

May 2025



U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention



Monthly Update: WIC Developmental Monitoring Project



<https://asphn.org/learn-the-signs-act-early/>

Upcoming Events

- May 28th: Networking Call
- June 25th: Building Strong Connections: Early Intervention Programs and Referral Best Practices

[Register here](#)

**Monthly trainings take place on the 4th Wednesday at 11 am ET.*

Sharing Updates/Resources

Would your state like to be featured in an upcoming newsletter? Please send an update on what your state is working on regarding developmental monitoring by the 20th of the month to be featured in the following month's newsletter.

Send to amberbrown@asphn.org
Thanks!

Join us for Our May Online Training

Date: May 28th, 11 am ET

Topic: State Updates & Networking Call

Description:

Join us for an insightful discussion on developmental monitoring in WIC! Hear firsthand from a couple of states in the learning collaborative as they share their initiatives and strategies. The remainder of the call will focus on networking, giving you the opportunity to discuss successes in WIC, challenges you're facing, and ways to support one another. Don't miss this chance to connect and collaborate!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

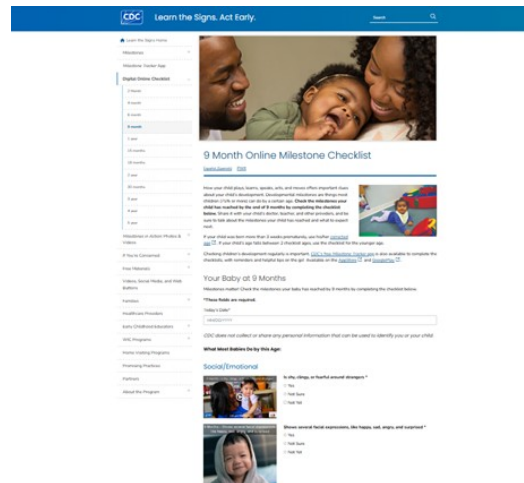
ASPHN and CDC Updates



Highlighting a Resource

Resource Highlight for WIC Professionals: CDC's Online Milestone Checklists

The [CDC's Online Milestone Checklists](#) are a valuable resource to help you engage families in developmental monitoring—especially when participants are unable to download the CDC's Milestone Tracker App.



These online checklists mirror the ones in the app and offer a quick, accessible way for families to track their child's development prior to their WIC visit. WIC staff can review the completed checklists with participants during appointments and use them to guide conversations about development.

How WIC Staff Can Support Use of the Online Checklists:

- **Direct participants to the CDC Milestones Page:** Encourage families to select the appropriate age and click “Complete an Online Milestone Checklist.” [CDC Milestones Page →](#)
- **Instruct participants to complete the form:** They'll be prompted to enter:
 - Date
 - Child's name
 - Child's birthday
 - State
 - (WIC clinic name is optional)
- **The participant fills out the age-appropriate checklist:** The online tool includes images and short videos to help parents identify

milestones clearly and confidently.

- **Participants can send an email summary to your clinic.** Participants can enter:
 - Your WIC clinic's email (to receive the child's summary)
 - Their own email (to receive a personal copy)

Submissions are sent from emailforms@cdc.gov—be sure this address is recognized by your clinic's email system.

Ocean County, NJ – Modernizing Developmental Support for Families

Ocean County WIC has made significant strides in supporting early childhood development and reducing information overload during new family appointments. Initially, LTSAE (Learn the Signs. Act Early.) checklists were introduced during in-person visits for new moms and infants. To streamline the process, we've since transitioned to an **automated digital rollout**—sending checklists via **email and SMS**, sorted by age, translated into Spanish, and branded with agency identifiers. These messages outline expected developmental milestones and provide resources and referrals when delays are noted.

Early data analysis through Qualtrics showed a notable trend: **children who are exclusively breastfed are significantly less likely to experience developmental delays** compared to those who are formula-fed. Partial breastfeeding also showed positive developmental benefits.

We're now excited to be **partnering with Monmouth University's Occupational Therapy program** to launch a “**Babies on the Move**” pilot in our WIC community. Initially focused on infants aged 6–12 months, the program may expand to other age groups where milestone delays are more common. We're also exploring a **newborn cohort** aimed at improving breastfeeding outcomes and addressing physical concerns like tightness, torticollis, and digestive alignment—combining OT expertise, LTSAE tools, and WIC's trusted support network.

NWA Conference Presentation - Simple Ways to Promote Child Development with WIC Families

Amber Brown attended the National WIC Association Annual Conference in April, where she presented on the Developmental Monitoring in WIC Project. Her presentation highlighted the vital role WIC clinics can play in supporting and monitoring children's development, the resources and materials available from the CDC, and WIC clinic staff perspectives on how well the program aligns with WIC services. The session was well-attended, with approximately 120–150 participants and many thoughtful questions from the audience.

Webinar Recording: Examining

the role of food parenting practices in the development of children's eating behaviors and their relationship with food



[WATCH THE RECORDING HERE](#)

Have you ever eaten something and then felt shame, guilt, or regret afterward? If so, you're not alone—these feelings are common, shaped by early experiences with food. But what if we could change that? As a dietitian, researcher, and mother, my goal is to help parents foster a positive, guilt-free relationship with food in their children. This talk explores the origins of our feelings about food, the powerful role parents play in shaping eating behaviors, and how food parenting practices—whether structured, supportive, coercive, or indulgent—impact long-term dietary habits.

In today's food environment, we are constantly bombarded by mixed messages: eat less, eat clean, avoid "junk"—all while being surrounded by highly processed foods engineered to be desirable. Parents play a critical role in how children navigate these messages, yet their approaches are influenced by many factors, including goals, time, and circumstances.

We will break down the four key types of food parenting practices—Structure, Autonomy Support, Coercive Control, and Indulgence—and discuss how they shape children's eating behaviors. Research consistently shows that structure and autonomy support promote healthful eating, while coercive and indulgent practices often lead to maladaptive behaviors. Drawing from both research and clinical experience, I will highlight strategies to help parents shift toward more supportive food parenting approaches. By understanding what drives parental feeding decisions, we can better equip families with practical tools to nurture a healthy relationship with food—one that encourages balance, enjoyment, and long-term well-being.

Join me for this important conversation about reshaping the way we think about feeding children, so they grow up with confidence in their food choices, free from shame and guilt.

Presenter

Katie Loth, PhD, MPH, RD

Katie Loth is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Minnesota. She is a researcher specializing in dietary intake, eating behaviors, and disordered eating, with a focus on food insecurity, body image, and parental influence on dietary intake and eating behaviors. Her research aims to develop evidence-based interventions to promote healthier eating and prevent eating disorders. Loth is also a faculty member at a family medicine residency clinic, teaching residents about nutrition and best practices for promoting healthful dietary intake. As a practicing clinical dietitian, she integrates her research into patient care.

Networking Questions!

Throughout the year, we will hold periodic networking calls. Please send me any questions or topics you are interested in discussing with other states. Please email amberbrown@asphn.org with your suggestions!

You are receiving this monthly newsletter because you are a part of the ASPHN WIC Developmental Monitoring Project. This newsletter will feature updates from states within the project about what they are doing and successes and challenges they have had, information about upcoming trainings, and other news. If you have anything you'd like to contribute, you can reach out to Amber Brown at AmberBrown@asphn.org. Thank you! <https://asphn.org/learn-the-signs-act-early/>

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