When there are Developmental Concerns...

Tips for Supporting Families

"Communicating concerns about a child to the family is often a difficult step. Success is more likely if this step is taken within an already-existing relationship that is built on trust and respect." -California Dept. of Education

1 Communicate Frequently

Make it a habit to chat with parents about their child's skills and activities. Daily check-ins can be simple updates like, "She enjoyed learning the words to a new song today." Over time, this type of communication builds mutual trust.

Regularly provide families with information about typical developmental milestones and activities. You can find printable milestones by age for 0-5 year-olds here: https://rb.gy/tvr7f.

2 Schedule a Conversation

When you have a concern about a child's development, request a private meeting with the child's family, so you can express your concerns in a supportive way. Communicate your desire to partner with families to support their child's progress. Suggestions to help you prepare for the meeting are outlined in the article, Tips for Navigating Conversations about Developmental Concerns (rb.gy/yuzdr).

3 During the Meeting, Share Resources & Suggest Next Steps

It can be helpful to gently inquire about whether the child has had a developmental screening. The screening process helps parents understand their child's progress and potential challenges. A good starting point for families is their pediatrician, since many offer screenings or can refer the family to an agency that does. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends regular screenings between the ages of 2 months and 5 years.

The organization Help Me Grow, available in many parts of the country, can provide developmental screenings and related support. Find Help Me Grow resources in your state, here: rb.gy/uc803. In many states and counties, the local office of education can provide information about screenings.