

# Speaking About Developmental Concerns

**As a child care provider who interacts with children ages 3-5 every day, you are instrumental in helping them thrive!**

Your knowledge and position give you the ability to notice changes in a child that families may not notice at home. Parents depend on you to help identify behaviors or developmental delays early. That makes you a key part in helping keep children on track and connecting families to the services that support their development!



## Building a Foundation of Trust

### Ongoing Practices

**Talk about development regularly.**

- Share with parents new skills you have noticed their children developing, or interesting things from their day/visit.

**Provide resources they can use to track their child's growth** (e.g., growth charts, milestone markers, CDC milestones).

- Consider creating occasional check-ins with parents to compare notes about what you both see.

**Use good listening skills when speaking to the family.**

### When You Have a Concern

**Place yourself in the parents' shoes.**

- How might they feel about the news you are sharing after a good day versus a long day at work?
- What is the typical communication style or personality of the parents?

**Be mindful of cultural differences or experiential factors that may affect development or behavior** (e.g., children who are bilingual or new to child care).

**Remember that you and the family are working together on their child's development.**

# Recommendations for Engaging With Families

## 1. Before the Conversation

- Observe and document the child's behaviors and developmental milestones.
  - Complete a milestone checklist or refer to a recently completed one.
- Speak with others to see if they have noticed similar things.
- Review Build Up referral steps so you can offer clear direction.
  - See the “Get Connected” section on **BuildUpMi.org**.

## 2. The Right Moment

- Find a quiet, private setting.
- Set aside time for a thoughtful conversation without rushing.

## 3. Starting the Conversation

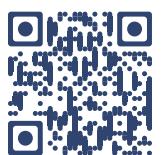
- Share a child's strengths and recent progress. Express concerns clearly, kindly and as neutrally as possible.
- Avoid diagnostic terms.
- Focus on observation, not assumptions.

## 4. Support and Next Steps

- Reassure families that a concern or delay is not indicative of something “wrong” with a child.
- Reinforce the message of early action and lifelong learning.
- Reinforce and validate the family's important role in their child's growth.
- Introduce Build Up and other community resources.
- Offer assistance with referrals or next steps.

## 5. After the Conversation

- Encourage and engage in ongoing dialogue.
- Use regular parent-connects to talk about progress or improvements.
- Check in to see how the family and child are progressing.



Scan the QR code  
for more resources.

## Remember!

- Early action makes a big difference.
- You (the provider) are not diagnosing. You are observing and offering support.
- Build Up is here to help parents and their children ages 3 through 5 access the support and services they may need.
- Build Up Coordinators can assist you in figuring out next steps when you have a concern about a developmental delay. Find your local Coordinator:  
**BuildUpMi.org/CoordinatorContact.**

## Learn the Signs. Act Early.

From ages birth through 5, it is typical for children to achieve developmental milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act and move. Track the development of children and act early if you have a concern.