

## Early Childhood Evaluation Program – Technical Assistance & Consultation

### Continuing Education series for NM FIT Providers

Presented by

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Early Childhood Evaluation Program (ECEP) Interdisciplinary Clinical Faculty and Staff

## Best Practices in Early Childhood Assessment: ECEP Processes, Referrals, and Triage

I'm worried about this young child, what do I do now?

February 23 & February 25, 2022

University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center  
 Department of Pediatrics - Center for Development & Disability



# Introductions

Who are we?



**Early Childhood Evaluation Program (ECEP)**



## Objectives for today

- List three developmental red flags for referring a child for assessment
- Describe the assessment process to families/clients
- Identify when and where to refer children when questioning autism and other complex neurological conditions.
- Referring to ECEP vs. community provider- how to decide?
- Referral and triage questions/ case discussion



## Review: What is ECEP?

### MISSION STATEMENT



The Early Childhood Evaluation Program (ECEP) is an Interdisciplinary Diagnostic Assessment Clinic

- 40+ years
- Serving children statewide

The mission of the Early Childhood Evaluation Program (ECEP) is to promote high quality of life for New Mexico's young children, including children with, or at-risk for, developmental delays, their families, and those who work with them through developmental evaluations services. We support access to information, quality early intervention and preschool service, health care, and personnel development statewide through training, research, and direct service.

#### ECEP Disciplines:

- Psychology
- Social Work
- Pediatrics

- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy

- Speech & language pathology

## Why does someone make a referral?

#### Common reasons

- MCHAT/ Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Complex or unusual behavior and/or development
- Not progressing
- Regression
- Asking why / etiology / diagnosis
- Need for in-depth information
- Needed evaluation or specialty services not readily available community
- Medical assessment and coordination of findings/ genetic concern
- Delays in sitting/crawling/walking/Cerebral Palsy concern
- Sensory differences/head-banging
- Impulsivity/poor attention/high activity level
- Prenatal exposure to substances
- CAPTA mandate
- Others?




**NEW MEXICO**  
**Early Childhood**  
 Education & Care Department

Family Support and Early Intervention Division  
 FAMILY INFANT TODDLER (FIT) PROGRAM

## ECEP Basics: Funding, Numbers, Waitlist, Workscope

Legislated under New Mexico Statute Chapter 28-Article 16A – Section 18 (1978) Developmental Disabilities Early Childhood Evaluation Services


STATE GENERAL FUNDS


- Public Education Department
- Medicaid
- Third party billing


 CENTER FOR  
 DEVELOPMENTAL  
 DISABILITY

- Funding and Expectation: 300+ evaluations per year
- Current Waitlist: 9-12 months
- Workscope:
  - Triage & Comprehensive Records Review (\*\*)
  - Developmental and Diagnostic Assessment
    - Telehealth Interview
    - Telehealth or in-person evaluation
  - Staffing (\*\*)
  - Family Meeting & Recommendations (\*\*)
  - Comprehensive Report (\*\*)
  - Follow-up and Referrals (\*\*)
  - Reassessment (If needed)
- Technical Assistance to Early Intervention Teams (\*\*= TA opportunities)

## Changes through COVID: March 2020 to...




 CENTER FOR  
 DEVELOPMENTAL  
 DISABILITY

- Triage
- Records review
- ZOOM/Hybrid Evaluation in 3 parts
- Part 1
  - Interview –Medical and development History
  - Vineland–3 Adaptive
  - (TELE-ASD-Peds)
- **Part 2 - Telehealth**
  - TELE-ASD-Peds
  - DAYC-2
  - DP4
- **Part 2- In Clinic (with PPE)**
  - Bayley-4/Standardized testing
  - ADOS-2 (modified)
  - TELE-ASD-Peds/AVABO
  - CARS-2-ST
- Part 3
  - Family Feedback (telehealth)



## Telehealth

### Benefits and challenges

- Increased access to services
- Decreased barriers for rural or families lacking transportation
- Increased availability of evidence-based tools
- Decreased timeline from referral to diagnosis and appropriate services
- Not appropriate for everyone



### What is the TELE-ASD-PEDS?

- A diagnostic tool designed (pre-pandemic) for use by providers and families during a telehealth assessment for autism.
  - Designed to be administered in combination with other clinical tools by trained clinicians; not to be used on its own.
- Developed for children 36 months and younger, with single words or limited language use.
- Provider walks parent through basic tasks with their child, allowing provider to watch for the presence of autism symptoms.
- Data collection and analysis of psychometric properties is ongoing. For more information and citations:

<https://vkc.vumc.org/vkc/triad/tele-asd-peds>

## Components of an Assessment: Best Practice Elements

### Depending on referral question:

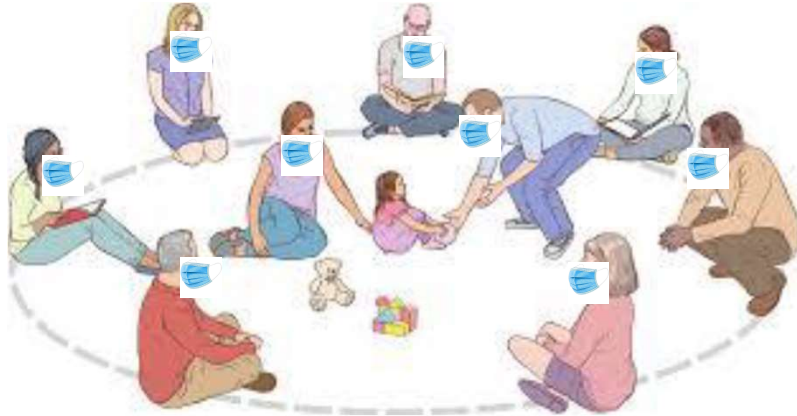
- Developmental Approach
  - Cognition
  - Speech and Language
  - Motor
  - Social Engagement and Play
  - Adaptive Skills
- Medical review
- Social-Emotional and Sensory/Regulation
- Includes record review, parent report, **and** clinical observation/testing
- Interdisciplinary vs. Psychologist vs. ABA provider vs. Pediatrician/Neurologist



## Arena Assessment in the age of COVID

UNM Hospital COVID precautions and procedures

- Confirmation calls/increased cancellations
- Limits on attendance
- Limits on numbers in a room
- Limited length of visits
- Masks and PPE



## Telehealth vs. In Person: Clinical considerations *and your role*



Family and EI team questions and concerns

Previous evaluation data

Length of time since previous evaluations

Child Age

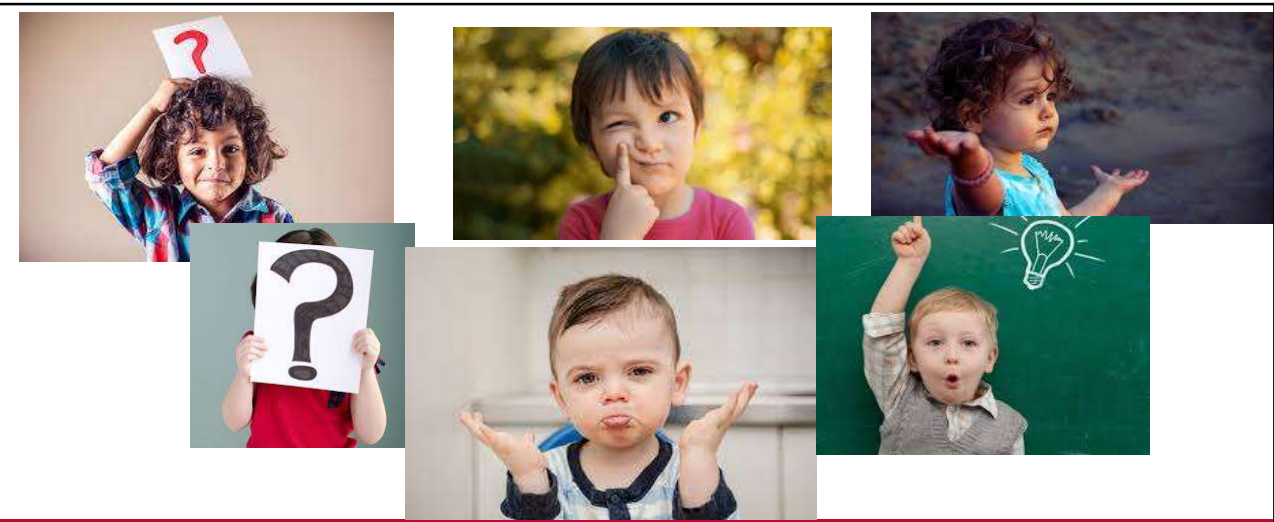
Primary Language of child and family

Language skills: Flexible phrase speech?


Sensory deficits: Vision or hearing loss?

Motor skills: Sitting without support? Walking?

Environmental factors (e.g., internet access, availability of toys, space restrictions, transportation)



## Case-specific Inquiries and Questions?



### Join us for more ECEP Office Hours:

**Session 2: Recognizing Red Flags and Talking to Families about Specific Diagnostic Concerns (Focus on Autism and Sensory Issues)**

March 30 at 4pm and April 1 at 8am

**Session 3: Recognizing Red Flags and Talking to Families about Specific Diagnostic Concerns (Review/check in on Autism; Focus on Cerebral Palsy and other complex neurodevelopmental issues)**

April 27 at 4pm and April 29 at 8am

**Session 4: Family-Focused Strategies Addressing Autism Spectrum Disorder, Feeding Issues, and Sensory processing concerns.**

May 25 at 4pm and May 27 at 8am

**Session 5: Family – Focused Strategies Addressing Cerebral Palsy.**

June 22 at 4pm and 24 at 8am



# Contact information

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