

Sharing Screening Results with Parents/Caregivers

When a screening is administered, there is a result. Sharing screening results with families can present us with some uncomfortable and/or anxious feelings. It can also present us with opportunities for positive discussion. It may be helpful to remind parents the results of screens are just one more way we gather information and explore how we can support young children and families.

Presenting results in a thoughtful manner:

- Emphasize strengths and comment on areas identified as going well.
- Share results with parents in a clear, culturally sensitive, and blameless manner.
- Determine the parents' understanding of the result (what meaning they make of the result) and look for ways to move forward together. Provide opportunity for the parent to share their thoughts.
- Being present, actively listening and empathizing with their feelings or reaction to the results is important. Respond in an understanding way. Resist the temptation to jump into action. This can be disconcerting because it will feel like you should do something right now.

Help parents to make a plan

Be prepared to help families take the next steps by reassuring parents that screening results will be used to support the family. A plan can include referral, community resources and follow up with a goal (even though the screening raises no concerns) to set a direction and to help make the tool meaningful.

Respect parents/caregivers

If there is a concerning screening result and the parent decides not to pursue a formal referral, it is important to respect their decision. Suggest other opportunities to support the family and when possible offer to re-screen and revisit other resources. Having open lines of communication can make the process easier.