

Developmental Disorders Series

Pre-school Children Developmental Delay

I. What is Developmental Delay?

Developmental delay is a condition whereby pre-school children fail to acquire the skills appropriate for their respective ages. The delay can be obvious in some children, while it may be minimal in others.

II. What causes Developmental Delay?

Genetic Factors

- Hereditary factors or chromosomal abnormalities

Pregnancy and Birth Factors

- e.g. drug misuse or excessive alcohol intake during pregnancy, complications of birth or prematurity

Infancy and Childhood

- Illness, poisoning or brain injury, e.g. encephalitis or brain trauma

Environmental Factors

- A lack of appropriate stimulation may lead to social or language developmental delay

Unknown Factors

- The cause in most cases is unknown

III. How does Developmental Delay affect the child?

Child may exhibit developmental delay in one or several areas.

Due to individual differences in the cause, degree of impairment and growth environment, children with developmental delay may show variations in their performance.

Language

- Abilities in verbal comprehension and expression and speech production

Gross Motor

- Physical development in sitting, standing, walking, running, jumping, etc.

Intellectual Ability or Cognition

- Ability to learn, think and solve problems

Fine Motor

- Abilities such as eye-hand coordination, use of tools and handwriting

Social Skills and Adaptability

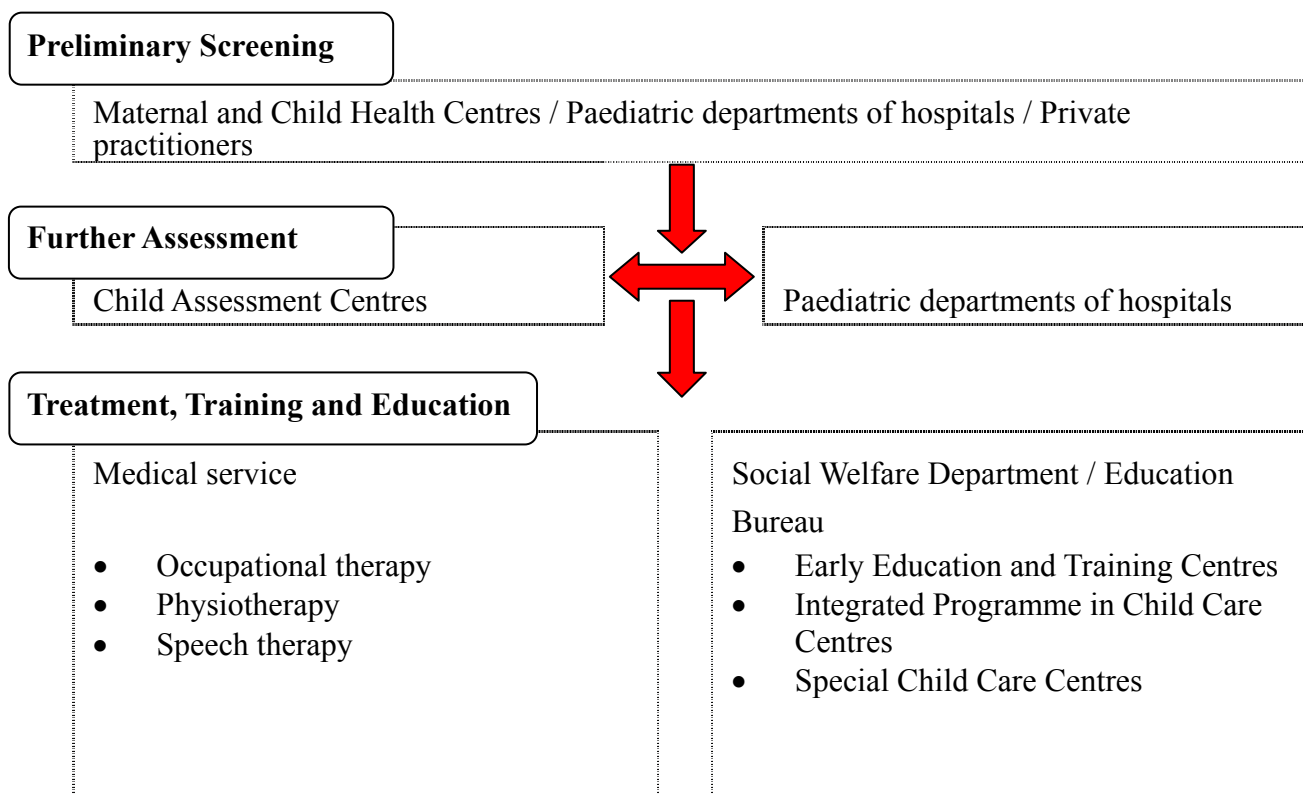
- Essential skills in communication, social interaction, self-care in daily living

IV. What are the symptoms of children with Developmental Delay?

If parents have doubts over their child’s development or if they observe the following symptoms in their child, they should contact relevant organisations for assistance as soon as possible.

Age	Symptoms	
6 months	Cannot keep the head steady Cannot reach out with hands to grasp objects	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1 year	Cannot stand holding onto furniture Cannot pick up small objects with the thumb and index finger	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 years	Cannot walk alone	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 years	Cannot say single words, such as “car”, “teddy” Cannot follow simple instructions, such as “give to mummy”	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2.5 years	Cannot scribble with a pen on paper Cannot combine single words, such as “blow bubbles, big car”	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3 years	Cannot speak in simple sentences, such as “I want biscuit” Cannot match basic colours and shapes	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

V. Where can parents seek help if their child is suspected to have developmental delay?



VI. How can parents help their child with Developmental Delay?

- (1) Arrange assessment for the child as early as possible to understand and accept his/her developmental progress.
- (2) Participate in the child's training services as far as possible and maintain communication with the instructors so as to master the training approach.
- (3) Identify the child's strengths to enhance self-confidence.
- (4) Share feelings with others to relieve negative emotions.
- (5) Join parent self-help groups and make good use of community services.

Enquiry Numbers and Related Websites

Government Bureau / Departments

- Department of Health
 - Child Assessment Service 2246 6633
www.dhcas.gov.hk
 - Family Health Service 2961 8855
(Maternal and Child Health Centres) www.fhs.gov.hk
- Social Welfare Department 2343 2255
www.swd.gov.hk
- Education Bureau 2891 0088
(24-Hour Hotline) <http://serc.edb.gov.hk>
 - Special Education and Special Schools
 - Special Education Resource Centre

Other Organisations

- Hospital Authority 2300 6555
(General Enquiry) www.ha.org.hk
- Heep Hong Society 2776 3111
www.heephong.org

Overseas

- Website on "Developmental Milestones of Children" www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/devdel.htm

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