



Developmental Surveillance Scheme



Why do we need to monitor children's development?

Children undergo rapid changes in growth and development during their first few years of life. For most children this is an uneventful process. However, for some, problem may arise. By monitoring children's growth and development regularly, we aim at timely identification of any growth, development or behavioural problems, so that appropriate management can be initiated.

What is "Developmental Surveillance Scheme"?

You may have been familiar with the Comprehensive Observation Service (COS) which your child receives at 10 weeks, 6 to 9 months and 3 years of age. Commencing in 2004, the Family Health Service has introduced a new scheme, the Developmental Surveillance Scheme (DSS), to replace the COS. The new scheme is being introduced in all MCHCs by phases. We expect every MCHC to have DSS in place by 2007.

How is it different from "COS"?

The new scheme emphasises partnership with parents, teachers and other caregivers. It aims to enable parents (and other caregivers) to be competent and effective in promoting and observing children's development. Through reading information leaflets, discussion with health professionals and attending regular parenting workshops, parents will better understand children's developmental needs in all aspects.

How is it carried out?

Developmental surveillance is a continuous process. For the convenience of parents, 6 routine interviews will be scheduled together with other essential services, i.e. at 2, 4, 6, 12 and 18 months **when your child is due for vaccination, and at 4 years for the preschool vision screening**. Visits at other ages will be arranged if your child needs closer monitoring.



During the interviews, our nurses will **ask you questions** to understand your perceptions of the child's development and behaviour at home (or at school, if applicable), identify your concerns and **make necessary observation** of the child. It covers different developmental areas like gross and fine motor, language and communication, social behaviour and play, self-care, vision and hearing as well as general concerns. We rely a lot on your information to arrive at a reasonable conclusion about your child's development.

How can my child join the Scheme?

All children registered with MCHCs will automatically be covered by the scheme.

Will I get any feedback on my child's progress?

At the end of the interview, the nurse will **explain** to you about the progress of your child in different areas of development, **provide necessary guidance** on his/her future development and address any concern you may have. If the nurse considers that your child's development is comparable to children of the same age, she will give you an appointment for the next routine visit and all you need to do is to continue with your own observation. If you have any query or worry before the next scheduled visit, please do not hesitate to make an appointment to discuss with our nurses.

What will happen if there is a problem?

If your child does not perform as expected in certain areas of development or the nurse suspects a problem either from your report or her own observation, she will give you an appointment for a follow up visit, or arrange a consultation by doctor for a more detailed developmental assessment. Referral to specialist will be arranged if needed.

How can I help to promote and monitor my child's development?

As parents or caregivers, you have constant access to and interaction with your child. We depend a lot on your observation. We have a series of child development, parenting and other related leaflets, 24-hour prerecorded Parenting Hotline as well as regular "Happy Parenting" workshops. These provide you with useful information to better understand your child's development and parenting needs. If you are concerned about your child at any stage, please let us know. We do take your concern seriously.

If you have any concerns or queries, please discuss with nurses and doctors in any MCHC.

