



Strong Start Toolkit Materials

This toolkit is designed to help organizations and stakeholders reach parents, grandparents, caregivers and healthcare providers with information about **Strong Start**—the District’s Early Intervention Program. Here you will find a collection of colorful, easy-to-understand, re-useable materials and outreach tips. With these materials, you will be able to help promote the program by communicating clear, consistent messages. Because the materials are not copy written, feel free to make and distribute as many copies as you need. The **Strong Start Kit** includes:

- Fact Sheet
- Road Map (describes the early intervention process)
- Outreach Tips
- Print PSAs/Flyers
- Infant and Toddler Developmental Chart
- Banner Ad

Strong Start Factsheet

This document provides information on developmental disabilities and delays, ways that **Strong Start** can help and answers questions on the early intervention process and fees.

Strong Start Road Map

This is a colorful and handy step-by-step guide through the DC Early Intervention process. Parents, caregivers and health care providers can see the steps involved in each phase.

Outreach Tips

This document offers ideas and strategies for promoting the campaign throughout the city.

Flyers

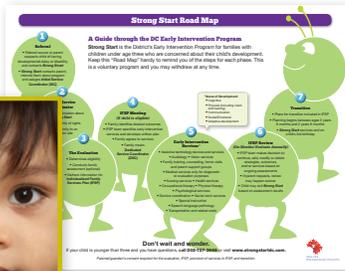
We have converted the campaign posters into print PSAs/flyers in three sizes: full page (8 1/2 by 11), half-page and quarter-page.

Infant and Toddler Developmental Chart

This flyer describes some of the most common developmental milestones—what a child should be able to do at a particular age.

Banner Ad

This colorful online ad is great way to promote the campaign and create a direct link to the program from your website.



If you would like to receive copies of **Strong Start** posters or postcards, or for additional information on the program, call (202) 727-3665 or visit www.strongstartdc.com.



Office of the State Superintendent of Education



Strong Start Factsheet

Strong Start is the District of Columbia's Early Intervention Program, administered through the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). The program provides coordinated services and support for infants and toddlers under age three who have been diagnosed with developmental disabilities or disabilities. **Strong Start** currently serves about 300 children in the District of Columbia, representing a fraction of those in need of assessment and services.

From birth, children experience physical changes but they also learn new abilities also known as "developmental milestones." Most children reach these milestones at a certain age. Below are answers to questions about **Strong Start** and the developmental growth of infants and toddlers.

What is a developmental delay?

As children grow and develop, they exhibit different skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, or waving goodbye. These skills are known as developmental milestones. A child that does not reach these milestones at the same time as other children the same age may have a developmental delay.

How can I tell if my child is progressing as he/she should?

If you have concerns about your child's development, you should ask your child's health care provider or call the **Strong Start** at (202) 727-3665 to schedule a free screening.

Can't I just wait for my child to "catch up"?

In most cases, children with developmental delays do not "catch up" or "grow out of it" on their own. By waiting, you could be missing critical opportunities for your child to receive the help he or she needs. Studies have found that children who receive early intervention services are often able to overcome a

delay, are better able to cope with a disability, and are less likely to need special education classes once they enter school.

How do Strong Start services help?

The program offers a range of services to address specific developmental challenges and develops a written plan for treatment and coaching—which is known as the **Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)**. These services include:

- Free initial screening and evaluation
- Speech, physical, occupational and family therapies
- Medical treatment
- Special education teachers and teaching assistants
- Family support & education
- Special Instruction
- Social workers, if needed

Who can refer a child to Strong Start?

Anyone can refer a child to **Strong Start**. The program accepts referrals from parents, caregivers, family members, friends, physicians, hospitals, Medicaid, child care staff, and social workers.

How will our family pay for the services?

Services such as screening, evaluations and service coordination are provided to families at no cost. Additional services can be paid for by private health insurance, Medicaid, and in some instances, Strong Start will pay for services. A sliding fee scale is used to help families who need financial assistance.

What if I have more questions?

For more information call (202) 727-3665 or visit www.strongstartdc.com.



Office of the
State Superintendent of Education

Strong Start Road Map

1

Referral

- Referral source or parent suspects child of having developmental delay or disability and contacts **Strong Start**
- **Strong Start** contacts parent, informs them about program and assigns **Initial Service Coordinator (ISC)**

2

Initial Service Coordinator

- Provides information about **Strong Start**
- Informs family of rights
- Refers family to an evaluation site

3

The Evaluation

- Determines eligibility
- Conducts family assessment (optional)
- Gathers information for **Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)**

4

IFSP Meeting (If child is eligible)

- Family identifies desired outcomes
- IFSP team specifies early intervention services and develops written plan
- Family agrees to services
- Family meets **Dedicated Service Coordinator (DSC)**

5

Early Intervention Services*

- Assistive technology devices and services
 - Audiology • Vision services
- Family training, counseling, home visits and parent support groups
- Medical services only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- Nursing services • Health services
- Occupational therapy • Physical therapy
 - Psychological services
- Service coordination • Social work services
 - Special instruction
- Speech-language pathology
- Transportation and related costs

*Areas of Development

- Cognitive
- Physical (including vision and hearing)
- Communication
- Social/Emotional
- Adaptive development

6

IFSP Review (Six Months/Evaluate Annually)

- IFSP team makes decision to continue, add, modify or delete strategies, outcomes, and/or services based on ongoing assessments
- If parent requests, review may happen sooner
- Child may exit **Strong Start** based on assessment results

7

Transition

- Plans for transition included in IFSP
- Planning begins between ages 2 years 6 months and 2 years 9 months
- **Strong Start** services end on child's 3rd birthday

A Guide through the DC Early Intervention Program

Strong Start is the District's Early Intervention Program for families with children under age three who are concerned about their child's development. Keep this "Road Map" handy to remind you of the steps for each phase. This is a voluntary program and you may withdraw at any time.

Don't wait and wonder.

If your child is younger than three and you have questions, call **202-727-3665** or visit **www.strongstartdc.com**.

Parental/guardian's consent required for the evaluation, IFSP, provision of services in IFSP, and transition.



Outreach Tips and Tools

We need your help to reach segments of the community with information about the District's early intervention services for children under the age of three. Keep in mind that **Strong Start** staff is always available to answer questions and provide assistance to any organization that using materials at local events and presentations. Here are a few ideas to get you started and help spur your thinking.

Start With Your Office

Display materials from the toolkit in your organization—place the poster in the reception area, display the postcards/fliers on a coffee table or next to the receptionist. Also place a poster in high traffic areas, such as a break/lunch room. Consider conducting a **Strong Start** briefing or “brown bag lunch” with all members of staff so they are familiar with the program and its services. Review the materials in the toolkit and explain their purpose. Ensure that everyone understands the program and is equipped to explain it to others. If your organization has a website, talk to your webmaster about posting the online banner ad and creating a link to the **Strong Start** website.

Promote “Don't Wait and Wonder” at Local Events

The District hosts several community events, festivals, and expos at various times of the year where parents or caregivers can be reached. Consider setting up a booth and distributing **Strong Start** materials. You can check online at <http://washington.org/calendar> or other popular search engines like Google, to get a list of these events. Don't forget to include those hosted by faith-based and other non-profit organizations. If your organization already has plans to participate in local events, consider including **Strong Start** materials—postcards, flyers, factsheets, etc.—at your booth. Be sure to include members of staff who can address questions about the program.

Reach out to Parents and other Stakeholders

There are many other places where parents can be reached such as grocery and department stores, libraries, neighborhood associations, churches, beauty salons, barbershops and educational institutions. These may all have places where you can post and/or display materials or host events that will allow you to disseminate **Strong Start** materials. Consider contacting each of these venues and ask to display and/or distribute **Strong Start** materials—hanging a poster, placing flyers on bulletin boards, leaving postcards on countertops, etc. or participating in upcoming events. Some may even allow you to create a special area dedicated to displaying **Strong Start** materials.

Contact Local Corporate Offices

Reach out to human resources or office managers and ask that they promote the program to their employees. Partner with employers and suggest that they leave fliers and postcards in employee lounges, break rooms, or reception areas. Ask to make a presentation about the **Strong Start** program at an upcoming staff meeting or at a “brown bag lunch.” Feel free to contact **Strong Start** to check the availability of staff members who can participate in the presentation. If the company has a website, ask them to consider placing the online banner ad and creating a hyperlink to the **Strong Start** website.

Host a Strong Start Event

Throughout the year, there are months dedicated to various issues. Some of these are directly connected to early intervention issues like Development Disabilities Month (March), Children's Mental Health Week (May), and National Down's Syndrome Awareness Month (October). Still other opportunities include observances such as National Family Health Month (October). Consider hosting an event or partnering with another organization during one of these times to promote **Strong Start**. Check with the **Strong Start** staff to see

Outreach Tips and Tools—continued

they can be available to support the event and answer any questions that may come up.

Start a Strong Start Support Group

Parents and caregivers of children with developmental disabilities and delays may be interested in spending time and sharing with other parents who are going through or have gone through the early intervention process. Consider creating such an opportunity within your organization. You can create a theme for each meeting—something to which parents and caregivers can readily relate—send out invitations, select a main speaker or a moderator to keep everyone engaged. This person could be another parent with a success story, a health care provider, or a member of the **Strong Start** team. Find a way to celebrate with the parents as their children make progress.

Go Viral

The internet has become a primary source for gathering and sharing information. Keep track of all the organizations and agencies in your network that have websites. Encourage them to post the online banner ad, create a hyperlink to the **Strong Start** website, and include the print PSA in an upcoming issue of their newsletter. Register for websites dedicated to DC parents and caregivers exchanging information about early intervention services. Take the time to respond to inquiries and even share information about the “Don’t Wait and Wonder” campaign. Remember to include a link to the **Strong Start** website in your response so that interested parties can contact the program directly.



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Infant and Toddler Developmental Chart

No two babies are alike. Each child will grow and learn differently. Here's a checklist of developmental milestones—things most children can do by a certain age. Not reaching these milestones, or reaching them much later than other children, could be a sign of developmental delay.

Here are some things children are usually able to do at different ages:



1-2 Months

- Sucks and/or swallows easily
- Turns head from side to side when lying on tummy
- Startles easily in response to loud noises
- Turns head in direction that cheek is touched



12-15 Months

- Walks without help
- Drinks from a cup without help
- Picks up small objects and drops into a container
- Points and asks for things
- Scribbles on paper using crayon



3-4 Months

- Holds a rattle and smiles
- Makes cooing sounds like “ooh” or “aah”
- Rolls from tummy to back
- Plays with hands by touching them together or putting them in the mouth



15-18 Months

- Points to body parts—eyes, nose, mouth—when you name them
- Shows emotions—happy or sad
- Tries to talk and repeats words
- Feeds self with spoon but spills
- Looks at picture books and turns pages



4-6 Months

- Laughs and babbles, like saying “bababa” or “dadada”
- Balances self while sitting for a few seconds
- Moves toys from hand to hand
- Turns toward sounds like your voice or music



18-24 Months

- Points to pictures in a book when you name them
- Puts words together like “mommy shoes,” “see car,” “go bye-bye”
- Shows affection—offers hugs and kisses
- Plays actively with toys—kicks large ball, stacks things, etc.
- Takes off clothes on their own like hat, shoes, socks



6-9 Months

- Sits up without falling
- Crawls or creeps forward on tummy by moving arms and legs
- Holds something in each hand at the same time
- Pulls up to stand by holding on to furniture
- Shakes head to say “no”



24-36 Months

- Follows simple two-step directions like, “Go to your room and bring me a diaper.”
- Uses 4 to 5 word sentences
- Plays make-believe with dolls, stuffed animals, and people
- Shows affection for playmates
- Jumps up and down



9-12 Months

- Takes steps by holding on to furniture
- Picks up small objects, toys and finger foods
- Waves “bye-bye”
- Says “Mama” or “Dada” to the right person
- Looks at pictures in a book

If your child is younger than three and you have questions, call **202-727-3665** or visit **www.strongstartdc.com**.

If your child won't look at you, maybe you should come see us.

All children grow and learn at different rates. But if you've noticed that your child isn't walking, talking or holding things like other children his age, call **Strong Start** – the District's Early Intervention Program. We're here to help D.C. families who are concerned about their child's development. If your child is younger than three, **call us at 202-727-3665** or visit **www.osse.dc.gov**. Together, we'll find answers.

Don't wait and wonder.



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If your child isn't talking, maybe it's worth speaking up.

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Si su niño no camina, tal vez usted debe de tomar el primer paso.

Todos los niños crecen y aprenden a su propio ritmo. Pero si usted ha notado que su niño no está caminando, hablando o agarrando las cosas como otros niños de su edad, llame a **Strong Start** – el programa para intervención temprana del Distrito de Columbia. Estamos para ayudar a las familias que están preocupadas por el desarrollo de sus niños. Si su niño es menor de 3 años, **llámenos al 202-727-3665** o visítenos en **www.strongstartdc.com**. Juntos encontraremos respuestas.

No espere...no se quede con la duda.



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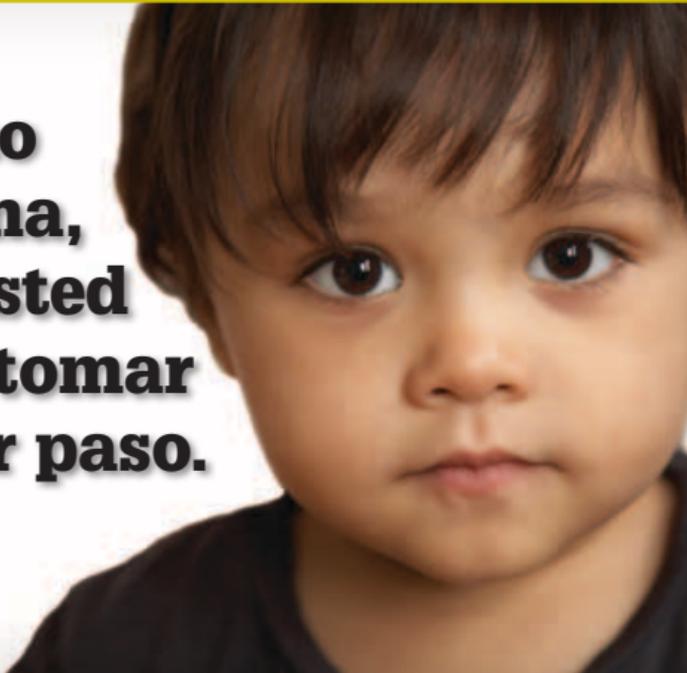
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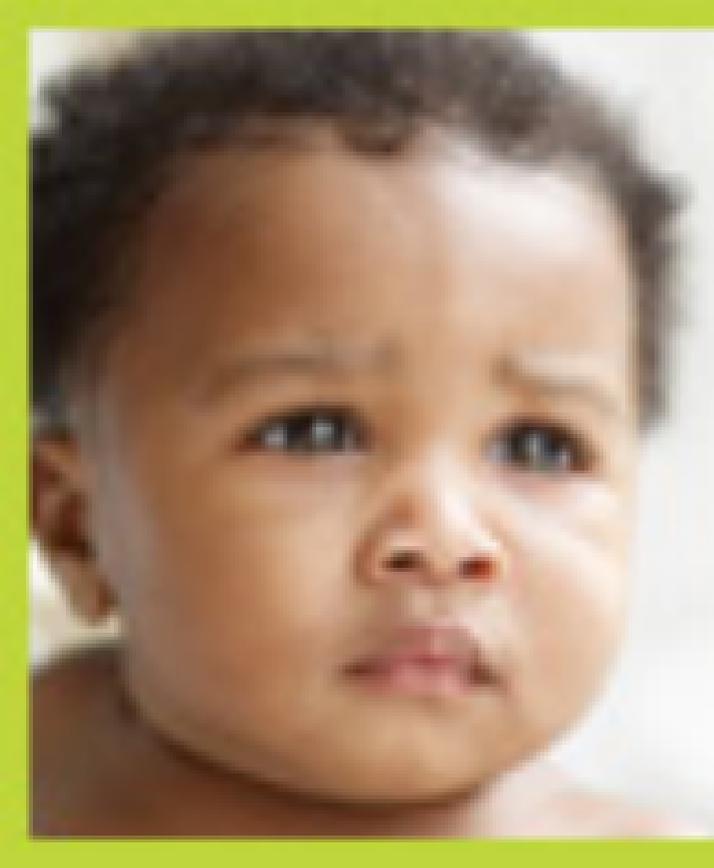


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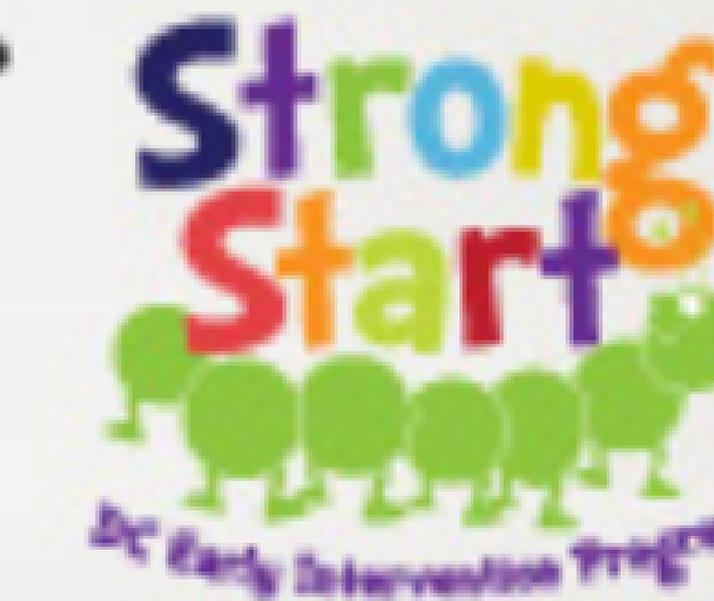
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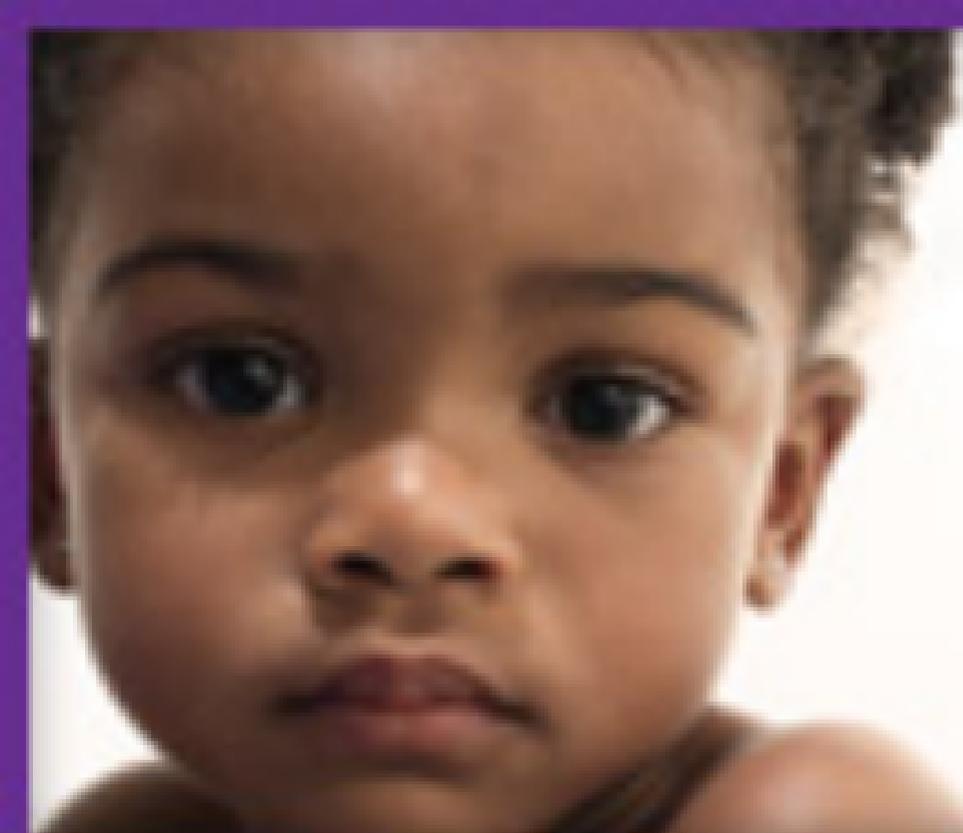
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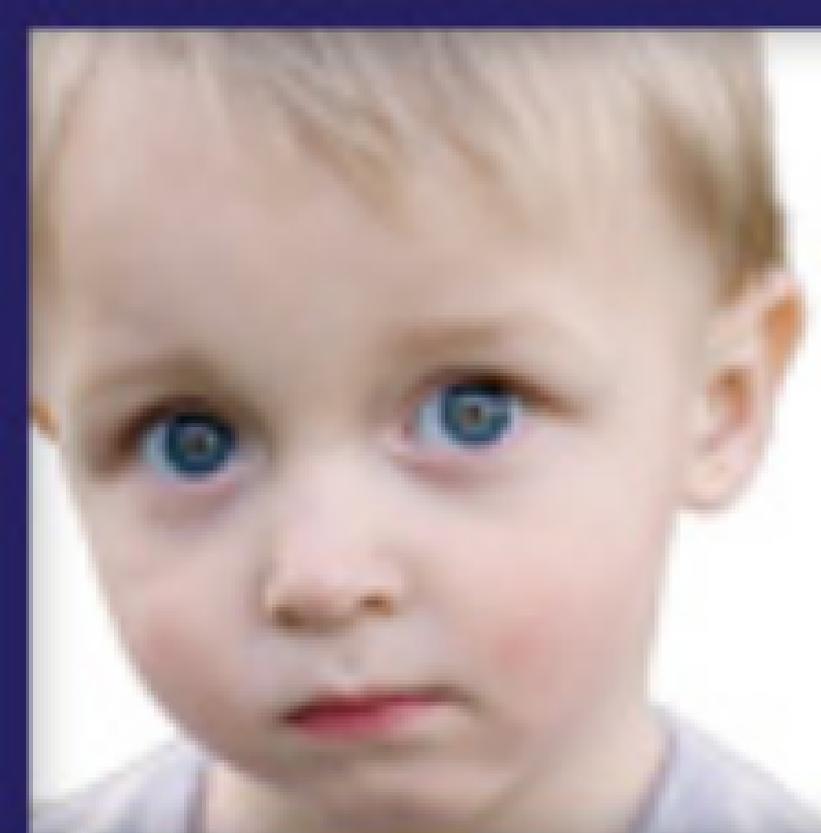
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