

Child Development Programs in Iranian Health System

Authors

Hamidreza Lornejad, Pediatrician – Child Health Office – Ministry of Health, Tehran, Iran- lornejad@health.gov.ir

Naria Abolgasemi, MD-MPH - Child Health Office – Ministry of Health, Tehran, Iran- na_abolghasemi@yahoo.com

Raheleh Toghyani, Master Midwifery- MPH- Child Health Office –Ministry of Health, Tehran, Iran- rahelehtoghyani@yahoo.com

Seifollah Heidarabadi, MD,Developmental Pediatrician, Associate Professor, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences,Tabriz-Iran- s_heidarabadi@yahoo.com

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Introduction

Optimal growth and development is a normal right of each child. The most important age of brain development is the early years of life. Child care, support, appropriate stimuli, screening, timely detection, education and recommendations for growth promotion and optimal evolution is highly important for improving the level of health and growth and maximum development of children.

Methodology

The clinical algorithm has been prepared in the children's health service package for primary health care worker to enable them to evaluate, classify and manage of children development in Iran health system. 16 care have been defined for each child under 5 years, starting of 3-5 days after birth up to 60 months. The evaluation of developmental status of children is done based on red flag at the age of 2, 6, 18 and 48 months. In addition, recommendations about communicating and playing with the child in different ages is presented. Moreover, developmental screenings, using a nationally standardized questionnaire (taken from ASQ) are conducted for all children at the age of 6, 12, 24, 36 and 60 months. These questionnaires is also completed for any child who has one of the red flags. Then the score obtained from screening will be compared with the Iranian children cut of points. If any child needs to be referred, he / she will be referred to the physician at health service center. Developmental Diagnostic test (Bayley III, GARS....) is performed for referred children. Finally, if they need any intervention, action is taken according to the child's age. Parents will be educated appropriately based on child's age for improving his/her development. Cities which have specialized centers for children's growth and development, accept children suspected of having a developmental disorder in order to presenting needed treatment for them.

The aims of establishing the specialized centers for children's growth and development are as follows:

- Systematize the specialized centers for children's growth and development
- Provide, maintain and improve of children's development through educating the families, screening, early diagnosis and treatment, rehabilitation of disabled children (for healthy children and children at risk of developmental disorder, developmental delay and disorder as they need)
- Supporting children and their families with developmental disabilities
- Early and timely diagnosis and treatment can lead to:
 - Improving the level of community health
 - The Promotion of children growth and prevention of developmental delay in at risk children
 - Preventing the increase in the severity of growth disorders in children with developmental disorders through timely diagnosis and intervention

