

Communications Office
Peterborough County-City Health Unit
10 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391
www.pcchu.ca



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Parents Play a Key Role in Identifying Children at Risk

Health Unit Ready to Support Enhanced 18-Month Well-Baby Visits Recommended by Province

Tuesday, May 25, 2010, Peterborough

New provincial recommendations regarding enhanced 18-month well-baby visits will see parents and family health care providers working more closely together to identify children at risk of developmental delays.

"This is a welcome development for all young children because evidence shows that using a consistent screening process of potential learning, behavioural and health issues significantly improves the identification of children at risk," said Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Medical Officer of Health for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit. "Our Health Unit looks forward to working closely with local family health care providers to support them in this new medical requirement."

Following the advice of an expert panel to expand the 18-month visit, the Minister of Child and Youth Services [recently announced](#) that the province now funds a longer and more in-depth 18-month well-baby visit.

Enhanced 18-month well-baby visits are designed to help parents and health care providers become more aware and knowledgeable about the importance of healthy child development and early identification of delays. This initiative builds on the current 18-month check up and allows more time for physicians to use screening tools and to have a more detailed discussion with parents on child development and parenting. The enhanced visit will enable family physicians to identify those children who will require referral to specialized services and to inform parents about the local community programs that promote healthy child development and early learning.

Recent studies show that 25-30% of children are arriving at school without the skills necessary to learn and succeed. If they are identified with a delay or at risk of a delay at 18 months, support and or treatment can begin then. Early intervention is critical to enable children to be ready for school and achieve their maximum potential in life.

continued...

NEWS RELEASE

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
10 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391
www.pcchu.ca



The Health Unit supplies screening tools and other resources to local physicians and nurse practitioners. The Ministry of Child and Youth Services recognized that our health care providers needed more time to be able to include the suggested screening tools and provide a more in depth assessment of children.

The Rourke Baby Record is used by physicians and nurse practitioners in conjunction with the Nipissing District Developmental Screen™ that parents complete on their own. Using these tools together will significantly improve identification of all children at risk of delays.

“The Nipissing District Developmental Screen™ has been used in our community for more than ten years,” said Leisa Baker, a public health nurse at the Health Unit. “This screening tool is completed by parents, who know their children’s abilities, and then discussed with their health care provider during the 18 month visit.”

Parents are the key in knowing their children’s developmental milestones and to discuss their concerns. Children are less likely to display all of their developmental abilities in an unfamiliar clinic setting.

The Nipissing District Developmental Screen™ is also available at many local health and social service organizations in Peterborough city and county or can be accessed on line at www.ndds.ca. This tool is available in 12 more developmental ages between one month and six years of age. In addition to the developmental checklist for each age, there is also an “Activities for your Child” section that provides suggestions for parents to help them be aware of and prepare for the next developmental stage.

If a parent identifies a concern or has any other questions about their child’s development at any time they can call PCCHU’s Family HEALTHline and speak to a Public Health Nurse.

Important 18-month milestones

These milestones mark the progress of young children as they grow and learn:

- Identify pictures in a book. (e.g. "Show me the baby")
- Use a variety of familiar gestures (e.g. such as waving, pushing, giving, reaching up).
- Makes at least four different consonant sounds (e.g. b,n,d,h,g,w).
- Say twenty or more words. (Words do not have to be clear.)
- Pick up and eat finger food.
- Walk up a few stairs or steps holding your hand.
- Show affection towards people, pets or toys.
- Look at you when you are talking or playing together.
- Follow directions using "on" and "under" (e.g. "Put the cup on the table")
- Point to at least three different body parts when asked (e.g. "Where is your nose?")

continued...

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
10 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391
www.pcchu.ca



- Hold a cup to drink.
- Help with dressing by putting out arms and legs.
- Walk alone.
- Squat to pick up a toy and stand back up without falling.
- Push and pull toys or other objects while walking forward.
- Stack three or more blocks.
- Point to show you something.

-30-

For further information, please contact:

Leisa Baker
Public Health Nurse
(705) 743-1000, ext. 312