

Developmental delay in children

Subject

Instructions for screening children with a possible developmental delay in the context of the Canadian immigration medical examination (IME).

Goal/Objective

These instructions are provided to ensure that panel physicians (PPs) follow a consistent and appropriate process for the following:

- identification of clients with possible developmental delay;
- further investigation of clients with developmental delay in order to provide all the information that will allow the medical officer to assess potential social/medical service requirements for the client; and
- completion and grading of an IME for a child with developmental delay.

Instructions

Screening and Testing

Developmental delay refers to a significant delay in the process of development and does not refer to a condition where a child is slightly or momentarily lagging in development.

The presence of developmental delay is an indication that without special intervention, it is likely that the child's ability to attain normal developmental milestones and educational performance at school would be jeopardized

PPs should be vigilant in their assessment of all paediatric age groups for the presence of possible delay in development, including cognitive, social, speech and language development and, neurological and behavioural function in children (e.g., cerebral palsy, autism, trisomy 21, etc).

To obtain a clear and reliable assessment, an interpreter may sometimes be necessary. If an interpreter is used, the PP must select and ensure that the interpreter is unbiased and has no connection to the client. Family members or friends cannot act as interpreters for clients. The use of a professional interpreter is at the client's expense.

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The following information will assist PPs in their assessment of clients for developmental delay:

- duration and progression of symptoms;
- whether the developmental delay will improve with time, get worse or stay the same;
- current and future living arrangements (e.g., with family or in institutional care facility; who is paying?);
- need for other specialized treatment or services; and
- special education requirements - recommended pupil: teacher ratio, need for teacher's aide or personal assistant.

Additional investigation required

In clients with suspected learning disabilities and developmental delay, PPs should complete or obtain the following:

- referral to a paediatric specialist for further assessment;
- school reports; and
- outline of any special services required/received (e.g., number of hours per day requiring a teacher's aide, physical therapist or speech therapist).

Reporting

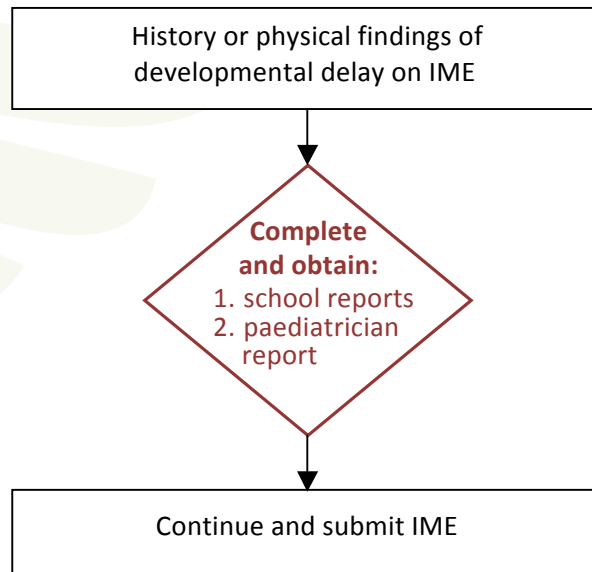
- All additional testing information and/or reports must be attached to the IME report.
- Any specialist report that may be available from previous consultations should also be attached.

Grading

All IMEs for clients with developmental delay must be graded B.

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Algorithm



References

Screening tools:

- Nipissing District Developmental Screen (NDDS). <http://www.ndds.ca/language.php>
- Ages and Screening Questionnaire (ASQ). <http://agesandstages.com/>
- Parent's Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) & PEDS : Developmental Milestones. <http://www.pedstest.com/LearnAboutPEDSDM/IntroductiontoPEDSDM.aspx>

Canadian Family Developmental Milestones charts: <http://www.canadianfamily.ca/milestones0-1/>

WHO, Motor development milestones: http://www.who.int/childgrowth/standards/motor_milestones/en/index.html

CDC, Developmental Milestones chart: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/>

American Academy of Pediatrics - Identifying Infants and Young Children With Developmental Disorders <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/118/1/405/T1.expansion.html>

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HB Approval and Authority

Director General, NHQ, Health Branch, CIC

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