

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT CLINIC



This information sheet will provide information about the Growth and Development clinic (G&D). We offer eligible children a Toddler and Pre-School neurodevelopmental check-up.

Eligibility criteria

Children who were born less than 28 weeks gestation or who weighed less than 1000g at birth or who required specialist care whilst in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Mercy Hospital for Women are automatically enrolled in the G&D clinic. We will confirm your child's enrolment during your child's admission in hospital, or shortly after you are discharged home via a letter in the mail or email.

What we do

Our G&D clinic paediatricians and psychologists offer a specialist service to check your child is meeting their developmental milestones. If any developmental delays are seen, we will make appropriate referrals to early intervention services in your area. Our service is provided in addition to any other outpatient appointments you may have.

Early intervention refers to services and programmes that can help your child's development be at its best. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, early childhood education, psychology and dieticians are all examples of early intervention services.

Research studies have shown that early intervention services and programmes have a positive effect on brain development and physical movement skills for children that last well into their preschool years. Early intervention support has also shown to reduce stress in parents and caregivers of children needing developmental help.

You will not be charged any out of pocket fees for this service. With a referral letter from your family doctor, we bulk bill 100% of the costs to Medicare, saving you up to \$1000 for each check-up! We will remind you to obtain a referral letter from your family doctor, when we call you to make your child's appointment.

Assessments

- **Toddler check-up** at 2-3 years corrected age (corrected age is your child's age based on their expected due date, not their date of birth)
- **Pre-Schooler check-up** at 4½ to 6 years of age

You will see a paediatrician who will ask you a number of questions about your child's health and well-being. They will also do a physical examination.

You will also see our psychologist who will use a number of fun games to assess your child's thinking, understanding, talking, movement and coordination.

Please allow 3 hours for your child's check-up. Breaks can be provided as needed. Please bring snacks and drinks for your child. Please bring your child's 'My Health, Learning and Development' book (green book) and copies of any medical or allied health reports.

Emotional Support

It is common for families to feel worried or anxious about returning to the hospital for their child's G&D assessment. If you are feeling stressed or anxious about this appointment, please contact our G&D research nurses on 8458 4127 to talk through which support option may suit you best.

Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA) have a national helpline that can help you find a supportive doctor to talk to. They also offer supportive counselling and can discuss with you other support options like playgroups or support groups. You can call for yourself or someone you are concerned about.

PANDA contact details:

- National Helpline: 1300 726 306
- Email: info@panda.org.au
- Web: panda.org.au

Telephone counselling and information

- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Parentline: 13 22 89
- Relationships Australia (Victoria): 1300 364 277
- Mensline Australia: 1300 789 978
- BeyondBlue information line: 1300 22 4636
- Life's Little Treasures support line: 1300 697 736 - support for parents with children born preterm



For more information

If you have any questions or need further advice, please call us:

- Monday to Thursday
- 9am to 3pm

Department: Growth and Development Clinic

Ph: (03) 8458 4750

Email: GDTeam@mercy.com.au