

# Act Early, Read Daily: A Systems-Level Intervention to Integrate Developmental Monitoring & Language Enrichment Supports in Delaware WIC Clinics

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## BACKGROUND

- Approximately 1 in every 4 children is at-risk for developmental delays (CDC, 2011)
- Yet in Delaware (DE), only 30.8% of children ages 0-5 years receive developmental screening (DECC, 2013)
- Developmental risk is heightened among the 40% of DE children from low-income households (Zuckerman, et al., 2017)
- Children who live in poverty are less likely to live in communities that foster language development, pre-literacy skills, social-emotional wellness, school readiness, and grade-level academic achievement (Greenwood, et al., 2017; Zill & Resnick, 2006)
- Children who are identified early and receive early intervention see more positive outcomes than children detected at school-age (Glascoe, 2000)

## COMMUNITY MODEL

- Several states have integrated education on child development into Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs with demonstrated success
- The Delaware WIC Program is a conduit to 17,000 children and families living in poverty per month, and targeted educational programming in which WIC staff are trained as change agents has shown great success
- Missouri's WIC Developmental Milestones Program integrated developmental checklists and educational graphics to increase parent awareness of milestones and referrals to primary care doctors for developmental concerns in a manner that was reportedly feasible and sustainable (Farmer, 2017)

## PURPOSE

*The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of an educational intervention featuring both developmental monitoring and language enrichment supports in the Delaware WIC Program statewide.*

## GOALS

### Study Focus

1. Develop a feasible and sustainable model for successful integration of Learn the Signs. Act Early. (LTSAE) into 7 full-time Delaware WIC clinics by September 2019.

### Phase I

2. Increase referrals for developmental screening.
3. Increase parent involvement in monitoring children's development.

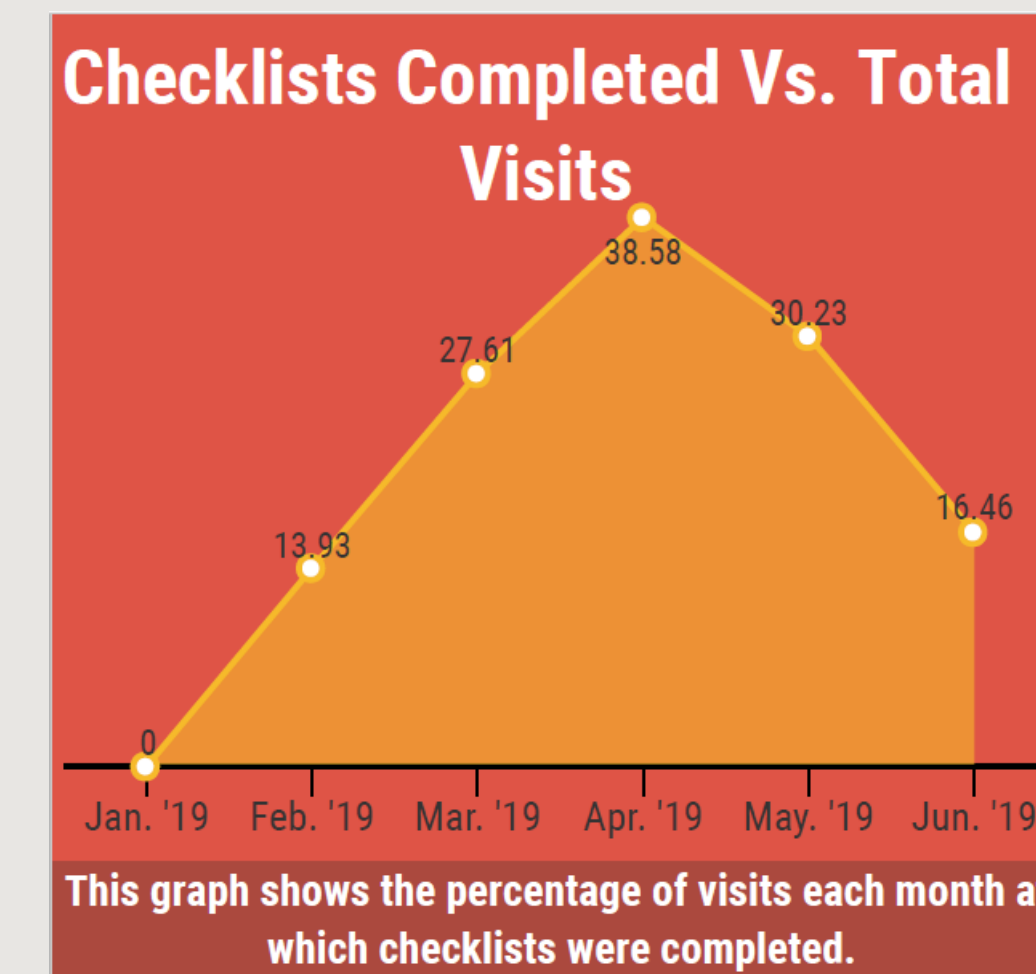
### Phase II

4. Increase parent use of language enrichment materials.

## METHODS

Collaboration	Training & Support	Data Collection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify partners: DPH, WIC, 2-1-1, Help Me Grow, Sussex County Health Coalition, ECCS CoIIN team, DE Libraries</li> <li>• Customize materials and MOU for WIC</li> <li>• Develop workflow with WIC supervisors &amp; staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide training on LTSAE, developmental milestones, language (3 trainings total)</li> <li>• Site visits to each full-time clinic for observations &amp; feedback</li> <li>• Program check-in's and reminders via email</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WIC electronic record integration – checklists &amp; referrals</li> <li>• WIC staff surveys</li> <li>• Family surveys &amp; interviews (Fall 2019)</li> </ul>

## RESULTS

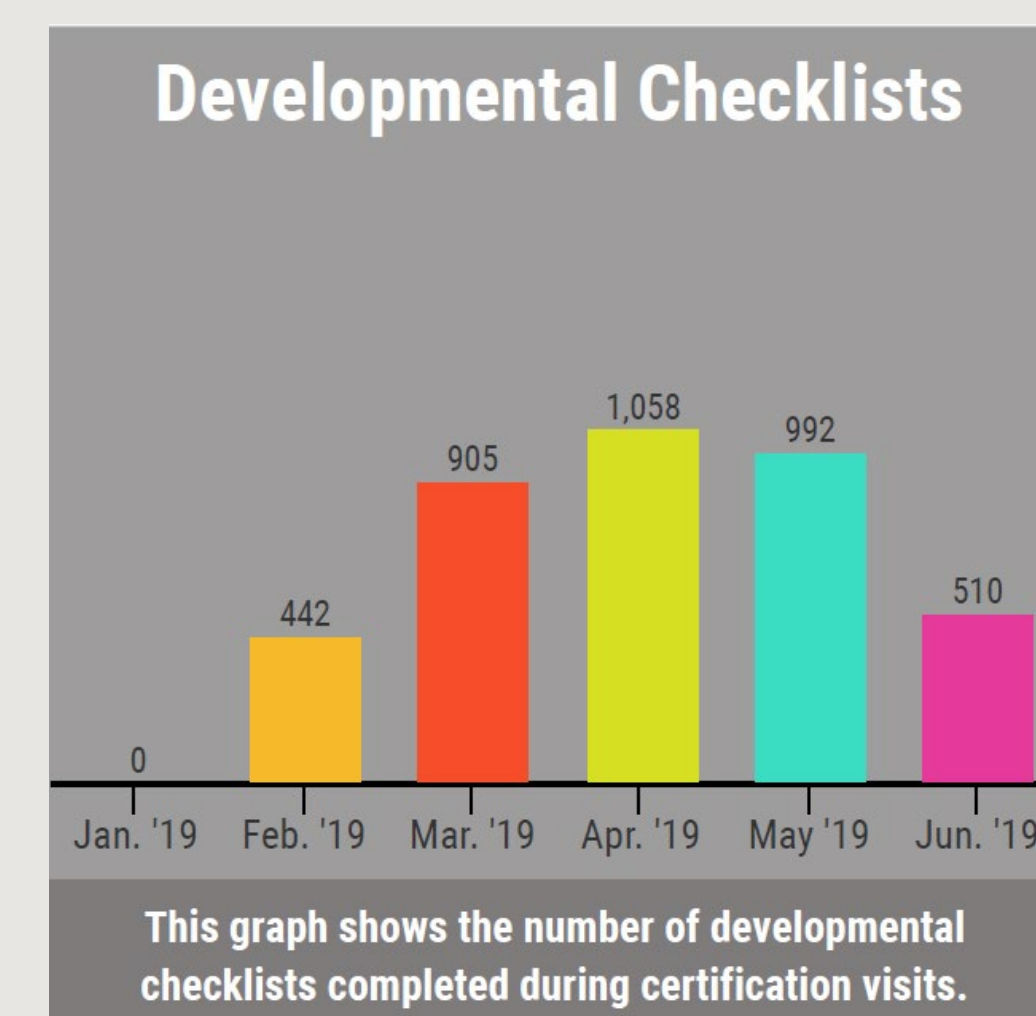


### Developmental Checklists

- Integrated LTSAE developmental checklists into all 11 DE WIC clinics, peak of 38% of visits in Month 3
- Almost **4,000 checklists** completed from Feb – June

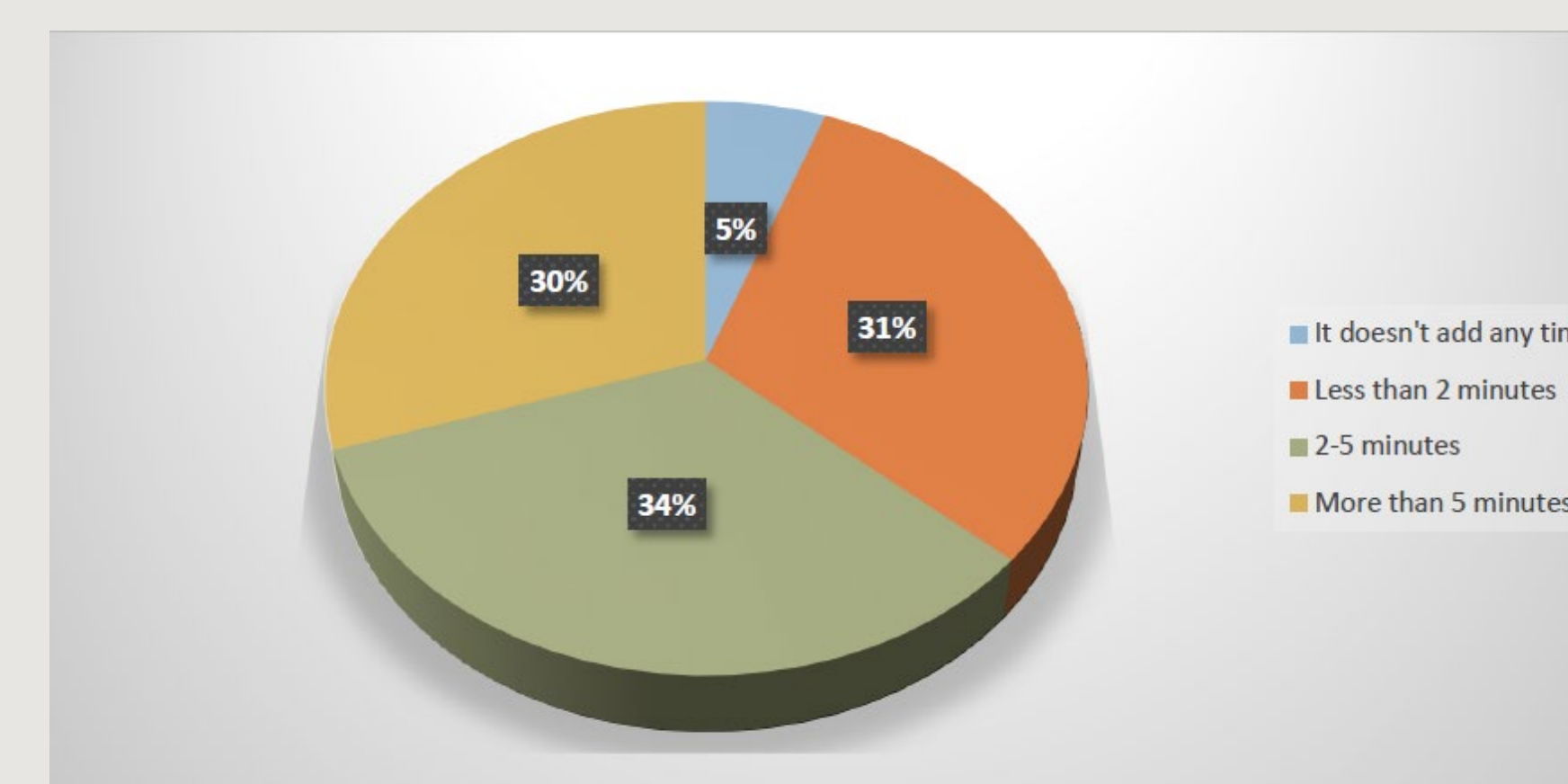
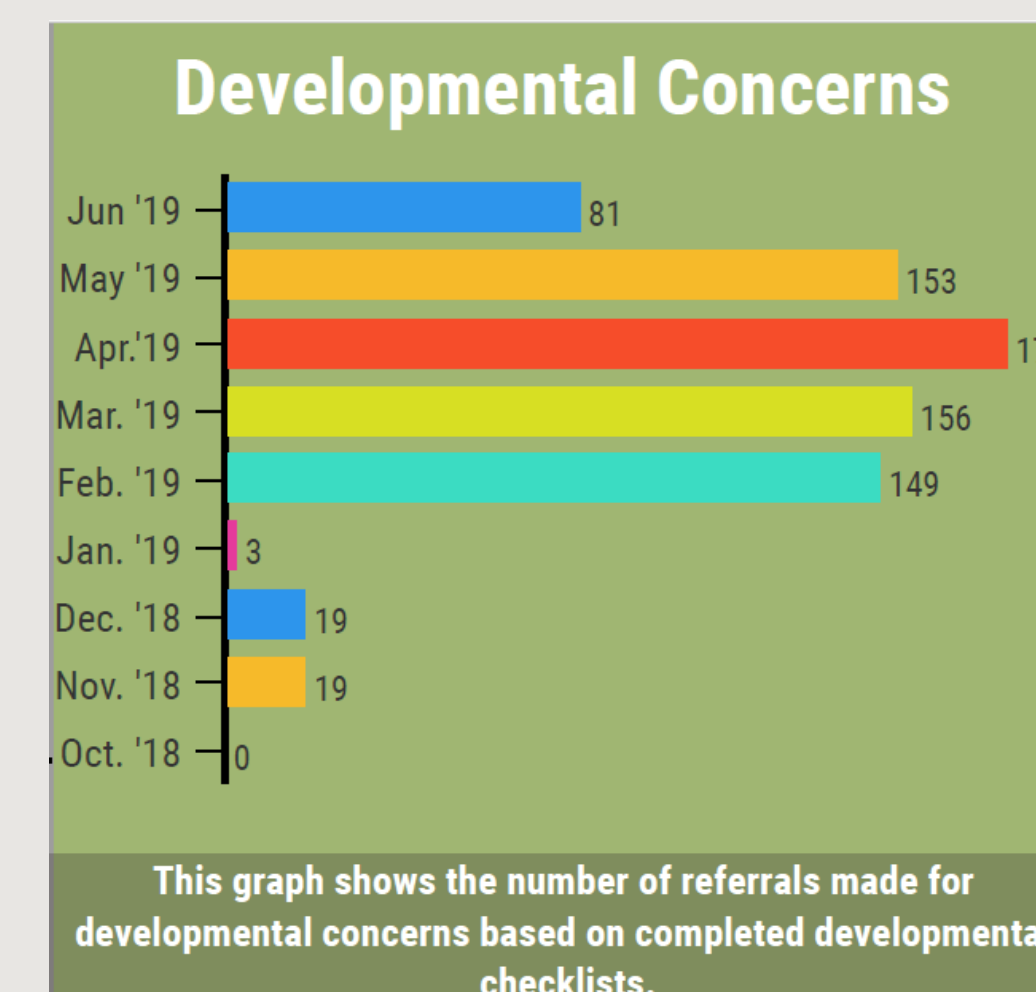
### Developmental Concerns

- Over **750 documented developmental concerns**
- Referral cards for 2-1-1/Help Me Grow screenings given to families of children with concerns



### Staff Feedback

- 70% reported the checklist program takes less than 5 minutes
- 89.3% agree or strongly agree that Developmental Milestones Checklists are easy to use
- 85.7% agree or strongly agree that the Checklists easily fit into workflow
- 92.5% agree or strongly agree that the Checklist Program promotes children's healthy development



## DISCUSSION

- WIC Staff have engaged in the program, understand the importance of educating parents on developmental surveillance, and value the added resources for discussion with and support for families
- There were several challenges with implementation that project staff addressed as the program rolled out; these included:
  - Language barriers
  - Literacy barriers
  - Change in workflow
- Additional, unexpected circumstances arose, including an increased workload for WIC staff to educate parents about a new "WIC Smart" initiative  
*\*This can be seen in the May-June decrease in checklist administration*

## CURRENT PROGRAM

- The program timeline has been extended for revisions to the program
- Efforts toward a more sustainable model, which include a decrease in the frequency of checklists and promotion of the Milestones Tracker app to decrease staff workload
- In September through November, WIC is dedicating education efforts to disseminating resources around early reading and language development
  - **10,000 free books** for families
  - **10,000 free library cards** for families
  - Variety of community resources and educational materials disseminated

## NEXT STEPS

- Evaluation of revised program components
- Family interviews to assess impact
- Continued partnership with WIC staff & leadership to maintain education about development for children birth to 5 across the statewide WIC Program

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