

Presumptive Eligibility Protocol

This protocol was developed to identify the youngest children possible to receive Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services through BabyNet. To identify the youngest children possible to receive ABA services through BabyNet, BabyNet now allows for a presumptive eligibility under autism. The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) and the Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers and Young Children (STAT) will be used to determine presumptive eligibility.

Screening Tools

The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)

The M-CHAT is a validated screening tool that will be used as an initial screening for toddlers between 18 and 33 months of age to assess risk for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The primary goal of the M-CHAT is to maximize sensitivity, meaning to detect as many cases of ASD as possible. Therefore, there is a high false positive rate, meaning that not all children who score at risk for ASD will be diagnosed with an ASD. To address this, a structured follow-up interview was developed for use in conjunction with the M-CHAT, the M-CHAT Follow-up Interview. The interview is designed to reduce the false positive rate (false positive cases are children who fail the M-CHAT but do not have an ASD).

The Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers and Young Children (STAT)

The STAT will be used as a second-level screening for children identified by the M-CHAT and confirmed by the M-CHAT Follow-up Interview as at risk for an Autism Spectrum Disorder. The terms “not at risk” and “at risk” are used to identify STAT screening results. A STAT result of “at risk” indicates the need for further autism-specific assessment and will be viewed as a presumptive eligibility for ABA services through BabyNet.

Use of the M-CHAT and STAT

1. If a child is between 18 and 33 months of age and a parent or one or more team members have a concern about an ASD, the Early Interventionist (EI), Primary Care Provider, or Child Care Staff who has the appropriate training should administer and score the M-CHAT as an initial screening for an ASD. It is recommended that this screening occur at 18 and 24 months.
2. If the M-CHAT is passed, the child’s development should continue to be monitored. The M-CHAT may be administered again in three (3) months if there continue to be concerns about an ASD or if new concerns arise. If the child will be older than 33 months of age at the end of this 3-month period, refer the child for an ASD evaluation rather than administer another M-CHAT.
3. If the M-CHAT is failed or the screening is passed and the parents still have concerns, the EI should make a referral to an approved STAT clinician who will complete the M-CHAT Follow-Up Interview. The list of approved STAT clinicians may be found at:

[Providers Approved to Administer the STAT Updated August ...](#)

- To make the referral, the EI should share the list of STAT clinicians with the parents so a selection can be made. Parents should make at least three prioritized selections. Once the selection has been made, the EI should contact the first clinician selected by the parents

and determine if the clinician can serve the child. If the clinician is unavailable, the EI should contact the next clinician from the prioritized list. If the clinician can serve the child, the EI must submit to the clinician, a referral packet. The packet must contain:

1. A copy of the completed M-CHAT
2. The Referral for the M-CHAT Follow-Up Interview and STAT

Notes:

- **The Autism Division has identified one specific person who should be contacted if the Autism Division is selected to complete the M-CHAT Follow-Up Interview. To schedule an M-CHAT Follow-Up Interview with an Autism Division clinician in any region of the State, the EI must contact Victoria Taylor by e-mail at vtaylor@ddsn.sc.gov or FAX at 803-935-5410 or 803-935-7135. No appointments can be made by telephone.**
 - **If the parents select a clinician that does not work for the Autism Division, a physician referral is required. In addition, the completion of the STAT is part of the hospital's intake process rather than a separate independent evaluation.**
 - **The Autism Division clinicians do not charge a fee for administering the M-CHAT Follow-Up Interview or STAT. However, all other clinicians approved to administer the STAT will charge a fee. These clinicians may bill Medicaid if the child is a recipient, insurance if the child is covered, or the family if the child is not a Medicaid recipient or covered under an insurance policy.**
4. The Autism Division STAT clinician will contact the parents and complete the M-CHAT Follow-Up Interview by telephone. Other STAT clinicians (i.e. non Autism Division clinicians) may require that the child be seen; the EI should ask this question when they make the initial contact. If the M-CHAT Follow-Up Interview confirms the failed M-CHAT, the clinician will schedule a STAT with the child as soon as possible. The STAT will be administered in the clinician's office.

Note: In most cases, the STAT can be completed in 20 to 30 minutes.

5. When the STAT is completed, the clinician will forward to the EI and parents a copy of the completed M-CHAT Follow-Up Interview and a written report of findings detailing the results of the STAT screening.
- If the STAT indicates the child is not at risk, the EI will inform the parents of services other than ABA that are available.
 - If the STAT indicates the child is at risk, the child may be eligible to receive ABA through BabyNet. The EI will assist the parents in obtaining these services by following the procedures outlined in the BabyNet Manual.

6. If the child begins ABA through BabyNet and an Autism Division clinician completed the STAT, the EI must complete the third section of the Referral for M-CHAT Follow-Up Interview and STAT.

Notes:

- **If a child is to be considered for a PDD transition slot, the child's EI must have received written notice from BabyNet approving ABA services before the child is 34 ½ months of age. It is not feasible to establish a functioning ABA team/program after this period. A functioning team is defined as:**
 1. **The child's Initial EIBI Adaptive Assessment has been completed, their Individualized Treatment Plan has been developed per the Assessment, and a Consultant, Lead Therapist, and Line Therapist are implementing the Treatment Plan.**
 2. **The child has been receiving ABA Line Therapy services from their current ABA provider for a minimum of 30 days prior to the child's third birthday.**
- **If an insurance company pays for a child's ABA services, BabyNet must still approve ABA services.**
- **If a child fails the M-CHAT and the STAT, the child maybe eligible to receive ABA services through BabyNet with a presumptive ASD eligibility until age three. To receive the ABA services through BabyNet, the child does not need to be eligible for DDSN nor do they need to have a confirmed ASD. However, before the child is considered for a Reserve Capacity Transition Slot, the ASD diagnosis must be confirmed.**