

COMPILED BY: GEORGIA HEALTH POLICY CENTER /
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & WELLBEING
AND IECMH TASK FORCE

Overview of Mental Health Screening Tools for Infants & Toddlers



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Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) is the developing capacity of the child from birth to five years old to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions; explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture.

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) is the developing capacity of the child from birth to five years old to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions; explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture.¹ Because very young children often communicate through behavior rather than through words to express themselves, early signs of social-emotional or mental health concerns may appear as early as infancy.

Behavioral health practitioners trained in early childhood development work closely with families to support early identification of concerns. As best practice, medical or physical health are ruled out first. Clinicians then consider developmental milestones, observations and screening results to determine whether behaviors are persistent, pervasive, and outside typical developmental expectations. When concerns are identified early, children and caregivers can benefit from interventions designed specifically for the birth to five population. Early diagnosis also provides an opportunity to strengthen caregiver-child relationships and support healthy attachment, which is the foundation of lifelong mental health.

Children's mental health is also influenced by social drivers of health (SDOH) and caregiver wellbeing. Screening for SDOH supports a comprehensive approach to child and family health. In addition, a two-generation (2Gen) approach is strongly recommended, recognizing that caregiver stress, trauma history, and mental health are essential factors in supporting young children's social-emotional development.²

The IECMH Task Force Prevention Workgroup's goal is to identify existing IECMH secondary prevention initiatives and gaps in access/services for all children birth to age five in Georgia. This document identifies recommended screening tools from multiple sources and updates the existing list that was created by the Georgia Health Policy/Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health & Wellbeing and the IDT IECMH Workgroup in 2021.

¹ ZERO TO THREE. Definition of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH). For more information on IECMH and ZERO TO THREE, visit <https://www.zerotothree.org/issue-areas/infant-and-early-childhood-mental-health/>

² SDOH Reference: National Institutes of Health (NIH) – <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7864106/>

Developmentally Appropriate Screening Tools

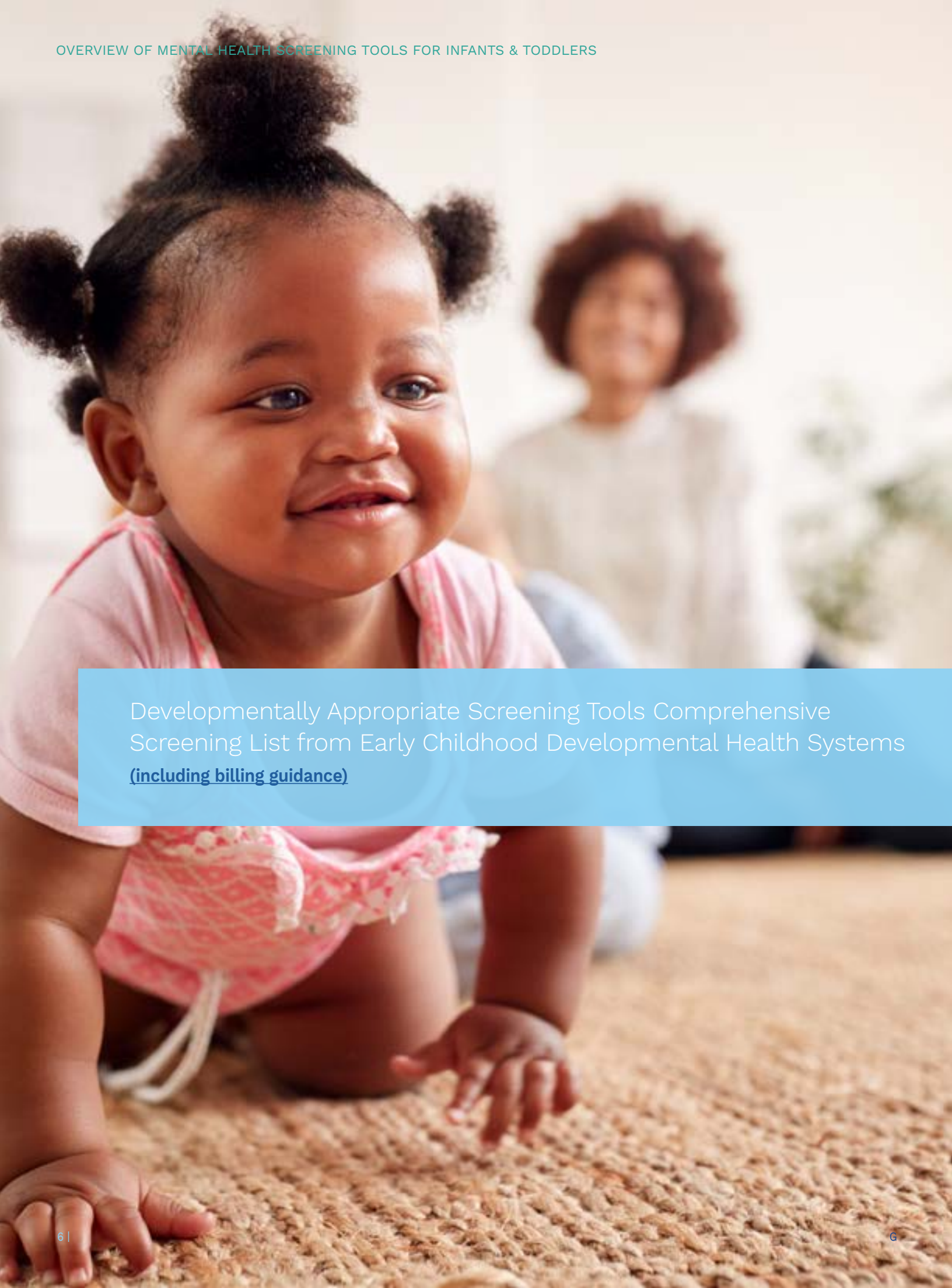
Each of the tools highlighted below are found in policy guidance used by Georgia early care providers, including the Birth to 5: Compendium of Screening Measures for Young Children used by Early Head Start and Head Start programs, and the Department of Community Health EPSDT Health Check Manual used by Georgia Medicaid providers conducting well-child visits. Standardized developmental screening is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Bright Futures periodicity schedule at well-child visits. These screenings are an important part of the well-child visit to help in early identification of developmental concerns or delays. The AAP released a January 2020 policy statement on developmental screening, which supports the inclusion of social emotional screening for young children. The AAP released also release a list of recommended screening tools <https://publications.aap.org/toolkits/resources/15625/Bright-Futures-Toolkit-Links-to-Commonly-Used>. The information below includes this information.

Tool Name	Who's Using it in Georgia?	Developmental Domains/Topics	Age Range	Respondent	Approx. Time to Complete
<u>Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pediatricians Early Head Start & Head Start (EHS/HS) DPH Child Health Programs Plans of Safe Care Mercy Care (CHOA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Gross Motor Fine Motor Problem Solving Personal-Social 	1 month - 5.5 years	Caregiver	10 - 15 mins
<u>Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)</u>	Unknown; possibly some HS/EHS programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language Motor Self-help Academic Social-emotional skills Behavior and mental health concerns 	0 - 8 years	Caregiver	2 - 5 mins
<u>Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status: Developmental Milestones</u>	Unknown; possibly some HS/EHS programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language Motor Self-help Academic Social-emotional skills Mental health concerns 	0 - 8 years	Caregiver	4 - 6 mins
<u>Survey of Well-Being in Young Children (SWYC)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pediatricians; possibly some HS/EHS programs Mercy Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developmental milestones Behavioral/emotional development Family risk factors 	0 - 5 years	Caregiver	15 mins

Social-Emotional/Behavioral Development Screening Tools

In addition to comprehensive developmental screenings, tools specific to social-emotional development and age-appropriate behaviors can help identify concerns related to infant and early childhood mental health. The following tools were selected to highlight here because of their ease-of-use in a wide range of settings beyond the behavioral health practitioner's office. These tools may double as a comprehensive social-emotional assessment or may screen for problem areas that can then be further assessed with a companion tool. These tools can be used in conjunction with broader developmental screens or used as standalone screeners. The ASQ-SE, PSC, and SDQ were also included in the AAP Policy Statement mentioned above.

Tool Name	Who's Using it in Georgia?	Developmental Domains/Topics	Age Range	Respondent	Approx. Time to Complete	Relationship w/other Assessment Tools
<u>Ages & Stages Questionnaire – Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPH Child Health Programs Some pediatricians Head Start/Early Head Start (unknown how many) Hughes Spalding Mercy Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Function Social-Emotional Development 	1-6 years	Caregiver	10 - 15 mins	Supplements ASQ-3 Developmental Screener
<u>Emotional Assessment (BITSEA)</u>	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships and Attachment Competence and Other Measures of General and Psychosocial Functioning 	1 - 3 years	Caregiver & Child Care Provider Versions	6 mins	Positive screens can be followed up with full assessment (ITSEA)
<u>Devereux Early Childhood Assessments (DECA)</u>	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiative Attachment and Relationship Protective Factors Self-Regulation 	1 month - 6 years	Caregiver & Teacher	3 - 10 mins	Can be used as screener or full assessment based on use
<u>Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI)</u>	Emory SPRITE Clinic (Parent Child Interaction Therapy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noncompliance Defiance Aggressiveness Impulsiveness 	2 - 16 years	Caregiver & Teacher	5 mins	No references to other tools found
<u>Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some pediatricians Hughes Spalding Mercy Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention Externalizing Internalizing 	4 - 16 years	Caregiver	5 mins	No references to other tools found
<u>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)</u>	Behavioral Health Providers – used with older children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional symptoms Conduct problems Hyperactivity and inattention Peer relationship problems Prosocial behavior 	3 - 17 years	Caregiver & Teacher	4 - 8 mins	No references to other tools found
<u>Parenting Stress Index (PSI) – Short Form</u>	Emory SPRITE Clinic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent experience Risk of dysfunctional parenting Child behavior problems 	Birth - 12 years	Caregiver	10 mins	No references to other tools found



Developmentally Appropriate Screening Tools Comprehensive Screening List from Early Childhood Developmental Health Systems (including billing guidance)

Additional screenings not listed that should be considered:

1. Developmental Screening

- o Brigance Early Childhood Screener- ages birth - 7 years
- o Bayley 4 Screening Test- ages birth - 42 months

2. Autism Screening

- o Pervasive Developmental Disorders Screening Test-II PDDST- ages 18 - 48 months
- o Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)

3. Caregiver Depression Screening

- o Caregiver Strain Questionnaire
- o Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)

4. Social Emotional Screening

- o Brief Early Childhood Screening Assessment- ages 1.5 - 5 years
- o Child Behavior Checklist- ages 1.5 - 5 years
- o Young Mania Rating Scale- ages 5 - 17 years
- o Young Child PTSD Checklist- ages 1 - 6 years
- o BASC-3 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS)- ages 3 - 18 years

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