

Orientation for Families

Welcome to the Developmental Medicine Center (DMC) at Children's Hospital Boston. The DMC provides a consultation service for pediatricians, parents and schools to help determine why a child may be having problems with behavior, socialization, or skills development. The DMC also serves as a clinical research center where we seek to understand the causes of developmental issues and study new methods of diagnosis, follow-up and treatment.

The typical DMC evaluation team consists of a developmental-behavioral pediatrician or nurse practitioner and pediatric psychologist. An evaluation actually involves two visits. The first is the evaluation and the second is the feedback session. Please arrive at 8:00 a.m. for both visits. The evaluation is finished by noon (sooner for younger children). For adolescents, we have an afternoon program from 1-4:30 p.m. Please arrive at 12:30 p.m. for the afternoon program. It is essential that one and preferably both parents are present throughout the evaluation. If there are any brothers or sisters in the family, we strongly urge that they be left at home. We have found that other children who come along can cause distractions and some-times interfere with the evaluation.

The second visit is a shorter visit and focuses on explaining the results and recommendations from the initial evaluation. (Parents are also welcome to invite the classroom teacher to come to the feedback session. Their attendance can help facilitate implementation of our recommendations at school.) In situations where distance between the hospital and the home is prohibitive, prior arrangement may be made to hold the feedback session on the same day as the evaluation. We discourage doing this as it involves a longer stay in the hospital and provides less of an opportunity for the physician to discuss the team's findings directly with you and your child.

During the evaluation, the pediatrician will review your child's history and perform a physical examination. Blood tests, x-rays, etc. are not routinely done unless some previously undiagnosed medical problem is identified or if they will be helpful diagnostically. Your child will often receive vision screening. The pediatrician will also conduct a neurodevelopmental examination which focuses on areas of functioning we believe contribute to school success. A pediatric psychologist also evaluates each child. The psychological evaluation may include administration of standardized tests and measures to assess your child's cognitive, adaptive and academic skills as well as general functioning. At the end of the session, after you leave, the team will meet to discuss previous testing and current findings, and to determine the most appropriate diagnosis(es) and treatment plan.

Most insurance companies require prior authorization for neuropsychological or psychological testing and/or mental health visits. Prior authorization is not a guarantee of payment coverage. The cost for services not covered by insurance carriers will be directly billed to parents.

Because the DMC is a clinical research center, we may occasionally invite you and your child to participate in a study. This is completely voluntary, and your decision will in no way affect the care you receive. However, we hope you will work with us in order to find new ways to improve the lives of children and their families with developmental issues.

We hope that the time you spend with us will be helpful to you. If you have any problems or questions about your child's appointment, please feel free to contact us at (617) 355-4683.

Sincerely,

LEONARD RAPPAPORT, M.D.
Director
Developmental Medicine Center

JANICE WARE, PHD
Associate Director
Developmental Medicine Center

P.S. Because evaluations make for very busy mornings, please give your child breakfast before coming. This usually helps performance during the evaluation. It is very important to arrive at 8:00 a.m. (12:30 p.m. for the adolescent program) in order to keep to the schedule for the morning. It may not be possible to conduct the evaluation if arrival time is very late.