

**Telephone Interviews:  
Parent Satisfaction Regarding the Developmental Check-Up  
Process: Children Referred to C.A.R.E. for Further Assessment**  
(Ages and Stages Questionnaire [ASQ] Second Edition)  
**Time 2 (Summer 2009)**



Prepared for the Grow Along with Me Steering Committee

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## **Telephone Interviews: Parent Satisfaction Regarding the Developmental Check-Up Process: Children Referred to C.A.R.E. for Further Assessment (Summer 2009, Time 2)**

The purpose of this study was to determine satisfaction among parents whose children were referred to Children's CARE Services for further assessment, based upon results of the parent-completed Ages and Stages Questionnaire (Version 2) (ASQ), regarding the follow-up services they received .

Telephone interviews were conducted with 32 parents who resided in Lethbridge (43.8 %, n=14); Raymond (18.8%, n=6); and Coaldale and Cardston (9.38%, n=3 ). Single responses were obtained from residents of Coalhurst, Magrath, Pincher Creek, Picture Butte, Taber, and Blairmore.

More than half of the parents interviewed (68.8%, n=27) reported that their experience with the ASQ and follow-up services was good. Most parents (62.5%; n=20) reported that the check-up provided them with new information about child developmental milestones, their child's capabilities; and ideas of how to interact with their child to promote optimal development. More than half of the parents who reported they did not learn anything new about child development (54.5%; 6/11) were already aware of this information, either through education or experience (i.e. running a day care home, or having several other children who had developmental check ups).

Follow-up services for the majority of children (84.4%, n=27) included; parent and child programs and classes, speech, physio or occupational therapy, suggestions for home-based activities, and exercises and preschool funding support. Just over twelve percent of children referred to CARE (12.5%, n=4) received no follow-up services post-assessment. One parent reported that her child had received no services at the time of the telephone interview.

Wait times for service was perceived as a significant barrier to receiving services by 25% of parents (n=8). While nearly half of the parents (46.9%, n=15) reported that wait times were satisfactory, 34.4% (n=11) disagreed. Average wait time<sup>1</sup> for "satisfied" parents was approximately three months in comparison to more than 9 months for their "dissatisfied" counterparts. Despite any dissatisfaction about waiting times, the majority of parents (75%, n=24) stated that they were satisfied with the service provided, while 12.5% of parents indicated that they were not sure, or that such services could have been better. Only 6.25% of parents stated that they were not satisfied. Five parents expressed a lack of clarity about the process of completing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. Their queries included: How would a parent have known about the ASQ if they did not happen to stumble upon it? Is it common to wait as long as one parent did? How often is the ASQ given? Is it just a one-time thing?

Over 70% of parents (71.9%, n=23) reported that they were aware or "somewhat aware" of the Grow Along With Me project.

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<sup>1</sup> Wait time from referral to intervention



## **Telephone Interviews: Parent Satisfaction Regarding the Developmental Check-Up Process: Children Referred to C.A.R.E. for Further Assessment (Summer 2009, Time 2)**

### **INTRODUCTION and METHODOLOGY**

During the month of August 2009, telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of parents who had completed a developmental check-up with their child using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ; Version 2) between March 2008 and May 2009. As a consequence of the check up, their children were referred to Alberta Health Services, Chinook Children's Community Assessment, Rehabilitation and Evaluation Services (C.A.R.E.) for a more in-depth assessment. Excluded from the sample were parents who had declined to be contacted for interview (See consent form, Appendix A). Consent was reconfirmed by the researcher at the time of the telephone interview. This survey replicated a telephone interview that was conducted with regional residents in Spring 2008, with the intent of monitoring changes in perspectives over time regarding the Grow Along with Me project.

#### **Background**

The Grow Along with Me project, initiated in May 2007 focused on children 18 to 36 months of age. Health, education and community partners collaborated to achieve a common goal, "identifying children with developmental delays as early as possible so that they can receive services that will increase their opportunity to achieve healthy outcomes in life" (Alberta Health and Wellness, 2005, p. 3). The coordinated approach to service delivery promised to stimulate innovation, promote evidence-informed decision-making, and enhance access and services delivery across the continuum of service Parent perspectives of progress toward achieving Grow Along with Me goals were key to ongoing quality improvement activities.

Two attempts were made to contact the 77 families at varying times of day. The majority of calls were made in the morning or early afternoon. The response rates was robust at 45.7% (n=32/70). Seven telephone contact numbers were not current or incorrectly recorded.

All interviews were completed and recorded by a consistent researcher, an undergraduate student contracted by the external reviewer, Dr. David Gregory, University of Lethbridge. The telephone interviews were completed within a two-week timeline during August 2009. Interviews ranged from five to sixteen minutes. In each instance, the child's mother was the survey respondent.

The following questions served as the organizing framework for the interviews and subsequent findings:

- 1. Can you please tell me what happened with you and your child from the point of completing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire through to the follow-up you received as a result?**



Probe #1: What was your experience with the assessment?

Probe #2: What kind of experience did you have with the follow-up you received? What services were offered?

Probe #3: Did you encounter any barriers to receiving services?

Probe #4: Was the timing from referral to intervention reasonable/acceptable/adequate? How long was it? Did you experience any delays in terms of accessing services? If 'yes', please tell me about it?

Probe #5: Were you satisfied with the service provided?

**2. Do you have any questions about the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, assessment, follow-up services, or discharge services?**

**3. Did you learn anything new about early childhood development as a result of your experience?**

Probe #1: Can you tell me about that?

**4. Is there anything else you would like to share?**

Probe #1: Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experience with the developmental check-up? Any other comments you want to make on it at all?

For the second cohort, an additional question was added to gauge regional awareness of the Grow Along with Me project and provide an indication of the effectiveness of communication/marketing strategies.

**5. Are you aware of the Grow Along With Me project?**

Responses were recorded manually by the interviewer and then typed immediately following the interview. Interviews ceased when data saturation was achieved. Personal identifiers were removed prior to analysis. Thematic (qualitative content) analysis was completed for each question.



## RESULTS

In total, 32 interviews were conducted. Of the 32 interviews completed, thirteen (40.63%; 13/32) were the result of either parents returning phone messages, or the interviewer's second attempt at contact.

Children who were referred for further services were mostly boys (59.38%; 19/32). A smaller percentage of the children referred were girls (40.63%; 13/32).

Parents who completed the ASQ in Lethbridge comprised the greatest number interviewed (43.75%; 14/32). The remaining 18 parents (56.25%; 18/32) completed the ASQ in nine other Southern Alberta towns. The breakdown of where parents completed the ASQ is identified in Table 1.

Table 1: Location where ASQ was completed

<b>Location</b>	<b>Percentage of Parents n=32</b>
Lethbridge	43.75%
Raymond	18.75%
Coaldale	9.38%
Cardston	9.38%
Coalhurst, Magrath, Taber, Pincher Creek, Blairmore, Picture Butte	3.13% each (total 18.78%)

Parents were provided with the opportunity to complete an Ages and Stages Questionnaire in conjunction with their Well Baby immunization visit or through various community locations. Annual spring inter-organizational community check-up events were sponsored at multiple regional locations as an alternative point of access. The majority of respondents (43.75%, 14/32;) had completed the ASQ at a community based screening event. Table 2 reflects the telephone responses by agency where the ASQ was conducted.

Table 2: Administering Agency

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Percentage of Parents</b>
Community Based Screening	43.75%
Children's CARE Services	12.50%
CH Home Visitation	3.13%
Daycare/Dayhome	0%
Parents As Teachers	6.25%
Parent Link Center	3.13%
Wellness Services	31.25%

## QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES



**1. Can you please tell me what happened with you and your child from the point of completing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire through to the follow-up you received as a result?**

**Probe #1: What was your experience with the assessment?**

The majority of parents (68.75%, n=22/32) reported having an overall good experience with the developmental check-up. Comments from these parents included:

*It was a very positive experience [that] made me aware of areas she [child] needed to work on.*

*They gave me some ideas of what to do.*

*It was fun to complete with the kids. I have done it with all four of my kids.*

*They were reassuring about us needing some help for her with her speech.*

A few parents (9.38%; 3/32) knew their child was capable of performing a task; however, the child refused to perform the task at the time that the ASQ was conducted making it difficult to accurately complete the questionnaire. Comments included:

*Some of the questions can be inaccurate; it doesn't always show what the child is capable of, because they are put on the spot. Like maybe they can do it, they just don't at the time of the assessment.*

Three parents (38%; 3/32) described the setting in which the ASQ was conducted as distracting:

*It was done in the clinic while we were waiting, there were lots of moms trying to fill out this questionnaire and it was busy. It was kind of a distracting environment.*

Three parents would have liked to receive more information. For example, details about what developmental skill sets to expect and when these should be present in their child. One parent voiced her disappointment in waiting for a long time to receive further help.

**Probe #2: What kind of experience did you have with the follow-up you received? What services were offered?**

Almost thirteen percent of children referred to CARE (12.9%, n=4/31) received no follow-up services post-assessment. One parent reported that her child had received no services at the time of the telephone interview.

Comments made by these parents included:

*I don't know what you mean [ when you refer to follow-up services.. Just the speech assessment was offered, nothing else. I was told it would be three months before speech therapy but it's been nine.*

*No services were offered and I haven't received any follow-up. Just that thing in the mail that says he was moderate in his speech and mild to moderate in motor skills.*

Follow-up services for the majority of children (87.1%, n=27/31) included parent and child programs and classes, speech, physio or occupational therapy, suggestions for home-based activities and exercises, and preschool funding support.

Parents whose children received further services reported being pleased with their experience on the whole, although several parents did add that the waiting time was unfortunate. Comments included:

*Children's Care was offered in the speech and behaviour areas. [We got in touch with] an occupational therapist, and a physical therapist for his walking when he was diagnosed.*

*A speech program and it was excellent. We went to classes once a week and then the speech pathologist came and taped us talking with him.*

*It took quite awhile to get any follow-up, but I guess that's the way it is. Now that it is started it's all going quite well. Three different people have assessed her...they are all keeping on top of it; it's good.*

### **Probe #3: Did you encounter any barriers to receiving services?**

Parents largely reported that they did not encounter any barriers to receiving services (71.19%, 23/31). A few parents who said they encountered no barriers also noted that the waiting time was frustrating to them. Comments made included:

*No none at all. Other than it being a slow process...I know there are waiting lists but it's frustrating; he is at that age where we need to deal with this now.*

*No. It was mostly my own barriers because I didn't have the time for it.*

One quarter of parents (25.80%;8/31) voiced that they did encounter barriers.<sup>2</sup> All of these

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<sup>2</sup> One parent said that she did not know whether or not she had encountered barriers.



parents reported the waiting time as the main obstacle to receiving service. Comments made by these parents included:

*We live in a rural area and the speech pathologist only comes out once a week and doesn't have much room on the caseload. Waiting was somewhat of a barrier; young children need help right away and there was a long time between assessment and a phone call which is somewhat disconcerting.*

*Just the wait time. I understand that high priority cases would come first, but maybe a call would have been nice, after a couple of months, just to let me know I was not lost on that list.*

**Probe #4: Was the timing from referral to intervention reasonable/acceptable/adequate?**

**Probe #5: How long was it?**

**Probe #6: Did you experience any delays in terms of accessing a service? If 'yes', Please tell me about it?**

Just under half of the parents interviewed (46.88%, n=15/32) reported the time waiting between referral and intervention to be satisfactory. On average, these parents reported waiting about three months. Comments made by these parents included:

*We did the Ages and Stages in October, then he was referred to a paediatrician...In November, a speech pathologist starting coming to the daycare. It was good, the timing.*

*Everything was good, no delays really. If there aren't enough people, they let me know. They always tell me how long it will be for them to call me. I have nothing negative to say because they kept me informed.*

Five parents (15.63%; 5/32) noted that the time spent waiting was borderline or just acceptable.

*It was a good couple months, two or three. I have a friend that is a speech pathologist that gave us some ideas of what to work on. If I didn't have that resource, the time length would have been stressful.*



Approximately 35% of parents (34.38%; 11/32) stated that they were disappointed with the wait time. Of these parents, seven (21.88%; 17/32) reported having to wait nine months or longer. Comments made included:

*It took over a year, so that is not adequate, no. I did the Ages and Stages and then found out that (s)he had speech issues and didn't hear back for almost a year; I was pretty disappointed by that.*

*Way too long, he has changed so much since then.*

### **Probe #5: Were you satisfied with the service provided?**

Despite some dissatisfaction with wait times, just under three quarters of parents (71.4%, n=24/31) reported that, overall, they were satisfied with the service provided. Comments included:

*Yes because it was very short. Everything happened quickly.*

*Yes in general. My only complaint is that sometimes the speech pathologist gets double booked and is not able to make appointments.*

*Once I finally got it, ya it was great.*

One parent said she had not had any service beyond the initial assessment, and thus could not comment on whether or not she was satisfied. Four parents (12.9%; 4/31) indicated that they were somewhat satisfied with the services offered. Two parents expressed dissatisfaction with follow-up services. :

*I don't know. If I wasn't it's probably because what was offered didn't work with me. I didn't want to do an at home video, and the course they offered was too long; I didn't want to put in ten weeks time.*

*What they are doing now, yes, before that I would say no. (S)he has to be transferred to someone at the school now that she is starting preschool, but if we[would have] heard earlier, (s)he could have had more sessions before (s)he (started) school and I think that would have been better.*

### **2. Do you have any questions about the Ages and Stages questionnaire, assessment, follow-up services or discharge services?**

The majority of parents (84.38%, 27/32) did not have any questions about the ASQ, assessment, follow-up services, or discharge services. Five parents (15.63%;5/32) did have questions related to the Ages and Stages Questionnaire and the expected process of completing the developmental check-up over time.

*I'm just wondering why there isn't any follow-up? Is there going to be follow-up? Is someone going to call, or?*

*I wonder if I didn't go to that community awareness night how I would ever have found out about these services? It was a fluke.*

*At what point do they end? At what age are you no longer allowed to do the Ages and Stages anymore?*

*Is it common for people to wait as long as I did? What is this process supposed to look like?*

*How often is this questionnaire given? Is it just a one-time thing?*

### **3. Did you learn anything new about early childhood development as a result of your experience?**

#### **Probe #1: Can you tell me about that?**

Most parents (62.5%; 20/32) said they did learn something new about child development from their experience. Typically, these parents learned about developmental milestones, what to expect at certain ages, and ideas of how to interact with their child to promote optimal development. Comments made included:

*Oh ya if we had another child I would do things differently; I have learned lots about speech development.*

*I enjoyed doing the Ages and Stages and discovering what should be normal and what maybe wouldn't be; it is a great tool for me to learn about development and then look at him [child] with that knowledge.*

*I learned a little about that which was specific to her problem.*

A smaller percentage of parents (34.38%, 11/32;)<sup>3</sup> reported they did not learn anything new about childhood development, but in most of these cases (18.75%;6/32) this was because the parent had been previously exposed to this information, for example through early childhood education classes, or “working in the field”

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<sup>3</sup> One parent said she could not remember whether or not she had learnt anything new.



**4. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experience? Any other comments you want to make on it at all?**

Most parents (56.25%;18/32) had no further comments to make about their experience with the developmental check-up. One quarter of parents interviewed (25%, 8/32) reiterated that they had a good experience and that they were happy these services are available. These parents also said that it was best to catch problems early on and that the ASQ helped in this regard; the staff were very kind; and they hoped that ASQ developmental check-ups and related services would continue to be available. Four parents (12.5%, 4/32;) reinforced how unfortunate it was that they had to wait so long between referral and intervention. One parent would have liked to receive more information on activities and exercises that she could do at home with her child Another parent responded that she would not have known about the ASQ had she not happened to notice an ad in the newspaper:

*I just happened to see it in the paper, I didn't know it existed; I wouldn't have known if it wasn't for that. A friend who works for the paper pointed it out to me.*

**5. Are you aware of the Grow Along With Me project?**

As a final question, parents were asked if they were aware of Grow Along With Me. All parents were told of the website, whether or not they had heard of GAWM. Just over 40% (13/32) of the parents interviewed reported that they were familiar with the project. Less than thirty percent (28.13%;9/32) stated that they had not heard of GAWM. Ten parents (31.25%) reported they were somewhat aware of GAWM, or had heard something about it.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Contact with single parents or parents who worked full-time outside the home may have been systematically eliminated as the telephone interviews were conducted entirely during the weekday, daytime hours.

All interviews were conducted with the mother of the child and this limits the study in that it was entirely women's perspectives that were recorded. Had there been any fathers or male care-givers interviewed, the comments and observations might have differed.

While parents were asked to confirm that the time of the call was appropriate for them, the spontaneous telephone interviews may have been limiting as parents may have been unprepared to respond to the questions asked of them. Parents may have been rushed in their responses, thereby not providing the clearest, or most accurate, response.

The dates when parents completed the ASQ ranged from March 2008 to May 2009, and thus some parents had difficulty recalling the questionnaire and the follow-up they received. This affected their responses because some parents were unable to remember the timeline of their experience clearly.



## **CONCLUSION**

The majority of parents interviewed reported having a positive experience with completing the ASQ and with follow-up services received. Despite longer wait times for service (identified as a barrier by  $\frac{1}{4}$  of parents), the vast majority (75%) of respondents were satisfied with services received.