WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING essential CHECKLIST

Step 1: Recognize Early Indicators & Milestone Gaps

Caregivers know their children best and are often the first to notice subtle developmental variations. You do not need a formal doctor's directive to take action - trusting your instincts is the first step. Look for key signs that suggest a quick screening could be helpful:

- ☐ **Communication Differences:** Notice if your child with autism is not talking as early as their peers or experiences delays in expressing needs.
- ☐ **Social Interaction:** Observe whether your child avoids consistent eye contact or struggles to engage with family members and peers.
- ☐ **Motor Skills:** Watch for challenges with motor balance, coordination, or physical movement.
- ☐ **Emotional Regulation:** Track frequent, intense meltdowns or difficulty navigating daily routine transitions.
- ☐ **Optimal Timing:** Screenings can be conducted as early as 12 to 18 months, or at the very first moment you ask yourself if a growth milestone or behaviour is typical.

Step 2: Move Beyond the "Watch and Wait" Approach

Relying on time alone to see if a child with autism will "outgrow" a communication or regulation challenge often leads to lost developmental opportunities:

- ☐ **Capitalize on Neuroplasticity:** Catching subtle developmental variations early allows targeted intervention to begin right away, supporting your child when their brain is most adaptable.
- ☐ **Reduce Daily Frustration:** Proactive screening addresses underlying communication and regulation challenges early, preventing unnecessary daily stress for your child and family.
- ☐ **Prevent School-Age Struggles:** Early support builds essential developmental skills before your child enters formal schooling, preventing larger social and behavioural hurdles later on.

Step 3: Connect with Compassionate, Experienced Clinicians

Understand who administers the screening process and how their expertise supports your family:

- ☐ **Qualified Professionals:** Screenings are conducted by compassionate clinicians, including Registered Psychologists, Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBAs), or Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs).
- ☐ **Neurodevelopmental Expertise:** These specialists understand unique neurodevelopmental profiles, focusing on identifying both your child's natural strengths and areas that may benefit from additional support.
- ☐ **A Safe Environment:** Screenings take place in a supportive, empathetic setting built around our promise that you and your child belong.

Step 4: Participate in a Fast, Collaborative Screening Session

A developmental screening provides a structured, lightweight snapshot of your child's growth without the lengthy wait times of a full diagnostic evaluation:

- ☐ **Brief Session Duration:** Screening appointments are fast and lightweight, typically completed in under 1 hour.
- ☐ **Play-Based Observations:** Clinicians observe how your child grows, learns, and communicates through low-pressure, engaging play activities.
- ☐ **Direct Parent Involvement:** Caregivers participate directly through brief discussions and simple questionnaires to share insights about their child's daily routines.

Step 5: Receive Immediate Guidance & Next Steps

A developmental screening ends with clear, actionable insights so you are never left wondering what to do next:

- ☐ **Immediate Baseline Results:** Review the screening findings with your clinical team right away to get instant clarity on your child's milestone progress.
- ☐ **Actionable Home Strategies:** Receive practical, home-based guidance immediately so you can begin supporting your child the moment you leave the clinic.
- ☐ **Clear Referral Pathways:** Obtain direct recommendations and referral pathways for specialized therapies or a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation if further support is recommended.