

3-year-old Child Health and Development Check

Frequently Asked Questions For Centre Directors and Early Childhood Teachers



Government of South Australia
Women's and Children's
Health Network



Early childhood educators play a vital role in supporting children's health, development and wellbeing. Your strong relationships with children and families place you in a unique position to notice changes, support conversations, and encourage early action.

Why is the 3-year-old Child Health and Development Check important?

The 3-year-old check is an important opportunity for families to pause, reflect on their child's development and receive reassurance, practical advice or early support if needed.

At 3 years old:

- Children are adjusting to preschool and new routines
- Developmental differences may become more noticeable
- Educators are often the first to observe these changes

The 3-year-old Child Health and Development Check:

- Supports early identification
- Enables timely connection to supports
- Helps families understand and support their child

How can you support children and families?

You don't need to be a health expert to make an impact. Simple, everyday conversations can make all the difference.

- Normalising checks as a routine and helpful part of early childhood
- Reassuring families that many people find them helpful and comforting
- Gently encouraging families to seek advice if they have questions or concerns.
- Letting families know CaFHS is there to support them at any time

How can I support families to understand the importance of checks?

Encourage families to book a Child Health and Development Check:

- "It's a routine check offered to all children"
- "It can help you understand your child's development"
- "It's free and supports learning and wellbeing"
- Reassure: it's supportive—not a test
- Highlight: early support leads to better outcomes



How can I support families to understand the importance of checks (continued)

Raising concerns sensitively:

- Start with strengths
- Use neutral language (“I’ve noticed...”)
- Acknowledge all children develop differently
- Frame the Child Health and Development Check as a positive, routine next step
- Refer to Blue Book milestones if helpful

What if we have concerns, but the family doesn’t?

Not all families will act straight away, and that’s okay.

Even a simple, positive conversation can help build awareness and confidence over time. Families are more likely to follow up when they feel informed, supported and reassured.

What if the family have been told to ‘wait and see’?

CaFHS does not recommend a ‘wait and see’ approach as there is strong evidence that early support and intervention can make a meaningful difference to a child’s development and wellbeing.

If a family, educator or health professional has concerns, this warrants support and investigation. If a family is not reassured by the advice they receive, we recommend seeking a second opinion.

For educators, encouraging a family to visit CaFHS will enable the family to explore alternative supports and services in a timely manner.

CaFHS clinicians will undertake developmental screening, address health concerns and support families.

They can also help families navigate a range of community services, including allied health providers, specialised playgroups, parenting programs, and support networks.

Are these appointments easy for families to attend?

All CaFHS services are free for families with children from birth to 5 years in South Australia. Our services are inclusive, family-centred and welcoming of everyone. This also includes:

- Free interpreters and longer appointments
- No Medicare card required
- Culturally safe and welcoming services

How do families make a booking?

To make a booking at their local CaFHS sites, caregivers can call **1300 733 606**

Can CaFHS visit our preschool?

Families are encouraged to attend a CaFHS clinic to support timely access to a Child Health and Development Check. A preschool visit may be helpful where families experience barriers to attending clinic appointments.

If you feel your families would benefit from a CaFHS visit to complete a Child Health and Development Check, please get in touch to discuss options.

CaFHS values its partnership with Early Education and Care Services and the important role you play in early identification and support.

There is no expectation for you to take on additional responsibilities.

This information and these resources are designed to support the conversations you are already having with families — helping you feel confident to guide them if questions about development arise.

Even small, informal conversations can make a meaningful difference for children and families.

For more information, please email strategyandreform@sa.gov.au.

Flying Start for kids

This initiative is supported by the Government of South Australia as part of the Flying Start reforms.

