Developmental “Red Flags”

At all Ages:
- Avoiding eye contact
- Asymmetries in appearance or movements
- Poor weight gain
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feeding problems
- Frequent diarrhea or vomiting
- Is apathetic or listless
- Is under or overactive
- Difficulty to comfort or satisfy
- Behavior interferes in daily life
- Any loss of skills
- Medical complications (prematurity, birth complications, low Apgar scores, intraventricular hemorrhage, apnea, hospitalization, ear infections, diagnosed conditions)

After 6 months
- Coughing, gagging, or vomiting with bottle
- Feels rigid or floppy
- Hands clenched
- Excessive back arching
- Difficulty bending at knees or hips during diaper changing
- After crawling: non-reciprocal arm/leg movements

After 12 months
- Feeding concerns (pocketing of food, sucking rather than chewing, stuffing food in mouth, tongue moves in-and-out rather than side-to-side
- Shows no stranger reactions
- After experience on feet: excessive toe walking or scissoring of legs
- No two-handed play (throwing large ball with both hands, banging two objects, two hands on push toy)
- Sitting positions (w-sitting, sacral sitting: on low backbone with rounded back, stiff legs)

After 18 months
- Shows no separation anxiety
- Avoiding certain textures in play and feeding
- Excessive drooling
- Plays apart from other children
- Ritualistic behavior
- Concerns in walking (excessive falling, dragging a foot, feet turned in)

After 24 months
- Overly friendly with strangers
- Does not check-in with parent when exploring new places
- Purposefully hurts self or others often
- Violent play
- Difficult for parent to understand words most of the time

After 30 months
- Difficulty coping (nail biting, biting shirt, withdrawing)
- Seeks excessive input (jumping, crashing, swinging, rocking, mouthing, biting, etc.)
- Difficult for familiar adults to understand words

After 36 months
- Shows little preschool readiness (unable to follow routine, sit for an activity, engage with peers, show interest in pre-academics such as colors, numbers, or letters)
- Difficult for new people to understand words
- Shows no interest in potty training

The presence of a “red flag” does not, by itself, indicate that a child has a delay. These are items to pay attention to in order to support a child’s healthy development.