

## The Nipissing Developmental Screen™

In 1993, the Nipissing District Infant Development Program, sponsored by the Children's Aid Society for the Districts of Nipissing and Parry Sound, in North Bay, Ontario, became concerned about the number of children experiencing developmental delays who were being identified after age three. This concern was shared among professionals working in early intervention services. As a result, a multi-disciplinary group began meeting with the goal of developing a checklist that would be time efficient for professionals to use to identify children who were experiencing developmental delays. The Committee consisted of speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, teachers, social workers and parent-infant therapists. Since its inception in 1993 the Nipissing Developmental Screen™ Committee (NDDST™) continued to meet regularly to update and incorporate changes to the instrument. The NDDST™ was designed in a manner that would elicit a "YES" or "NO" response, with "NO" indicating a possible developmental delay.

### 1993-1995

- The Committee was formed and a first draft of the screen produced based on norm-referenced material.

### 1996

- Health Canada (Community Action Program for Children) assisted in promoting the use of the Screen across Canada.

### 1998

- French translation produced.

### 1999

- Early childhood consultant hired to recommend a selection of play activities to complement the Screen for each age level.
- Healthy Babies/Healthy Children (HB/HC) was established in Ontario and the NDDST™ was identified as the most comprehensive Canadian screening tool available.
- It was adopted as the screening tool of choice by HB/HC.
- NDDST™ Committee recognized a need and established an additional screen for the 15 month age range.

### 2000

- The Screen was updated to include autism indicators and additional language and social/emotional items as recommended by the Office of Integrated Services for Children.
- The Office of Integrated Services for Children forwarded drafts of the expanded NDDST™ to Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto, Ontario, to be analyzed for cultural sensitivity.
- The recommendations were implemented and a new comprehensive Screen was printed reflecting these revisions.
- The play activities were included to complement each Screen.
- Reviewed by literacy specialists to maintain a Grade 5 literacy level.

## **2001**

- NDDS Committee incorporated as Nipissing District Developmental Screen™
- Spanish translation printed and introduced in San Diego, California.
- North West Territories adopted the NDDS™ as their screening tool of choice.

## **2002**

- HB/HC Validity Testing completed by the Applied Research Consultants from the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. ([click here to view Evaluation page](#)).
- Fourth Version of the NDDS produced to reflect recommendations of the Validity Testing.
- Chinese translation produced

A video was made by Chilliwack Public Health and is based on the Make Children First “ABC’s of Developmental Screening Workshop” held March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003. This video is available for viewing. Please contact Jane Ballance at 604-815-9115 to borrow.

## **Background**

The Nipissing District Developmental Screen™ is a series of screening tests (13 different age levels) designed for use by parents or caregivers with children between the ages of 1 month and six years. The Nipissing™ is intended to identify various aspects of a child’s development that may require early intervention. The questions cover seven areas of development: vision, hearing, speech-language, gross motor, fine motor, cognitive and self-help skills. Evidence-based indicators for autism have been incorporated into the screen. It is sensitive to the varying cultural values in child-rearing and allows for alternate experiences. The Nipissing™ includes suggested activities designed to encourage a child's overall development at specific ages. A “no” answer to one or more questions is a “red flag” indicating a possible concern that should be discussed with a qualified professional.