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## How is your child developing? Boone County childhood group offers screening

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Feb 9, 2022

The Boone County Early Childhood Coalition is offering free online screenings for parents to assess the general development and social-emotional health of their children 2 months to 5 years old who live in the county.

The Survey of Well-Being of Young Children is a first-level screening tool for children 5 and younger, according to the coalition's website. The survey looks at children's developmental milestones, such as social-emotional health, social interactions and family context.

The website states the screenings "help you learn how your child develops, identify potential areas for concerns, and help find the supports your child may need." Screeners take about 10 minutes each.

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Cindy Reese, the screening program coordinator, said in an email from MU Health Care spokesperson Eric Maze that surveys are provided at different age intervals so parents can use the hub to monitor their child's development over time.

Parents may also receive tip sheets to help with common developmental challenges, Melissa Stormont, project co-director with Laine Young-Walker, said through Maze.

"We strive to connect families with available resources and supports for their children and families during the early childhood period," Stormont said. "Many families feel better knowing their child is on track developmentally. For families of children who need more screening and/or resources, our program can connect them and provide important support."

Reese said they also have "what we call a bridge to the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the ASQ Social Emotional. These are surveys that dive a little deeper for a next-level screening, for children who may be in the 'needs review' range using the SWYC survey."

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Paper copies of the survey are available, Reese said, "or we can go through the survey with them by phone. We also hold in-person screening events at the library or sometimes other places."

The survey is voluntary, and once completed, there are no further obligations for the parents.

Questions about the survey, including whether to take it, may be directed to Reese at (573) 884-4891.

The coalition is offered through the MU School of Medicine and supported and funded by the Boone County Children's Services Board.

## Elizabeth Brixey

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