

All About Sparkler and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ)

What is Sparkler?

Sparkler is a mobile app-based service brought to Connecticut families by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. It promotes healthy early childhood development for children starting at birth to age 6.

What does Sparkler DO for families?

Sparkler helps families answer three main questions:

Question 1: How is my child doing?

Sparkler helps families and educators measure how well children are doing in two ways:

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire® delivered through a fun and engaging mobile app.

Science-backed play activities give parents opportunity to share feedback: was activity too easy, too hard, or just right for your child?

Question 2: What can I do to help my child thrive?

Sparkler offers 1,200+ activities for children from birth through 5 in Spanish and English. Each activity contains a simple recipe for play and tips for parents/caregivers including information on how an activity helps a child practice a particular skill. Parents read three simple steps, and then put down their phones to play with their children.

Activities

Activities include art projects, games, outings, role playing, reading, problem solving, and more. The activities help children develop in four core areas:

Heart  Words  Mind  Body 

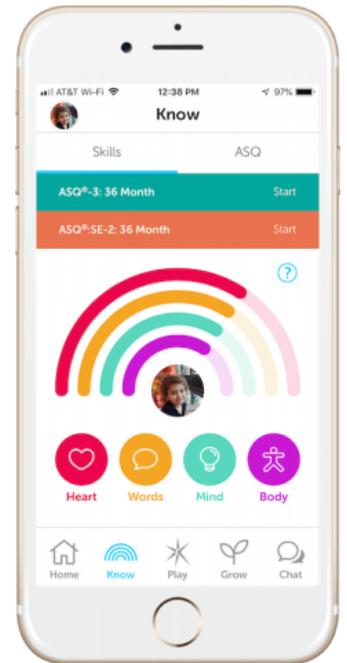
Question 3: Who else can help?

Providers: Sparkler helps families communicate with their early care providers about their child's development.

Families: The app also helps family members share access to their child's account so that everyone is on the same team, working together to help their child grow.

211: In Connecticut, if a child needs extra support in one of the ASQ domains, the app will connect the family to help through the 211 Child Development Infoline.

Sparkler Coaches: Sparkler's expert early childhood coaches can communicate with parents through the app with helpful observations and tips.



What is the ASQ?

Sparkler offers a convenient digital version of the **Ages and Stages Questionnaire®**, a research- and time-tested developmental screening tool that until now could only be completed on paper. ASQ helps parents and the people serving them learn about children's strengths and access support if needed.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the State of CT urge all families to use developmental screening tools. The ASQ asks families questions about how children are growing and developing. The questions focus on:

Communication skills – how a child talks, listens, and understands;

Fine motor skills – how a child coordinates his/her hands and eyes;

Gross motor skills – how a child makes large movements, i.e., moving arms, legs, feet, whole body;

Personal-Social – how a child understands him or herself and others;

Problem Solving – how your child remembers, solves problems, and decides.

Why is the ASQ recommended?

- * Screening helps parents and those who serve young families learn about children's development.
- * Developmental screening is part of well-child visits for many children, and is often used as a first step in understanding children's development.
- * The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends developmental and behavioral screening for all children at 9 months, 18 months, and 24 or 30 months.

Connecticut is encouraging ALL families to use screening tools to check in on young children's development.

Why is Sparkler important?

In the first 3 years of life, children make a million neural connections every second. Research shows that this critical period of brain development is powered by a child's interactions with the people who care for them.

Developmental delays, learning disorders, and social-emotional problems are estimated to affect 1 in every 6 children. Only 20 - 30% of these children are identified as needing help before school begins. Studies have shown that children who receive early treatment for developmental delays are more likely to graduate from high school, hold jobs, and avoid teen pregnancy.

Sparkler brings parents and early care providers together to identify and address any potential developmental concerns early. The app also provides play activities and tools to make developmental promotion more fun and meaningful.

What happens to information people share with Sparkler?

Sparkler is committed to preserving and protecting families data, using it only to provide and support the actual service of families. We are FERPA certified by the IKeepSafe coalition, meaning we voluntarily hold ourselves accountable to the privacy standards of public school districts.

During the Sparkler registration process, the app collects information ONLY to support children's learning and development, including giving parents the right information for their child and enabling Sparkler and its partners to reach out directly to families who need additional support.

Sparkler keeps ALL information private, as per its privacy agreement, and will not share the information with anyone outside of the project.

If anybody has other specific questions, they can email connecticut@playsparkler.org.

You can find more detail on the Sparkler Privacy Policy online (<https://www.playsparkler.org/content/privacy-policy>)

To use Sparkler:

Download the **Sparkler: Play for Parenting** app at Google Play or the App Store

Building Healthy Families' Early Learning Provider Code: **BHF**

http://bhfct.org/images/stories/Documents/About_Sparkler_the_ASQ_and_Privacy.pdf