Guidelines for:

Developmental Testing

Developmental testing is typically used in pre-school aged children with developmental delays and involves standardized testing, not screenings. This type of testing is used to determine what early intervention services are needed and can be used as part of the assessment for autism spectrum disorders. Early intervention services address delays in speech, gross and fine motor skills, adaptive behavior, cognitive development and social skills.

A referral for developmental testing should include:

1. Presenting problems.
2. Diagnostic questions to be answered.
3. Tests that will be used to answer the questions and the amount of time needed for each test. The tests chosen should be appropriate for answering the diagnostic questions. The rationale for testing needs to be clear and specific. Standard batteries are not recommended.
4. How treatment planning will be affected by the results.
5. If previous testing has been completed, have those results been obtained, reviewed, and utilized to determine what additional information is needed to answer the diagnostic questions.

Developmental testing requires objective scoring as well as subjective observations. Codes 96112 and 96113 are used to report total time spent observing the member and making clinical decisions, administering and then scoring standardized tests. Providers may complete a clinical interview called a neurobehavioral status exam prior to testing. This is a separate service and has a different billing code.

Developmental testing is performed by a qualified health care professional (QHP) or clinically-trained technician under the direction and supervision of the QHP.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AUTHORIZATION

1. Tests must be reliable and valid for answering the diagnostic questions under consideration. The tests must be the most recent editions, be age appropriate and meet the developmental and cultural requirements of the patient.
2. A behavioral health assessment needs to be completed by a behavioral health care provider or primary medical provider prior to testing.
3. A clear and specific rationale for testing must be provided. Additionally, it should address the specific impact on treatment planning.
4. A Psychological Testing Prior Authorization Request Form must be completed. The psychologist must complete the section that covers the tests to be given and the amount of time needed for each. The referring clinician can complete the sections that cover clinical information and diagnostic questions to be answered.

MEDICAL NECESSITY

These three guidelines need to be met for testing to be authorized:

1. The tests selected must be appropriate for providing the answers to the diagnostic questions/diagnosis or guide in providing the answer/diagnosis.
2. The referral questions cannot be answered by means of a diagnostic interview or behavioral observations.
3. The test results will have a meaningful impact on treatment.

REASONS FOR NON-AUTHORIZATION

1. Testing primarily for educational or vocational purposes.
2. Testing for legal purposes.
3. Testing primarily for cognitive rehabilitation purposes.
4. Testing that exceeds established standards for administration time.
5. Routine entrance into a treatment program.

Disclaimer: Recommendation of treatment does not guarantee coverage of services.

REFERENCES