INFORMATION SHEET

Capital Health Network
ACT's primary health care organisation

ACT Health Kindergarten Health Check

Overview

Growth, development and health are vital for effective learning. The Kindergarten Health Check has been conducted by ACT Health for over 40 years. All children in ACT Kindergarten classes (public and independent schools) are invited to participate and over 83% complete the Health Check. GPs will be notified of the outcomes of the kindergarten health checks.

This check is a comprehensive physical, developmental, behavioural and emotional health check that requires the collaboration of parents, schools, ACT Health, the Academic Unit of General Practice, ACT Medicare Local, School Health Nurses, General Practitioners and Practice Nurses.

The check consists of a self-completed parent questionnaire and a physical health check. This information is collated and scored by the Academic Unit of General Practice. The results of the physical check, an accompanying short clinical summary and score sheets of the PEDS (Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status) and SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) tools are forwarded, with the permission of the parents, to the family GP. Where issues are identified, the GP has the discretion to contact the family and to provide appropriate follow up or referral as indicated. Where no family GP is nominated and issues are identified, the Academic Unit of General Practice will contact the family and encourage attendance at a general practice.

Background

Since 2014, the child's nominated GP has been notified of the outcomes of the kindergarten health checks via the summary as mentioned above. This is to enable more effective liaison with the parents about any significant issues raised by the health check in relation to the child.
Additionally, this was the first time that the PEDS and SDQ tools have been included in the kindergarten health check. For children who have been identified through these tools as being at risk, engagement with a GP who knows them, their family context, and what services they are already accessing, is the appropriate next step in helping to determine the most suitable approach to secondary assessment, and whether referral is necessary.

Parent Questionnaire

At the beginning of the school year, a questionnaire is sent by ACT Health to all parents of kindergarten children. The questionnaire asks about the child's physical health, questions about development, behavioural and emotional health using validated and reliable questions. The questions are based on the Parent Evaluation of Development Tool (PEDS) and the Strengths

and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Parents have an opportunity to raise any concerns they may have about their child's physical health throughout the questionnaire.

The Physical Health Check

Physical health checks are scheduled with individual schools by the School Health Team throughout the school year. Physical checks commence around March each year and are completed around October. An ACT Health school health nurse completes this part of the check which includes:

- Body measurement check (height, weight and BMI)
- Vision check (squint, track, convergence, acuity)
- Hearing check (at 500, 1000, 2000, 4000 dbls)

On the basis of the physical check alone, the school health nurse has the option of referring a child to a GP, dietitian, orthoptist or optometrist, or for hearing retest or audiometry as relevant. This will be identified on the clinician's results summary. The school health team provides a letter indicating any areas of concern and information about any issues that are identified in the physical health check to the parents immediately following the physical check. Information about nutrition in this age group is sent to all families by the school health team. If a parent has indicated a problem with incontinence, snoring or asthma the family will be sent a brochure on this. If the school health nurse has noticed that the child has a problem with their speech or movement, the family may be sent a brochure about Therapy ACT drop in clinics.
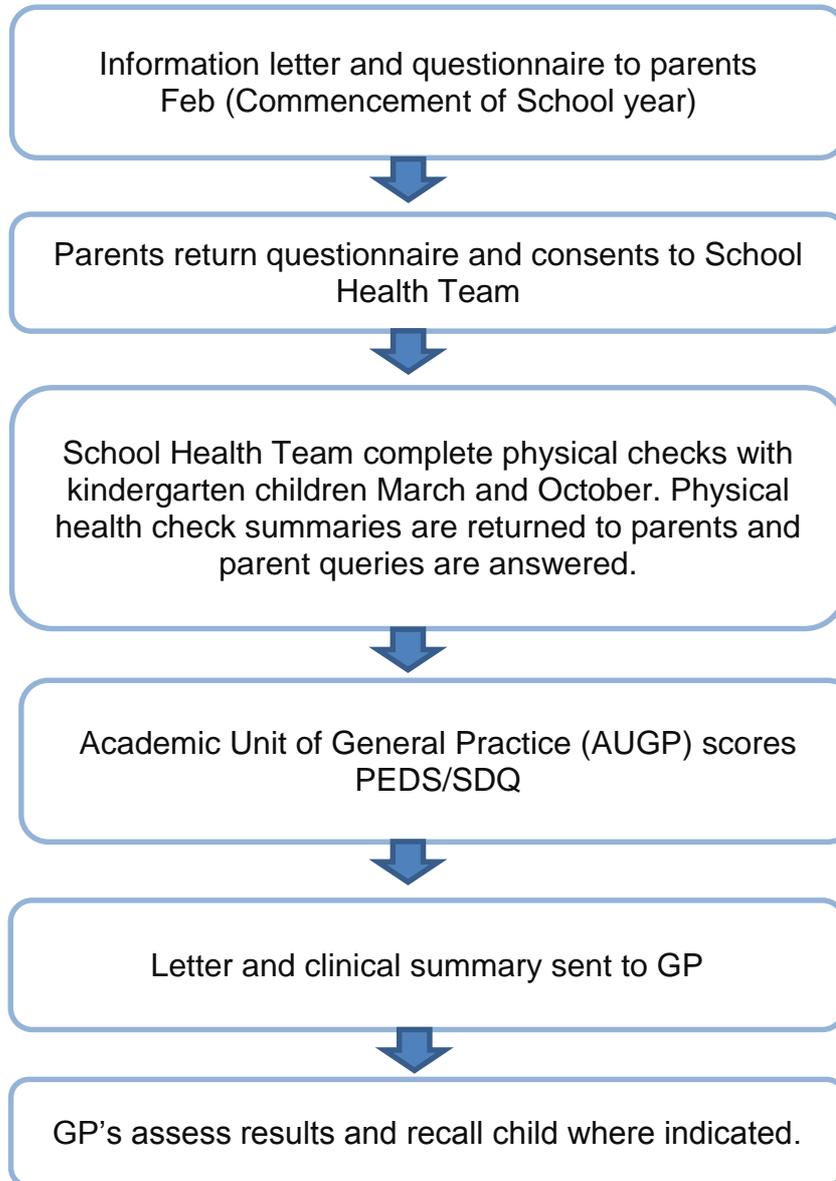
Clinical Summaries

The Academic Unit of General Practice reviews each child's complete health check information (ie the parent questionnaire and the physical check results). For each child under their care, the nominated GP will receive a short clinical summary. This will include outcomes and any referral already made as part of the physical health check, a PEDS/SDQ score and a brief clinical summary of any identified concerns.

Where an adverse outcome is noted in the PEDS/SDQ score or clinical summary, the GP is asked to contact the family to arrange for a consultation.

Secondary Screening

In the case of a child who has been identified by the kindergarten health check as needing follow up by the GP, the GP, in consultation with the family, may decide that further assessment of the child is required. A guide to referral options for particular areas of concern has been developed to accompany this information pack. For situations where a family may choose to see a private practitioner, many professional associations allow for a refined search encompassing specific criteria on their websites (Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Dietetics). For physiotherapy related concerns, advice from the Australian Physiotherapy Association is that the majority of physiotherapists should be able to manage issue around gross motor skill development. New South Wales residents are able to access similar services publically through their local community health clinic or privately through the same process as above. Further information is provided on the chart included in this toolkit.

Flow Chart for General Practice

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Information letter and questionnaire │
│ to parents                          │
│ Feb (Commencement of School year)   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Parents return questionnaire and    │
│ consents to School Health Team      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ School Health Team complete         │
│ physical checks with kindergarten   │
│ children March and October.         │
│ Physical health check summaries are │
│ returned to parents and parent      │
│ queries are answered.               │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Academic Unit of General Practice   │
│ (AUGP) scores PEDS/SDQ              │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Letter and clinical summary sent    │
│ to GP                               │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ GP's assess results and recall      │
│ child where indicated.              │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Further Information

For further information about the **parent questionnaire** or relating to the **PEDS/SDQ** aspects of the Kindergarten Health Check, please **contact Karen Ciszek** – research nurse from ACT Health's Academic Unit of General Practice on **(02) 6244 4949**.

For further information about the **Physical Health Checks** please contact the **Clinical Nurse Consultant – School Health Team** on **(02) 6205 5059**.