

Using the CSHCN Screener

The Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Screener is a set of five consequences-based questions used to identify children with chronic or special health care needs. The questions are designed to be self-administered or telephone administered as part of a parent/caretaker survey.

Screening Criteria

The theoretical framework used by the CSHCN Screener is based on the Questionnaire for Identifying Children with Chronic Conditions (QICCC) (Stein, et al., 1997). Like the QICCC, the criteria used by the CSHCN Screener to determine whether a child has a chronic or special health care need are independent of a specific diagnostic or a formally recorded etiology.

The CSHCN Screener uses health-related consequences to identify children with chronic or special health care needs. The following must all be present for a child to qualify:

- The child must currently experience a specific consequence.
- The consequence is due to a medical, behavioral, or other health condition.
- The duration or expected duration of the condition is 12 months or longer.

The first part of CSHCN Screener question asks whether a child experiences one of five different health consequences:

- Use or need of prescription medication
- Above average use or need of medical, mental health or educational services
- Functional limitations compared with others of same age
- Use or need of specialized therapies (OT, PT, speech, etc.)
- Treatment or counseling for emotional, behavioral or developmental problems

The second and third parts of each question ask those responding "yes" to Part 1 of the question whether the consequence is due to a specific health condition and if so, whether that condition has lasted or is expected to last for at least 12 months.

All three parts of at least one screener question (or in the case of question 5 there are two parts) must be answered "yes" for a child to meet the CSHCN Screener criteria for having a chronic condition.

The CSHCN Screener has three "definitional domains". They are:

- Dependency on prescription medications
- Service use above that considered usual or routine
- Functional limitations

The definitional domains are not mutually exclusive categories. A child identified by the CSHCN Screener can qualify on one or more definitional domains (see diagram below).

Qualifying questions for meeting a screener definitional domain

Definitional combinations possible for qualifying children to meet

