



# Screening, Referral, and Follow Up: Bridging Clinical Service Gaps for Primarily Spanish-Speaking Children

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## BACKGROUND

- Evidence has shown that early and accurate screening dramatically improves children’s developmental outcomes.
- There is a need to better understand the accuracy and impact of screenings on primarily Spanish-speaking children who are acquiring English as a second language.
- The Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) is a widely administered developmental screening tool available in English and Spanish.
- The Center for Children and Families (CCF) has administered > 1,000 developmental screenings across the DFW metroplex.
- Nationwide incidence of developmental language disorder (DLD) ranges from 7-9%.

### Purpose

- The purpose of this study was to determine the patterns of clinical follow-up exhibited by families whose children’s performance on the ASQ-3 was of developmental concern, and what factors influenced these patterns.

## METHOD

- CCF developmental screening data based on *communication area* performance of ASQ-3, from 2018-2021.
  - Children who fail the ASQ-3 communication area are referred for a complete speech-language evaluation.
  - CCF attempts to document families’ follow-up patterns of such referrals.
- CCF developmental screening data available for 634 children.
  - 97 (15.3%) children failed the ASQ-3 communication area = at risk for DLD.
  - CCF was able to contact 65 families (67%) of children who failed to inquire about referral follow-up.
- This study investigated the follow-up patterns for these 65 families.
  - 32 (49.2%) families did not follow up.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- To our knowledge, this study is the first to systematically examine the patterns of follow-up from CCF families whose children failed the ASQ-3 communication area from 2018-2021.
- Understanding patterns that limit families from accessing tools to help the child’s development is critical.
  - Given the expected DLD incidence (7-9%), the proportion of children who fail the ASQ-3 communication area (15.3%) is elevated and of concern.
  - Nearly 1 of every 2 families of children who failed (49.2%) did not follow up on referrals.

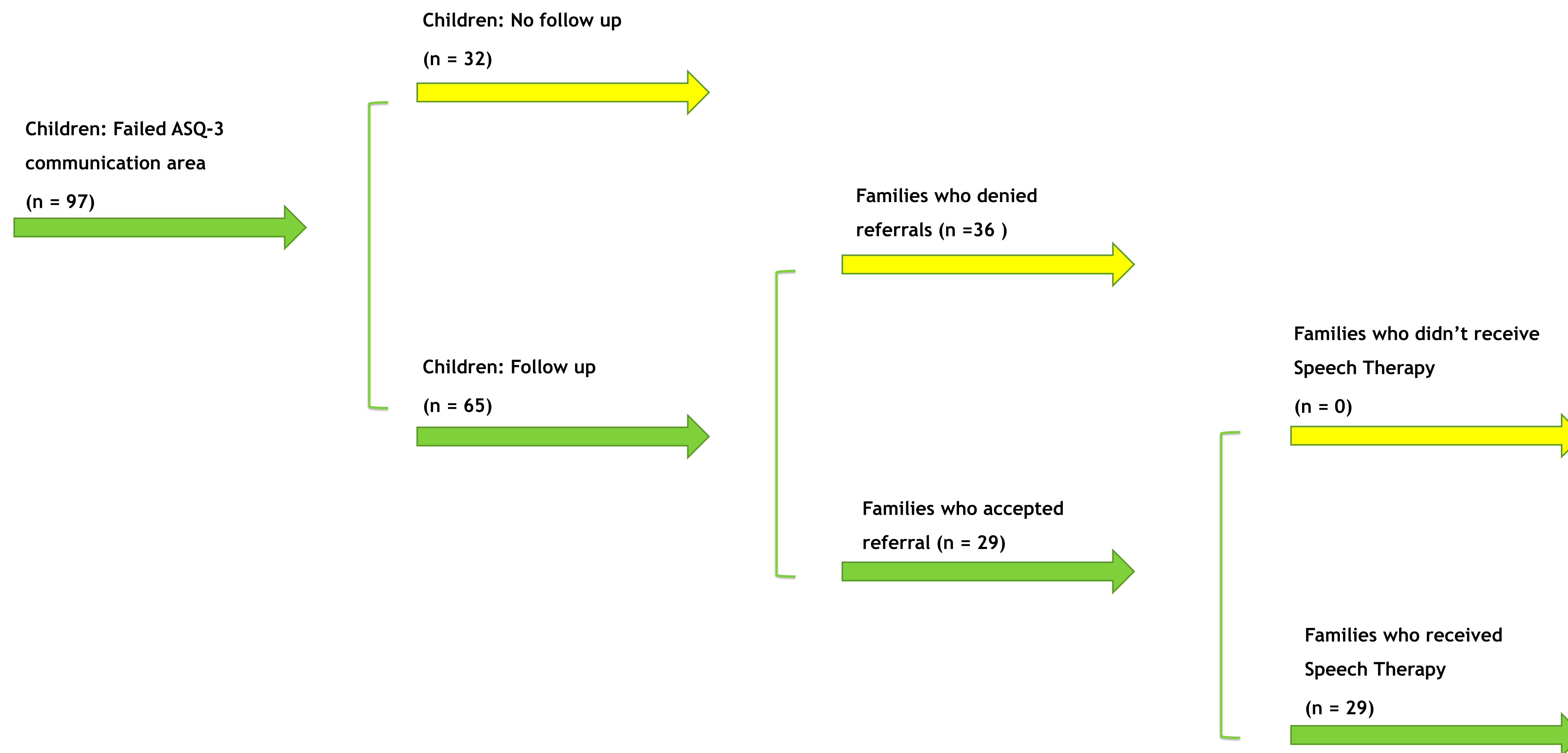
### Limitations

- Currently, follow-up data are being collected by a single CCF employee.
- Some data were missing due to attrition, while other data were incomplete due to families not answering surveys fully.

### Future Directions

- As these families are primarily Spanish-speaking, a language screening designed in Spanish (as opposed to translated) would be ideal.
- There is a need to better support families throughout the referral and follow-up process.
- Future studies should consider using the Quick Interactive Language Screener: English-Spanish (QUILS: ES) as it was developed for and normed specifically for Spanish-English speaking children.

## CLINICAL REFERRAL FOLLOW-UP PATTERNS



- There was a noticeable decrease in attendance during the COVID19 pandemic. This is another limitation to the collection of data and screening of children in the communities CCF serves.

## Acknowledgements

I want to express my deepest appreciation to CCF and this REU for giving me the opportunity of meeting such great fellows, as well as a treasured mentor Dr. Rojas. I would also like to thank Drs. Maguire and Owen, who put together the needed materials and words to give this first cohort the opportunity of meeting and working together. I’m also grateful for Natalie Quintero-Flores for putting hard work into guiding us when our mentors weren’t present and answering emails late at night when we needed help the most. Thanks to Maria Maese, who diligently answered questions about the data and is keeping the data for CCF. Finally, I’d like to thank my fellows in the REU for encouraging words, laughs, and lifelong memories. With hard work and dedication this was all possible. Thank you to everyone who helped.

