



Bright Futures™

prevention and health promotion for infants,
children, adolescents, and their families™

The Bright Futures Guidelines,
Third Edition
Health Promotion Information Sheet

PROMOTING FAMILY SUPPORT

The Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, Third Edition features 10 health promotion themes. These state-of-the-art discussions focus on topics of key importance to families and health care professionals in their common mission to promote the health and well-being of children from birth through adolescence. These 10 themes are also woven into the 31 health supervision visits.



What you'll find in the "Promoting Family Support" chapter

Overview: Setting the stage

The health and well-being of infants, children, and adolescents depend on their parents and families. Supporting the family's growth and development along with the growth and development of the child is a central activity of Bright Futures. This support is the basis of the partnership between health care professionals and families. Putting this approach into practice involves:



- Being aware of the composition of the family
- Assessing parental well-being
- Asking about and addressing parent concerns
- Identifying and building on parents' and families' strengths
- Assessing the family's well-being
- Providing information, support, and access to community resources
- Delivering family-centered care in the medical home

In-depth: Exploring the topic

Many factors affect a family's well-being, and this chapter's introductory section discusses them in detail:

- The family constellation
- The role of fathers
- Supporting families with special needs, including children who were adopted or came from the foster care system; families with adolescent parents, and; children and youth with special health care needs
- Recognizing the impact of environment on families
- Forming an effective partnership with families, including family-centered care, and complementary and alternative care
- Parental well-being
- Family stress and change, including parental depression, substance abuse, separation and divorce
- Understanding and building on the strengths of children and youth
- Family culture and behaviors

Along with evidence on the effectiveness of relevant health promotion interventions, the chapter also looks at family support issues unique to each developmental stage:

- The preconception and prenatal periods
- Infancy (Birth to 11 Months)
- Early Childhood (1 to 4 Years)
- Middle Childhood (5 to 10 Years)
- Adolescence (11 to 21 Years)



How the theme of “Promoting Family Support” fits into Bright Futures visits

Each Bright Futures health supervision visit is structured around *five priority topics* that help focus the health care professional’s guidance to parents and children. Some priorities are unique to a particular visit; others are featured often and their components evolve in concert with the child’s development.

These examples of priorities, taken from selected visits, show how Bright Futures helps health care professionals support strong and healthy families during each developmental stage:

Infancy: Prenatal Visit

Family resources, such as family support systems, the transition home after discharge from the hospital, and the use of community resources

Early Childhood: 3 Year Visit

Family support, including family decisions, sibling rivalry, and work-family balance

Middle Childhood: 5 and 6 Year Visits

Mental health issues, including family time, routines, temper problems, and social interactions

Early Adolescence: 11 to 14 Year Visits

Social and academic competence, including connectedness with family, peers, and community; interpersonal relationships, and; school performance

Additional Resources on Promoting Family Support

- Administration of Children and Families, Children’s Bureau www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb
- American Psychiatric Association www.HealthyMinds.org
- Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation www.kff.org
- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) www.serve.org/nche
- National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) [IDEA Part C eligibility assessment for infants and toddlers with disabilities] www.nectac.org/topics/earlyid/partcelig.asp
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) www.nimh.nih.gov

Bright Futures is a national health care promotion and disease prevention initiative that uses a developmentally-based approach to address children’s health needs in the context of family and community.

Other Bright Futures Health Promotion Themes

Family Support

Child Development

Mental Health

Healthy Weight

Healthy Nutrition

Physical Activity

Oral Health

Safety and Injury Prevention

Community Relationships and Resources

Healthy Sexual Development and Sexuality

*To learn more about Bright Futures,
visit www.brightfutures.aap.org.*

