

Bright Futures: Family Matters

Volume 11, Issue 3
April 2011

Life affords no greater responsibility, no greater privilege, than the raising of the next generation. ~ C. Everett Koop, former U.S. Surgeon General



Child Development

Child development is the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social changes children undergo as they grow from infancy to adulthood.



Physical development – how children's bodies grow, and what they can do physically. This includes gross motor activities, like standing, walking, throwing a ball, and climbing. Physical growth also includes fine motor activities such as grasping objects, stacking blocks, writing, typing, and using a joystick or mouse.

Intellectual development – how a child imitates sounds, learns to speak, follows directions, and uses information to solve problems.

Emotional development – how children feel about themselves and others. How they understand and cope with feelings of joy, sadness, anger, and more. Children also learn to consider others' feelings, how to follow rules, respect limits, and be responsible for their actions.

Social development – children become aware of their family, friends, teachers, coaches, and other people in their ever-widening social circles.

The American Academy of Pediatrics' Healthy Children Web site has more information about child development at each age & stage at www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/Pages/default.aspx. Remember, every child learns at different rates. And, it is not unusual for a child to develop more quickly in one area than another. However, as noted in the 3rd edition of **Bright Futures, Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents**, "Parental concerns are highly accurate markers for developmental disability..." Parents know their children best! Talk with your health care provider if you are concerned about your child. He may just need more time, but he also may need referrals to programs and services.

Here are some ideas for ways parents can contribute to and support their children's development:

Infancy: Your baby is growing, learning to trust caregivers, and feeling loved and safe. Respond to your baby's needs. Feed her when she's hungry, comfort her when she cries, respond to her sounds, smile and talk to her. Provide toys

she can grasp and safe space where she can learn to roll, sit, crawl, and pull up to stand. Learn more at www.zerotothree.org/baby-brain-map.html.



Early Childhood: One to four year olds learn through play. They are also more mobile and eager to explore. Visit www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopment/ for fun games and activities to play. Read or tell stories to help build literacy skills and develop imagination. Establish routines for meals, snacks, playtimes, naps, and bedtimes to provide a sense of safety and control.

Middle Childhood: Your child's day now includes school. Set goals for school performance. Help your child develop a routine for homework. Praise your child for what he does well, and for new things he tries, even if he does not always succeed. Encourage your child to explore areas of interest and provide opportunities to make friends outside your family. Read more at www.mesacc.edu/dept/d46/psy/dev/middle_child/.



Adolescence: Just because teens are getting older doesn't mean they don't need their parents. Talk with your teen. Ask about school, friends, hobbies and other interests. Help teens feel good about their changing bodies. Teens hear lots about behaviors to avoid. Help them find healthy, fun things they can say "yes" to. This is also an exciting time. Teens become more responsible, and may be making plans for work or continuing education past high school. Learn more (English en Espanol) at www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/earlyadolescence.htm

Special Health Needs: Children need to learn about their condition. Answer questions in a way they can understand and help them explain their needs to others. Special needs may affect development. Find ways to celebrate your child's successes and accomplishments. Learn to ask for the help your child needs. Talk with other families to learn about supports to help you and your other children meet any challenges. Visit the Maternal and Child Health knowledge path for Children & Youth with Special Needs at www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp_CSHCN.html.



Family Voices is a national network working to keep families at the center of children's health care. With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, Family Voices works to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. **Bright Futures: Family Matters** is a publication to share with your networks. Visit Family Voices at www.familyvoices.org & www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org.

Partners...

Grantmakers In Health is a national, non-profit educational organization. They work with foundations, corporations, and other grant-giving entities to provide resources and information that will help ensure the grants support programs that improve the health of all people. Their many focus areas include access to healthcare, infant mortality, child and youth health issues of teen smoking, and pregnancy, and a concentration on healthy eating and physical activity to ensure overall health promotion, mental health, oral health, and social determinants of health. These include the factors such as education, income, race, ethnicity, and environment that influence overall health. Visit the website below for news, events, and publications about each focus area.

Grantmakers In Health

1100 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 1200

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202.452.8331

www.gih.org/



What's New in Research?

"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me," is a familiar playground chant. In fact, words do hurt, even if a child does not hear the words directly. Researchers at the University of Washington found that gossip – talk and rumors spread about a child through conversation with others - or by pointing and laughing, do hurt. They also found that gossip is a form of bullying. For 10 weeks, researchers studied the playground interactions of 610 third through 6th grade students in 36 classrooms at various Seattle elementary schools. Then they had the teachers use an anti-bullying program in half the classrooms. The anti-bullying program emphasized:



- 1) victims should not fight back or get even,
- 2) by-standers should speak up, rather than be silent, which leads the bullies to believe their behavior is okay, and
- 3) the importance of supportive friends to lead the victim away from an encounter.

After the classroom intervention, there was another 10-week observation period during recess. Researchers found a 72% decrease in gossip for the students who participated in the anti-bullying program. Read more at www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/01/110103121024.htm.

Tidbits for the Month



April is **Autism Awareness Month**. This is an opportunity to learn more about Autism Spectrum disorders, and help raise awareness about the issues faced by individuals with autism and their families. Learn more about at www.autism-society.org.

Gardening is more than planting seeds and pulling weeds. At this time of the year, eager gardeners are itching to get their hands dirty. Even if you don't "dig" it, visit www.kidsgardening.org for ways to make gardening a fun family activity. The parent primer helps you get to the "root" of gardening activities, and has ideas to engage kids of all ages.



Share your news!

Want to share news about your agency or family organization? Did you get this newsletter from someone else? We can add you to the mailing list. Let us know! Contact Betsy Anderson, IMPACT project director, at banderson@familyvoices.org.

Editor: Beth Dworetzky (bdworetzky@cox.net)

Family Resource Corner



If you were unable to attend the 75th Anniversary of Title V in October 2010, hear, see, and read a recap of the celebration at www.hrsa.gov/ourstories/mchb75th/.

We live in a digital world; our children can access media with the press of a TV remote, mouse click, or voice command. Learn more about media, and get ideas for how to manage its role in children's lives. Read reviews of books, movies, TV, apps, websites, and more at www.common sense media.org/.

OnGuard Online provides advice about Internet safety so your children will stop and think before they click. Read Net Cetera, on-line or order free copies, in English en Espanol at www.onguardonline.gov/topics/net-cetera.aspx.

Need ideas to connect with your children, help foster their self-esteem, and ensure they grow to be responsible, caring adults? The Search Institute has a list of developmental assets by age/stage of development, and ways for promoting these common sense ideas at www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets (English en Espanol).

Your child is ill. When do you wait it out; when do you call the doctor? Get guidance at www.healthychildren.org/english/tips-tools/Pages/default.aspx.