



Bright Futures™

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

The Bright Futures Guidelines,
Third Edition
Health Promotion Information Sheet
**PROMOTING
CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

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 Child Development” chapter

Overview: Setting the stage

Any health supervision encounter with children involves promoting healthy child development. Understanding and applying child development principles set the care of children apart from that of adults. Infants must grow to be children, then adolescents, and then adults. Health promotion to ensure physical, cognitive, and social-emotional health — as well as to protect the child from infectious diseases and injuries — supports healthy development. Successful health promotion efforts should take into account the developmental reality of the child patient now, as well as her developmental expectations for the near future and her developmental potential over time.

In-depth: Exploring the topic

Each stage of life has its own child development issues and challenges. These are covered in detail, along with evidence on the effectiveness of relevant health promotion interventions.

Infancy: Birth to 11 Months

- Infants with special health care needs
- Domains of development, including gross and fine motor skills; cognitive, linguistic, and communication skills, and; social-emotional skills
- Developmental highlights of infancy, such as the influence of culture on development, self-regulation, sleep, SIDS, and discipline, behavioral guidance, and teaching

Early Childhood: 1 to 4 Years

- Young children with special health care needs
- Domains of development, including gross and fine motor skills; cognitive, linguistic, and communication skills; and social-emotional skills
- Developmental highlights of early childhood, such as self-regulation and daily living tasks; sleep; toilet training; socialization; discipline, behavioral guidance, and teaching; literacy; play; separation and individuation; child care, and; school readiness

Middle Childhood: 5 to 10 Years

- Children and youth with special health care needs
- Domains of development, including gross and fine motor skills; cognitive, linguistic, and communication skills, and; social-emotional skills
- Developmental highlights of middle childhood, including moral and spiritual development

Adolescence: 11 to 21 Years

- Youth with special health care needs
- Stages of adolescence, including physiological, psychological, and social development
- Domains of development, including gross and fine motor skills; cognitive, linguistic, and communication skills, and; social-emotional skills
- Developmental highlights of adolescence, including assets and models of care



How the theme of “Promoting Child Development” 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 talk to families about healthy child development during each developmental stage:

Infancy: Newborn Visit

Infant behaviors, such as infant capabilities, parent-child relationship, sleep, and sleep/wake states

Early Childhood: 4 Year Visit

School readiness, including structured learning experiences, opportunities to socialize with other children, fears, friends, and fluency

Middle Childhood: 9 and 10 Year Visits

School issues, such as school performance, homework, and bullying

Late Adolescence: 18 to 21 Year Visits

Physical growth and development, including physical and oral health, body image, healthy eating, and physical activity

Additional Resources on Promoting Child Development

- American Academy of Pediatrics aap.org
- HealthyChildren.org, American Academy of Pediatrics healthychildren.org
- Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration mchb.hrsa.gov
- Family Voices IMPACT on Health & Wellness for Families fv.impact.org
- Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs and National Network of State Adolescent Health Coordinators, A Conceptual Framework for Adolescent Health amchp.org
- National Association for the Education of Young Children naeyc.org
- Reach Out and Read reachoutandread.org
- The Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ETCA) Center [IDEA Part C eligibility assessment for infants and toddlers with disabilities] ectacenter.org

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.

Bright Futures Health Promotion Themes

Family Support	Physical Activity
Child Development	Oral Health
Mental Health	Safety and Injury Prevention
Healthy Weight	Community Relationships and Resources
Healthy Nutrition	Healthy Sexual Development and Sexuality

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

