

Healthy Children



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Healthy Children

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Healthy Children

“Does anybody really believe that a kid who’s ill or hungry can do very well educationally? I don’t think so.” Ed Zigler

Healthy Children

Every year, thousand of young children enter school unprepared to succeed. Many have had minimal exposure to preventive service and high exposure to detrimental social and emotional environments, due to family circumstances like

- poverty,
- low educational attainment,
- lack of social support,

or due to their own health problems.

Health problems that may begin before birth.

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Health and Development are Synonymous

- Important prenatal influences on developing brain architecture include the mother's health and nutritional status.
- Achieving optimal child health is dependent upon the health and well-being of a child's mother.

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At birth....

Too many babies are born pre-term. In 2004, one in eight babies (12.5%) in the United States was born preterm, before the 37th week of pregnancy.

- In Arizona, 12,450 babies (13.3%) were born earlier than 39 weeks.

Babies born preterm are more likely than full term babies to suffer from:

- Low birthweight;
- Breathing problems from under developed lungs;
- Greater risk for life threatening infections;
- Greater risk for cerebral palsy; and
- Greater risk for learning and developmental disabilities

Healthy Development

It's a matter of timing

Healthy children are ready to engage in the developmental tasks of early childhood and to achieve the physical, mental, intellectual social and emotional wellbeing necessary for them to succeed in school.

The period between birth and three years is a time of rapid development. If all goes well:

- Explosive growth in vocabulary starts around 15-18 months and continues into the preschool years.
- The ability to identify and regulate emotions in oneself and others is well underway.

Healthy Development

Between three and five years of age:

There is an emergence of increasingly complex social behaviors, emotional capacities, problem-solving abilities and pre-literacy skills that *build on earlier developmental achievements* and are essential building blocks for a success life.

By ages four and five:

Most children have learned the basics of the grammatical system in their language, can detect and identify simply emotions in themselves and others, begin to understand other's points of view, experience emotions important to the development of conscience, have learned the rudiments of how to negotiate with others to achieve common goals, and can sit quietly with a group of children and pay attention for at least brief periods of time. (whew!)

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Stress and development

Stress in early childhood can be either growth promoting or toxic to developing brain architecture and physical health.

Positive Stress is an important and necessary aspect of healthy development when it occurs in the context of stable and supportive relationships.

Tolerable stress is associated with events that could trigger physiological responses large enough to disrupt brain architecture, but are relieved by supportive relationships that facilitate adaptive coping and thereby restore heart rate and stress hormone levels to their baseline.

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Toxic stress

Toxic stress is the most threatening kind of stress experience and is associated with strong prolonged activation of the body's stress response system in the absence of the buffering protection of adult support.

- Recurrent child abuse or neglect
- Severe maternal depression
- Parental substance abuse,
- Family violence

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Child health is foundational to adult health and well-being. When children's health is nurtured and supported and there is an absence of physical and mental abuse, or other intentional childhood trauma, the stage is set for a healthy adulthood less likely to include chronic health problems.

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Children that do not make it to five

In 2006, 799 children ages birth through age 4 had untimely deaths.

189 (24%) of these deaths were determined to be preventable.

54 Drugs & Alcohol Related

36 Motor Vehicle-Related

18 Drowning

27 Homicides

9 Shaken Baby Syndrome

45 Unsafe sleeping environment

Healthy Children

A definition

Child health is a state of physical, mental, intellectual, social and emotional well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Healthy children live in families, environments, and communities that provide them with the opportunity to reach their fullest developmental potential.

Child Health Workgroup

Healthy Children

What Matters

Good health during pregnancy supported by early and continuous prenatal care is associated with better birth outcomes and healthier development after birth.

Mothers who participate in the Women's Infants, Children (WIC) nutrition program are less likely to give birth to low weight or pre-term infants.

Decades of research give incontrovertible evidence that from the moment of birth, children's cognitive development is dependent on positive interaction and nurturance from parents and other care givers.

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What Matters

To thrive physically, cognitively and mentally, children require:

- Early developmental screening from their health provider and quality early intervention to put children on a positive and successful developmental trajectory,
- Safe environments, stable, sustained relationships,
- Healthy, adequate nutrition,
- Immunizations from birth and throughout childhood to protect children from disease.

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What Matters-Health and Early Education Programs

- Healthy children are prepared to benefit from quality early care and education programs and early childhood programs must be prepared to support the health of children who may spend most of their waking hours each day in their care.
- Nearly all children age three and under participate in some level of well-child care making it an ideal setting for monitoring children's development, yet not all children receive early screening and timely follow-up.

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What Matters-Workforce

- In Arizona, there are not enough clinicians at all practice levels and in all sectors delivering early childhood health and development services.
- The health care and mental health care workforce is complex with many specialty providers. These providers however may not have the specialized education and or training to competently intervene with babies, toddlers and young children.
- Linkages and collaborations are not consistently available between health providers, courts, child abuse and neglect programs, early childhood education and child care programs and all others that may have a role in supporting the healthy development of young children.

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What Matters-Early Education Workforce

Early education and child care providers are in an ideal position to serve as the bridge between parents and health care providers or the health care system. However, this role is not fully supported or developed and little training and support exists for this to happen.

Child care and early education staff, in most cases, do not have the expertise or health provider credentials when health concerns arise for children in their care. Further, child care staff may be at greater risk for illness and disease when children in care become ill.

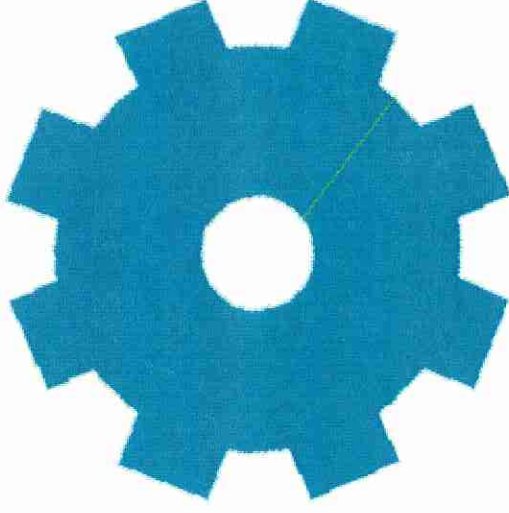
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Health Care

Early and Continuous
Prenatal Care

Early Intervention

Preventive, Primary
Health Care



Oral Health Care

Mental Health Care
and Support

Developmental Screening

Healthy Children

Health System Components

- Primary and preventive health services.
- Health insurance.
 - Outreach and Enrollment.
- Medical Home.
 - Care Coordination.

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Health System Components

- Developmental Screening
 - Developmental Screening at 9, 18, and 24 months in accordance with recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
 - Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Testing (EPSDT).

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Health System Components

- Mental Health Care-Social Emotional Support
 - Anticipatory guidance to parents and caregivers.
 - Care & treatment for abuse and neglect.
 - Safe stable environments when children experience violence, trauma, and abuse.
 - Clinicians with knowledge, skills to effectively intervene with babies, toddlers, and young children.

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Health System Components

- Oral Health Care
 - Pediatric dentists
 - Other dental care providers
 - Information and education for parents about the importance of early oral health care.
 - First oral health screening by age one
- Oral health care for pregnant women

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Health System Components

- Early Intervention Services
 - Timely access to speech and hearing therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy.
 - Strong linkages between health care and developmental specialists to coordinate health care and planning to support the Individual Education Plan.

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- Child Care and Early Education Programs
 - Promote “best practices” for healthy and safe environments for children.
 - High standards and regulations that support child health and safety.
 - Child Care Health Consultation as a “Quality” standard.

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- Parent Support
 - Information, education and support for parents to access health care beginning with pregnancy and continuing through early childhood years.
 - Parents are the primary pathway to children's health—they should have all the help they need to obtain the health care their children need to be ready to succeed in school

Healthy Children

First Things First provides an opportunity to improve access to and quality of health services available to young children and their families.

Achieving or maintaining a child's optimal state of health requires integration and coordination of all those that currently serve children and their families.

Healthy Children

When I approach a child, he inspires in me two sentiments; tenderness for what he is, and respect for what he may become.

Louis Pasteur