

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." ~ The World Health Organization

## Social, Emotional & Mental Well-Being

The World Health Organization defines mental health as more than the absence of a diagnosed mental disorder. To be mentally healthy, an individual should have ways to cope with the normal stresses of daily life, opportunities to do rewarding work, participate in and contribute to his or her community, and enjoy a general state of well-being. Visit [www.who.int/features/qa/62/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/features/qa/62/en/index.html) (English) or [www.who.int/features/qa/62/es/index.html](http://www.who.int/features/qa/62/es/index.html) (en Español) to learn more.

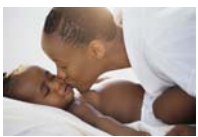


To ensure our children's physical health, we serve them nutritious foods, encourage physical activity, and immunize them. We weigh and measure them to chart their physical growth. Just how do we gauge children's mental health? What do we "feed" them to make sure we are doing everything possible to promote their healthy social & emotional development? And, what are the signs that our child might have a problem?

Bright Futures at Georgetown University, in collaboration with the National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health has created a wonderful set of developmental tools for families and providers. These materials provide information about social & emotional development in infancy, early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence. Each publication lets families know what to expect and when to seek help. Find these easy-to-read, family-centered resource materials, in English **en Español**, at [www.brightfutures.org/tools/](http://www.brightfutures.org/tools/).

## Promoting Healthy Mental Health at Home:

**For Parents** – Support your children's mental health by taking care of your own. Children sense their parents' states of mind and know when you are worried or depressed. Babies may be harder to calm. Older children may have trouble sleeping. If you are depressed, alone, or have difficulty coping with a family situation, talk to your doctor. She can rule out an underlying medical problem. She can also provide resources and referrals for support. If you need immediate help, or suspect a friend or family member does, **Mental Health America** has a 24-hour crisis line at **1-800-273-8255** (English **en Español**).



**For Baby** – Kisses, hugs, smiles, and responding to a baby's needs lets her know you love her. Infants like knowing what to expect. A daily routine will help your baby grow up confident and secure. Visit

[www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=key\\_social](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=key_social) for more information and ideas.

**For Young Children** – Continue to show your child love and provide a daily routine that includes active play and quiet time. Be a role model for your child. Show him how to play with others. Ask him about his feelings and teach him to cope with frustration and stress in healthy ways. And, be sure to compliment all things your child does well! Learn more at [www.ccids.umaine.edu/ec/growingideas/socemotip.htm](http://www.ccids.umaine.edu/ec/growingideas/socemotip.htm).

**For Adolescents** – Your teen's life changes daily. Be the constant source of love, support, advice and praise your teen needs. Ask about school and friends. Make sure to schedule time for family fun, but also encourage and support her outside interests. Continue to model appropriate behaviors. Answer her questions honestly, and talk openly about risky behaviors. Read more ideas in The San Francisco Adult Health Working Group adolescent health toolkit at <http://ahwg.net/resources/FINAL%20BH%20Toolkit.pdf>.

**Children & Youth with Special Health Needs** – Dealing with a special healthcare need, or disability is stressful. In addition, mental health diagnoses may co-occur with other chronic health conditions. Note any changes you see in your child and ask your health provider to screen your child for anxiety and depression. The Maternal & Child Health knowledge path at [www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp\\_Mental\\_Healthy.html](http://www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp_Mental_Healthy.html) has a thorough collection of resources, publications and databases about social & emotional development for all children & youth.



## Tis the Season...

The winter holidays are approaching. Tis the season to be jolly! And, tis the season to be social, with events at school, family gatherings and other celebrations. What do you do when the change in routine is stressful for your child?

- Preparation is key. Show your child photos of family members he will see, or make a book that walks him through the day's events.
- Have realistic expectations. You may have to arrive late or leave early.
- Try to keep to your daily routine, especially at bedtime. The days will be more fun if you and your children are rested.
- Eat healthy meals and get exercise. Enjoy a family walk or put on your favorite holiday music and dance.
- Simplify. You don't have to celebrate the season the same way each year.

Get more tips at

[www.healthyminds.org/kidsandholidaystress.cfm](http://www.healthyminds.org/kidsandholidaystress.cfm).

Family Voices is a national grassroots network of families and friends speaking on behalf of children with special health needs. Our children are also part of the wider world of children. 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. Check out our Family Voices web sites at [www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org](http://www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org) and [www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org).

## Partners...

The mission of the National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation is to improve the quality of America's healthcare system. They work in partnership with organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maternal Child Health Bureau, the National Initiative to Improve Adolescent Health, and others to conduct research, analyze policies and sponsor educational activities that help the private healthcare industry and the government work together to improve for the nation's health system. Areas of special interest include prevention and maternal, child and adolescent health. For example, they recently hosted a webinar about integrating mental health care into the primary care setting to promote early identification and treatment of potential mental health issues. Other areas of interest include promoting adolescent health as a way to avoid chronic illnesses in adulthood. Visit the website to read their publications, learn about upcoming webinars and to access the playback and handouts of past presentations.



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## Family Resource Corner

Want a holiday gift that's useful and supports a good cause? The **2009 Family Voices Calendar**, filled with memorable photos, inspirational quotes, and lots of room for writing your important dates, is now available. Call 1-888-835-5669 or visit [www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org) to order your copies.

Teachers know children learn not only through books, but also through play. TRUCE (Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment) has many lovely suggestions for toys that promote meaningful, creative, respectful play. Learn more and read the toy action guide at [www.truceteachers.org/](http://www.truceteachers.org/).

If you're looking for a holiday gift for a child with special needs and want to make sure your selection is appropriate, read the guidelines and related articles at [www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content3/toys.disabilities.html](http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content3/toys.disabilities.html).

Need to occupy your kids while you wrap a few gifts, bake a holiday dessert or finish your morning coffee? Read 50 fun ideas for outdoor winter activities at [http://kidsactivities.suite101.com/article.cfm/outdoor\\_winter\\_day\\_activities](http://kidsactivities.suite101.com/article.cfm/outdoor_winter_day_activities).

If your family enjoys hiking, and you need to accommodate a family member with a disability, the National Parks System has a state-by-state list of accessible hiking trails at [www.nps.gov/pub\\_aff/access/trails.htm](http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/access/trails.htm).

Don't forget to include books as part of holiday gift giving. For suggestions, ideas and games to make reading fun, visit [www.nea.org/readacross/resources/promotereading.html](http://www.nea.org/readacross/resources/promotereading.html).



## What's new in research?



Is the amount of television a person watches an indication of his or her state of mind? According to a study by University of Maryland sociology professor John Robison, it might be. Using General Social Survey data collected from 45,000 people by the University of Chicago over a span of 35 years, Dr. Robison and his research team found that the more activities a person enjoyed, like reading, traveling, playing sports or a musical instrument, gardening, volunteering, and meeting new people, the happier they were. And, while they also enjoyed television, they spent a lot less time watching it than unhappy people. It turns out there is a link between television watching and happiness. Happy people watch less television; unhappy people watch more television. Read more about this research at [www.nytimes.com/2008/11/20/health/research/20happy.html?partner=rss&emc=rss](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/20/health/research/20happy.html?partner=rss&emc=rss).

## Tidbits for the Month



According to the National Blood Collection and Utilization Report, someone needs blood every two seconds! And, while 37% of the U.S. population is eligible to donate, only 10% regularly give blood. In fact, in 2007, 71.5% of donated blood was from repeat donors. **January is National Blood Donor Month** - If you are a blood donor, you already know it's important to give. If you are not a blood donor, consider becoming one. It doesn't hurt, your body quickly replaces the one pint of blood you donate, and it's a way



to pay it forward. Just imagine that your child needs blood and there are not enough donations to meet her needs. Learn more about donating blood at the American Association of Blood Banks at 301-215-6526 or visit [www.aabb.org/Content/Donate\\_Blood/Blood\\_Donation\\_FAQs/](http://www.aabb.org/Content/Donate_Blood/Blood_Donation_FAQs/). Find a blood donation center near you at [www.aabb.org/Content/Donate\\_Blood/Where\\_to\\_Donate/](http://www.aabb.org/Content/Donate_Blood/Where_to_Donate/).

**Family Medical History** - Knowing your child's past health history can keep him healthy in the future. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers tips and tools for collecting family health history at <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/FamilyHistory/>.



**Family Voices National Conference** - May 3 - 5, 2009, Washington, D.C. Visit [www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org) often for updates.

## Share your news with others!

We love to hear from partner and family organizations and invite you to share news about your organization's programs and activities. To share your tidbits and/or subscribe to this publication, e-mail Betsy Anderson, IMPACT project director, at [banderson@familyvoices.org](mailto:banderson@familyvoices.org).

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