



# Bright Futures: Family Matters


## Tips for a Healthy Fall!


Family routines change with each season. The biggest season of change is fall - the time of year when children go back to school. Here are some 'building blocks' that will help keep children and their families healthy throughout the school year.




 **Well-child Visits:** Make appointments to review each child's general health & well-being. Talk to your child about what to expect; make a list of questions to ask; write down observations about your child's development; note any concerns. If your child participates in school or community sports, ask the doctor to fill out sports physical forms. Be sure your child is up to date with immunizations as well as other health screenings for vision, dental & hearing.

 **Immunizations:** These are the most important form of preventive medicine. They not only protect your child from getting certain diseases, they also protect your child's friends and classmates. Check the 2006 schedule of recommended childhood & adolescent immunizations at [www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.htm#printable](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.htm#printable) (English **en Español**) or call the Centers for Disease Control Immunization Hotline at 1-800-232-4636 (English **en Español**) or 1-888-232-6348 (TTY).

 **Dental Visits:** Cavities are the most common childhood disease. If left untreated, they can become a major health problem. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that children see a dentist twice a year, more often if they have certain health conditions or are at risk for tooth decay. Visit <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/HealthInformation/DiseasesAndConditions/ChildrensOralHealth/> for information (English **en Español**) about children's oral health, including children with special health needs.

 **Sleep:** Each child has different sleep needs, but one thing is the same; lack of sleep is unhealthy. If your child has special health needs, sleep deprivation can make them worse. Children who do not sleep enough have trouble paying attention in school. In general, school-aged children need 9 - 10 hours a night. Learn more about sleep habits & bedtime routines at [www.kidshealth.org/parent/general/sleep/sleep.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/general/sleep/sleep.html) (English **en Español**).

 **Nutrition:** Good nutrition helps ensure a child's health, growth & development. Serve your children three meals a day that include a variety of foods. Children are more apt to eat foods they help choose and/or prepare. Eat family meals together as often as possible. For healthy meal ideas visit [www.mealsmatter.org/CookingForFamily/Planning/index.aspx](http://www.mealsmatter.org/CookingForFamily/Planning/index.aspx).



**School lunches:** School lunch periods do not always coincide with times when your child is hungry. Pack healthy snacks that your child can eat instead of a full meal. If your child buys lunch, make sure there are healthy choices. Learn about healthy lunches at [www.kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition\\_fit/nutrition/lunch.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/nutrition/lunch.html).

**Allergy Alert:** More & more children have food allergies. The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network at [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org) has information to keep your child safe at school.



**Snacks:** Children are hungry after school. Have healthy snacks ready when they get home. For ideas, go to [www.webmd.com/content/article/71/81444.htm](http://www.webmd.com/content/article/71/81444.htm).



**Physical Activity:** School budget cutbacks & pressure to prepare children for state standardized tests means physical education & recess are no longer part of many children's school day. Have a family meeting to brainstorm ways to include walks, bicycle rides or other activities in your family's daily routine. Visit [www.ehow.com/how\\_1926\\_child-start-exercising.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_1926_child-start-exercising.html) to learn more.



**Screen time:** The more time your child spends watching TV, using the computer & playing video games, the less time your child is physically active. Establish family rules for screen time, make informed choices about shows to watch, and turn off the TV during mealtimes. Learn how TV affects kids' health at [www.csun.edu/science/health/docs/tv&health.html](http://www.csun.edu/science/health/docs/tv&health.html).



**Special Needs:** Review your child's IEP or 504 plan and talk to the school nurse and teachers about your child's health condition. The Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers website at [www.taalliance.org/centers/index.htm](http://www.taalliance.org/centers/index.htm) lists the Parent Training and Information Center for each state. These centers help families ensure their children with special needs receive appropriate educational services.

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...



Hearing loss is the most common birth defect. For every 1,000 births, three babies will have some degree of deafness. In 2006, the **Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** launched a *Hear from the Start, Talk for a Lifetime* campaign. The goals are to 1) raise awareness that children who are deaf or hard of hearing can learn to listen & talk, and 2) ensure that every child with hearing loss has access to highly qualified professionals trained to support and facilitate audition and spoken language communication. To learn more about this campaign contact the **AG Bell Assn** at: 3417 Volta Place, NW, Washington, DC 20007

Tel: 202/337-5220

TTY: 202/337-5221

Fax: 202/337-8314

Email: [info@agbell.org](mailto:info@agbell.org)

Website: [www.agbell.org](http://www.agbell.org)



## Family Resource Corner

**Family Routines** - Daily routines help families stay organized and give children a sense of stability. When children know what is expected of them (brushing teeth, doing homework, helping to set the table), they are more likely to develop a sense of responsibility. Read more about the importance of daily and holiday routines and learn helpful tips for staying on track at [www.childcareaware.org/en/dailyparent/volume.php?id=16](http://www.childcareaware.org/en/dailyparent/volume.php?id=16).

**Backpacks** - are your child's school responsibilities literally weighing him or her down? More than 40 million kids carry backpacks. Children should not carry more than 10% of their body weight in their packs. Heavy packs are the leading cause of back pain and back injury in children. Learn more about important features for children's backpacks at [www.consumerreports.org/cro/babies-kids/backpacks-for-kids-405/overview/index.htm?resultPageIndex=1&resultIndex=1&searchTerm=backpacks](http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/babies-kids/backpacks-for-kids-405/overview/index.htm?resultPageIndex=1&resultIndex=1&searchTerm=backpacks).

**Adolescent Attitudes** - Sometimes changes in a teen's attitudes and behaviors are not just growing pains. These changes can mean the child is having a mental health problem and needs help. Learn the warning signs, and access mental health resources and information at [www.talklisten.org/](http://www.talklisten.org/) (English **en Español**).

**Bullying** - Bullying is not "just a fact of life." It is a serious and scary problem that affects 15 - 25 % of all students. Learn the signs and what you can do to help at [www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov) (English **en Español**).

## What's new in research?



**Family-School Partnerships** - When parents are involved in their children's education *and* participate in school-related events, their children are better students. There are many opportunities for family involvement when children are in elementary school. The challenge for schools and parents is to make families feel welcomed and provide opportunities to keep families involved as their children transition to middle and high school. The Harvard Family Research Project is studying how to strengthen and sustain family-school partnerships so families can be active participants in their children's education from kindergarten through high school. Read more at [www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/family.html](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/family.html).

## Tidbits for the Month

**November is National Family Caregivers Month.** This event promotes awareness of the issues and challenges family caregivers face as they care for someone who cannot take care of him or herself due to a disability or chronic illness. Learn more at [www.nfcacares.org](http://www.nfcacares.org).



**Parents are caregivers too!** When you are so busy taking care of your children, work and household responsibilities, it is easy to forget to take care of yourself. When was the last time you had a physical, took some time to yourself, or enjoyed some adult time with your husband, partner or a friend? Do you get enough sleep? Do you get enough exercise? Did you get a flu shot? For information and resources about adopting a healthier lifestyle, visit [www.americaonthemove.org](http://www.americaonthemove.org). Their mission is to promote healthy lifestyles for individuals, families and communities.



Many children grumble at the idea of going for a walk, except when it involves **Halloween "trick or treating."** Halloween is the most dangerous night of the year for children, aged 14 and under, to be out walking. Make sure your children wear reflective costumes, have flashlights, and if younger than 12, are supervised by an older adolescent or adult. If you are out driving, be exceptionally alert. Let's make sure the only things that go bump in the night are the real ghosts and goblins! Read more Halloween safety tips on the National Safety Council website at: [www.nsc.org/halloween\\_safety/](http://www.nsc.org/halloween_safety/).

## Share your news with others!

We're always looking for news and activities about partner and family organizations and programs. You are invited to share exciting events and activities about your organization. Email Betsy Anderson at [banderson@familyvoices.org](mailto:banderson@familyvoices.org) with your tidbits or to subscribe to this publication.

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