Disaster Preparedness Advisory Council
The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) appointed a Disaster Preparedness Advisory Council (DPAC) in 2007 to mobilize efforts related to pediatric preparedness planning and response. The DPAC recommends that children’s issues be addressed early on in the development of disaster preparedness programs and activities and encourages community planners to include pediatric experts in all levels of disaster planning and response. See the 2012-2015 DPAC strategic plan at www.aap.org/disasters/strategicplan. The AAP provides quarterly reports and newsletters. For details, see www.aap.org/disasters/contactnetwork.

AAP Children and Disasters Web Site
The DPAC provides oversight for the AAP Children and Disasters Web site at www.aap.org/disasters, which is a comprehensive resource for health professionals, policymakers, child care and school representatives, and families.

Helping Children Understand and Adjust to Loss
Resources should be offered to children and families early on to help them understand and cope with a personal loss.

- After a Loved One Dies - How Children Grieve, and How Parents and Other Adults Can Support Them | Spanish translation
- Guidelines for Responding to the Death of a Student or School Staff – Helps school administrators, teachers, and crisis team members respond to the needs of students and staff after a loss such as the death of a student or staff member.
- Guidelines for Schools Responding to Death by Suicide – Helps school administrators, teachers, and crisis team members respond to the needs of students and staff after a suicide has impacted the school environment as well as when an individual student's life may be impacted by a suicide within the family.
- The Pediatrician and Childhood Bereavement (AAP policy).

Pediatricians can view brief (1-3 minute) video clips of children and their parents explaining the impact of bereavement:

- Long-Term Impact of Bereavement
- Impact on Academic Functioning
- Anxiety and Withdrawal
- Considering Peer Interactions
- Grief Triggers
- The Positive Impact of Providing Support
- The Important Role Teachers Can Play in Supporting Grieving Students

Promoting Adjustment and Helping Children Cope
After a disaster, children may have difficulty coping and may develop a range of symptoms, including depression, anxiety, or bereavement. This Web page includes resources that can be offered to pediatricians, children, and families to help them understand and cope with loss. Key resources include the AAP policy, "Psychosocial Implications of Disaster or Terrorism on Children: A Guide for the Pediatrician" and information on pediatrician self-care after a disaster. In this report, specific children's responses are delineated, risk factors for adverse reactions are discussed, and advice is given for pediatricians to ameliorate the effects of disaster on children. Also see Talking to Children About Disasters.

Supporting Pediatricians
The long-term needs of pediatricians providing care for the children in the areas affected by the disaster must also be considered. Although a pediatrician's first response might be to ensure personal safety and that of family and colleagues while also attempting to meet as many of the needs of their patients and families as possible, the experience of personal injury or loss and witnessing the impact of a disaster on patients and their families will influence their ability to respond professionally. Pediatricians may also experience fear, tension, sadness, and exhaustion. See A Critical Concern: Pediatrician Self-care After Disasters.

In addition, listening to trauma stories may have an emotional toll. Awareness of the impact of this indirect trauma exposure, known as secondary traumatic stress, helps to protect the pediatrician's health and ensures that children receive the best possible care. For more information about secondary traumatic stress, see Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Fact Sheet for Child-Serving Professionals.

Pediatric Bereavement Lectureship Program
In 2012, the AAP, National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement, and New York Life Foundation launched a Pediatric Bereavement Lectureship Program to offer training to pediatric health care providers to increase skills in supporting grieving children/families. For more information, see www.aap.org/disasters/lectureship.

For additional information on AAP disaster preparedness initiatives, e-mail DisasterReady@aap.org.
Strategies for Systems Change in Children’s Mental Health: A Chapter Action Kit

Developed in collaboration with the Department of Community, State, and Chapter Affairs, the Chapter Action Kit outlines numerous strategies that AAP chapters can use to improve children’s mental health programs and services in their state. Included in the tool kit is a summary of collaborative programs around the country involving mental health services interfacing with pediatric clinical care settings.

Improving Mental Health Services in Primary Care: Reducing Administrative and Financial Barriers to Access and Collaboration* (Pediatrics, April 2009)

This Pediatrics special article on administrative and financial barriers to collaborative mental health care was jointly developed with the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The paper will be helpful to advocacy efforts at the local, regional, and national levels.

The Future of Pediatrics: Mental Health Competencies for Pediatric Primary Care (Pediatrics, July 2009)

This policy statement on mental health competencies for primary care clinicians was jointly developed with the AAP Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. This statement will be helpful in developing and guiding continuing medical education opportunities for practicing clinicians and assisting training programs in formulating curricula.

Educational Opportunities

Several teleconferences* are available at www.aap.org/mentalhealth. These include Collaborative Models in Rural Pediatrics: Integrating Mental Health, The 15 Minute Mental Health Visit, Partnering to Address Mental Health Concerns in Early Education and Child Care, and Linking and Integrating With Primary Care: The Medical Home Model for Children’s Mental Health.

Collaborative Mental Health Care

This online continuing medical education module focuses on providing collaborative care to address children’s mental health concerns. It is available at: www.pedialink.org.

Enhancing Pediatric Mental Health Care: A Report from the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Mental Health (Pediatrics, June 2010)

The supplement, “Enhancing Pediatric Mental Health Care: Report from the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Mental Health,” outlines strategies to enhance pediatric mental health at both the community level and in individual pediatric practices. The report also provides clinical algorithms to guide primary care clinicians through the process of implementing mental health care into a pediatric practice. With these enhancements to their practices in place, pediatricians can help families to build strength and resilience in their children, to recognize mental health problems, and to coordinate care in the medical home for children and adolescents with mental health problems. The supplement was supported by the AAP, AAP Friends of Children Fund, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Department of Health and Human Services.

Addressing Mental Health in Primary Care: A Clinician’s Toolkit

This toolkit was designed to assist primary care clinicians with implementation of the process described by the mental health algorithms including screening, diagnosing, and managing mental health conditions in practice. The toolkit is designed in a chronic care model approach and focuses on 7 symptom cluster areas as they would present in a primary care setting: social-emotional problems in infants and young children, anxiety, depression, inattention and impulsivity, disruptive behavior and aggression, substance use and abuse, and learning difficulties.

For more information about AAP mental health activities, please e-mail mentalhealth@aap.org.