



FOSTER CARE FRIENDLY TIP SHEET FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Office-wide

- Welcome all children and teens
- Use respectful language
 - Don't label children or families
 - Ask what the children or teens call their parents (foster or birth) or kin and use that term
 - Use the term "child in foster care" or "teen in foster care" instead of "foster child"
- Understand that children and teens in foster care have special needs
- Meet all the criteria for a [medical home](#) for children and teens in foster care
- Be comfortable and knowledgeable about the impact of trauma on children, teens, and families
- Be comfortable and knowledgeable about the impact of foster care on children, teens, and families
- Provide advice and support to children and teens throughout transitions and crises that may arise during foster care
- Provide advice to families about supporting children and teens through transitions and the crises that arise during foster care
- Learn about the resources in your community
 - Help families to access these resources
- Develop relationships with local child welfare authorities
 - Obtain medical records
 - Communicate health needs
 - Encourage consideration of health needs in placement decisions

Front Desk

- Ensure that phone numbers for foster care agencies and child protective services are readily available
- Ensure that medical records contain parent (foster or birth) or kin, caseworker, mental health therapist, and legal guardian contact information, as well as contact information for others as appropriate and relevant
- Schedule visits with children and teens in foster care
 - Shortly after entry into foster care
 - At an appropriate time of day in order to minimize school absences by allowing extra time for all visits (*the duration of the visit should reflect the more intense and complex health needs of the foster care population*)



Examination Room

- Look the child or teen in the eye
- Ask open-ended questions
- Listen attentively
- Use the strength-based approach and language
 - Look for and encourage strengths
 - Develop goals and expectations with teens
 - Show children and teens their potential
- Understand the language of foster care
- Provide the parent (foster or birth) or kin with anticipatory guidance regarding support for children and teens through transitions and fostering attachment
- Provide health care according to the [health care standards](#) for children and teens as outlined in [Fostering Health](#)
- Ask about and address common areas of need, even if not mentioned in conversation
 - Dental health
 - Mental health
 - School/educational needs
- Help older children or teens to learn about and manage their own health
 - Create a portable health summary for teens

After the Visit

- Contact the caseworker
- Provide a copy of the health summary to the caseworker and parent (foster or birth) or kin
- Make all necessary referrals
- Communicate health information to caseworkers in an appropriate and timely manner
- Understand and make timely referrals for mental health evaluations, developmental or educational evaluations, and dental assessments as appropriate
- Provide [health care management and coordination](#) in collaboration with all of the professionals involved, as well as parents (foster or birth) or kin and others, to develop health services, mechanisms of communication, and information management that enhance access of children and teens to health care and optimize health outcomes

