Children’s Health: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do

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In 2012

- 73.7 million children in the United States
  - 24.1 million 0–5 years of age
  - 24.5 million 6–11 years of age
  - 25.1 million 12–17 years of age
- 1.7 million more than in 2000
- 80.3 million projected in 2030
What do we need?

- Provide children with the environment, skills, and motivation to choose healthy behaviors and avoid risk behaviors
- Develop health promoting and protecting habits that can last a lifetime
- Create living, learning, and playing environments in which children can achieve their full potential
- Increase access to appropriate health services
How are we doing?

**Good news**
- Preterm and low birthweight births
- Infant mortality
- Teen births
- Child maltreatment
- Exposure to second hand smoke

**Bad news**
- Overweight children
- Asthma
- Activity limitation resulting from one or more chronic health conditions
- Serious emotional or behavioral difficulties
CDC Role in Promoting Healthy Childhood

- A population-based approach
- Focus on the most vulnerable children
- Address all levels of the social ecology
- Take advantage of CDC’s unique niche at the interface of science and action
Parents Are Key

- Information
- Tools
- Skills
Parenting and Health Outcomes

- Parenting
- Behavioral/Emotional Problems
- Brain Architecture
- Adverse Exposures
- Risk Behaviors for Chronic/Infectious Disease
- Suicidal Behavior
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Aggressive/Violent Behavior
- Youth Violence

Adult Disease
Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships (SSNRs)

- Strong, positive relationships consistently associated with positive outcomes for children
- Parents and other caring adults are key elements of SSNRs
- Foundation for healthy development and the prevention of disease, injury, and illness during childhood and in later life
Factors that Affect Health

Examples

- Solve disputes peacefully
- Multi-systemic family therapy
- Trauma informed care
- Head Start
- Early home visitation
- Built environment
- Alcohol policies
- Poverty, education, housing, inequality

Changing the Context to make individuals’ default decisions healthy

Long-lasting Protective Interventions

Clinical Interventions

Counseling & Education

Socioeconomic Factors

Largest Impact

Smallest Impact
Long-Lasting Protective Interventions

**Individual-level:**
- Early childhood home visitation programs

**Family-level:**
- Comprehensive early childhood intervention programs
- Triple P

**School-level:**
- Universal School-based programs
- Teen dating violence prevention programs
Changing the Context

Community Policing/Street Outreach:
• Cure Violence model

Built Environment:
• Green space/park development

Environmental Design:
• Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
Socioeconomic Factors

**Business Improvement Districts**

**Alcohol:**
- Study access (e.g., outlet density and price)

**Poverty/Equity:**
- Increase economic self-sufficiency
- Assistance for vulnerable families
Challenges

- **Increases in**
  - children living in poverty
  - births to unmarried women
  - children who speak a language other than English at home
  - households with children reporting shelter cost burden, crowding, and/or physically inadequate housing

- **Decreases in**
  - children living with at least one parent employed year round, full time
  - children living with two married parents