

Bright Futures: Family Matters

Back to School!

The end of summer and start of school signals new beginnings. As an update of Fall 2004's issue, we have included some old favorites, as well as new sites and information to get your family off to a healthy school year!



1. Immunizations. These are among the best protections your children can have. Immunization schedules have changed in recent years, and include new requirements for very young children and teenagers. For more information, talk to your child's doctor or go to www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.htm to see the most current schedule.

2. Well child health and dental visits. These important visits review your children's general health and well-being. They are also opportunities for you, as parents, to get information and ask questions. For more information, check out the Bright Futures Family Pocket Guide at www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org or visit the American Academy of Pediatrics Parenting Corner at www.aap.org/healthtopics/commped.cfm

3. Gym, physical education and recess. In many communities, limited budgets mean smaller physical education programs. Find out what's happening in your town and schools and what you and others can do to ensure your children get the exercise so beneficial to growing children. Visit www.nasbe.org/healthyschools/physical_activity.html for more information about school policies.

4. School lunches. Are there healthy food options at your child's school: lunches, snack and drink machines? Or can your child bring food? What can you and others do to work with schools to ensure the availability of healthy foods children will eat? See:

www.kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/nutrition/lunch.html or my.webmd.com/content/article/71/81444.htm

5. School Safety. Families and children want safe schools. Violence in schools is on the rise and bullying is part of the problem. To keep your children safe teach them to be assertive rather than aggressive or violent when confronted by a bully. Tell them to walk away and get help from an adult in dangerous situations. For more tips visit: www.pta.org/pr_magazine_article_details_111763875346_8.html or www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

6. Children with special needs. Make sure that those who need to know about your child's needs - nurses, teachers, etc. - have your child's individualized education or 504 plans. Also, make sure your child's medication list is up to date and that the school nurse knows about any changes in your child's condition. See also: www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/backtoschool.html

7. Snacks/After school snacks. Plan ahead to have healthy snacks on hand that your hungry children will enjoy when they get home from school. Try to limit high calorie foods around the house to reduce temptation. www.mealsmatter.org/eatingforhealth/topics/article.aspx?articleid=43 or www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/thriftyliving/tl-snacks.html

8. After-school activities. More exercise, less screen time (TV, computer, videos)! Make sure that your children have regular opportunities for active play every day. See: www.ncpad.org especially for kids with disabilities or www.scholastic.com/familymatters/parentguides/afterschool.htm or www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity/index.html

9. Meals/Family Meals. Maybe you already eat well or maybe this is the year you'd like to plan healthier meals for your family. Involve your children in choosing foods and helping to prepare meals. Eat together as a family as often as you can.

www.fns.usda.gov/tr/resources/nibbles/family_meals.pdf

10. Family activities. Think about activities that will get your whole family moving. Try to build in regular times to take walks, play catch, swim - activities everyone will enjoy. For ideas that will work for your family's interests and time see

www.americaonthemove.org/WGroups.asp?PageID=4 or www.pta.org/pr_magazine_article_details_11181679044_68.html

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 digest of articles and news clips to share with families, family organizations, and our professional partners. Check out our Family Voices web sites at www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org and www.familyvoices.org

Partners...



The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality. They carry out this mission through research, community services, education and advocacy to save babies' lives. Researchers, volunteers, educators, out-reach workers and advocates work together to give all babies a fighting chance against the threats to their health: prematurity, birth defects and low birthweight. www.marchofdimes.org

March of Dimes
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605
Phone: (914) 428-7100



Family Resource Corner

♥ **FitSource** This site links child care and after school providers to a wide variety of physical activity and nutrition resources. You will find links to activities, lesson plans, healthy recipes, information for parents, and many other downloadable tools that can be used to incorporate physical activity and nutrition into child care and after school programs. <http://65.205.63.184//fitsource/>

♥ **PBS Kids - It's My Life: Movin' On Up** This site provides both insight and information about what to expect when a student transitions from elementary to middle school. Aimed at students, *Movin' On Up* includes games, interviews with middle school students and a journal kids can use to record their feelings.

<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/school/middleschool>

♥ **NikeGo** A program created for kids and the parents, teachers and coaches who influence their behavior. Teaches kids about healthy lifestyles and the joy of physical activity.

<http://www.nike.com/nikebiz/nikego/>

♥ **Resources for Families Affected by Katrina.** Many sites now offer information and resources.

♥ The Academy of Pediatrics has released a new guide on the implications of disaster or terrorism on children -

www.AAP.org

♥ "The Educational Rights of Homeless Children" can be viewed on the Federation for Children's website -

www.fcsn.org

♥ See the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) site for ways they can respond flexibly -

www.cms.hhs.gov/katrina/. Medicaid information for out-of-state evacuees, call (888) 342-6207.

What's new in research?

Walking to School Makes the Grade!



A new study, featured in the August 16, 2005 online issue of the *British Medical Journal* shows that children who walk to school "are more active for the rest of the day than their peers who arrive by car, bus or train."¹ Researchers found that "teenagers who walked to school exercised more than those who rode. Those who walked both to and from school got 25% more exercise over an entire weekday, 8.9% more during school hours, 18.4 % during lunch break and 17% more outside of school." Similar results were found for 10-year-olds. For five-year-olds, however, walking to school did not increase their physical activity level.

¹ Nicholas Bakalar, "High Marks for a Walk to School", *New York Times*, August 23, 2005, p D7



Tidbits for the Month

September is Home and Sports Eye Safety Month!

There are thousands of eye injuries a year related to common household products and sports. Here are some tips to keep your family's eyes safe:

- ♥ Buy and use sports eye protectors, available at sporting goods stores or from your eye doctor.
- ♥ Make sure all stairs have handrails and enough light
- ♥ Supervise children's crafts. Scissors and glues are common causes of eye injuries in children.

For information, visit www.preventblindness.org, or call 1-800-331-2020.



Hurricane Katrina: How you can help!

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, consider donating to Family Voices to assist families in affected states - www.familyvoices.org

Share your news with others!

We're always looking for news and activities about family organization and programs to post. Share exciting events and activities about your organization that will be interesting to others. Email Kati Cawley at kcawley@familyvoices.org or fax at (617) 399-8325 with your tidbits or to subscribe

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