



Children's Health Initiative

Overview

There is a strong link between health and well-being early in life and health and well-being later in life. That's why HealthPartners is working to improve the health and well-being of children from pregnancy through age 5 by concentrating on 10 areas of focus known as our Children's Health Initiative.

The three broad aims of the initiative are to promote early brain development, provide family-centered care and to strengthen communities.

This long-term initiative includes the following areas of focus:

♥ Early Brain Development

- **Read, Talk, Sing** encourages every caregiver to “exercise” their child’s developing brain by reading, talking and singing. As part of this work, all children 6 months to 5 years old receive a book at every well-child visit through the Reach Out and Read program. We also have moved the messaging “upstream” by providing expecting mothers a book and information at their OB visit.
- **Social Emotional Development** identifies and refers children with social/emotional and developmental delays to the appropriate resources. All children from 2 months to 5 years are screened at regular intervals during well-child visits.
- **Healthy Beginnings** promotes drug, alcohol and tobacco free pregnancies by universally screening all pregnant women and offering non-judgmental support.

♥ Family-Centered Care

- **Breastfeeding Promotion** encourages mothers to feed their babies only human milk for the first six months by offering support and resources to patients, members and employees.
- **Postpartum Depression** adds depression screening to the list of preventive services for new mothers at their OB visits as well as their infant’s well-child visits.

Did you know ...

- Over the last 5 years in Minnesota, the number of babies born with mothers using drugs, alcohol or tobacco has doubled.
- Every year, more than 1 in 3 American children start kindergarten without the language skills they need to learn to read.
- Reading proficiency by the 3rd grade is the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success.
- As many as one-half of American children with a developmental delay will not be identified by the time they enter kindergarten, even though most will show mild developmental delays by two years of age.

- **Standard Workflows** supports long-term health goals for children by aligning evidence-based guidelines, clinical tools and measurement across the organization.
- **OB-Pediatric-Family Medicine Collaboration** supports coordinated care for families and children across specialties and medical groups.

♥ Strengthen Communities

- **Decrease Teen Pregnancy** works to develop clinical standards for talking to adolescents about sex and makes long-term birth control methods more easily accessible.
- **Supporting High-Risk Families** expands access and partnerships with community programs to support families that are most at-risk.
- **Early Childhood Experience** works to identify and prevent exposure to harmful events that might impact a child's development.

Children's health is the foundation for health throughout life. By investing in the health of mothers and children, we can help ensure the happiness, health and success of the next generation.

For more information, visit healthpartners.com/childrenshealth

To follow our blog, HPhealthmatters.com

To contact, childrenshealthinitiative@healthpartners.com

Did you know ...

- Nearly 1 in 2 American children are living in poverty or near poverty.
- At least 80% of new mothers experience the "baby blues" following the birth of their baby. About 15% of mothers experience postpartum depression anytime in the first 12 months after delivery.
- 90% of a child's brain develops during the first 5 years of life. That's why brain exercise (Read, Talk, Sing) is so important in the earliest years.