

HEALTH PROMOTION: PROMOTING HEALTH AND PREVENTING ILLNESS

It is essential that health professionals identify and focus on the individual needs and concerns of the child and family, since families often hesitate to initiate discussion.

1. Identify relevant health promotion topics.

- Ask open-ended, nonjudgmental questions to obtain information and identify appropriate guidance

Example:

- “How is breastfeeding going? What questions/concerns do you have today?”

- Ask specific follow-up questions to communicate understanding and focus the discussion

Example:

- “How often and for how long do you breastfeed Manuel? How do you tell when he wants to be fed?”

- Listen for verbal and nonverbal cues to discover underlying or unidentified concerns

Example:

- “How do you balance your roles of partner and parent? When do you make time for yourself?”

Note:

- If parent hesitates with an answer, try to determine the reason.
- If parent brings in child multiple times for minor problems, explore the possibility of another unresolved concern.

2. Give personalized guidance.

- Introduce new information and reinforce healthy practices

Examples:

- Take time for self, time with partner
- Encourage partner to help care for baby
- Accept support from friends, family

3. Incorporate family and community resources.

- Approach child within context of family and community

- Identify each family member’s role

Examples:

- “Who helps you with Kim?”
- “How much rest are you getting?”

- Identify community resources such as lactation consultant or local La Leche League chapter

- Develop working relationships with community professionals, and establish lines of referral

- Create a list of local resources with contact information

4. Come to closure.

- Be sure that the health message is understood

Examples:

- “Have I addressed your concerns?”
- “Do you have any other concerns about Kim’s health?”

- Identify possible barriers

Example:

- “What problems do you think you might have following through with what we discussed today?”

Source: Reproduced with permission from Green M, Palfrey JS, Clark EM, Anastasi JM, eds. 2002. *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents* (2nd ed., rev.)—Pocket Guide. Arlington, VA: National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health.