

PARTNERSHIP: BUILDING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

A clinical partnership is a relationship in which participants join together to ensure health care delivery in a way that recognizes the critical roles and contributions of each partner (child, family, health professional, and community) in promoting health and preventing illness. Following are six steps for building effective health partnerships.

- 1. Model and encourage open, supportive communication with child and family.**
 - Integrate family-centered communication strategies
 - Use communication skills to build trust, respect, and empathy
- 2. Identify health issues through active listening and “fact finding.”**
 - Selectively choose Bright Futures general and age-appropriate interview questions
 - Ask open-ended questions to encourage more complete sharing of information
 - Communicate understanding of the issues and provide feedback
- 3. Affirm strengths of child and family.**
 - Recognize what each person brings to the partnership
 - Acknowledge and respect each person’s contributions
 - Commend family for specific health and developmental achievements
- 4. Identify shared goals.**
 - Promote view of health supervision as partnership between child, family, health professional, and community
 - Summarize mutual goals
 - Provide links between stated goals, health issues, and available resources in community
- 5. Develop joint plan of action based on stated goals.**
 - Be sure that each partner has a role in developing the plan
 - Keep plan simple and achievable
 - Set measurable goals and specific timeline
 - Use family-friendly negotiation skills to ensure agreement
 - Build in mechanism and time for follow-up
- 6. Follow up: Sustaining the partnership.**
 - Share progress, successes, and challenges
 - Evaluate and adjust plan
 - Provide ongoing support and resources

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.