

Promotion of Maternal and Child Health in Pediatric Care Settings to Prevent Infant Mortality

Advisory Committee on Infant and Maternal Mortality
June 14, 2023

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The mission of the American Academy of Pediatrics is to **attain optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being** for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults.



INFANT MORTALITY DATA*

Almost 20,000 infants died in the United States in 2020. The five leading causes of infant death in 2020 were:

- Congenital malformations
- Preterm birth and low birth weight.
- Sudden infant death syndrome.
- Unintentional injuries.
- Maternal complications.

** Although not top 5, it should be noted that infants <1 y accounted for about ½ of all child abuse fatalities (674) in 2021*

*Data from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr71/nvsr71-05.pdf>



BRIGHT FUTURES

- Bright Futures is a national health promotion and prevention initiative, led by the AAP and supported in part, by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.
- Bright Futures Guidelines provide age-specific, theory-based, and evidence-driven guidance for all preventive care screenings and health supervision visits.
- At least **one** prenatal visit is recommended to establish a medical home.
- A minimum of **nine** well-child visits are recommended by the time the child is 15 months of age—important touch points to provide screening and parenting education.



NEONATAL INITIATIVES

- AAP policy statement “[Levels of Neonatal Care](#),” which provides a review of data supporting the tiered provision of neonatal care and need for nationally consistent standards of care to improve neonatal outcomes.
- AAP developed the “[Standards for Levels of Neonatal Care: II, III, & IV](#)” which are considered a complementary implementation tool
 - Codify minimum requirements of care expected for each level of neonatal care from Special Care Nursery (level II SCN), to complex subspecialty care including surgery (level IV NICU).
- AAP [NICU Verification Program](#)
 - Establishing and implementing risk-appropriate neonatal care standards improve neonatal outcomes by ensuring that every infant receives care in a facility with the personnel and resources appropriate for the newborn’s needs and condition.



BREASTFEEDING INITIATIVES

Breastfeeding is associated with a reduction in infant mortality.

- **Policy**

- In 2022, updated the landmark breastfeeding policy "[Breastfeeding and the Use Of Human Milk](#)".
- Policy on the importance of paid family leave to support families in establishing successful breastfeeding.
- Policy on the pediatrician's role in decreasing racial disparities in breastfeeding.

- **Education**

- AAP created a [free, online breastfeeding curriculum](#) for medical schools and residency programs with funding from a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- An educational webinar 2022 to educate pediatricians on the AAP breastfeeding policy and breastfeeding research.
- in-person breastfeeding education at the National Conference & Exhibition (AAP Annual Meeting)

- **Leadership**

- Network of [breastfeeding champions](#) in every US state to promote and support local breastfeeding initiatives.



IMMUNIZATION INITIATIVES

- Collaborated with the FrameWorks Institute to develop and report and tools for supporting public discourse about vaccines.
- Red Book Online-Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedules and resources.
- Communication guides are available to facilitate discussing maternal and newborn, child, and adolescent immunizations with families and caregivers.
- Network of Chapter Immunization Representatives across the country to support immunization work in each AAP chapter.



SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME

Policy- 2022 Sleep Related Infant Deaths: Recommendations for Reducing Infant Deaths in the Sleep Environment

Programs- Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) Prevention Program aims to reduce overall rates of SUID and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in SUID

- Safe infant sleep resource development www.aap.org/safesleep
- Promotion of fatality review (Child Death Review and Fetal and Infant Mortality Review)
- National Collaborative for Safe Infant Sleep



THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY RELATIONAL HEALTH

- The physical and mental health of maternal caregivers and children are inherently linked.
- Family relationships promote resilience and positive health and mental outcomes for both caregivers and children.
- Relationships should be:
 - Safe: The relationship is free of physical or psychological harm. Children believe their caregivers will protect them.
 - Stable: The adult is dependably there for the child. Children believe their caregivers will meet their needs.
 - Nurturing: The child's physical, emotional, and developmental needs are sensitively and consistently met. Children believe their caregivers will use warmth and clear expectations to foster their development.
- Family-centered, two-generation approach to healthcare is needed to promote optimal growth and development.



TRAUMA AND INFANT MORTALITY

- ACEs literature has demonstrated the effects of childhood adversity on adult health
- Systemic racism and racial trauma effect the health and well-being of mothers
 - Evidence linked to infant mortality
- Caregivers who have experienced trauma may also experience substance use disorders, mental health concerns, and continued adversity.
 - Which may lead to child abuse, neglect and infant death
- Can impact ability to meet their child's physical and emotional needs, a term subsequently referred to as disrupted caregiving.



SUPPORTING MATERNAL HEALTH IN PEDIATRICS

- **AAP supports pediatricians in assessing and supporting the mental health of maternal caregivers**
- **Pediatricians can assess caregiver well-being during family/social history taking:**
 - “Has anything scary happened to you or your child?”
 - “What are you doing to take care of yourself? Does anyone help you take personal time?”
 - “I know we’ve talked a lot about your child’s health, but I want to stress that YOU matter as a person, too. Would it be ok to share some resources that other moms have found helpful?”
- **Brief interventions to support maternal health:**
 - Promote strength of caregiver-child relationship
 - Encourage understanding and responding to child’s behavior, cues
 - Encourage reading and talking to the child
 - Encourage routines for security, sleep, diet, exercise, stress relief
 - Promote realistic expectations
 - Encourage social connections
 - Connect to community resources



MATERNAL AND RELATIONAL HEALTH AT AAP

- **Aligns with AAP Strategic Priorities:**
 - Mental Health
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
- **Capacity-Building:**
 - Patient care webpages and resources:
 - Maternal Health and Well-being
 - Perinatal Mental Health and Social Support,
 - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
 - Maternal Infant Health and Opioid Use
 - Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention www.aap.org/en/patient-care/child-abuse-and-neglect/prevention-of-child-abuse-and-neglect/
 - Trauma-Informed Care www.aap.org/tic
 - Conference presentations, journal articles, podcasts
 - Leveraging AAP Chapters through “Early Childhood Chapter Champions”



MATERNAL AND RELATIONAL HEALTH AT AAP (2)

- **AAP Policy on Maternal/Relational Health**
 - [Incorporating recognition and management of perinatal depression into pediatric practice](#)
 - [Preventing childhood toxic stress: Partnering with families and communities to promote relational health](#)
 - [Trauma-informed care in child health systems](#)
 - [Families Affected by Parental Substance Use](#)
 - [The Role of Integrated Care in a Medical Home for Patients with a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder](#)
 - [A Public Health Response to Opioid Use in Pregnancy](#)
 - [Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome](#)



EXISTING AAP PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES – MATERNAL AND EARLY RELATIONAL HEALTH

- **Pediatrician Education**
 - Perinatal Depression Curriculum
 - EQIPP – Strength-based Early Childhood Screening and Referral
 - Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health ECHO and Pedialink
 - Early Relational Health Implementation Guide and Teaching Videos
 - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
 - Maternal Infant Health and Opioid Use
 - Pediatric Approach to Trauma, Treatment and Resilience
- **Patient Care Improvements**
 - ASHEW Practice Transformation and Strength-based screening and referral
 - Bright Futures™ Social-emotional Development Screening and Suicide Prevention
 - Perinatal Mental Health Community of Practice
 - Building Capacity for Trauma-Informed Pediatric Care
 - Improving Continuity of Care for Children and Families Affected by Prenatal Alcohol Exposure
 - Maternal-Infant Health and Opioid Use Virtual Learning Collaborative

