

Preventive care important for healthy kids

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A mother and her 3-year-old daughter visit Duke Pediatric Clinic in Durham.

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To quote the honorable social reformer and orator Frederick Douglass: "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." Those invested in the lives of young children know this to be true, as the best outcomes for children stem from a healthy foundation that ensures needs are met across every domain – physical, social emotional, cognitive.

As part of that strong foundation, health professionals recognize the importance of comprehensive preventive health care, which averts health problems from developing in the first place and treats problems early on to prevent long-term illnesses.

In order for all young children to be at optimal health and development by the time they enter the classroom, we should focus on specific health efforts, such as ensuring all families have health insurance and a regular health care provider; ensuring primary care providers use standardized developmental screenings during well-child visits; and, educating parents on developmental milestones during routine

well-child visits.

It's not enough to assume a child's health problem isn't serious or that because a child seems relatively healthy that they shouldn't see their pediatrician for well-child visits. Early diagnosis and prevention is critical to healthy development. And measuring children's health is parallel to their opportunity for success in school.

Data from the Kindergarten Health Assessment (KHA) Project, a collaborative project of Durham's Partnership for Children and Durham Public Schools that analyzes state mandated KHA forms to assess the health status of young children when they begin kindergarten, shows that more than one in four children had a reported illness, health risk or developmental concern. In addition, vision and hearing problems exist at an early age; a child's ability to see and hear clearly is vital for the development of reading skills and communication with adults and other children. Of all children entering kindergarten at Durham Public Schools in the 2010-2011 school year, one in 10 were referred to an eye doctor or already had a diagnosed vision condition, and 5 percent were diagnosed with hearing issues.

We know that health conditions that go unaddressed have significant consequences later on. Neglecting to identify or care for children with health or developmental problems can lead to difficulty learning, decreased ability to show good emotional control, increased risk for obesity, diabetes, and even a shorter life span. In order to educate parents, schools, and health care professionals on the importance of preventive care for young children, the Partnership and its partners developed a key that outlines preventive care, a schedule for immunizations and community resources.

WHAT IS A WELL-CHILD CHECK-UP?

- A visit to your child's nurse or doctor when your child is not sick
- A way to track your child's growth and development
- Required shots are given to your child to stay healthy
- An opportunity to ask the doctor questions you have about your child's health

Call your Medicaid Health Check Coordinator at 919-613-6509, your child's doctor's office, or your current health insurance provider for assistance in scheduling an appointment.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A WELL-CHILD CHECK-UP?

- Height and weight measurement
- Developmental screening – answer questions about child's development and behavior concerning potty training, tantrums, talking, reading, interacting with other children and sleep.
- Vision screening
- Hearing screening
- Blood pressure
- Nutritional assessment
- Immunizations

HOW OFTEN DOES MY CHILD NEED A WELL-CHILD CHECK-UP?

Parents should take their child to the doctor for a Well-Child visit at the following ages: 2 weeks, 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 18 months, 2 - 20 years recommended each year

IMMUNIZATIONS FOR CHILDREN

Immunizations help protect your child from very serious diseases, many of which are rare, but the risk is still present. Please ask your child's doctor about your child's immunization schedule. Up to date immunizations are required for entry into kindergarten.

Required: Hib, DTaP, Hepatitis B, Polio, MMR, Chickenpox

Recommended: Rotavirus, Pneumococcal, Influenza

DURHAM HEALTH RESOURCES:

Durham County Health Department

(919) 560-7600

Maternal Care, WIC Program, Immunizations, Dental Clinic, Health and Nutrition Education

Durham Social Services

(919) 560-8000

Medicaid, Job Search Assistance, Food and Nutrition Services, Subsidized Child Care, Crisis Services

Lincoln Community Health Center

(919) 956-4000

Prenatal, Pediatrics, and Dental Care, Pharmacy, WIC Program, Breastfeeding Support

Welcome Baby

(919) 560-7150

Parent Education and Support, Community Resources, Giving Closet, Car Seat Program

El Centro Hispano

(919) 687-4635

Adult Education, Parenting Support, Youth Support, Health Education and Support Services

LATCH (Local Access to Coordinated Healthcare) for uninsured Durham County residents

Durham Community Health Network (DCHN) for Durham County Medicaid recipients

Care Management Staff: (919) 613-6509

Home Visits, Assistance Making Appointments, Health Education, Application Assistance (Medicaid, Food Stamps), Links to Community Resources (housing, food, clothing, bills assistance, prescriptions), Transportation Assistance (health-related)