



Erasmus + VET Strategic Partnership

IENE 8 - Empowering migrant and refugee families with parenting skills

Bite sized Learning Tool no. 4.2.

HEALTHY CHILD

AUTHORS:

SAMARTZI CHRISTINA / SAKELLARAKI OURANIA

MDM GREECE / DOCTORS OF THE WORLD – GREEK DELEGATION

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National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens



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TITLE: 4.2. HEALTHY CHILD (2 – 6 YEARS OLD)

4.2. HEALTHY CHILD

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. The first objective of this bite-size learning module is to present the key aspects of raising healthy children aged 2 to 6 years old.
2. The second objective is to identify the basic principles of identifying the basic elements for the health of a child aged 2 to 6 years old, including mental health.
3. The third objective of this bite-size learning unit is to raise awareness regarding the aspects of raising healthy children within the refugee and migrant communities.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY HEALTHYCHILD?

Having a healthy lifestyle, eating well and being physically active helps children to: a) build strong bones, b) grow and develop healthily, c) improve their concentration at school, d) maintain a healthy weight, and e) be alert and active. Being unhealthy can lead to later life, such as: a) Type 2 diabetes, b) high blood pressure and cholesterol levels, c) some types of cancers, d) heart disease, e) heart stroke, f) joint problems and breathing problems, and g) being overweight and obese.

Good health – for you and your children – is all about striking the right balance between healthy eating and regular physical activity. (<https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/parents-carers/fags/what-is-healthy.aspx>). Understanding certain key topics of importance to families and health care professionals is essential to promoting the health and well-being of children, from birth through adolescence and young adulthood.

The relevance of the above element to IENE 8 project, resides in the importance of these issues in the context of assisting refugee and migrants parents with parenting skills.

Promoting Healthy Development: Early Childhood - 2 Through 6 Years At the beginning of this developmental period, a child's understanding of the world, people, and objects is bound by what he can see, hear, feel, and manipulate physically. By the end of early childhood, the process of thinking moves beyond the here and now to incorporate the use of mental symbols and the development of fantasy. For the infant, mobility is a goal to be mastered. For the active young child, it is a mechanism for exploration and increasing independence. The 2-year-old is beginning to use the art of imitation in his repetition of familiar sounds and physical gestures. The 6-year-old has mastered most of the complex rules of the languages that are spoken in the home and can communicate thoughts and ideas effectively.

How does a child grow and develop between the ages of 2 and 6? The ages between 2 and 6 are often called the preschool years. During these years, children change from clumsy toddlers into lively explorers of their world. A child develops in these main areas: Physical development. In these years, a child becomes stronger and starts to look longer and leaner. Cognitive development. A child this age makes great strides in being able to think and reason. In these years, children learn their letters, counting, and colors. Emotional and social development. Between the ages of 2 and 6, children gradually learn how to manage their feelings. By age 6, friends become important. Language. By age 2, most children can say at least 50 words. By age 6, a child may know thousands of words and be able to carry on conversations and tell stories. Sensory and motor development. By age 2, most children can walk upstairs one at a time, kick a ball, and draw simple strokes with a pencil. By age 6, most can dress and undress themselves and write

some lowercase and capital letters. Each child grows and gains skills at his or her own pace. It is common for a child to be ahead in one area, such as language, but a little behind in another. Learning what is normal for children this age can help you spot problems early or feel better about how your child is doing.

Why are routine medical visits needed? Routine checkups usually are scheduled several times during ages 2 to 6. They are important to check for problems and to make sure that your child is growing and developing as expected. In some areas, your child may see a public health nurse for routine checkups and immunizations. During these visits, the doctor will: Give your child a physical examination. Give your child any needed shots. Weigh and measure your child to see how he or she compares to other children of the same age. Ask questions about your child's behavior and your family. Ask about your child's favorite activities or friends. Routine checkups are a good time to talk with your doctor about any concerns you have about your child's health, growth, or behavior. Between visits, write down any questions you want to ask the doctor next time.

When should you call a doctor? Call your doctor anytime you have a concern about your child's physical or emotional health. Be sure to call if your child: Is not reaching developmental milestones as expected. Is not growing at a steady pace. Has lost skills he or she used to have, such as talking or running. Is overly aggressive, violent, or abusive. Doesn't seem to be doing well, even though you can't pinpoint what makes you uneasy.

How can you help your child during these years? It's important to learn about some of the behaviors you can expect during these years of rapid change. Temper tantrums, thumb-sucking, and nightmares are common issues in children at this age. Knowing what to expect can help you to be patient and get through the stressful moments. The best thing you can do for your child is to show your love and affection. But there are also many other ways you can help your preschooler grow and learn. Offer your child healthy foods. Keep lots of fruits, vegetables, and healthy snacks in the house. Make time for your child to be active. Limit TV and computer time to less than 1 hour a day for children 2 to 4 years old and 2 hours or less a day for children older than 4. Read and talk to your child. This helps children learn language and opens them up to new ideas. Help your child get enough rest. Teach skills, such as how to get dressed and how to use the toilet. Set limits that help your child feel safe and secure but that also allow your child to explore.

Sleep. 1-3 Years Old: 12 - 14 hours per day. As your child moves from the first year toward 18-21 months of age, he will likely lose his morning and early evening nap and sleep only once a day. While toddlers need up to 14 hours a day of sleep, they typically get only about 10. Most children from about 21 to 36 months of age still need one nap a day, which may range from one to three and a half hours long. They typically go to bed between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. and wake up between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. **3-6 Years Old: 10 - 12 hours per day.** Children at this age typically go to bed between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. and wake up around 6 a.m. and 8 a.m., just as they did when they were younger. At age 3, most children are still napping, while at age 5, most are not. Naps gradually become shorter, as well. New sleep problems do not usually develop after age 3.

Promoting Oral Health. Oral health is critically important to the overall health and well-being of infants, children, and adolescents. It covers a range of health promotion and disease prevention concerns, including dental caries; periodontal (gums) health; proper development and alignment of facial bones, jaws, and teeth; other oral diseases and conditions; and trauma or injury to the mouth and teeth. Oral health is an important issue requiring continued health supervision from the health care professional. Childhood caries is a preventable and transmissible infectious disease caused by bacteria (*Streptococcus mutans* or *Streptococcus sobrinus*) that form plaque on the surface of teeth. The bacteria interact with sugar in foods and beverages, turning them into acids that dissolve tooth enamel, causing caries.

Promoting Physical Activity. Participating in physical activity is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle and ideally begins in infancy and extends throughout adulthood. Regular physical activity increases lean body mass, muscle, and bone strength and promotes physical health. It fosters psychological well-being, can increase self-esteem and capacity for learning, and can help children and adolescents handle stress. Parents should emphasize physical activity, beginning early in a child's life. The dramatic rise in pediatric overweight and obesity in recent years has increased attention to the importance of physical activity. Along with a balanced and nutritious diet, regular physical activity is essential to prevent pediatric overweight.

Promoting Healthy Nutrition. Infancy, childhood, and adolescence are marked by rapid physical growth and development, and every child's and adolescent's health and development depends on good nutrition. Any disruption in appropriate nutrient intake may have lasting effects on growth potential and developmental achievement. Physical growth, developmental requirements, nutrition needs, and feeding patterns vary significantly during each stage of growth and development. The dramatic rise in pediatric overweight and obesity in recent years has increased health care professionals' and parents' level of attention to nutrition.

Immunisations. Immunisations should be offered to all children and their parents. General practices and child health record departments maintain a register of children under five years, invite families for immunisations and maintain a record of any adverse reactions on the GP record. Where necessary, local planning should aim to target excluded or at-risk families (including refugees, the homeless, travelling families, very young mothers, those not registered with a GP and those who are new to an area).

KEY POINTS

Regarding key aspects for a Healthy Child, we need to note:

1. General physical health
2. Emotional, behavioural and social development
3. Physical development
4. Speech and language development
5. Self-care skills and independence
6. Immunisations

Please also refer the relevant PowerPoint presentation for this bite-size learning unit.

ACTIVITY

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE PROMOTION OF A HEALTHY CHILD

1. What is emotional development?
2. How can I help my child's growth and development?

REFLECTION ON ONE ISSUE FROM THIS BITESIZED TOOL

Use this space to write down your answers to the questions of the above activities.

SELF ASSESSMENT

You have a child aged between 2 and 6 years old. When should I call a doctor?

REFERENCES

1. Top 10 Key Elements to Raising Healthy Children:
<https://www.pretendcity.org/raising-healthy-children/>
2. Healthy kids:
<https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/parents-carers/faqs/what-is-healthy.aspx>
3. Health link for children:
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/ta3612#ta6552>
4. Healthy child programme:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167998/Health_Child_Programme.pdf
5. Bright futures guidelines:
<https://brightfutures.aap.org/materials-and-tools/guidelines-and-pocket-guide/Pages/default.aspx>
6. Healthy development:
https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF4_HealthyDevelopment.pdf
7. WHO guidelines on child health:
https://www.who.int/publications/guidelines/child_health/en/
8. WHO To grow up healthy children :
<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/24-04-2019-to-grow-up-healthy-children-need-to-sit-less-and-play-more>

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN ACTIVITY SECTION:

A/A	ANSWER
1	<p>Emotional growth is a process of developing feelings and learning how to handle them appropriately. Sadness, fear, anger, and happiness are our most common feelings. Every child has emotional needs. Meeting those needs is one of the most important things you will do as a parent or caregiver. Between the ages of 2 and 6, children gradually learn how to manage their feelings. For example, a toddler may get mad and have a tantrum if a toy is taken away. As the child matures emotionally, he or she will learn to express anger in other ways. Young children also begin to develop moral emotions and to feel ashamed or guilty when they do something wrong. When bad things happen, young children may feel responsible for no logical reason. Reassure your child by showing affection and love in addition to talking about feelings. Children do not always know the words to explain how they feel.</p>
2	<p>You can help your child grow by showing love and affection, by talking with and reading to your child, and by letting your child play. It's also important to set boundaries and limits. Most important aspects are: Physical development, cognitive development, emotional and social development, language development, sensory development, nurturing the relationship between parent and child, going to school.</p>

ANSWER FOR SELF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY:

Although your child grows at his or her own pace, be aware of signs of a developmental delay. The earlier you identify a delay, the better chance you have of getting the right treatment for your child that can prevent or minimize long-term problems. In general, talk to a doctor anytime your child:

- Does not seem to be reaching developmental milestones as expected.
- Is not growing and gaining weight as expected.
- Is not able to do some of the things he or she used to do, such as talking or running.
- Makes you so angry or frustrated that you are worried about what you might do next.
- Acts overly aggressive, violent, or verbally abusive.
- Does not seem to be doing well, even though you can't pinpoint what makes you uneasy. Friends and other caregivers may also be concerned.