



# Health Services Newsletter

## A Focus on Expectant Families

The recently updated *Head Start Program Performance Standards* (HSPPS) provides guidance related to services for pregnant women and expectant families. The revised standards indicate that education and services should be available to families on topics including the following: the importance of nutrition, the risks of alcohol, drugs, and smoking, parental depression, safe sleep practices, the benefits of breastfeeding, nurturing and responsive caregiving and father engagement.

*Explore the resources below for more information to enhance services for expectant families and pregnant women. The specific and complete guidance, as detailed in the Head Start Program Performance Standards, can be viewed [here](#).*

## Positive Parenting Strategies

Parents are our most important partners in supporting the development and well-being of young children. Use [An Introduction to the Compendium of Parenting Resources](#) to increase your knowledge of parenting programs that could be effective with families of young children in the settings where you work.



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## Promoting Safe Sleep

There is new guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on Safe Sleep! Nineteen evidence-based recommendations aimed at protecting infants up to 1 year of age are featured in "*SIDS and Other Sleep-related Infant Deaths: Updated 2016 Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment*".

The document includes a [policy statement](#) and [technical report](#). Recommendations include placing infants on their backs to sleep, using a firm sleep surface, room sharing without bed sharing, avoiding exposure to smoke, alcohol, and drugs, breastfeeding, and routine immunization. Updated from 2011, the recommendations consider data from 63 new studies and recent AAP Clinical Report "*Safe Sleep and Skin-to-Skin Care in the Neonatal Period for Healthy Term Newborns*" on the benefits of skin-to-skin care for newborns that you can access [here](#).



## Breastfeeding

Research shows that breastfeeding has important long-term impacts on the health and development of children and the health and well-being of mothers. The revised *Head Start Program Performance Standards* require breastfeeding education for expectant families and accommodations for breastfeeding children.

These online [breastfeeding information links](#) from The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) and [breastfeeding articles](#) from AAP's website HealthyChildren.org, share a variety of resources to enhance your education efforts around breastfeeding.

## Nutrition and Healthy Active Living for Mom, Baby and Family

Thinking about good nutrition and healthy habits for families during pregnancy and beyond? Take a good look at [Nutrition Tips for a Healthy Pregnancy](#) and the National Center for Early Childhood Health and Wellness' [Healthy Active Living Resources](#), for information and strategies to promote family well-being.

Healthy nutrition and food habits are rooted in the relationships between families and their children. In this podcast from Zero to Three, [Nurturing Healthy Eating Habits from the Start](#), Dr. Dan Kessler describes how the feeding relationship between parent and child encourages a child's physical and emotional development and suggests ways to get babies and toddlers off to a healthy start.



## Working toward Smoking Cessation

There is no safe level of tobacco exposure. This series of three [podcasts](#) focuses on the importance of having a smoke-free home and car for our children and families. They also introduce the use of the "Head Start Smoking Survey," and offers instructions on accessing resources related to smoking cessation.

## Thinking about Substance Use in Pregnancy

In this audio conference, [Sensitivity, Screening, and Support: Talking with Expectant Families about Substance Abuse](#), panelists share insights and strategies around approaching the sensitive topic of alcohol and substance use in pregnancy, its effect on the developing fetus, and provide guidance on supporting families in making informed, healthy choices during pregnancy.

## Maternal/Paternal Depression

Home visitors, family services workers, family educations and other child care professionals can use the following resources to enhance their work with mothers and families experiencing depression. Visit [Collaborating Across Federal Programs to Address Maternal Depression](#) on the ECLKC to explore a valuable resource available from SAMHSA, the [Depression in Mothers: More than the Blues Toolkit](#).

In addition, explore "[Family Connections](#)," a system-wide mental health consultation and training approach that is also available on the ECLKC. Staff can utilize these resources when working with families dealing with parental depression and related adversities.



# Making Positive Changes with Families and Children

This training presentation, [\*Facilitating Change: Conversations that Help\*](#), can help professionals learn more about developing conversational skills that strengthen relationships with families to encourage growth and change. Resources include PowerPoint slides, notes, and a script for each slide, along with descriptions of activities and discussions.



**NATIONAL CENTER ON**  
**Early Childhood Health and Wellness**

## CONTACT US

The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness welcomes your feedback on this newsletter issue, as well as your suggestions for topics for future issues. Please forward your comments to [health@ecetta.info](mailto:health@ecetta.info) or call 866-227-5125.

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***School readiness begins with health!***