Partnering with Caregivers

Recognizing and addressing parenting challenges for at-risk infants, toddlers, and young children

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Overview

• Effective parenting practices
• Probing and identifying concerning parenting practices
• Tools for addressing parenting concerns with parents
• Resources
“She cries all the time!”
Developmental Progression of Challenging Behaviors

• Infancy (Birth to 12 months)
  • (Excessive) fussiness/crying/colic
  • Disrupted sleep routines
  • Feeding problems

• Toddlers (1 to 3 years) and Young Children (3 to 5 years)
  • Aggression (pushing, hitting, spitting)
  • Tantrums
  • Self-injury (head banging, hair pulling)
  • Food refusal, eating nonfood items
  • Noncompliance/defiance
  • (3-5) Inattention, hyperactivity, separation anxiety
Parenting

Positive
- Sensitivity
- Warmth
- Consistency

Secure attachment, social & language skills, emotion regulation, less problem behavior

Negative
- Detachment
- Harsh/Negative Behavior
- Inconsistency

Insecure attachment, behavior/emotional/social problems
Risk factors for Concerning Parenting Practices

Child
- Age
- Physical and/or mental disability
- Temperament
- Behavior

Caregiver
- Age
- Physical disability/Mental health
- Childhood history
- Education
- Low social support/Family conflict

Social Environment
- Poverty
- Stress
- Neighborhood violence
Screening for Parenting Factors
Screening for Parenting

“From time to time, all children misbehave. Parents have many different ways of dealing with these problems.”

- How have you responded to/dealt with (problem behavior)?

  - Appropriate expectations, rules, consequences and communication for age/developmental level?

- What else have you tried? How long did you try it for? How did it work?

  - Parents often give up when negative behavior escalates, not realizing that it often gets worse before it gets better!
Screening for Parenting

• Have you talked to anyone else about this? Child specialists?
  
  • To inform referrals

• If you’re spending all this time doing X with child, how are you meeting X/Y need for yourself?
  
  • Assessing parent stress and level of self-care

• When child finally listens, what is it that gets them to do __ at that point? How are you feeling by then?
  
  • Repeating instructions? Giving in/bribery? Yelling? Threatening?
Tools for Addressing Concerning Parenting Behaviors

“Parenting is the easiest thing in the world to have an opinion about, but the hardest thing in the world to do.” – Matt Walsh

• Normalize and empathize!
  • “You are not alone...”
  • “It’s hard enough to take care of children, let alone children with _____ (challenging behaviors)!”
  • “I’m glad you recognize _____. You’ve done a great job checking out possible solutions.”
  • “I can tell how much you care about your child”
  • “If there is a superhero parent out there who is perfect 100% of the time, I have yet to meet them!”

• Provide hope!
  • “I’m glad you came in, ___ is something I can help you with/help you find resources for.”
Use humor!

“Before I had kids I used to be so selfish. I used to shower, like, every day.”

“As a housewife, I feel that if the kids are still alive when my husband gets home from work, then hey, I've done my job.”
Brief, Solution-Focused Suggestions

• Managing parent stress through self-care
  • Put your own oxygen mask on first!
  • Routine self-care breaks throughout the day
  • Eat well
  • Get enough sleep (tag team with other caregivers)

• Infancy
  • Consistency is key! (daily routine)
  • Relationship is fundamental
    • Play with your infant (face to face interaction)
    • Take advantage of opportunities for positive interaction during routines
  • Responsivity – can’t spoil an infant!
Brief, Solution-Focused Suggestions

• Toddlers and Young Children
  • Consistency is key!
  • Catch being good with descriptive praise
  • Simple, clear rules
  • Provide/model acceptable alternatives
  • For consistent problems, anticipate and plan
  • Redirect
  • Label feelings and empathize
  • Time in/out
  • Planned ignoring
When to Refer

- Child behaviors unlikely to desist without intervention:
  - Trauma
  - Child behavior problems
  - Child restricted affect
  - Child DTO/DTS and related behaviors
  - Parent-child relational problems
- Caregiver inconsistent parenting practices
- Caregiver mental health concerns (sometimes secondary to trauma history)
How to suggest?

“Strategies for managing difficult behavior” rather than “parenting skills”
Evidence Based Treatments

• Evidence Based Programs Registry
  • SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices -- http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/

• Infants and Toddlers
  • Attachment/Relationship-based therapy

• Toddlers
  • Attachment/Relationship-Based
  • Behaviorally-based
Evidence Based Treatments

• Young Children
  • Behaviorally-based parent management training
    • Triple P
    • Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
    • Family Check-up
  • Mindful parenting
Additional Resources

For Providers

• [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

• [http://effectivechildtherapy.org/](http://effectivechildtherapy.org/)


• *Evidence-Based Psychotherapies for Children and Adolescents*, by John Weisz, PhD., and Alan Kazdin, Ph.D.
Additional Resources

For Parents

• [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)
• [http://booksthathealkids.blogspot.com/](http://booksthathealkids.blogspot.com/)
• *The Emotional Life of the Toddler*, by Alicia Lieberman, Ph.D.
• *Raising your Spirited Child*, by Mary Kurcinka, Ph.D.
• *The Happiest Toddler on the Block: How to Eliminate Tantrums and Raise a Patient, Respectful, and Cooperative One- to Four-Year-Old*, by Harvey Karp, M.D.
• *Sleeping Through the Night: How Infants, Toddlers, and Their Parents Can Get a Good Night’s Sleep*, by Jodi Mindell, Ph.D.
• *The Kazdin Method for Parenting the Defiant Child*, by Alan Kazdin, Ph.D.
• *1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12*, by Thomas Phelan, Ph.D.