



Promising Practices

To assure that young children are healthy and ready for school, it is important to look at strategies that improve health, social and emotional skills, economic status, and literacy.

Educate prospective parents about the importance of prenatal and well-baby care. ■ Create community education and public awareness media campaigns and public service announcements to help expectant parents understand the importance of early prenatal care. ■ Home visitation, community clinics, and mobile vans can increase access to and utilization of prenatal care and immunization. ■ Provide children with regular access to preventive and routine health care, so that problems can be identified and ongoing medical supervision and treatment can be provided. ■ Train school and child care personnel and provide them with tools to address children's chronic health problems, such as asthma, since many asthma attacks occur during the school day.

Provide effective sex education programs for youth that include peer education and support. ■ Involve middle and high school girls and boys in youth development activities and planning for their futures. ■ Educate young people about adolescent health, responsible decision-making, the consequences of unprotected sex. ■ Work with the siblings of teen parents since studies show that they are at risk of following in their siblings' footsteps. ■ Keep teen mothers in school through supportive, school-based programs that provide comprehensive education and health services and on-site child care to help them gain confidence as they care for their babies and build their own academic and life skills. ■ Provide programs and services geared specifically toward young fathers to help them bond with their children and serve as role models.

Improve access to quality, affordable childcare for working families. ■ Cities and counties can promote child care by revising zoning ordinances to promote establishment of child care facilities, including child care centers in their general plans, and by instituting developer fees that support child care. ■ Business can establish family-supportive practices, such as providing flexible work schedules, flexible benefit plans, and pre-tax child care credits. ■ Local stakeholders can advocate with the state and federal governments to increase the supply of subsidized child care for low-income families and to take cost of living into account when setting eligibility standards for child care subsidies. ■ Employers can support their employees by providing on-site child care centers.

Help children develop the cognitive, behavioral, and social skills required for kindergarten. ■ Summer programs are effective for children who have not attended preschool to assist in transitioning into kindergarten. ■ It is essential to provide early identification and intervention for children with developmental problems, such as hidden learning disabilities. ■ Schools should identify students with such problems early and to provide intervention, with a particular focus on reading and writing. ■ Communities can support parent home instruction for their preschool children.

Increase student success in schools by providing support services to families. ■ School-linked services can provide case management services, access to community resources including food, clothing and health insurance, short-term family counseling, parenting classes, family literacy classes, and other services.

