



# Bright Futures Parent Handout Early Adolescent Visits

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

## Your Growing and Changing Child

PHYSICAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Talk with your child about how her body is changing with puberty.
- Encourage your child to brush his teeth twice a day and floss once a day.
- Help your child get to the dentist twice a year.
- Serve healthy food and eat together as a family often.
- Encourage your child to get 1 hour of vigorous physical activity every day.
- Help your child limit screen time (TV, video games, or computer) to 2 hours a day, not including homework time.
- Praise your child when she does something well, not just when she looks good.

## Healthy Behavior Choices

RISK REDUCTION

- Help your child find fun, safe things to do.
- Make sure your child knows how you feel about alcohol and drug use.
- Consider a plan to make sure your child or his friends cannot get alcohol or prescription drugs in your home.
- Talk about relationships, sex, and values.
- Encourage your child not to have sex.
- If you are uncomfortable talking about puberty or sexual pressures with your child, please ask me or others you trust for reliable information that can help you.
- Use clear and consistent rules and discipline with your child.
- Be a role model for healthy behavior choices.

## Feeling Happy

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Encourage your child to think through problems herself with your support.
- Help your child figure out healthy ways to deal with stress.
- Spend time with your child.
- Know your child's friends and their parents, where your child is, and what he is doing at all times.
- Show your child how to use talk to share feelings and handle disputes.
- If you are concerned that your child is sad, depressed, nervous, irritable, hopeless, or angry, talk with me.

## School and Friends

SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC COMPETENCE

- Check in with your child's teacher about her grades on tests and attend back-to-school events and parent-teacher conferences if possible.
- Talk with your child as she takes over responsibility for schoolwork.
- Help your child with organizing time, if he needs it.
- Encourage reading.
- Help your child find activities she is really interested in, besides schoolwork.
- Help your child find and try activities that help others.
- Give your child the chance to make more of his own decisions as he grows older.

## Violence and Injuries

VIOLENCE AND INJURY PREVENTION

- Make sure everyone always wears a seat belt in the car.
- Do not allow your child to ride ATVs.
- Make sure your child knows how to get help if he is feeling unsafe.
- Remove guns from your home. If you must keep a gun in your home, make sure it is unloaded and locked with ammunition locked in a separate place.
- Help your child figure out nonviolent ways to handle anger or fear.



American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

The recommendations in this publication do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate. Original document included as part of Bright Futures Tool and Resource Kit. Copyright © 2010 American Academy of Pediatrics. All Rights Reserved. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not review or endorse any modifications made to this document and in no event shall the AAP be liable for any such changes.