

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT: ACTION SHEET

Your role

Each contact you have with the family provides an important opportunity to link them to parenting resources, provide child development information and model and validate effective caregiving. You can:

- Connect parents to parenting education classes or home visiting as appropriate for their situation
- Model appropriate expectations for the child
- Engage parents in dialogue when their expectations are not in line with the child's developmental phase
- Underline the importance of nurturing care to help the parent in valuing the importance of their own role
- Provide "just in time" parenting education: crucial information a parent needs at the time when parenting issues arise
- Help the parent identify a series of trusted informants that they can turn to when they need parenting information

Questions to ask

- What does your child do best and what do you like about your child?
- What do you like about parenting? What do you find challenging about parenting?
- How have you learned about parenting skills?
- How do you continue to learn about your child's development?
- What has helped you learn about yourself as a parent?
- Are there things that worry you about your child's development or behavior?
- Have other people expressed concern about your child?

What to look for

- Does the parent understand and encourage healthy development?
- Is the parent able to respond and manage their child's behavior?
- Does the parent understand and demonstrate age-appropriate parenting skills in their expectations, discipline, communication, protection and supervision of their child?
- Does the child respond positively to the caregivers' approaches?
- Does the parent understand and value their parenting role?
- Does the parent have a reliable source for parenting information when issues come up?
- Does the parent know how to encourage social-emotional development and apply a range of age-appropriate disciplinary strategies?
- Is the parent involved in their child's school, preschool or other activities?
- Does the parent understand the child's specific needs (especially if the child has special developmental or behavioral needs)?

Activities to do with parents

- Ask the parent what their hopes and dreams are for their child(ren). Discuss any worries the parent has about ensuring those hopes and dreams are met. Then discuss what the parent is doing today (or wants to do) to help achieve those hopes and dreams.