

Bright Futures: Addressing Mental Health



What is *Bright Futures*?

[*Bright Futures*](#), a HRSA-supported initiative, provides health care professionals and maternal and child health programs updated recommendations for pediatric health promotion, health supervision, and anticipatory guidance for well-child visits. To ensure consistency in the quality of care, HRSA works to implement *Bright Futures* as the standard for pediatric preventive care. *Bright Futures* develops [materials and tools](#) to provide health care professionals with a common framework for well-child care, to enhance family-provider partnerships, and to create opportunities for health education. These materials and tools include:

- ***Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents***: A “how to” manual of all-inclusive, age-specific, evidence-based recommendations and tips to enhance the quality of primary and preventive care. Includes the Periodicity Schedule, which summarizes the recommended well-child screenings/services to perform at every well-child visit.
- ***Bright Futures Tool and Resource Kit***: Helpful resources to implement *Bright Futures* in practice.
- **Educational materials for families.**

What does *Bright Futures* say about Mental Health?

Bright Futures acknowledges that establishing mental health and emotional well-being is key for children and adolescent development. Mental health focuses on social, emotional, and behavioral health and wellness as well as the early identification and treatment of concerns. *Bright Futures* promotes mental health through well-child visits at each age and stage of development beginning prenatally with the mental health of the mother, through early childhood, and beyond. *Bright Futures* offers recommendations for [screening and assessment tools](#) that health care professionals can use to detect, prevent, and coordinate care for children and adolescents experiencing mental health issues.

Bright Futures recommends that health professionals use well-child visits to:

- Screen for parental, child, and adolescent depression
- Learn about healthy family relationships, social involvement, and any concerns about domestic violence and substance abuse
- Identify strengths and challenges in social and emotional development
- Offer guidance about developmentally appropriate strategies to support positive mental health
- Support adolescents in avoiding risky behaviors
- Provide resources to support the mental health and wellness of family and individuals

To learn more, visit mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-topics/child-health/bright-futures.html.