



**Health Resources and Services Administration |
Maternal and Child Health Bureau**

◆ **Background**

The life course approach to conceptualizing health care needs and services evolved from research documenting the important role early life events play in shaping an individual's health trajectory. The interplay of risk and protective factors, such as socioeconomic status, toxic environmental exposures, health behaviors, stress, and nutrition, influence health throughout one's lifetime.

This emerging science on gene-environment interactions touches on several aspects of public health, including health disparities, fetal origins of adult disease, and outcomes related to prenatal and preconception health and health care. Since introduced, life course has become a prominent framework for conceptualizing health, and scholars and practitioners are exploring application to MCH practice.

A number of key resources are identified below in the hopes that MCH Training Programs will partner with MCHB in exploring the implications of life course perspectives for our collective efforts to improve the health and well-being of all women, children, youth and families now, and over future generations. Stay tuned – as new studies and program efforts are continually emerging, MCHB will provide updated information on resources from time to time.

◆ **Fact Sheets and Policy Briefs**

.Halfon N. 2009. "Life Course Health Development: A New Approach for Addressing Upstream Determinants of Health and Spending." Expert Voices, NIHCM Foundation, Washington, DC.
http://www.nihcm.org/pdf/ExpertVoices_Halfon_FINAL.pdf

Fine A, Kotelchuck M, Adess N, Pies C. 2009. Policy Brief. A New Agenda for MCH Policy and Programs: integrating a Life Course Perspective.; Martinez, CA. Contra Costa Health Services.
http://www.cchealth.org/groups/lifecourse/pdf/2009_10_policy_brief.pdf

Shonkoff JP 2009. Mobilizing science to revitalize early childhood policy. *Issues Sci Technol* 2009; 26(1): Retrieved from <http://www.issues.org/26.1/shonkoff.htm>

Pies C, Parthasarathy P, Kotelchuck M, Lu M. 2009. Making a Paradigm Shift in Maternal and Child Health:: A Report on the National MCH Life Course Meeting. Martinez, CA. Contra Costa Health Services.
http://www.cchealth.org/groups/lifecourse/pdf/2009_10_meeting_report_final.pdf

Grason H and Misra D. 2006. Application of a Lifecourse and Multiple Determinants Framework to Improve Maternal Health. Baltimore, MD. Women's and Children's Health Policy Center. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.
http://www.jhsph.edu/wchpc/publications/Lifecourse_and_Mult_Determinats_Frmwk_brief.pdf

The Impact of Early Adversity on Children's Development, 2009. Cambridge, MA. Harvard Center on the Developing Child. <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu/content/downloads/inbrief-adversity.pdf>



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◆ **Peer-Review Journal Articles**

Halfon N Hochstein M. Life course health development: An integrated framework for developing health policy, and research *The Milbank Quarterly* 2002;80(3):433-479.

Misra D, Guyer B, Allston A. Integrated perinatal health framework: a multiple determinants model with life span approach. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 2003;25(1):65-75.

Lu M, Halfon N. Racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes: a life course perspective. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 2003;7(1):13-30.

Kotelchuck, M. Building on Life-Course Perspective in Maternal and Child Health
Maternal and Child Health Journal 2003;7(1): 1-74

Wise PH. Framework as Metaphor: The promise and peril of MCH life-course perspectives.
Maternal and Child Health Journal 2003;7(3): 151-156

Forrest CV, Riley AW Childhood origins of adult health: A basis for life-course health policy. *Health Affairs* 2004;23(5): 155-64.

Misra DP, Grason H. Achieving safe motherhood: Applying a life course and multiple determinants perinatal health framework in public health. *Women's Health Issues* 2006;6:159-175.

Guyer B, Ma S, Grason H, Frick K, Perry D, Sharkey A, McIntosh J. Early childhood health promotion and its life course health consequences. *Academic Pediatrics* 2009;9(3), 142-149.

Braveman P, Barclay C. Health disparities beginning in childhood: A life-course perspective. *Pediatrics* 2009; 124 Supplement: S163-S175.

Wise PH. Confronting social disparities in child health: A critical appraisal of life-course science and research. *Pediatrics* 2009; 124 Supplement: S203-S211.

Shonkoff JP, Boyce WT, McEwen BS. Neuroscience, molecular biology, and the childhood roots of health disparities: Building a new framework for health promotion and disease prevention. *JAMA* 2009; 301(21): 2252-2259.

Shonkoff JP. Building a new biodevelopmental framework to guide the future of early childhood policy. *Child Dev* 2010; 81(1): 357-367.

Harris KM. An integrative approach to health. *Demography*. 2010; 47(1): 1-22.

Lu MC, Kotelchuck M, Hogan V, Jones L, Wright K, Halfon N. Closing the black-white gap in birth outcomes: A life-course approach. *Ethn Dis* 2010; 20(1) Supplement 2: S2-62-76.



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◆ **Presentations and Course Lecture Series**

The Science of Child Development and the Future of Early Childhood Policy. 2008. Jack Shonkoff, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University. Presentation from the National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy. Video (73 minutes)

http://developingchild.harvard.edu/library/multimedia/symposium_presentations_and_videos/

Life Course Health Development: A Framework to Guide Research, Practice, and Health Reform. 2008. Neal Halfon. CityMatCH Emerging Issues in MCH (EMCH) Webcast.

<http://webmedia.unmc.edu/community/citymatch/EMCH/101608/index.html>

The Intersection of Life Course, Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health: Translation to Action. 2009. Vijaya Hogan. MCHB Federal/State Partnership Meeting October 25-27, 2009 Webcasts.

<http://webcast.hrsa.gov/conferences/mchb/partnershipOctober2009/sunday.html>

Audio Lecture Series (13) and Course Readings.

Health Across the Life Span. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. K Mmari & H Mosley, Instr.

<http://ocw.jhsph.edu/courses/HealthAcrossLifeSpan/>

◆ **Web resources and toolkits**

CityMatCH Life Course Toolbox -- <http://www.citymatch.org/lifecoursetoolbox/>

Community Health and Program Services (CHAPS) resources --

http://www.cdc.gov/NCCDPHP/DACH/chaps/library/health_disparities.htm

◆ **Examples of Local Initiatives**

Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership -- <http://www.sisterlink.com/>

Harlem Children's Zone -- <http://www.hcz.org/programs/the-hcz-project>

Contra Costa (CA) Health Department -- <http://www.cchealth.org/groups/lifecourse/> and http://www.cchealth.org/groups/lifecourse/pdf/12_point_plan_fact_sheet.pdf

Wisconsin Department of Health Services -- <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/healthybirths/pdf/abshealthyfamilies.pdf>