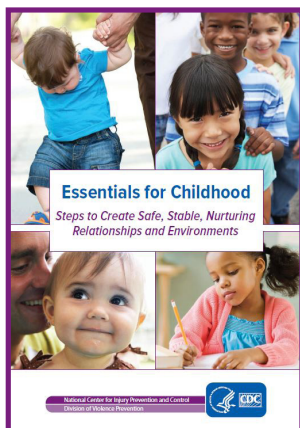


Essentials for Childhood:

Steps to Create Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments



Safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments are essential to prevent child maltreatment and to assure children reach their full potential. *Essentials for Childhood* proposes strategies communities can consider to promote the types of relationships and environments that help children grow up to be healthy and productive citizens so that they, in turn, can build stronger and safer families and communities for their children.

Essentials for Childhood is intended for anyone committed to the positive development of children and families, and specifically to the prevention of all forms of child abuse and neglect. The document is organized into four sections, with each one focused on a goal and related steps. While each individual goal is important, the four goals together are more likely to build the comprehensive foundation of safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children:

Goal 1: Raise Awareness and Commitment to Promote Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments and Prevent Child Maltreatment

- Adopt the vision of “assuring safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments to protect children from child maltreatment”
- Raise awareness in support of the vision
- Partner with others to unite behind the vision

Goal 2: Use Data to Inform Actions

- Build a partnership to gather and synthesize relevant data
- Take stock of existing data
- Identify and fill critical data gaps
- Use the data to support other action steps

Goal 3: Create the Context for Healthy Children and Families through Norms Change and Programs

- Promote the community norm that we all share responsibility for the well-being of children
- Promote positive community norms about parenting programs and acceptable parenting behaviors
- Implement evidence-based programs for parents and caregivers

Goal 4: Create the Context for Healthy Children and Families through Policies

- Identify and assess which policies may positively impact the lives of children and families in your community
- Provide decision-makers and community leaders with information on the benefits of evidence-based strategies and rigorous evaluation

While child maltreatment is a significant public health problem, it is also a preventable one. The steps suggested in *Essentials for Childhood*—along with your commitment to preventing child maltreatment—can help create neighborhoods, communities, and a world in which every child can thrive.

Essentials for Childhood: Steps to Create Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments is available online at www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/essentials. Please visit www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment to learn more about CDC’s work to prevent child abuse and neglect. Please follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/vetoviolence.