

Head Start Health Services Newsletter

March 2010 | Issue #6

Featured Topics of the Month

- Using technology to support mothers and babies
- Protecting Children from Exposure to Lead
- A new [Emergency Preparedness Manual](#) is now available online [PDF, 809 KB]

Emerging Research

Mobile Health: Why Go Mobile?

Mobile phones are the most personal technology device; they are almost always with us -- in our hands, in our pockets or on our night tables. As health devices, cell phones can remind us to take our medications or visit the doctor, help us track our weight loss or quit smoking, monitor our glucose levels or give us vital information about prenatal and infant care.

"They're the most direct, convenient, and dependable form of communication we have. That's why the President and I believe mobile phones have so much power to empower the consumer toward a healthcare system in the future..."

Kathleen Sebelius,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary, October 2009

Text Messaging

Text messaging represents an enormous yet untapped channel for delivering vital health information to those who need it most. Over 1.5 trillion text messages were sent in the U.S. in 2008, with texting use higher among women of childbearing age. The Internet is transforming health care in the U.S., but it is still limited in reach, particularly among underserved populations where health challenges are most acute (Evans, W.D. "Social Marketing: Effective Campaigns and How They Work." Invited Presentation at the Bloomberg School of Public Health at the Johns Hopkins University, September 2009).

Moms, Babies and Technology

Each year in the U.S., more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely and an estimated 28,000 children die before their first birthday. In response to this national public health crisis, the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB) is launching text4baby, a free mobile information service that provides pregnant women and new moms with information to help them care for their health and give their babies the best possible start in life. Women who sign up for the service will receive free text messages each week, timed to their due date or baby's date of birth.

How it Works

Registration is easy and can be done online or from your cell phone: Text the word BABY (or BEBE for Spanish) to 511411. You'll be asked to enter your baby's due date or your baby's birthday and your zip code.

Once you are registered, you will start receiving free messages with tips for your pregnancy and caring for your baby. These messages are timed to your due date or your baby's birth date. If your due date changes, you can text UPDATE to 511411 and enter your new due date.

If you want to stop receiving messages from Text4baby, you can text STOP to 511411.

Announcements from Professional Organizations

Protecting Children from Exposure to Lead

A new policy report from the Society for Research in Child Development summarizes new data on the intellectual, academic, and behavioral deficits seen in children exposed to both low and high levels of lead, discusses the biological and neurological mechanisms of lead poisoning, explores sources of environmental lead exposure and lead abatement practices, shows that current federal and state-level child screening and lead level reporting practices are inadequate, and makes policy recommendations centered on increasing education, intensifying abatement efforts, strengthening and regulating mandatory screening practices, and reducing the federal threshold of allowable levels of lead.

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) - Emergency Preparedness Manual

Emergency Preparedness

Early childhood programs face the challenge of preparing for emergencies. In this section, you will find tip sheets, checklists, and resources that offer guidance and techniques to cope with the four phases of activities related to a disaster: preparation, impact, relief, and recovery. A new Emergency Preparedness Manual is now available online. [PDF, 809KB]

Did you miss anything?

Select the Head Start Health Services Newsletter: 2009 Issues to review the previous topics.

Ask OHS

Do you have a question about Head Start? Submit your question to OHS-PolicyQuestions@acf.hhs.gov. Questions and answers that would be helpful to your colleagues will be published in the next issue of this newsletter.

We Want to Hear from You

If you have suggestions for future Head Start Health Services Newsletter topics, please send your comments to tomasr@headstartinfo.org.