

Comments from Comprehensive Services ~ June 2021



Your Child's Medical & Dental Home

Why Does your Child Need a Medical Home?

Pediatricians are trained to:

- Help you determine healthy lifestyles for your child and useful ways to role model your choices.
- Offer advice to prevent illness and injuries.
- Provide early and appropriate care of minor illness to prevent its progression.
- Treat life-threatening childhood conditions requiring intensive care.
- Guide you in anticipating your child's needs from newborn to 21.

Experience:

As part of their extensive training, pediatricians are experienced in the physical, emotional, and social development of children. Children may be too young or shy to talk so pediatricians understand the importance of listening carefully to your child, and to you. Pediatricians answer your questions, helping you to understand and promote your child's healthy development. Pediatricians also address issues affecting a child's family and home environment.

Pediatricians understand that children are not simply small adults:

They often present different symptoms from adults. They may need different prescriptions or treatments than adults. Pediatricians are specially trained to recognize the importance of these differences, especially with young children and newborns.

Contact your insurance now to find a pediatrician for your child.



Why Does your Child Need a Dental Home?

Dental Caries, called tooth decay or cavities, is the most common infectious disease in U.S. children. 40% of children will have tooth decay by the time they are in kindergarten. Cavities are 5 times more common than asthma and 7 times more common than hay fever, even though tooth decay is preventable. When cavities are not treated, children can have pain and infection that can lead to eating problems, speech delays, difficulty in school and learning, as well as future problems with erupting permanent teeth. Education and prevention of cavities is one of the responsibilities of the dental home, and prevention of cavities can save children from surgical treatment later. Oral health is critically important to the overall health and wellness of infants, children, and young adults. Babies should have their first dental visit when the first tooth erupts or by the first birthday, whichever occurs first.

Why so early?

- Teeth are at risk of cavities as soon as the tooth erupts into the mouth.
- Bacterium causes cavities. Babies get these bacteria from parents, typically between the age of 6 months to 30 months. This is the best time to start prevention.
- Visiting a pediatric dentist early enables the establishment of a dental home and begins a lifelong oral health programs to minimize tooth decay.
- Research suggests children who wait to have the first dental visit at age two or three are much more likely to require surgical treatment of cavities and emergency dental visits.
- The Journal of Pediatrics demonstrated that children who had the first dental visit before the age of 1 had 40% lower dental costs, on average, during the first five years of life when compared to children who had the first dental visit later.
- Waiting to the age of 3 is too late for prevention and often means that there will be treatment needs at the first dental visit.



Dual Language Learners

FICTION



FACT

- 1) Speaking two or more languages to a child can “confuse” them so it is better to speak only one.
- 2) It is better for families to only speak in the language taught at school, even if that is not the native language of the home and they do not speak it very well.
- 3) Young bilingual children are delayed in learning language compared to their peers who only speak one language.
- 4) Bilingual children who mix languages (code switch) are “confused” and require immediate “special needs” support.
- 5) Bilingual children who stop speaking their first language have a “language disorder” or learning disability.

- 1) All children are capable of learning multiple languages, including children with developmental delays and learning disabilities.
- 2) Families should always speak in the language they are most comfortable speaking, so children are given rich linguistic models and can interact best with other members of their community.
- 3) Bilingualism does NOT cause language delays and has been shown to improve children’s ability to learn new words, identify sounds and problem solve.
- 4) Language mixing. Also known as “code switching” is normal and grammatical. It serves social and communication purposes. It fosters cultural and linguistic awareness.
- 5) Language loss can occur during bilingual language acquisition when a child is exposed to the second language more consistently than their first language.
- 6) A language and/or articulation delay/disorder is only diagnosed when it occurs in BOTH languages, the native language and the second language.



June is National Dairy Month

Here are some important facts and reminders concerning dairy products:

- If you have an allergy to milk, there are dairy and lactose free options available to you. Publix has 6 online Dietitians that can answer any question you may have.
- If you cannot or choose to not eat dairy, talk with your Primary Care Provider. He or she will recommend a calcium supplement. We need calcium from our dairy products to ensure strong bones and healthy teeth. Osteoporosis is on the rise, and caffeine and limited consumption of dairy products are the main contributing factors to bone disease.
- Caffeine interferes with calcium absorption, so please limit coffee or other caffeinated beverages to 2 cups per day.
- Try and get a dairy product in at every meal. The USDA is an excellent reference. Click on this link to learn more about foods high in calcium and recommended serving sizes. <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/dairy> .

The Importance of Closure for End of Year Transitions

It can be easy to assume that since children come and go from childcare daily, the termination of a school year is just another happy milestone. This is mostly true—children are celebrated for all of their progress and achievements from the many months spent in care, their families celebrate and delight in them, and we often have lighthearted and fun days planned to cap off a year. What is also true is that separations and endings can be difficult for children (or adults) who have had adverse childhood experiences around these events. We know that teachers and caregivers become attachment figures for young children in childcare, and for many this separation can be both a celebrated time as well as one met with difficult emotions. Additionally, young children often don't possess the skills needed to express, process, and manage these emotions effectively on their own. Teachers, parents, and caregivers can all play a role in helping to make this transition smooth and show children that separations can be positive experiences.

For many children who have grown up exposed to adversity, separations can be traumatic. They can be characterized by parental discord, deportations, removals, incarcerations, or even violence. In almost all cases, they are sudden, unexpected, and stressful. When young children are met with uncertainty or instability, they will seek to fill in the gaps of their world by creating stories that make sense to them. For child in the egocentric stage of development (age 2-7), this can mean internalizing shame and blame due to the belief that they are the causative factor in their world. For even younger children, simply feeling the stress of their caregiver can be internalized and raise their stress levels. Just as negative experiences with separations can teach children about relationships, positive separations can have a reparative effect and teach them that goodbyes are not always sad or scary. As trusted adults, we can assist in creating a coherent narrative surrounding transition, and here is how:

- **Check in with yourself.** Young children see the world through the eyes of their caregivers. First, check in on yourself. How are *you* feeling about the transition to the end of the year? What messages might you be conveying through your attitude, tone, body language, and presence about how you feel about this transition? Once you have raised your self-awareness, you can set the stage for how to approach this transition.
- **Partner with other important caregivers.** If you are a teacher, communicate with the child's primary caregiver about how they have spoken to the child about the end of the year. What does the child already know? How does the parent feel about this? For some parents the graduation out of EHS or HS can be emotional. Talk about summer plans. Vacations, summer camps, or other fun events can be useful information to help children know what comes next.
- **Help fill in the gaps.** Provide concrete information, and use the aid of visuals when applicable. Explaining to children using a calendar or timeline that the school year is coming to end (or pause for Early Head Start), and how much time out of school they will have can be helpful to lay clear expectations and establish some predictability. Similarly, if a child is going to a summer camp or on a vacation, talk about what that is like if you can. We know that predictability and routines are important tenets of trauma-informed care for a student's day-to-day transitions in childcare, and this is another way we can utilize that.
- **Have a goodbye ritual.** Get creative and find a unique and fun way to say goodbye. Some ideas may be to have children decorate a picture frame, and take a photo together for them to keep. Using washable paint, make a handprint card together and place a nice message in it that their parent can read to them. Make a class mural wishing each other well to enhance their sense of school family. Ensure that in your communication with children that it is clear that they are loved, held in your mind, and that you have enjoyed having them in your care.

