



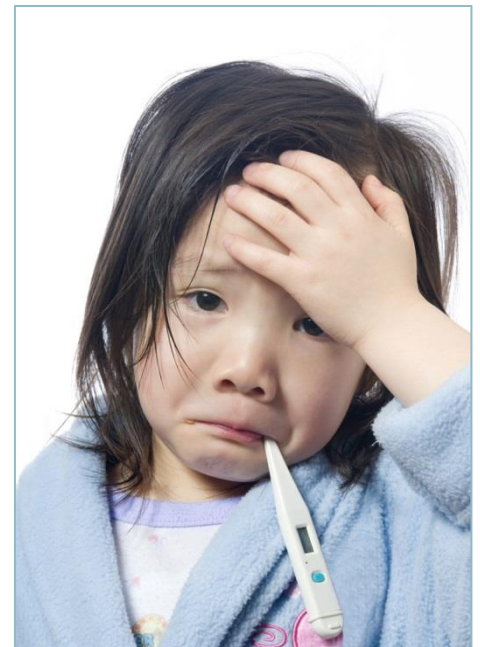
## Affordable Care Act (ACA):

### Helping families of children with special healthcare needs access prevention and wellness care

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) covers many aspects of wellness and prevention at no cost to families. For families of children with disabilities who may see multiple doctors, often the focus is on the condition. However, health promotion and prevention is also important for children with special needs. Wellness and preventive care are important to overall health, and making these services available without cost-sharing to families means that more children will receive these services.

The ACA requires that the following sets of services be provided to children without cost-sharing:

1. Immunizations for routine use that are recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and
2. Evidence-informed preventive care and screenings provided for in the comprehensive guidelines supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which is a reference to the “Bright Futures” guidelines (see below).



### Immunizations

Being vaccinated for preventable disease is essential to wellness. Immunization schedules are available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>. Flu prevention is especially important for children at high risk of complications, such as those with developmental disabilities or neurological disorders (see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/neurologic-pediatric.htm>.)

### Screening

Most often, it is the parents who have concerns that something is “off” with their child and who bring their concerns to the attention of their child’s pediatrician or family doctor. Good information on screening is available from the American Academy of Pediatrics at <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/Pages/default.aspx>. The “Act

Early” campaign of the CDC has checklists for families at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/concerned.html>. Good information regarding concerns about a child’s development is available from First Signs at <http://www.firstsigns.org/concerns/index.htm>. Screenings can also include hearing, vision, lead, and psychosocial/behavioral assessment. The ACA covers the “Bright Futures” recommended screenings for a variety of developmental areas and at periodic times throughout a child’s life.

## Hearing

When hearing loss is detected earlier, children have better outcomes. Information is available for families from the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/families.html>. In each state, there is an Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program which can be found at <http://www.infanthearing.org/states/index.html>. “Opening Doors: Technology and Communication Options for Children with Hearing Loss” from the U.S. Department of Education is found at [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/products/opening\\_doors/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/products/opening_doors/index.html) or Spanish [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/products/opening\\_doors/espanol.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/products/opening_doors/espanol.html). Medicaid also covers hearing services for children.

## Vision Care

Vision care for children is one of the 10 Essential Health Benefits under the ACA. In each state, there is also a Commission for the Blind or Visually Impaired (usually found under the Department of Human Services) which is a good resource and collaborates with schools. Medicaid also covers pediatric vision services. For parents who do not have insurance for their child, there are vision resources such as

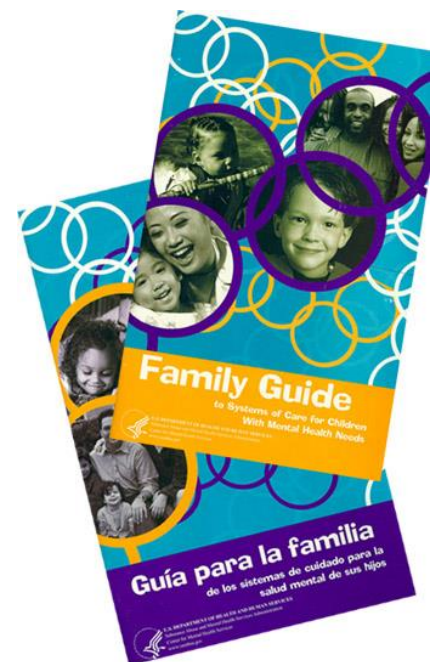
- New Eyes for the Needy at <http://neweyesfortheneedy.org/apply-for-assistance/>,
- One Sight at [http://www.onesight.org/na/about\\_us/2010\\_clinic\\_schedule/](http://www.onesight.org/na/about_us/2010_clinic_schedule/), and
- Vision USA at <http://www.aoafoundation.org/vision-usa/how-to-apply/>.

## Behavioral Health

Behavioral health screenings are covered under the ACA. Medicaid also covers mental health services. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Child & Adolescent Action Center offers information at [http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Child\\_and\\_Adolescent\\_Action\\_Center&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=21090](http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Child_and_Adolescent_Action_Center&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=21090).

NAMI also has workshops and support for parents of children with challenging behaviors at [http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Your\\_Local\\_NAMI&template=/CustomSource/AffiliateFinder.cfm](http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Your_Local_NAMI&template=/CustomSource/AffiliateFinder.cfm).

A “Family Guide to Systems of Care for Children with Mental Health Needs is available from the U.S. Department of Health at <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Family-Guide-to-Systems-of-Care-for-Children-With-Mental-Health-Needs-bilingual-English-Spanish-/SMA05-4054>. Most states have a chapter and/or state organization of the National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, which can be found at [www.ffcmh.org](http://www.ffcmh.org).



## General Wellness

- The Family Voices publication “Family Matters: Promoting Health & Wellness for Children with Special Health Care Needs Family Booklet” has general information on wellness available in English and Spanish at <http://www.familyvoices.org/page?id=0005>.
- “People with Disabilities: Living Healthy” is available from the CDC and found at <http://www.cdc.gov/features/disabilities/>.
- Bright Futures even has an activity book for children found at [http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/BFAActivityBook\\_L%200626.pdf?Site=nf.aap.org&WebKey=68530b27-2adb-43ae-9c87-2fa20cb86cae&url\\_keyword=Bright+Futures+Activity+Book](http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/BFAActivityBook_L%200626.pdf?Site=nf.aap.org&WebKey=68530b27-2adb-43ae-9c87-2fa20cb86cae&url_keyword=Bright+Futures+Activity+Book).

A discussion of prevention and wellness wouldn't be complete without mentioning nutrition and exercise. There are many good resources available on these topics. These include:

## Nutrition

- CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/nutrition/index.html> or similar information in Spanish at <http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/especialesCDC/ObesidadNinos/>
- AAP/Bright Futures <http://www.brightfutures.org/nutrition/index.html>
- AAP information for families <http://www.healthychildren.org/english/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/default.aspx>; in Spanish <http://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/healthy-living/nutrition/paginas/default.aspx>.

## Physical Activity

- AAP Bright Futures at <http://www.brightfutures.org/physicalactivity/about.htm>
- AAP Fitness Guide at <http://www.healthychildren.org/english/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/default.aspx> or Spanish <http://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/healthy-living/fitness/paginas/default.aspx>.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (for girls only ) <http://www.girlshealth.gov/fitness/index.html> or in Spanish at [http://www.girlshealth.gov/padres/forma\\_fisica/index.html](http://www.girlshealth.gov/padres/forma_fisica/index.html)
- “Body & Mind: Physical Activity “at <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/activity/index.html> or in Spanish at [http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/hojas/actividad\\_fisica.html](http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/hojas/actividad_fisica.html).
- “14 Weeks to a Healthier You” from the National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability at <http://www.ncpad.org/14weeks/>.



A listing of accessible playgrounds can be found at <http://www.accessibleplayground.net/united-states/new-jersey/>. Other organizations have peer buddies for physical activities, such as Miracle League, Little League Challenger Division, and Special Olympics Project Unify.

### Special Note on Dental Care

Pediatric oral health is also one of the ACA's 10 Essential Health Benefits. For information on how to access dental care, why it is so important for children with special health care needs, and how it affects overall health, see last month's blog at <http://www.fv-ncfpp.org/blog/why-oral-health-important-children-special-needs-how-access-it/>.

Families of children with special health care needs want the best care for their children, and this includes prevention and wellness care. The ACA helps parents by covering prevention and wellness at no cost.

*This tip sheet was authored by Lauren Agoratus, M.A. Lauren is the parent of a child with multiple disabilities who serves as the Coordinator for Family Voices-NJ and as the southern coordinator in her the New Jersey Family-to-Family Health Information Center, both housed at the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) at [www.spanadvocacy.org](http://www.spanadvocacy.org).*

*More of Lauren's tips about the ACA can be found on the website of the Family Voices National Center for Family/Professional Partnerships: <http://www.fv-ncfpp.org/>.*

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## RESOURCES

### American Academy of Pediatrics: Implementation of the ACA Pediatric Preventive Services Provision

Overview: <http://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/practice-support/Periodicity/BF%20Introduction%20F010914.pdf>

Detailed information on each visit contained in the Bright Futures Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care:

<http://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/practice-support/Periodicity/AllVisits.pdf>

### Family Voices Impact Project (Bright Futures for Families)

Wellness/special needs:

<http://www.fv-impact.org/>

For Spanish, click on Google translate on homepage:

### Maternal/Child Health Knowledge Paths

Various topics-family resources:

<http://www.mchlibrary.info/families/index.html> (English)

[http://www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp\\_spanish.html](http://www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp_spanish.html) (Spanish)