

## STANDARD 11 Promoting and monitoring health

**‘Health care providers, organisations and individual health workers, share a responsibility to advocate for children and to reduce the fear, anxiety and suffering of children and their families by ensuring that they monitor and promote health’.**

### Supporting criteria

1. A system for immunising children, scheduled and catch-up immunisations that complies with the country’s program is coordinated by a lead health worker. Includes the safe storage and transport of vaccines and has standardised guidelines for the administration of vaccines and the management of adverse effects.
2. A system for monitoring the nutritional status of children, including growth, ideally part of a comprehensive integrated country program. The system includes standardised strategies for managing children with problems.
3. A system for monitoring a child’s physical (motor and sensory) and psychomotor (mental, emotional, behavioural and social) development that is ideally part of any existing country program. It includes standardised strategies for referring children with suspected problems to specialist referral services for investigation and treatment.
2. Compliance with a country’s health screening programs for children and systems for providing advice and healthcare for children with detected problems.
3. A health education program for children, and their carers that is appropriate, accessible and provides relevant advice and information in understandable language and format
4. A safe motherhood program whose health workers liaise with skilled children’s health workers when there are problems with an unborn child and a child at birth or after birth.



*A nurse making health education and other ‘child friendly’ materials in Pakistan.*

### Discussion

A child has a right to the nurturing (the word nurse comes from ‘to nurture’) and care that will help him or her survive, develop to his or her full potential and participate responsibly in society.

The responsibility for nurturing a child until they are fully developed lies with all adults. The child’s parents, supported by the State when this is necessary, have the major responsibility but all adults who work with children also have a nurturing role. This is necessary if a child is to become a mature adult capable of being a responsible member of their society, able to contribute to this society’s development and well-being, and themselves to be an adequate parent.

Best practice is for the State to support the child and parents through legislation that protects the child, and also through other child and family services such as education, health and social welfare. The shared efforts of all the services and agencies that work with and for children are needed if a child’s development is to be monitored and supported effectively. Preventive health services for children, such as a safe motherhood

program to protect the unborn child, the preventive component of WHO's program for the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) and immunisation, health monitoring and health screening programs for children are therefore of great importance.

Screening activities, whether or not they are part of a countrywide program, need to be supported by systems that provide advice, counselling, support and appropriate healthcare for the child and family if a problem or abnormality is detected.

Monitoring nutrition in the unborn baby and child is an essential component of any health provision. Best practice is for the health worker to do this every time a pregnant woman or child is seen.

Monitoring child development is equally important and not costly. If one or more areas of development are thought to be delayed this needs early confirmation, investigation, and effective treatment, with standardised referral to specialist services where necessary. Unnecessary suffering due to a second child having the same genetic health problem might be prevented if the problem is detected early.



***Health education materials used by health workers in Pakistan to teach all pregnant women attending the hospital about childcare***



***Growth monitoring facility in a children's outpatients department in Pakistan***

Children with disabilities are often discriminated against within families and communities. Health workers have an important role to play in increasing the community's understanding of the capabilities and needs of each individual child with a disability as well as increasing the community's awareness of some of their common causes.

Avoidable health problems, accidents and childhood pregnancies cause great fear, anxiety and suffering to children and families. All health workers have an additional responsibility to provide 'health education' on these and other topics that promote a healthy lifestyle, to raise awareness in parents so that they can give their child the 'best possible' care and to act as advocates for children when necessary.



However, it is important that health advice is not prescriptive, that it is relevant to the individual child and family and given at an appropriate time. For example it would not be appropriate to give such advice when a child was very ill, but to wait until the child was recovering and the parents less distressed.



***Health education materials made by health workers play workers and children.***

Both primary and secondary health workers need to have education/training opportunities that equip them with the knowledge and skills to meet these health preventive responsibilities. Audit of compliance with policies, programs and systems of care is important if their objectives are to be achieved in the best possible way.

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