HealthySteps

Description

HealthySteps is a pediatric primary care program that supports healthy early childhood development and effective parenting. A child and family development professional, known as a HealthySteps specialist, connects with families as part of the primary care team during pediatric well-child visits. The HealthySteps specialist offers screening and support for common and complex parenting challenges, such as feeding, attachment, behavior, sleep, parental depression and adapting to life with a baby or young child. Trained specialists also provide guidance, referrals, care coordination and home visits for families who need them.³ HealthySteps serves families primarily in the pediatric office but can be extended into the community.

Evidence

• Children were 1.4 to 1.6 times more likely to receive age-appropriate vaccinations on time, and 1.4 times more likely to be up-to-date on vaccinations by age 2.²
• Children were 23 percent less likely to visit the emergency room for injury-related causes in a one-year period.²
• Families were four times as likely to receive information on community resources.²
• HealthySteps parents were:
  – Twenty-two percent less likely to rely on harsh punishment (e.g., yelling, spanking with hand)²
  – 1.5 times more likely to rely on someone in the practice for advice (rather than friend or relative)²
  – 1.8 times more likely to remain with the practice through 20 months³
• Mothers with depressive symptoms were 1.6 times more likely to discuss their symptoms.²
• Mothers were 24 percent less likely to place newborns on their stomachs to sleep, reducing the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).²

Implementation

HealthySteps training and technical assistance helps practices implement the HealthySteps model tailored to the needs of their staff and the families they serve. Staff from new sites attend a two-to-three-day training program known as the HealthySteps Institute. The highly interactive training focuses on applying relationship-building strategies, practicing a strengths-based, family-centered approach, and working on case scenarios.⁴
Billing and Reimbursement

While there is currently no specific billing code in New York State for the entire HealthySteps program, there are individual codes for a number of the services that HealthySteps offers families. For more information, email the HealthySteps National Office Policy and Finance team at JTracey@zerotothree.org.

Resources

HealthySteps
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