



Adolescent Health

Toolkit for Parents
& Caregivers

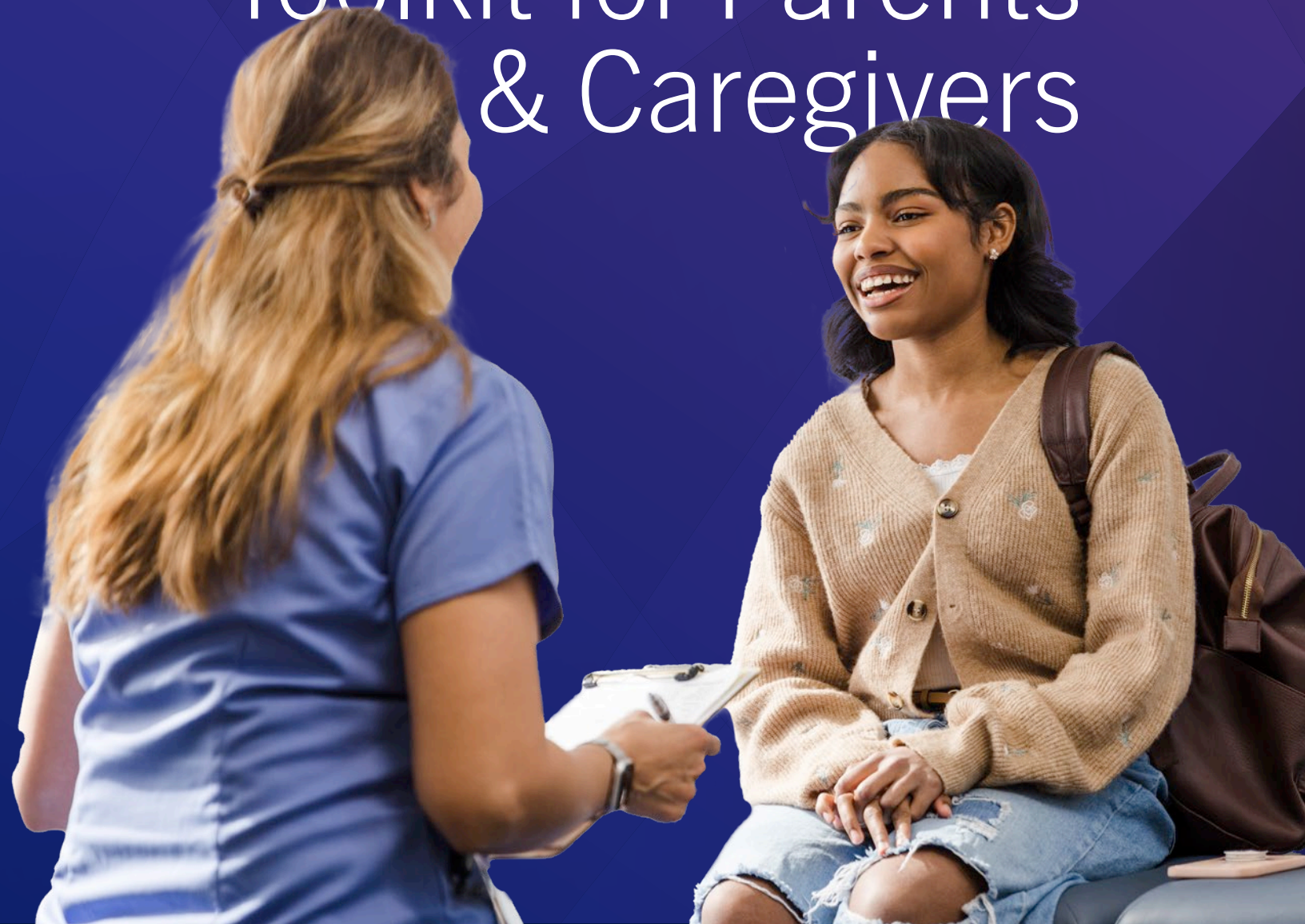


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INTRODUCTION

LETTER FROM JENNIE PINKWATER, ICAAP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 2022

The Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) makes it a priority to address the needs of children and families through advocacy and education. When it comes to addressing health issues and behavior change, focusing specifically on adolescent health needs is a must. The transition from childhood to adulthood is one of the most dynamic and best times for engagement in human development. The rate to which physical, emotional, and intellectual changes are occurring during the adolescent stage provides an opportunity to positively impact health outcomes. It is essential to adolescents' health that their independence is built upon a strong foundation to invest in their future as healthy adults.

As part of a four-year project, ICAAP was awarded funding from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Adolescent Health Program, to address the state's adolescent health needs through educational resources and tools. Through this grant, we developed this educational guide for providers, parents, and teens to utilize. We are proud to serve those in Illinois working towards optimal health outcomes for children and youth!

Best Wishes,

Jennie Pinkwater, MNM
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ABOUT

The Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics was awarded funding from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health and Family Services from 2018 to 2022 to support adolescent health services in Illinois. The purpose of the Illinois Adolescent Health Program is to empower adolescents to adopt healthy behaviors and improve the overall health of adolescents by increasing the rate and quality of adolescent well-care visits.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and Bright Futures recommend annual well-care visits during adolescence. Annual well-care visits during adolescence promote healthy behaviors, prevent risky ones, and detect conditions that can interfere with physical, social, and emotional development.

ICAAP developed this two-part toolkit for pediatric providers, adolescents, and parents/caregivers to improve the effectiveness of adolescent well visits. This toolkit includes tools and resources on adolescent health issues, health equity, the pandemic impact, and implementation strategies to empower youth to take control of their health care.

Funding provided in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

PROJECT WORK GROUP INVOLVEMENT

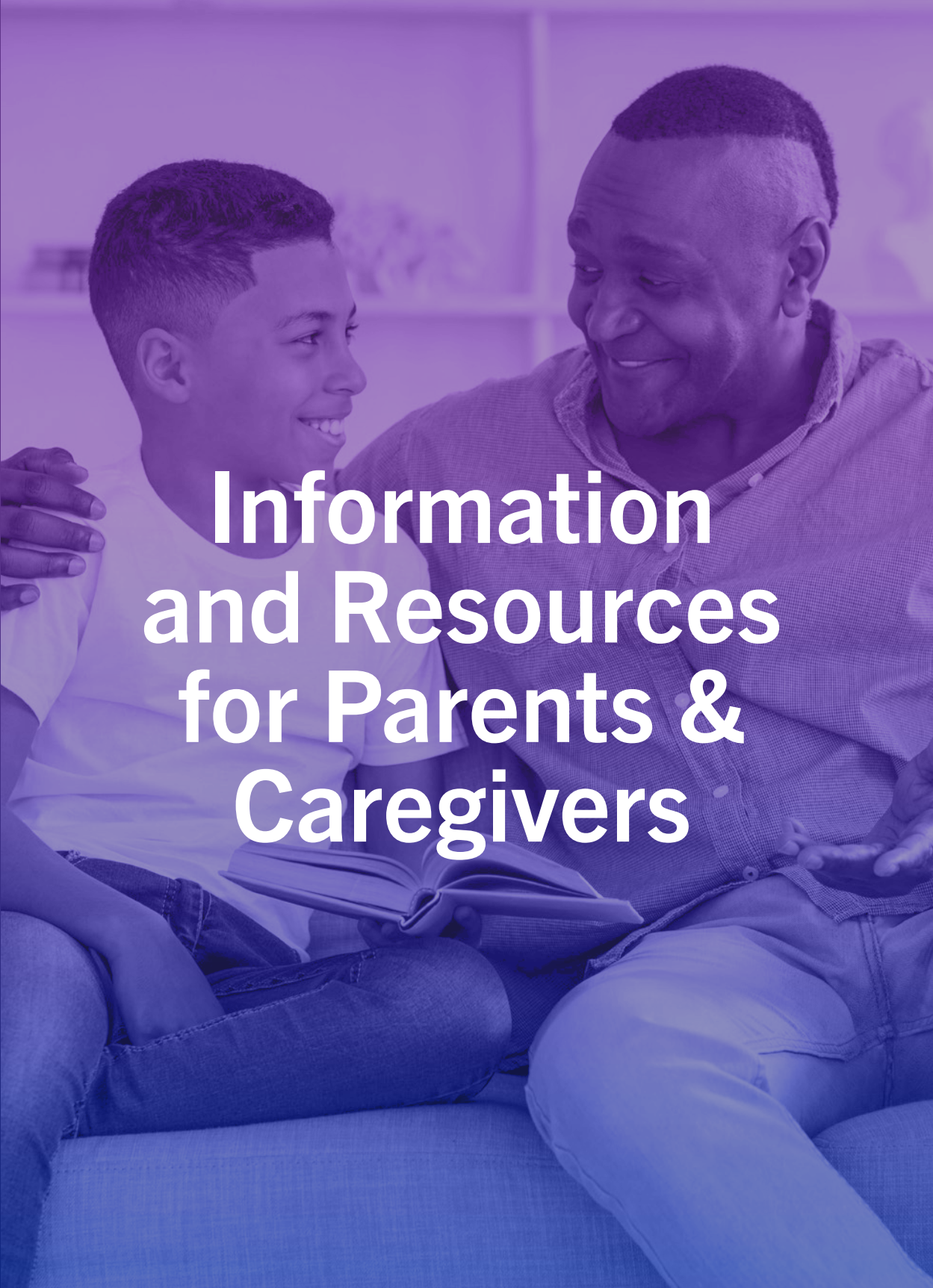
ICAAP wishes to thank members of the Adolescent Health project planning group for their knowledge and expertise on this project, including:

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Information and Resources for Parents & Caregivers



PARENT AND CAREGIVER RESOURCES

RAISING TEENS

- Research in no way suggests that “one size fits all.” Rather, these [parenting strategies](#) offer starting points from which to adapt ideas that fit the characteristics of each family, culture, circumstance, and teenager.

FACT SHEET FOR ONE-ON-ONE TIME

- [Teen Health Services and One-On-One Time with a Healthcare Provider](#)

Teens need regular medical care to ensure they receive recommended health services that help keep them safe and healthy. Parents can help create that trusting relationship by allowing their teen one-on-one time with their healthcare provider.

MENTAL HEALTH

► Parenting Your Teen

Mental Health Literacy provides a toolbox of resources for parents to review when communicating with teens.

► Mental Health Resources for Parents

The Check-In project offers information on mental health conditions, risk factors and warning signs of mental illness, and practical ways you can help support your child's mental health and well-being.

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES FOR TEENS

► Creating Positive Experiences for Your Teen

Building a strong foundation for your teens will help provide emotional wellness through experiencing them together.

SEXUAL HEALTH

► Positive Parenting Practices

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides guidance for parents on best practices for protective factors for sexual health.

► Teen Pregnancy and Parent Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides parents teen pregnancy resources when addressing their teens sexual health.

► Getting the Conversation Started With Your Teen on Sexual Health

The Office of Adolescent Health through Health and Human Resources offers quizzes that parents can take to guide their sex talk with their teens.

► Parent and Child Communication Through Promoting Sexually Healthy Youth

The Advocates for Youth provide the facts for parents on best ways to openly communicate with their teen on their sexual health.

► Talk to Your Kids About Sex

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offer a range of healthy communication tools on how to talk to your teens about sex.

► Parents, Family and Friends of LGBTQIA+

This national organization supports the LGBTQIA+ persons and provides information on how to best support their teen needs.



Adverse Childhood Experiences



HELPING YOUR TEEN OVERCOME ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Children and teens don't grow up in a vacuum — they're shaped by their environment, relationships, and experiences. Some experiences, like trauma or instability, can have a lasting impact on a young person's development. These are known as **Adverse Childhood Experiences**, or **ACEs**.

But ACEs are not destiny. With strong support systems, safe environments, and access to helpful resources, children and teens can heal and thrive. These resources are here to connect you, as a parent, guardian, or caring adult, with services and programs across Illinois that help meet young people's needs at every stage.

MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Safe2Help Illinois – A confidential 24/7 system for youth to report mental health concerns, bullying, or school safety issues using an app, text, or website — without needing an adult present.

The Check-In Project – Resources to help youth and families start conversations around mental health and learn how to recognize emotional distress.

HealthyChildren.org – Creating Positive Experiences – Tips from pediatricians on building resilience and emotional wellness in teens through everyday actions

ACCESSING HEALTHCARE FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

HRSA Find a Health Center – A map of low-cost or free community health centers. Offers primary care, mental health services, and more, regardless of insurance status. Language support is available.

ICIRR – Immigrant Health Center Map – Clinics across Illinois that provide care regardless of immigration status or documentation.

Dial 2-1-1 – Connects families to local healthcare, housing, and emergency resources 24/7 across Illinois.

Get Care Illinois – Step-by-step guide to help families apply for health coverage. Resources are available in Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Polish.

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) – Affordable insurance for children and pregnant individuals who don't qualify for Medicaid. Call 1-800-318-2596 to apply.



HOUSING STABILITY & EMERGENCY SUPPORT

Homeless Youth Provider Agencies

– Programs offering shelter, transitional housing, and supportive services for youth experiencing homelessness.

Housing Action Illinois – Statewide directory of housing and shelter resources organized by region.

Eviction Help Illinois – Call 1-855-631-0811 | Text 844-938-4280 (English) or 844-938-4289 (Spanish)

Greater Chicago Food Depository

– Find Food & Diapers – Find nearby pantries for groceries, diapers, and hygiene items.

Homeless Youth Handbook (IL) – A legal guide covering the rights of youth without stable housing in Illinois.

EMPLOYMENT & FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Illinois Job Link – A free job search website to help teens, parents, and caregivers explore work opportunities by location, skill, or experience level.

Illinois workNet – Offers job training, resume tools, career counseling, and workshops — with support for young adults, veterans, and people with disabilities.

Resume Builder – workNet – Create or update a resume using free online tools (requires account).

Illinois Financial Wellness Hub – Teaches families how to budget, build savings, manage debt, and plan for education or homeownership.

Ticket to Work Program – Free employment support for people who receive disability benefits and want to work. Call 1-866-968-7842 or TTY 1-866-833-2967.





FOOD ACCESS & NUTRITION ASSISTANCE

We Got You Illinois – A campaign connecting youth and families to food, diapers, and basic needs services in the Chicago area.

Find Food Illinois – Eat.Move.Save.
– A statewide map to find nearby food pantries, meals, and nutrition assistance.

Eat.Move.Save. Recipes & Tips
– Healthy, budget-friendly meals with bilingual resources.

Call 2-1-1 – Available statewide to connect families with food, health, or housing resources.

Student's Guide to Overcoming Food Insecurity – Practical support and campus food access tips for college students.

IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE FAMILY SUPPORT

Work Permits 4 All – Parole in Place Info – Information about immigration protections for military-connected families.

Welcoming Centers & Family Resource Map (Spanish-English) – Find community-based immigrant support centers across Illinois.

Illinois DHS – Resources for Immigrants and Refugees – Statewide programs offering food, legal support, housing, and public benefit navigation.

HELPING CHILDREN & TEENS THRIVE

You don't have to do it all alone. Whether you're supporting a child through stress or instability, helping a teen step into independence, or navigating complex systems yourself, there is help available.

These resources were gathered by ICAAP to give Illinois families the tools to build stability, resilience, and hope, even through life's toughest moments.



CONCLUSION

As it is our mission to promote and advocate for optimal child, youth and family well-being; we hope that this toolkit has provided easy access to resources in order to increase the quality and frequency of adolescent health well visits. Specially focusing on adolescents, this is a time where guidance and support of their parents, families, schools, healthcare providers and communities are important.

We recognize that adolescents need healthy, positive relationships with a trusted adult in order to begin making their own health decisions. We are proud to serve those in Illinois towards optimal health outcomes for children and youth!

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