

Preface

Children are the most vulnerable members of society and are dependent on adults for their well-being. Communities, schools, parents, government, and various institutions strive to protect our children and provide them the environment and tools necessary to grow into healthy adults. The well-being of children determines the health of the next generation. Indeed, many of society's most severe health and social problems are caused by issues that develop during childhood and adolescence. As Healthy People 2020 points out, professionals in policy, research, and clinical practice fields are cognizant that childhood provides the physical, cognitive, and social-emotional foundation for lifelong, health, learning, and well-being, and thus health promotion strategies need to be well researched, executed, and assessed. Even from an economic perspective, investment in childhood health promotion pays off greatly.

Health promotion for children and adolescents involves a range of academic disciplines and fields in order to be successful. And thus, this book is for readers of all kinds—professionals and students in public health, public policy, education, social work, medicine and health care, and of course parents and children themselves. This book aims to bridge the gap between what is discussed in theory and academia and what health promotion programs are working on the ground.

This book presents the latest findings on the most effective methods for health promotion for children. Theory driven, the chapters highlight a multifaceted approach to health promotion, incorporating community, families, schools, and policies. Rather than using the same framework and applying it to different problems, each author presented in the book relies on different prevention and health behavior models in order to best understand the issue at hand and address the problem from a multitude of perspectives. Throughout the book, various solutions will be given using evidence-based principles to plan, implement, and evaluate community health programs that target health problems of children and adolescents. While this book was written with a US focus, the theories and approaches that are addressed are universal in nature and can easily be translated to many countries and settings.

Health Promotion for Children and Adolescents begins with an overview of health promotion theories and models in order to orient and familiarize the reader with the different theoretical approaches or tools available in conducting health promotion. The book then has two chapters that discuss the role that socioeconomic, poverty, and culture play in providing the context in which health promotion for children occurs. Part III of the book will focus on psychological wellness in children and adolescents, with Chap. 5 describing what stress and resiliency look like in children, Chap. 6 exploring recent developments in child mental health, Chap. 7 discussing youth suicide, and Chap. 8 highlighting health-related concerns among children with ADD/ADHD. Social and behavioral wellness will be the focus of Part IV. Sexual behavior, sexuality, and gender issues will be discussed in Chaps. 9 and 10, highlighting the latest research findings and debates. Chapter 11 will focus on the latest research findings in the field of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use prevention for children, while violence and aggressive behavior are covered in Chap. 12. While childhood obesity is all over news headlines these days (Chap. 13), it is unhealthy eating habits that are the root cause of both obesity and eating disorders (Chap. 14), which Chap. 15 will thoroughly address. As number of children with chronic illnesses has been increasing, Chap. 16 will cover how dealing with these illnesses is of particular challenge among children. The need for confidentiality in health services for children will appropriately follow in Chap. 17, with a look at the ethical and legal issues involved in having children be more autonomous in their health care. Chapter 18 will focus on child abuse and the foster care system.

This book was a project that could not have been completed without the hard work of so many people. Each contributing author put in time, effort, and hard work for which I am so grateful given everyone's very busy schedule and competing interests. The authors that took part in this book are some of the top scholars in the field of health promotion for children and adolescents and have been instrumental in conducting both research and programmatic efforts in their area of interest. I am appreciative of their commitment to this book and the high-quality chapters that are presented within. I would also like to thank my editors at Springer, Janet Kim and Khristine Queja, for their guidance, patience, and support throughout each step of this project. A special thanks to my family, especially my husband, Ittai, and my children, Benjamin and Gabriel, for their endless support and love.

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