

evaluator to administer and score test correctly and interpret the results meaningfully. The therapists giving the child services thus understand what the child's problems are and can work on the best way to go about addressing them.

Strong evaluations facilitate the delivery of appropriate recommendations. Experienced evaluators with a strong base of knowledge across multiple domains of functioning will not only be able to explain a child's test results, but will also be able to make appropriate recommendations for supplementary evaluations to address areas of concern outside that evaluator's main domain of expertise. For example, the Early Intervention core evaluation involves administration of an educational evaluation. The educational evaluator may be able to make recommendations for other evaluations such as speech, hearing, occupational therapy, or physical therapy based on what she sees in testing your child. The psychological evaluation is the core part of the assessment for children ages 3- 5. The psychologist is most likely to identify concerns that relate to other areas of functioning and require extra testing such as occupational therapy evaluation, physical therapy evaluation, speech and language testing, audiological assessment, vision evaluation, or neurological follow-up. A strong evaluator also knows how to interpret test results and use these interpretations to make intervention recommendations across different domains of functioning. She provides a holistic picture of what an assigned therapist should work on if the child is identified as eligible for help.

What can parents do to attain an effective, quality evaluation for their child?

Many of the best evaluators have full schedules with limited availability. It may be worthwhile to let the agency conducting the evaluation know that you are willing to make yourself available for your child's testing according to the assigned evaluator's schedule.

Many of the children evaluated for Early Intervention or in the 3-5 age range are in school. It is, therefore, realistic to expect that your child will have to miss some class time in order to participate in testing. For children ages 3-5, the educational evaluation is done in school.

It is important to note that most children give a more accurate picture of their true functioning when they are not tired. It is best for children to be tested earlier in the day or after they have eaten or napped so that they can put their best foot forward and be free from interference in the testing. When scheduling an appointment, try to take into account your child's daily routine and request or accept an appointment time earlier in the day or after your child has gotten up from his nap.

The evaluation process will likely involve a few assessments in different areas of functioning. The total time commitment will ultimately not involve more than a few hours over the course of several days. If you work outside the home, it is worthwhile to take a few hours off, if possible, to make your child available for testing in order to assure that evaluations are conducted under the most optimal conditions possible. If you are home full time, it is worthwhile to rearrange your daily routine to accommodate an appointment for testing.

Health Matters

By Garey V. Ellis, MD.



As the saying goes, "When you have your health, you have everything." But of course, we cannot just sit idly hoping for good health for ourselves and our families. Preventive care is an important part of medicine, so it is everyone's responsibility to learn as much as possible about how to maintain wellness and to recognize warning signs of illness as early as possible.

As a New Year begins on the Jewish calendar, I wish everyone in the YVY family a healthy year. To assist this, I will share information that can help us all to maintain good health in this new column.

This month we will learn about dental health problems and effective preventive care, through information from the American Dental Association.

What should you know about diet and tooth decay?

Your teeth are covered with plaque, a sticky film of bacteria. After you have a meal, snack or beverage that contains sugars or starches, the bacteria release acids derived from dietary sugars that attack tooth enamel. Repeated attacks can cause the enamel to break down and may eventually result in cavities.

Plaque that is not removed can eventually harden (calcify) into calculus, or tartar. When tartar collects above the gumline, it becomes more difficult to thoroughly brush and clean between teeth. This can create conditions that lead to chronic inflammation and infection in the mouth. Brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning once a day between your teeth with floss or an interdental cleaner helps remove decay-causing plaque.

With this issue, we inaugurate a new column by Yeled V'Yalda's Director of Health Services and Family and Community Partnerships. If there are any issues you would like addressed, please let us know at (718)686-3750, ext. 353.

Don't be shy to let the evaluator scheduling the appointment know your routine. Evaluators always try as hard as possible to accommodate a child or family's schedule when making test arrangements. You can make requests for an appointment that will accommodate your child and family routine (i.e., testing arranged on Sundays).Most evaluators will take these requests into account when scheduling with you.

If your child is being evaluated at home, arrange the evaluation area so that it is clean, free of distractions, and conducive to work. This includes removing the telephone during the evaluation, keeping your other children busy while your child is working with the evaluator, and keeping videos, computers, or audiotapes off during the testing.

Parents' cooperation is essential for having a child evaluated appropriately and for the child to receive the most benefit from services once these services are approved. Parents must work actively with their child's therapists to assure optimal results.