

## Oral Health Best Practices

### Strength-based Approach

A strength-based approach is one that focuses on a patient's or family's strengths and builds on them.

The goals of a strength-based approach are to:

- Raise awareness of a family and child's strengths.
- Find positive motivation and assist families and children to take on healthy behaviors that lead to a child's healthy development.

A strength-based approach encompasses many familiar constructs all with a similar goal—a healthy child. The following equation illustrates how these approaches work in tandem:

**Strengths = assets = protective factors = resilience = healthy development**

Most practitioners already ask questions about child and family strengths, but not necessarily in an organized manner. Eliciting parental strengths promotes the role of the family as a primary partner in health promotion. Because families most often are responsible for implementing next steps and recommendations, practitioners help build the family's strengths to raise children who ultimately take responsibility for their own health and well-being.

A study in *Pediatrics* found that parents “talked about the importance of reassurance during well-child visits, wanting feedback to confirm that their child was growing and developing normally. Parents also sought reassurance regarding their parenting skills. An acknowledgment from the pediatrician of doing a good job as a parent was viewed as an important source of encouragement.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Radecki L, Olson LM, Frintner MP, Tanner JL, Stein MT. What do families want from well-child care? Including parents in the rethinking discussion. *Pediatrics*. 2009;124(3):858-865. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/124/3/858.full.pdf+html> Accessed December 23, 2020

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