Helping Children Live with HIV
An Early Assistance resource from Hesperian Health Guides

Information and activities to help families and other caregivers support the healthy development and well-being of young children in communities affected by HIV, poverty, and other challenges. Primary focus on ages 0 to 5, and up to age 8.

Contents

Chapter 1: Children need help to live with HIV
HIV is in our communities • How HIV makes both children and caregivers vulnerable • The importance of caregiving and supporting caregivers • Benefits of local resources • Children’s rights and how to support them

Chapter 2: HIV and how children develop
What babies and children need at different ages to develop well • Ways HIV can harm or slow a child’s development • How to help children affected by HIV grow and develop well

Chapter 3: Communicating with children and talking about HIV
Different ways we communicate • Communicating with children as they grow • Problems understanding children • How bad behavior is communication and what to do • When and how to talk with young children about HIV

Chapter 4: Helping children through death and grief
How to support children through a parent’s illness and death • Planning for the future • How to support a grieving child at different ages • Rituals, storytelling, and memory boxes • Community support

Chapter 5: Prevention of HIV in children and mothers
How HIV does and does not spread • How to protect babies by preventing HIV infection in women before pregnancy • Preventing HIV transmission during pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding • The role of ART and safer sex • Other ways children can become infected

Chapter 6. How to know if your child has HIV
Understanding and getting the HIV test • Ensuring privacy • Testing parents and pregnant women • Testing babies and children • Signs a child should be tested for HIV • Positive and negative HIV test results • Getting support
Chapter 7: How to keep children healthy
Nutrition for babies and young children • How to breastfeed and wean safely with HIV • Children with HIV need to eat more • How to purify and store water • Sanitation, cleanliness, and toilets • How to prevent common illnesses, including worms, malaria, and TB • How a strong spirit in children supports their health

Chapter 8: ART – Medicines for HIV
What ART (anti-retroviral therapy) does • When babies and children should start ART • How to give ART • Ways to help a child take medicine and remember to give it every day • How to respond to side effects • Keeping your child on ART

Chapter 9: How to care for common health problems
Signs of illness in children • Fever • Pneumonia • Diarrhea • Vomiting • Dehydration • Cough, pneumonia, and tuberculosis • Thrush and mouth sores • Ear pain and discharge • Eye irritation • Skin problems • Delayed growth and development

Chapter 10: Helping children with pain or if they are dying
HIV and pain • How to know when a child is in pain • How to talk with children about their pain • How to ease pain in a child with HIV • How to support a dying child, and a family when a child dies • How to use medicines for pain in children

Chapter 11: Preventing and addressing abuse of children
Understanding abuse and how it harms children • Support for caregivers can prevent abuse • How guidance and discipline differ from abuse • Ways to support children facing abuse • Sexual abuse and how it harms children • How to talk to children about sexual abuse • Signs of sexual abuse • Supporting a sexually abused child • Community efforts to stop sexual abuse

Chapter 12: Community support for children
Mobilizing communities to support children and families • How to organize support groups, health care support, livelihood and food support projects, household help, childcare • Raising awareness and fighting stigma • Ways to use art, different media, and events • How to find resources

Resources:
• Understanding HIV
• Medicine information
• Tools: sample will, growth record, medicine reminders
• Helpful books, organizations, and websites