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Koplan, J. P., Fleming, D. W. Current and future public health challenges. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2000; 284: 1696-1698.

Children and mental health are getting increased attention in the public health world! A recent article in the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association* by two senior members of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, lists ten current and future public health challenges. The third of these ten is children's emotional and intellectual development.

Koplan and Fleming indicate that, "Attention to children's physical development must be matched with a parallel focus on their emotional and intellectual development. Although vaccinations and other health advances have made infancy and childhood less perilous, an essential challenge is to encourage home, preschool, and community environments, interactions, and relationships that permit each child to achieve his or her full potential."

It is noteworthy that the eighth challenge on the list is to "recognize and address the contributions of mental health to overall health and well-being." The authors indicate that, "the challenges are to identify risk factors, improve access to treatment (including removing the stigma from seeking help), and promote good mental health in all communities."

This article was published just two weeks after the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health, and during the same week that the Surgeon General conducted a Congressional briefing on children's mental health.

The complete list of 10 challenges is:

1. Institute a rational health care system;
2. Eliminate health disparities
3. Focus on children's emotional and intellectual development
4. Achieve a longer "healthspan"
5. Integrate physical activity and healthy eating into daily lives
6. Clean up and protect the environment
7. Prepare to respond to emerging infectious diseases
8. Recognize and address the contributions of mental health to overall health and well-being
9. Reduce the toll of violence in society
10. Use new scientific knowledge and technological advances wisely