

Screenings an essential tool for children

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

The Northeast Colorado Health Department has started scheduling a new year of healthy child clinics, and families with young children, age 6 months to 5 years, are encouraged to take advantage of this free and important service.

“Children develop more quickly between birth and age 3 than they do at any other point in their life,” said Michelle Pemberton, NCHD’s prevention services coordinator. “Their bodies and brains are growing rapidly during this time. Because each stage of development is connected to the next, early screening and intervention is an essential tool in making sure their foundation is as strong as possible to help with future learning.”

The healthy child clinics have previously been funded by the El Pomar Foundation and The Colorado Trust and are coordinated by NCHD. The services provided include vision, hearing, developmental, speech/language, social emotional development, dental and immunization assessments. The screenings are free and are intended for all children age 6 months through 5 years of age.

“These clinics allow us to bring all of the various specialists to one location so your child goes through a comprehensive assessment over the course of an hour,” said Pemberton. “Whether or not you suspect a delay in the development of your child, a healthy child checkup is an essential part of your child’s early years.”

In a recently published report by the American Academy of Pediatrics, 12-16 percent of all children have some type of disability, including speech/language delays, mental retardation, learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral problems. Only 30 percent of these disabilities are detected prior to school entrance.

“Preschool and kindergarten students actually receive many of these same types of screenings after they start school,” said Pemberton, “but detecting and addressing them early can reduce and help prevent future problems.”

NCHD coordinates several healthy child clinics each year in Logan, Morgan, Phillips and Sedgwick counties, with some of them beginning in mid-February.

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To find out more about the clinics or to schedule an appointment, visit www.nchd.org, or contact Pemberton at 970-522-3741 ext. 1239 or e-mail michellep@nchd.org. For more information or to schedule an appointment at a healthy child clinic in Washington or Yuma counties, contact the Rural Communities Resource Center, 970-848-3867.

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