



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

AAP News

News Articles

Positive relationship with parents key to helping children thrive

by Carla Kemp, Senior Editor

Editor's note: *The 2018 AAP National Conference & Exhibition will take place from Nov. 2-6 in Orlando.*

Throughout her career, child development expert Claire Lerner, L.C.S.W., has worked side by side with pediatricians to support children and families.

"I saw what an enormous influence pediatricians have on families to help them get off to the healthiest start possible," Lerner said.

Medical training, however, may include only a short rotation on parenting and early childhood development.

"They (residents) don't get a lot on how do you support a parent who comes in with a child who is having major temper tantrums or has a temperament that is intense and reactive and is working their 'last nerve' ..." she said.

Lerner aims to fill that gap during a session titled "Promoting Positive Parenting (F4063)," from 2-2:45 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 6, in room W414AB of the convention center. During the session, she will outline a four-step process pediatricians can use to develop a positive relationship with parents.

"You could have the most brilliant insight into what's going on with a child if they're having a challenge, but if you don't have a strong, trusting relationship with the parent, it's much less likely the parent is going to actually digest and act on your very valuable information," said Lerner, senior parenting adviser at Zero To Three, a nonprofit organization working to ensure babies and toddlers benefit from early connections that are critical to their well-being and development.

Lerner acknowledges that pediatricians have limited time for well-child visits. Rather than taking more time, her approach involves using time in a specific way. The process involves being empathic, avoiding judgment and prescriptive guidelines, seeking to understand what is going on with parents and empowering them to solve their parenting challenges.

"Your job is not to solve the parents' problems," Lerner said. "Your job is to help them understand what makes them tick and what makes their child tick and how to use that information to make really attuned and sensitive parenting responses to their child."

*For more coverage of the 2018 AAP National Conference & Exhibition visit <http://www.aapublications.org/content/aap-national-conference-2018> and follow @AAPNews on *Twitter* and *Facebook*.*