

Healthy Families Indiana

Location: Home Based

Client: Parent/Child/Family

Summary:

Healthy Families Indiana is a voluntary home visitation program designed to promote healthy families and healthy children through a variety of services, including child development, access to health care and parent education.

By working closely with hospital maternity wards, prenatal clinics and other local agencies, Healthy Families Indiana systematically identifies families that could benefit from education and support services either before or immediately after birth. The program is designed to strengthen families by reducing child abuse and neglect, childhood health problems and juvenile delinquency.

Research over the last two decades has consistently confirmed that *providing education and support services to parents* around the time of a baby's birth, and continuing for months or years afterwards, *significantly reduces the risk of child maltreatment* and contributes to positive, healthy child rearing practices. Families receiving this type of intensive home visitor service also show other positive changes such as consistent use of preventive health services, increased high school completion rates for teen parents, higher employment rates, lower welfare use and fewer pregnancies.

Healthy Families Indiana provides screening and assessment of families in targeted areas throughout the state. Service entry points include WIC Programs, health clinics and local hospital. Parents are screened using a validated, standardized instrument, the Maternal Record Screen. Positive screens do not assess the risk of child abuse and neglect but do indicate a need to conduct a more in-depth discussion with the family.

Families with positive screens are then assessed using a standard validated instrument, the Kempe Family Stress Checklist. Family Assessment Workers also use a standardized rating scale to score the checklist. Families with a score of 25 or higher are offered the opportunity to participate in a voluntary home visiting program tailored to their individual needs.