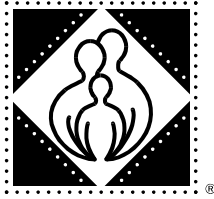


# Healthy Families America: A Distinctive Approach to Home Visiting



In 1992, Prevent Child Abuse America launched the Healthy Families America® initiative (in partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities and with ongoing support from the Freddie Mac Foundation), a voluntary home visiting program with three equally important goals:

- ⊙ to promote positive parenting,
- ⊙ to enhance child health and development, and
- ⊙ to prevent child abuse and neglect.

This initiative was the response to a call from communities across the country for a sensible approach to working with families around the complex issues of child abuse and neglect—before abuse occurs. Over a decade later, Healthy Families America has grown to over 450 sites in North America, assessing 82,000 families and providing 50,000 families with comprehensive home visiting services each year. In 2001 alone, the program secured nearly \$185 million dollars in private and public funding. Healthy Families America provides a distinctive structure and approach that ensures quality, while encouraging each community to use the program to best fit its unique needs.

## **Healthy Families America Provides a Wide-Ranging Umbrella of Services for Families and Communities.**

⊙ Program staff bring a wealth of education and expertise from such areas as child development, public health, psychology and nursing, and social work, enriching the resources available to families.

⊙ An inclusive approach brings communities together, through strong networks and collaborations among a variety of community-based service providers.

⊙ Healthy Families America's distinctive "state systems" provide statewide infrastructures that facilitate communication between sites and state level advocates both within the state and across the country. State systems also serve to reduce duplication of services and ensure the ongoing development of such critical functions as training, quality assurance and evaluation.

## **Healthy Families America is Flexible—Meeting the Individual Needs of Families, Communities and States.**

⊙ Healthy Families America offers services to families based on their stated needs and personalized goals. Each family crafts their own action plan to change their own lives. In this way, families proactively take the necessary steps to create and maintain a stable and nurturing home for their child.

⊙ Programs are located in a variety of agency settings including: public agencies, local non profit organizations and private institutions. This flexible approach allows each community and state to design its own service delivery system based on its unique assets and needs.

## **Healthy Families America is Evidence-Based and is Built Directly on Research of What Works.**

⊙ Each program is grounded in a common framework of twelve, research-based "critical elements" that represent quality standards and ensure the program's adherence to best practices in home visitation. Only those programs that commit to this quality standard can be affiliated with the national initiative.

⊙ Healthy Families America is the only home visiting program to have a formal credentialing function linked with institutionalized credentialing systems to ensure quality.

⊙ Healthy Families America supports a Research Network and Research-Practice Council of independent evaluators working collaboratively to use research to improve program practice.