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FACT SHEET: [Site Characteristics](#)

Healthy Families America Implementation Study

This fact sheet on site characteristics is based on the report of the Healthy Families America Implementation Study (May 2004)ⁱ. The primary sample for the study includes approximately 100 sites in nine states or Healthy Families America systems. This number is approximate as the number of sites and states represented in each area of the study varies considerably. The study provides the most comprehensive picture of Healthy Families America implementation status to date. Overall, the results reveal that sites vary in their implementation in ways that may affect family outcomes in areas such as parent-child interaction, child development and child abuse and neglect. The study provides a foundation for interpreting the differences in these outcomes from site to site.

Summary of Results

Site Characteristics:

- ▶ **Site Maturity:** A greater percentage of the study sites are newer (61% of study sites started in 1999 or later) compared to 30% of sites nationally.
- ▶ **Site Service Capacity:** Over half of study sites are larger compared to Healthy Families America sites nationally (i.e., 54% have seven or more FSWs, compared to 33% of Healthy Families America sites nationally).
- ▶ **Target Population:** About two-thirds of study sites serve parents regardless of the number of children they have, one-third serve only first-time parents, and two sites (2%) serve only teen parents.
- ▶ **Predominant Race/Ethnicity:** Sites serving predominantly African-American families make up the largest group in the study sample (37%), while sites serving predominantly Latino families make up 21%.
- ▶ **Community Size:** Compared to national Healthy Families America sites, fewer study sites are located in rural communities (i.e., compared to 26% of sites nationally), and more study sites are located in larger communities.
- ▶ **Host Agency:** The host agencies that house Healthy Families America study sites are categorized into three types: family support services, social services, child welfare (47%); health, medical, public health, maternal/child health (33%); and other i.e., mental health, education, community action, etc. (20%).

Relationships between Site Characteristics:

The relatively small number of sites in the study makes it difficult to detect differences, and therefore, the relationships between site characteristics may be even greater in the field of home visiting as a whole. Attention to such relationships is important when comparing to quality measures and family outcomes.

- ▶ Site maturity and capacity show a relatively strong relationship, with older sites tending to be larger.
- ▶ Sites serving predominantly Latino families are larger on average than sites serving other groups.
- ▶ FSWs had higher education in predominantly Anglo sites than predominantly African-American sites: the average years of education is 14.6 and 13.4, respectively.
- ▶ FSWs in major urban sites have less prior experience in home visiting than those in small cities/towns: average years of prior experience in home visiting is 1.0 year and 2.6 years.
- ▶ Other relationships that were examined but were not statistically significant included: Race/Ethnicity and host agency type; at the site level, FSWs' average education level and average years of prior experience, FSWs' average education level and average age, and FSWs' average age and average years of prior experience.

Mothers' Risk Scores at Enrollment: In the top 25% of sites, the *average* Family Stress Checklist score ranges from 45 to 70, a very high level of stress.

- ▶ Median risk score was not significantly related to site characteristics measured in this study, except for site capacity. Sites with 7-12 FSWs had the highest median risk scores compared to sites with 3 or fewer FSWs. Also, the smallest sites had significantly smaller range of risk scores (maximum score minus minimum score).

ⁱSee Harding, K., Reid, R., Oshana, D., & Holton, J., (April 2004). Initial results of the HFA implementation study. National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research, Prevent Child Abuse America: Chicago, IL.

