Healthy Families New York Prevents Child Maltreatment

Healthy Families New York (HFNY) Home Visiting Program

HFNY is an evidence-based, voluntary home visiting program for expectant and new parents. Based on the Healthy Families America model, trained paraprofessionals use a strengths-based approach to service provision and may provide Intensive in-home services until the child enters school or Head Start. The goals of HFNY are to promote positive parenting skills and parent-child interaction, prevent child abuse and neglect, promote optimal prenatal care and child health and development, and enhance family self-sufficiency.

Healthy Families New York Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)

In 2000, OCFS initiated an RCT in collaboration with SUNY Albany’s CHSR to test the effectiveness of HFNY in preventing child maltreatment and promoting children’s development.

Families eligible for HFNY in three sites were randomly assigned to either an intervention group that was offered HFNY services or to a control group that was given information on and referrals to appropriate services other than home visiting. Baseline interviews were conducted with 1,173 women (intervention, n=579; control, n=594). Mothers were again interviewed in their homes around the time of the child’s first, second, third, and seventh birthdays.

The research team also examined data from child protective services reports and foster care placements.

For additional details on this research, see the following sources:


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HFNY produced sustained reductions in harmful parenting practices for the whole sample at ages one, two, & seven.

HFNY Produced Sustained Reductions in Harmful Parenting Practices for the Whole Sample

HFNY produced sustained effects on harmful parenting practices. Based on all mothers’ reports of parenting practices, HFNY generated:

- An 88 percent reduction in the average number of acts of very serious physical abuse at age one.*
- A 75 percent reduction in the average number of acts of serious physical abuse at age two.*
- An 80 percent reduction in the average number of acts of serious physical abuse at age seven.*

Although there were no differences in the cumulative rate of confirmed CPS reports in the first four years of life for a subgroup of children of young, first-time moms who enrolled in the study early in pregnancy, HFNY did reduce the rate at which these children were confirmed as victims in CPS reports between the fifth and seventh years of life†.

HFNY Reduced Child Welfare System Involvement for Two Subgroups of Women:

1. Mothers who had confirmed CPS involvement prior to HFNY

HFNY reduced rates of confirmed Child Protective Services (CPS) reports for neglect† and physical abuse† and for initiation of child welfare services* through age seven for a subgroup of mothers with confirmed CPS involvement prior to being randomly assigned to the HFNY RCT.

2. Young, first-time moms who enrolled in the study early in pregnancy

Although there were no differences in the cumulative rate of confirmed CPS reports in the first four years of life for a subgroup of children of young, first-time moms who enrolled in the study early in pregnancy, HFNY did reduce the rate at which these children were confirmed as victims in CPS reports between the fifth and seventh years of life†.

* Denotes statistical significance at the .05 level
† Denotes statistical significance at the .10 level