



Annual  
Report  
FY2018



# **Healthy Families**

## Travis County

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| ABOUT HEALTHY FAMILIES TRAVIS COUNTY _____                      | 3  |
| Program Overview _____  | 3  |
| Mission/Goals _____   | 3  |
| Accreditation _____   | 3  |
| ASSESSMENT SERVICES _____                                       | 4  |
| Acceptance Rate _____   | 4  |
| HOME VISITING SERVICES _____                                    | 5  |
| Supports and Resources Included in Home Visiting Services _____ | 6  |
| Information and Demographics _____                              | 7  |
| Retention Rate _____  | 8  |
| GIVING AND RECEIVING _____                                      | 9  |
| Holiday Party _____   | 9  |
| Donations _____   | 9  |
| EMPLOYEE TRAINING _____   | 10 |
| List of Training _____  | 10 |
| PERFORMANCE _____   | 11 |
| FUTURE GOALS _____  | 12 |
| Quality Assurance _____   | 12 |
| Reports and Funding _____                                       | 12 |
| Strategic Planning _____  | 13 |
| EMPLOYEE INFORMATION _____                                      | 14 |
| REFERENCES _____  | 15 |

# ABOUT HEALTHY FAMILIES TRAVIS COUNTY

## Program Overview

Healthy Families Travis County (HFTC) is a program under the umbrella of the Office of Children's Services within the Travis County Health & Human Services Department based in Austin, Texas. A County-operated program, HFTC is a **voluntary**, intensive home visiting program whose goals include teaching over-burdened families about maintaining safe, stable and nurturing relationships. Caring and well-trained Home Visitors reach out to families through visits that focus on the parent-child relationship, bonding and attachment, understanding child development, and learning about community resources.

This evidenced-based home visiting model is supported by Healthy Families America and Prevent Child Abuse America. The model adheres to best practice standards such as: providing standardized assessments of families' strengths and needs, beginning services prenatally, cultural understanding and acceptance, frequent home visits, developmental screenings of children, annual training requirements for staff, and family driven goal-setting.

## Mission

Our mission is to promote child well-being and prevent the abuse and neglect of our nation's children through intensive home visiting.

## Goals

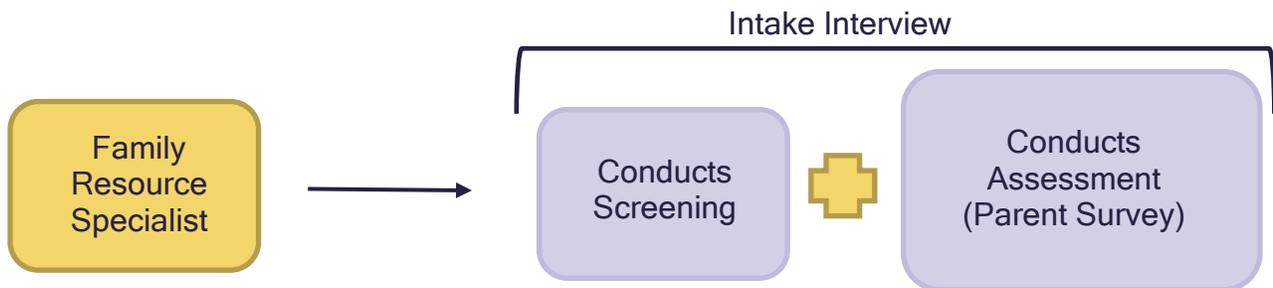
- Reduce child maltreatment;
- Improve parent-child interactions and children's social-emotional well-being;
- Increase school readiness;
- Promote child physical health and development;
- Promote positive parenting;
- Promote family self-sufficiency;
- Increase access to primary care medical services and community services; and
- Decrease child injuries and emergency department use.

## Accreditation

Healthy Families Travis County (HFTC) has been nationally accredited/affiliated with Healthy Families America (HFA) and Prevent Child Abuse America since 2004. This means that the program is focused on adhering to the fidelity of the HFA model and has continued to meet Best Practice Standards during each Peer-Review site visit for the past 15 years.

# ASSESSMENT SERVICES

Family Resource Specialists (FRS) are employees who conduct outreach and recruitment efforts on behalf of the program. They offer presentations to local clinics, schools, community fairs, WIC offices, and more. They are usually the first people that families meet from Healthy Families Travis County. They also meet with families in their homes to complete an Intake Interview, which includes a Screening Questionnaire and an Assessment Tool (Parent Survey). These standardized tools help determine if the family is eligible for home visiting services. However, if the family is not eligible or not interested in home visiting services, the FRS offers each family very valuable community resource information catered to their individual interests and needs. Also, this Intake Interview must take place prenatally, or ideally before the baby is 2 weeks old.



After the FRS submits the family's Intake information to the FRS Manager, it is then determined if a family is eligible for Home Visiting Services, if the family is interested. At that point, a family is assigned to a Home Visitor if the program has an opening available.

## Acceptance Rate

In fiscal year 2018, 105 families received a Screening. Of those, all of them agreed to an Assessment (Parent Survey), which is **100%** for an Acceptance Rate.

Of those who completed an Assessment, 81 enrolled in Home Visiting services during fiscal year 2018. Of those who did not, they were unable to be contacted, were no longer interested in services, or enrolled in home visiting services during the next fiscal year.



# HOME VISITING SERVICES

Once a family is assigned to a Home Visitor, this employee meets with families in the comfort of their own home. Home Visitors have flexible schedules in order to try to meet the needs of the families they serve. Families who are actively enrolled and meet regularly with their Home Visitor may have access to numerous types of support, education, information and assistance. The following graphic shows many of the supports and resources that HFTC offers, with details listed on the following page.



## Supports and Resources Included in Home Visiting Services

- Car seat safety technicians - Some of the program's Home Visitors have been trained and certified to teach families how to install car seats properly.
- Growing Great Kids parenting curriculum - HFTC utilizes this evidenced-based parenting curriculum to help educate parents about their baby's behavior and capabilities.
- Child safety items and supplies - Depending on availability, the program can assist families with diapers, car seats, pack-n-plays, strollers, and more.
- Bilingual Home Visitors - Most of the Home Visitors are bilingual in English and Spanish.
- Breastfeeding Peer Counselors - A number of Home Visitors are trained specialists who help mothers who may be experiences challenges with breastfeeding.
- Child development screenings - All of the Home Visitors are trained to administer child development screenings, which help families learn how to encourage and support their baby's growth and development.
- Children's books - Donated children's books are given to families to encourage parental bonding and promote school readiness with children.
- Period of Purple Crying information - All families are taught about this crucial period in babies development which can help prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Community resources referrals - All Home Visitors are knowledgeable about many types of resources in the community, and are able to assist families in connecting with them.



*The following is a text exchange between a Home Visitor (blue) and a mom (gray) expressing her appreciation:*

Hi (name), was just checking to see if you ever got ur food stamps back? Let me know  
Thanks.

Yes thank god and thank u for helping me

I will help u with what I can. Stay strong n continue being the great mom that you are... ♥ hope to see you all soon.!

Ok I will.  
I appreciate you so much! I'm hanging in there. Thanks I will keep in touch for sure

*This text exchange shows a Home Visitor (blue) providing encouragement to a mom (gray) enrolled in the program.*

## Information and Demographics

On average, each Home Visitor can have a caseload of up to 20 families. In addition, Supervisors meet weekly with each Home Visitor to discuss the families on their caseload, as well as provide support, and offer personal and professional growth opportunities.

Families are visited weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly depending on their progress and needs. They can stay enrolled in the program until the baby's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. At that point, HFTC hosts a Baby Graduation Event to celebrate the families' successes and achievements.

In fiscal year 2018, 174 families were enrolled in home visiting services. Demographics included:

| Gender |   | Ethnicity |                     | Race |         | Language |         | Age |       |
|--------|---|-----------|---------------------|------|---------|----------|---------|-----|-------|
| 174    | F | 107       | Hispanic/Latino     | 56   | Other   | 81       | English | 12  | 15-16 |
| 0      | M | 67        | Non-Hispanic Latino | 52   | Black   | 79       | Spanish | 36  | 17-18 |
|        |   |           |                     | 48   | White   | 3        | Chinese | 33  | 19-21 |
|        |   |           |                     | 5    | Asian   | 2        | Nepali  | 26  | 22-24 |
|        |   |           |                     | 13   | Unknown | 1        | Arabic  | 30  | 25-29 |
|        |   |           |                     |      |         | 1        | French  | 27  | 30-35 |
|        |   |           |                     |      |         | 4        | Unknown | 10  | 36-40 |
|        |   |           |                     |      |         | 3        | Other   |     |       |

## Retention Rate

Because research demonstrates positive outcomes for parents and children, Healthy Families Travis County tracks data related to the length of time that families remain enrolled in home visiting services. This is a measure of a family's retention rate or the program's retention rate.

Successful completion of the program is a process that takes between 3 and 5 years. Results indicate that, relative to the baseline, parents who completed the program showed significant positive change in parenting attitudes and practices. In addition, relative to other children their age, the children of families who successfully completed the program exhibited significantly higher levels of performance on measures of social and emotional competence. (Cullen, J.P., Ownbey, J.B., & Ownbey, M.A., 2010, p. 335)

The reasons why families exit the program is also documented. Sixty-eight families were closed for the following reasons during fiscal year 2018:

| Number of Families | Reasons for Leaving  |
|--------------------|--|
| 15                 | Graduated (remained in the program for 3 years)                      |
| 13                 | Refused continuation of services (often due to work/school schedule) |
| 12                 | Moved (many due to high cost of living or immigration status)        |
| 10                 | Lost or were unable to contact                                       |
| 10                 | Never fully engaged (may have had a visit or two, did not remain)    |
| 4                  | Never enrolled (did not have a first home visit)                     |
| 3                  | Became involved with CPS services                                    |
| 1                  | Child death  |

Retention Rate information:

| % of Families | Length of Service  |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 56%           | 6 months           |
| 42%           | 12 months (1 year) |
| 38%           | 18 months          |



Unable to measure a longer time period, as a new data system was incorporated in 2017. Only families active as of fall 2016 were entered in the new system.

# GIVING AND RECEIVING

## Holiday Party

Each year, HFTC hosts a special event to celebrate the holiday season with all the families enrolled in home visiting services. In fiscal year 2018, the event was held at Fiesta Gardens in downtown east Austin due to its beautiful and centralized location.

Approximately 200 guests attended this event, including babies and their families. Many volunteers assisted with setting up, serving food/drinks, and cleaning up, such as the City of Austin's Graffiti Crew members and Travis County employees.



## Donations

HFTC was so grateful to the following organizations for their generous donations and support:

- **Angels Afoot from Riverbend Church** - For many years now, Angles Afoot has donated a holiday gift to each baby enrolled in home visiting services. These gifts are age-appropriate toys that encourage and support the baby's growth and development.
- **Austin Area Quilt Guild (Baby Bundles)** - Each year, the Austin Area Quilt Guild creates handmade quilts and donates about 100 of them to our program. Each family receives at least one quilt to encourage tummy time and floor play with babies.
- **Austin Diaper Bank** - The program received over 20,000 diapers to help families experiencing financial burdens.
- **BookSpring** - This community agency donates approximately 900 books a year, which supports our goals of encouraging parental bonding and school readiness.
- **Family Eldercare** - In recent years, HFTC has been a recipient of donated fans from the Family Eldercare Summer Fan Drive. This is so helpful, as some families cannot afford to keep their air-conditioner running all summer. Therefore, having a fan can help children and babies feel more comfortable during the summer months.
- **Zeta Phi Beta** - This local sorority donated funds for the program to purchase baby safety items, and other needed supplies to help families throughout the year.



# EMPLOYEE TRAINING

All Healthy Families Travis County employees are required to complete a certain number of training hours each year. New employees complete an enormous number of training hours during their first year of employment, this includes: New Employee Orientation, Family Support Specialist role-specific core training or Family Resource Specialist role-specific core training, and Wrap Around training. Wrap Around training encompasses numerous topics such as: Basic Infant Care, Stress Management, Culture of Poverty, Teen Parents, Substance Abuse, Cultural Diversity, Language and Literacy, and many more.

Employees who have been working in the program longer than a year are required to completed so many hours of job-related training each year in order to improve their skills while serving children and families. Training must include topics such as cultural diversity and child abuse reporting. Supervisors and employees track these training hours annually to ensure that staff are meeting training requirements.

Below is a list of some of the training completed by HFTC employees and managers in FY2018:

- Central Texas African America Family Support Conference
- Working for Kids: Building Skills
- Teen Pregnancy in Travis County
- Home Visiting Mini-Conference
- Sexual Harassment Prevention
- Cybersecurity Training
- Home Visit Safety Training
- HIPAA Training
- Racism as Trauma and Cultural Competency: What This Means for Prevention and Treatment with Dr. Fran Kaplan
- Team Building Retreat, which included Cultural Diversity and Child Abuse and Neglect Identifiers training

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”  
- Nelson Mandela

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”  
- Benjamin Franklin



# PERFORMANCE

The following performance measure outcomes were reported to the Travis County Commissioner's Court and the Healthy Families Travis County Advisory Committee on a quarterly basis throughout the year.

| <b>FY2018 OUTCOMES</b>                              | <b>Q1</b>   | <b>Q2</b>   | <b>Q3</b>   | <b>Q4</b>  |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Children with up to date Immunizations</b>       | <b>84%</b>  | <b>68%</b>  | <b>68%</b>  | <b>70%</b> |
| <b>Children with up to date Well Child Checks</b>   | <b>75%</b>  | <b>69%</b>  | <b>89%</b>  | <b>82%</b> |
| <b>Children with a Regular Medical Provider</b>     | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>97%</b> |
| <b>Children Developmentally on Track</b>            | <b>92%</b>  | <b>90%</b>  | <b>91%</b>  | <b>94%</b> |
| <b>Substantiated Reports of child abuse/neglect</b> | <b>0%</b>   | <b>0%</b>   | <b>0%</b>   | <b>0%</b>  |
| <b>Community Referrals given to families</b>        | <b>97</b>   | <b>128</b>  | <b>180</b>  | <b>261</b> |
| <b>Worker Home Visit Rate</b>                       | <b>64%</b>  | <b>60%</b>  | <b>73%</b>  | <b>72%</b> |



*This is a toy box that a mom made for her baby. Beautiful and creative! It is just one of the activities from our parenting curriculum.*



# FUTURE GOALS

## Quality Assurance

In reviewing current performance data, the following items were marked as needing improvement:

- Immunization rates
- Worker home visit rates

In regards to the immunization rates, staff currently ask parents to show their immunization card as proof that they are up to date. Program managers and staff are now considering whether or not that is necessary. Some parents have misplaced their cards. So while they may be up to date, it cannot be counted as such for reports. Due to this, managers and staff have planned to discuss ways to more efficiently and effectively collect and measure this data.

The program would like to see an overall home visit rate of 75% or better. The current numbers could be attributed to the amount of newer and less experienced staff that have been employed with the program for the past few years. HFTC has found that more experienced staff can usually maintain visits that are more regular with their families. They are often more confident in reaching out to families, and have had more experience with building rapport and maintaining longer relationships. Therefore, more training and experience may address this issue.



*Also from the parenting curriculum, this Dream Catcher activity encouraged a pregnant mom to create a tribute to her baby.*

## Reports and Funding

- The HFTC program is primarily funded by Travis County general funds in order to serve vulnerable populations in the community. In addition, the program receives funding from a City of Austin grant, and from a MIECHV (Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting) federal grant in order to serve African American families.
- Because of the various funding sources, the program provides quarterly and annual performance reports to Travis County, the City of Austin, and MIECHV. Additionally, reports and data are also provided to the following organizations:
  - United Way for Greater Austin
  - HFAST (Healthy Families America)

- Every other year, HFTC produces additional analyses and reports. These include an Acceptance Rate Analysis, Retention Rate Analysis, and a Cultural Analysis Plan. These were last completed in 2017 and will be produced next in 2019.
- Finally, in order to maintain an affiliation with Healthy Families America, the program participates in an Accreditation Review by HFA every four years. This review ensures that the program is adhering Best Practices Standards. The next review will take place in 2022.

## Strategic Planning

- In the fall of 2018, HFTC began working on a Strategic Plan to track and monitor all program functions in order to maintain adherence to Healthy Families America's Best Practice Standards.
- Managers began meeting more often and more regularly in order to give input to the strategic planning efforts. Current plans include updating and revising the program's Policies and Procedures manual.

Report submitted by:

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# EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Below is a list of all the staff employed with the Healthy Families Travis County program. It should be noted that many of the employees have years of job-related experience prior to being hired for their current position.

| Name              | Title   | Years in Current Position |
|-------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Laura Peveto      | Program Director, Office of Children Services           | - 2 years                 |
| Corie Cormie      | Program Administrator, Home Visiting Services           | - 6 years                 |
| Natalie Hendrix   | Program Manager   | - 17 years                |
| Doris Edwards     | Program Manager   | - 11 years                |
| Azure Hobbs       | Program Manager   | - 2 years                 |
| Maggie Cano       | Family Resource Specialist                              | - 22 years                |
| Yanet Guzman      | Family Resource Specialist/Child Development Specialist | - 12 years                |
| Tasha Taylor      | Family Resource Specialist                              | - 5 years                 |
| Alex Vackimes     | Home Visitor  | - 15 years                |
| Alex Cruz         | Home Visitor  | - 4 years                 |
| Jennifer Batista  | Home Visitor  | - 4 years                 |
| Ruby Hernandez    | Home Visitor  | - 4 years                 |
| Valerie Simms     | Home Visitor  | - 4 years                 |
| Ayra Matthews     | Home Visitor  | - 3 years                 |
| Monica H. Perez   | Home Visitor  | - 2 years                 |
| Anika Adams       | Home Visitor  | - 1 year                  |
| Jennifer Johnson  | Home Visitor  | - 1 year                  |
| Lizzieann Johnson | Home Visitor  | - 1 year                  |
| Lizette Hernandez | Home Visitor  | - 1 year                  |

Omg really, thank you so much for all your help ♥ I'm literally in tears, thank you thank you.

You are welcome. I am happy to help!

*Text exchange with a mom (blue) stating her appreciation to her Home Visitor (gray).*

# REFERENCES

- Cullen, J.P., Ownbey, J.B., & Ownbey, M.A. (2010). The effects of the Healthy Families America home visitation program on parenting attitudes and practices and child social and emotional competence. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 27(5), 335-354.
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