

HealthySteps Addresses Child Abuse and Neglect Risk Factors

HealthySteps strengthens the parent-child dyadic relationship and addresses the full range of child and family needs, including several risk factors commonly associated with child abuse and neglect, such as caregiver substance abuse, caregiver mental illness and exposure to violence.



PEDIATRIC CARE • SUPPORTING • PARENTING
A Program of ZERO TO THREE

BRING HEALTHYSTEPS TO YOUR COMMUNITY

HealthySteps is committed to improving the lives of young children and families and preventing child abuse and neglect.

To learn more, contact HealthySteps National Director Dr. Rahil Briggs at rbriggs@zerotothree.org or visit healthysteps.org/prevent-can



HealthySteps is an evidence-based, team-based pediatric primary care model that promotes the health, well-being and school readiness of babies and toddlers.

THE HEALTHYSTEPS NATIONAL NETWORK SPANS **20+ STATES, WASHINGTON, D.C., AND PUERTO RICO**



HEALTHYSTEPS IS CURRENTLY IN **190+ PEDIATRIC PRACTICES SUPPORTING 335,000+ CHILDREN**



HEALTHYSTEPS MEETS FAMILIES WHERE THEY ARE WITH PEOPLE THEY TRUST

Nearly all young children regularly see a pediatric primary care provider. It's an incredible opportunity to meet families where they are with people they trust.

HealthySteps, a program of **ZERO TO THREE**, is an evidence-based, team-based pediatric primary care model that promotes the health, well-being and school readiness of babies and toddlers, with an emphasis on families living in low-income communities.

HealthySteps partners with the pediatric primary care team to provide tailored support for common and complex concerns that primary care providers often lack time to address, such as: behavior, sleep, feeding, attachment, parental depression, social determinants of health and adapting to life with a baby or toddler. The entire practice works to implement the HealthySteps model, with leadership from a Physician Champion and a child development professional, known as a HealthySteps Specialist, integrated into the primary care team. HealthySteps Specialists connect with families and guide them during and between well-child visits.

The HealthySteps national network spans more than 20 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. HealthySteps is currently in more than 190 pediatric primary care practices supporting more than 335,000 children.

HEALTHYSTEPS BUFFERS YOUNG CHILDREN FROM STRESSORS AND SUPPORTS FAMILY STRENGTHS

Research on childhood adversity has demonstrated that *risk factors* commonly associated with child abuse and neglect can disrupt a child's developing brain, negatively influencing behavioral, educational, economic and health outcomes for decades and even generations.¹ HealthySteps identifies and intervenes to prevent child abuse and neglect from happening.

HealthySteps' risk-stratified, population-health model allows pediatric and family medicine practices to identify children and families most at risk for child abuse and neglect and address their needs before nascent concerns escalate. HealthySteps' two-generation approach aligns closely with ongoing child abuse and neglect prevention efforts. The trusting and long-standing relationships that HealthySteps Specialists establish with families during these early years allow sensitive subjects to be addressed in a safe and frequently accessed setting.



Learn more about the HealthySteps model at healthysteps.org/the-model.



HEALTHYSTEPS SUCCESSFULLY ADDRESSES RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

HealthySteps' 15-site randomized controlled trial and several subsequent site-level research studies have demonstrated:

- Children of mothers with a history of childhood trauma scored better on a social-emotional screening after receiving HealthySteps than comparable children who did not receive the program.²
- HealthySteps parents were less likely to resort to using harsh forms of punishment (threatening, yelling, spanking with hand) or severe discipline (face slap, spanking with objects) than comparable non-HealthySteps parents.³
- A longitudinal analysis indicated that HealthySteps participation was associated with greater security of attachment and fewer child behavior problems.⁴
- HealthySteps mothers with depressive symptoms were more likely to discuss their symptoms with their provider and to have a non-medical referral for services than comparable mothers who did not receive the program.³ One study also found that HealthySteps mothers had fewer depressive symptoms after three months in the program.⁴
- HealthySteps parents scored higher on an injury control index and were more likely to use stair gates and have access to the local poison control center's telephone number than comparable parents who did not receive the program.⁵
- HealthySteps parents were more likely to notice behavioral cues and provide age-appropriate nurturing than parents who did not receive the program.³
- HealthySteps parents demonstrated a better understanding of infant development than comparable parents who did not receive the program.⁶
- HealthySteps families received more anticipatory guidance that matched their needs and were more likely to discuss 12 key child development and family-specific topics with their provider than comparable families who did not receive the program.³
- HealthySteps children were more likely to have received non-medical referrals, including for behavior, speech, hearing, child abuse or neglect prevention, and early intervention than comparable children who did not receive the program.³



To review HealthySteps outcomes, visit healthysteps.org/the-evidence.

¹ <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/factors/>

² Briggs, R. D., Silver, E. J., Krug, L. M., Mason, Z. S., Schrag, R. D. A., Chinitz, S., & Racine, A. D. (2014). Healthy Steps as a moderator: The impact of maternal trauma on child social-emotional development. *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*, 2(2), 166–175.

³ Guyer, B., Barth, M., Bishai, D., Caughy, M., Clark, B., Burkorn, D., Genevro, J., Grason, H., Hou, W., Huang, K.Y., Hughart, N., Jones, A.S., McLearn, K.T., Miller, T., Minkovitz, C., Scharfstein, D., Stacy, H., Strobino, D., Szanton, E., and Tang, C. (2003). Healthy Steps: The first three years: The Healthy Steps for Young Children Program National Evaluation. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, February 28, 2003.

⁴ Caughy, M. O., Huang, K., Miller, T., & Genevro, J. L. (2004). The effects of the Healthy Steps for Young Children program: Results from observations of parenting and child development. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 19(4), 611–630.

⁵ Johnston, B. D., Huebner, C. E., Anderson, M. L., Tyll, L. T., & Thompson, R. S. (2006). Healthy Steps in an integrated delivery system: Child and parent outcomes at 30 months. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 160(8), 793–800.

⁶ Johnston, B. D., Huebner, C. E., Tyll, L. T., Barlow, W. E., & Thompson, R. S. (2004). Expanding developmental and behavioral services for newborns in primary care: Effects on parental well-being, practice and satisfaction. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 26(4), 356–366.