

# HealthySteps Impacts Important Precursors for School Readiness

HealthySteps' emphasis on the parent-child relationship and responsive caregiving aligns with the U.S. Office of Head Start's five key domains of school readiness. HealthySteps supports parenting practices identified as having the strongest potential influence on school readiness.<sup>1</sup>



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



## BRING HEALTHYSTEPS TO YOUR COMMUNITY

HealthySteps is committed to promoting the health, well-being and school readiness of babies and toddlers.

To learn more, contact HealthySteps National Director Dr. Rahil Briggs at [rbriggs@zerotothree.org](mailto:rbriggs@zerotothree.org) or visit [healthysteps.org/school-ready](http://healthysteps.org/school-ready)

## 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 together 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. Learn more about the HealthySteps model at [healthysteps.org/the-model](http://healthysteps.org/the-model).

The HealthySteps national network spans more than 20 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. HealthySteps is currently in more than 160 pediatric primary care practices supporting more than 200,000 children.

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 **25+ STATES** and **WASHINGTON, D.C.**



HEALTHYSTEPS IS CURRENTLY IN **367+** PEDIATRIC PRACTICES SUPPORTING **517,000+** CHILDREN



## SCHOOL READINESS GOES BEYOND LITERACY

School readiness is a complex construct. It is grounded in literacy and numeracy skills *and* in overall social-emotional well-being and self-regulation skills. The U.S. Office of Head Start, which provides funding for early care and education programs serving infants and toddlers, describes school readiness as when "...*Children (possess) the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. Physical, cognitive, social and emotional development are all essential ingredients of school readiness.*"<sup>2</sup> Their Early Learning Outcomes Framework identifies five key domains of school readiness:<sup>3</sup> approaches to learning; social emotional development; language and literacy; cognition; and perceptual, motor, and physical development.



## HEALTHYSTEPS PROMOTES SCHOOL READINESS

Research has demonstrated that social-emotional development is a key developmental foundation to school readiness and academic success, and must be considered alongside early academic skills (e.g., mastery of ABCs and 1-2-3s) that historically have garnered more attention.<sup>4,5,6</sup> The HealthySteps Specialist supports families and their young children's social-emotional development and early learning, and connects families to high quality child care and key services in their community, such as Part C Early Intervention.

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

- 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.<sup>7</sup>
- Mothers engaged in HealthySteps were 22% more likely to show picture books to their infants every day and 24% more likely to play with their infant every day.<sup>7</sup>
- HealthySteps parents were more likely to notice behavioral cues and provide age-appropriate nurturing than parents who did not receive the program.<sup>7</sup>
- HealthySteps children were more likely to have received non-medical referrals, including for behavior, speech, hearing, child abuse/neglect and early intervention than comparable children who did not receive the program.<sup>7</sup>
- Important developmental topics (e.g., sleep, language development, social skills) were discussed more frequently in well-child visits of families receiving HealthySteps than in visits of families not engaged in the program.<sup>8</sup>
- HealthySteps children of parents who had endorsed childhood trauma had social-emotional screening (ASQ:SE) scores well within normal limits while the children of parents who endorsed childhood trauma in the control group were much more likely to have elevated (worse) scores.<sup>9</sup>



To review HealthySteps outcomes, visit [healthysteps.org/the-evidence](https://healthysteps.org/the-evidence).

<sup>1</sup> Leger, M., C., Roberts, C. & Sharp, S. (2020) The road to readiness: The precursors and practices that predict school readiness and later school success. Overdeck Foundation, available online at <https://overdeck.org/news-and-resources/article/the-road-to-readiness-the-precursors-and-practices-that-predict-school-readiness-and-later-school-success/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness>

<sup>3</sup> <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework>

<sup>4</sup> Thompson, R. A., & Raikes, H. A. (2007). The social and emotional foundations of school readiness. In D. F. Perry, R. K. Kaufmann, & J. Knitzer (Eds.), Social and emotional health in early childhood: Building bridges between services and systems (pp. 13-35). Baltimore, MD, US: Paul H Brookes Publishing.

<sup>5</sup> Denham, S. A. (2006). Social-emotional competence as support for school readiness: What is it and how do we assess it? *Early Education and Development*, 17, 57-89.

<sup>6</sup> Raver, C. C. (2002). Emotions matter: Making the case for the role of young children's emotional development for early school readiness. *Social Policy Report*, 16, 3-19.

<sup>7</sup> Guyer, B., Barth, M., Bishai, D., Caughey, M., Clark, B., Burkom, D., Genevra, 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. <sup>8</sup> Buchholz, M., Talmi, A. (2012). What we talked about at the pediatrician's office: Exploring differences between Healthy Steps and traditional pediatric primary care visits. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 33, 430-436.

<sup>9</sup> 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.