



## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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](https://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.<sup>2</sup>
- 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.<sup>3</sup>
- A longitudinal analysis indicated that HealthySteps participation was associated with greater security of attachment and fewer child behavior problems.<sup>4</sup>
- 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.<sup>3</sup> One study also found that HealthySteps mothers had fewer depressive symptoms after three months in the program.<sup>4</sup>
- 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.<sup>5</sup>
- HealthySteps parents were more likely to notice behavioral cues and provide age-appropriate nurturing than parents who did not receive the program.<sup>3</sup>
- HealthySteps parents demonstrated a better understanding of infant development than comparable parents who did not receive the program.<sup>6</sup>
- 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>3</sup>
- 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.<sup>3</sup>



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

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

<sup>2</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.

<sup>3</sup> Guyer, B., Barth, M., Bishai, D., Caughy, M., Clark, B., Burkom, 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.