

## BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES

### Building a Healthy Family begins with a Strong Foundation

Expecting a Baby?

Have a Newborn?

The Building Healthy Families Team is partnering with parents to nurture happy childhoods all over the county.



Babies don't come with instructions, and the arrival of a little bundle of joy can fill a new parent's heart with big questions and even bigger worries.

Building Healthy Families visits provide the perfect partnership with parents where individualized support, resources, and information strengthen the family foundation and cultivate resilience, or the ability to "bounce back" in hard times. Staff listen without judgment, respect individual beliefs and

values, and offer a caring approach toward planning and problem-solving.

Resource and Support Specialists are friendly and highly trained in subject matter important to new parents. Even seasoned parents appreciate the regularity of seeing a friendly face at the door in the midst of a stressful parenting situation or when excited to share their child's accomplishments.

Home visitors offer games and thought-provoking activities to engage expectant couples in planning for a rewarding parenting journey. Once the baby arrives, visitors provide enjoyable parent-child activities to support developmental milestones and social-emotional well-being. They offer current and evidence-based information and resources to address challenges, such as getting the little one to sleep, saving money, dealing with depression, cutting down on smoking, or increasing social connections.

Childhood doesn't last forever.



A parent's time and touch can last a lifetime.

#### Frequently Asked Questions:

*Will I spoil my baby if I hold her too much?*

Research and parents agree that a newborn who is held as often as she calls for it will develop a sense of security and become independent far easier than an infant left to cry with an unfulfilled need for attention. In fact, baby brains develop with each loving touch of a caretaker.



#### Dad's Corner

Did you know that holding a newborn skin to skin provides some of the same benefits as breastfeeding?

See the next page for more FAQs about Building Healthy Families

## Participants and Staff Answer Frequently Asked Questions about Building Healthy Families:

1. I have so many appointments and obligations. How would I ever make time for visits?

Visits are arranged at the family's convenience and can purposely include everyday routines. Tips and activities are offered for making the most of time with children. Visits are designed to enhance family life, rather than disrupt it, so there is no need to prepare anything ahead of time.

Tip: Ask your Home Visitor for ideas about adding joyful moments to a busy schedule!



2. What does my stress have to do with my baby's brain development?

Parental stress releases the hormone cortisol that can be damaging to a developing infant during pregnancy.

After birth, a parent whose attention is occupied by the release of stress hormones has a harder time reading an infant's signals and enjoying time with their child.

Tip: Ask your Home Visitor for ideas to release stress.



3. How does time with my baby contribute to my health and my child's academic success?

Time spent holding, reading to, and playing with your child releases hormones that make you both feel good. Time with your child teaches him he is important and builds confidence to try new things. It exposes him to language and prepares him to read. It teaches him lifelong skills for making friends and forming quality relationships with others.

4. Was there anything you were concerned about before meeting with a Home Visitor?

*"I had no concerns because everyone was so nice and no one was judging me."*

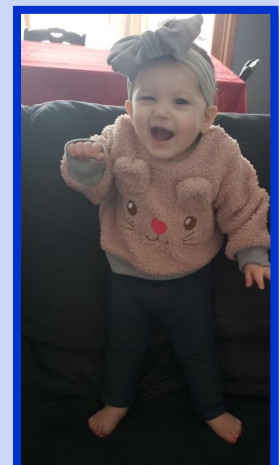
*"I didn't really have any concerns because I am a new Mom and I didn't know anything about babies. I was looking forward to being part of the Building Healthy Families Program."*

*"I was embarrassed about my house not being organized and not having time for a shower. We made goals out of that!"*

5. Is there anything that you think would be good for new Families to know before they begin meeting with Home Visitors?

*"Trust your Family Support Specialist because they use research when you talk about baby/child development."*

*"I would say just go for it. Building Healthy Families helps you out, gives you good ideas."*



A young participant in a joyful moment with BHF !

**If you are expecting a baby or have a child under 3 months old or would like to refer someone to Building Healthy Families, fill out our survey:**

<https://mail.ofo.dev002.vibrantcompany.com/find-program/building-healthy-families/>