



Northern Virginia Family Service
Healthy Families Arlington County

Program Overview

Healthy Families Arlington County, a program of Northern Virginia Family Service, provides voluntary home-visiting services to vulnerable parents residing in Arlington County. Established in 1997, the program is affiliated with Healthy Families America, an initiative of Prevent Child Abuse America, and is an active member of the 33-site Healthy Families Virginia network.

Program Goals:

The four primary goals of Healthy Families Arlington County are to:

- Promote positive parenting
- Improve child health and development
- Promote school readiness
- Prevent child abuse and neglect

Eligibility for Services:

Eligibility for the Healthy Families program is based on findings from an initial assessment using the Parent Survey. Specific criteria for eligibility are the following:

- Participants must live in Arlington County.
- The mother must be pregnant with and/or the target child must be under 2 weeks of age at the time of referral.
- The target child must be less than three months old at pre-enrollment (assignment to Family Support Specialist).
- Participants must screen and assess positively according to the Healthy Families Arlington Screening and Parent Interview procedures.
- Participant must not be currently enrolled in another intensive home visiting program unless coordinated, concurrent services are indicated.

Exceptions to these criteria may be allowed depending on community needs.

Program Services:

Healthy Families Arlington County provides two main types of services to families in Arlington:

- (1) **Family Assessment:** A Family Resource Specialist (FRS) conducts an initial parent interview based on the Parent Survey to determine eligibility for the program as well as need for other services within the community. Depending on indicated need, the FRS provides parents with referrals to community resources.

- (2) **Home Visits:** Family Support Specialists (FSSs) provide regular home visits to at-risk families beginning during pregnancy. Services may continue until the child reaches three years of age. Home visiting services include the following components:
 - **Family Goal Planning:** FSSs help families develop family goal plans, which are updated regularly according to family needs.

 - **Parenting Education and Skills Development:** FSSs support parent-child interaction. FSSs use the *Parents as Teachers* curriculum, which is activity-based and builds upon parents' knowledge of child development. FSSs routinely assess parent-child interaction using the *PICCOLO* tool and use results to help guide home visiting activities.

 - **Health Education:** FSSs provide information on prenatal care, immunizations, well-baby and mother care, and other health topics.

 - **Developmental Screenings:** FSSs administer routine developmental screenings (*Ages and Stages Questionnaire*) and refer children who may have developmental delays to early intervention services. In addition, FSSs routinely assess the home learning environment using the *HOME Inventory* tool; results from the assessment help guide home visiting activities.

 - **School Readiness Activities:** Staff promotes early literacy through book sharing, book-making, literacy-based playgroups, among other activities.

 - **Mental Health Services:** When indicated, Healthy Families Arlington provides short-term in-home bilingual counseling services to families in need.

 - **Referrals:** Staff refers families to other community resources as needed.