

Healthy Start Initiatives



Overview of Healthy Start

- The purpose of the Healthy Start program is to improve health outcomes before, during, and after pregnancy, and reduce racial/ethnic differences in rates of infant death and adverse perinatal outcomes.
- 5-year grant, funded by Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- 100 projects funded – 3 in North Carolina
 - Healthy Start Robeson – Robeson County
 - NC Baby Love Plus – Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, & Pitt Counties
 - Triad Baby Love Plus – Forsyth & Guilford Counties

Overview of Healthy Start Initiative

WHO WE SERVE

- Preconception
- Pregnant
- Interconception women and their infants up to 18 months of age
- Fathers or male partners

HOW WE DO IT

- Providing adequate prenatal care
- Promoting positive prenatal health behaviors
- Meeting basic health needs (nutrition, housing, psychosocial support)
- Reducing barriers to access
- Enabling client empowerment
- Promotion of positive fatherhood & male involvement

Landscape of Program

HEALTHY START ROBESON

Serves Robeson County

Lead Agency – UNC Pembroke

Subcontracts with local FQHC, Health Department and hospital

NC BABY LOVE PLUS

Serves Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash & Pitt Counties*

Lead Agency – NC Division of Public Health
Subcontracts with local health departments

Specialized support:

Staff with certifications/experience in Mental Health, Grief Counseling, Substance use, Breastfeeding support, Childbirth Education, Car Seat Safety, Father/Partner Engagement

Key Components of Both Programs

- Provide or coordinates transportation to doctor visits and health/wellness related appointments
- Offers breastfeeding support
- Provides behavioral health resources
- Provide health education classes

Home Visiting Model

- Visit participants at least once a month, could be more often based on risk level
- Use the Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum*
- Provide emergency supplies on a limited basis and when available
- Use *24/7 Dad & Fathering in 15* for fathers/male partners
- Involve participants in service planning for self-sufficiency

What helps us do this work?

- Funding
- Collaboration/Partnerships
 - Local/Community Action Networks
 - Community Programs
 - Agreements with other agencies
- Staff support

What are the barriers?

- Rural communities
- Lack of resources for families
- Fear of Social Service agencies, especially when involving home visits
- Historical Trauma/Racism/ACES
- Stigma of “Case Managing” Fathers

How can you help?

- Promote the benefits involved with home visiting programs and community health workers to families
- Support training and education for home visiting programs and staff
- Advocate for policies that support Women's, Men's and Children's health (access, equity, programs, etc.)
- Spread the word within your networks - Promote collaborations with providers and Healthy Start services