

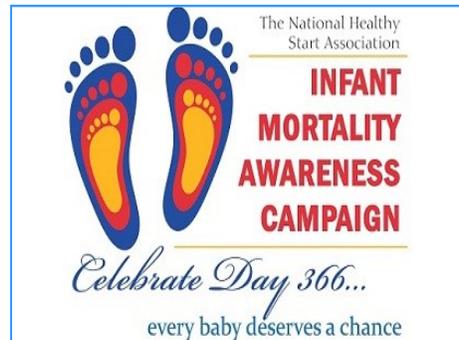


Getting off to a Healthy Start

August 2019

September is Infant Mortality Awareness Month!

Mark Your
Calendars!
NHSA's 20th
Annual Con-
ference will be
in October!
See page 2 for
more details!



Infant Mortality is a serious issue that affects our nation's health. NHSA has developed a campaign, *Celebrate Day 366...Every Baby Deserves a Chance*, to celebrate babies living beyond the first year of life. With the infant mortality rate so high across the U.S, infants living beyond their first birthdays is a huge accomplishment for many families.

There are lots of ways Healthy Start projects can participate in Infant Mortality Awareness Month. For example, there's the "Baby Buggy Walk in the Park," a concept developed by Baltimore Healthy Start and originally funded by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health. This is a fun-filled way to help women of reproductive age and new moms take charge of their health and that of their children through education with an engaging theme. Healthy Start families learn about eating right, making time for exercise and health-related resources in their own community and how all these resources work together to give babies a better start in life.



Click [HERE](#) for more information about IMAM, including NHSA's IMAM Toolkit, which provides a wealth of information on advocacy, activities and events, marketing, sample press releases and much more!

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Attention Healthy Start Project Directors!

An upcoming issue of *Getting off to a Healthy Start* will feature photos, proclamations and news stories from your Infant Mortality Awareness Month activities. Send them to Bea Haskins at bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org. Be sure to send waivers for any consumers and their family members!



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The National Healthy Start Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The mission of the NHTSA is to be our nation's voice in providing leadership and advocacy for health equity services and interventions that improve birth outcomes and family well-being.

Getting off to a Healthy Start

NHTSA's 20th Annual Conference

NHTSA will hold its 20th Annual Conference this year! The first two years, our conference hotels were in Virginia and we utilized buses to get us to the Hill for the visits with our Members of Congress. Is there anyone reading this who remembers the breakfast boxes we had on those buses?

This year's conference will feature the annual Fatherhood Summit on October 19th and 20th. Sunday evening will also feature orientation sessions for new Healthy Start staff and consumers attending the conference. Plenaries and breakout sessions will happen on Monday and Tuesday and a grantee meeting will be held during the conference. Wednesday morning will see our annual Congressional Breakfast before everyone heads to the Hill. And stay tuned for more details, because we're going to work in a few sessions from our Healthy Start Leadership Institute during the conference!

Registration details will be available soon. Meanwhile, you can use the link below to make your hotel reservations. Remember, the Hyatt Regency fills up fast, so you don't want to miss out on rooms there!



Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill

Be sure to mark your calendars for the
 National Healthy Start Association's
 20th Annual Conference in Washington, DC!

October 19-23, 2019

Congressional Breakfast and visits to
 Capitol Hill planned for October 23rd.

Click [HERE](#) to make your reservations at the Hyatt Regency!

Research News: *Hot* Stats and *Fast* Facts

How is the Opioid Crisis Impacting Pregnancy-Associated Deaths?

The opioid crisis in America has made headlines recently. A *Washington Post* article reported that the opioid industry shipped 76 billion oxycodone and hydrocodone pills to America between 2006 and 2012. That's 76 *billion*, with a "b!" In 2012 alone, 12.6 billion pills were shipped across the country.



How has this avalanche flooding some of America's most vulnerable communities impacted pregnancy-associated mortality involving opioids? A recent study using death certificate and live birth data from the U.S. National Vital Statistics System from 2007 to 2016 looked at the little-known contribution of opioids to pregnancy-associated deaths.

The researchers found that the pregnancy-associated mortality rates increased 34% between 2006 and 2017. During that same period, "pregnancy-associated mortality involving opioids more than doubled in terms of both the rate (1.3 to 4.2) and the percentage of all pregnancy-associated deaths (4% to 10%)." The study found that white women were more highly impacted despite their lower risk for "all-cause" pregnancy-associated mortality in comparison with non-Hispanic Black women. In 2016, 70% of pregnancy-associated deaths involving opioids occurred during pregnancy or within 42 days of pregnancy termination. The researchers added, "The patterns we observe, including rising trends among white women and increases in deaths involving heroin and other synthetic opioids, also mirror the broader opioid epidemic."

Read the *Post* article [HERE](#) and click [HERE](#) for the article on pregnancy-associated mortality involving opioids.

Births in the United States 2018 is Available from the CDC

The report provides highlights from the 2018 final birth data on key demographics and infant health indicators. Some key findings:

- The teen birth rate declined 7% from 2017 to 2018 to 17.4 births per 1,000 in females aged 15-19. Rates fell for each race and Hispanic-origin group.
- The percentage of births delivered preterm and early term increased from 2017 to 2018. Full-term and late- and post-term deliveries declined. These patterns were consistent across race and Hispanic-origin groups.

Click [HERE](#) to access a PDF version of the complete report.

Using Food Stamps for Online Grocery Shopping is Getting Easier

Walmart premiered the use of food stamps for online grocery shopping in 2017 with just a few locations. Now, the retail giant is expanding the program at more than 2,500 locations that allows for groceries to be ordered online and paid for with food stamps. The program currently is available throughout New York State and in the coming months will expand to additional states, including Alabama, Iowa, Maryland, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington State.



Amazon recently rolled out other benefits aimed at low-income shoppers. Customers can sign up for its credit card or get a separate card they can reload with cash at most convenience stores. Reaction to this program has garnered mixed reactions. The credit card is available to people with no or bad credit and offers 5% cash back on purchases. But the interest rate is higher than the average credit card.

Read the complete article [HERE](#).

More Research News on page 8!

Letter from NHSA's President



Hello, Fellow Healthy Start Partners!

Welcome, to all of our new and past members to the National Healthy Start Association!

I wanted to formally introduce myself to all the members of the National Healthy Start Association! For the last seven years, I have served on the Board of Directors in various roles. Since 2018, I have served as NHSA President. Back at home in Chicago, IL, I serve in the capacity of the Project Director for the Access Community Health Network: Westside Healthy Start Program.

I first became familiar with infant mortality nearly 18 years ago. I recall standing in the delivery room after the birth of my nephew and moments later seeing him taking his last breath in my sister's arms. I remember asking the doctor why did this happen, and he simply stated, "These type of situations happen to children like that." At that moment, I was filled with anger and felt the need to do something to change the narrative of why babies shouldn't just die. I have heard of similar stories among our participants, and believe that with your partnership, we can continue to start our babies off with a Healthy Start.

As I write this correspondence, I am amazed that it has been 28 years since the first 15 Healthy Start demonstration projects were funded to transform the infant mortality rates across some of our nation's vulnerable communities! Overcoming many obstacles, the NHSA has continued to serve as a leader in the maternal-child health sector to tell the Healthy Start story to America that it "takes a village" to improve perinatal health disparities. I am humbled by the great work that each Healthy Start Project has cultivated to provide case management services to some of the highest risk families, developed innovative ways to provide health education, offered lactation support and empowered the community to be agents of change for our families and the communities in which they call home.

My fellow board members and I have been hard at work developing the strategic direction for the NHSA and its members. During our national fall conference in Washington, DC, October 19-23, 2019, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, all NHSA members are invited to attend our business meeting to learn about our new strategic plan and see how you can become involved. Until then, feel free to reach out to me with any questions, or if you would like to share your personal stories on how you came into the MCH community, please email me at Timika.Anderson@achn.net!

Timika Anderson Reeves M.S.W.

Timika Anderson Reeves, NHSA President



→ Deborah Frazier, NHSA's CEO, and Board President Timika Anderson Reeves at the 2019 Fatherhood Summit in Tulsa, OK.



↓ Anderson Reeves and 2018 Annual Conference Co-chairs Carol Gagliano and Sharon Ross-Donaldson with Bea Haskins, long-time NHSA consultant (seated).



← Taken in 2016 at the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Healthy Start Initiative with current and former board members and Dr. Louis Sullivan, former Secretary of the Department of Health & Human Services.

Healthy Start in the News

Attention Healthy Start Project Directors!

Do you have a project newsletter? Be sure to include NHSA in your distribution list so we can include your news in *Getting off to a Healthy Start!* Please add Bea Haskins, our newsletter editor, bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org.

Do you have project staff you'd like to be on *our* distribution list? Send their name, title and email address to Bea so she can add them!

Literacy Project in Cleveland

Chrisawndra (Chris) Matthews founded Literacy in the H.O.O.D. (Helping Out Our Disenfranchised) after the birth of her son. Its mission is to help every family create a culture in which reading, writing, thinking and speaking are prioritized in the home. Ms. Matthews partners with organizations such as the Cleveland (OH) Kids' Book Bank, WKYC Channel 3, the Cleveland Police Department and Cleveland Metropolitan School District, among many others, to distribute books and educate families. Huge supporters of Literacy in the H.O.O.D.'s efforts are Seeds of Literacy and LaBarberia Barber College. Last year, the program gave away more than 10,000 books, in addition to bookshelves and literacy kits for newborns. Chris Matthews says, "I am determined to change the mindset of parents and help them understand the importance of reading with a child 15-20 minutes everyday. My main message to parents is, 'you are your child's first teacher.'"

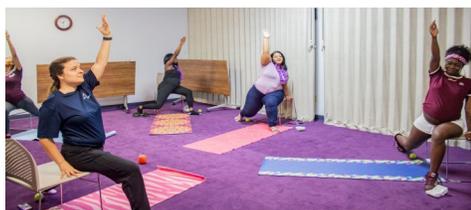


Chris Matthews and Bishop

Click [NEW BEGINNINGS](#) to read MomsFirst's newsletter in its entirety.

Breastfeeding Myths vs. Realities at the Magnolia Project

Pregnant moms learned breastfeeding myths vs. realities on May 16th during a health education /nutrition class. Magnolia Project staff then taught safe sleep practices at their Moms Empowerment class, followed by a pregnancy yoga class taught by Yoga 4 Change. Each mom received a body scrub, other relaxation items, baby items and more. Sounds like a fun day! Check it out on their Facebook [PAGE](#).



The Magnolia Project staff also organized a group walk on May 17th, to raise awareness on the importance of women living active and healthy lifestyles. Both these events were part of National Women's Health Week. The first event was called "Tranquil Thursday" and the walk was held on "Fitness Friday."

Source: NEFL Healthy Start Coalition's e-Newsletter, Spring 2019.

Crescent City Family Services Promotes Breastfeeding Week

Crescent City Family Services teamed up with NOLA Baby Café to help families. The "Pumpspotting RV" parked in Gretna, LA, with staff available to discuss the benefits of breastfeeding. Pumpspotting is a global breastfeeding community and digital health platform.

Click [HERE](#) to watch the video of the news clip on WDSU.



Getting off to a Healthy Start

Association News

NHSA Participates in March of Dimes Prematurity Collaborative Event

The March of Dimes Prematurity Collaborative aims to achieve equity and demonstrated improvements in pre-term birth. **PREMATURE BIRTH** (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) and its complications are the leading contributors to infant death and disability in the United States. The **PREMATURITY COLLABORATIVE** has 340 member organizations, including NHSA, and 600 individual members all working together to achieve these goals

On July 8th, NHSA participated in the Prematurity Collaborative's workshop on *Equity in Action: Moving from Theory to Practice* in Orlando, FL. NHSA Board Member Rev. Tommy Rodgers participated in a "Fireside Chat" and awards were presented to Dr. Fleda Jackson, PhD, who authored the Healthy Start Toolkits on Depression and Stress, and Dr. Art James, MD, a former NHSA board member and medical consultant.



← Rev. Tommy Rodgers, NHSA Board Member.

→At the podium, Dr. Wanda Barfield, MD, MPH, FAAP, RADM, and Lisa Waddell, MS, MPH, Deputy Medical Director and Senior VP MCH & NICU Intervention (center n the black jacket) present awards to Dr. Fleda Jackson and Dr. Art James.



Introducing Brandy Payne!



NHSA is pleased to introduce our new Supporting Healthy Start Performance Project (SHSPP) (see also page 10) Program Coordinator, Brandy Payne. Brandy is no stranger to NHSA. In 2017, she jumped in to help CEO Deborah Frazier with that year's annual conference, handling a lot of the last-minute programmatic and logistical details. Now, as Program Coordinator, Brandy will play a critical role in coordinating key project related meetings and trainings. She'll be working with partner and other organizations concerned with infant mortality, women's health and perinatal health disparities.

Brandy is a seasoned communications professional with over 20 years experience in the areas of corporate communication, strategic planning and change management, specializing in internal and employee relations, public outreach and community relations and writing, editing and special events planning. Her past work experience includes 11 years with Booz Allen Hamilton, a U.S. management and information technology consulting firm, headquartered in McLean, Virginia, where she was an associate for the last six years of her tenure. Brandy also worked for the U.S. Postal Service for several years. In 2016, she was the registrar and office manager of the Saudi Arabian International School, Multinational Section, in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

A graduate of the University of Central Arkansas with a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication and a minor in Health Education, Brandy has served on the Board of Directors of the Infant Toddler Family Day Care in Fairfax, VA, and was the board secretary of the Old Keene Mill Swim and Racquet Club in Burke, VA. Brandy is married and the mother of two lively children.

Brandy brings a wealth of valuable experience to NHSA and she says she is excited to be involved again in a larger and more permanent role. We know everyone will enjoy working with Brandy and meeting her in October at the 20th Annual Conference! Meanwhile, you can reach her at bpayne@nationalhealthystart.org.



News and Resources for Dads and Programs that Work with Fathers/Men

Working with Dads through WIC

WIC is the acronym for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which administers the program, “The WIC Program aims to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care.”



OK, so what about DADS? It says “women,” not men, in that description. Well, the National Fatherhood Initiative has three resources to engage dads in WIC. These are the *How to Engage More Dads in Your WIC Program* webinar, the *Engaging Men & Dads at WIC: A Tool Kit* and an article on their website, that you can access [HERE](#), where you can also find the webinar and the free toolkit that covers these topics:

- Engage and train WIC staff on inclusion of dads
- Communicate directly with dads
- Encourage moms to include dads
- Include dads in evaluation efforts
- Provide service referrals to dads and build community partnerships
- Make the environment friendly to dads
- Help dads to support moms and breastfeeding
- Focus on ways dads can bond with baby
- Provide dads with opportunities for peer groups or counseling

Additional Source: Visit the [USDA](#) website.

Policy Brief: Involved Fathers Are Important for Child Well-being and Development

A Policy Brief from the Child & Family Research Partnership discussed the importance of involved dads. “Involved fatherhood is linked to better outcomes on nearly every measure of child wellbeing, from cognitive development and educational achievement to self-esteem and pro-social behavior,” the paper states. Some factors discussed are:

- When parents get along, the quality and quantity of father involvement are higher.
- While parents engaged in a romantic relationship are more likely to be involved, research shows that even parents who are not together and not in a romantic relationship but who engage in positive co-parenting have a positive influence on paternal involvement.
- Involved fathers also serve against maltreatment of children.
- Nurturing dads help to reduce family stress and child neglect.

Federally-funded Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs seek to increase fathers’ parenting skills including appropriate discipline, communication, emotional support and stress management. “Programs and services that are already family-centered should work to be more inclusive of fathers and develop strategies to engage fathers in their programming.”

Read the whole brief [HERE](#).



More Research News, continued from page 3

Racial Disparity in Care Starts with the Youngest & Frailest Patients

HealthDay News reports that a new review confirms that racial gaps in health care begin at birth. In a review of 41 studies, the findings show that “infants born to minority women typically received poorer care in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) compared with white newborns.” Why?

Sometimes it had to do with lower-quality care in hospitals where minorities were a large share of the patients.

“Hospitals with a high percentage of black preemies typically had lower-quality care and fewer nurses, versus those with a smaller percentage of black patients. There was also evidence that newborn death rates were higher in those ‘minority-serving’ NICUs.”

Part of the problem, the article continues, is the lack of resources and understaffing at hospitals serving minorities. But, added one of the researchers, racial disparities also show up in care “processes.” For example, parents of black and Hispanic preemies were less likely to get referrals for after care compared with white parents. Another factor is the use of “surfactant therapy,” according to Dr. Wanda Barfield of the CDC.

Surfactant is a liquid that coats the lungs and keeps them from collapsing. But when babies are born prematurely, surfactant replacement therapy is a lifesaving measure that helps the lungs that have not fully developed. Some studies found that black preemies were less likely to receive this treatment than white infants.

“According to Barfield, there has historically been a ‘myth’ that black preemies have a more positive outlook, versus other groups. That’s rooted in a statistic: At any given birth weight, except for the tiniest newborns, black babies tend to have better survival rates. But such broad patterns should not affect care decisions for any one baby, Barfield said.”



Other factors leading to these disparities:

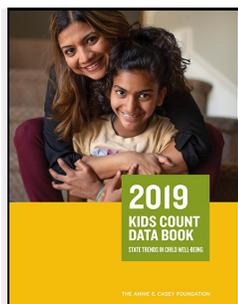
- Black mothers reported receiving less education and support for breastfeeding than white moms.
- Communication issues, which might be language barriers or family members unable to be at the hospital often due to work schedules or transportation barriers. Sometimes this is “judged” by the staff.

Some ways of overcoming these issues?

- Make sure minority-serving hospitals are included in regional quality improvement efforts.
- Encourage women to ask questions about where they will deliver and visit the NICU where they will deliver and ask questions there.

Read the whole article [HERE](#).

Fast Fact: According to the most recent CDC figures, U.S. black women have a preterm birth rate that is about 50% higher than that of white women. Source: click [HERE](#).



The 2019 Kids Count® Data Book is Available!

The 30th edition of the Kids Count book explores how America’s child population has changed in those 30 years. The U.S. has seen the child population grow by more than nine million since 1990. Forty-seven percent are kids of color. The Data Book continues to provide its portfolio of state rankings, with a wealth of information about the state of infants and children in America. Click [HERE](#) for a PDF version of the Report you can read or download.

News of Interest

Responsible Fatherhood Media Campaign Toolkit Webinar

On July 30th, Healthy Start projects were treated to a webinar presented by the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse in cooperation with the Ad Council on tactics to effectively market Responsible Fatherhood in Healthy Start programs. Over 80 participants tuned into to the webinar and learned how to



access and use the high-quality Responsible Fatherhood Media Campaign marketing materials to improve awareness, recruitment and overall excitement about this message and about promoting fatherhood.

The walkthrough of the Responsible Fatherhood Media Campaign Toolkit included information on promoting fatherhood programs with videos, imagery, customizable flyers, social graphics and social media content. Viewers were empowered and inspired to share messaging on social media and to feel comfortable navigating the Toolkit to find and share social content.



If you missed the live webinar, you're still in luck! Click [HERE](#) to watch the video.

Name Change for What to Expect Foundation

The What to Expect Foundation has changed its name to The What to Expect Project and they have a new website. The Project puts all of the mom-to-mom not-for-profit work of What to Expect under one umbrella. The Project's mission is to educate and empower moms in need so they can expect healthier pregnancies, safer deliveries, healthier

what to expect.project babies and healthier futures. Here's the [LINK](#) to their new website.

August is National Breastfeeding Month

The U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, a coalition of more than 50 organizations that support its mission to drive collaborative efforts for policy and practices that create a landscape of breastfeeding support across the United States., declared in 2011 that August would be National Breastfeeding Week. This year's theme is "Support Changes Everything." There are four sub-themes, one for each week in August. For example, Week 4 is Black Breastfeeding Week.



Click [HERE](#) for more information on Breastfeeding Month.

October is Safe to Sleep[®] Awareness Month



The Safe to Sleep[®] campaign invites you to participate in this year's #SafeSleepSnap photo activity for SIDS Awareness Month. The public's commitment to safe infant sleep practices has helped to raise awareness about safe sleep environments. Your participation is a valuable part of the campaign's efforts to affect social norms around safe infant sleep by making images of safe sleep environments more common on social and other types of media

Click [HERE](#) for the SafetoSleep[®] Awareness Month Toolkit.

Attention Healthy Start Project Directors!

Is your project doing an event for Breastfeeding Month in August or SIDS Awareness Month in October? Or do you have some Healthy Start in the News to share? What about a Consumer Success story? Send information and photos to bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org. If your photos include consumers or their family members, please send a release form giving NHTS permission to use.

Getting off to a Healthy Start



Greetings, Healthy Start Grantees!

It is most exciting to write greet you in the National Healthy Start Association's newsletter! The National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ) is thrilled to partner with the NHSA and proud announce to you that we have been selected by the Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau to lead the Supporting Healthy Start Performance Project.



NICHQ's CEO, Scott Berns, and NHSA's CEO, Deborah Frazier, are Co-Principal Investigators for the cooperative agreement, and I am beyond humbled to serve as the Director. As many of you may know, I started with the Boston Healthy Start Initiative, one of the original fifteen Healthy Start projects in 1991 and have had the pleasure up until recently to work as the Project Director of the New Haven Healthy Start program in New Haven, Connecticut. So, the opportunity to serve as director of the SHSPP and a chance to work with all of 100 Healthy Start projects across the country can only be categorized as a blessing. A "blessing" that each of you very well. It is the blessing we have in serving America's most vulnerable families and children.

NICHQ celebrates you and your work of nearly 30 years. Healthy Start has helped improve the health of moms, babies, and families across the country by strengthening communities and improving systems of community care. Healthy Start began and continues as a community-based, community-driven approach to addressing infant mortality and the model has proven to make a difference.

With that, we welcome our "new" Healthy Start projects that are joining the Healthy Start family who will enhance and strengthen an already passionate workforce. The NICHQ Team will support all of you by designing and delivering comprehensive training and technical assistance to build your program capacity to provide support your local communities where the impact of poverty and lack of resources contribute to persistent disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes.

The entire team at NICHQ and NHSA looks forward to joining you in a "Kick-Off" webinar in late August to introduce you to the team and begin our work together and share our planned activities under the cooperative agreement. We will offer technical assistance on clinical and public health topics (e.g., fatherhood and breastfeeding) as well as training for your program staff on core competencies (e.g., leadership and quality improvement). We are also looking forward to learning from what you need and building a relationship with each of you, MCHB and the entire staff at the Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services.

Our goal is to work in partnership with you over the next five years to support the tremendous work of the Healthy Start and lift up the work that each of you are doing in your respective communities. Many have heard about the great work of Healthy Start, so let's use the next five years to demonstrate the work of Healthy Start in a way that we haven't before. Let's tell the story that needs to be told about this unique initiative that spans almost 30 years; a program that focuses on improving infant mortality through a lifecourse approach emphasizing women's health, family health and community/population health. Here's to you and next five years of working together!

Kenn Harris, Director — Visit the NHCHQ [WEBSITE](#) to learn more!



Look for Infant Mortality Awareness Month pictures, news stories and so much more an upcoming issue of *Getting off to a Healthy Start!*



COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES OF *Getting off to a Healthy Start!*

- ◆ Projects' highlights of Infant Mortality Awareness Month & Breastfeeding Week/Month
- ◆ Annual conference highlights
- ◆ Continuing the "Then & Now" series on the original Healthy Start Projects: District of Columbia Healthy Start Is next!
- ◆ Got something going on you want highlighted in the newsletter? Send it to bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org

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