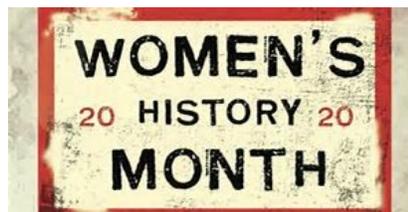




Getting off to a Healthy Start

March 2020



Click [here](#) for info on **COVID-19** and Pregnant Women & Nursing Moms



See page 6 for an update on the Healthy Start Reauthorization Act of 2019.

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Recognizing Women's History Month 2020

Women's History Month had its origins as a national celebration in 1981 when Congress authorized and requested the president to proclaim the week beginning March 7, 1982, as "Women's History Week." Congress continued to pass joint resolutions for the next five years designating a week in March as "Women's History Week." In 1987, after being petitioned by the National Women's History Project, Congress passed Public Law 100-9 to designate the month of March 1987 as "Women's History Month." Congress continued to pass resolutions from 1988-1994 requesting and authorizing the president to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month. Since 1995, presidents have issued annual proclamations designating the month of March as "Women's History Month." These annual proclamations celebrate women's contributions and achievements.

On February 29, 2020, President Donald Trump proclaimed March 2020 as Women's History Month. "This month," he said in the proclamation, "we pause as a Nation to pay tribute to the women who strengthen and enrich our society through civic action, devotion to family, and tireless dedication to community, innovation, peace, and prosperity. We pledge also to continue fighting for the further advancement of women in our society and around the globe, living up to the promise of our Nation's founding."

The National Women's History Alliance selects the yearly theme and this year it's "Valiant Women of the Vote." The theme honors "the brave women who fought to win suffrage rights for women, and for the women who continue to fight for the voting rights of others."

Continue to page 2 for more on Women's History Month!

From the first settlers who came to our shores, from the first American Indian families who befriended them, men and women have worked together to build this nation. Too often the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions went unnoticed. But the achievements, leadership, courage, strength and love of the women who built America was as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well.

President Jimmy Carter's Message designating March 2-8, 1980 as National Women's History Week

Getting off to a Healthy Start



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Association is a 501(c)(3)
nonprofit organization.**

**The mission of the NHSA is
to be our nation's voice in
providing leadership and
advocacy for health equity
services and interventions
that improve birth out-
comes and family well-
being.**

National Healthy Start Association
1325 G Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-295-2195
www.nationalhealthystart.org

Newsletter Editor: Bea Haskins,
Communications Coordinator
Contributing Writers: Ki Smith. *New
Haven Healthy Start Staff*

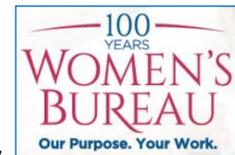
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Women's History Month, continued from page 1

Women's Health Bureau Turns 100!

This year, we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Women's Bureau and the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment, which gave women the right to vote. From the Women's Bureau [website](#), we learn: "The Women's Bureau was established in the U.S. Department of Labor on June 5, 1920, by Public Law No. 66-259. The law gave the Bureau the duty to 'formulate standards and policies which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.' It also gave the Bureau the authority to investigate and report to the U.S. Department of Labor upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of women in industry. The Women's Bureau is the only federal agency mandated to represent the needs of wage-earning women in the public policy process."



Honoring a Pioneer: Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence



*Margaret Morgan
Lawrence.*

Arthur James, one of NHSA's consultants on the AIM CCI grant and a former NHSA board member, told us, "You have no reason to know this, but Marion Wright Edelman is my SHERO. She does not know me, but from afar... she has taken me under her wing and mentored me for many years. Her work and her courage have inspired me for decades. I wanted to share her most recent column with you. She speaks eloquently of the life of a Pediatrician, a trail blazer...another person I never met...but who undoubtedly helped to open doors so that this poor black boy from Watts could some day become a physician. Though she passed away in December, I owe a tremendous amount of respect and gratitude to Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence." The following tribute is excerpted from Marion Wright Edelman's February 28, 2020, column.

"Dr. Lawrence graduated from Columbia University's medical school...where she was the only Black student in her class and one of only ten women. She was turned down for the first hospital internship she applied for because women were not allowed to live in the affiliated doctors' housing and the nurses' housing wouldn't allow a Black woman... She secured an internship at Harlem Hospital, and during her time there became keenly aware of how much the poverty and other challenging circumstances children faced in the surrounding neighborhoods influenced their health and the care they needed...She went on to pursue a master's of public health at Columbia, where she studied under the famous pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock. There she learned more about the deep relationships between physical, social, and psychological health, and that led her to continue formal training in psychiatry, becoming the first Black resident at the New York Psychiatric Institute and the first Black trainee at Columbia's Psychoanalytic Clinic for Training and Research.

"Dr. Lawrence ultimately became both the first Black woman psychoanalyst and the first Black woman physician certified by the American Board of Pediatrics...Dr. Lawrence was dedicated to serving underserved children and especially interested in helping develop 'ego strength' in Black children. She was also dedicated to helping children and families recover from trauma and develop resiliency, and always said helping families was a privilege. She gave other children the thoughtful, loving care she once might have needed...[i]n her daughter's words, 'her life [was] one of courageous boundary crossing; enduring the visibility and distortions of tokenism, and the double oppressions and assaults of racism and sexism' - yet she 'faced the virulent barriers of racism and sexism with a deft blend of grit and grace.' All of us who care deeply about child development owe Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence a debt of gratitude."

Click [here](#) to read the entire column.

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

Pregnant Women's Cosmetic Chemicals Might Lead to Heavier Babies

Many cosmetics contain paraben, a chemical used as a preservative in cosmetics and body care products. Studies have found that parabens mimic estrogen in the body, which can lead to the disruption of the normal functioning of hormones. In a new study, "researchers found detectable parabens in the urine of pregnant women who used paraben-containing 'leave-on' products every day – makeup, body lotion or facial moisturizers. The higher those urinary paraben levels, the more likely it was that a woman's child would be overweight by age 8. A compound called butylparaben stood out: Kids were twice as likely to be overweight when their mothers' prenatal levels of butylparaben were in the top one-third, compared to the bottom third. Girls, it seemed, were more affected than boys."

Eve Tanner, a researcher at Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine in New York City reviewed the findings of the study, which was conducted by the Berlin Institute of Health and Charité at the Berlin University Hospital in Germany. Said Tanner, "This work adds to the growing body of evidence suggesting that prenatal exposure to chemicals found in common consumer products may harm child growth and development." Irina Lehmann at the Institute noted that cosmetics are not the only product containing parabens, which are also used as a preservative in food products and pharmaceuticals. She also said that women who leave paraben containing cosmetics on all day had higher concentrates in their urine.

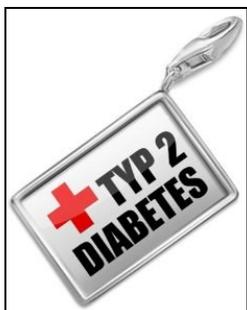
More studies are needed, the researchers all agreed. Lehmann suggested that pregnant and breastfeeding women opt for paraben-free personal-care products and said many are labeled as such.

Source: Norton, A., [Mom-to be's cosmetic chemicals could lead to heavier baby](#), 02/12/2020.



Pregnancy and Breastfeeding May Lower Risk of Early Menopause; Breastfeeding Could Reduce Type 2 Diabetes Risk

A recent study found that women who breastfed their babies exclusively for seven to 12 months may have a lower risk of early menopause than women who breastfed their babies for less than a month. Pregnancy itself might reduce the chance of early menopause. Published in *JAMA Network Open*, funding for the study conducted at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst was provided by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Health and Human Development. "The study results provide the strongest evidence to date that exclusive breastfeeding may reduce the risk of early menopause," said Lisa Halvorson, M.D., chief of the NICHD Gynecological Health and Disease Branch, which oversaw the research.



Another NIH-funded study found that breastfeeding aids in reducing type 2 diabetes risk. "The longer a woman with gestational, or pregnancy-related, diabetes breastfeeds her infant, the lower her risk for developing type 2 diabetes later in life, suggests an analysis by researchers at the National Institutes of Health and other institutions. The study was conducted by Cuilin Zhang, M.D., Ph.D., of NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and colleagues. It appears in *Diabetes Care*...Of more than 4,000 women in the study who had gestational diabetes, 873 developed type 2 diabetes over the course of 25 years. Compared to women with gestational diabetes who had not breastfed, those who breastfed for six to 12 months were 9% less likely to develop type 2 diabetes, those who breastfed for one to two years were 15% less likely, and those who breastfed for more than two years were 27% less likely. The researchers suggested that clinicians may want to encourage patients with gestational diabetes to breastfeed if they are able to, to potentially reduce their type 2 diabetes risk. In addition to health risks for mothers and babies, gestational diabetes increases the risk for type 2 diabetes 10 to 20 years after pregnancy. Type 2 diabetes increases the risk for heart disease, stroke and other health problems."

Sources: [Pregnancy, breastfeeding may lower risk of early menopause, NHI-funded study suggests](#), 01/22/2020; [Breastfeeding may reduce type 2 diabetes risk among women with gestational diabetes, NIH study suggests](#), 02/14/2020.

Letters from the Outgoing President

Timika Anderson Reeves' term ends on April 1st; this is her "farewell letter."



Dear Members of the National Healthy Start Association,

As I reflect over the last two years as the President of the National Healthy Start Association, I have been genuinely humbled by the work of our Board of Directors, NHTSA staff and its members to ensure that we remain visible and serve as change agents for mothers, fathers and babies.

We have developed unique partnerships, expanded our funding portfolio, employed new staff, and most importantly, served our membership tirelessly by remaining vigilant on Capitol Hill to sustain Healthy Start funding. For the first time in NHTSA history, we co-hosted the Men's Summit in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Moving our conference to the other side of the country allowed for us to engage with non-traditional Healthy Start partners from the West Coast, but also allowed us to gain a piece of history in learning about "Black Wall Street." Moreover, we received a wealth of information from the generals of fatherhood regarding best practices on how to engage and serve our male partners of the Healthy Start program.

As we look towards the future, I encourage that you remain involved and also continue to share your innovative thoughts and ideas on how to improve maternal, paternal and child health outcomes in some of the most challenged communities across the nation.

As I pass the baton to my colleague, Raynard Washington, as the new President of NHTSA, I implore you to support his vision to carry out our newly approved strategic plan and support our efforts to address the issues surrounding Maternal Mortality and Morbidity.

Timika Anderson Reeves, MSW

Timika Anderson Reeves MSW

Click [here](#) for NHTSA's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan referred to in Timika's letter and pictured here! ↗

Raynard Washington becomes president on April 1st. Look for a letter from him in the April issue of *Getting off to a Healthy Start*.



Some Reminders:

Healthy Start Projects!

Does your project have regular baby showers or parenting classes, maybe support groups? Send us photos for *Getting off to a Healthy Start*! It's a great way to spread the word about what your project is doing!

If Your Project Changes Project Directors...

...Please be sure to let NHTSA know so we can update our records. Send the new project director's name and email address, along with the name of the previous PD, to [Bea Haskins](#) and/or [Sheree Keitt](#).

Reminder: Advocacy is a year-round project. Take every opportunity you have to educate your Members of Congress, as well as your state and local legislators. Invite them to your events. Take photos. Send them the NHTSA newsletter when their photo appears; they love seeing that!

Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Community Care Initiative (AIM CCI) Grant First National Maternal Safety Workgroup Meeting

On February 18th and February 19th, AIM CCI (Alliance for Innovation in Maternal Health Community Care Initiative) held their first National Maternal Safety Workgroup, with approximately 50 attendees, all working to achieve one common goal, addressing maternal morbidity and mortality through Clinical–Community Integration. The Clinical-Community Integration approach can be described as “Intentional strategies that connect traditional healthcare structure with community-based organizations and programs.” (Bascom, 2017).

AIM CCI is a cooperative agreement between the National Healthy Start Association (NHSA) and HRSA’s Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services. The role of the National Maternal Safety Workgroup (NMSW) is to support the development and implementation of non-hospital maternal safety bundles within community-based organizations and outpatient clinical settings across the United States within communities that experience high maternal morbidity and mortality rates. It is anticipated that the AIM-CCI efforts, including the NMSW, will work in collaboration with community stakeholders to address maternal morbidity and preventable maternal mortality among pregnant and postpartum women outside hospital and birthing facility settings.



NMSW attendees at the first workgroup meeting.

NMSW members represented organizations that serve and interact with women in the postpartum period and which are all committed to improving maternal morbidity and mortality. The equity driven, community based approach of the AIM-CCI will enhance NMSW efforts and create communities with equity and community-driven development, implementation and evaluation of the non-hospital focused Maternity Safety Bundles.

The initial NMSW meeting was held in Alexandria, Virginia, and provided attendees with the opportunity to learn about the importance of AIM CCI, their role as a member of the NMSW and an understanding of the difference between Hospital Bundles and Community Bundles. Attendees also gained knowledge about the core components of AIM CCI and were given the opportunity to join a smaller workgroup to contribute to the overall success of AIM CCI. Workgroups included equity, metrics, charter, bundle implementation and new bundle development.

Participants of the NMSW had the opportunity to meet with AIM CCI’s Core Implementation Team, HRSA Project Officers and initial Pilot Sites. Speakers at the event included Kacie McLaughlin, Sandra Lloyd, CDR Johannie Escarne of HRSA, Julie Zaharatos of CDC and AIM CCI Team members, Vijaya Hogan, Arthur James, Sue Kending, Deidre McDaniel, Sannie Sulley and Deborah Frazier.

The National Maternal Safety Workgroup will continue to meet again every other month for the first year as it defines its charter, develops metrics for the existing bundles and begins to launch the pilot sites and bundles. Workgroups will be busy with the work of writing the charter and developing metrics, defining the equity language and equity metrics. Stay tuned for continuing news from AIM CCI and the NMSW!



← *“Traditional interventions and payment models designed to improve maternal outcomes focus on hospitals and health care providers, with less attention to wrapping in community-based services that provide important case management and support. The voices of women and families are marginally included and they are often left to navigate disconnected services alone. AIM CCI seeks to break this model and create a new paradigm for community-clinical integrated care driven by equity, centered on women and families.” – Sue Kending, JD, WHNP-BC, FAANP.*

Getting off to a Healthy Start

Healthy Start in the News

NHSA Supported Reauthorization in March 11th Hearing

The House Energy and Commerce Committee on Health held a hearing on March 11th in which the Healthy Start Reauthorization Act was considered. NHSA, along with other supporters, submitted a letter of support to be included in the committee members' review of the Act, which was introduced by Congressman Tim Ryan in October 2019. Reports Madie Robinson, NHSA Board Member and Chair of the Government Relations Committee, "The Subcommittee on Health favorably forwarded the Healthy Start Reauthorization Act of 2019 to the full Committee without amendment by voice vote, on Wednesday, March 11. The next step is to pass the full Committee on Energy and Commerce, and that markup is not on the calendar." You can keep track of the House and Senate bills by clicking these links: Senate: [S. 2619](#); House: [H.R. 4801](#)



Strong Beginnings – Healthy Start's Radio Interview

← Denise Evans (far right) and others did an interview on Strong Beginnings' racial equity work. You can listen to it by clicking this link: <https://www.wgvunews.org/post/mutually-inclusive-health-equity-social-justice-dialogue-workshops>. After you listen to it, why not provide some feedback about what you heard? Click [here](#) to post your comments on NHSA's Facebook page.

University of Illinois Healthy Start Showcased in Local ABC Station Investigative Report on Maternal Mortality

→Angela Ellison, NHSA Board Member and Director of the Healthy Start program at the University of Illinois is featured in this moving investigative report on maternal mortality in Chicago and elsewhere. Click [here](#) to watch it. We'd like to hear your feedback on this, too.



Midlands Healthy Start Staffperson Chosen as March for Babies Ambassador

←Lakesha Fields, Midlands Healthy Start (Columbia, SC) staff member, and her family were selected as 2020 Midlands March for Babies Ambassadors. Lakesha's son Eugene "Cinco" Jacobs V was born at 23 weeks and 2 days. Lakesha's journey with her son inspired her to begin working at Midlands Healthy Start. Too many moms and families have babies that are born too soon like Cinco, but working together we can do something about it.

Healthy Start Project Directors: Send Us Your Healthy Start in the News & Consumer Success Stories!

The short "blurbs" above are more great examples of the types of stories that fit in with "Healthy Start in the News." Please keep them coming!

Don't forget your Consumer Success stories, too! NHSA wants to spotlight consumers in future issues of *Getting off to a Healthy Start*. We have a form with sample questions to help you interview your consumer. To request the form, send an email to [Bea Haskins](#). If you already have a story, send it in, along with photos of your consumer and family! (Make sure you have a waiver form in your files, of course.) And if you have a nice staff story to tell, send that along to Bea, too! We'll include them when we have space.



Family Support Magistrate Offers Guidance for Court-Involved Fathers

When a father appears in Family Support Magistrate Court because of a child support or paternity dispute, Chief Magistrate Michael L. Ferguson always makes sure to ask if he has anything he would like to say. “The best advice I can give is to speak up,” Ferguson says. “You know your situation better than anyone else. If you don’t say your part, we won’t know. If you see that things are not going your way, talk to the judge.”

Ferguson offered his advice to court-involved fathers and families during a February 8, 2020, judicial panel discussion. The panel was hosted by New Haven Healthy Start at The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven for fathers attending New Haven Healthy Start’s fatherhood programs, community members and local service providers involved in family and fatherhood work.

Fathers and families involved in legal disputes over child support, paternity, custody and other cases often appear in court with a limited understanding of how the family judicial system operates. Lacking information about their rights and responsibilities, these court-involved fathers are at risk of making poor decisions that compound their problems and hurt their relationships with their children.

New Haven Healthy Start is addressing this knowledge gap with a series of judicial forums about what families need to know about the family and juvenile courts and how they operate. The February 8th panel focused on the Connecticut Family Support Magistrate Court system, which hears paternity and child support cases. In addition to Ferguson, the panelists included Magistrate Gladys I. Nieves and Magistrate Donald R. Green.



(L to R) Chief Magistrate Michael L. Ferguson, Magistrate Gladys I. Nieves, Magistrate Donald Green, NHHS Men’s Services Manager, Rodney Moore

Putting the Child First

The magistrates want the public, and particularly the fathers who come before them, to know that the courts are looking out for the best interests of the child. That frequently means listening to the circumstances of fathers and not punishing them if they show that they are trying to do the right thing by actively looking for work, staying involved in their children’s lives and helping the mother. “I grew up in the inner city. I know the struggle. If you appear before me, you are going to get a fair shot,” said Magistrate Green. “My job up here is not to put you in jail. It is to get you to obey the orders so you can support your child.”

Ferguson, whose 2011 appointment by Governor Dan Malloy was the first of an African American to the Family Support Magistrate Court, said that he is always willing to listen to a father explain his reasons for not paying child support, no matter how long it takes. “You will never hear me interrupt you. You might not know how to express yourself initially, but if you keep talking, eventually you will get to the reason for why you are not making your payments. If you have a legitimate reason for not making child support payments, say it. I’m not going to put you in jail if you can’t make a payment.”



It was not always this way. The magistrates and audience attendees recalled the 1990s, a time when magistrates were much more punitive. Now, magistrates make sure fathers standing before them are aware of the many service providers and agencies who can help them find work, training, health care, housing, and other needed supports. “What you did was bring some balance to and sensitivity to the process, and I want to thank you for that,” said Shirley Ellis West, an attendee and interim executive director of New Haven Family Alliance, an agency that works with fathers. “It’s about the child and it’s all of us that make this better together.”

Continued on page 8

Family Support Magistrates Offer Guidance, continued from page 7

Using Court Support Resources

Most men appear in Family Support Magistrate Court pro se, meaning they represent themselves without the help of an attorney. The Court Services Center has resources to help them understand the court rules and procedures. The center also helps people understand the purpose of different motions and which forms to use for which motions. It also provides space for people to prepare forms and documents. “We are there to help people navigate the court system,” said John Lomax of the New Haven Judicial District Court Services Center. The panelist also encouraged people to use the Connecticut Judicial website and to seek free legal aid services for more complicated cases.

Pro se legal representation comes from Latin, literally meaning “on behalf of themselves,” which basically means advocating on one’s own behalf before a court, rather than being represented by a lawyer. This may occur in any court proceeding, whether one is the defendant or plaintiff in civil cases, and when one is a defendant in criminal cases.

Asking for Modifications

Fathers who can show that their circumstances have changed from the time when the court issued the order are able to receive modifications, the magistrates said. The magistrates, however, are bound by strict procedures, which require the men before them to understand the process and file the correct motions. Most importantly, people should never delay in making a modification request to an order if they feel it is impossible to meet. “Don’t sit on the order. Act immediately,” said Magistrate Nieves. “Bottom line, you have to ask for it to change. You have to file the motions. You have to get in front of the judge and say, ‘My circumstances have changed. I need a different order.’”

Obey the Orders. Go to Court

People compound their problems when they come without following orders such as providing job sheets that show they were looking for work, or fail to show up in court entirely. The magistrates said that men may avoid court because child support services enforcement agents have told them that they will go to jail if they do not come to court with a payment. The panelists said that this was not true. Ferguson encouraged fathers to write down what they want to say before stepping into the courtroom. “You’re nervous. I get it. But you have to be able to express yourself without being combative,” Ferguson said.

You Feel Better When you Do the Right Thing

New Haven Healthy Start Men’s Services Manager Rodney Moore works with men to overcome the barriers that come between them and being an effective and supportive father for their children. At the panel discussion, Moore said that he always tries to get court-involved fathers to see the bigger picture. “A lot of my fathers get frustrated because they don’t understand the process,” Moore said. “I can help them see that the process is there to make sure that they do what they need to do for their child. And if you do that, you will feel better and you will be a better father for your child.”

Submitted by New Haven Healthy Start at The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

Fathering Court – An Alternative to Prosecution & Incarceration

“Fathering Courts are problem-solving courts that use alternatives to incarceration in an attempt to assist non-custodial parents with unpaid child support and enhance the delinquent parent’s employment options,” according to the [National Center for State Courts](#). “The purpose is to increase child support payments, reduce expenditures by the state, and improve relationships between the non-custodial parents and their children.” According to the [District of Columbia](#), “The Fathering Court program is designed to equip fathers with skills that enable them to contribute positively to the emotional and economic well-being of their children.”

Interested in establishing a Fathering Court? [The National Center for Fathering’s website](#) says these are the components of a successful Fathering Court:

- Needs assessment and skills development
- Case management
- Counseling and treatment
- Peer support and curriculum for fathers
- Health and education services for children
- Employment assistance
- Connecting dads and moms to necessary resources

Resources – Webinars, Training Opportunities & More

COVID-19: Pregnant Women & the Coronavirus



Expectant moms have no need to panic about COVID-19, says a clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Neil Silverman said pregnant women should take the same precautions as everyone else: frequent hand washing and avoiding contact with sick people.

Visit NHTSA's [website](#) for valuable information about the coronavirus and pregnant and nursing women. There are several links there for additional information.

Source: <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-03-moms-dont-panic-coronavirus.html>, 03/13/2020.

2020 Census and Equity Webinar: Wednesday, March 25th, 3:00 p.m. ET

The National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE) will hold a webinar on *The 2020 Census and Equity - Why It Matters and How You Can Help*. Topics covered will be how the census works, why it's important for children and families, what populations are typically undercounted and why and the role we can all play in making sure that all families are counted. Click [here](#) for more information or to register.

Increasing EITC Participation Reduces Child Poverty

With the April 15th tax deadline approaching, agencies that work with low-income families can encourage eligible workers to file for this valuable tax benefit. The Earned Income Tax Credit, or EITC, considered one of the most effective programs for reducing child poverty and promoting economic mobility among low-income families. Yet each year, one out of every five eligible workers misses out on this valuable tax benefit. Outreach is critical to ensure that working families get the support they deserve. The EITC is a federal tax credit designed to help working families support themselves and their children while also encouraging workforce participation. The income limit and maximum credit varies by marital status and the number of children in the family (see table below).

Research offers three reasons why state and local officials, as well as nonprofit and community partners, should work to increase program participation:

- 1) The EITC promotes workforce participation and supports local economies.
- 2) The EITC lifts millions of families with children out of poverty each year.
- 3) The EITC improves children's health, academic achievement and economic mobility.

Number of Children	Income Limit		Maximum Credit
	If single	If married	
No children	\$15,570	\$21,370	\$529
One child	\$41,094	\$46,884	\$3,526
Two children	\$46,703	\$52,493	\$5,828
Three or more children	\$50,162	\$55,952	\$6,557

Source: [To reduce child poverty, increase EITC participation](#), 03/04/2020.

Single Black Motherhood Podcast

One listener described the podcasts as, "Good down-to-earth practical advice from well-qualified individuals." A recent episode is titled *Best for You. Best for Baby. CDC's Pregnancy Tips*. Click [here](#) to listen.

Interactions with Baby Forecast Future Success

Research from Purdue University finds that caregivers who had more stimulating and responsive interactions with their babies during the first three years of life had children who performed better on both math and vocab assessments.

[Watch the video in English](#). Click [here](#) for the video in Spanish.

Black Maternal Health Week 2020 is April 11-17!

The third annual national Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW) campaign, founded and led by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, will be a week of awareness, activism and community building. Among the activities are three webinars:

- April 14th, 2:00 p.m. ET—Shifting and Advancing Black Maternal Health Policy
- April 15th, 2:00 p.m. ET—Improving Health Outcomes for Black Mamas Through Holistic Midwifery Care
- April 16th, 2:00 p.m. ET—Centering Black Mamas: In Practice

For resources, more information or to register, click [here](#).

Getting off to a Healthy Start

What's Going on at the Healthy Start Projects?

NHSA again received so many photos and stories from the Healthy Start projects that we can't include them all in this edition of *Getting off to a Healthy Start*. We've set up a new album on our Facebook page with the rest of the photos; click [here](#) to see it. You'll know if a project has photos in the album when you see the Facebook icon  by a project's name. Check them out! And keep sending those stories and photos to our newsletter editor at bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org!

My Baby & Me (Columbus, OH) Fatherhood Fundamentals

On February 14th, the Fatherhood Fundamentals team held their first Dads' Baby Shower at the Columbus Public Health Auditorium.

→ *Vendors are all set for the event.* ← *They don't look like dads, but they certainly look like they are having a great time!* ↘ *He looks like a dad and he looks like he's enjoying himself, too!*



Midlands Healthy Start (Columbia, SC)

Midlands Healthy Start has a lot going on- Fatherhood, CANs and Dental Health. Check it all out below. Plus, see page 6 for news about one of their staff members!

← **Midlands Fatherhood Parenting Class** – Midlands Healthy Start and Midlands Fatherhood Coalition are currently coordinating a six-week series of parenting classes. These classes emphasize the benefit to mothers and children for the father to be present and active in the life of the child, while also helping to improve parenting skills for those who attend these sessions.

→ **Lunch, Learn and Earn-Sumter County** – February was National Children's Dental Health Month and Midlands' Sumter County participants were able to meet Dr. Alex Whittington, DMD, and Mrs. Lisa Hellams, RDH, from Tandem Health Dental. Nine participants were given information regarding oral hygiene for infants and toddlers. Through models and information sheets, the babies and parents were engaged. Every family was given a goodie bag to help them on their dental journey.



Richland Community Action Network (CAN) – During the Richland County CAN, 16 attendees discussed PopUp Informational Sessions to be held during this quarter. Seven community agencies and MHS participants developed a plan of action and created subcommittees to delegate tasks to ensure the informational sessions run smoothly. The informational sessions will focus on Women's Health and Improving Family and Health Wellness. The CAN also discussed the Young Parents Project (YPP) collaboration with Midlands Fatherhood Coalition and Midlands Healthy Start. The YPP services men and women from ages 15-20. The goal of the project is self-sufficiency and participants gain information regarding parenting skills, prenatal and postpartum education, obtaining further education and employment opportunities.

More From the Healthy Start Projects!

Midlands Healthy Start (Columbia, SC), continued



Sumter Community Action Network (CAN) - Safe Sleep was the topic of discussion for the First Quarter Sumter CAN meeting. “We were honored to have Lt. Trista Baird, from the SC Law Enforcement Division, speak to us regarding her work with the Special Victims Unit - Department of Child Fatalities. Lt. Baird presented on the safe sleep task force and cases that they have encountered. She showed the Safe Sleep video that parents view after giving birth. She took questions from the members of the CAN regarding co-sleeping, appropriate sleep spaces for babies without cribs and attachable sleep spaces for infants for regular beds. Our participants, CAN and community members, were very appreciative of the information received.”

New Haven (CT) Healthy Start



NHHS Men’s Services held a Healthy Start Mom & Dad Baby Shower on February 16th, which was mostly for dads.

→ Tables beautifully set for the shower.

→ Rodney Moore, Men’s Services Manager, on the far right, with baby shower guests Isaiah Wilkins and Isaiah’s fiancée, Nysheema Robinson.



Healthy Start New Orleans



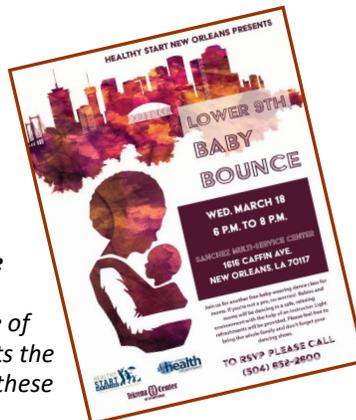
HSNO- like all the Healthy Start grantees- is very busy! We’ve got yoga and meditation, Baby Bounce and Mardi Gras for you!



HSNO hosted a **Baby Rest Stop** for families during some of the Mardi Gras parades this year. Families were able to use a safe and clean space for breastfeeding and diaper changing along the busy parade route in Uptown New Orleans. The Baby Rest Stop was a hit and dads made use of the space, too! Sadly, Mardi Gras season is officially over in New Orleans but “we are planning to bring this back for next year. Laissez les bons temps rouler!”

← Flyer about the Baby Rest Stop.

→ Mom and baby appreciating the Baby Rest Stop.



HSNO has two more events to show off! → **Too Blessed to be Stressed** is a series for free yoga and meditation nights for pregnant parents in Orleans Parish. Stress is a leading cause of pre-term birth and this series addressing that issue highlights the importance of prioritizing mental health and well-being for these parents.

→ **Baby Bounce Nights** started up again this month. As reported in the last issue of Getting off to a Healthy Start, this genre began in New Orleans. Parents in these classes get to dance with their babies, socialize, exercise and have fun- and participants get dinner, too! Families get to know one another, as well.

Hopefully, HSNO will send us some pictures for these two events soon!



Getting off to a Healthy Start

More Project Activities

Kansas City Healthy Start (formerly known as Mother and Child Health Coalition)



KCHS, also known as Nurture KC, now offers a Product Showcase for Healthy Start participants about once a month. Participant Tania (→) has presented hair and skin products she sells and Elizabeth (←) did likewise with jewelry accessories.

The showcases are an opportunity to share information about resources in the community, network, engage the families and empower one another. It's also an opportunity for the participants to practice speaking in front of an audience.

Hospitality Staffing, a temp job agency, provides space for the showcases and has also employed several KCHS participants.



Healthy Start Brooklyn



The Healthy Start Brooklyn Community Action Network (CAN) hosted a full-day public-speaking workshop on Monday, February 3. The 17 attendees - a mix of CAN members who live and/or work in the project area - learned about qualities of an effective public speaker and then constructed their own presentations on the importance of mental health (which is the CAN's focus). At the end of the day, each group made its pitch and was critiqued by the other attendees and the facilitators. The next step will be for the CAN to create a "speakers' bureau" of members who can go out into the community and talk about the CAN's mission: to improve mental wellness by decreasing stigma and improving the quality and availability of mental health services. Several members have already reported that they feel more confident speaking up at community meetings and in other settings.

Healthy Start Tennessee (Marshall, Wayne, Warren, Moore, Van Buren, Jackson and Fentress Counties)



Healthy Start Tennessee hosted a Family Fun Day on February 29th at the Lewisburg, TN, Housing Authority. They collaborated with local author Parish Phelps (←) who provided a puppet show for the children, as well as had activities to make puppets and sock puppets. During the event, education was provided on the program, safe sleep and the importance of reading to their children. Each child who came to the event left with a new children's book to be able to read with their families.



Cradle Cincinnati Connections



↑ Ebony Peak, 2nd from right on the Motherhood and Mental Health panel.

Cradle Cincinnati Connections celebrated maternal mental health in February by participating in Queens Village's Mental Health and Motherhood Brunch. Queens Village is a supportive community gathering of Black women who come together to relax, re-power and take care of each other. Ebony Peak, MSW, LSW, joined a panel discussion alongside a phenomenal group of Black professionals working in mental health. This panel touched on such topics as the impact and effects of maternal mental health on Black women and how mental health concerns are taboo in the Black family system. They also discussed possible ways to dispel these myths.

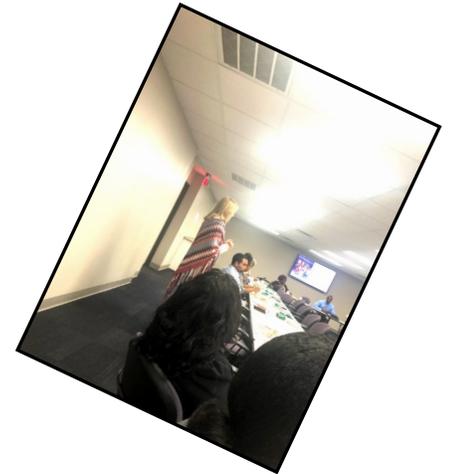
As Ebony said, "This was a fantastic experience, as it allowed me to be transparent about my own issues with mental health and motherhood. It also gave me the opportunity to let other Black mothers know that they are not alone in this battle. We laughed and cried and supported one another throughout this difficult conversation, and I truly believe we were able to push the needle to normalize mental health concerns before, during and after pregnancy in the Black community."

More From the Healthy Start Projects!

Community Service Council's Healthy Start Program (Tulsa, OK)

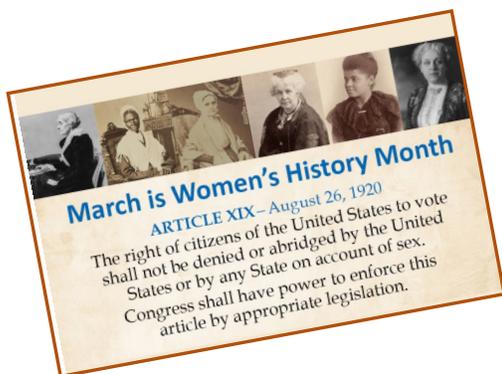


About 15-20 people attended CSC Healthy Start's CAN meeting. Community partners included FedEx, Workforce Tulsa, Community Health Connection, Tulsa Health Department - Fetal & Infant Mortality Review and others. Several Healthy Start Families attended along with Supporters of Families with Sickle Cell Disease. The CSC Healthy Start program gave an overview of the program, discussed how they wanted to collaborate their community partners and encouraged the families to discuss how CSC's Healthy Start Program has helped them.



Special Message to Healthy Start Fatherhood Coordinators from the Newsletter Editor

Many of you share information with each other about what you are doing and that's great! Sometimes you copy me on your emails and sometimes Ken Scarborough forwards them to me. When you send to me, please send photos and a brief description of your event - the name of the event, date it was held, how many people attended, activities, things like that. We want to feature fatherhood activities as much as any other, so don't forget the NHTA newsletter!



Attention Healthy Start Project Directors and Program Staff!

Newsletters

- Be sure to include NHTA in your newsletter distribution list so we can include your news in *Getting off to a Healthy Start!* Please add Bea Haskins, Communications Coordinator and 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!
- Make sure we have your Fatherhood Coordinator's name and email address, too!
- Not a Healthy Start Project? That's OK! Let us know if you want to add someone to our distribution list.

Photos, Stories and More

- Send us photos and news stories from your events for inclusion in the next issue of *Getting off to a Healthy Start!*
- Examples of events: baby showers, educational forums or CAN meetings.
- And remember to invite your elected officials – federal, state and local – to your events and be sure to take pictures of them!
- Don't forget your consumer success stories!
- The deadline is the 6th of each month.
- Send everything to Bea Haskins.

Stay Connected with NHTA on social media!

