



**NATIONAL
HEALTHY START
ASSOCIATION**

Getting off to a Healthy Start

November 2020

October was SIDS/Safe Sleep Awareness Month.

Check out how the Healthy Start Projects recognized it and used it as a teaching moment! The photos and stories start on page 10.

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Be sure to read the Consumer Spotlight Story on the bottom of page 12!



Coming Next Month

Healthy Start Projects' recognition of Prematurity Awareness & American Diabetes Months

Stay up to date on all things National Healthy Start Association by following us on Twitter & Instagram @NatHealthyStart

#NATHEALTHYSTART is my go-to resource for all things early childhood development!

Thankfulness During the Pandemic

Normally during November, we are thinking about Thanksgiving Day and gratitude and looking forward to the coming winter holidays. Things seem different in 2020, the year of the novel coronavirus. Some may be asking what they have to be thankful for, when they have lost so much. Others may be worried about how to celebrate safely. Others are just plain stressed out and don't want or need anything to add to their stress levels. Here are some guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other tips and ideas to make November and Thanksgiving a time of peace and gratitude.

Cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude During the Pandemic

"...how in the world can one figure out how to be grateful for something awful that is happening? How can we shift our minds to think through a lens of gratitude as this global health crisis sweeps across the world?"¹ Gratitude is a choice. We can choose what our attitude will be.

"... it's perhaps more important than ever to focus on gratitude – the practice of noticing and being thankful for what is meaningful and valuable for you."² Here are some tips that might help.

1. The pandemic has given us more time to spend with our families.
2. Jot down your joys: keeping a list of what makes us grateful can remind us of all the good that we have in our lives. One author says to make this a challenge and list 50 ways that you are thankful. "Don't overthink these. Write down the first things that come to mind...without judgement, no matter how big or small."³
3. Make mealtimes mindful. Appreciate what you do have, not stew over what you don't. Chew slowly and savor every bite.
4. Devote time for yourself. You'll be grateful for a little bit of pampering.
5. Walk in peace. Slow down. Choose your thoughts and attitude. Stand strong. Enjoy the moment – the big ones and the small ones.



See page 4 for Tips for Baby's First Thanksgiving and Gratitude Games, Activities and Crafts for Kids.

Click these links for several articles or blog posts that have even more information: [Why Gratitude is Important During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)², [How to Be Grateful During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)^{1,3} and [5 Reasons to be Thankful During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#).

Considerations from the CDC

1. Keep your celebrations small this year. More people means more risk of spreading or acquiring COVID-19. Social distancing (six feet or two arm lengths apart) needs to be considered when you think of the size of the event. Guests need to wear masks and wash their hands as needed.
2. If possible, host your event outdoors rather than inside to reduce the chance of spreading the coronavirus.
3. If you are indoors, try to open some windows and doors to increase ventilation.
4. Limit the number of people in the kitchen; try to have one person bring out and serve the food.

Click [here](#) for a complete list that includes food and drink at small gatherings, travel and overnight stays and steps to take if exposed to COVID-19 during a holiday gathering. The CDC says that staying home at Thanksgiving is the best way to protect each other and ourselves.

Getting off to a Healthy Start

November is National Prematurity Awareness Month

Every November we celebrate Prematurity Awareness. Prematurity is the leading cause of infant mortality and morbidity in the U.S. Every year in America, more than 380,000 babies are born preterm, which means they were born before 37 weeks gestation, more than a month early. The 2017 preterm birth rate was 9.9% of live births. Many of these “preemies” survive, but all are vulnerable to medical and developmental complications. Some of the more common of these are chronic lung conditions, feeding difficulties and developmental delays.

Preemies aren’t just tiny newborns. “They are babies that have to continue to grow and mature in an environment that is more challenging than in utero.” Here are some things you may not know!

- Babies begin to learn to breathe in the womb. Preemies haven’t had enough time to practice so they aren’t efficient users of oxygen, and their lungs can be damaged easily.
- During the last few weeks of pregnancy, babies’ brains reorganize and restructure dramatically. Preemies often have trouble controlling their temperature, breathing and heart rate.
- Preemies need to learn how to master the art of eating; that is, the rhythm of breathing and swallowing. Because their stomachs and intestines are immature, it makes it harder to absorb nutrients and fight infections.

For more information on prematurity and awareness month activities, visit the National Perinatal Association’s Prematurity Awareness Month [pages](#). And don’t forget: November 17th is World Prematurity Day.



Mission Possible: Reducing Disparities in Preterm Births in the United States

Rear Admiral Wanda Barfield, MD, MPH, FAAP, is the director of the CDC’s Division of Reproductive Health. In a blog, she writes about the preterm birth in 2001 of her son, Joseph. Because she was given medications to help Joseph’s lungs mature more rapidly and slow down labor, his breathing was normal and he went home with his parents five days later. In 2018, Dr. Barfield wrote, she could watch Joseph run track and play the cello. “However, I still remember how hard it was to deal with the uncertainty and fear in those weeks immediately following his arrival. My hope, as a public health professional, a physician, and a mother, is that fewer women will have to experience that anxiety. Let’s continue to work together to ensure successful outcomes for all woman and their babies.” The following is excerpted from the blog post.

“In 2017, overall preterm rates for non-Hispanic black (13.92%) and Hispanic (9.61%) women were higher than births to non-Hispanic white women (9.06%). [i] The high burden of preterm birth among black women creates greater challenges for survival, as non-Hispanic black infants have an infant mortality rate twice as high than that of non-Hispanic white infants.[ii] Approximately 44% of infant deaths among non-Hispanic black infants are related to being born preterm...[iii] Some of these problems [refer to the information in the text above the babies graphic] may not emerge for several years. These health concerns place increased social and financial burdens on families and our country. The annual economic burden associated with preterm birth in the U.S. was estimated to be at least \$26.2 billion, according to a 2005 estimate from the Institute of Medicine.[iv] In 2017 US dollars (inflation adjusted from 2005 cost estimates using Gross domestic product [GDP] price index), the cost would be \$32.4 billion.

“We in public health can continue to work together with other partners to bring down preterm birth rates. There are several important factors that contribute to preterm birth for which we can focus our efforts. We can improve preconception health so women go into pregnancy as healthy as possible. We can prevent teen and unintended pregnancies and improve pregnancy spacing. We can help to reduce the risk of higher-order multiples in fertility therapies. We can also improve systems of care that ensure facilities have appropriate staffing, equipment, and experience to match patient needs. Pregnant women and newborns will benefit from receiving the right care, at the right place, and the right time. Lastly, we can ensure providers are aware of the variety of public health resources available to support postnatal infant development, particularly for low-income families through programs like breastfeeding support, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), early intervention services, Healthy Start, Home visitation programs, Head Start, and literacy initiatives (e.g., Reach Out and Read). These interventions, with a consideration for health equity and in collaboration with other stakeholders, will improve the health of women before, during, and after pregnancy and reduce death and disability among newborns...[v]

“...November is National Prematurity Awareness Month. Our mission of improving birth outcomes for all is possible with the help of improved data, surveillance, and further research to understand the causes of preterm birth. More action is needed. We can ensure equitable access to medical care and prevention, create stronger public health partnerships, and eliminate the conditions that drive up rates of preterm birth. CDC will continue to work with partners across the country to improve quality of care, especially for the populations most impacted, while strengthening community partnerships to develop effective strategies to achieve equity in preterm birth.”

For the entire blog, as well as the sources cited, visit <https://blogs.cdc.gov/healthequity/2018/11/01/pretermbirths/>.

November 2020

American Diabetes Month is in November, Too

The American Diabetes Association's theme for 2020's Diabetes Month is **We Stand Greater Than**. "Right now, things are difficult for people living with diabetes—and for those who love them. Between the constant bad news and the bleak forecast, it's easy to feel powerless, afraid and small. Enough is enough. It's time to embrace a message of hope and empowerment. Because hope is greater than fear. Actions are greater than words. And unity is greater than division. November is American Diabetes Month – a time to take action together, as a community. Because together, we can conquer this disease. Together, we stand greater than diabetes." Visit their [site](#) for more information.

Diabetes and Pregnancy (The [following](#) is from the CDC.)

Diabetes can cause problems during pregnancy for women and their developing babies. Poor control of diabetes during pregnancy increases the chances for birth defects and other problems for the pregnancy. It can also cause serious complications for the woman. Proper health care before and during pregnancy can help prevent birth defects and other health problems.

Diabetes is a condition in which the body cannot use the sugars and starches (carbohydrates) it takes in as food to make energy. The body either makes no insulin or too little insulin or cannot use the insulin it makes to change those sugars and starches into energy. As a result, extra sugar builds up in the blood. The three most common types of diabetes are:

TYPE 1

The pancreas makes no insulin or so little insulin that the body can't use blood sugar for energy. Type 1 diabetes must be controlled with daily insulin. [Learn more about type 1 diabetes and pregnancy](#)

TYPE 2

The body either makes too little insulin or can't use the insulin it makes to use blood sugar for energy. Sometimes type 2 diabetes can be controlled through eating a proper diet and exercising regularly. Many people with type 2 diabetes have to take diabetes pills, insulin or both. [Learn more about type 2 diabetes and pregnancy](#)

Gestational

This is a type of diabetes that is first seen in a pregnant woman who did not have diabetes before she was pregnant. Often gestational diabetes can be controlled through eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly. Sometimes a woman with gestational diabetes must also take insulin. For most women with gestational diabetes, the diabetes goes away soon after delivery. When it does not go away, the diabetes is called type 2 diabetes. Even if the diabetes does go away after the baby is born, half of all women who had gestational diabetes develop type 2 diabetes later. It's important for a woman who has had gestational diabetes to continue to exercise and eat a healthy diet after pregnancy to prevent or delay getting type 2 diabetes. She should also remind her doctor to check her blood sugar every 1 to 3 years. [Learn more about gestational diabetes and pregnancy](#)

One Healthy Start Project's Diabetes Education Program

Oklahoma has the fourth-highest death rate from diabetes in the U.S., according to the American Diabetes Association. This escalating rate of diabetes is attributed to poor nutrition and a sedentary lifestyle. Pregnant clients at the **Community Service Council Healthy Start Program** in Tulsa, OK, receive diabetes education from physicians at health clinics, Healthy Start Care Coordinators and community agencies. The CSC Healthy Start Program is clinic-based, allowing physicians to deliver diabetes education to Healthy Start expectant clients during routine visits. For example, a typical diabetes education consultation may include reviewing nutrition, symptoms of Gestational Diabetes, which may affect the healthy birth outcome, and monitoring. Physicians also help expectant clients to develop a healthy meal plan to combat Gestational Diabetes. Developing meal plans is particularly essential when educating clients of diverse cultural backgrounds. Some cultures tend to consume more simple carbohydrates and sugars than other cultures. Expectant clients who consume too many simple carbohydrates could risk an unhealthy birth outcome.

The CSC Healthy Start Care Coordinators educate expectant clients on additional strategies to prevent diabetes, such as teaching them how to keep diabetic logs to monitor their sugars. They also assist pregnant clients with adopting daily low-impact exercise routines. Each CSC Healthy Start Care Coordinator may adapt their exercise and nutritional recommendation to meet client needs. Community education efforts consist of collaborating with Oklahoma State University extension's [Live Well, Eat Well, Be Active with Diabetes nutrition program](#). L.E.A.D.'s mission is to provide resources and hope to an individual who manages a chronic condition across the state. Expectant Healthy Start clients who participate in this program also learn additional diabetes prevention education, such as daily blood sugar monitoring, exercise, and cooking healthy meals. The diabetes education learned from physicians and the Care Coordinators is reinforced through this community agency. The CSC Healthy Start Program will continue to educate all clients about diabetes education throughout November and beyond.

The **CSC Healthy Start Fatherhood Program** promoted National Diabetes Education Week by providing fathers with diabetes information sheets and *The Full Plate Diet* book. The information sheets encompass the definition of diabetes, symptoms, racial disparities, types of diabetes and the importance of monitoring. The Fatherhood Program hosts bi-weekly virtual classes for fathers on the significance of attending prenatal visits to monitor any mom with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, as well as Gestational Diabetes. *The Full Plate Diet* book introduces healthy eating options to Healthy Start fathers and helps them select food choices to prevent and manage diabetes. Both diabetes information sheets and *The Full Plate Diet* books are available upon the client's request or during home visits.



CSC dad with his book.

Making Thanksgiving Fun, Safe and Meaningful for the Kids

Tips for Baby's First Thanksgiving

"Thanksgiving is all about gratitude and giving thanks. If you have a new baby in the family, there's a lot to be thankful for this year. Babies are, after all, one of life's greatest joys, and Thanksgiving is often the first time extended family and friends have a chance to meet your new little one. The holiday season is the perfect time to start some special traditions you and your family can enjoy for years to come. Here are some ways to make your baby's first Thanksgiving a day you'll treasure forever."

1. **Start a Thanksgiving family tradition.** Share holiday memories around the table, watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or play a game together. Traditions like these make Thanksgiving a day to look forward to every year.
2. **Record a Thanksgiving video for your baby.** Capture baby's reaction to the big turkey or taking a nap on grandpa's lap after dinner. These will be fun to look at each year.
3. **Give your baby a taste of Thanksgiving.** If your infant is old enough to taste some of the special food, take time to prepare and puree a few favorites, such as sweet potatoes, pumpkin and squash. Before you eat, feed the little one. Take photos or include this in the video.
4. **Have the perfect outfit.** Have a cute outfit for baby or put the entire family in matching outfits.
5. **Have a Thanksgiving photoshoot.** Take pictures of baby and of the whole family, perhaps amongst some seasonal decorations or outside with some fall foliage.
6. **Don't try to be perfect.** Things happen! Remember that even if dinner is late or the rolls got burned, the important thing is being together.
7. **Make time for a nap.** This could be baby's regular afternoon nap or perhaps the entire family zonks out after a big meal. Cuddle up for a while to be ready for whatever is next.

Source: [Baby's First Thanksgiving: 8 Tips for a Special Day](#) (Note: even though the title says eight tips, there were only seven!)

→ Example of a Thanksgiving nap while wearing a cute outfit!



Healthy Start Projects!

Can you beat this photo for cuteness? Send holiday photos of your Healthy Start babies for the December issue of *Getting off to a Healthy Start*. Send to [Bea Haskins](#) by December 4th.

Gratitude Games, Crafts and Activities for the Kids

"Gratitude is a transformative power backed by science. [Practicing gratitude](#) can improve our health, help us build deep and lasting relationships, and has even been linked to a longer, more fulfilling life. One study showed that practicing gratitude is linked with an uptick in weekly exercise and it can [increase our happiness](#) by 25%!... gratitude games and activities for kids will teach your children to appreciate both big and small moments, turn mistakes into learning lessons, and be thankful for loved ones. Instilling this sense of appreciation in your children when they are young will help them live happier, healthier lives and give them more [positive attitudes](#) towards school and their families. You can help your children practice gratitude by teaching them how to enjoy the little moments, reflect on lessons learned and pass kindness on to others." Here are some ideas to try.

1. **Gratitude Jar.** Every day, have your children write down something they're thankful for; this can improve mood and happiness.
2. **Gratitude Scavenger Hunt.** Send the kids on a mission to take photographs of their favorite things at home and in the yard. They'll learn that things that bring them joy and happiness are nearby. You can make it a competition by timing it.
3. **Thank You Notes.** Make it a habit to write thank you notes and cards. Encourage the kids to write notes to the people who do nice things for them and, of course, to thank the people who send them a gift. This helps cultivate a sense of gratitude.
4. **Join the "Gratitude Graffiti Project."** Get out the chalk and ask the kids to write peace and gratitude messages or draw things on the sidewalk for others to enjoy. This allows for contemplation and thus finding gratitude in art and prose.
5. **Paint Rocks with Gratitude Messages.** Does your community engage in the [painted rocks project](#), where you leave a rock when you find one to take home? You'll find rocks in the most unexpected places and with some wonderful art or simple messages. This activity is fun and fosters creativity and the appreciation of unusual things in unexpected places.
6. **Gratitude Decorations.** Allow the kids to help decorate for each holiday with things they create themselves. Add the child's name and the year on every object. Thinking about making the decorations is another way to appreciate things around one.

Sources: For more detail on these ideas and even more suggestions for games, activities and crafts, visit these sites: [30 Gratitude Games and Activities for Kids to Practice Thankfulness](#) and [Fun Gratitude Activities and Crafts for Kids](#).

During the month of November, most families celebrate Thanksgiving. In my family, we go to our parents for Thanksgiving dinner. During our time of reflection, we share one thing for which we are grateful. Doing so helps to remember the things of importance and how we can celebrate and value them for the day and the future.

I am challenging you to consider having “Fatherhood” as part of your Healthy Start program as your thing for which you are grateful. It may be challenging to understand why working with and serving fathers is important and needs much attention. Over the last several months, we have seen many Fatherhood Practitioners separating from our programs for various reasons. For you to achieve the outcomes and benchmarks required of your program, it is critical to retain practitioners to recruit, enroll, engage and retain fathers.

Having an *Attitude of Gratitude for Fatherhood* can help make your work more meaningful. Showing an Attitude of Gratitude facilitates more:

Cohesion, which is the collaboration of like-minded people leading to the accomplishment of a specific objective; in this case, a stronger and more vibrant fatherhood program.

Strengthened relationships, which are extremely important in the work environment, as well as with our Healthy Start families; strong relationships lead to better outcomes.

“Paying it forward,” leading people to being more “helpful, generous of spirit, and compassionate. These qualities often spill over onto others,” which fosters individual and organizational achievements and community partnerships.¹



One way to achieve an Attitude of Gratitude is by using the model, *Motivate through Modeling*. When I want a certain result or outcome from my children or those I manage, coach or mentor, I model the behavior I expect from them.² Modeling always has a better outcome than mandating when trying to motivate others towards a goal or change their thinking or behavior. When you start to Motivate through Modeling in your program, you will see better results that move you in the right direction to reach your goal. Modeling an Attitude of Gratitude for your fatherhood program can lead to retaining fatherhood practitioners, improving services to fathers and men and creating a more inclusive team that values fathers.

Click [here](#) for a motivating story about Sheldon Smith and the Dovetail Project.³ After serving time in prison, he became a father at age 21. He made a commitment to stay involved in his daughter’s life and wanted to help other young dads in his troubled Chicago community do the same thing. He created the Dovetail Project, a nonprofit program that helps young African American dads build stronger families by giving them the skills to be positive role models and responsible parents. There is some additional information in the references below,^{4,5,6} as well, that I hope will inspire you to adopt an Attitude of Gratitude for Fatherhood in November and beyond.

References

¹Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/some-assembly-required/201411/the-benefits-cultivating-attitude-gratitude>

²National Academy of Sciences: <https://www.pnas.org/content/117/44/27719>

³Sheldon Smith & The Dovetail Project: <https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2016/11/17/cnn-heroes-sheldon-smith-orig.cnn>

⁴Positive Psychology: <https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-appreciation/>

⁵Fathers.com: <https://fathers.com/s5-your-situation/c62-traditional-dad/gratitude-can-help-you-as-a-father/>

⁶Mark Merrill: <https://bit.ly/3laHqnf>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Third Thursday of every month at 1:00 p.m. ET: NHSA Fatherhood Practitioners Webinars. Healthy Start Project Directors, please make sure we have your Fatherhood Coordinator in our database so they receive notices about the webinars. Send name and email address to [Hida Reese](#) and/or [Bea Haskins](#).

Getting off to a Healthy Start

Meet NHTA's Newest Staffperson



Caroline Valencia, MPH, is the Program Manager for the Supporting Healthy Start Performance Project (SHSPP) grant. Caroline has always been passionate about maternal and child health, having interned and worked for various Healthy Start Coalitions in Florida. Her previous roles include Data Specialist with the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) in Alachua County and Community Liaison with the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Palm Beach County. Prior to coming to NHTA, Caroline was a Senior Health Planner & Program Manager, where she worked on various public health issues including fetal and infant mortality, obesity prevention, asthma and HIV. Caroline can be reached at cvalencia@nationalhealthystart.org.

Resources You Can Use

KIDS COUNT News: COVID-19 Experiences

The Annie E. Casey Foundation announced that the [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#) has new features on how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting children and families across the U.S. To get the information, they used the U.S. Census Bureau's new Household Pulse Survey. "The pulse survey serves as a unique real-time resource for advocates and policymakers, providing quality data that speak to the current experience of kids and families during this challenging period," reported the Foundation.* Categories are employment and income, housing and food insecurity, education and health.

*Email dated 10/22/2020.

MMWR: Two Reports on COVID-19 and Pregnancy

Check out these reports from the November 6th issue of the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*:

[Birth and Infant Outcomes Following Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Pregnancy — SET-NET, 16 Jurisdictions, March 29–October 14, 2020](#)

[Update: Characteristics of Symptomatic Women of Reproductive Age with Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection by Pregnancy Status — United States, January 22–October 3, 2020](#)

Black Doctor Dies After Giving Birth, Underscoring Maternal Mortality Crisis

"Around 35 weeks into her pregnancy, Wallace developed symptoms of preeclampsia. Her baby was delivered via C-section, but Wallace had subsequent complications -- including a ruptured liver, kidney function issues, and high blood pressure -- and required additional surgeries. She died on October 24, four days after her daughter, Charlotte, was born." Chaniece Wallace, MD, was a fourth-year pediatric chief resident at the Indiana University School of Medicine. A November 2nd article in [MedPage Today](#) uses this tragedy to show that racial disparities in pregnancy outcomes aren't solely based on access to care.

"The death of Chaniece Wallace, a Black woman, highlights a tragic trend in pregnancy and childbirth outcomes in the U.S. About 700 women die from pregnancy-related causes each year, and the maternal mortality rate is higher in the U.S. than in any other industrialized country in the world. People of color die from pregnancy at an alarming rate, with Black, Native American, and Alaskan native women [two to three times as likely to die during pregnancy](#) than white women. Medical professionals have long recognized that [the U.S. maternal mortality rate is a problem](#). But Wallace's death has again brought attention to an issue where the country has made little progress."

(Note to readers who may not be familiar with the Healthy Start initiative: Healthy Start programs are required to address maternal mortality.)

U.S. General's New Call To Action



The U.S. Surgeon General has issued a new **Call to Action** that urges Americans to recognize and address hypertension control as a public health priority.

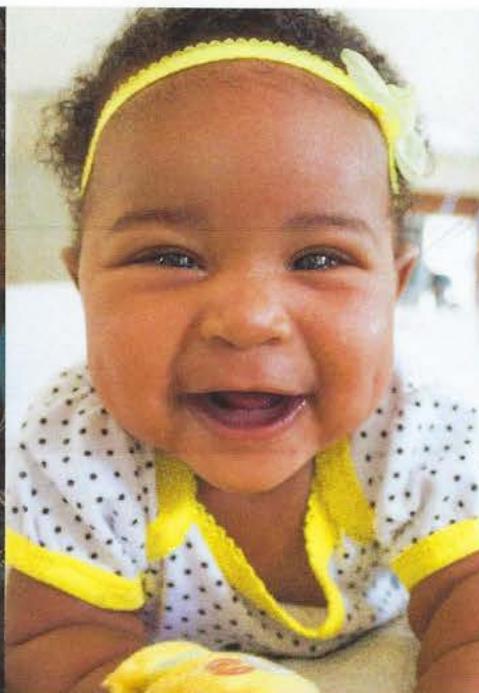
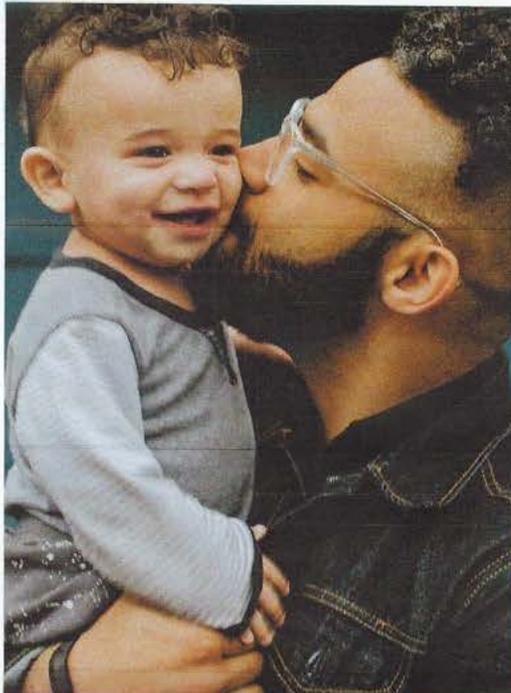
Hypertension, which is also known as high blood pressure (HBP), is very common. According to the CDC, it occurs in 1 of every 12-17 pregnancies among women ages 20-44 in the United States. Complications from hypertension include the following:

For the mother: [preeclampsia](#), [eclampsia](#), [stroke](#), the need for labor induction (giving medicine to start labor to give birth) and placental abruption (the placenta separating from the wall of the uterus).

For the baby: [preterm delivery](#) (birth that happens before 37 weeks of pregnancy) and low birth weight (when a baby is born weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces). The mother's high blood pressure makes it more difficult for the baby to get enough oxygen and nutrients to grow, so the mother may have to deliver the baby early.

Things to do: keep a healthy weight before and during pregnancy, get regular prenatal care and use a home BP monitor. If mom had HBP during pregnancy, she is at higher risk for stroke and other problems after delivery. Click here for [symptoms of preeclampsia](#) after delivery. And click [here](#) for the Surgeon General's Hypertension Call to Action.

Source: CDC's [High Blood Pressure During Pregnancy](#).



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Director, Center for Research
on Men's Health
Vanderbilt University



Cathy Kothari, PhD
Lead Evaluator
Healthy Babies-Healthy Start
Terra Bautista
Project Supervisor
Healthy Babies-Healthy Start



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

Opportunity Hoarding Impacts Black and Hispanic Children More than White Kids

Diversity Data Kids' new article, published in *Health Affairs*, includes a new analysis of the racial/ethnic dimensions of opportunity hoarding and sharing. "We found that opportunity hoarding is positively associated with large gaps between White and Black or Hispanic children. Although there are racial/ethnic gaps in all metropolitan areas, in hoarding areas Black and Hispanic children live in neighborhoods with much lower opportunity scores than White children do.

"Another important finding from the paper concerns the kinds of neighborhoods that poor children experience. We found vast racial/ethnic inequities in neighborhood opportunity among children in poverty: 66% of poor Black children and 50% of poor Hispanic children live in very low-opportunity neighborhoods compared with 20% of poor White children. This finding is important because there is evidence that living in higher opportunity neighborhoods can have protective effects for children living in poverty."

Click [here](#) to read the article. This [link](#) takes you to the "data story," *Opportunity Hoarding Linked to Racial and Ethnic Inequities in Children's Neighborhoods*.

Birth in the United States, 2019

This report presents selected highlights from 2019 final birth data on key demographic, health care utilization and infant health indicators. General fertility rates (the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15–44), prenatal care timing (the percentage of mothers with first trimester care), source of payment for the delivery (the percentage of births covered by Medicaid) and preterm birth rates are presented. Some key findings:

- The U.S. general fertility rate declined 1% in 2019 to 58.3 births per 1,000 women aged 15–44 from 59.1 in 2018; rates declined for non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black and Hispanic women.
- The percentage of mothers beginning prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy increased from 2018 to 2019 among non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black women, but decreased among Hispanic women.
- Medicaid as the source of payment for the delivery declined from 42.3% to 42.1% from 2018 to 2019.
- The preterm birth rate rose 2% from 2018 to 2019 from 10.02% to 10.23%; rates rose for each race and Hispanic origin group.



Source: *Births in the United States, 2019*: Data Briefs #387; click [here](#) for the PDF version of the Brief.

Q. Why Are So Many Black People in Prison? A. Systemic Racism

"It wasn't Black-on-Black crime. Violent video games and rap songs had nothing to do with it; nor did poverty, education, two-parent homes or the international "bootstraps" shortage. When a judge tasked researchers with explaining why Massachusetts' Black and Latinx incarceration was so high, a four-year study came up with one conclusion.

"Racism.

"It was always racism...."

"What [researchers] found is the criminal justice system is unequal on every level. Cops in the state are more likely to stop Black drivers. Police are more likely to search or investigate Black residents. Law enforcement agents charge Black suspects with infractions that carry worse penalties. Prosecutors are less likely to offer Black suspects plea bargains or pre-trial intervention. Judges sentence Black defendants to longer terms in prison. And get this: The average white felon in the Massachusetts Department of Corrections has committed a *more severe* crime than the average Black inmate."

Click [here](#) to read the article, *A Judge Asked Harvard to Find Out Why So Many Black People Were in Prison. They Could Only Find 1 Answer: Racism*.

Breastfeeding During COVID-19

Researchers in the United Kingdom conducted an online survey with over 1,200 breastfeeding mothers to understand the impact of the pandemic on breastfeeding duration, experiences and support. Some findings:

- 27% of moms struggled to get support and had barriers stemming from the lockdown; some stopped breastfeeding before they were ready.
- Mothers with lower education, with more challenging living circumstances and from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to find the impact of the lockdown more challenging and stop breastfeeding.

Click [here](#) to read the full article, *Experiences of Breastfeeding During COVID-19: Lessons for future Practical and Emotional Support*.

Food Insufficiency During COVID-19

Many Latino and Black households with children are struggling to obtain enough food to feed their families during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing recession. According to data from the [Household Pulse Survey](#):

- 19% of Hispanic households and 22% of Black households with children experienced food insufficiency this summer, compared to 9% of White household with children.
- 1 in 7 Hispanic and Black workers were unemployed this summer, compared to 1 in 10 White workers.

Source: [During COVID-19, 1 in 5 Latino Households with Children Are Food Insufficient](#).

Getting off to a Healthy Start

What's Going on at the Healthy Start Projects? Let's Take a Look!

We've indicated the October SIDS/Safe Sleep Awareness Month activities in bold. As usual, we've included as many photos as possible and created a new album on our Facebook page with the rest of the November 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! Please keep sending stories and photos to our newsletter editor at bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org!

Missouri Bootheel Regional Consortium Host Federal Officials



L to R: Mark A. Bartlett (MBRC Re-Entry Program Coordinator), Cynthia Dean (MBRC CEO), Pastor Tony Lowden (Executive Director of the Federal Interagency Council on Crime Prevention and Improving Reentry) and Eric D. Hargan (United States Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services)

Missouri Bootheel Regional Consortium (MBRC) hosted a meeting on October 8th with Paster Tony Lowden, Executive Director of the Federal Interagency Council on Crime Prevention and Improving Reentry, and Eric D. Hargan, United States Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services. The topic was MBRC's efforts to reduce recidivism in Dunklin, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Scott Counties in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Corrections and local agencies through funding awarded by the Department of Justice. MBRC's Male Empowerment Now (MEN) Adult Re-Entry Program was selected as a model for providing reentry services on a local level.

U.S. Senators Roy Blount and Josh Hawley sent representatives from their offices. In addition to keynote presentations, there was a panel discussion with representatives from the Workforce Development Board of Southeast Missouri, Southeast Correctional Center, Stella Counseling, Mission Missouri, Delta Area Economic Corporation and the Sikeston Department of Public Safety. The day included a tour of the Southeast Correctional Center led by Warden Bill Strange. Closing remarks were made by Ken Chapman, Women's/Offender Re-Entry Program Manager, Office of the Director for the Missouri Department of Correction, and John Ginwright, Deputy Director, Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division, Child Support.

Kansas City Healthy Start Initiative (MO)

Kansas City Healthy Start Initiative (KCHSI) held a safe sleep photo contest in recognition of October as **Safe Sleep Awareness Month**. Families submitted images of their babies using the ABCs of Safe Sleep (see page 13 for more info on the ABCs). Each entry that correctly displayed a baby sleeping safely received a fleece sleep sack. Any entries that were incorrect were reeducated and given an opportunity to re-submit a photo. Out of 20 submissions, only one needed reeducating. Three random winners were picked and each family received \$30 gift cards to Wal-Mart from Truman Medical Centers and KCHSI's Community Health Nurse. *(Editor's Note: Of course, we had to show the images of the three contest winners.)*

Two of KCHSI's Spanish-speaking Community Health Workers were interviewed by Univision KC and asked to talk about Safe Sleep and the KCHSI. Here is the link to that video: <https://youtu.be/6Z9JdEc9y-k>.



Milwaukee County Healthy Start (WI) *(Photos not received by publishing date, but may arrive in time to go in the Facebook album.)*



"On National Apple Day (10/21), Milwaukee County Healthy Start hosted a virtual caramel apple party for all of our families. We provided every household enrolled in our program with either apples or apple slices (depending on ages of kiddos in the home) and then a variety of toppings including candy, cereal, cookies, sprinkles and, of course, caramel! The party was a hit with our families who spent the time talking about their kids, fun fall plans, how their pregnancies are going and of course the best caramel apple toppings. We also got some fun entertainment of 'Tik Tok' dances from some of our mom's older children. Overall, the event went great and the moms voted on doing cookie and wooden heart decorating for Valentine's Day for our next virtual event."

SIDS/Safe Sleep Awareness Month and Other Activities at the Projects!

Delta Dads (Delta Health Alliance, Stoneville, MS)



↑ & → Demonstrations and hands-on training on life-saving techniques.



“On Tuesday, October 27th, at 2:00 p.m., in honor of **SIDS Awareness Month**, three representatives from Med Stat Emergency Medical Services came and demonstrated what to do if a baby stops breathing. The representatives, Zac Case, Pam Younger and Mike Hester, used medical dolls, valves and oxygen masks, as well as other emergency medical supplies, and taught the Delta Dads and others from the community how to perform chest compressions on babies to possibly get the heart beating again. We were also taught oral resuscitation (using an oral cover and barrier) techniques to get babies breathing again. The EM Team showed us how to continue these and other life saving techniques nonstop until emergency services have arrived at the home where the baby has stopped breathing. We were also taught about other emergencies, such as what to do in case accidents happen such as deep cuts and even how to use an EpiPen should a baby have an allergic reaction. We were then given a chance to practice CPR on the dolls and dummies. They then allowed us to view their ambulance, which featured an adult-sized dummy that could verbally react to pain and discomfort.

“The Delta Dads were also told about employment opportunities in paramedics and how to become CPR certified. There were 23 attendees: 12 on Zoom, eight on Facebook and three in person.”

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death, usually during sleep, of a seemingly healthy baby less than a year old.

Check this [link](#) for some great illustrations and step-by-step directions for “Baby CPR.”

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, including virtual ones like the ones described in this issue. Take photos. Send them the NHSA newsletter when their photo appears; they love seeing that!

West Central Indiana Healthy Start (Terre Haute, IN)

In honor of **Safe Sleep and SIDS Awareness Month**, a Safe Sleep Workshop was organized on October 22nd to “Empower Childcare Providers to have Safe Sleep Conversations” with the families they serve in the Wabash Valley. The workshop was a collaborative effort between Chances and Services for Youth (CASY), Children’s Bureau, Hamilton Center, West Central Indiana Healthy Start, Union Hospital and several childcare providers as part of the local Safe Sleep Community Action Team.

The event hosted childcare providers throughout West Central Indiana that care for infants. Community organizations and physicians across the region are working together to create a consistent message promoting safe sleep in medical offices, daycares and through-out the community. Participants were each provided with safe sleep posters, information booklets and infant sleep sacks for the childcare facilities to use both while the child is in their care as well as to send one home with families to further promote safe sleep practices.

→ Christina Keller



↑ L to R: Connie Hire, Amanda Posey, Kaylee Fagg, Sarah Fagg & Matthew Herrick



Family Tree Healthy Start (Lafayette, LA)



The Family Tree Healthy Start's first ever Maternal Mortality Summit was a great success! Some of the most popular sessions were "The High Risk Pregnancy" with Dr. Scott Barrilleaux and a Panel of Experts hosted by Dr. Kenneth Brown (retired OBGYN), Ivy Sias (LPC specializing in Perinatal Mental Health), Ebony Smith (WHNP) and Kira Kana (midwife and owner of a local free-standing birth house). Attendees appreciated Dr. Barrilleaux's candor and the panelists' great passion for creating a safer world for birthing women. “With over 250 people in attendance, we are one step closer to becoming a community that protects mothers from the dangers of maternal mortality,” reported their November newsletter.

Getting off to a Healthy Start

More Happening at the Healthy Start Projects!

Midlands Healthy Start (Columbia, SC)

In October, Midlands Healthy Start (MHS) of Columbia, South Carolina, introduced three new classes/events to help their participants deal with everyday stressors during this global pandemic. They were **Prenatal Yoga**, **Fall Fun for Fathers** and **Women of Power**.

PRENATAL YOGA

October 6, 2020 – Midlands Healthy Start held its first virtual **Prenatal Yoga** class. This class was led by a professional yoga instructor who volunteered her time to teach MHS participants. The instructor was very engaging with those who attended. The class included deep breathing and mindfulness before moving into yoga movements. This class also included ideas for postpartum recovery.

FALL FUN FOR FATHERS

October 15, 2020 – Midlands Healthy Start hosted their first virtual **Fall Fun for Fathers**. This event was created to celebrate and encourage fathers to continue to have a positive influence in the lives of their children. The fathers were able to play games and share parenting advice with each other and win prizes.

WOMEN OF POWER SUPPORT GROUP

October 26, 2020 – Midlands Healthy Start (MHS) held its first virtual **Women of Power** support group. The purpose of **Women of Power** is to provide additional support to women enrolled in the MHS program seeking to expand their knowledge and build relationships. The topics discussed were self-care and gratitude. Participants shared a self-care activity that they engaged in over the past week and the group ended with a gratitude exercise. The participants were highly engaged in the discussion, activities and voiced their enthusiasm for the next group scheduled for November 23, 2020.



Heart of Georgia Healthy Start (Dublin, GA)



For Halloween, Heart of Georgia Healthy Start was invited by their Community Mental Health program, Standing Tall & Stronger Together Federation of Families, to participate in a Trunk or Treat Festivity for children in mental health services and also for children in the community. The theme was Scooby-Doo. “Our staff dressed as the characters of the popular cartoon,” said Program Coordinator Latosha Elbert. “It was a great opportunity for our program to give back to the community we serve.”



Strong Beginnings – Healthy Start (Grand Rapids, MI)



“The Sweetest Thing Ever” is the title of an [article](#) by Shawn Foucher in Spectrum Health’s *Health Beat*. (Spectrum Health is the grantee agency for Strong Beginnings—Healthy Start.) Lyric Green is the mom of two, Malik, 2, and Messiah, 3 months. Pregnant with Messiah, she discovered Spectrum Health Healthier Communities. “I didn’t know when I was pregnant with my first child...what they were about,” Green said. One of the resources in the Healthier Communities’ toolbox is Strong Beginnings, which worked with Green during her second pregnancy, which occurred during the pandemic.

Lyric Green with Messiah. Photo Credit: Chris Clark, Spectrum Health Beat.



November 2020

Wow! Even More Activities at the Healthy Start Projects!

The Magnolia Project (Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, Jacksonville, FL)

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, each month the Magnolia Project provides a gift bag to the ladies enrolled into the program from donations received from local partners. Some of the items include diapers, wipes, hand sanitizer, baby lotion, baby wash, masks, gloves and books to read to the babies/children. The case managers place the items on the door knob of the home, then mom will come out to pick up their bags. The participants expressed their gratitude to receive the items, but are more grateful to see their case managers (see photo at right).



Family Road Healthy Start (Baton Rouge, LA)



Family Road Board Member Linda Gibson & CEO Dene Christy with Pumpkins For Pack 'n Plays

SIDS Awareness - Mommy and Daddy Hour

Family Road Healthy Start recognized **SIDS and Safe Sleep Awareness Month** with a Mommy and Daddy Hour Virtual Training with "The Safety Place." Eighteen Healthy Start participants and six staff attended the virtual training. The Safety Place is a child safety and injury prevention nonprofit and Community Action Network member. The Safety Place serves East Baton Rouge and surrounding areas through safety education, services and resources.

Crystal Pichon, MNPA, CEO, presented "Sleep and Sound," a safe-sleep education and resource for parents and caregivers to prevent those sleep-related deaths in infants. This training places focus on the **ABCs of Safe Sleep; A: Alone, B: on their Back, and C: in a Crib**. The program offers portable crib assistance to families who cannot otherwise afford a safe place for their babies to sleep. The Safety Place is a proud partner of the East Baton Rouge Parish Safe Sleep Taskforce organized by the East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner's Office. FRHS had great participation and The Safety Place also surprised one of their Healthy Start moms with a Pack 'n Play® giveaway!



Halloween Trunk R Treat – see more photos in the Facebook [album!](#)

"Pumpkins For Pack 'n Plays" is a Family Road of Greater Baton Rouge fundraiser for **SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) Awareness Month**. The fundraiser supports families without a safe sleep space for their infant. Family Road's board members, employees, volunteer community groups and local artists come together to decoratively paint pumpkins and homemade crafts and sells them at local markets. Between 50-60 pumpkins are decorated and sold at three markets: Calvin's, Calandro's and Whole Foods. This event goes through the second week in November, so the total amount raised is not known yet. In 2019, \$5,000 was raised. East Baton Rouge Parish infant mortality is two times that of the national average (10.1 deaths per 1,000 live births) and three times higher among African Americans (15.3 deaths per 1,000 live births). Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) accounts for 20% of all infant deaths in Louisiana and constitutes 90 % of all unexpected infants' deaths, according to the Louisiana Department of Health. Pack 'n Plays help prevent SIDS related deaths, which includes rollover deaths and suffocations. Pumpkins for Pack 'n Plays gives the community the opportunity to help babies have a safe place to sleep!

Healthy Start Trunk R Treat

Family Road Healthy Start staff had lots of Halloween FUN with around 20-25 families on October 30, 2020, including 50 children and 30 adults. "Our 'Trunk R Treat' Halloween Celebration yielded 'Family Fun, Lots of Tricks, Tasty Treats and Happy Pic's!'" reported Levyette Matthews, Community Developer at Family Road Healthy Start.

Getting off to a Healthy Start



**NATIONAL
HEALTHY START
ASSOCIATION**

Attention Healthy Start Project Directors and Program Staff!

Newsletters

- Be sure to include NHSA 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. November provides the opportunity for Thanksgiving events!
- 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. (The deadline for the December issue is December 4th.)
- Send everything to [Bea Haskins](#).

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The National Healthy Start 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 outcomes and family well-being.

Newsletter Editor: Bea Haskins, Communications Coordinator | *Contributing Writers:* Sekou Clincy, Kenneth Scarborough and Healthy Start Projects' Staff; *Photo Credits:* Thank you to the Healthy Start projects that sent in photos used in this issue! Shutterstock photos are used under agreement.

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