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### Curricula Delivery at Healthy Families New York Programs

Center for Human Services Research, University at Albany

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# Curricula Delivery at Healthy Families New York Programs

How do we improve the lives of the families we serve through Healthy Families New York (HFNY)? One important piece of the puzzle is the curricula delivered at the home visits: they support the enhancement of family-staff bonding, teach parents about child development, and encourage positive parent-child interaction. We sought to identify the curricula currently used most frequently across HFNY and to determine if appropriate curricula are used for three subgroups of interest (prenatal families, fathers, and young parents).

## Analyses & Results

### *How often is curricula used in HFNY home visits?*

All home visits occurring in 2018 were first analyzed to determine overall rates of curriculum use. Of the almost 73,000 home visits conducted in 2018, **74% were recorded as including at least one curriculum**. The most frequently recorded curricula were the four HFNY-approved primary curricula: Growing Great Kids (32% of visits); Partners for a Healthy Baby by Florida State University (19%); Parents as Teachers (9%), and San Angelo (9%). **These results demonstrate that home visitors are making a marked effort to deliver curricula, particularly HFNY-approved primary curricula, during home visits.**

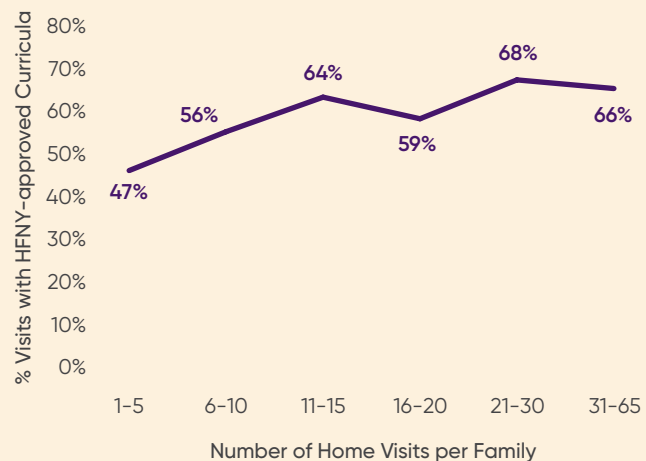
HFNY-approved curriculum use was also examined on a per-family basis, for families enrolled in the first half of 2018, in relation to the total number of home visits a family received. Not surprisingly, families who received more home visits also had more curriculum-based visits; but importantly, the **rate** of curriculum use also increased. For example, families who received only a few home visits had about a 50% rate of curriculum use, while families who received at least 20 visits had about a 67% rate (Figure 1). **This pattern demonstrates increasingly frequent use of curricula for families who receive more home visits.**

Of the almost 73,000 home visits conducted in 2018,

# 74%

were recorded as including at least one curriculum.

**Figure 1.** Rate of HFNY-approved curriculum use versus total number of Home Visits.



## Are specific population-focused curricula used for the targeted group?

Curriculum use for three particular subpopulations of interest were then examined.

### Prenatal Families

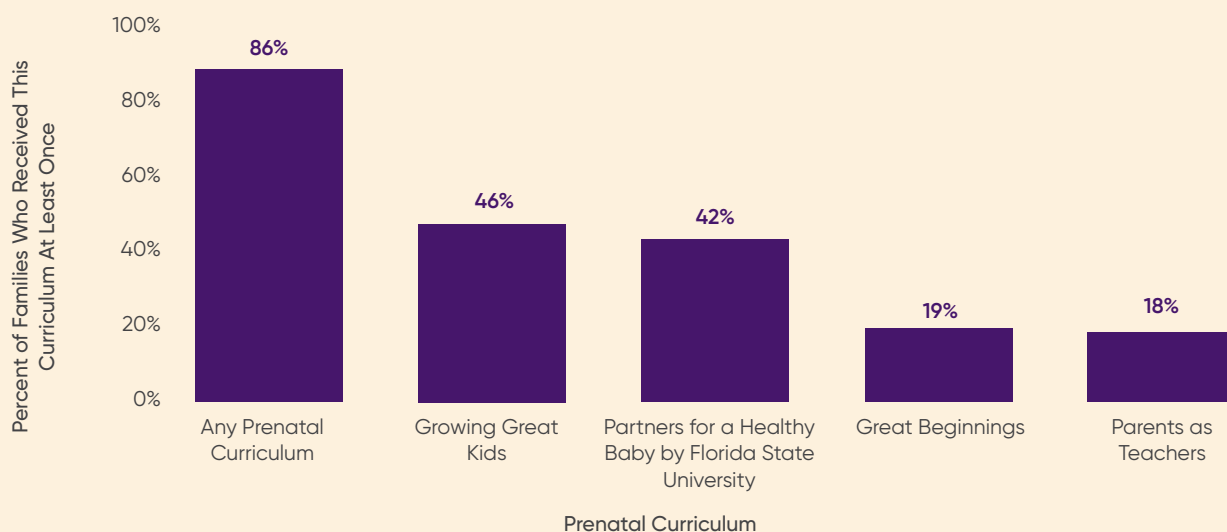
The prenatal period is a particularly important one for preparing parents for their baby's arrival, building needed skills, and connecting to resources in this window. The prenatal curricula considered here included Growing Great Kids, Partners for a Healthy Baby by Florida State University, Parents as Teachers, and Great Beginnings Start Before Birth. **86% of the 1,345 prenatal families received at least one visit with one of these curricula** (see Figure 2); Growing Great Kids and Partners for a Healthy Baby by Florida State University were the two most commonly used. Similarly, 62% of home visits with prenatal families were recorded as using at least one of these curricula. **This high rate of prenatal curriculum implementation represents a critical success in addressing the needs of these families during this important period.**

### Fathers and Father Figures

In recent years, HFNY has made a marked effort to engage fathers and father figures in the home visiting process. Five of the MIS-listed curricula are specifically father-focused: 24/7 Dads, Parents as Teachers: Focus on Fathers, Mom as Gateway, Inside Out Dads, and Boyz 2 Dads. Here, father-present visits were identified as visits where a father or father figure was recorded as participating in the home visit; curriculum use during these visits was examined.

**Although fathers were present for 12,782 visits in 2018, only 17 involved any of these five curricula, indicating rare use of these materials.** There are several potential reasons for this gap. First, programs may not have access to these curricula, and/or may be using other materials not listed. Alternately, some programs may be moving away from "father"-specific to more inclusive "parent"-focused language; however, this approach may not address father-specific issues, such as how they might support the mother during and after pregnancy or how they can feel more included in the family.

Figure 2. Percent of Prenatal Families Receiving At Least One Visit with Prenatal Curricula.



## Young Parents

Young parents represent a particularly vulnerable group in need of HFNY services, as they are at especially high risk of poor parenting outcomes, and are particularly likely to live in poverty and have less education. Here, visits with young parents were identified as visits at which the primary caregiver was 21 or younger.

**San Angelo is the only HFNY-approved curriculum specifically designed for young parents. However, it is not used frequently with this population** (only 18% of young parents had at least one visit that included the San Angelo curriculum, as opposed to 37% of young parents who received Partners for

a Healthy Baby by Florida State University during at least one visit). As such, many young parents may not be receiving curricula designed for their demographic. Again, there are several potential explanations for this gap: first, not all programs have access to the San Angelo curriculum; and second, the San Angelo curriculum is viewed by many home visitors to be condescending and outdated. Parents as Teachers: Partnering With Teen Parents and Partners for a Healthy Baby by Florida State University may be alternative curricula that are appropriate for this population and are more up-to-date.

## Conclusions

Curricula use is an important part of HFNY's overall mission to support families and help them meet their goals. Thus, the overall rates of curriculum use, as well as the high rates of curriculum use with prenatal families, represent great successes for the program. The shortfalls for curricula use with fathers and young parents require further consideration and conversation to ensure groups with special needs are receiving appropriate curricula. Overall, we found that curriculum use across HFNY was quite good with a few areas for improvement.

## About the Center for Human Services Research

The Center for Human Services Research (CHSR) is a research department at the University at Albany. CHSR has nearly 30 years of experience conducting evaluation research, designing information systems, and informing program and policy development for a broad range of agencies serving vulnerable populations. For more information about CHSR, please visit [www.albany.edu/chsr](http://www.albany.edu/chsr).



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