



A Proven Child Abuse Prevention Program

Healthy Families Florida recognizes that the State of Florida is mired in an unprecedented fiscal crisis and difficult decisions will be made regarding budget cuts for fiscal year 2009-2010. However, research shows that the added stress low-income families face during economically depressed times causes child abuse and neglect to increase.

The human and monetary costs of child abuse and neglect are unconscionable, especially compared to the low cost of effective prevention. The Florida Legislature made a wise investment in effective prevention by funding Healthy Families Florida. Over 13,000 high-risk families and their 21,000 children benefit from high-quality, proven prevention services each year.

- **Healthy Families Florida participants receiving intensive services had 58 percent less child abuse and neglect at 24 months compared to the comparison group who had little or no services.**
- **96 percent of children were free from abuse and neglect one year after the family completed the program.**

A rigorous, independent five-year evaluation concluded that Healthy Families Florida has a significant impact on preventing child abuse and neglect. The evaluation shows that children in families who completed the program or received long-term, intensive Healthy Families Florida services experienced 58 percent less child abuse and neglect than did comparison groups with little or no services. Since the program's inception, Healthy Families Florida consistently meets or exceeds participant outcome goals. The following chart includes outcome results from Fiscal Year 2007-2008.

Outcome	Goal	Performance
Free from abuse and neglect during services	95%	95%
Free from abuse and neglect within 12 months of completing the program	95%	96%
Immunized by age 2	85%	90%
Well-baby Checks – Age 2	85%	87%
Well-baby Checks > Age 2	85%	96%
Self-Sufficiency	80%	77%
Participant connected to a medical provider	90%	99%
Target child connected to a medical provider	90%	99%
No subsequent pregnancy in 2 years after birth of target child	80%	98%

Healthy Families Florida experienced a \$2.5 million funding cut for the 2008-2009 fiscal year, resulting in more than 1,000 high-risk families going without Healthy Families services and 100 field staff positions being eliminated. Any additional funding cuts would severely damage the capacity of Healthy Families Florida to provide critical services that keep families together by preventing child abuse and neglect before it ever begins.

The Governor's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency State Plan and the 2008 Florida Child Abuse Death Review Report recommend the continuation of funding at the 2008-2009 level. This recommendation supports Goal 2 a and 3 a,c of the Children and Youth Cabinet's Strategic Plan.

We urge you to maintain the current funding for Healthy Families Florida.