

Supporting Healthy Start Performance Project NEWSLETTER



Strengthening Healthy Start to support family health and well-being

TA & Support Center News & Updates

Deadlines:

Dec 15 HSMED-II Report (CSV or XML) Due

Events:

Dec 8 Infant Health Equity Action Plan Webinar: Part 2 – *IHE Supplement grantees only*

Dec 13 Community Engagement Cohort Meeting #4 – *Community Engagement cohort members only*

Dec 13 [Fatherhood Talk Tuesday](#)

Dec 14 Breastfeeding Cohort Meeting #4 - *BF cohort members only*

Dec 20 Healthy Start COIN Meeting – *COIN members only*

Fatherhood Talk Tuesday

That's a wrap, folks! This year's final Fatherhood Talk Tuesday will feature a recap of TASC's fatherhood offerings throughout the year, a sneak peek at what's to come, and an opportunity for grantees to share what they're looking forward to!

Join the Healthy Start TA & Support Center (TASC) for this reflective session on **Tuesday, December 13 from 3-4:30 pm ET. To register, please [click here!](#)**

In Case You Missed it...

Fatherhood Talk Tuesday

The November Fatherhood Talk Tuesday was dedicated to celebrating and honoring Native American Heritage Month and highlighted Native American traditions and how they can be reflected in the work and services offered throughout Healthy Start communities. Attendees heard from fellow grantee, Onaje Muid from the Foundation for Delaware County, who presented strategies, programming insights, and lessons learned! To view the recording, [please click here](#).

The Impact of Infant Loss: Recognizing the Uniqueness of Black Grief Inservice

Thank you to all who joined the Healthy Start TASC for a 90-minute training about understanding infant loss and African American grief on November 10. A Throughout the training, participants learned about African Americans' historical and contemporary experiences with death, including the impact of systemic racism on individuals' reactions to loss. This equipped participants with an understanding of how best to support communities that are disproportionately affected by infant death. Attendees gained insight into how some women of color deal with compounded loss and trauma and how to best serve them. The TASC hosted this training in partnership with Dr. Stacy Scott, founder of the Global Infant Safe Sleep Center (GISS), long-time international and community advocate and educator for safe sleep initiatives, and Vice President of Health Equity Innovation at NICHQ. To view the training recording, [please click here](#).

November: Prematurity Awareness Month

November is Prematurity Awareness Month, a time to bring attention to the many babies born too soon and too small. In 2021, [1 in 10 babies](#) were born prematurely in the United States, meaning that they were born [before 37 weeks of pregnancy](#). A developing baby goes through [important growth](#) throughout pregnancy, including in the final months and weeks. The earlier a baby is born, the more likely they are to experience health issues, such as anemia, breathing problems, and infections. Some health issues associated with

prematurity are present at birth, and other problems, like intellectual developmental disabilities, can emerge as the child grows.

Preterm birth is on the rise across the United States; the overall rate increased 4% in 2021, from 10.1% in 2020 to 10.5% in 2021. However, just as we see with other health outcomes, there are racial disparities in [premature birth](#) rates. In 2021, non-Hispanic Black women were about 50% more likely to have a premature birth than non-Hispanic White women. Almost 17% of Black babies and a little over 10% of American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic babies are born early each year, compared to less than 10% of White and Asian babies. Each year, the March of Dimes releases [report cards](#) highlighting key indicators of maternal and infant health for each state, including the disparity ratio. Check out your state's report card to see how your infant mortality rate and disparity ratio compares to others.

While we don't always know what causes preterm labor, there are certain [risk factors](#), including having a personal or family history of preterm birth, being pregnant with multiples, having problems with your uterus or cervix, and getting pregnant too soon after a previous pregnancy (i.e., before [18 months postpartum](#) for most people). Certain medical conditions can also increase the risk, including being under or overweight prior to pregnancy, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Some people may be able to reduce their risk of preterm birth by obtaining a healthy weight and treating any chronic conditions before pregnancy; avoiding smoking, misusing drugs, and drinking alcohol; and protecting themselves against infections.

Healthy Start plays a key role in helping mothers and families prepare for pregnancy and adopting behaviors to increase their risk of a healthy birth. Below are some tools and resources you can use when working with Healthy Start participants to promote healthy, full-term pregnancies:

- [Quit for Two- Smoking and Pregnancy](#)
- [Prenatal Alcohol Exposure Screening Implementation Guide](#)
- [Reducing Stress During Pregnancy](#)
- [Vaccinations and Pregnancy](#)
- [Signs of Preterm Labor](#)

Below are additional resources about preterm labor and birth, including strategies to support families experiencing preterm delivery. We encourage you to share these resources with your fellow Healthy Start staff members and participants.



Preterm Labor and Birth Pamphlet

The [American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology \(ACOG\)](#) created a [pamphlet](#) to educate pregnant people about preterm labor. This clear and concise pamphlet contains information to help recognize preterm birth, risk factors for preterm labor, management of preterm labor and birth, and health risks associated with early delivery.

Voices for Birth Justice Stories

[Voices for Birth Justice](#) works to improve birth outcomes for Black and Brown birthing people by advocating for culturally-appropriate, person-centered care while challenging disrespectful care. One of the many ways they achieve this work is through sharing [stories](#) of action and change to connect more pregnant people to culturally-relevant resources and support and inspire more people to join the movement.

Loss & Grief in Pregnancy & Postpartum

[Postpartum Support International \(PSI\)](#) compiled a page of [helpful resources](#)

Coordinated Systems are Key to Addressing Rising Preterm Birth Rates

As part of its Exploring State-Level

around providing support to people experiencing the loss of a pregnancy, infant, or child. The page includes information on PSI's pregnancy and infant loss [support groups](#), a [discussion tool](#) for parents experiencing loss to track their symptoms in preparation for discussion with a medical provider, a [provider directory](#), and other relevant resources.

Mighty Little Giants

[Mighty Little Giants](#) is a non-profit organization that advocates for parents who experience preterm deliveries resulting in long-term stays at the NICU. They focus on providing [support](#), education, and encouragement to parents. One of their many great resources is the [Essential Self Care Kit for Mothers](#), created for moms with babies in the NICU, moms on bedrest, and those experiencing postpartum depression.

Support for Achieving a Healthy Pregnancy eLearning

The [Reproductive Health National Training Center \(RHNTC\)](#) houses many trainings, including an [eLearning module](#) designed to help family planning staff follow the *Providing Quality Family Planning Services: Recommendations of CDC and the U.S. Office of Population Affairs* to support clients in achieving a healthy pregnancy.

Breastfeeding Premature Infants

The University of California San Diego Health's [Supporting Premature Infant Nutrition \(SPIN\)](#) Program engages parents to encourage breastfeeding and support positive feeding experiences. SPIN has created a [series of videos](#) about the special considerations and challenges of breastfeeding premature

Strategies to Improve Maternal Health and Birth Outcomes Initiative, the [National Institute for Children's Health Quality \(NICHQ\)](#) published a [family story](#) about Savannah, a mother of three in Kansas and an advocate for systems-level change. The story discusses Savannah's third pregnancy, which was high-risk, and how she and her husband utilized public health programs in their community as a support system.

Help for Dads

When thinking about preterm labor and delivery, we typically think about mom and baby. But we can't forget dad! PSI provides [postpartum mental health support to men](#), including a HelpLine that dads can call or text, a support group and closed Facebook group for dads, connections to fatherhood experts and specialized coordinators for dads, and other relevant resources.

Baby Steps at Home

The [National Association of Neonatal Nurses \(NANN\)](#) created [Baby Steps to Home](#), a guide for preparing NICU parents to bring their baby home from the hospital. The tool is comprised of ten sections and is intended to educate parents about their baby's condition and provide them with knowledge and resources to ease the transition from NICU to home.

NICU Family Resources

[RWJBarnabas Health](#) has created a variety of [resources for families with infants in the NICU](#), including a guide to siblings' adjustment in the NICU; a guide to premature infants' sensory development; a guide to observing premature infants' stress signals; safe sleep guidelines; and more.

infants for both parents and NICU staff.



Hosting or attending an exciting event or webinar?

We will use the EPIC Center [Training Calendar](#) to share information about events specifically planned for Healthy Start projects, as well as other relevant webinars, trainings, and other events that are open to the public. If you know of events or trainings that you think other Healthy Start projects should be aware of, please feel free to send information to healthystart@nichq.org.

Have questions? Either respond to this email or contact the sender on healthystart@nichq.org

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