

Supporting Healthy Start Performance Project NEWSLETTER



Strengthening Healthy Start to support family health and well-being

TA & Support Center News & Updates

February Healthy Start Events & Deadlines

Deadlines:

Feb 18 Letter of Intent for Catalyst for Infant Health Equity Program Due

Feb 28 HSMED-II Report (CSV or XML) Due

Events:

Feb 11 [Annual TASC Fatherhood Training](#)

Feb 16 Fatherhood Cohort Meeting #2 – *Fatherhood cohort members only*

Feb 17 Evaluation Cohort Meeting #2 – *Evaluation cohort members only*

Annual TASC Fatherhood Training 2022

The Healthy Start TASC is partnering with the National Healthy Start Association (NHTSA) to host its **second annual fatherhood training on February 11th from 11:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. ET**, facilitated by Kenn Harris and Ken Scarborough. To review the 2021 trainings, [please click here](#) and scroll down to the section titled *Building a Successful Fatherhood Program Training*. **To register for the 2022 training, [please click here](#).**

Catalyst for Infant Health Equity Program

We are very pleased to announce that the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is now accepting applications for the fiscal year 2022 Catalyst for Infant Health Equity program. The purpose of this new funding opportunity is to support the implementation of existing action plans that apply data-driven policy and innovative systems strategies to reduce infant mortality (IM) disparities in a specific county/jurisdiction. The goals of the Catalyst for Infant Health Equity program are twofold: 1) to continue reducing overall IM rates in the United States, and 2) to decrease and ultimately eliminate disparities in IM across racial/ethnic groups by achieving steeper declines for groups with highest rates. To maximize impact on disparities in infant mortality rates at the national level, counties/jurisdictions with larger numbers of excess infant deaths will be considered priority areas. The Catalyst for Infant Health Equity program is open to applicants from domestic or private entities, community-based organizations, tribes and tribal organizations. HRSA anticipates that Catalyst awards will accelerate the reduction of IM disparities and excess infant deaths by supporting policy and systems changes that improve conditions to promote equity.

The anticipated project start date is September 1, 2022. Letters of Intent to apply are requested by February 18, 2022.

Applications are due April 19, 2022. More information is available in the NOFO: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=334421>

Please circulate this broadly within your networks. For more information, please contact the Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services at infanthealthequity@hrsa.gov.

In Case You Missed it...

Understanding Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and Preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Webinar #2

The Healthy Start TA & Support Center (TASC) is partnering with the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) to provide a three-part series related to prenatal alcohol exposure. During the first session, which took place in

September, Kathy Mitchell of NOFAS provided an overview of the historical view on alcohol and pregnancy; the current research on how both alcohol and other substances may impact on the developing fetus; and diagnostic criteria for FASD. To view the first session recording, [please click here](#). The second session took place on Tuesday, February 1. **To view the session recording, [please click here](#).**

Beyond COVID-19: Breastfeeding Webinar Series

To support Healthy Start grantees in providing breastfeeding support and meeting the two breastfeeding benchmarks, the Healthy Start TASC hosted a three-part Beyond COVID-19: Breastfeeding Webinar Series. The goal of this webinar series was to enhance and strengthen Healthy Start grantees' capacity to meet their client's breastfeeding needs as we continue to navigate the changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic. The series featured Cathy Carothers, IBCLC, FILCA, of Every Mother, Inc, who facilitated the previous TASC's COVID-19 and Breastfeeding Webinar Series last fall. Visit the links below to access the session recordings.

- [Session 1](#) focused on building community partnerships to promote and support breastfeeding
 - [Session 2](#) focused on demystifying secrets of milk production
 - [Session 3](#) focused on common challenges and complex infant breastfeeding problems
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COVID-19 Vaccination Education Webinar Series

Session 1 - Equipping Frontline Staff to Encourage the COVID-19 Vaccine among Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women

On December 8, NHSA hosted the first session in the COVID-19 Vaccination Education Webinar series in partnership with TASC and Rapid Response Virtual Home Visiting (RR-VHV). **To view the webinar recording, [please click here](#).**

Session 2 - Ask the Doctors: What We have Learned about COVID Vaccinations for Pregnant Women and Children

On Wednesday, December 15th, RR-VHV hosted the second webinar in the COVID-19 Vaccination Education Webinar Series in partnership with NHSA and the TASC. **To view the session recording, [please click here](#).**

Fatherhood Talk Tuesday

On December 14, the TASC held the final Fatherhood Talk Tuesday of the 2021. During this session, attendees heard from Healthy Start projects that work with rural and tribal populations. The webinar also served as a year-end wrap up of fatherhood work at the TASC in 2021 and a preview of activities to come in 2022! **To view the webinar recording, [please click here](#).**

January: Birth Defects Awareness

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [every 4 ½ minutes](#), a baby is born with a birth defect in the United States. Birth defects are [health conditions that are present at birth](#), which change the shape or function of one or more parts of the body (e.g., heart, brain, foot). Birth defects impact approximately one in every 33 babies born each year, and can vary from mild to severe. We know what causes some birth defects, such as [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder](#) (FASD), which is caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. However, we are not certain what causes most birth defects.

While we are still exploring how genes, behavior, and the environment may interact to cause birth defects, we have identified several [risk factors for birth defects](#). Examples include smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking certain drugs during pregnancy; taking certain medications during pregnancy; and having certain infections during pregnancy (e.g., Zika virus, cytomegalovirus). Based on these risk factors, we have identified key steps that a woman can take before and during her pregnancy to [increase her chances of having a healthy baby](#). Examples include starting prenatal care as soon as pregnancy begins and seeing a provider regularly throughout pregnancy; taking 400 micrograms of [folic acid](#) each day; and ensuring any medical conditions are under control before getting pregnant.

While these prevention methods are essential, it is equally important to recognize the structural barriers that prevent many families from taking the recommended steps to prevent birth defects. This [National Birth Defects Awareness Month](#), the National Birth Defects Awareness Network's theme – Healthy Communities, Healthy Families – strives to inspire conversations around identifying and building more resources to support successful pregnancies. With our strong roots within communities, the Healthy Start program is uniquely positioned to help families overcome barriers to having a healthy pregnancy. Whether it be engaging fathers in prenatal visits or supporting mothers in quitting smoking, Healthy Start staff can play an essential role in birth defects awareness and prevention. We hope the following resources equip your Healthy Start project to share information and connect families to resources that can help them take action to prevent birth defects. Please feel free to share with your Healthy Start participants.



Birth Defects Awareness Resource Map

The National Birth Defects Awareness Network has created an [interactive map](#), which lists local community resources throughout the United States. Examples of resources include pharmacies that offer free vitamin programs; free immunization programs; and workout/wellness/yoga studios that offer free prenatal class trials. You can also fill out [this form](#) to suggest resources in your community to be added to the map.

Birth Defects and Your Baby: Know the Facts

As part of their *Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies* Facebook Live series, [March of Dimes](#) recently hosted a webinar sharing how healthy habits in the years before pregnancy can help women prepare for pregnancy and prevent birth defects. During the webinar, parents and experts shared actions to help prevent birth defects, as well as how to improve the health of people living with birth defects across their lifespan. To watch the recording, [please click here](#).

Birth Defects Prevention Toolkit

The CDC has released [a new Awareness](#)

Cup of Health Podcast

The CDC's [Cup of Health podcast](#) has

[of Birth Defects Across the Lifespan toolkit](#). The toolkit describes what scientists have learned about birth defects prevention before and during pregnancy; the survival and health of infants with birth defects; the educational and special healthcare needs of children and adolescents with birth defects; and information on planning for pregnancy for adults with birth defects.

Mother to Baby Podcast

In the [Mother to Baby](#) podcast, host and certified genetic counselor, Chris Stallman offers insight into the different types of exposures that a pregnant or breastfeeding mom may experience. In Episodes 14 and 15, she speaks with parents and experts from the CDC about birth defects prevention tips. Episode 7 focuses specifically on alcohol and opioid use during pregnancy. To access these episodes and more, [please click here](#).

Eye on Nutrition: Folate and Folic Acid

[This webpage](#) from the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) takes a closer look at folic acid, a crucial nutrient for pregnant women. The page discusses what folate is, why it is important, and what WIC-eligible foods provide folate. The page also shares [several folate-rich recipes](#) created by WIC staff.

Birth Defects Prevention: Erica's Story

In two videos created by the March of Dimes, families share their experiences giving birth to and raising their children who have birth defects. Their stories highlight the experiences of children and families impacted by birth defects, as well as March of Dimes' efforts to support not only pre-term babies, but also full-term babies impacted by birth defects. To

several episodes exploring birth defects. The "Good Medicine Can Be Bad for Baby" episode discusses why women should consult with a health care provider about the risk of using particular medications during pregnancy. The "Healthy Little Hearts" episode focuses on congenital heart defects, including maternal risk factors and specific prevention tips. To access these episodes and more, [please click here](#).

Birth Defect Prevention Infographics

The CDC has created [three birth defect prevention infographics](#), which focus on preventing infections during pregnancy, making healthy choices, and the costs associated with birth defects. We encourage you to download the infographics and distribute them to families (either printed or via social media) or display them at your Healthy Start site.

Developmental Milestone Checklist Program

The [Developmental Milestone Checklist program for WIC](#) was developed through a collaboration with WIC and the CDC's [Learn the Signs, Act Early program](#). The program helps WIC providers engage parents in monitoring their children's development from age 2 months through 5 years and support them with timely referrals when developmental concerns are identified.

How Much Do You Know About Birth Defects?

This [interactive quiz](#) created by the CDC tests your knowledge about birth defects, including how they can be prevented, detected, and treated. We encourage you to share this quiz with your fellow Healthy Start staff members and with the mothers, fathers, and families you serve.

watch the videos, please click [here](#) and [here](#).

Other Resources:

Call to Share Promising Practices: COVID Vaccination among Pregnant People

In September 2021, the CDC issued a [health advisory](#) recommending urgent action to increase COVID-19 vaccinations for pregnant women. The Maternal Health Learning and Innovation Center (MHLIC) focuses on presenting ideas, research, innovative programming and/or promising practices related to improving maternal health. MHLIC is currently calling for maternal health professionals to share innovative practices, programs or policies designed to increase COVID-19 vaccinations for pregnant people. MHLIC hopes to share promising practices with their national audience through their Resource Center, blog, webinar panels, newsletters, and social media.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Vaccines are one of the most effective ways to protect your health and the health of those around you. MCHB's Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services (DHSPS) encourages you to consider opportunities to leverage your programs and partnerships to support confidence in and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines among MCH populations, for example:

- The organizing efforts, including Community Canvassing, Phone Banking, Text Banking, and Vaccination Events, will focus on what we know works best to ensure everyone has equitable vaccine access: person-to-person action that connects people with key resources and information. MCH programs can support these efforts by visiting <https://wecandothis.hhs.gov/> which includes available resources that you can use to support the communities you serve.
- Several nationwide child care providers are offering free child care to all parents and caregivers getting vaccinated or recovering from vaccination.

To learn more about estimates for vaccine hesitancy in the local communities, counties, and states you serve, visit the Office of The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation mapping tool [here](#). For more information on COVID-19 Vaccinations for Children and Teens, visit the CDC resources [here](#) and HHS' We Can Do This resources page [here](#).



Healthy Start Fatherhood Corner

The TASC is excited to support Healthy Start staff in their efforts to engage fathers. To that end, we will share resources and information for Healthy Start programs and fatherhood coordinators related to fathers/partners in this “Fatherhood Corner” of the SHSPP monthly newsletter.

If you are doing work that specifically demonstrates successful inclusion of fathers in your MCH program, you are invited to share your story with us so that it can potentially be featured in the Fatherhood Corner or the new quarterly Fatherhood newsletter! Please email your stories to healthystart@nichq.org.

New Resources: ASPE Key Programmatic Elements of Father Engagement to Promote Self-Sufficiency (“KEEP Fathers Engaged”) Project

The Office of the Assistance Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) recently released a [publication of several new resources](#) from their *Key Programmatic Elements of Father Engagement to Promote Self-Sufficiency (“KEEP Fathers Engaged”)* project. Resources include an issue brief and accompanying

infographics, case studies, podcasts, and more.

Funding Opportunity: Reentry Program Grants from the Bob Barker Company Foundation

The Bob Barker Company Foundation is currently offering grants for organizations working to promote successful reentry and reduce recidivism for incarcerated people. Grants will range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Organizations that serve a minimum of 100 incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals per year are eligible to apply. To learn more about grant eligibility and apply, [please click here](#).

TASC Quarterly Fatherhood Newsletter

The TASC distributed the latest quarterly Fatherhood newsletter in December. To access the Fatherhood newsletters, [please click here](#) and scroll down to the “Quarterly Fatherhood Newsletter” section. The Fatherhood newsletters feature TASC events related to fatherhood, as well as external events and resources on the topic. This newsletter is geared towards Fatherhood Coordinators and other Healthy Start staff who work with dads. The newsletter highlights and promotes learning opportunities, helpful resources, Healthy Start site and staff spotlights, commentary from experts, and so much more! If you or your site would like to share a success story about working with fathers in your community, please email healthystart@nichq.org.

Fatherhood Resources on the EPIC Center Website

The Healthy Start EPIC Center website is home to an abundance of resources geared to support the work of Healthy Start grantees. To further support Fatherhood work within Healthy Start, the TASC has compiled all the available Fatherhood resources into one page on the website to make these resources easily accessible to grantees. To view the new Fatherhood Resources page on the EPIC website, [please click here](#).

Partner4Fatherhood (P4F)

The TASC is excited to host Partner4Fatherhood (P4F), an informal group that will bring together new and experienced Fatherhood Coordinators to connect, share wins and barriers, and discuss their Healthy Start projects’ work around fatherhood. All Healthy Start Fatherhood Coordinators and other staff who work with fathers are invited to join. In addition to serving as a fellowship opportunity with a mentoring structure, the group will allow participants to share their insights and concerns with the entire group while also being paired with another member for a more concentrated dialogue. If you are interested in participating in this group, please email healthystart@nichq.org.



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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