

New York State Office of Children and Family Services

FOR RELEASE: FEBRUARY 16, 2007

Press Contact:

New York State Office of Children & Family Services
Public Information Office
(518) 473-7793

**OCFS AWARDED JUST UNDER \$640,000 FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES
NEW YORK STUDY**

Grant Extends Study of Nationally Recognized Program

New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Acting Commissioner Gladys Carrión announced today that the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation has awarded \$639,563 to OCFS to extend a randomized trial of Healthy Families New York (HFNY) from three years to seven years. The grant will help OCFS to broaden and build on data collected from the existing randomized trial of HFNY that was initiated by OCFS and the Center for Human Services Research at the University of Albany.

"We are pleased to receive this grant and appreciate the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation for its recognition of the HFNY Program. This home-based early intervention and prevention program is producing positive outcomes for families across New York State. HFNY is helping parents and caregivers develop positive skills necessary to properly care for their children in the critical, early stages of life," said Acting Commissioner Gladys Carrión.

HFNY is a community-based prevention program that seeks to improve the health and well-being of children who are at high risk for abuse and neglect, through the provision of intensive home visitation services to expectant and new parents. HFNY is administered by OCFS in collaboration with Prevent Child Abuse New York, the Center for Human Services Research at the University at Albany, and the New York State Department of Health. HFNY is modeled after Healthy Families America (HFA), a nationwide initiative of Prevent Child Abuse America, which recently was named an Effective Program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

This award, from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, "Understanding the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect: Contributions from the Randomized Trial of Healthy Families New York," supplements a recent award that OCFS received from the National Institute of Justice in the amount of \$648,056. In total, OCFS has received over \$1.2 million dollars from federal and private funding sources to help support the extension of the randomized trial to a seventh year.

"The foundation seeks to fill specific gaps in funding for long-term research studies that will yield important insights for informing the policy and practice of child abuse prevention," said Joan E. Spero, president of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. "We are pleased to support the Healthy Families New York evaluation, as its comprehensive and rigorous research design will inform both the home visiting field as well as the broader prevention field."

Home visits are conducted by specially trained paraprofessionals who work with parents to promote positive parent-child interactions, encourage positive health-related behaviors during pregnancy, increase knowledge of child development, and facilitate linkages to health care and other community resources. Home visits begin prenatally or shortly after birth and may last until the targeted child is five years old, or enrolls in kindergarten or Head Start.

HFNY is located in 29 high need communities throughout New York State including 10 entire counties and nine sites in New York City. Since HFNY began in 1995, over half a million home visits have been provided to more than 17,000 families.

In collaboration with the Center for Human Services Research, OCFS conducted a rigorous, three-year random assignment study of HFNY. Baseline data were collected for 1,173 women who met assessment criteria for HFNY and were randomly assigned to either an intervention group that was offered HFNY services or a control group that was given information and referrals to other appropriate services. Follow-up data were collected at the time of the child's birth, and first, second, and third birthdays from in-depth interviews with mothers, Child Protective Services (CPS) records, the HFNY Data Management System, and videotaped observations of parent-child interactions (at Year 3 only). The Year 1 findings indicated that compared to mothers in the control group, HFNY participant mothers developed healthier parenting attitudes, adopted less harmful parenting practices and experienced better birth outcomes, including a reduction in the incidence of low birth weight. HFNY continued to demonstrate positive outcomes in Year 2, helping mothers to set firm and clear limits for their children and reduce their use of abusive and neglectful parenting practices. HFNY also improved mothers' access to health care.

The newly awarded funds from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation will be used to expand the scope of the seven-year follow-up to evaluate HFNY's impact on parenting behaviors that may contribute to abuse and neglect, by conducting videotaped observations of parent-child interactions for a subset of the study's families. The information gathered will complement data already collected in earlier phases of the study. The recent NIJ award will support an additional data extraction from CPS records, and facilitate another interview with mothers in both the intervention and control groups as well as interviews with the target children around the time of their seventh birthday. The addition of the videotaped observations of parent-child interactions to the follow-up will make the HFNY evaluation the largest, longest running, and most comprehensive randomized trial of an HFA model to date. As such, the evaluation is uniquely positioned to enhance our understanding of whether, for whom, and at what cost a paraprofessional home visitation program effectively serves women at high risk for maltreating their children. The study also will evaluate whether HFNY services prevent long-term patterns of abusive or neglectful parenting from developing, and how the model might be implemented to optimize resources.

In addition, the grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation will allow the research team to conduct analyses on the entire data set to explore factors that may protect against or trigger the initiation and recurrence of child maltreatment. The foundation also is interested in facilitating the use of the evaluation's data to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the pathways to child maltreatment, which, in turn, may lead to the development of more effective interventions to prevent child abuse and neglect.

All of the grant's objectives are consistent with the grant-making strategy of the foundation's Child Abuse Prevention Program, which supports national organizations and research initiatives that advance efforts to prevent the maltreatment of young children by providing services, supports and information to families. The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, wildlife conservation, medical research and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties.

Additional information about HFNY can be found on the OCFS website, www.ocfs.state.ny.us.

[Back to news main page](#)

###

[OCFS Home](#) | [About OCFS](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Use Disclaimer](#) | [Site Map](#) | [OCFS on Facebook](#)

New York State Office of Children and Family Services · 52 Washington Street · Rensselaer, New York
12144-2834



