

# Early Findings from Healthy Families Oregon's

## Study Background

In 2009, NPC Research received a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, to conduct a randomized study of the **Healthy Families Oregon (HFO)** program.

The study has three major goals:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of HFO in promoting positive parenting and child wellbeing;
2. To examine the impact of HFO on documented child maltreatment reports; and
3. To conduct a cost-benefit analysis of HFO and to develop a web-based tool to support cost analysis of home visiting programs in Oregon and nationally.

This will be the first research study to use a randomized design, considered the "gold standard" for research, to evaluate HFO.

The study includes participants from HFO programs in the following Oregon counties:

- Clackamas
- Deschutes
- Douglas
- Jackson
- Lane
- Marion
- Polk

This briefing includes short-term (1 year) program outcomes on a subsample of study participants.

**The study will be completed in spring 2015.**



## Randomized Study

### What Did We Do?

- ✓ We conducted telephone interviews with 803 first-time mothers who had been enrolled in the study and assigned by lottery to either:
  - (1) Participate in the HFO program; **or**
  - (2) Receive basic information and referral resources (control group)
- ✓ Interviews happened about a year after enrollment in the study at the time of the baby's one-year birthday.

### What Did We Learn?

**Key Finding 1: HFO families provided more early support for school readiness for their children.**

- ✓ HFO parents were much more likely to read to their babies on a daily basis, compared to parents in the control group.
- ✓ HFO parents provided more frequent developmentally supportive activities for their babies, compared to parents in the control group.

**Key Finding 2: HFO mothers were less stressed than mothers in the control group, an important factor in reducing risk for maltreatment.**

- ✓ HFO mothers scored significantly lower, compared to control mothers, on the Parenting Stress Index, a

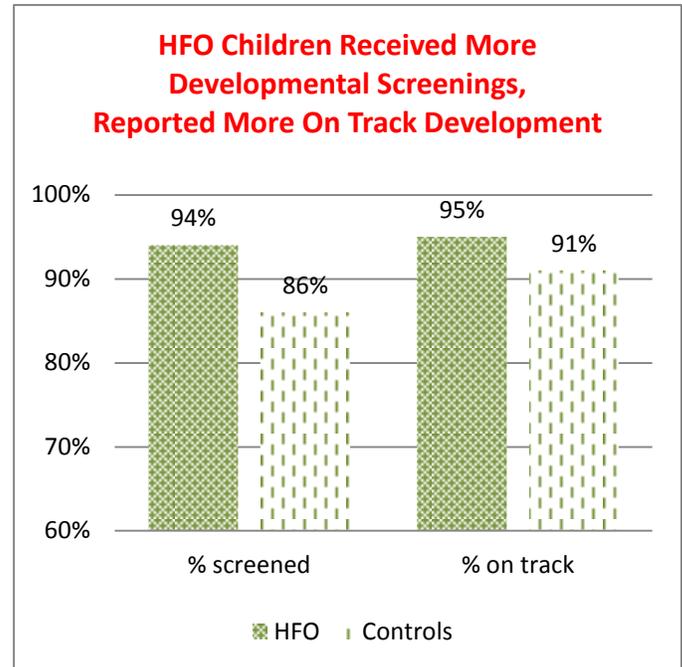


validated measure of parent stress, which has been linked to risk of child abuse and neglect.



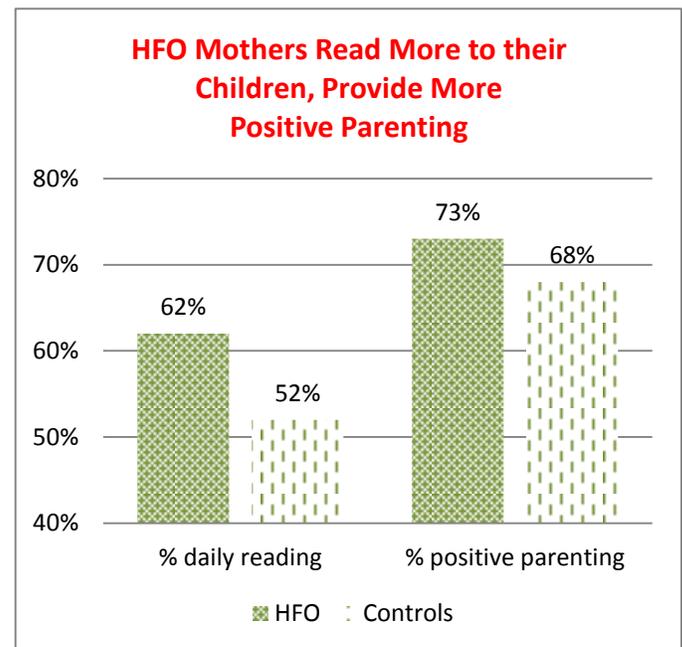
### Key Finding 3: Children in HFO were more likely to receive developmental screenings, and less likely to show early signs of being “off track” developmentally.

- ✓ 94% of babies in the HFO group had received developmental screening in their first year of life, compared to only 86% in the control group.
- ✓ Only 5% of HFO infants had early signs of atypical development, compared to 9% of infants in the control group.
- ✓ Providing developmental screenings for young children is a key goal of Oregon’s Coordinated Care Organizations.



### Key Finding 4: There was little evidence of duplication of home visiting services.

- ✓ Only 13% of HFO families reported receiving home visits from another agency in addition to HFO; most of this overlap was through planned co-enrollment to address specific family needs. Other agencies that commonly provided additional home visits were public health and child welfare.
- ✓ Other studies have shown much higher duplication across home visiting services, as high as 75% with dual program enrollment.
- ✓ Only 21% of families in the control group were connected with home visiting services provided by other agencies in the community.



For more information about this study, contact Jerod Tarte, [tarte@npcresearch.com](mailto:tarte@npcresearch.com), or Beth Green, [beth.green@pdx.edu](mailto:beth.green@pdx.edu). This study is supported by grant #90CA1782 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.