Healthy Steps: The First Three Years

The Healthy Steps for Young Children
Program National Evaluation

Women’s and Children’s Health Policy Center
Department of Population and Family Health Sciences
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

February 28, 2003
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Prepared by the
Women’s and Children’s Health Policy Center
Department of Population and Family Health Sciences
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Authors: Bernard Guyer1, Michael Barth2, David Bishai1, Margaret Caughy3, Becky Clark1, Diane Burkom4, Janice Genevro5, Holly Grason1, William Hou1, Keng-Yen Huang1, Nancy Hughart1, Alison Snow Jones6, Kathryn T. McLearn7, Tess Miller1, Cynthia Minkovitz1, Daniel Scharfstein1, Heather Stacy1, Donna Strobino1, Eleanor Szanton1, and Chao Tang1

Editors: Nancy Hughart and Janice Genevro.

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Nancy Hughart and Janice Genevro, eds. Women’s and Children’s Health Policy Center, Department of Population and Family Health Sciences, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Baltimore, Maryland.

1 Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
2 ICF Consulting
3 University of Texas Houston School of Public Health
4 Battelle Centers for Public Health Research and Evaluation
5 Consultant (Embedded Study)
6 Wake Forest University School of Medicine
7 National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health


**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

*Healthy Steps: The First Three Years* is the final report of a seven year evaluation of the Healthy Steps for Young Children Program. In one sense, it began with a request from The Commonwealth Fund for proposals to evaluate the program and a team of researchers huddled at a conference table weighing a decision to respond. But its origins were actually earlier in the vision of Margaret E. Mahoney, Karen Davis, Kathryn T. McLearn, Barry Zuckerman, Steve Parker, and Margot Kaplan-Sanoff. They believed that a new whole-child, whole-family model of child health care could be developed and could help to fill a void in the lives of young children and their families. Foundation leaders in concert with physicians and administrators at the Healthy Steps sites shared this vision and steadfastly worked to make it a reality.

A similar commitment was evident in the evaluation. Whether participating in the program or in the control group, families, clinicians, and practice staff alike contributed equally to the evaluation. Mothers and fathers filled out questionnaires and completed interviews. Physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, medical assistants, receptionists, administrators, Healthy Steps Specialists, foundation leaders, and other individuals involved in initiating and/or implementing the Healthy Steps program at their sites participated in interviews, completed questionnaires, and/or filled out forms. It is through the willingness of all respondents to contribute their time to the evaluation and to share openly their experiences, both negative and positive, that allowed this report to be written.

We are especially grateful for the support we have received from The Commonwealth Fund. In particular, we are indebted to Karen Davis, President of The Commonwealth Fund, for her leadership and her willingness to take risks to improve the health and well being of young children and their families and to advance scientific knowledge. We thank Kathryn Taaffe McLearn for her expert guidance and support during the time she was our program officer at The Commonwealth Fund and Stephen C. Schoenbaum and Edward L. Schor who have been equally supportive since. Kathryn McLearn has continued to contribute to the evaluation, authoring Chapter 2 of this report.

Throughout the evaluation, the National Advisory Committee has provided guidance. The evaluation has benefited enormously from the candor, criticism, patience, and unshakeable support of its members. We thank Margaret E. Mahoney (Chairman), Joel Alpert, Howard Berman, T. Berry Brazelton, Peter Budetti, Katie Couric, Barbara A. DeBuono, Fernando Guerra, Robert J.
Margaret E. Mahoney has been central to the success of the program and the evaluation. Since first conceiving the possibility of Healthy Steps and the potential it offered for giving families better access to developmental services and child rearing support, she has been its tireless advocate. Throughout, she has not wavered in her belief that pediatric care for all young children and their families in the U.S. can and should be improved and in the promise of Healthy Steps for enhancing pediatric practice.

The project was fortunate to have the experience and leadership of Michael C. Barth, who provided the management, infrastructure and support for the entire project. Every day, Mike brought his intelligence, pragmatism, and enormous energy to bear to provide support to sites, to ensure communication, to solve problems, and to otherwise steer the project to its successful completion. He also shared responsibility for the assessment of program costs and collected the majority of expenditure data, co-authoring Chapter 15 on the costs and benefits of Healthy Steps. He was ably assisted by others at ICF Consulting. We thank Nita Hassan, Philip Rizzi, Juliet Fried, Samatha Gill, Kristen Paynter, Sara Rogers, and Cynthia Hansel for their contributions to the program and evaluation.

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Enrollment Coordinators and Medical Record Abstractors: Jean Arndt; Shanese Bastic; Robin Berry; Dawn Bielawski; Lisa M. Bey-Knight; Melissa Blackburn; Kelly Blackwell; Anna Boassi; Teresa Boles; Diana Bors; Ann Bridges; Laurinda Brown; Cynthia Capets; Georgette Champagnie; Angela Chandler; Tamy Connell; Cheryl Davis; Nancy D’Angelo; Irene Diaz; Donna Douglas; Nora Duldulao; Margaret Feron; Lupe Flores; Kim Fuhrmeister; Rosemary Funk; Marion Gable; Tasha Gordon; Benjeana Hadley; Cara Hadley; Julia Hannah; Julie Harbecke; Alwine Harber; Leslie Harrington; Maria Hart; Jeannette Hayes; Traci Higginbotham; Melanie Hoagland; Donna Hodge; Peggy Irwin; Virginia James; Vivian Johnson; Tracy Johnson; Claudette Jones; Abdullah Kallon; Jamie Kernasch; Stacy Killian; Marty Krall; Sandra Lamb; Marilyn Lane; Teresa Lane; Rosemarie Lister; Carol Lou; Shirley Lutes; Cathleen Magill; Maureen Mahoney; Lucia Marano; Norma Marguez; Julie Marik; Pamela McPherson; Tamara Miller; Denice Miller-Aston; Andrea Montalvo; Brendan Moses; Danielle Motta; David Motta; Sylvia Motta; Yvonne Moyer; Diane Nichols; Christine O’Neill; Suzanne Perryman; Nancy Peterson; Dorothy Pivarunas; Esther Polanco; Monica Reitz; Guadalupe Rivera; Edie Roderick; Tammy Ross; Juan Ruiz;
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Finally, the writing of the report was also a team effort. The individuals contributing to the report and their roles on the project are listed below:

### FACULTY/CONSULTANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bernard Guyer, MD, MPH</td>
<td>Principal Investigator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Bishai, MD, PhD</td>
<td>Economic Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Burkom, MA</td>
<td>Survey Director (Battelle Centers for Public Health Research and Evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Caughy, ScD</td>
<td>Principal Investigator: Amarillo/Florence Embedded Study, University of Texas Consultant (Amarillo/Florence Study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice Genevro, PhD</td>
<td>Sustainability Assessment/Director, Women’s and Children’s Healthy Policy Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly Grason, MA</td>
<td>Project Director, National Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Hoghart, BSN, MPH</td>
<td>Economic Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison Snow Jones, PhD</td>
<td>Affiliate and Process Evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tess Miller, DrPH</td>
<td>Project Director, Amarillo/Florence Embedded Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Minkovitz, MD, MPP</td>
<td>Pediatrics and Health Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Scharfstein, ScD</td>
<td>Principal Investigator, Long-Term Evaluation of Healthy Steps Biostatistician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna Strobino, PhD</td>
<td>Outcome Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleanor Szanton, PhD</td>
<td>Consultant (Early Childhood Development)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RESEARCH STAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becky Clark, BA</td>
<td>Research Programmer (Economic Evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Hou, MSc</td>
<td>Senior Research Data Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keng-Yen Huang, MA</td>
<td>Research Assistant (Amarillo/Florence Embedded Study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Stacy, BS</td>
<td>Research Assistant/Programmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chao Tang, BS</td>
<td>Data Programmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia Lo, MHS</td>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Nancy Hughart and Janice Genevro
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