

Early Childhood

By age 3, a baby's brain will have grown to 80% of its adult size. In these early years, the child develops a **sense of trust** - or not, a **confidence** in his own ability - or not, an intense **curiosity** - or not. The pathway for the child depends on the relationship of the people that care for him. Providing education and support services to parents during the early years significantly contributes to positive, healthy, child-rearing practices and therefore the child's future **success in school**.

Family Focus' early childhood programs focus on strengthening the parent - child relationship and are offered year-round. We begin in the pre-natal stage and continue until the child is ready for preschool or Head Start at three. For young children and their parents, we focus on **developmental milestones, literacy and school readiness**. The program uses quality evidence-based curriculums which present parent-child reading and developmentally appropriate play activities, while fostering strong bonds and healthy interaction between parents and their young children.

Our home visiting services for parents with children ages 0-3 reach isolated **immigrant families**, first-time parents, pregnant and **teen parents**, mothers with high-risk pregnancies, multiple births, and others who do not have a medical home. Our home visiting staff provide these parents with essential **one-on-one child development education** and support, and connection to community health care services.

We also help families attain **self-sufficiency** and enable parents to be effective advocates for themselves and for their children through our adult program component in which parents acquire the skills to obtain their goals for themselves and their children. The curriculum focuses on parental leadership, health and wellness, community organizing, **preventing abuse and neglect**, accessing community resources, and learning tools to advocate for themselves and for their children. As a result of our program, parents step forward as **advocates** for their children and as **leaders in their community**.

At our centers, we provide **crisis intervention**, outreach and referral services to the families we serve. We have referral agreements with community agencies providing a variety of services such as primary health care, **mental health** services, **job-readiness** and placement services, and housing services. Through advocacy and connection to community resources, we also help parents to mitigate and overcome challenges with housing, finances, social isolation, and **domestic violence**.

Your support of Early Childhood Education has a lasting impact. Our Chicago Public Schools-funded home visiting programs for families with young children ages 0-3 in **Englewood and Lawndale ranked #1 and #2** respectively out of 89 programs citywide last year. Last year, we reached **661 parents and 727 children** under the age of three with home visiting programs that emphasize child development and school readiness -- [with your help](#), we can reach even more.

