

Healthy Kids and Families Initiative

At Family Focus, we understand **access to healthcare** is a critical issue for families living in Chicago's low-income areas (where access to reliable transportation and services can be barriers for families). We also understand that health interventions for young children will not work unless their parents are also given the opportunity to change their attitudes and behaviors.

Last year, Family Focus **convened community-based health service** providers in the Englewood, Lawndale and Hermosa neighborhoods, to discuss coordination of services and how to best serve local families. Collaborations like this ensure we are leveraging limited resources effectively. Through our **home visiting** and **doula programs** (pre and post - birth), we are bringing health services to families, ensuring that those young children are reaching their developmental milestones. Through **Smart Health Chicago**, our city centers will have a dedicated health kiosk where our participants can come for information to access resources in their community. In addition, parents can access an **online patient portal** that will help them keep track of their families' own medical records.

Family Focus developed a **12-week workshop** for parents of young children addressing proper nutrition, structured/unstructured play, oral hygiene, emotional health and **obesity prevention**. Our parents participate in small group discussions and learn about portion control, choosing fresh foods, and how to read food labels. They take **field trips to grocery stores** and participate in diabetic and other healthy **cooking classes**. We have **community gardens** and work with the Greater Chicago Food Depository, which provides fresh food to 200 families in Lawndale every month.

Fitness is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. Our summer camps start every morning with **calisthenics** for children and we hold **mini triathlons**. We offer fitness classes including **Zumba**, **line dancing**, **ballet** and **stepping classes**. In addition, participants engage in health education and nutrition workshops to increase their knowledge of **cardiovascular disease**, diabetes and asthma, as well as how they can prevent or manage these conditions through physical activity and proper nutrition. We take baseline measurements of **weight**, **BMI** and **cholesterol** and participants can track their success in improving their health.

Over **680 people benefitted** from this program last year and an additional **1200 were involved through our outreach efforts**. With your help, we expect to serve 960 people next year. By supporting this program, you are encouraging parents to make healthier decisions for their families and themselves – resulting in lower healthcare costs and a healthier community. Click [here](#) if you can help!

