



Review of Healthy Families Healthy Homes 2013-2019: What we learned

Background

The Healthy Families Healthy Homes (HFHH) program has been in place since 2013. HFHH is an in-home visitation, health promotion program targeting expectant families and families with children aged 0-3 years in Trail and area. This is a time when children are more at risk of exposure to lead in their home environment as they are beginning to crawl, explore their world and put objects in their mouths.

Each family receives two visits, one from an Interior Health Public Health Registered Nurse and one from a trained professional at the Home & Garden program. Visits focus on prevention of lead exposure and strengthening the children's healthy development through education, awareness and supplies to help parents take action immediately.

In November 2020, in an effort to take stock of the program and monitor how it is doing, an independent evaluation consultant was hired to complete a review. The review included conducting an online survey of program participants from 2013-2019 as well as seeking feedback from community partners and past and current program staff. Program records were used to compile participation numbers and background information. Taken together, the information provided a picture of how the program has been going and helped to identify areas that are working well and areas for further development.

A key message that emerged from the review is that families who participated in the program feel that HFHH services and offerings helped them reduce health risks from lead or exposure to lead, and they made changes based on what they learned in home visits.

HFHH conducted home visits with 439 children for Healthy Families, and 578 home visits for Healthy Homes.



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Key Findings

There are No Barriers to Participation

Families may participate at any time and will be supported as needed. In addition, because of the network of organizations within the community supporting families, common messaging is repeated, and families may choose to participate after having heard similar messaging from a variety of sources.

Families Understand the Purpose of Home Visits and Have Made Changes Based on What They Learned

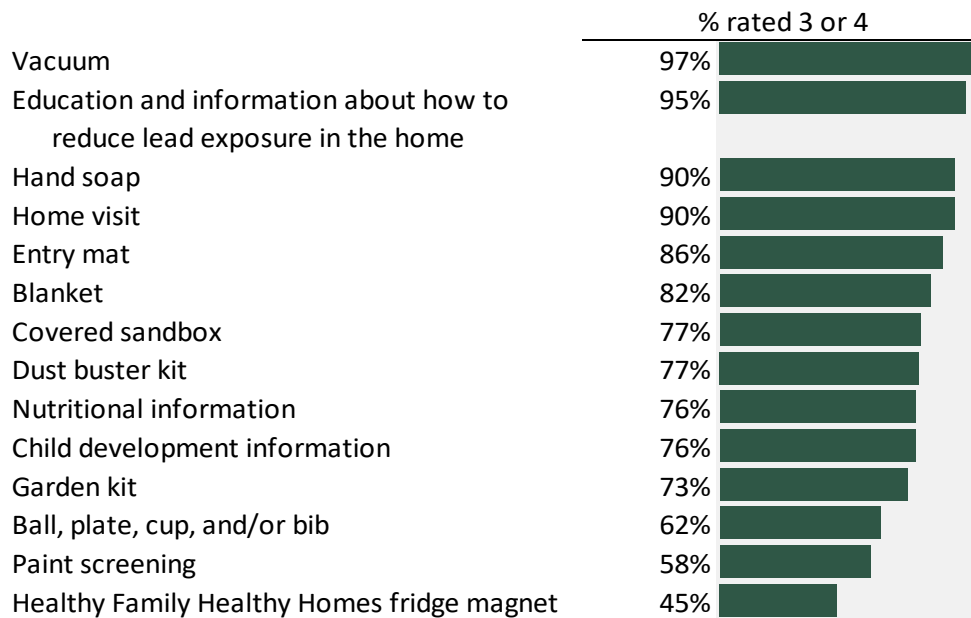
Overall, families who participated in HFHH programs both understood the purpose of a home visit and made changes based on what they learned. Public Health and Home & Garden staff also confirmed that the program was meeting needs in the community and resulting in behaviour changes recommended as part of primary prevention.

Survey responses from participating families provide a positive picture of the value of the HFHH program to families. 97% of respondents said that they **understood why they received a home visit**, and in addition to the services provided during the home visit, 74% of families who responded also **learned about other programs** in the community. 88% of respondents said that they **received substantial information** from the home visit (44% selecting 4 on a scale of 1 to 4 and 44% selecting 3 on a scale of 1 to 4). 69% of respondents said the **home visit was very helpful** (4 on a scale of 1 to 4) and 27% selected 3 on a scale of 1 to 4 for how helpful the home visit was to them. 93% of respondents said that **participating in HFHH empowered them to take steps for a healthier family and kid(s)**.



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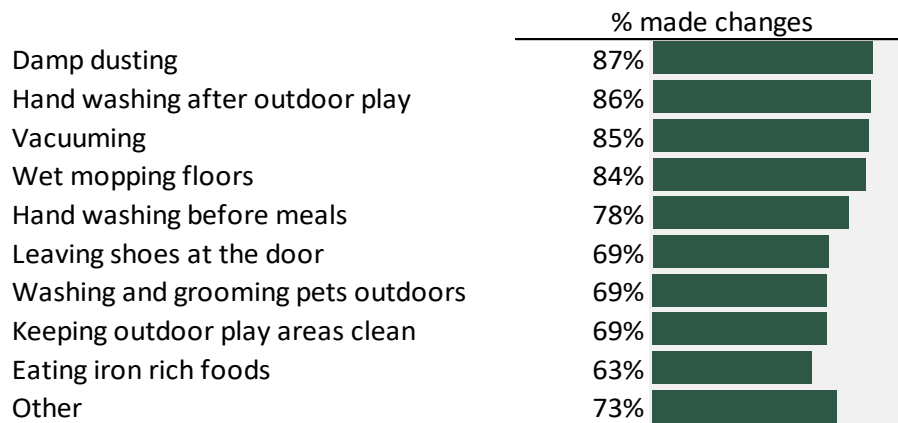
When asked about the **extent to which services and offerings helped the family to reduce health risks from lead or exposure to lead**, respondents selected 3 or 4 out of 4 for the following:





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Respondents indicated that **they did make changes based on information they received during a home visit**. The following summary shows that, as a result of having a home visit, over 80% of respondents made changes in damp dusting, hand washing after outdoor play, vacuuming, and wet mopping floors. Changes in other areas were also followed quite readily by families, with over 60% of respondents making changes in the other recommended areas.



Blood Lead Levels Are Down

Average lead levels in blood ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) have lowered from 2013 to 2020 through the combined efforts of the Trail Area Health & Environment Program. Healthy Families Healthy Homes is one of the program components contributing to this through delivery of primary prevention education and support.

	2013	2020
Area 1	2.7	2.0
Area 2	4.3	2.2
Area 3	5.4	2.4



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Communication Throughout the Community is Key

Partners, staff and families participating in the program all noted the importance of referrals to programs within the community. The repetition of messaging by different community organizations, and the referrals back and forth so that families could find out about services they need regardless of which program staff they were speaking with, were both valuable components of communication about HFHH and in support of the families.

Families noted that they primarily use social media and word of mouth to learn about community events. Staff also indicated that people use a variety of sources to find out about events and resources. While parents of young children are the main target for the HFHH program and most likely to use social media, general messaging intended to reach all demographics may need to be shared more broadly.

The Program is Working: Keep Successful Elements and Plan for Evolution

Overall, feedback on the program was excellent. Families, partners and staff saw value in the program, the program delivered services and offerings that relate to program goals, and families made changes based on the recommendations provided in home visits. In addition, staff expressed the sense that the program evolved over time in response to feedback.

Emergent Learning

The Importance of Diet

Nutritional information was appreciated by families, but not all families who received the information increased consumption of iron-rich foods. Future consideration may be given to supporting behaviour changes, including addressing the costs and preparation time associated with eating iron-rich foods.

The Relative Influence of Various Sources of Lead in a Household and Community

As blood lead levels decrease in children, the relative influence of a range of lead sources becomes more important. Understanding the different exposure pathways for children, including for example exposure to lead paint and hobbies where lead exposure exists for children, will ensure supports remain relevant.

Where appropriate, program development can be addressed in partnership with relevant community organizations.



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Considerations for the Program

Maintain Key Aspects of HFHH

The program is working well. It will be important to maintain aspects of the program that are working. For example, the program should maintain material offerings that were well used, in addition to educational topics and materials that families found valuable and/or helped them to engage in the program.

Continue an Active Role in Networks of Community Organizations

Being an active part of a network of community organizations brings value to the program and should be continued. This creates opportunities for shared messaging and informal program referrals that support local organizations to collectively meet the needs of families, and ensures that families are able to navigate community resources without barriers.

- a. Within program communication, efforts should be made to identify individuals and organizations in the community who act as influencers, to help share key messages.
- b. Given the high value of community partnership, staff should continue to participate in the leadership of the Lower Columbia Poverty Reduction Project, Navigator Table, Family Action Network Board, Early Years Coalition, as well as outreach to the community.

Continue to Learn and Refine the Program Over Time

A primary prevention approach is working well. There continues to be good uptake. Many people expressed behaviour changes and uptake of messaging. Maintaining open communication and feedback in order to continue refining the program is important.

The program may consider discussing how to embed an adaptive management framework into the program to build on the learning and refinements to date in a formalized way.