



HEALTHY FAMILIES ARIZONA AND DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY AT-A-GLANCE

Healthy Families Arizona (HFAz) is a voluntary home visitation program that serves pregnant women and families of newborns. HFAz is a prevention program dedicated to supporting families in their quest to be the best parents they can be. Program services are designed to strengthen families during the critical first years of a child's life. The infant must be under three months of age at enrollment into the program as services are focused primarily on prevention through education and support in the homes of new parents. All HFAz Program criteria are based on proven best practice standards. Intensity of services is based on each family's needs, beginning weekly and moving gradually to quarterly home visits as families become more self-sufficient. The Department of Child Safety (DCS) contracts with community providers who implement the program in their local communities.

FAMILY SUPPORT SPECIALISTS are caring, well-trained home visitors who offer support, encouragement, and services using an evidence-based approach which include the following:

- Providing emotional support and encouragement to parents
- Teaching & supporting appropriate parent-child interaction and discipline
- Providing periodic developmental assessments and referrals if delayed
- Linking families with community services, health care, child care, and housing
- Encouraging self-sufficiency through education and employment
- Providing child development, nutrition, and safety education

INTAKE INTO THE HFAZ PROGRAM consists of two steps which take place either in a prenatal service location, such as a prenatal clinic, a hospital or in a potential participant's home.

- Parents are to be informed, verbally and in writing, of the voluntary nature of participating in HFAz services as early as possible but no later than when families consent to participate in services.
- The Family Assessment Worker reviews the Family Rights and Confidentiality handout, which also indicates the services are voluntary. Families will need to complete the signed document before services can proceed.
- In the event that child welfare or the court system attempt to mandate services for a family, HFAz staff will ensure that both the agency and the family know that services will be offered voluntarily.
- HFAz Family Assessment Worker will complete a 15 question screening form that provides relevant information about family stressors.
- If that screening questionnaire is determined to be positive, the next step is completion of a Parent Assessment Survey which consists of a detailed interview with the family where 10 different subject areas are discussed.
- If either parent scores 25 or more on the Parent Assessment Survey, the family is offered the HFAz program.
- All assessments must occur and the program accepted by the family prior to the target child turning three months of age.
- Program services to the entire family can continue until the child turns five years of age.

ROLE OF THE HFAZ PROGRAM STAFF AS IT RELATES TO DCS INVOLVED CASES:

- Accept referrals from DCS Specialists and provide a screening and assessment for the parent(s) if the parent(s) wishes to determine if they are eligible to receive program services.
- A newborn must be in parental custody at the time of HFAz intake.
- If a newborn has medical complications and is in the hospital for a period of time (e.g. the infant is not in the home), the family can be accepted into the program as long as the family retains custody of the child.
- Having an in-home dependency petition does not preclude enrollment in HFAz if all other enrollment criteria are met.
- For children already enrolled in HFAz, and DCS becomes involved and files a dependency petition, and the child is removed from the home, the child must be reunited with the parent(s) within 120 days for services to continue.
- If DCS places the child with a relative, an intake assessment must be completed to ensure the relative is eligible for program services.
- If the parent is involved in multiple services, the HFAz Supervisor may request a staffing with DCS and the parent(s) to determine the services most appropriate to meet the needs of the individual family.
- Attend DCS case staffings only with the parent(s) permission and with the parent(s) also in attendance.
- HFAz staff are mandated reporters and will continue to report observations of child abuse and neglect in families in the program or as families are leaving the program.

HFAZ PROGRAM IS UNABLE TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Supervision for visits between the child and parent(s) and/or transport to/from supervised visits.
- Progress reports to the DCS Specialist without the written consent of the parent(s).
- Program records are not available to DCS or other government agencies without specific prior written consent of the parent(s) or the receipt of a court order.
- Joint visits to a family by HFAz staff and DCS cannot occur without the HFAz parent(s) consent.
- Testimony in a proceeding without a court order or parent(s) written permission.
- The HFAz program cannot be mandated as a service for a DCS case plan since program services are voluntary and the parent can terminate services at any time.
- All families are enrolled in services on a first-come first-served basis, so preference cannot be given to DCS families.
- The HFAz program does not maintain a waiting list.
- Upon termination of services, HFAz will be unable to advise DCS of the parent's status unless the parent gives written consent for HFAz program staff to talk with DCS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT HFAZ Central Administration:

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