



## Birth & Beyond Program Impact on CPS Reports

After five years of operation in nine Sacramento County neighborhoods, the Birth & Beyond home visiting program continues to show marked progress in reducing the likelihood that families who participate in the program will be reported to CPS for child abuse or neglect. The following are highlights from the annual report, which features the findings from the fourth annual CPS follow up study for Birth & Beyond families who received at least 90 days of service.

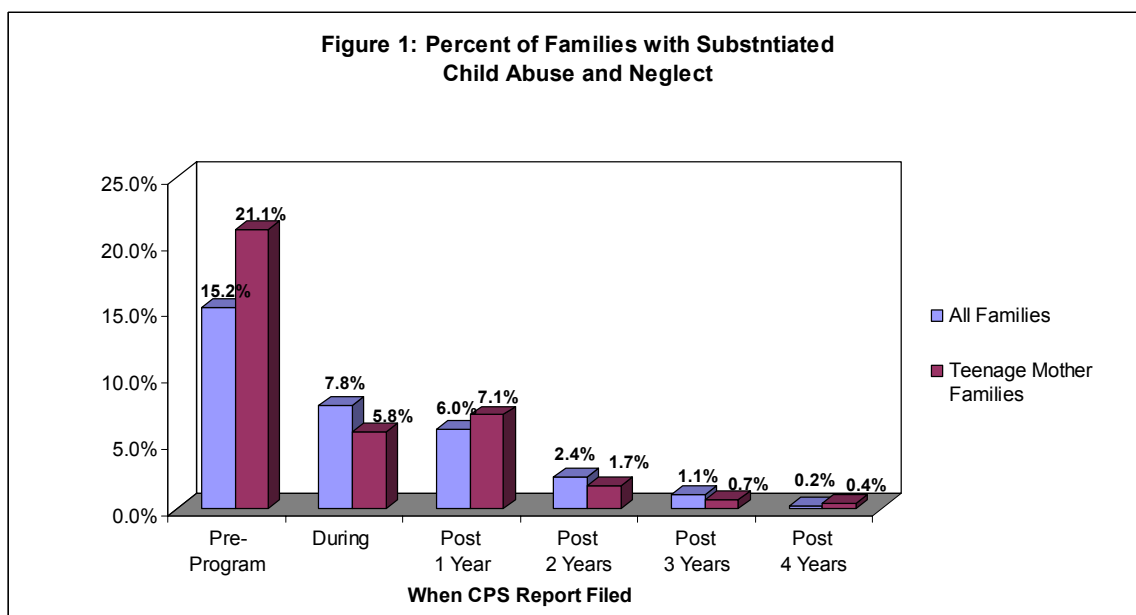
*The annual evaluation study shows that the program has value as a both a **primary prevention** resource (families who never have a report to CPS), and a **secondary prevention** resource (families who have had reports before entering the program, but have no new reports during or after the program).*



Birth & Beyond is also a resource for **early intervention**, since home visitors are mandated reporters for suspected child abuse and neglect and they have made some referrals to CPS.

### CPS Follow Up Findings

Figure 1 provides an overview of the findings from the latest CPS follow up study on a sample of 1,915 families who received home visiting services from Birth & Beyond for at least 90 days and left Birth & Beyond as of July 1, 2004.



465 of these families had teenage mothers and these families are broken down separately in Figure 1 to show differences in results.

### Highlights include:



- 32% reduction in number of families reported to CPS<sup>1</sup>. This reduction was 46% for teenage mother families.
- 36% reduction in the number of families with *substantiated* CPS disposition. For teenage mother families this reduction was 53%.
- Sustained reduction in substantiated reports following departure from the program, for one year.
- The rate of substantiated reports to CPS for families who participated in Birth & Beyond is 32% lower than the rate of reports for a comparison group of families.
- 85% of the families who enter the program do not have any reports with CPS; the rate increases to 90% after families leave the program.

Prior to program participation, 15.2 percent of these families had a history with CPS with a substantiated disposition<sup>2</sup> and 21.1 percent of teenage mother families had a CPS history. The rate declined to about 7.8 percent for all families *during* program participation, representing close to a 50 percent decrease. And while the rate increases again slightly after families leave Birth & Beyond (to almost 10%), the decline remains unchanged for the first year post-program. For families with teenage mothers the number of substantiated CPS reports was reduced by more than half (53%).

*The reduced reporting to CPS suggests that the program intervention not only helps to reduce the incidence of substantiated reports of child abuse or neglect while families are engaged in home visiting, but the positive impact of the program remains in effect for at least one year after families leave the program.*

This finding also suggests that families are most vulnerable to new CPS reports immediately after they leave the program, when the majority of substantiated reports occurred.

<sup>1</sup> For substantiated, inconclusive, or unfounded allegations; this rate includes all reports, regardless of the final disposition or CPS finding.

<sup>2</sup> In the annual report, the rate of families with CPS history prior to enrolling in Birth & Beyond included families who were still open and receiving services. Thus the “n” value for that report was 2,752 families and the rate of pre- and during-program CPS reports was slightly different than the rates reported herein. The trend toward positive change for both cohorts is similar.

## Implications

- Retain families in Birth & Beyond as long as possible, to insure at least six months of regularly scheduled home visits;
- Engage families in Family Resource Center activities to reinforce the home visiting and provide additional social and emotional support;
- Develop and expand outreach efforts to engage families

This summary of the evaluation findings related to child abuse and neglect outcomes illustrates the overall benefit of participation in the Birth & Beyond home visiting program. As of July 1, 2004 nearly 3,000 families had participated in Birth & Beyond's home visiting services for at least 90 days (includes open and closed cases). These families had new babies, with the following characteristics:

- 53% were mothers between 20 and 29 years of age;
- 22% were teen mothers (under 20);
- 37% were Latina mothers;
- 24% were African American mothers;
- 23% were Caucasian mothers;
- 8% were Southeast Asian, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Ukrainian families (predominantly immigrant and non-English speaking);
- 50% were single parents (either never married, separated, divorced)
- 45% of school aged mothers had less than a high school education
- Nearly all presented some level of risk for lack of parenting skills, maternal depression, domestic violence, social isolation and/or alcohol and other drug abuse.

Birth & Beyond addresses these and other risk factors through weekly home visits and engagement of families in classes, workshops, and social or recreational activities at the Family Resource Centers. The program evaluation has also shown progress for families who remain in the program for at least six months, with reduced risks and increased resiliency. Active families are also more inclined to demonstrate the following positive outcomes:

- Receipt of prenatal care;
- Connection to primary health care provider;
- Breastfeeding for at least three months;
- Immunizations prior to entering pre-school;
- Increased awareness of parenting; and
- Increased utilization of other community resources for family support.



These intermediate outcomes illustrate ways the program is providing support to families, mitigating risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect, and strengthening parental capacity to care for their families. With these resources and increased efficacy as parents, the risk for child abuse and neglect declines.