About the Program

University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development Early Head Start Family Foundations (EHS/FF) has been serving 310 families in low-income communities in the city of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County for over 18 years now. The program provides intensive home visiting or center-based services to expectant families and families with children ages 0-3 years. Services include health and development for infants and toddlers; and the promotion of the parent’s abilities to support their child’s cognitive, social, emotional and physical development in order for the child to be ready for school. The program continues to enhance its expertise in infant mental health, promoting healthy parent-child relationships and preparing families and their children for success in school.

In addition to family engagement and self-sufficiency goals, health and development of enrolled expectant families and children aged 0-3 is a primary goal of the EHS/FF program.

- 100% of enrolled children are up-to-date on their immunizations, have a medical home and have a health insurance provider.

Through continuing collaboration with Children's Hospital Dental clinic, all families have access to early dental exams and care.

- 39% of age eligible children received dental exams
  This is an increase from last year when 27% of age eligible children received a dental exam. The program will to continue to work with families, dentists and communities to ensure all children at the age of 12 months / 1 year have access to dental care.

- 100% of enrolled children received a dental screening and have a dental home.

As is shown in research, oral health is essential for the health and success of expectant families, infants and toddlers.

Financial Report
The FY12-13 budget includes $3,979,296 federal funds and $180,000 through the generous support of The Heinz Endowments. $3,326,141 is budgeted for sub awards for six sites. The remainder is budgeted for OCD compensation, supplies, travel, and space rental.

Approaches to Learning

We don’t have to hear the words of love to know this mother and baby have the feeling of love for each other. Their closeness gives the baby a feeling of security that fosters her ability to explore the world the way babies do: through sight, touch and taste. By the second year the baby’s knowledge of objects, learned through the senses and stored as images in the brain, can be symbolized by words.

“Let’s pretend”. These words are the invitation to play out made up stories about things that have happened, or things that are hoped for. This mother joins her son in a play about birds. She shows her approval by providing the props and partnering in play. Eventually, her son will be able to substitute words for props and actions.

One can’t help but smile at the assumed pleasure the baby gets from making his “mark” on the world. The confidence that comes from experiences like these will allow him to eventually move away from the mother and explore and make his “mark” on the wider world.

The little girl’s intense interest in the book would seem to tell us that she has had many satisfying experiences with her father as they share story books. For a young child, books open the doors to creativity and imagination in a world beyond the here and now. Children who are read to, generally have an easier time in learning to read themselves once they enter school.

Language Literacy

It’s about trust

Exploration

Play and Learning
Our Families

300 Slow Cookers

In 2013, FF/EHS utilized program funds to purchase slow cookers for 300 families enrolled in our program. Our program nutritionist taught them how quick and easy it is to put a nutritious meal together in the morning and let it cook all day until dinner time.

Survey results following the pilot revealed a dramatic increase in the frequency with which families ate a healthy meal at home. Families were very appreciative of the slow cookers, especially considering that some of them lacked a properly working stove or oven. This allowed for them to safely cook a meal at home. Many of the families involved in the pilot are still regularly cooking meals at home in their slow cooker rather than eating out.

Several parents shared their perspective on the benefits of meals cooked using their slow cooker:

“We eat much healthier…it saves us from eating a lot of grease” – Northside parent

“It has helped us reduce the amount of fried foods we eat” – East End parent

“My family and I eat less fried foods” – Hill District parent

“We eat healthier and I cook more often” – Tri Boro parent

“It gives me more time to focus and play with my kids” – Tri Boro parent

“I can spend more time with my family because the slow cooker helps with preparing” – Northside parent
School Readiness Goals

Social and Emotional Goals

- Children will establish a secure attachment to their parents.
- Children will begin to develop and demonstrate a positive sense of self and express their needs and wants.
- Children will begin to develop and demonstrate control of their feelings and behaviors.
- Children will begin to learn and integrate routines and directions.

Language and Literacy

- Children will use receptive and expressive language and communication strategies in their home language.
- Children will understand and use oral language to engage in conversations.
- Children will use words to describe what they are thinking and doing.

Approaches Toward Learning

- Children will demonstrate interest, curiosity and imagination in exploring their world.
- Children will demonstrate persistence in learning and discovery.

Cognition and General Knowledge

- Children will engage in stories and books.
- Children will use their senses to discover how to make things work, what objects and people do and how they can make things happen.

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

- Children will develop control of large muscles for movement, balance and coordination.
- Children will develop control of small muscles for manipulation and exploration.

Health, Nutrition and Safety

- Children and their family will practice a healthy lifestyle.
- Expectant parents will participate in prenatal care and healthy nutrition to ensure the best possible outcomes for baby.
- Children will play and learn in safe home environments.

Transition

- Parents will have a relationship with the pre-school setting in their community or school district.
- Children will understand what to expect in their new environment.

ALL GOALS are culturally sensitive and adapted to meet the varying developmental needs of children.

The program will aggregate child assessment data quarterly during the program year, analyze the data, share the information from the data with parents and community members and revise/add to the school readiness goals as the data shows a need.