

# Legacy for Children™

## Childhood Poverty

In 2014, there were over 15 million children living below the poverty line. Because of its impact on social service usage, the estimated public economic benefit of eliminating the effects of early childhood poverty is between \$230 million to \$590 million a year. Even more staggering are the family level, health care related, and crime related economic impacts of specific disorders associated with poverty such as ADHD and intellectual disabilities which have been estimated as high as \$52 billion annually.

## Impact of Poverty

Young children growing up in poverty are at heightened risk for a multitude of poor health outcomes and health risk exposures across the lifespan. The chronic exposure to adverse experiences such as the stressors associated with poverty affect lifelong health and development. In particular, poverty has been associated with poor health outcomes, poor social competence and impulsivity along with lower IQ and language delays.

## Intervention

*Legacy for Children™ (Legacy)* is an evidence-based, parent-focused intervention approach aimed at improving child outcomes by fostering positive parenting among low-income mothers of infants and young children. Specifically, the intervention goals are to:

- Promote maternal responsibility, maternal investment, and maternal devotion of time and energy
- Promote responsive, sensitive mother-child relationships
- Support mothers as guides to their children's behavioral and emotional regulation
- Promote mother's facilitation of their children's verbal and cognitive development
- Promote mothers' sense of community



*Legacy* goals are achieved through parent and parent/child group meetings, one on one sessions to reinforce content, and participation in community events.

## Lessons Learned from the *Legacy for Children™* Research Study

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a multi-site, randomized controlled trial of the *Legacy for Children™* intervention to examine *Legacy's* impact on child health and development. Preliminary results revealed *Legacy* has a positive impact on children in poverty; significant positive effects of the intervention on child IQ, child behavioral problems, and maternal-child behavior measured within the home environment were found.

## Partnership with Healthy Start

CDC is partnering to translate research to practice by incorporating *Legacy* into public and private programs, including the Health Resources and Services Administration's Healthy Start program. Healthy Start and *Legacy* share a mission and approach to address health disparities, and *Legacy* can serve as an evidence-based family strengthening strategy to support Healthy Start's goals. Trained *Legacy* sites include Indianapolis Healthy Start, University of North Carolina at Pembroke Healthy Start, and Healthy Start New Orleans. Sites began implementation between October of 2015 and May of 2016. Throughout the course of implementation, sites collect data through *Legacy* fidelity monitoring tools, and annual report, organizational survey, and parent satisfaction survey.

**Additional information on *Legacy for Children™*: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/legacy.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/legacy.htm)  
800-CDC-INFO, TTY: 888-232-6348; [LegacyforChildren@cdc.gov](mailto:LegacyforChildren@cdc.gov)**