



Nebraska Success Stories

These stories come from the Nebraska-Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting programs. They are told either from the view of the Home Visitor, the Home Visiting Supervisor or from the Family themselves. Some are long, some are short, but all are real, all are true and all show the impact that evidence-based home visiting makes in Nebraska!

(All stories have had express written consent for sharing. Consent forms are available at the individual Local Implementing Agencies. Names and all identifying information have been changed to protect privacy.)

Story #1:

When we work with families sometimes we don't realize how much just being supportive to parents encourages them to believe that they can accomplish great things. In many ways the secure base that we teach parents to create with their children is really modeled in the nature of the relationships we ourselves have with the families. One of my first assessments was with a client that was on her own with two children and expecting a third. MOB had survived a breakup with the father of her children. At the assessment the MOB started crying. I remember feeling this strong surge of empathy for her, and I hugged her immediately. The mom was very family orientated and was worried about what the effects of being without a dad would have on her children. Having no contact with the father since she found out that she was pregnant, she was also worried about getting through the pregnancy on her own, and being able raise her family by herself.

During the first several visits MOB would talk about how she would have to cry things out, and how much stress she felt being on her own. MOB said that she was worried about finances and about being able to support her family. During one of the prenatal modules in the Growing Great Kids curriculum, MOB made a collage about what she wanted for herself, and then what she wanted for her baby. I remember sitting down with MOB and watching her as she put together pieces of her life that she came to call her *dreams* on a piece of paper. During the process of MOB working on that piece of paper, you could see the stress and tension melting away from her face. As she completed her collage we talked about the importance of a parent's dreams and who her dreams would impact as she strived to accomplish them.

MOB realized that her dreams were centered around getting back into school, and she was able to connect this dream to not only a way that she would eventually be able to support her family on her own, but also as a way to model to her own children the value of "hard work" and "education". MOB's short term goal was to



finish up the courses she needed to be a CNA, and then, eventually, her long-term-goal to become a registered nurse.

Over the course of the next few weeks we talked about her personal strengths and assets, and set goals for MOB to do to pursue her dreams. MOB went to the local college and got information on the CNA and MED aid classes that she needed to pursue her dreams. MOB, unfortunately, was unable to get federal funding for these classes. The Healthy Families America Staff looked through resources in the community, in hopes to help MOB find a way to fund her classes. What we found was a program through job services, that not only funds specific classes, but when the classes are completed, clients are helped to find jobs in the community. So, we did what we as home visitors do best-we referred MOB to the program and hoped that it would work for her! MOB got the funding she needed for college and is currently enrolled and attending classes for her CNA certificate.

Story #2:

We received a referral from the hospital for a family of a newborn baby girl. The mother was having difficulty bonding and had a history of drug abuse; she had previous children removed from her home and Children & Family Services was concerned about her ability to parent this newborn. The father of the baby had had trouble in his past, but was now clean and sober and wanted very much to raise this child. Shortly after birth, MOB abandoned the family and left the area leaving our client as a single dad raising an infant daughter.

Over the last 18 months, FOB has maintained home visits and attended group events, learning about his child and her needs, and applying what he learns in his daily life. He has grown into a confident parent and role model for other young fathers in the program and now sits on our Advisory Board as a parent representative. FOB has an older son from a previous relationship and is now using his HFA training and resources to regain custody of this child—something he would never have pursued if he had not had the chance to learn and grown with HFA.

Story #3:

A Native American teen mother had grown up with an alcoholic mother and abusive step-father. The trauma incurred during her youth contributed to long-term mental health issues requiring on-going counseling. When she found out she was pregnant, she made the decision to leave her mother's home and relocate to live with her biological father. Neither MOB nor her father knew much about having babies or raising young children and decided that HFA was a good option for support. Through support of the HFA program, MOB was able to



establish and keep a regular schedule of mental health counselling visits. After several months, MOB's counselor remarked that she is amazed at the compassionate, individualized care MOB is receiving and acknowledged what a difference it makes in caring for her client. The counselor is now working with HFA to identify other possible clients in the practice that could also benefit from a relationship with HFA.

Story #4:

One woman is the sister of one of our former HFA clients. When she found herself unexpectedly pregnant, MOB took her sister's advice and called HFA to sign up. MOB has an older daughter whose custody she had voluntarily relinquished to her mother in order to avoid termination by the state.

MOB suffers from very low self-esteem and had been a victim of domestic violence in her past. She is also an alcoholic and wanted to use this opportunity to make a change in her life. MOB committed to making her weekly meetings with her HFA Parent Coach and established a goal plan which included staying clean and sober and delivering a healthy baby.

In January, MOB accomplished her goal and is now settling into motherhood. She and her Parent Coach are now focusing on next steps—finding her own apartment, looking into vocation rehab, and becoming financially independent—all critical elements in MOB's long range goal of breaking the generational cycle which plagues her family.

Story #5:

MOB had grown up in an abusive household with a single mother who was frequently absent, leaving MOB to fend for herself. MOB also has mental health issues and a significant learning disability, both of which make it very difficult for her to find and hold down a steady job. When her relationship with the father of her two young boys and unborn baby ended, she found herself pregnant, unable to afford her apartment and expenses and faced with homelessness. To avoid this, she chose to enter another relationship that included drugs and alcohol which eventually caused the removal of her children.

MOB wanted to change, but did not have the capacity or support system to accomplish this. Her HFA Parent Coach has worked with her to teach her positive parenting techniques. She supported MOB as she stayed clean during her pregnancy and continues to work with her to gain parenting knowledge and confidence and regain custody of her baby. At a recent team meeting coordinated by her caseworker, MOB received praise for what a remarkable change she has made and was told "we wish all our clients were like you."



Story #6:

I am now 25 years old and my journey began almost 3 years ago. I met a man who I thought the world of. We were dating for approximately 9 months before I found out I was pregnant with my daughter. I was told I could never have kids, so this (pregnancy) meant a lot to me!

When I found out I was pregnant with her, that's when things went from good to not so good. This man I thought I loved started abusing me. He'd choke me until I would pass out. He would throw me off the bed and I would hit my back while I was pregnant. Once he pushed me into a bath tub and I hit my stomach so hard I threw up.

I was about 6 months pregnant when I had my first anxiety attack. I didn't know what it was so I went to the ER. The Dr. had me stay there to observe me just to make sure everything was ok with the pregnancy. While in the hospital, my boyfriend told me I was not worth his time anymore and he left.

When I was released from the hospital, I moved to (a new city) and was there for only a month before I went back to him. When I moved back things were okay for a while and that is when I started working with Healthy Families of America.

In one of the conversations with our home visitor he told her that he would rather kill me than see me get custody of our daughter and he'd kill me if I ever left him again. Not too long after that I was no longer allowed to have visits with our parent coach as he would not allow it.

I went on to have a beautiful daughter. The abuse continued and it only got worse. He would not allow me to work or to talk to my family or have any interaction with friends. My daughter was only 3 months old when I found out I was pregnant again, but this time with a boy.

The abuse never stopped. I was told I was ugly, I'd never amount to anything, and that I was worthless and stupid. He would knee me in my head, choke me until I passed out, beat me in front of our daughter and yell at me. He'd take me to dr. appointments and while I was being seen, he'd leave, so I would have to walk home with our daughter while also being pregnant. I had to walk almost everywhere and if I left I always had to get his permission first.

When my son was born he was diagnosed with (a serious heart condition). I was terrified for my son's life because he might not live and I was going through medical problems myself. My son's life was in danger, I was still getting abused. I left him a couple of times, but it was just overnight, I always went back because I was terrified of this man.



After my son was born, we were at a Dr.'s appointment and I saw my old parenting coach in the Dr.'s office. We talked and we set up a meeting and she started meeting with me again. I was not allowed to meet with her without my boyfriend present in the house.

I had to start working for financial help and on my way to work one morning I slipped on ice, fell and hit my back. It slipped a disc so I had to have back surgery. The day I got home from the hospital; he beat me and took off with the kids. I called my parenting coach and she came right over to help me and to just listen to me. I was in so much pain, how could someone I love hurt me so bad and take my kids away? How could he do this to me? I did not initially call the cops on him for any of the things he did.

Without my parent coach I would still be a lost soul. She stood by me and stuck by my side. I'm stronger because she helped me. She took me to a domestic violence agency where they gave me 3 nights in a shelter. After those 3 nights someone from the church took me in and has let me live with them and get back on my feet. She connected me to places where I could get food, clothing and legal advice. She went with me to the court house so I didn't have to go alone and helped me file papers for custody of my kids and protection orders. She took time out of her life to answer my phone calls and talk to me about the problems I was facing.

She also encouraged me to take care of myself. She gave me a 30 day beauty challenge that for 30 days I was to do something for myself. It could have been as simple as painting my nails, going for a brisk walk or just taking an extra-long shower. During this time, I noticed it wasn't about looking good, it was about feeling good and taking that 5-10 minutes out of my day to take care of myself and it made me feel like a whole new person.

It's now been 4 months since I got out of that awful, abusive, controlling relationship. I have both of my kids and I'm in a better place now and I'm happy. I've met someone that loves me for me and he loves my kids as if they were his own. I have foster parents from the church who treat me like I'm their daughter, who love my kids like their own grandkids. I have a full time job; I'm saving my money to finance my own home and a vehicle. I'm the happiest I have ever been.

I am still working with my parent coach and she has taught me how to be a better mom. She teaches me how to interact, communicate and encourage my children. We make toys, toy boxes, memory books and things that aide in my children's all around healthy development. My parenting coach is a lifelong friend who I am thankful to have in my life!



Story #7:

Two-year-old twins who are developmentally delayed due to neglect are in a nurturing, safe environment now and showing marked signs of improvement.

Story #8:

Was able to help a mom through the difficulties of overcoming mastitis. She was so concerned that she was going to be unable to continue breastfeeding her newborn. I went over to her home and we talked over a plan to get her baby nourishment while she is not producing as much milk (due to infection) and protect her milk supply. I answered every little concern or fear she had regarding her mastitis recovery. She told me at a later appointment that she didn't think she could have continued breastfeeding without my support, knowledge, and encouragement.

Story #9:

A Teen Parent that has been participating in the Teen Parent Classes held at the local public high school has now graduated! This mother has two children under the age of 3, works part time and continues a relationship with the father of the children. It is their goal to attain a home of their own instead of living with family. The father graduated from high school last year and continues working full time. This mom has always been a great participant in class and has helped drive topics that are discussed during classes. We are so happy that she reached her goal of completing High School.

Story #10:

A 21-year-old mother of a 10-month-old child was unemployed when enrolling in the Home Visitation program. Nearly 9 months after enrolling, mom is employed for over 6 months and continues to hold two part-time jobs while caring for her daughter. The home visitor also assisted in connecting mom to mental health counseling services to help stabilize self. Additionally, during the visits, the home visitor offered conflict resolution information and strategies which decreased household tension while she lived with her mother and younger siblings. This mother embraced and welcomed new information and implemented the new-to-her parenting skills to help promote healthy brain development for her daughter. Consequently, this 10-month-old girl has high scores on recent developmental screens.

Story #11:

Client is pregnant and scheduled to have a C-section. She stated that she had severe post-partum depression after the birth of her first child. She said she knows she needs to begin taking medication for depression as soon as her twins are born. When the home visitor asked whether the client had discussed this



with her doctor, the client replied that she had not. The client made a note to ask her obstetrician about the prescription need at her next prenatal appointment.

Story #12:

Another mom who had her daughter's lip tie clipped last month told me her success story. She shared that from the time she brought her daughter home she had to supplement with formula, due to pain while nursing. She told me that she has not had to supplement for the last three days and is exclusively breastfeeding her baby! She cried with joy and gave me a big hug while sharing this with me. She also told me that she was on the verge of giving up the day that I met her at the breastfeeding support group, and thanked me a million times for the knowledge and referral I made for her. These were such great experiences and such a great testimony as to why having a lactation counselor is so vital to our moms!

Story #13:

At a recent visit a teen mom expressed sincere appreciation for our home visitation program and all of the referrals that we have provided her. She stated that without this program she would have been lost this last year. Her child was diagnosed with optic nerve dysplasia and had surgery to remove a cyst and insert a shunt. She stated that our assistance with Medicaid, helping them to find a place to stay during his surgery, and referral to EDN has been a lifesaver. Even though their child will never regain his vision, with support from EDN and a vision specialist, they are learning ways to accommodate him and provide him with developmentally appropriate activities.

Story #14:

The home visitor has been working with a family with a history of financial struggles, and struggles with a child with a disability. The mother says she enjoys having our program come into her home to offer support. Since working with HFA, she has gotten help for her depression and is now happier, and better able to function within her family. Her son has gotten help from different programs to get a diagnosis for his disability. She finally was approved to receive disability payments which will help the family with bills and mortgage, as well as food. The mother feels she is less stressed than before and better able to handle her son's behaviors. She reports feeling she is not alone, and likes that she has someone to turn to for questions regarding parenting. This mother is no longer constantly stressed about losing their home, or falling behind in bills. She continues to work hard and keeps up on her counseling visits, and home visiting appointments to maintain a healthy relationship with her family.



Story #15:

A mother had become unexpectedly pregnant while in an unhealthy relationship with the father when she entered our program. She had utilized various resources for food and utility bills. She has since obtained and held a full time job with benefits. She has also cautiously worked on the relationship with the father; he is now an active member in the mother and child's life and home. She has also set herself a goal of making it through the winter without utility help and believes she will attain that goal.

Story #16:

An ASQ screening identified concerns significant enough to warrant an EDN referral. The family is willing to permit the child to undergo EDN screenings and assistance, if warranted.

Story #17:

A home visitor has been working with a new family from out of state. They recently learned of our program and signed up after hearing about us through the WIC Program. The mother is very interested in learning new information and asks questions about breastfeeding when needed. She was grateful to learn of resources in the area that she was unaware of. The father is very in tune with their new baby. He knows her cues of when she wants a diaper change, and recognizes hunger cues. He helps mom with baby by positioning with breastfeeding, and offering her snacks and water while she feeds. They have a great balance of sharing cares for their new baby and I praised them for their "give and take" of their responsibilities and parenting.

Story #18:

Two families this month anchored the concept of E-Parenting. After presenting the Daily Do, the parents started using with their children during the visit.

Story #19:

A first-time mom's low birth-weight infant was not initially gaining weight during the first month. After the home visitor started providing education on infant feeding and development coupled with the baby's primary physician's guidance, the baby is beginning to gain weight.

Story #20:

An HFA family has made the decision to not smoke inside the home. They now smoke outside which will benefit the children's health. The mother expressed



more interest in learning about discipline and consistency, and overall would like more tips on parenting. She is also working with her significant other on having the same rules which has cut down on yelling by the children.

Story #21:

As I was calling around to check on all the moms I have served and have now exited the program, it was so neat to hear them thank me for my time to come visit with them. I had one breastfeeding mom who wept on the phone and told me that if it wasn't for me she would not have been able to continue breastfeeding her baby because of all the difficulties she had faced.

Story #22:

A young mother of 2 recently fenced in her front yard to allow her children a safe place to play without being able to enter the street. They go outside daily to play and explore new sounds and objects. She says they make sure to get out at least for an hour a day when it's nice out. She uses sidewalk chalk and objects to label things to encourage language development.

Story #23:

A teenage, first-time mom continues in high school with high scores adequate to earn free time during the day during her senior year. Encouraged by her home visitor, she is determined to breastfeed until her child is at least six months old. She carves time out of her busy schedule to pump and store breast milk during the school day.

Story #24:

I have six of my clients graduated from services for accomplishing certified parenting classes or outgrowing the need for home visitation. Families are able to see their own personal growth over their time with home visitation. All have goals and plans to continue their success and to continue their self-sufficiency and parenting skills.

Story #25:

A single mom of two children had been enrolled for five and a half years and recently graduated from our services. During the last three months of her enrollment she didn't reach out to home visitation. She was able to problem solve small issues that have come up and even prevent crisis from occurring. During her time in the program she moved twice; the last time was into her own house that they are buying. She is now co-parenting with her oldest child's father. She



continues to work full-time and has several promotions with her job over the years. She has always put the needs of her family and children first. She has a solid family and social network that supports her in a positive manner. It has been a great opportunity to support this family over the years. This mom has even been able to identify her successes and has a vision for their future.

Story #26:

A single mother came into our services to attain a parenting certificate and was enrolled for a year before she completed the certificate. She has six children and was actively working with CPS. Upon enrollment she had custody of half the children and needed to find housing other than the rescue mission to get back the remaining children. During her time with our services she enrolled and started college, found a large apartment and gained full custody of all her children along with earning her parenting certificate. They family continues to receive counseling service; mom continues to work part-time and attend college full-time. Mom has been clean for over one year and attends support classes, and is scheduled to complete drug court by the end of this year.

Story #27:

A husband and wife and their child have been receiving home visitation services from our program on and off for the last seven years. The family had CPS involvement at one time due to not being able to keep the home clean. The couple separated for a time and now is reunited and stronger than ever. They continue to work on the issues that separated them. All 3 of them have documented disabilities and receive financial assistance. The father is working full time with a company within the community. Mom is working part time and has a goal of going back to college for photography. The child is successful in school and is having good behaviors since his parents are together. The family is very active in the faith and state that church helps bring them closer together.

Story #28:

We have evidence that HFA is making a difference in the lives of these families. One teen mom who wanted to drop out of school decided to remain in high school, largely due to the encouragement and support of her family support worker. Three young moms delivered babies in January, all 3 of normal birth weight and healthy. One young mom was able to find a home and a job with the help of the family support worker. Another mother who was finally able to bring her preterm infant home after more than 60 days of hospitalization is getting along very well and taking excellent care of her baby, under the guidance and support of her HFA worker.



Story #29:

A mother of 2 boys, struggling with meth use joined our home visiting program when she was 4 months pregnant with her 3rd child. With support and encouragement from her home visitor, she chose to quit and was able to remain sober for the rest of her pregnancy, and several months after the birth of her baby. Unfortunately, after trying to live on her own, the MOB went back to a chaotic family living situation & relapsed close to the holidays. MOB called her home visitor the next day and asked for an emergency visit, but after hearing of the relapse, the home visitor told her that she had to make the call to CPS. The children were eventually removed. Angry, MOB cut off communication with the home visitor. When the MOB's court date came up, the home visitor went to the court house to testify about all MOB had done to try and remain sober, and to support her if she wanted help in getting her children back. MOB was shocked; none of her family or "friends" had gone with her to court, and here was the home visitor that she had written off, telling a judge that she was not a bad mom! MOB invited the home visitor back the same afternoon.

Story #30:

A developmentally disabled, teen mom is enrolled in our HFA program. During the course of visits, the home visitor noticed that the baby was not gaining weight appropriately, and became concerned. The young mom didn't know how to talk to her doctor about it, and was scared to tell the doctor by herself. The home visitor encouraged mom to call, coached her on how to assert herself and advocate for her child and went to the doctor's appointment with her. The baby is now back on track and gaining weight.

Story #31:

A teen mom had enrolled in home visiting prenatally. After the birth of her son, she was being successful in taking him to all the scheduled well-child checks and immunization schedule. At approximately 5 months old, the home visitor became concerned that the baby was still not holding his head on his own and conducted an ASQ 3 assessment. She encouraged the mom to talk with her doctor, but the doctor tried only to reassure her, telling her that babies all develop at their own rate. Still concerned, the home visitor conducted a follow-up re-assessment, and called the doctor herself with the mom's permission. When the doctor still seemed unconvinced, the home visitor talked with the mom and grandma and encouraged them to contact EDN. Now EDN, the doctor, the home visitor and the family are all working together to help baby get back on track.



Story #32:

One of our home visitors has been using a smart phone to record parent-child interactions to share with a family. She was so excited that on the next regular visit, the mom shared with her a recording that SHE made with the baby in between visits! She was anxious to tell her about the "E Parenting" that she had been practicing!

Story #33:

One of our prenatal moms went into a very early labor and gave birth at 25 ½ weeks. Having made the decision to breastfeed, with encouragement from her home visitor, the mom was able to pump. In fact, she was so successful, she was able to feed her tiny daughter breastmilk exclusively for 5 months!

Story #34:

We have one family that is doing remarkably well—if you can get past how their house looks! This family has its ups and downs; FOB tends to quit his job when he decides that he doesn't like it. Regardless, as parents, they are very engaged with their home visitor! When asked the reason for their willingness to have her come to their home, MOB told me (supervisor) "I love (her) coming because she accepts me as I am and doesn't judge me."

Story #35:

A young, single, Native (American) mom, pregnant with her first child, has a lot of family, but no real support. She has been diabetic since she was 14. As her parenting coach, I attended all her prenatal visits with her, on her request. When she went into labor I was with her for 15 hours of labor! She delivered a boy; and mom honored me, an Elder in the Native community, by asking me to name him and cut the cord.

In the Native culture it is customary for an elder to name the child. Naming a child in the Native American culture is a sacred event only to be performed by the wisest of the group, the elders. Because of the level of ritual that it is given, Native American names are considered especially significant and powerful. This was the greatest honor! The child was named (xxx), a Sioux name that means falcon. Earlier that day, while mom was in early labor, we were watching a show on falcons. They are one of the fastest flying birds, great hunters and with great vision. Although the baby was in the NICU for 21 days after birth, today he is a healthy, happy child and Mom is doing great!



Story #36:

I work with a 19 year old, Native American, single mom. Her parents called me to ask me to work with her; they had just gone to get her after her boyfriend had beat her so badly that she almost lost the child and her life. I worked with the family to get a restraining order on FOB and got her to the doctor. From there on, we saw each other weekly. The FOB never gave her any trouble, MOB was able to get a job, and she got housing in Transitional Living Program. She joined a single-mothers group, and has never missed a home visit. She had a healthy baby boy, and recently started college! She is now dating a young man who treats her like a queen. Although they've moved away, the family stays in touch with me.

Story #37:

One of my clients is a young lady that had her first child removed from her. She spent the past few years drinking and using drugs, and found out she was pregnant. She called me and I enrolled her right away in our HFA program. I had known this young lady for a long time; we talked seriously and I explained to her the effect the drugs and alcohol has on the development of her child. I asked her if she was ready to work hard to have a healthy baby. She told me that all she wanted was to have a healthy baby. She started going to AA and NA meetings; she amazed me by staying clean and sober. Today, she has a healthy baby, is still sober and never misses a home visit.

Story #38:

One of our partners at a clinic called me to refer a teen, single, Native American/Mexican pregnant mom with mental health issues and learning disabilities. The girl was living with her father, and I enrolled her into the program. Both the grandfather and the mother are active participants. I learned that the girl has anger issues and post-traumatic stress disorder from long-term abuse from her mother. She has short and long-term memory problems from the abuse and repeated head trauma. But! She wanted to be the very best mother she could be and wanted to do everything RIGHT for her child! She gave birth to a healthy baby girl. The doctor's office called CPS at the birth, but the case was unfounded. Currently she and her little family are doing great! She's on level 2, and will be moving to level 3 soon. She works with her daughter daily and send me video and pictures all the time. She is so attentive to her child, reads her cues and cares for every need. She makes and keeps all appointments for her child and herself!



Story #39: *Here is the story of a woman in our program I had told you about. I asked (the home visitor) to write something up with this Mom's approval and the mom instead wanted to write it. The whole story is not within the type of these pages, but still a great write up on how much our program and Home Visitor means to this family, and it's the portion of this mom's story she is comfortable sharing. Great story, great woman and mother!*

I met (my home visitor) by luck while I was staying at a motel with my 3 children, (and I was) also pregnant. She offered her services to me and I was glad to accept. We started with weekly meetings about my life and the baby to be. She was a very big help to my family, taking us to places that I needed to go in order to better my family's life, which at the time we were homeless. I called her when I went into labor and she came to be with me at the hospital where she stayed with me through the whole delivery as I had no family here because we had only been in Nebraska for about two months. I could and continue to call (my home visitor) at any time for any concerns I may have as a parent or just for someone to talk with.

After the baby was born, (my home visitor) helped me apply for a grant that would help me pay for my housing deposit, utilities, security deposit and also furnish our new home with the things that we needed. We continue to have a weekly session and my other children enjoy her and like to attend the monthly group session. She has been a great advisor, friend, and I confide in her. She means the world to me and I am grateful that we crossed paths and look forward to working with her in the years ahead. She has taught me about the Circle of Security and E-Parenting. She has also provided me with many resources to help in our community.

Story #40:

We have been part of Healthy Families of America for the last 6 months. We have learned a lot. The Circle of Security has help us out a lot, especially with our 3 ½ year old. We enjoy (our home visitor); she is a very special lady who is very informative. If you ask her questions she answers them, when she does not know the answer, she look it up and then answers them. We love working with her. We really enjoy the program; it helps a lot with all the raising children and how things change.