

## Description

HealthySteps is a pediatric primary care program that supports healthy early childhood development and effective parenting. A child and family development professional, known as a HealthySteps specialist, connects with families as part of the primary care team during pediatric well-child visits. The HealthySteps specialist offers screening and support for common and complex parenting challenges, such as feeding, attachment, behavior, sleep, parental depression and adapting to life with a baby or young child. Trained specialists also provide guidance, referrals, care coordination and home visits for families who need them.<sup>1</sup> HealthySteps serves families primarily in the pediatric office but can be extended into the community.

## Evidence

- Children were 1.5 to 2.4 times more likely to receive a well-child visit on time.<sup>2</sup>
- Children were 1.4 to 1.6 times more likely to receive age-appropriate vaccinations on time, and 1.4 times more likely to be up-to-date on vaccinations by age 2.<sup>2</sup>
- Children were 23 percent less likely to visit the emergency room for injury-related causes in a one-year period.<sup>2</sup>
- Families were four times as likely to receive information on community resources.<sup>2</sup>
- HealthySteps parents were:
  - Twenty-two percent less likely to rely on harsh punishment (e.g., yelling, spanking with hand)<sup>2</sup>
  - 1.5 times more likely to rely on someone in the practice for advice (rather than friend or relative)<sup>2</sup>
  - 1.8 times more likely to remain with the practice through 20 months<sup>3</sup>
- Mothers with depressive symptoms were 1.6 times more likely to discuss their symptoms.<sup>2</sup>
- Mothers were 24 percent less likely to place newborns on their stomachs to sleep, reducing the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).<sup>2</sup>

## Implementation

HealthySteps training and technical assistance helps practices implement the HealthySteps model tailored to the needs of their staff and the families they serve. Staff from new sites attend a two-to-three-day training program known as the HealthySteps Institute. The highly interactive training focuses on applying relationship-building strategies, practicing a strengths-based, family-centered approach, and working on case scenarios.<sup>4</sup>

## Billing and Reimbursement

While there is currently no specific billing code in New York State for the entire HealthySteps program, there are individual codes for a number of the services that HealthySteps offers families. For more information, email the HealthySteps National Office Policy and Finance team at [JTracey@zerotothree.org](mailto:JTracey@zerotothree.org).

## Resources

HealthySteps

Phone: 844-464-9811

Website: [healthysteps.org](http://healthysteps.org)

Email: [healthysteps@zerotothree.org](mailto:healthysteps@zerotothree.org)

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1. What is HealthySteps? (2016). Retrieved from: [Healthysteps.org](http://Healthysteps.org).
  2. Guyer B, Barth M, Bishai D, Caughy M, Clark B, Burkom D, Genevro J, Grason H, Hou W, Huang K, Hughart N, Jones AS, McLearn KT, Miller T, Minkovitz C, Scharfstein D, Stacy H, Strobino D, Szanton E, Tang C. Healthy Steps: The First Three years: The Healthy Steps for Young Children Program National Evaluation. *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*. 2003. Retrieved from: [https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/womens-and-childrens-health-policy-center/publications/Healthy\\_Steps\\_Final\\_Reports/FR\\_COVCONT\\_030103FIN.pdf](https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/womens-and-childrens-health-policy-center/publications/Healthy_Steps_Final_Reports/FR_COVCONT_030103FIN.pdf).
  3. Minkovitz CS, Strobino D, Mistry KB, Scharfstein DO, Grason H, Hou W, Ialongo N, Guyer B. Healthy Steps for Young Children: Sustained results at 5.5 years. *Pediatrics*. 2007; 120(3), e658-e668.
  4. HealthySteps: Our Training. (2016). Retrieved from: <http://healthysteps.org/our-training/>.