

DHF Families



DHF is making a difference in the lives of parents; in their own words --

"Our home visitor has been great. She has given us a lot of ideas on how to help our kids and where they should be with their age. If they are behind she has given us reference of who to talk to and what to do."

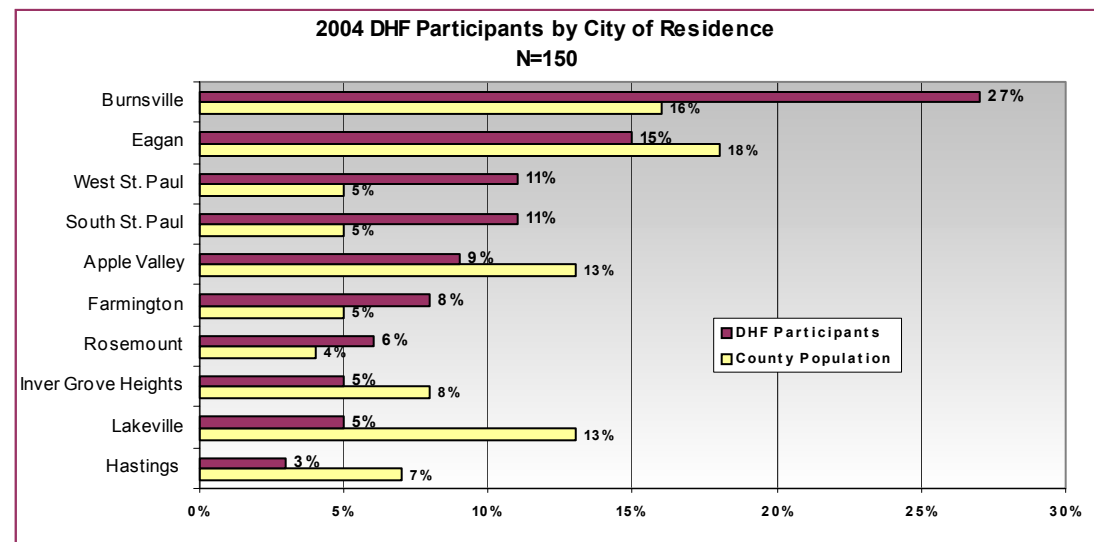
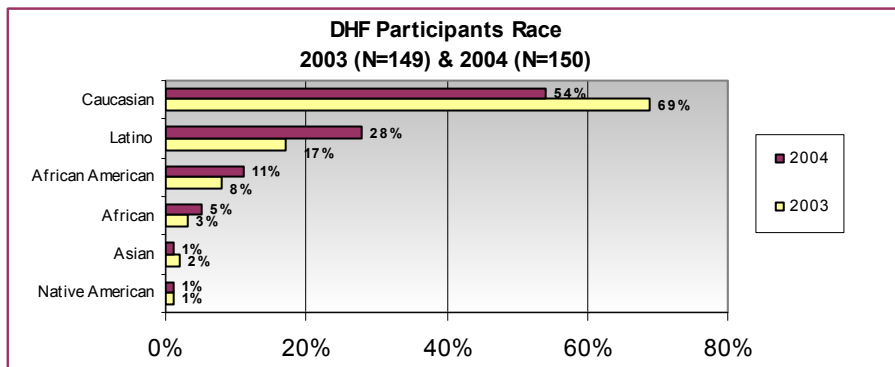
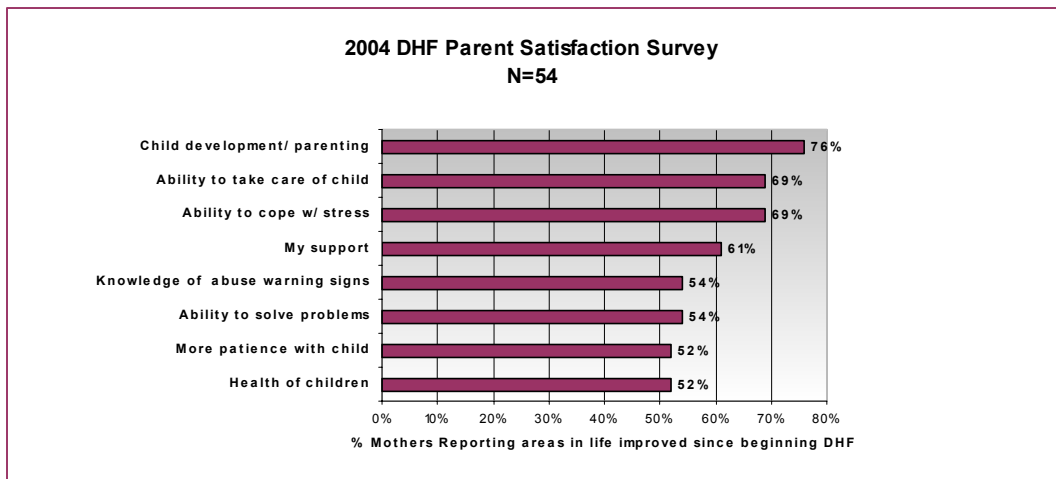
"She (home visitor) changed our dull and sad home into a lively and happy home."

"I did not know anything about bringing up a child . . . , but with the help of my home visitor, I am doing fine."

Specific ways DHF improved lives of parents were identified in the annual parent satisfaction survey. Parents reported having a better understanding of child development and warning signs of child abuse, improved ability to take care of the child, deal with stress and solve problems and more patience with the child, among other improvements.

DHF serves families who face the greatest challenges in their new parental role. A typical participant was a poor (92%), single (80%), young (66%) mom facing issues of domestic abuse (39%), mental illness (23%), limited education (18%), isolation (17%) and substance abuse (6%), N=150. Additionally, Parent Survey scores from in-home family assessments ranged from 25 to 70 with a mean of 42 and a median of 40. Research shows that scores of 40 or higher place families at high-risk for child abuse.

DHF increased outreach efforts to underserved populations with U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services ELOA and Blue Cross Foundation support. 2004 data show an increase in the percent of Latino, African American and African immigrant families served over 2003. Non-English speaking families were up from 13% in 2003 to 21% in 2004.



Although DHF continues to have a countywide presence, it serves proportionately more families from communities with higher rates of free and reduced school lunch participation – an indicator of low income.

These cities are Burnsville, South St. Paul, West St. Paul, Farmington and Rosemount. Fewer families from Apple Valley, Hastings, Lakeville, Eagan and Inver Grove Heights were served by DHF.

DHF Home Visitors and Staff

The DHF contract home visitors and supervisor (7.2 FTEs), and Public Health initiative staff (2.25 FTEs; 1 FTE in-kind) are well qualified; several have Master's Degrees in social work, nursing, child development, early childhood education or counseling and three are bilingual. Combined years of experience in early childhood development and home visiting exceed 270 years.

Funding from Hedge Funds Care supported enhanced outreach and assessment activities. In 2004, 179 families were contacted to arrange an in-home meeting resulting in 109 completed Parent Survey assessments. Seventy eight percent (69 of 89) of eligible families, those with Parent Survey scores of 25 or higher, accepted home visiting service. Of eligible families not enrolled in DHF – 8 percent were not offered home visiting because the program was at capacity and 14 percent were not eligible due to other criteria or parent declined to participate.

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services ELOA grant funds also enabled DHF to better evaluate and support the early language development of its infants and toddlers. Specifically, home visitors now use the Early Communication Indicator (ECI) to assess communication skills of infants and toddlers, beginning at age six months and repeated every four months. The ECI allows home visitors and parents to know whether their children are performing at or near the norm and how they are progressing. ECI training and implementation was supported by the University of Minnesota in partnership with the Juniper Gardens Project of the University of Kansas.



(L to R) Back: Jessica Abbott, Joyce Bolton, Jill Simon, Wendy Ochs
Middle: Kelley Zarn, Carol Pohl, Ana Rivera
Front: Roberta Enderby, Leslie Wight
Not pictured: April Schultz, Carol Messler, Gay Bakken, Theresa Gomez

Home visitors received 44 hours of training to learn effective early literacy development strategies. The following is one of the strategies from Growing Great Kids, Inc. Daily Do-Parents Play by Play.



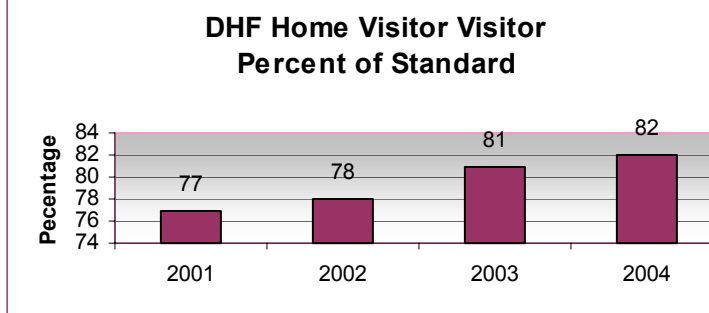
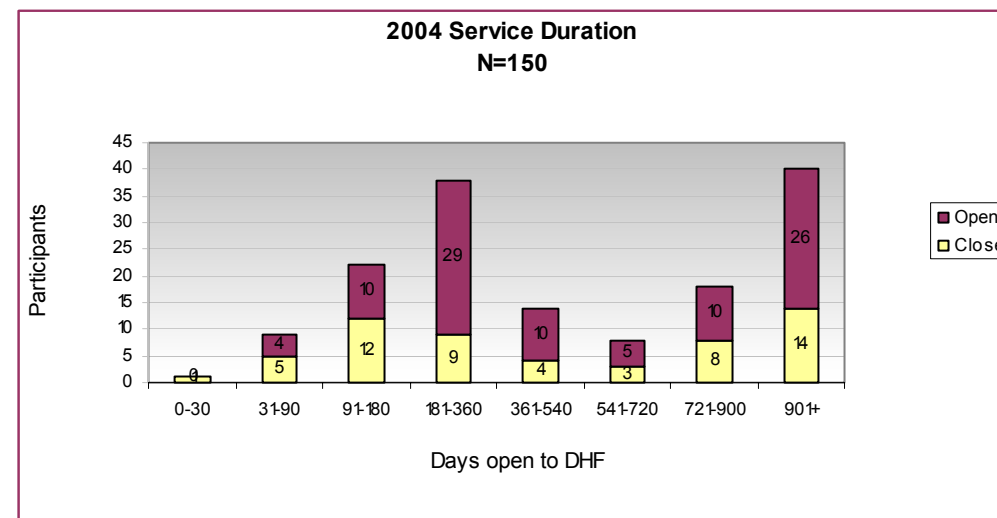
- ◆ Get on your child's level
- ◆ Tell him/her what he/she is seeing, hearing, doing or feeling
- ◆ Use your face, voice and touch to communicate your message
- ◆ Be positive, persistent and patient

Home visitors exceeded accountability standards as seen in the Service Duration and Percent of Standard charts.

Service Duration – One hundred fifty families received home visiting services in 2004 compared to 149 served in 2003. The average service duration for these families was 573 days with a median of 442 days, up 3 percent over 2003.

Percent of Standard – The percent of visits completed by home visitors continued on its steady upward climb, reaching 82 percent in 2004.

Additionally, the average number of home visits delivered per family in a 12-month period



was 23. Research shows that 15 visits per family in a 12-month period are the minimum needed before change in key outcomes occurs.

