

# HANDS Across KENTUCKY

## Prepared by

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## Executive Summary

Are you or someone you know a new parent? Could you use an extra pair of HANDS? Although there isn't an instruction manual for newborns or toddlers, support for new parents can be found across all 120 Kentucky Counties in a new and exciting program called HANDS. So, you may be asking, 'What is HANDS?'

HANDS (Health Access; Nurturing Development Services) is a voluntary, home visitation service for first-time parents. It is part of the KIDS NOW Early Childhood Initiative passed by the 2000 General Assembly. The HANDS program reaches out to parents during the prenatal period or within three months after the birth of the child. The goal of HANDS is to build upon parents' strengths to improve the health and development of Kentucky children over the first two years of life. There are no income guidelines, and the service is free to the family.

New parents often have many questions or reservations about participating in a home visitation program. Traditionally, home visitation is associated negatively with social service programs. In order to break this stereotype our KPHLI team chose to create a visual account of what parents could expect from HANDS, specifically focusing on what they could expect from a HANDS home visitor. The promotional video reflects actual home visitors from across the state interacting with several HANDS families. Our goal is to show the positive aspect of home visitation and spark an interest in receiving support through HANDS. Parents may find that they also could use a second pair of HANDS.

A 21-minute promotional video (16 minutes English; 5 minutes Spanish) has been developed introducing the HANDS program. The video covers all the aspects of the original design, which include: addressing questions regarding having a baby/toddler, HANDS introduction, addressing questions about HANDS, Parent Visitor introduction, Home Visitor introduction and testimonies of participating HANDS families. The video will be available for all the local health departments along with extra copies for community agencies.

HANDS currently serves 6500 families, while our goal is to reach all first-time parents in the Commonwealth who are identified as in need of services. Our KPHLI team anticipates increased HANDS enrollment and participation due to the positive, promotional account.



# HANDS Across Kentucky

## **Introduction/Background**

Are you or someone you know a new parent? Could you use an extra pair of HANDS? Although there isn't an instruction manual for newborns or toddlers, support for new parents can be found across all 120 Kentucky Counties in a new and exciting program called HANDS. A part of the KIDS Now Initiative, HANDS is free to all first time parents and brings information right to your home. Yes, right to your home. So, you may be asking how do I get involved? Or, perhaps, what are some of the common areas addressed through this support? Well, how about taking a few minutes to hear from some of our parents about their experience in HANDS. You may just find that every parent needs a second pair of HANDS.

## **Project Description**

To produce a promotional video that would introduce all aspects of HANDS services to new parents and the community.

Outline:

- Address questions regarding having a baby/toddler
- Introduction of HANDS
- Address questions about HANDS
- Introduction of the Parent Visitor
- Introduction of the Home Visitor
- Testimonies of HANDS Families

## **Objectives**

- Increase parent understanding of the program
  - Increase enrollment
  - Increase participation
- Increase referrals from local agencies, physicians and hospitals
- Increase awareness of benefits/outcomes
- Consistently publicize HANDS throughout the state

## **Methodology**

### **Initial Survey**

Our first step began with a survey to the 55 HANDS Coordinators to determine if there was a need for a public awareness initiative. Coordinators overwhelmingly saw the need to address

this issue and determined that several groups should be targeted. Those groups being parents, OB/GYNs, hospitals and local agencies. Coordinators liked the idea of an introductory video along with a designated state program logo and slogan. A logo and slogan were chosen based on the results of the survey.

Follow up steps:

- Contacted Eastern Kentucky University about production of a promotional video.
- Scheduled three taping sites across the state to include urban and rural.
- Developed interview questions for families participating.
- Contacted local health departments about participating in the project.
- Secured Release and Permission to video tape from families participating.
- Wrote a script and reviewed with local and state HANDS representatives.
- Received permission from the Nationally recognized foundation 'I Am Your Child' to use video clip and logo.
- Solicited a narrator for video narration.
- Reviewed family interviews and selected appropriate segments to include in the video.
- Worked with ECU in editing process.
- Scheduled promotional video review with appropriate state personnel.
- Scheduled promotional video review with HANDS Coordinators.
- Adapted a Spanish version to be included in the video.

### **Essential Public Health Services**

Essential service three, seven and ten clearly are established by this innovative project, which will inform, educate and link parents with needed personal health services.

### **Essential Public Health Services #3, 7, 10**

*#3 Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.*

*#7 Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.*

*#10 Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.*

### **Results**

A 21-minute promotional video (16 minutes English; 5 minutes Spanish) has been developed introducing the HANDS program. The video covers all the aspects in the original design. The video will be available for all the local health departments along with extra copies for community agencies. Further analysis will determine after distribution if participation and enrollment increase in the HANDS program. Also referral sources will be monitored.

Comments from HANDS Coordinators:

- The video is fantastic-I think this will help our Administrators to understanding the worth of the program as well as our promotional efforts.
- Video very good and realistic.
- The film is wonderful. The children were animating and the parents were so interested in their children. It showed what HANDS is all about.

## **Conclusions**

Our KPHLI team anticipates increased HANDS enrollment and participation due to the positive, promotional account. In addition, more family referrals are expected from the community, including hospitals and OB/GYNs.

## **Leadership Development Opportunities**

### ***C. Renee` Knight***

Eleanor Roosevelt said, “Today, living and learning must go hand in hand”. I believe this is true. We learn so much just by living. Leadership skills come from a variety of sources: being a parent, participating in sports, joining a club, reading, attending classes, etc. The Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute has provided me the opportunity to evaluate my skills as a leader and also a team member. The books that I have read during the last year contain a common theme. That theme is that in order to be an effective leader you must first get to know yourself. Although I thought that I did know myself, the personal development plan that I have worked on has allowed me to get to know myself even better. I have been able to determine what type of leader I am and leadership skills that I possess. I have been able to use the information I have learned to enhance my skills to become an effective leader.

It has been an honor to be part of this Change Master Project. During the past several years I have had the privilege of being part of an exciting time in KY. I have been able to work with the HANDS home visitation program from the beginning, during the pilot phase. The opportunity to work on developing a video to be used to promote HANDS in each community of KY has truly been awesome! The project took much more time than initially expected. Being able to work with a team kept the frustration level down and helped to be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. This video will educate the public about HANDS and everyone who sees the video will want to be part of this amazing program.

### ***Brenda Chandler***

I have thoroughly enjoyed working on the HANDS Across Kentucky KPHLI project. HANDS is a wonderful program that has proven many health and social outcomes such as, fewer premature infants, fewer low birth weight babies, fewer very low birth weights and significantly lower numbers of substantiated abuse and neglect. Home visitation is often viewed in a negative light. Therefore, my partner and I wanted to show what a positive impact HANDS can be for families through any of the HANDS services and in particular home visitation. Although this project has been a “labor” of love, all the hard work is dutifully worth it knowing there could be one more Kentucky child that is healthy, happy and safe.

It has been an honor to be a part of the 2002 Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute. I've enjoyed getting to know other health professionals and have learned from their leadership styles and skills. I have also enjoyed getting more familiar with all the other wonderful programs the health department has to offer.