

## MISSION STATEMENT

SHIELDS for families is a non-profit community-based organization dedicated to developing, delivering, and evaluating culturally sensitive, comprehensive service models that empower and advocate for high-risk families for over 20 years.



We believe that with education, access to appropriate services and caring guidance, families can rebuild their lives and become productive members of the community, nurturing parents and achieve all of their dreams.

## HISTORY

SHIELDS was formed in 1987 in response to high incidence of infants born prenatally exposed to drugs at Martin Luther King Hospital in South Central Los Angeles.

SHIELDS began providing services to this unique population and has since grown to provide over 30 comprehensive, family-centered, wrap-around programs addressing issues facing high-risk families in South LA.



*believing, building, becoming*

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## Healthy Start Program

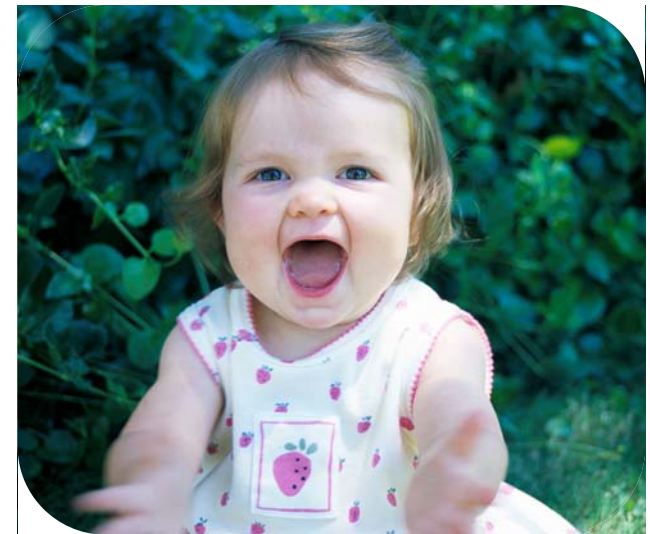


Healthy Start focuses on reducing infant mortality and morbidity rates in the community by providing comprehensive case management and support services to pregnant and parenting substance abusing women with children ages 0-2.





SHIELDS' Healthy Start Program provides **outreach and intake services, comprehensive case management, child development and health education** for pregnant and post-partum substance abusing women with children 0-2 in order to reduce infant mortality and morbidity. The Healthy Start Consortium, consisting of residents, consumers, government entities and service providers, guides the program's service delivery and advocates for policy that impacts the target population.



In 1991, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funded 15 urban and rural sites in communities with infant mortality rates that were 1.5 - 2.5 times the national average to begin the Healthy Start Initiative. SHIELDS is nationally recognized as the first of these programs to pilot culturally sensitive treatment models and has continued to provide comprehensive services to pregnant and parenting women with children affected by drugs and/or alcohol in South Los Angeles, Watts/Willobrook, Compton and North Long Beach areas through **community-based outreach, case management, referrals and linkages, child development services including on-site and in-home assessments/interventions and health education.**



The amount of time our clients remain in Healthy Start Program is 12 to 18 months and sometimes longer depending on the need of the family being serviced.

To ensure that the whole community is committed in the fight to reduce infant mortality and low birth weight, the Healthy Start Consortium, composed of neighborhood residents, consumers, medical providers, social service agencies, faith-based representatives and the business community was developed to empower the community with information and education. In addition, the Consortium is actively engaged in advocacy efforts that focus on informing policy and regulations that assist in improving the health and well-being of pregnant and postpartum substance abusing women and their children.

In an effort to add to the continuum of services that SHIELDS provides, the Healthy Start Intervention Program (IP) was developed in February of 2002 to target younger clientele who have had some initial experimentation with drugs and/or alcohol in a treatment model that ranges between 6 to 9 months. The target population also includes women dealing with a high-risk pregnancy and/or women with children 0-2 who have special needs and are high risk.

### Program Highlights

- Funded in 1998, Healthy Start has served over 2,000 pregnant and parenting substance women and their children.
- The program has demonstrated increases in parental knowledge of child development and parenting skills with parents scoring an average of 90% on post-test scores.
- 72% of pregnant women served enrolled in pre-natal care in their first trimester.
- Low Birth Weight of newborns has averaged less than 4.5% over the last six years.
- Immunization rates among enrolled children averaged 80%.
- In 2009, Healthy Start serviced 152 clients. 89% of which gave birth to drug-free babies with no infant mortalities.
- The SHIELDS Healthy Start program pioneered the use of women living in the community as outreach workers and home visitors which has provided real jobs to hundreds of unemployed women, particularly those on welfare.