



First 5 Riverside County HealthySteps

Community Impact Report

2018–2021





	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Introduction 04</h2> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is HealthySteps 06 The HealthySteps Model 06 HealthySteps National Reach and Results 09
	<h2 style="margin: 0;">HealthySteps in Riverside County 10</h2> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First 5 Riverside County's Investment in HealthySteps 11 Riverside County HealthySteps Pilot Partners 12
	<h2 style="margin: 0;">HealthySteps Progress & Impact 14</h2> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverside County Pilot Progress 14 HealthySteps Fidelity Requirements 15 The Impact of HealthySteps 16 Key Learning in Operationalizing HealthySteps 19
	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Program Spotlight: Rady Children's Hospital 20</h2> <hr/>
	<h2 style="margin: 0;">The Opportunity of HealthySteps 24</h2> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking Forward 27
	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Appendix 29</h2> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix A: Fidelity Graphics 28 Endnotes 30



Introduction

Nearly 30,000¹ babies are born each year in Riverside County. The speed at which each of these little ones will grow, learn and develop in their first years is incredibly rapid and amazing to witness. Decades of research shows that the first three years of life are the time when vital connections are made in the brain and that this is the most critical period in a child's development. Unfortunately, due to multiple external factors facing families today, many young children are at-risk of not meeting developmental milestones during their first years. And they can have developmental delays that can go undetected until they reach kindergarten or even later, putting them behind from the very beginning of their time in school and potentially throughout their lives.

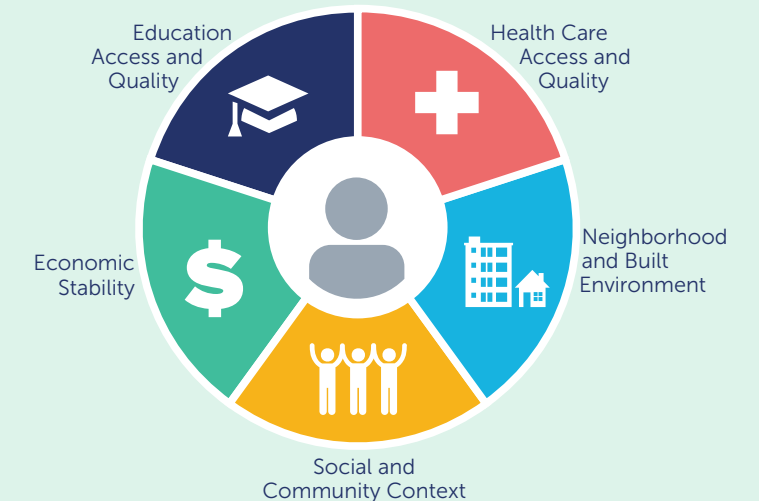
The good news is that early screening and identification of developmental delays can make a big difference by identifying concerns early, connecting children and their families to supportive resources, and helping children enter school ready to learn and thrive. Developmental screenings that measure how children are doing in meeting developmental milestones are now seen as a best practice among education and child development experts and have become the standard practice in pediatric care for children ages birth through three.

Fewer than one third of children in California receive developmental and behavioral screenings in a timely manner. And children of color are even less likely to be screened.²

Nearly all families take their babies to see a pediatric primary care provider (90%)³. New parents and caregivers typically attend 12-13 well-child visits in a child's first three years, providing a prime opportunity to identify developmental concerns early - through identification and intervention. This frequent contact often means that pediatric providers are seen as trusted sources of information and a lifeline for parents as they navigate the first years of their child's life.

There is also increasing recognition of the importance of supporting children's development more holistically and in the broader context of the challenges families face that can ultimately affect a child's physical, social and emotional development. To better understand what these factors may be, health care providers are increasingly looking at the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and their impact on children and their families.

Social Determinants of Health⁴



HealthySteps Comes to Riverside County

With a longstanding commitment to taking a whole-child approach to early identification and intervention, and recognizing the opportunity of reaching children and families through their pediatric providers, First 5 Riverside County (F5RC) partnered with the national non-profit ZERO TO THREE, to bring HealthySteps, an enhanced pediatric practice-based model, to Riverside County. "Healthy Steps integrates a child development specialist into the pediatric primary care team to promote nurturing parenting and healthy development for babies and toddlers, particularly in areas where there have been persistent inequities for families with low incomes and families of color."⁵

HealthySteps specialists are uniquely positioned to provide, not only support for parenting and child developmental concerns, but are able to support families more broadly with concerns that may affect their families, including those identified through looking at the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). First 5 Riverside County invested in a three-year pilot and partnership that began in 2018, in partnership with local health care providers to test the model in a range of settings, with a focus on serving children who were less likely to have their concerns identified early.

The HealthySteps Community Impact Report provides an overview of the HealthySteps model and how it has been implemented in Riverside County through a pilot in three pediatric settings. It highlights the progress and impact of the pilot, the potential for positive return on investment, and the opportunities for HealthySteps to be an integral part of the early intervention system in Riverside County.

What is HealthySteps?

HealthySteps is an evidence- and team-based pediatric primary care program designed to promote nurturing parenting and healthy development for babies and toddlers.⁶ The model integrates a child development professional - called a "HealthySteps Specialist" - into the pediatric primary care team to provide support to families whose concerns are often unaddressed by physicians.⁷ The HealthySteps Specialist connects with families during, and between well-child visits, as part of the primary care team. HealthySteps Specialists provide families with parenting guidance, referrals and care coordination, tailored to their particular needs and concerns.



HealthySteps was launched in 1995 and became part of the national nonprofit, ZERO TO THREE, in 2015. The goal of the HealthySteps model is to improve the health, well-being, and school readiness of children ages 0 to 3 who are at the highest risk for poor developmental outcomes.⁸

The HealthySteps Model

"The HealthySteps model is organized into three (3) Tiers of Service and eight (8) Core Components to make sure all families in the practice with children ages 0-3 receive support aligned with their needs."⁹

Tier 1 (Universal Services)

All families with children ages 0-3 in a HealthySteps practice receive universal services (Tier 1) that include screenings and access to a child development support line. Screenings include child development, social and emotional and behavioral screenings based on the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines. They also receive screenings for family needs including, "at a minimum maternal depression, food insecurity, housing instability or homelessness, utility needs, transportation needs, interpersonal violence, substance misuse and tobacco use."¹⁰ After they are screened, families are triaged further into a variety of support catered to their needs.

Tier 2 (Short-Term Supports)

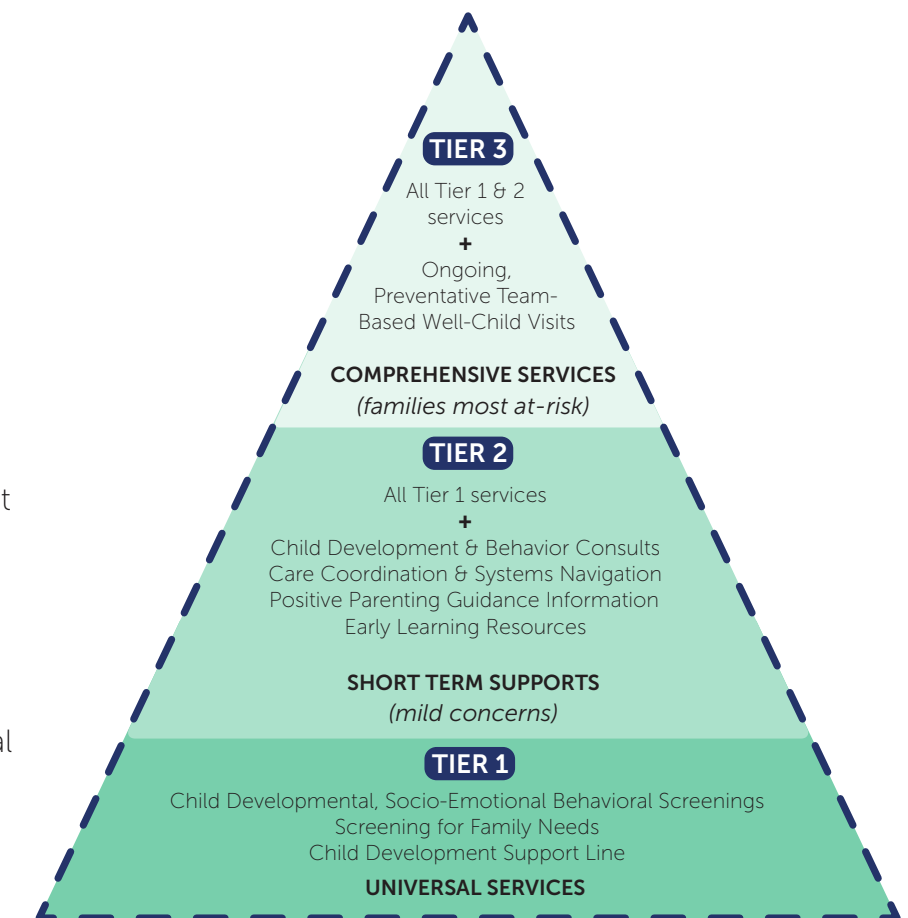
If a family has moderate concerns, they receive additional Tier 2 services. In addition to receiving all of the Tier 1 universal services, families with mild concerns receive short-term supports that include consults with a HealthySteps Specialist, referrals to needed services and care coordination, positive parenting guidance and information, and early learning resources to address more time-limited concerns. This might include 1-3 visits or calls from the Specialist.¹¹

A key ingredient at the Tier 2 level is the "warm hand-off" that happens as the HealthySteps Specialist is introduced by the provider to the family during a well child visit or through a follow up referral from the provider. The HealthySteps Specialist helps families navigate community services by making both in-house and community referrals and ensuring that families are able to navigate the often complex systems.¹²

Tier 3 (Comprehensive Services)

Families that are determined to be at greatest risk receive Tier 3, comprehensive services, that include scheduled ongoing touchpoints with the HealthySteps Specialist. In addition to receiving all of the supports provided through Tier 1 and Tier 2, they receive more intensive support that includes connecting with a HealthySteps Specialist in the exam room prior to, during and/or following a baby's routine well-child visits.¹³ Sometimes additional visits with the HealthySteps Specialist may be scheduled outside of the routine visits, if needed. The intent is to help prevent children from having poor developmental and social-emotional outcomes by intervening early, and providing information and guidance to parents to best support their children's health, development and well-being.

Core Components (Services)





HealthySteps National Reach & Results

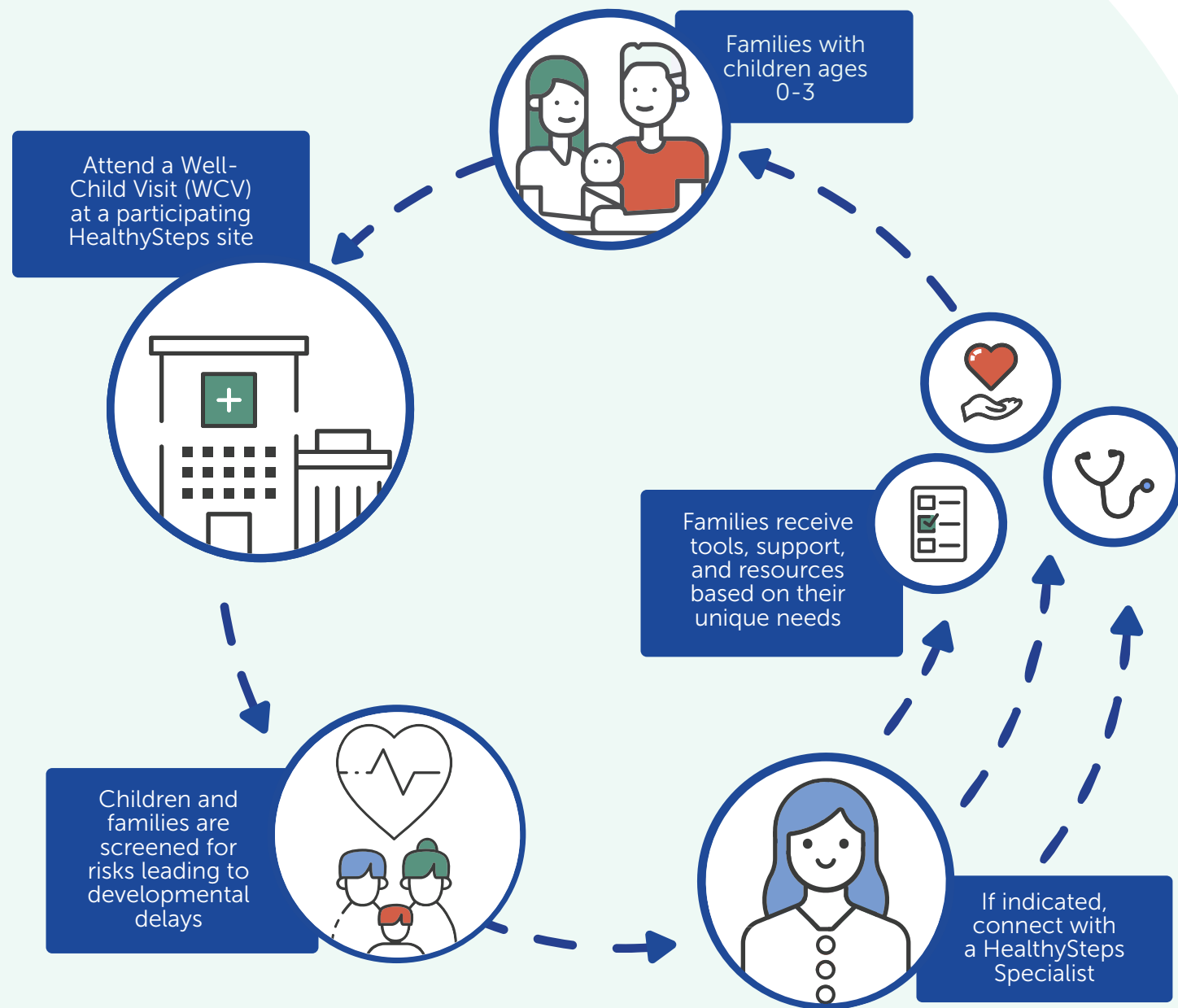
Since HealthySteps was launched in 1995, it has been implemented in over **200 pediatric primary care practices** across the United States and Puerto Rico. In 2020 alone, **over 300,000 families were served** throughout the HealthySteps' National Network. The model is showing significant positive outcomes including increases in early intervention referrals as a result of universal screenings, increased rates of social-emotional development and well-being, and decreased symptoms of maternal depression, amongst other positive life outcomes for young children and their families.¹⁵ In its 25+ year history, children served by HealthySteps were:

8 times more likely to receive a developmental assessment and had significantly higher rates of developmental and nonmedical referrals¹⁶

Diagnosed with autism earlier. Across a network of HealthySteps practices the **median age of autism diagnosis for children who were screened at the high-risk level was two years earlier** than the national median.¹⁷

2.4 times more likely to receive timely well child visits and to **attend all of the first 10 recommended well-child visits**¹⁸

HealthySteps in Action¹⁴



HealthySteps has also been successful in identifying family needs early and connecting them to services.

- Mothers with depressive symptoms **reported significantly fewer symptoms after receiving HealthySteps and that symptoms decreased at a faster rate** than comparable mothers¹⁹
- Families were significantly **less likely to report the use of harsh punishment and severe discipline**
- **Children were 23% less likely to visit the emergency room for injuries in a 1-year period**²⁰
- Families were significantly **more likely to notice behavioral cues and provide age-appropriate nurturing**²¹
- Families were significantly more likely to report their **child looked at or read books weekly**²²

HealthySteps has helped participating primary care practices to improve their patient's experiences and provider satisfaction and lower health care costs.

- Families **rated their provider as more competent and caring** and were significantly more likely to believe that the health plan cared about them²³
- Physicians reported significantly **higher satisfaction** with HealthySteps and that they **felt emotionally supported** by the HealthySteps Specialist²⁴
- A financial analysis in one HealthySteps practice serving a diverse pediatric population found that **estimated costs averted exceeded program operating costs** (\$641-\$959 compared to \$575 per child)²⁵

Overall, HealthySteps is demonstrating a powerful capacity to drive population health because it strategically and inexpensively tailors care, focusing resources on improving the experience and behaviors of parents, providers' care, and broadening services that positively impact children and families.²⁶



HealthySteps in Riverside County

In 2017, recognizing HealthySteps' demonstrated ability to positively impact young children and families, the First 5 Riverside County Children and Families Commission approved the development of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify pediatric partners to participate in a HealthySteps pilot program. The initial intent was to test the HealthySteps model in a variety of site types in the county that served children living in communities of highest need. First 5 funding was designated to support HealthySteps Specialist positions within Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and/or pediatric care facilities in Riverside County and to support training to sites, over a three-year period. As a national partner, ZERO TO THREE's role was to provide training and technical assistance to ensure fidelity to the model and to contribute to planning around possible sustainability strategies.

For First 5 Riverside County, HealthySteps was consistent with its goal of supporting the comprehensive health and development of all children by creating a system in which young children and their families access a full spectrum of health and behavioral health services.²⁷ The investment was also in line with the Commission's priority of making investments that include collaborating early with other partners and/or agents of sustainability and/or scalability.²⁸

First 5 Riverside County's Investment in HealthySteps

First 5 Riverside County invested more than \$4.45 million to pilot HealthySteps in three pediatric primary care agencies in the county between October 2018 and June 2021 including Borrego Community Health Foundation, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC); Rady Children's Hospital, a non-profit hospital; and Riverside University Health System, a public general hospital. In 2021, seeing the positive impact and the opportunity of HealthySteps to support children and families in the pilot sites' communities, the Commission approved contract extensions through June 2023 for all three of the pilot organizations for a total of \$2.75 million for the 2-year period.²⁹

Table 1: **Riverside HealthySteps investments 2018-2023**³⁰

	Borrego	Rady	RUHS	Start-up Training Costs	Total
2018-21 Investment	\$1,696,412	\$1,629,750	\$984,291	\$144,286	\$4,454,739
2021-23 Renewal	\$1,170,000	\$1,100,000	\$480,000	-	\$2,750,000
Total Investment	\$2,866,412	\$2,729,750	\$1,464,291	\$144,286	\$7,204,739

HealthySteps has provided an impactful, cost-efficient approach to incorporating a whole-child early intervention model into existing pediatric practices. By Year 3 (2021) of the HealthySteps pilot in Riverside County, the average annual operating costs across all Pilot Partners for a practice of over 3,000 children is just under \$410,000.

Table 2: **HealthySteps Pilot 2021 Annual Operating Costs and Practice Size**

	Borrego	Rady	RUHS	Average
2021 Operating Costs	\$560,133.34	\$465,295.73	\$203,586.14	\$409,671.74
2021 Practice Size (all sites)	2,062	4,593	1,703	3,086

Riverside County HealthySteps Pilot Partners

Awarding funding to three different types of health care entities gave First 5 and its partners the opportunity to serve children and families across the county, and to test the model in different settings, and within different health care structures.

Borrego Community Health Foundation (Borrego)³¹

Borrego is a non-profit 501(c)(3) Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Tort Claims Act Deemed (FTCA) facility. Their health centers serve communities across Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties. Borrego’s services range from primary and pediatric care, preventative care, specialty services, and ancillary services. HealthySteps was piloted in Borrego community health centers in the cities of Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs, San Jacinto, and Riverside.

Rady Children’s Hospital (Rady)³²

Rady is a nonprofit pediatric care facility that has offices located throughout San Diego and Riverside counties. Rady is a dedicated pediatric healthcare facility that provides primary care services in addition to specialty and developmental services. HealthySteps was piloted at satellite locations in Murrieta and Temecula.

Riverside University Health System - Medical Center (RUHS)³³

RUHS is a public general hospital providing primary and specialty care throughout Riverside County. In addition to the general hospital, RUHS operates FQHC community-based health centers for underserved communities. HealthySteps was piloted at RUHS’s main campus in Moreno Valley.

First 5 Riverside County’s funding supported new HealthySteps Specialist positions at the participating sites and training and ongoing technical assistance from ZERO TO THREE’s national office.

Table 3: **HealthySteps Sites & Specialists**³⁴

	Borrego	Rady	RUHS	Total
# of Sites	5 (Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs, San Jacinto, Riverside, (2))	2 (Murrieta, Temecula)	1 (Moreno Valley)	8
# of HealthySteps Specialists (FTE)	4.5	5	2	11.5





HealthySteps Progress & Impact

Riverside County Pilot Progress

Although still in the early years of implementation, the HealthySteps pilot is already having an impact on children, families and pediatric providers across Riverside County by changing the way that early identification and intervention is addressed for families with complex needs, who are most likely to be ill prepared for lifelong learning.

HealthySteps Reach in Riverside County

- HealthySteps is **reaching more than 6,000 children³⁵ and their families annually** through the three pilot sites.
- In FY 19-20 through FY 20-21 **more than 10,000 screenings** were conducted with children and families covering child development, social and emotional **functioning**, autism, maternal depression and family needs³⁶
- **More than 4,000 referrals were made for services and follow up for child and family needs** in FY 19-20 through FY 20-21 related to early intervention, mental health, early care and education, and maternal depression

Table 4: **Children Served by HealthySteps by Tier FY 2020-2021³⁷**

HealthySteps Tier	Borrego	Rady	RUHS
Tier 1: All children and families receive developmental, social-emotional and behavioral screenings and access to a child development support line	2,888	1,745	1,703
Tier 2: Tier 1 services plus child development and behavioral consults, care coordination/ case management and systems navigation, positive parenting information and access to early learning resources	894	252	316
Tier 3: Tier 1 and 2 services and ongoing preventative team-based well child visits at the practice site, or in family home for families at greatest risk	704	1,414	318

Table 5: **Children Served by HealthySteps Pilot Agency³⁸**

	18-19	19-20	20-21
Borrego	2,151	4,964	4,486
RADY	486	3,230	3,411
RUHS	852	1,662	2,337
Total	3,489	9,856	10,234

Note: Numbers include Tier 1, 2, and 3 children served, Source: Persimmony

HealthySteps Fidelity Requirements



As an evidence-based model, ZERO TO THREE has established two types of requirements that are assessed in order to assure that participating sites are working towards and maintaining fidelity to the HealthySteps model. HealthySteps' fidelity requirements aim to capture the successful implementation of the model (Administrative Fidelity) and delivery of services in alignment with the model's Core Components and Tiers of Service (Service Fidelity).³⁹ ZERO TO THREE works closely with each of the HealthySteps sites to support their success along the way. Examples of the HealthySteps fidelity requirements are highlighted in Appendix A.⁴⁰



The Impact of HealthySteps

The HealthySteps pilot is having a direct impact by ensuring that more children and their families have access to services, increasing the level and quality of care and support that families are receiving and impacting the way in which pediatric care is being provided in the pilot sites. HealthySteps is showing a significant impact by:

- Increasing the number of children and families who are receiving child and family needs **screenings**
- Increasing **access to quality services and supports** for children and their families
- Providing a **model for pediatric practice improvement** that benefits providers and families alike

Expanding Screenings for Children and Families

With early screening for developmental delays, Riverside County families and providers are able to readily address delays and related issues early-on so that children are on track to thrive into adulthood. As a result of these screenings, families in Riverside are better equipped to understand what their children are experiencing and are empowered to seek out appropriate services.

"[A mother whose child was screened for developmental and behavioral delays] took a full 12 months before she was willing to get the diagnostic evaluation her child needed based on the symptoms that came up in [her child's] screenings... [Today], the same mother is now going to have her second child served [by HealthySteps] before [her child reaches the] age of two. That's the impact of HealthySteps."

—Kristin Gist, Advisor, Rady

Referrals & Access to Services & Supports

Referrals from developmental and behavioral screenings have resulted in successful linkages to services for young children and their families. These linkages have enabled children to attend therapy sessions for speech delays and mothers to receive mental health treatment, amongst other related supports. Families receiving services from HealthySteps sites in Riverside County reported overall positive experiences and outcomes since being introduced to the program.



"I personally have received a lot of support and insight from the HealthySteps program and staff. They have been there for me and my family every step of the way and through every challenge or uncertainty I've faced with my girls...HealthySteps [staff] have adapted to my daughters' needs and helped with the skills they needed. I personally am appreciative of the care they've shown for my daughters."

—HealthySteps Parent

"HealthySteps has been vital in helping create a medical home for our families. They are great at helping narrow down areas of concerns and following up with families about referrals placed. It helps create a wonderful closed loop communication system with some of our higher risk children. I've had so many times where I've had moms dealing with severe PPD. Everyone, especially Melanie, has been helpful in connecting with these moms and making sure they are getting connected with the proper resources."

—Dr. Amber Hamilton, MD, Rady



The impact of HealthySteps has been especially powerful for those who are struggling the most, as was captured in the words of a mother who had scored with concern on the PHQ-9 screening for depression, and shared that she was having feelings of depression and anxiety following the birth of her second child. HealthySteps provided support to her by connecting her to a mental health therapist and a psychiatrist:

"[I] finally feel happy...and can enjoy[my] boys". "If you doubt what you are doing, this is the reason you are here."

—HealthySteps Parent

Families' needs for services were heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, HealthySteps Specialists acted as a source of stability and support for families experiencing added hardships. HealthySteps Specialists have been cited as a support system that families knew they could rely on for resources and assistance.

"Many families [gave] feedback on how grateful they are to know that they have someone who is checking in on their family and providing resources to them during [COVID 19]... [Patients] have stated things like, 'It shows that you care about my family,' and 'I am happy I have someone I can talk to.'"

2019 - 2020 Performance Progress Report, Borrego



A Model for Practice Improvement

Across the HealthySteps sites operating in Riverside County, pediatric primary care staff find themselves better equipped to provide quality care to young children through insights rendered from their on-site HealthySteps Specialists.

"We work very closely with our [HealthySteps] Specialists. They are critical to what we're doing in [the] clinic to address social, behavior, developmental or parenting issues."

—Dr. Chad Vercio, MD, RUHS

The incorporation of the HealthySteps Specialists into primary care teams has provided pediatric care providers with key developmental insights and concerns that contribute to the quality of care provided to young children and their families. Since the introduction of HealthySteps, pediatricians are not only equipped with the "full picture" of a child's physical health, but also the factors in their environments that contribute to their overall well-being.

"I think we're helping the family... Even though the family is assigned a [primary care physician] for each child, it doesn't mean the kids will see the same doctor [at every visit]... [HealthySteps Specialists are] in a position where [they are] able to talk to the doctor and remind the doctor of those things that need to be done [for each child]."

—HealthySteps Specialist, RUHS

"[HealthySteps] greatest impact on our practice is having] a specialized person [and] team to help families who may need things that I could not provide as a physician."

—Dr. Kaivan Dadachanji, MD, RUHS

The capacity of HealthySteps Specialists to form and develop relationships with families has allowed families to find pillars of support during difficult times. The care and support provided by HealthySteps Specialists, as part of the primary care team, have allowed families to access basic resources, gain knowledge and resources to support their child's development, and provide nurturing environments for their children to live and grow.

"I was able to learn that [a] dad was homeless and had very little resources. If I never asked... I would have never learned about the serious needs of his family. [Eventually, the dad and his partner] were able to get the resources that they needed and moved out of state into a much better situation. During my last phone call [with the dad], it was so nice to hear him tell me, 'you checked in with me at a time where I really needed the resources that you gave me, [and] you made a really big impact in our lives. Thank you.'"

—HealthySteps Specialist, Rady

Initially, the sites reported some hesitancy to integrate and adapt to a new model, especially with the existing high-volume workloads for providers. After HealthySteps was integrated, however, the HealthySteps pediatric teams found that building trusting relationships between medical staff and HealthySteps Specialists actually improved workflow and the ability to serve children and families.

"It's been a long journey in...getting [physicians] to trust us [as HealthySteps Specialists]... Today, they joke that they can't live without us...That speaks volumes as to how we've been able to build that rapport and how they now depend on us to support them in these situations...whether it be identifying resources or discussing very specific developmental topics."

—HealthySteps Specialist, Rady

Key Learning in Operationalizing HealthySteps

"I'm really impressed with [how Riverside's] implementation has gone, how their teams have managed things, and with the leadership they've shown...[First 5 Riverside County's piloting partners have] a really strong influence on HealthySteps' reputation in California."

—Laura Krug, Director of Training, ZERO TO THREE

HealthySteps Model Fidelity: Borrego, Rady, and RUHS are all making significant progress in achieving HealthySteps' Service Fidelity requirements across the three tiers of service provided to children and families. Riverside County's HealthySteps pilot sites have been recognized by ZERO TO THREE as models of successful implementation of HealthySteps in California and beyond.

Integrating HealthySteps into Existing Practices: As with any new program, certain challenges arose when integrating HealthySteps into existing medical practices. Sites had to rethink the way in which they conducted and utilized screening tools and broadened their team with the addition of the HealthySteps Specialists. While ultimately this was successful, it requires a change in thinking about how care is delivered, which takes time and commitment across all of the practice.

Data Collection & Documentation: The HealthySteps model requires ongoing data collection in order to determine if sites are meeting fidelity requirements. Tailoring existing data systems to meet HealthySteps requirements took significant time. The investment of time in building and integrating data collection systems is now allowing the practices to gather relevant data to not only meet fidelity tracking requirements, but also to inform their work.

COVID-19 Response: The COVID-19 pandemic altered the ways in which families received care in the midst of national stay-at-home orders. HealthySteps teams adjusted their service delivery to provide telehealth services in order to continue monitoring children's and families' progress in achieving developmental goals. The ability to be nimble and be responsive to families' needs speaks to both the commitment of the pilot practices, as well as the value of HealthySteps in providing supportive services to families.

"[We] made immediate changes to [our] program, due to the public health emergency. Moving our HealthySteps Specialist (HSS) out of the clinics and having them work remotely was something we were not prepared to do, [but our] HSS [has continued to provide] the support...families needed during this time of disparity and uncertainty."

2019 - 2020 Performance Progress Report, Borrego



Services Provided:

Screenings for Children: Rady's utilizes the following tools to help assess the developmental and behavioral state of children served: M-CHAT, a modified Survey of Well-being of Young Children (SWYC), PHQ-9, and ASQs.⁴²

Screening for Families: To better serve children and their families, Rady administers a family needs assessment for Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) as adapted from the SWYC. Elements captured in these assessments are also being monitored via the child's primary care physician during office visits.⁴³

Support for Families: Rady provides all its HealthySteps families with an on-demand telephone support line for families seeking assistance on their child's development. For families exhibiting needs for extra support (Tier 2 and Tier 3 families), ongoing consultation is provided by Rady's HealthySteps Specialists.⁴⁴

Referrals for Children & Families: Families receiving support have been referred to therapy for parents, early care and education services including Early Head Start, and behavioral and emotional support services for children.⁴⁵

Program Spotlight: Rady Children's Hospital⁴¹

Rady Children's Hospital has demonstrated noteworthy progress in moving towards ZERO TO THREE's HealthySteps model fidelity. The following program highlights Rady's approach and progress.

Sites: HealthySteps was piloted at Rady Children's Hospital's Murrieta and Temecula **parkway** locations.



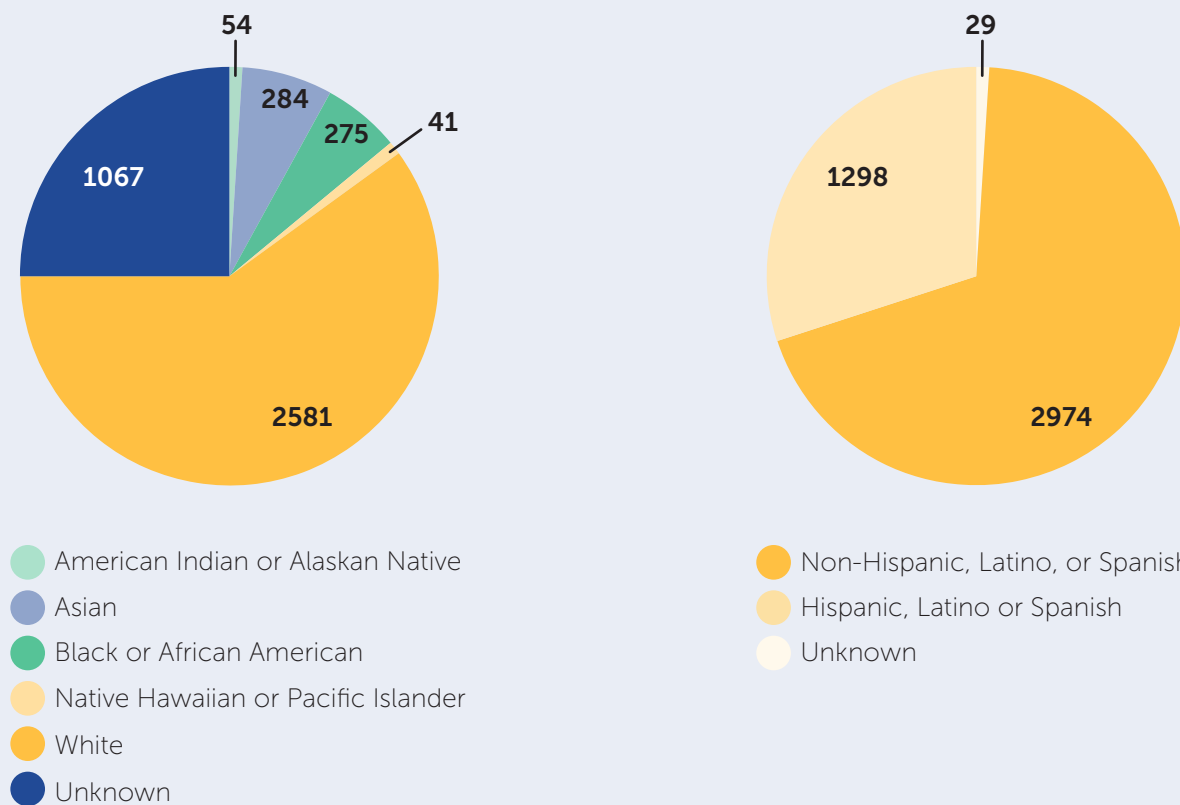
Results

In FY 2020-21 through Rady's HealthySteps sites:

- **Almost 2000 children age 0-3** received at least one developmental, social-emotional, or autism screening (note: children who received multiple screenings are double counted)
- **Over 300 children age 0-3** received Tier 2 services
- **99-100% of children** who were identified as needing Tier 2 services received a consult with the HealthySteps Specialist within 3 months of being identified
- **Over 1,300 children age 0-3** received Tier 3 services

Family Characteristics

Children Served by Race 2020⁴⁶



Rady's HealthySteps Service Fidelity Progress

Each HealthySteps site is expected to be working towards model fidelity and is expected to meet specific standards. ZERO TO THREE completes an annual, HealthySteps Fidelity Scorecard to track each sites' progress, against fidelity indicators. Rady has made significant progress in moving towards fidelity across all tiers of services and has achieved optimal fidelity in Tier 2 in both of its locations. This means that in addition to receiving screenings, families are receiving child development and behavioral consults, care coordination/case management and systems navigation, positive parenting information and access to early learning resources that are timely and responsive. This is vital for helping families and children thrive.

	Murrieta	Temecula
Tier 1 - Universal Services	2.6	2.5
Tier 2 - Short-Term Supports	4.0	4.0
Tier 3 - Comprehensive Services	2.5	2.8

Source: HealthySteps Fidelity Scorecard

Note: Scores shown are the average of individual indicator scores relevant to each tier.

Scoring legend: 0 = did not begin; 1 = does not meet fidelity; 2 = approaching fidelity; 3 = meets basic fidelity; 4 = meets optimal fidelity

Other Accomplishments

- Rady was selected to participate in the Harvard Center for the Developing Child, Health's Early Roots and Origins (HERO) study, focused on validating the screening process for measuring toxic stress on young children.
- Rady was selected by ZERO TO THREE to participate in a pilot study of their Return on Investment (ROI) calculator for its sites to capture the cost-savings benefits of HealthySteps.⁴⁷



The Opportunity of HealthySteps



The launch of the HealthySteps pilot in Riverside County has brought an interdisciplinary, pediatric, primary care approach to the county that promotes nurturing parenting and healthy development for babies and toddlers through one of their most trusted sources of support – their pediatric providers. The inclusion of HealthySteps Specialists as part of their practices' primary care teams, as well as the whole-family approach in the HealthySteps pilot sites, is setting a new standard of pediatric care that is yielding positive outcomes for young children and their families. As First 5 Riverside County and its partners look ahead, there are a number of opportunities to explore:

- 1. Expansion in a Range of Pediatric Settings:** The success of the HealthySteps pilot in Riverside County across multiple primary care settings including a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), a non-profit children's hospital and a public general hospital with services provided in both neighborhood clinics and community health centers, highlights the opportunity of bringing this standard of care to children and families receiving their primary care in diverse settings.
- 2. Short- and Long-Term Cost-Savings to Medicaid:** HealthySteps has a strong commitment to serve children with Medicaid health coverage and explicitly target areas of health inequity. Due to the program's ability to impact both child and caregiver health trajectories, HealthySteps drives significant Medicaid cost savings, even when evaluated against a short time horizon.⁴⁸ In looking at the short-term cost savings over a period of 12 months, Medicaid agencies save an estimated **\$2.63 for every \$1 invested** in HealthySteps.⁴⁹ **This is an average Medicaid Return on Investment (ROI) of 163%.⁵⁰**

In addition to short-term health care savings, there are long-term cost savings that may be attributed to reductions in the need for developmental and special education services, prevention of chronic diseases, reduced involvement in juvenile justice, and higher educational attainment.⁵¹ HealthySteps sites in Riverside County are currently working with ZERO TO THREE to determine the actual and potential cost savings and return on investment of HealthySteps. HealthySteps provides an opportunity to actualize short and long-term savings through partnerships across the county.

- 3. Building an Integrated System of Preventative Care:** First 5 Riverside County has prioritized early intervention investments that build a foundation for a system of care that emphasizes (i) prevention, (ii) support for clinical and community linkages, and (iii) promotion of population-based approaches to addressing children's comprehensive needs.⁵² Riverside's investments in HealthySteps, Help Me Grow, and Home Visiting programs act as key drivers in actualizing a comprehensive care model of "systemized prevention."⁵³ First 5 envisions an early identification and intervention system that leverages its existing program investments to provide families with multiple entry points to care:
 - **Universal Services:** providing universal access to early identification and intervention services. Services include HealthySteps Tier 1 services, Light-Touch Home Visiting* programs, and Help Me Grow
 - **Preventative Care:** providing services to families with moderate needs. Services include HealthySteps Tier 2 services, Moderate-Touch Home Visiting* programs, and Help Me Grow
 - **Safety Net:** providing comprehensive services to children and families exhibiting the highest needs for care. Services include HealthySteps Tier 3 services, Intensive Home Visiting programs, and Help Me Grow⁵⁴

*Light and Moderate-Touch Home Visiting does not exist in Riverside County.

SYSTEMATIZING PREVENTION



This comprehensive model of care prioritizes prevention, levels of service based on the complexity of needs and concerns that a family might face, and creates a network of support that meets families where they are in the community, in their homes, or in their pediatrician’s office. Together, First 5’s program investments aid young children and their families with their immediate early child development needs and beyond, to address the social determinants of health, contributing the healthy development of the “whole child”.⁵⁵

First 5 Riverside County’s Early Intervention System Investments

HealthySteps: A national initiative that focuses on the importance of the first three years of life. HealthySteps emphasizes a close relationship between healthcare professionals and families in addressing the physical, emotional and cognitive growth and development of children from birth to age three.

Help Me Grow Inland Empire: A system model that works to promote cross-sector collaboration to build efficient and effective early childhood systems that mitigate the impact of adversity and support protective factors among families, so that all children can grow, develop, and thrive to their full potential.

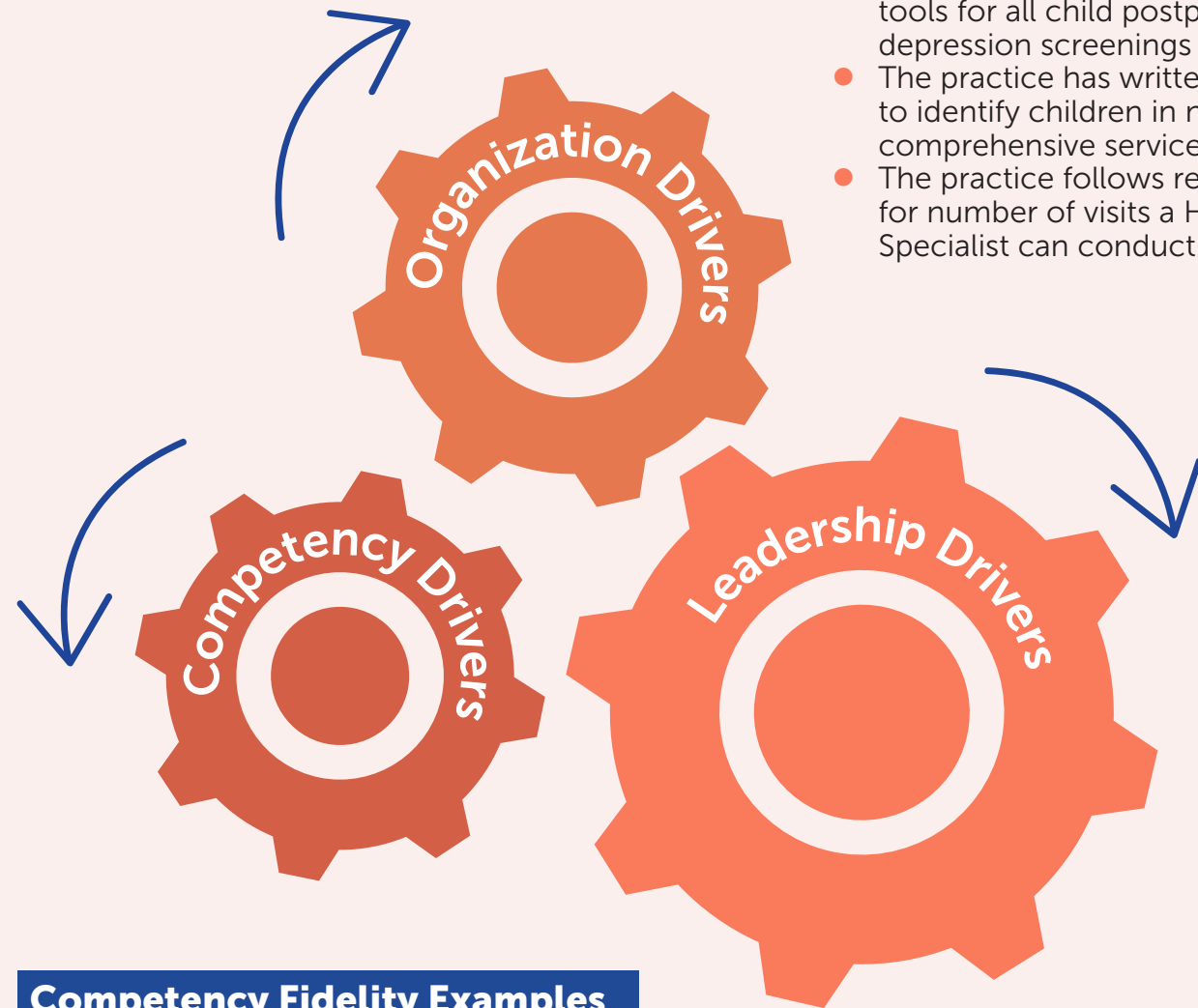
Home Visiting: In partnership with community organizations and other initiatives across the county, home visitation brings comprehensive support for children’s development within the context of the family and home environment and assists families with identifying and navigating community- and public- services and supports. Home visiting also provides evidence-based validated developmental, risk and other screenings to families where they are as well as provides care coordination in order to better assist families in receiving early identification and intervention services.

Looking Forward

HealthySteps’ ability to increase families’ access to health services through systems navigation and expertise related to early child development makes the program a valuable component of First 5 Riverside County’s investment landscape in early intervention. The HealthySteps Pilot in Riverside County is demonstrating the power and potential for changing the way that young children’s development is supported in a range of pediatric settings and in the context of the communities in which families live, that capitalize on the natural level of engagement between families and primary care providers. Through HealthySteps and First 5’s other investments in early intervention, Riverside County families are equipped with a variety of pathways to achieve positive developmental outcomes for their young children. First 5 Riverside County is committed to continuing to work with its community partners to build equitable systems of support for children and families throughout the county.

First 5 Riverside County and its HealthySteps partners invite other health, education, social service agencies and providers, and elected leaders to learn more about HealthySteps and how Riverside County can lead the state and the country in setting the highest standard of care for our youngest children and their families.

Administrative Fidelity ⁵⁶



Organization Fidelity Examples

- The practice uses validated screening tools for all child postpartum depression screenings
- The practice has written guidelines to identify children in need of more comprehensive services
- The practice follows recommendations for number of visits a HealthySteps Specialist can conduct in a single day

Competency Fidelity Examples

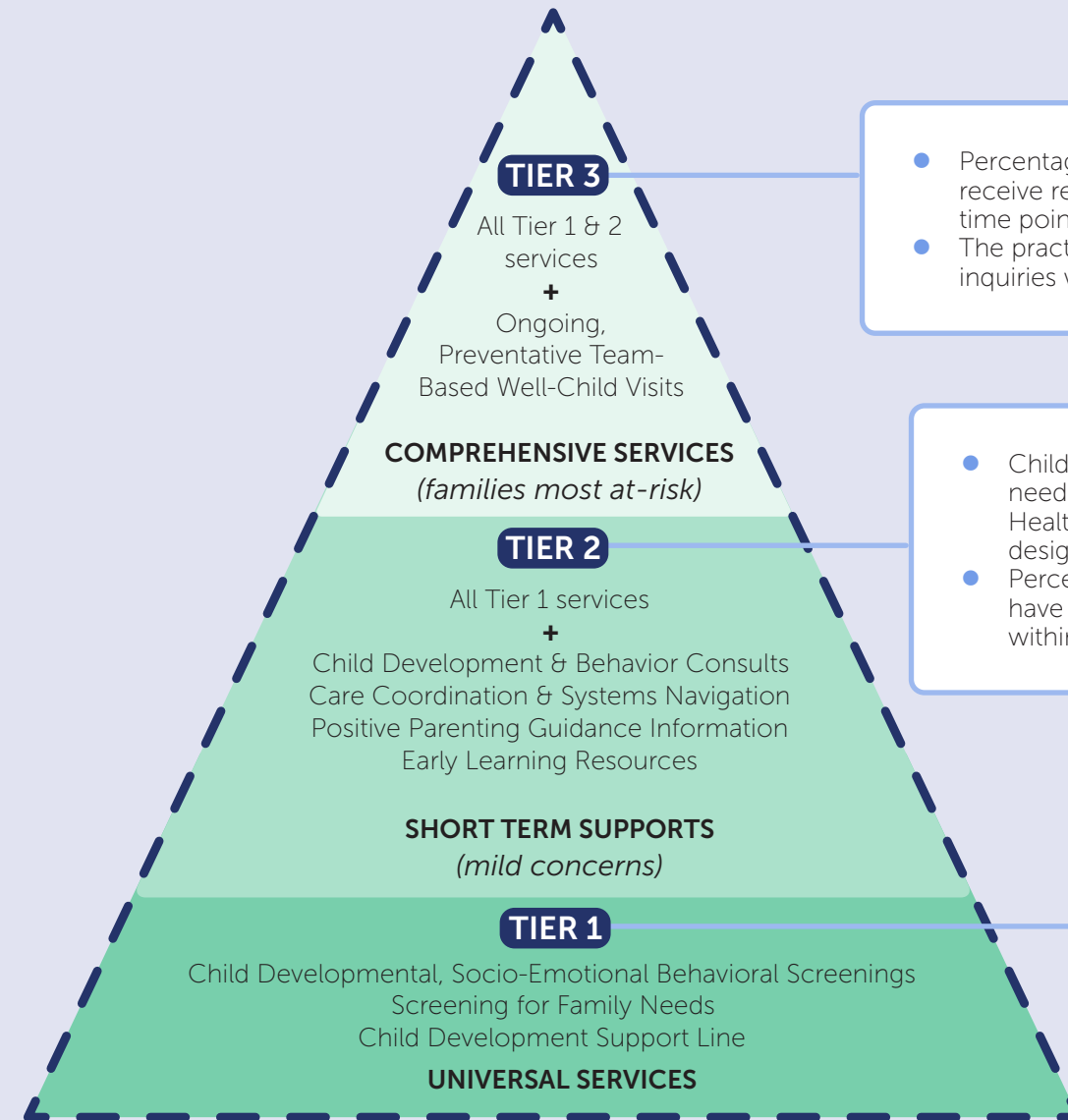
- Key staff participate in an initial multi-part training and multiple technical assistance calls with the National Office
- HealthySteps Specialists hold at least a Bachelor's degree, with a Master's degree strongly preferred
- HealthySteps Specialists receive reflective supervision at least 1x/month in addition to logistical supervision

Leadership Fidelity Examples

- The practice has an identified Physician Champion
- The practice completes an implementation plan during onboarding

Service Fidelity ⁵⁷

HealthySteps Levels & Core Components



Fidelity Examples

- Percentages of children/families that receive required screenings at designated time points
- The practice responds to support line inquiries within a designated timeframe

- Children with an identified need receive a consult with the HealthySteps Specialist within a designated timeframe
- Percentage of children/families that have a referral outcome documented within a designated timeframe

- Percentage of children who receive a specific number of ongoing, preventative time-based well-child visits within a designated timeframe.

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