



# Prevent Child Abuse Virginia™

## PRESS RELEASE

Garrett Johnson  
Prevent Child Abuse Virginia  
Public Relations Manager  
(804) 359.6166

### **Prevent Child Abuse Virginia Accredited for Quality Service as a Multi-Site System by Prevent Child Abuse America *Leading National Child Abuse Prevention Organization Accredits Multi-Site Healthy Families Program in Virginia to Serve At-Risk Families***

**RICHMOND, VA** - Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) announced today that the Healthy Families America (HFA) affiliate, Prevent Child Abuse Virginia has been accredited as a multi-site provider of high quality home visiting services to families who want to improve their child's health, nutrition and developmental outcomes.

HFA is a signature program of PCA America that has been providing home visiting services for more than 20 years. Expectant and new parents have common questions about their child's development. HFA connects with families through community partners like hospitals and pediatricians to find the answers to their questions, meeting within the familiarity and convenience of the family's own home. HFA is an accessible, voluntary and well received service.

"The American Dream starts with a happy, healthy childhood," said Dan Duffy, President and CEO of PCA America. "As parents, we all have questions from time to time. Our HFA professionals offer evidence-based best practices to provide answers to questions, individualized support when needed most, and linkages to community services. As we congratulate the 33 Virginia sites in this program we also recognize the state and community leadership that has contributed to success across the Commonwealth."

The accreditation process is based upon a stringent set of 12 critical elements grounded in more than 30 years of research. The process involves an in-depth examination of the site's operation, as well as, the quality of the visits made by HFA home visitors.

Prevent Child Abuse Virginia  
8100 Three Chopt Rd. Suite 212, Richmond, VA 23229  
(804) 359.6166  
[www.PCAV.org](http://www.PCAV.org)

“We commend Prevent Child Abuse Virginia for opening itself up to such an intensive review process,” said Cydney Wessel, National Director of HFA. “We believe that all families and all communities deserve access to quality home visiting services.” Prevent Child Abuse Virginia will serve families and communities all over Virginia with the 33 sites as well as with resources from our other statewide partners.

Home visitors in each community receive extensive training in a wide range of areas that can cause stress and worry to just about every new parent: caring for a new baby, ensuring the baby is receiving the nutrition needed, promoting healthy child development and coping with a myriad of other potential stresses, such as financial, housing, partner relationship, etc., that may become heightened with an addition to the family.

HFA is the sole topic featured in an issue of The Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community (Volume 34, Numbers 1/2 2007). The title of the issue is “The Healthy Families America Initiative: Integrating Research, Theory, and Practice,” and was edited by researcher Dr. Joe Galano. There are 11 distinct articles about various aspects of HFA and authors include a number of PCA America national office staff including Senior Director of Research, Kathryn Harding.

PCA America was established in 1972 with the belief that child abuse and neglect is preventable. The not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization is committed to preventing child abuse in all forms through education, research, public awareness, and public policy development. Today, PCA America has 50 statewide chapters.

PCA America implemented the Healthy Families America (HFA) initiative in 1992 in partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities, building on two decades of research in the field of home visiting. HFA serves families of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, meeting the needs of close to 600 communities in 40 states, DC, the U.S. Territories and Canada.

Healthy Families America is an effective and proven evidence-based home visiting program according the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. PCA America is proud to support HFA and to be part of a national coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the home visiting field.

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