

# Children First helps children's lives and relationships

Children First, also known as Oklahoma's Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), has been improving the quality of participant children's lives and relationships since the April 1997. Since the initiation of the Children First program in Oklahoma there has been a drastic decrease in the percent of child abuse and neglect and client use of government assistance programs. A 25% decrease in prenatal smoking by mothers has been reported in states where Nurse-Family Partnership is available (NIEER, 2005). A 44% decrease in problems related to drug and alcohol use in participating mothers 15 years following the birth of their first child (NIEER, 2005). Rates of childhood immunization by age two (97%) exceed statewide rates of 72% (Oklahoma State Department of Health). Mothers who participated in NFP raise teenagers with 81% fewer criminal convictions than peers from similar backgrounds, fewer sex partners, less substance abuse, and fewer instances of running away from home (Newsweek, 2005). Children First clients experience approximately 50% less infant deaths in the first year of life than mother's who do not have a home visitation nurse (Oklahoma State Department of Health).

One of the biggest problems facing Children First participation is client attrition. The program's developer and lead researcher, Dr. David Olds is now undergoing a study to determine interventions to prevent client attrition. Dr. Olds's research focuses on the quality of nurse-client relationship through communication and flexibility. Oklahoma Children First nurses are studying Miller and Rollnick's *Motivational Interviewing* to facilitate communication and promote client self-efficacy. As a part of Dr. Olds's study, Children First nurses in Oklahoma county are offering clients flexible visit schedules, control of visit content, and even the ability to request a new nurse home visitor if desired. Dr. Olds's statistics show a 95% client retention rate 3 months post enrollment and a 75% retention rate 11 months post enrollments since initiation of the attrition study. Children First nurses value the programs effect on Oklahoma's first-time mothers and their children. Participation in Dr. Olds's study has given Oklahoma county nurses the ability to retain clients who may have chosen to drop out of the program under previous program guidelines. The overall impact of The Nurse-Family Partnership program on Oklahoma's children will reduce the potential for neglect and abuse and improve the quality of life.