



# Santa Barbara County Education Office

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Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent of Schools

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Welcome Every Baby program certified as evidence-based model**

The Santa Barbara County Education Office is pleased to announce the “Welcome Every Baby” program is now certified as an evidence-based Family Connects model. WEB is a program that has provided more than 16,000 nurse home visits in Santa Barbara County for families with newborns for over 19 years. In the last 11 years, this program has been provided as part of the Children and Family Resource Services, a partnership with the Santa Barbara County Education Office. In addition to the Family Connect certification, the program is getting a new name and a fresh look.

Within the first three weeks after the baby’s birth, a registered nurse visits the family in their home to check on mother and baby, offer supportive guidance on newborn care and feeding, and link the family to community resources based on their unique needs. Nurses may return for follow-up visits, if needed, and they ensure families are connected back to their medical providers for continued care.

Originally launched in 2000, as a planning grant funded by First 5 Santa Barbara County, this innovative approach to positive early childhood outcomes will now be known as Welcome Every Baby (WEB) Family Connects. WEB Family Connects is primarily funded by First 5 Santa Barbara County, Cottage Hospital, and the Bower Foundation.

Family Connects is an evidence-based model for supporting newborns and their families, and it is free for every eligible family\* in Santa Barbara County with a new baby. “Eligible families” are those not otherwise served by Public Health’s Maternal Child & Adolescent Health Program or Marian’s Dignity Health Home Health.

The Family Connects model was created by the Center for Child & Family Policy (CCFP) at Duke University in partnership with the Durham County Department of Public Health and the Center for Child & Family Health (CCFH), a community-based provider of family support services.

Ongoing randomized, controlled trials — results of which have been published in the journals *Pediatrics* and *American Journal of Public Health* — have shown the

remarkable efficacy of the Family Connects model. These studies have shown that families that received a nurse home visit demonstrated higher quality parenting practices, better maternal mental health, safer home environments, higher quality child care selection, and fewer hospitalizations or emergency room visits for their child, when compared to families who did not receive a nurse home visit.

Based on these strong outcomes, there has been widespread interest in replicating the Family Connects model in communities throughout the U.S. To meet this demand, CCFP and CCFH developed a framework for assessing community readiness, training agencies to deliver the service, and providing ongoing technical support. In 2018, Family Connects International was established at the Duke Center for Child & Family Policy to accelerate the development of new program sites. There are now 16 Family Connects sites actively providing nurse home visits in 10 states, and 14 others are in some phase of implementation.

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