

## Family Connects nurses feel that they are making a difference

*"I have really enjoyed helping families in my hometown connect with local resources that many people don't know about. The idea of giving families the best chance at raising their child/children just makes me happy! I feel blessed to be a part of such a wonderful program."*

*"Having spent 29 years as an RN working with mothers & babies, I have found helping families through Family Connects very rewarding. I have always felt education is vital in helping mothers to be able to care for their families and have found providing this education very rewarding as a nurse."*

*"It is very rewarding to help families in our community. As an inpatient nurse, I have many years of experience helping families in the acute setting. Being involved with families through Family Connects is rewarding on a whole new level. Empowering families at such an important stage in their lives is amazing."*

*"Since beginning patient/family interactions in October 2021, I feel our team has made a strong connection and impact! Whether it is a new mom or someone with multiple children that we are working with, we have found that the topics we discuss, provide education on, and seek resources for have made a difference by decreasing stress levels and easing this very busy postpartum period. This ranges from families with minimal complications to those with + substance use, DSS/CPS involvement, medical conditions, mental health issues, and lack of housing."*

*"We are truly humbled by our ability to work so closely with our families and to assist them in the way that this program allows."*

*"I think this program is great for all mothers but most valuable to first time mothers. There's so much education and support that can be offered to help to reassure/teach new moms to make them feel more comfortable with caring for their newborn."*

## Family Connects make a difference by....

- Educating families on taking care of their newborn.
- Creating critical connects to community partners to support families.
- Providing mental health resources for mothers who are experiencing postpartum depression.
- Supporting the emotional needs that arise from becoming pregnant, giving birth, and starting a family.
- Identifying wide-spread community problems or needs through on-going community support.

## Family Connects make a difference at the individual family level

### Connecting families to resources

- Family Connects supported a mother new to the U.S. The mother did not speak English, had very little knowledge of resources in the area, and was suffering from a history of abuse and poverty. Her nurse was able to assist her with phone calls, advocate for her with providers, and arrange needed transportation. Through these interactions with her Family Connects nurse, she gained new knowledge and became empowered to make educated decisions for her family.
- A 19-year-old mother found out unexpectedly she was in labor after arriving at the hospital for abdominal pain. Through Family Connects, she was able to receive a needed pack-n-play, a breast pump, and a connection to a support group of young mothers.
- Family Connects supported a set of paternal aunts serving as guardians for their infant relative after a case of maternal substance abuse and child neglect. The aunts had many concerns regarding their new role. Through Family Connects, their nurse was able to identify their needs and connect them to valuable resources.
- Many families did not have a safe space for their child to sleep. Due to critical need for safe sleep, Family Connects was able to provide pack-n-plays for infants to sleep.
- A mother receiving Family Connects support did not have a stroller. Through Family Connects, she was able to receive a needed stroller.
- In many cases, families are experiencing homelessness or trouble with housing. Through critical connections, Family Connects nurses can support families, connecting the dots between community resources and families.



### Providing emotional support to families

- A Family Connects nurse described a mother as being very nervous. To support the first-time mother, the nurse provided education and reassurance, reinforcing the mother's value and how well she was doing.
- Family Connects can help support mothers who may not have a strong support system. The emotional support and resource support provided can be critical.

## Family Connects make a difference at the community level

- Family Connects nurses can also create change for parents outside of the Family Connects program. At a birthing hospital, a Family Connects nurse realized that discharge education was lacking critical information for families. She is now training the unit coordinator at the hospital to enhance discharge education for families giving birth. Additional families can now receive the benefit of improved parental education!
- In one community, Family Connects nurses were able to identify a trend of many infants having low Vitamin D. Nurses were then able to offer valuable support.
- One Family Connects provider is participating with a partner organization to raise community awareness around perinatal mood disorders. Through this relationship, needed education and support will be provided to the community.
- Family Connects identified that many families were not yet reading to their babies, did not have physical books on hand, and did not recognize the need for supervised tummy time. Nurses were able to provide needed education and created a connection to Dolly Parton Imagination Library as well as other community resources.

