



Up START

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS





UPSTART COMMUNITY PROGRAMS



Building Futures - Every Child Thrives, Every Family Supported

The Division of Public Health Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital was established in recognition that complex family and community forces play a substantial role in the health and well-being of children and families. In response to community needs and feedback, in 2022 the Division launched upSTART Community Programs, a diverse suite of community-based programs offered to families with young children.

upSTART includes programs and services targeting:

- **Early language and brain development**
- **Positive parenting**
- **Early support for developmental delays**
- **Maternal mental health**
- **Maternal and infant health and wellness**
- **Preparation for newborns**
- **Basic needs**
- **Connection to resources**

upSTART Community Programs **build family resilience, strengthen family stability, increase protective factors, and reduce risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect.**

UNIFYING MISSION

To ensure that all families with young children in the Greater Houston region have access to the knowledge, tools, services, and resources needed for their children to thrive.

OUR VISION

Every child's health and development are prioritized and nurtured through a community that empowers and supports families.

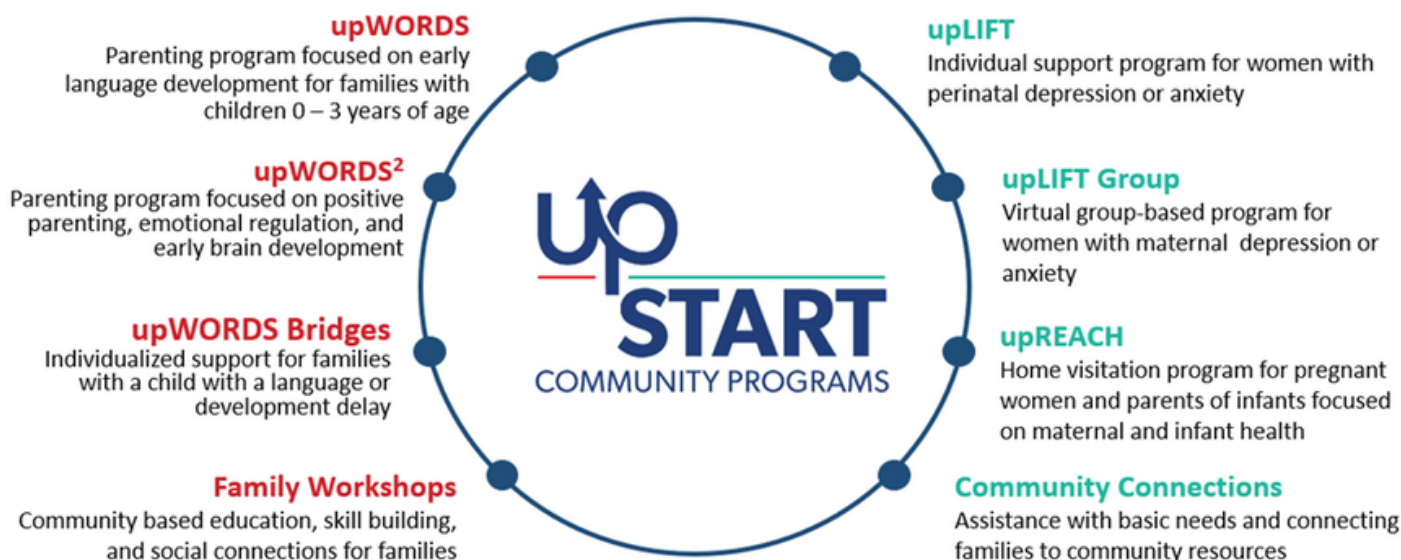
OUR VALUES

- **Safety and Well-Being**
- **Cultural Humility**
- **Family-Centered Approach**
- **Holistic Family Support**
- **Strengths-Based Practice**
- **Trauma-Responsive Care**
- **Collaboration**
- **Ongoing Learning**
- **Ethical Responsibility**

"Hello! First of all, I want to thank the uplift group for their help towards me. The truth is that it was very helpful to me since they helped me get through my depression. There were times when I felt bad and the truth is that they were really helpful for me. A lot of help now I feel renewed I have left where I thought I couldn't it was not easy but with your help and the love you give to your work everything is possible I am more than grateful thank you very much!!"

- Message from upLIFT Program Participant

UPSTART PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



SERVICE NUMBERS

3,961
Total Served

~1,500
Served Annually

15%
Participate in Multiple Programs

- **upWORDS:** 3,044 children (since 2016)
- **upWORDS²:** 491 children
- **upWORDS Bridges:** 250 children
- **upLIFT:** 315 Families
- **upLIFT Group:** 94 Families
- **upREACH:** 508 families
- **Community Connections:** 4,104 referrals; 715 families received direct assistance
- **Family Workshops:** 759 attendees

QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS

"I was really **worried about my diabetes**. In the beginning, my pregnancy was rough, and the **education helped me so much as a first-time mother**. I felt like I was getting prepared correctly."

"I am **more conscious**. Especially with my older daughter, every time I want to explode, I take a **deep breath**. I am able to calm myself down before I speak to her. I realize that I wasn't being the best model for her. I am often her trigger."

"What has been the most helpful thing about the services is being able to be connected to the government **early education services**. My child is now awaiting being accepted to **receive speech therapy services** through the government."

upSTART Community Programs is provided by
Baylor College of Medicine and
Texas Children's Hospital



FOR MORE INFORMATION



www.texaschildrens.org/upstart



upSTARTHouston@bcm.edu

UPWORDS



Program Overview

The early years are a time of incredible brain growth, with **millions** of connections forming every **second**. **Positive interactions with parents are crucial, as early exposure to language is vital for development.** By talking, singing, and engaging with a child, caregivers lay the foundation for understanding speech patterns, vocabulary acquisition, and fluent communication. Launched in 2016, upWORDS is a group-based program for caregivers of children ages 0-36 months. It teaches simple, research-backed strategies to boost **early brain and language development.**

Program includes:

- 16 one-hour group sessions (inc. two individual meetings)
- Monthly language snapshots
- Use of a LENA "Language FitBit" device
- Weekly reports on talk, turn-taking, and electronic sound exposure

BY THE NUMBERS

82K+     
OVER 82,000 BOOKS DISTRIBUTED

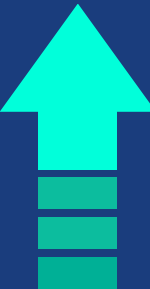

3044
CHILDREN SERVED

SERVED
45 TX COUNTIES
&
248 ZIP CODES

ASIAN: 9.1%
BLACK: 11.5%
HISPANIC: 60.9%
WHITE: 9%
OTHER: 9.5%

43%
Spanish Speaking

OUTCOMES

- 
- CONVERSATIONAL TURNS
 - ADULT WORDS
 - PARENTAL SELF EFFICACY
 - SHARED BOOK READING
 - CHILD LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
 - AWARENESS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- 
- MATERNAL DEPRESSION
 - PARENTAL STRESS



71% GRADUATION RATE



86% OF FAMILIES INCREASE IN CONVERSATIONAL TURNS



88% INCREASE IN ADULT WORDS SPOKEN TO THEIR CHILD

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENTAL SNAPSHOT

Throughout the upWORDS program, families complete the Language Developmental Snapshot, a validated language screening tool. This snapshot helps identify children with a language delay of six months or more. The data below illustrates the percentage of identified delays and the resolution rates over the course of the program. On average, families experience five months of language progress during their time in upWORDS.

912

OF CHILDREN WERE IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A
6-MONTH OR GREATER LANGUAGE DELAY

325

OF FLAGGED SNAPSHOTS WERE RESOLVED
OVER THE COURSE OF THE PROGRAM

Program Benefits

- **Supportive**, group-based model with **peer connection**
- **Personalized feedback** from trained early brain development educators
- LENA “talk pedometer” offers real-time, **trackable progress**
- Access to a **speech-language pathologist** and **sessions on behavior and executive functioning**
- Help from **Community Health Workers** with basic needs and public benefits
- **Referrals** for essentials like baby gear, home safety items, and more

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PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WHO ARE 0 - 36
MONTHS OF AGE

WORDS ABOUT upWORDS FROM PARENTS AT GRADUATION

“We have bonded so much and this has been life changing.”

“I feel like I am a more proactive parent. I used to ignore her often.”

“I learned to be patient with my baby.”

“The program reinforced good behaviors I have and helped me where I lack.”

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT OPTIONS



832-227-1828



www.texaschildrens.org/upwords-program



upWORDS@texaschildrens.org



UPWORDS SUPPORTS



upWORDS²

Based on feedback from families, **upWORDS** expanded its programming to include critical support for early brain development, social-emotional growth, and positive parenting practices. upWORDS² is a comprehensive 10-session program that integrates both group and individual sessions tailored for parents and caregivers of young children.

- **Targeted Support for Social-Emotional Development:** Recognizing the importance of emotional well-being, upWORDS² offers resources and guidance to foster healthy social-emotional growth in children.
- **Strategies for Self-Regulation:** We equip families with practical tools and techniques to help children develop effective self-regulation skills, promoting emotional stability and resilience.
- **Management of Challenging Child Behaviors:** Addressing the concerns of parents, we provide strategies and support for managing challenging behaviors, creating a more harmonious home environment.
- **Interventions for Language and Developmental Delays:** We offer targeted interventions and resources to support children facing language and developmental delays, ensuring they receive the necessary support to thrive.

Use Evidence-Based Methodologies from
Conscious Discipline and
Triple P Stepping Stones



CHILDREN SERVED

“

My first reaction was that I wanted to hit him, but I stopped myself and used a logical consequence for what he had just done.

I was using a lot of threatening tactics to get my children to cooperate, but I realize now I can encourage cooperation in positive ways by using verbal praise and attention.

”

upWORDS Bridges

upWORDS Bridges **supports upWORDS graduates with language or developmental concerns with individual consultations with a bilingual speech-language pathologist.** It offers:

- **Personalized consultations:** Bilingual speech-language pathologist sessions, including screenings and tailored recommendations.
- **Guidance on next steps:** Expert advice for accessing further services.
- **Facilitated developmental evaluations:** Streamlined access for broader developmental concerns.

Bridges connects families to necessary services, ensuring continued support.



CHILDREN SERVED

60

DEVELOPMENTAL
ASSESSMENTS

85%

RECEIVED AUTISM
DIAGNOSIS

I appreciate you explaining these things (prompts, cueing). I feel like we have turned a corner and that he is finally hitting milestones he was supposed to be doing 6 months ago.

I was unable to bond with my child before I received a diagnosis.

I am less stressed. I am watching him consistently imitate new words.



UPLIFT



Program Overview

During pregnancy and postpartum, it is not uncommon for women to have feelings of irritability, guilt, sadness, loneliness, and fear. In fact, **perinatal mood and anxiety disorders** (PMADs), such as postpartum depression (PPD), are a leading cause of complications from pregnancy and childbirth. While PMADs are treatable through social support, therapy, and medication, **access to care, cultural norms, and stigma are obstacles for many women.**

In 2019, Baylor College of Medicine's Division of Public Health Pediatrics' (PHP) research faculty conducted a randomized control trial comparing referral to a brief home visitation program facilitated by a licensed social worker to referral to a psychiatrist with 156 participants. This study demonstrated **home visits with social workers were just as effective as the gold standard of psychiatric treatment** in significantly reducing perinatal depressive symptoms. The study led to the creation of additional modules to better meet the needs of women with perinatal depression and anxiety symptoms.

In 2022, PHP launched the **upLIFT program** at no-cost to pregnant and postpartum women **experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety.** Licensed social workers deliver the evidence-based curriculum in-person or virtually in up to eight one-hour sessions. They use evidence-based tools and strategies to manage participants' emotions and improve their interpersonal skills.

BY THE NUMBERS

Total number served

315

Percent completed program

66%

Average number of sessions

6

Black, 26%

Hispanic, 55%

White, 10%

Other, 9%

36%

Spanish Speaking

2022-2024 EVALUATION RESULTS

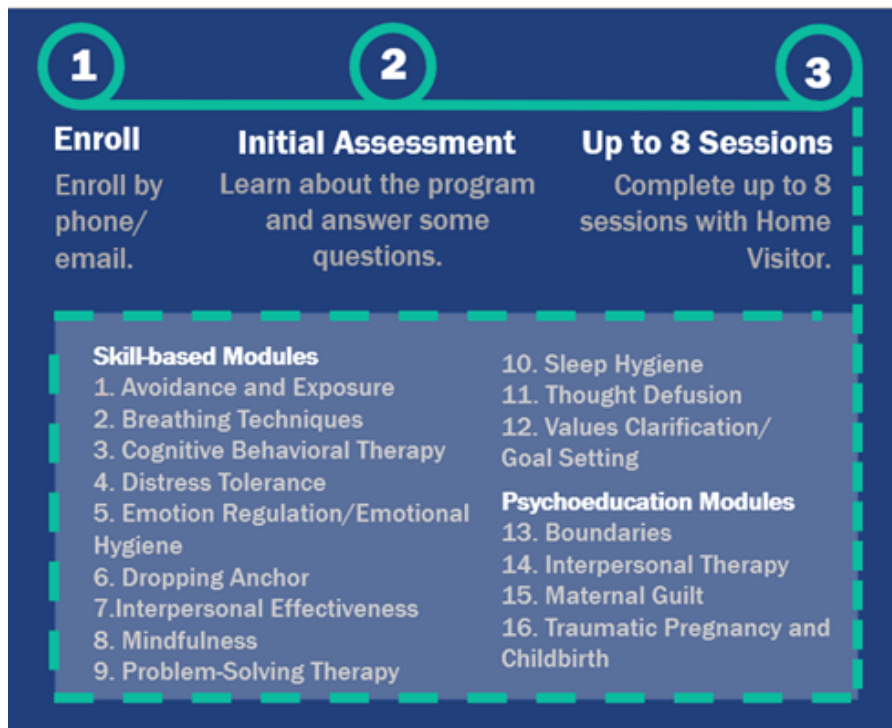


Depressive
Symptoms



Maternal Self-Efficacy
Bonding
Family Functioning
Social Support
Concrete Support
Nurturing and Attachment

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?



PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

PREGNANT OR POSTPARTUM (UP TO 12 MONTHS)

DEMONSTRATED SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION/ANXIETY

NO AGE REQUIREMENT (UNDER 18 YEARS-OLD MUST HAVE LEGAL GUARDIAN CONSENT)

MUST LIVE IN HARRIS, BRAZORIA, CHAMBERS, FORT BEND, GALVESTON, LIBERTY, MONTGOMERY, OR WALLER COUNTIES

Program Benefits

- **Skill-based learning modules** that emphasize practice of evidence-based strategies and tools
- **Psychoeducation modules** that provide information and support to better understand and manage PMAD symptoms
- Access to **care coordination services** provided by Community Health Workers to assist with basic needs, such as food insecurity, bill assistance, and applying for public benefits
- Access to **limited direct assistance** (e.g., baby items, etc.) and community resources through referrals

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Quotes from Program Participants

"My time in the program has helped me tremendously. I'm a first time mom with a trach baby and the amount of times I felt low during this journey Ms. Lorena has helped me realize so much about my situation. I wasn't a big fan of therapy at first but as the sessions continued I've realized how much of a change it made in my day to day life. I highly recommend this program to friends in family, especially to my fellow NICU moms as well. Thank you so much to the Uplift program for getting me through this obstacle in my journey!!"

"With the program, I feel way better. I feel way comfortable. [W]hen my anxiety creeps up on me, I can say, 'No, no. I know how to handle you now. I don't need you to take over my whole day, or week or month.' The fact that I haven't really felt depressed is good. This has helped me a lot."

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT OPTIONS



832-826-0440



upliftformoms@bcm.edu



Submit referrals to redcap.link/uplift



UPLIFT ENHANCEMENTS



upLIFT Group

upLIFT Group aims to empower women who are experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety to navigate the challenges of pregnancy and early motherhood with greater confidence and resilience. By providing evidence-based support and fostering a **supportive community**, the program contributes to **improved maternal mental health** and **overall well-being**, benefiting both mothers and their children.

KEY BENEFITS

SUPPORT
NETWORK

COPING
SKILLS

ANXIETY
RELIEF

SELF-
ESTEEM

upLIFT Teen

The upLIFT Teen program is designed to address the **unique mental health needs of pregnant and parenting teenagers** facing depression and anxiety. Recognizing the challenges of early parenthood, this program provides comprehensive, **personalized support** to empower young mothers.



In-Home Support



Mental Health Professional



Coping Skills Training



Community Referrals

BY THE NUMBERS

Total number served

94

Percent completed program

53%

Average number of sessions

5

“

Personally, all the topics I attended were very helpful for my mental health

I received very practical advice for everyday life. As a mother who suffers from depression, this group has been a great escape from my routine, and a help, since I really don't like to talk to friends about it because I feel judged or I don't feel like talking about my personal problems with anyone. Thank you for the guide to find myself as a woman, and not get totally lost in motherhood, for the conversations, for teaching me to take care of myself...

”

UPREACH



Program Overview

upREACH is a brief home visitation program designed to support expecting and early postpartum families.

- All participants receive a personalized, curriculum-guided core program delivered by a **Community Health Worker** to meet their specific needs.
- Women and infants with high-risk medical conditions or complex needs are offered additional support from a **Registered Nurse**, who use their expertise in health assessment, education, and clinical care to support these families.

The **upREACH** program aims to achieve the following goals:

- **Prepare families** to bring their newborn home to a **safe, stable, and nurturing environment**
- **Identify and prioritize** medical and social needs
- **Educate** families on health and wellness topics during pregnancy and the early postpartum period
- **Ensure** families have the **tools and knowledge** they need to support **maternal and infant wellness**
- **Link families to community resources** to maintain an environment that promotes maternal and infant safety and wellbeing

BY THE NUMBERS...

Total served

508

Percent completed program

82%

Average number of visits

6

Black, 17%

Hispanic, 76%

White, 1%

Asian, 2%

Other, 4%

68%

Spanish Speaking

OUTCOMES



Depressive
Symptoms



Concrete Support
Social Support
Nurturing & Attachment

upREACH Program Content

- **Prioritizing Needs & Goal Setting**
- **Advocating for your health**
- **Healthcare partnerships**
- **Thinking ahead**
- **Maternal prenatal/postpartum health & wellness**
- **Preparing for and ensuring infant safety**
- **Infant brain development**
- **Infant health & feeding**

Program Benefits

- **Promotion of maternal and infant health:** The CHW/RN team help triage and address needs early and connect the participant to their healthcare providers, leading to better maternal and infant health outcomes.
- **Enhanced Access to Resources:** CHWs connect families to essential community resources and services, such as nutritional support, housing assistance, and mental health services. This helps families navigate complex systems and access the support they need.
- **Education on Pregnancy and Infant Safety:** Providing education on topics like safe sleep practices, infant feeding, and prenatal care can significantly reduce risks associated with pregnancy and infancy.

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Baylor College of Medicine and
Texas Children's Hospital



PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

**PREGNANT OR POSTPARTUM
(UP TO 21 DAYS)**

ENGLISH OR SPANISH SPEAKING

**NO AGE REQUIREMENT
(UNDER 18 YEARS-OLD MUST HAVE
LEGAL GUARDIAN CONSENT)**

**MUST LIVE IN HARRIS, BRAZORIA,
CHAMBERS, FORT BEND, GALVESTON,
LIBERTY, MONTGOMERY, OR WALLER
COUNTIES**

“ I was in shock at how willing [upREACH staff] were to help and I learned new helpful things! What an amazing program!

God bless and thank you for the visit and bringing such beautiful cribs. After you left I cried because it was a beautiful detail and thank you for the things for my daughters since we didn't have anything. It was so nice to meet you. You have a nice way of being.

The truth is, thank you very much for your attention, the Lord blesses you and your whole family for such great and immense work. Thank you very much again, blessings.

The beautiful nurse that visited me at home. She was very kind, understanding, and very helpful. God bless you.

”

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



THE CHALLENGE

Many families face **significant obstacles accessing vital healthcare and community services**, hindering their ability to adopt healthy behaviors. These barriers include:

- **Limited Awareness:** Lack of knowledge about available resources.
- **Complex Navigation:** Difficulties with application processes.
- **Basic Needs Insecurity:** Food, housing, utilities, and transportation challenges.

These obstacles prevent families from fully engaging with and benefiting from essential community support.

OUR SOLUTION

To address these critical needs, upSTART programs include **comprehensive Care Coordination services for all participants**. This ensures families receive:

- **Holistic Approach:** Addressing the whole family's needs to promote stability and well-being.
- **Direct Assistance:** Personalized support to navigate healthcare and community resources.
- **Resource Connection:** Help with applications and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles.
- **Basic Needs Support:** Connections to food banks, housing assistance, transportation, and utility support.

BY THE NUMBERS

Total Screenings for Basic Needs
2,934

Referrals to Community Programs
4,104 to 1,335 families

Number Receiving Direct Assistance
715

Family Needs



31% Food Insecure



27% Housing Insecure



23% Health Insurance Needs



20% Unreliable Transportation



PILOT PROJECTS



In the spring of 2024, upSTART Community Programs received additional funding to pilot three new initiatives.

Parent Workshops & Events

Our family workshops and events bring together current and former upSTART participants and other local families with young children to **foster social support, provide essential resources, and encourage meaningful parent-child and parent-to-parent connections.**

Community Health Worker Training

We offer **Community Health Worker Certification Training** for past and current program participants, as well as other community parents seeking workforce skills and certification. In partnership with Trust CHW, we provided 160 DSHS-certified training hours to prepare trainees to become certified Community Health Workers (CHWs) in Texas.

Longterm Care Coordination

We partner with Trust CHW to provide **up to six months of extended care coordination** for upSTART participants requiring additional support beyond what our in-house Community Health Workers can offer. These families often faced multiple challenges and needed long-term, intensive assistance.

1

Large Event

29

Workshops

759

Attendees

63

CHWs Trained

54

Families in extended
care coordination

Thank you

Partners and Funders

upSTART Community Programs would not be possible without the generous support and collaboration of our funders and partners. Our investment in maternal mental health, early childhood development, injury prevention, and family support drives meaningful change across our communities.

Together, we are helping families provide safe, stable, and nurturing environments for their infants and young children—laying the foundation for healthy beginnings and brighter futures.

Thank you for being champions of resilience, connection, and innovation in public health. We are grateful for your partnership and shared commitment to strengthening families.

Partners who help make it happen...

Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries
Baker Ripley
Casa de Esperanza
Casa Juan Diego Shelter
Catholic Charities
Children's Museum of Houston
Clothed by Faith
Community Family Centers
Early Childhood Intervention
Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Harris County Library System
Harris County Public Health
Harris Health System

Houston Food Bank
Houston Health Department
Houston Infant Toddler Coalition
Houston Public Library System
Katy ISD
Kids' Meals
March of Dimes
Memorial Hermann
Meyer Center for Developmental Pediatrics
Network of Behavioral Health Providers
Safe Kids
Santa Maria Hostel
Spring Branch Family Development Center
Texas Children's Health Plan
The Council on Recovery
The Riverside Project
Trust CHW



up START

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

