

My journey with Healthy Families began in 2014 when my first child was three weeks old.

As a first-time parent, in a new place, with limited family nearby, and coming from a tough childhood myself, I knew that I had to be better and do better to stop generational traumas from continuing their hold on my family.

I never heard of the organization prior to giving birth and it was only when a social worker at the hospital asked if I had a support system and if I would be interested in a free program to support my new journey as a parent.

I immediately agreed to be referred. I did not know what to expect from the program, especially as a Black mother in Clackamas County. I had a fear of being judged not just for being low-income, but for the color of my family's skin, for being a young mother, and for the "outdated" parenting style I was accustomed to.

What I was met with instead was the most caring, open minded, non-judgmental parenting program I have ever been a part of.

Healthy Families gave me a non-judgmental ear to lean on, resources to help propel my family forward, the confidence that I can be a great parent, and the knowledge to be my daughter's greatest advocate.

We completed the three -year commitment with my daughter and during that time she flourished and so did I. We were able to have unlimited individualized guidance from our own personal Family Advocate in the comfort of our home, the park, and even at work when I was able to finally secure a job that could fully support my family, thanks in-part to Healthy Families.

Healthy Families is like that having your own personal cheerleader who knows all the right people and shares that knowledge and kindness in the world.

I would have not made it through those formative years without this program. It is essential to our underserved communities. It is a program that helps bring equity to those that are typically forgotten and helps give their children the chance at a bright and healthy future.

Cutting this program, decreasing its funding, or refusing to increase it is taking away a lifeline to the states most vulnerable people—our youth and it is a personal attack on marginalized communities especially Black, Brown, and Low-Income.

What do you want to be remembered for?