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[**Abilities** Network]
SEEING ABILITIES NOT DISABILITIES.

For Immediate Release

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**Abilities Network Healthy Families a Healthy Families America Program,
Accredited for Quality Service by Prevent Child Abuse America
Leading National Child Abuse Prevention Organization Accredits Healthy Families
America program in Baltimore, MD to Serve Families**

Baltimore, MD, April 29, 2009 – Prevent Child Abuse America (PCAA) announced that the Healthy Families America (HFA) affiliate, Abilities Network Healthy Families has been accredited as a provider of high quality home visitation services to families who want to improve their child's health, nutrition and developmental outcomes.

HFA is a signature program of PCAA that has been providing home visitation services for more than 16 years. Expectant and new parents have common questions about their child's development. HFA connects with families through community partners like hospitals and pediatricians to find the answers to their questions, meeting within the familiarity and convenience of the family's own home. HFA is an accessible, voluntary and well received service - 90% of all the families who are invited to participate in HFA's program accept.

"Parents want to be good parents; and as parents we all have had many questions when we realize the importance of raising a child," said Jim Hmurovich, President and CEO of PCAA. "HFA's well-trained home visitors are trusted sources in their own communities. They help provide answers to those questions and when needed, refer parents to other community services. As we congratulate Abilities Network Healthy Families we also should recognize the state leadership and the community engagement that has made this a great benefit for Baltimore. HFA requires community agency involvement and the commitment of community leaders."

The accreditation process is based upon a stringent set of 12 critical elements founded in 20 years of research. The process involves an in-depth examination of the site's operation, as well as, the quality of the visits made by the family workers.

"We commend the Abilities Network Healthy Families for opening itself up to such an intensive review process," said Cydney Wessel, Director of HFA Quality Assurance and Accreditation. "We believe that all families and all communities deserve access to quality home visitation services."



The HFA site in Towson, MD is located at 8503 LaSalle Rd., Towson, MD 21286.

Tomeaka Jupiter, Director of Program Development for Healthy Families states, “We are very excited to have been expedited through the reaccreditation process! I know that this is due to the team's hard work and their commitment to providing quality services to families. “

As part of Healthy Families America, Abilities Network Healthy Families is part of a national initiative serving more than 400 communities across the nation, Healthy Families Baltimore County works with new mothers to develop supportive, enriching parenting practices that help their children and families grow to realize their fullest potential.

Home visitors in each community receive extensive training in a wide range of areas that can cause stress and worry to just about every new parent: caring for a crying baby, ensuring the baby is receiving the nutrition needed, promoting healthy child development and coping with the stresses of the personal relationship and financial changes that may come with an addition to the family.

“When parental stress can be managed effectively, children enjoy safer, healthier and more loving experiences, regardless of the parent’s income or standing,” says Hmurovich.

HFA is the sole topic featured in the current issue of *The Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community* (Volume 34, Numbers 1/2 2007). The title of the issue is “The Healthy Families America Initiative: Integrating Research, Theory, and Practice,” and was edited by researcher Dr. Joe Galano. There are 11 distinct articles about various aspects of HFA and authors include a number of PCAA national office staff including Vice President of Research, Dr. John Holton.

PCAA was established in 1972 with the belief that child abuse and neglect is preventable. The not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization is committed to preventing child abuse in all forms through education, research, public awareness, and public policy development. Today, PCAA has 41 statewide chapters.

PCAA implemented the Healthy Families America (HFA) initiative in 1992 in partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities, building on two decades of research in the field of home visitation. HFA serves families of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, meeting the needs of 420 communities in 35 states, DC and Canada annually.

PCAA is proud to be part of a national coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the home visitation field. Other members include HIPPIY USA, Parents as Teachers, Child Family Partnership, all home visiting programs, as well as, many non-home visiting members including Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, Child Welfare League of America, Children’s Defense Fund, and Voices for America’s Children.

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