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The Baby Fold's Healthy Start Program Earns National Accreditation from Healthy Families America

Normal, IL – The Baby Fold's Healthy Start program has earned national accreditation from Healthy Families America (HFA), recognizing its delivery of high-quality, evidence-based home visiting services for expectant families and families with infants and young children.

Healthy Start provides in-home support that helps strengthen parent-child relationships, promote healthy child development, and connect families with community resources during a child's earliest years.

The accreditation process is based upon a stringent set of 12 critical elements grounded in more than 30 years of research and includes an in-depth examination of program operations and the quality of home visits. This achievement reflects the strength of Healthy Start's experienced staff and its commitment to best practices that support positive outcomes for children and families.

"This accreditation reflects the extraordinary dedication of our Healthy Start team," said Clete Winkelmann, CEO of The Baby Fold. "The process is intentionally rigorous, and for good reason—it sharpens best practices and ultimately ensures the strongest possible outcomes for the children and families we serve. We are incredibly proud of our staff for reaching this milestone."

"Healthy Start staff work alongside families during some of life's most formative and sometimes challenging moments," said Theresa Lawrence, Director of Early Childhood Services at The Baby Fold. "This accreditation affirms the quality, consistency, and heart our team brings to every home visit. It strengthens our ability to support nurturing parent-child relationships and meet families where they are—with respect, care, and expertise."

"HFA sites utilize evidence-based best practices to provide individualized support to families when needed most, and linkages to community services," said Melissa Merrick, President and CEO of Prevent Child Abuse America, who oversees HFA. "We congratulate The Baby Fold and we commend the staff for their leadership and commitment that has contributed to this most notable and highly regarded achievement."

The Baby Fold's Healthy Start is a free, voluntary home visiting program that supports expectant parents and families with infants under 3 months of age in McLean County. The program also offers doula services for expectant families. Families partner with a Family Support Specialist through weekly visits during pregnancy and regular visits after birth, with services available until a child is at least 3 years old. The program accepts referrals from hospitals, schools, the health department, friends, family, and current or former participants, and also welcomes self-referrals.

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