

Narrator: Isaiah, Falcom, Michael, Natalie and Keeyana: Five children among thousands whose families are receiving powerful guidance through relationships they are building with Head Start home visitors. The Head Start home-based program option serves children and their families from birth through age five. In this video you will see how home visitors partner with parents to provide comprehensive child development services to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The Head Start Program Performance Standards are federal regulations that programs must follow to deliver high quality, comprehensive Head Start services. Pam McGinley is a home visitor in Homer, Alaska. Falcom Greear's parents chose the home-based option to help address his sensory integration delays.

Pam McGinley: Come on in. There's all kinds of kids ready to play with you.

Narrator: Pam McGinley is only in her second week as this family's home visitor. She is just getting to know Falcom and his family; and is building new relationships.

Pam McGinley: I think Falcom is kind of a young three. Some children that I've worked with have never been away from mom or dad at all. I just think he needs some time to mature a little bit and learn with a lot of adults in the social situation that can help guide him before he is really ready to come into the four-day-a-week center-based program. Every time you go on a home visit you never know if what you planned is going to happen, for various reasons, and just getting to know this family and the kids, as it's the beginning of the school year.

Falcom: Pam! Pam McGinley: Who's that? Hi Falcom! Falcom Greear: What's in there? Pam McGinley: What do you think? What do we got in there? Falcom Greear: Ducks. Pam McGinley: You see ducks. Falcom Greear: Monkeys. Pam McGinley: Monkeys. Uh-huh. Shall we come in? Alana Greear: Good morning Pam! Pam McGinley: Good morning!

Narrator: For this home visitor, Pam and Falcom's parents planned together to make play dough from ingredients from the kitchen. Their goal is to see if Falcom can focus on one activity for an extended period.

Pam McGinley: I wasn't really sure because I knew he was kind of an active child and whether play dough was going to engage him.

Falcom Greear: Pam. Pam McGinley: What do we got? Ooh, we got the alum. Falcom Greear: Pam. Pam McGinley: Oh, you're walking so carefully. Good job. There. My goodness that looks heavy. Falcom Greear: Heavy. Alana Greear: We've got the tablespoon and cup. Pam McGinley: And, Falcom decided he wanted to make blue play dough.

Narrator: When Falcom's dad unexpectedly returns home, Pam involves him in the home visit.

Mr. Greear: You want the rolling pin? Pam McGinley: Ooh, Dad has a good idea. Falcom Greear: Rolling pin.

Narrator: So far, so good. Dad has joined in the home visit and Falcom is interested and engaged in the activity.

Falcom Greear: There, I make more fish. Pam McGinley: Alright.

Narrator: With some practice and the help of a cookie cutter, Falcom hones his fish making skill still focusing on the play dough. The strategy appears to be working.

Alana Greear: There it is. Falcom Greear: I got it. Alana Greear: Excellent. Pam McGinley: Wow. Mr. Greear: Use your rolling pin and then you can roll it out. Falcom Greear: I use this.

Pam McGinley: I think he was engaged the whole time and was kind of reluctant to put it away. I was really happy that the dad showed up, because he said that he had to work, and it was very evident that Falcom was happy to see him. He jumped right in and got involved in showing him how to use the rolling pin.

Alana Greear: Well, if Falcom had the time of his life. For me, anytime that Falcom gets a new idea or a new stimulation then we've had a good day. He has such a good time having someone new come, pay attention to him, talk with him at his level that he is just bonding with her really well. It seems... well you can just tell. Today he walked around here screaming her name, "Pam, Pam, Pam." So, I'm thinking it's going really well.

Pam McGinley: That makes me feel good. I'm glad she's feeling that way already. It just touches my heart. He did his happy dance and, of course, I joined right in. But to me, that's just his expression of joy. I think it's great. It's a family tradition that they've started for their family. I think it's wonderful and I support it by doing it with them.

Narrator: In Spokane, Washington, Julie Bostwick-Cosby works with Isaiah and his parents, Shanet and Shawn.

Shanet Abeyta: Good job. Julie Bostwick-Cosby: So you could virtually do that with all the treasures in his drawer. And these become that space where he can put some meaning to: one block is also one; two blocks is also two. So later on, as he develops more math skills, numbers will have a lot more meaning.

Shanet Abeyta: She's just real open. She shares her experiences and allows us to share ours experiences about feeling guilty or if we're frustrated so it's kind of, not pointing the finger, just sharing the experience and letting us move on from there.

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: There's one bird. Can you find something else to go in the egg carton? Huh! Why don't you look in the drawer? Is there something else you can put in the egg carton?

Shawn Liedley: She's helped me learn that you can always...that you can never give too much. Sometime I'll get frustrated. When she first started coming and I'd get frustrated and he'd do something. She helps me out a lot and gives me the motivation to keep giving a whole bunch of efforts. And it pays off. It's cool.

Narrator: On weekly home visits, Julie marks Isaiah's progress as well as his parents advancing skills.

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: What I'd love to do is bring my camera, tape you with Isaiah for about six – eight minutes, just playing as you normally do, and then, I'd love to sit down and look at that tape with you. Okay, you guys will focus on the egg carton activity and I'll bring my camera next time and I'll video tape some play. Shanet Abeyta: Sounds good.

Shawn Liedley: Can you say blue socks? Isaiah: Blue socks. Shawn Liedley: Yeah. There goes one. There goes two. What color shirt is this? Shanet Abeyta: Your shirt is blue. Shawn Liedley: Where are you? There you are.

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: How has it been going with the activity? Shanet Abeyta: Egg carton? Julie Bostwick-Cosby: Yeah, the egg carton. Has he shown an interest? The last time we got together I shared with you that I'd love to have an opportunity to make a family movie.

Narrator: Julie uses video tape to focus on the parent-child relationship. She video tapes each parent individually and then reviews their interactions with Isaiah and their parenting styles.

Isaiah: I did it. Shanet Abeyta: Did you get it? One. Isaiah: I do it. Shanet Abeyta: Oh, Isaiah do it.

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: You know that was really a nice moment. What did you see happen there? Shanet: He was making a change and he wanted to do it. So, I said, "Alright, go ahead." Julie Bostwick-Cosby: Yeah, and you know what's cool about that, Shanet, is you honored that and you supported that. He wanted to be independent, wanted to do it himself. Exploration is really a key part of learning. You're supporting that and you're honoring that. That's really cool. That was really fun. Let's look at some more.

Shanet Abeyta: Can you zip your zipper? Isaiah: A Duh, duh, duh. Shanet Abeyta: Is it stuck? Can I help you? Isaiah: Sure. Shanet Abeyta: Pull this. Huh! Good job! You did it!

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: What happened there? Shanet Abeyta: He was asking for help. Julie Bostwick-Cosby: Yeah, that's what we'd call a need - a "need moment."

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: To show both parents that moment and to raise it their attention was one of great importance for Isaiah's emotional growth and development because he's going to continue throughout his life to have "need me" moments.

Shawn Liedley: What I noticed, what I think is really nice, that she's does a lot more than I do, is when he asks for help she doesn't just do it for him. She'll say, "Okay, you need help. Okay, well here, pull this. You can do it." Shanet Abeyta: I'm pushing for his independence and not doing it for him. And another thing, for me, is my mom would do it for me. Instead of helping me, she'd just do it for me. So, I work hard to help him do it.

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: There's nothing more meaningful than learning about parenting and learning about child development with your self and your own child. The focus for me is to ignite, so to speak, a parent's passion and love in supporting their child. It's a lovely example of success for this young mom with her toddler when maybe other parts of her life are a challenge and a struggle. She's doing a lovely job. It's like filling her cup so she can continue to fill her child's cup.

Narrator: Regular weekly socializations bring Julie's families together at the center.

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: Hey, you found two, Isaiah. One. Two. You found two bears.

Narrator: It's also valuable time for parents to share.

Woman: It's really neat to see how they're growing. Shawn Liedley: To see what phase they're at.

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: My hopes and my dreams for Shanet and Shawn is to stay true and strong to their goals - that they stay true to their child and their support in being there for him as he continues to need them throughout his life.

Narrator: In New York City, Berkis Rodriguez and Miriam Prieto team for home visits to Natalie and her parents, Patricia and Elvis. This morning the team is on their way to visit eleven-month-old Natalie and her mother Patricia. Home visits are conducted in either English or Spanish depending on the preference of the family.

Berkis Rodriguez: The community is basically Latino speaking community. They come from different part of the county but most of them speak Spanish. They have a large population of Dominican, but also Mexican. You can find some Salvadorian and Ecuadorian. So, it's mixed.

Miriam Prieto: Berkis and I are a team because we work together as a team. We basically do everything together.

Berkis Rodriguez: This is a big city and a lot of things happen. It's more beneficial for the child because I might see something that she doesn't see and vice versa. So, I think it's done for safety reasons, but also to have four eyes instead of two.

Berkis Rodriguez: Hi Natalie!

Narrator: Berkis and Miriam have worked together with Patricia through many challenges since Natalie's premature birth.

Patricia Caceras: She stretches out and she starts turning. That's how she'll get here. Berkis Rodriguez: I remember the other day she was going around like that. Patricia Caceras: Now she's turning side to side and she pushes herself like that. Come on. Come on.

Berkis Rodriguez: I think it's really beneficial for Natalie to get home visits because a chance to work in an environment that both of them feel comfortable in.

Patricia Caceras: Come on. You can make it. There you go. You almost got it. Good job. Berkis Rodriguez & Miriam Prieto: (cheer)

Berkis Rodriguez: You remember last week in class when she was going around in circles. Patricia Caceras: Yeah. Berkis Rodriguez: That is the kind of way that she moved last week. Patricia Caceras: Now she is moving side ways. She rocks side ways to reach for things out of her grasp. Berkis Rodriguez: I remember when we came one day and you said that she's rolling. She's keeping more focused. She would give up more easily before.

Patricia Caceras: I was twenty-seven weeks pregnant when I had her. She was one pound thirteen ounces when she was born. She stayed in a hospital for three months. She was born February and she was let go in May.

Patricia Caceras: Da Da. Natalie: Adah dah dah. Berkis Rodriguez & Miriam Prieto: Adah dah. Yeah, you said it! Have you been practicing “floor time” at home?

Patricia Caceras: With premature children, it’s very, very rough road. You’ve got to learn to how to take it one day at a time.

Berkis Rodriguez: This is the first premature child that I have ever worked with. I’ve been doing some reading sort of to get some knowledge about what is expected, what is the next stage...step that Natalie is going to be doing. Basically, I just meet Natalie at the level where she is at and try to take it from there.

Patricia Caceras: She’s doing this. Berkis Rodriguez: She is? Patricia Caceras: She’s counting her fingers making sure all of them are there. It’s like one, two, three.

Patricia Caceras: That’s the one thing with Berkis, she’s always planning new things for Natalie. I’m like, “Berkis, I’m not sure she can do it.” But she’s like, “Yeah, yeah, she can do it. Let’s do it. Let’s do it.” She helps me because I’m really afraid of trying new things with her. She gives me confidence to go, “Okay, let’s go ahead. Let’s do it. She’ll be okay.” I trust her. If Berkis says we could try it, I’m like, “Let’s try it.”

Narrator: The relationship that Patricia has built with Berkis and Miriam inspires her to consider new possibilities for her daughter. Together they set goals to build on Natalie’s emerging skills. The weekly socialization reinforces the work they do on home visits.

Berkis Rodriguez: Who’s that? Who’s that over there? Who’s that girl?

Berkis Rodriguez: We try to put the rattle a little farther and when she masters that we will do something else. But right now we are focusing on having Natalie reach the rattle and work her way towards the rattle. So, it's intentionally that we do it at home and we do it here.

Patricia Caceras: Little by little, they have been helping me recognize and helping me understand everything she is doing. And whatever she is doing, they help me to better it. If she is starting to rock, I'm like, "Okay put a toy out of her reach so she has to rock and reach for it...And learn how to reach for something."

Elvis Caceras: (reading) La boca. La piña.

Narrator: Natalie's father, Elvis, participates in weekly socializations that support her development as well as provide social time with other children and parents.

Group: (singing) Buenos tardes Natalie como estas?

Patricia Caceras: It's a great thing. It's the best that can happen, even starting them off so small. Some people say, "What are they going to do? They're just babies. They don't even sit." I mean, they do a lot. They learn a lot.

Berkis Rodriguez: I feel fortunate that I have the opportunity to have such an impact in the family's life. I feel a great responsibility doing it. That's why everyday, I want to do it the best I can.

Narrator: In remote St. Mary's, Alaska, home visitor Marcia Beans is supervised by Michelle Thompson. Early Head Start is providing valuable services for children and families as well as for professional development opportunities for residents of this remote community.

Michelle Thompson: St. Mary's, it's about 80 miles from the coast on the Yukon. There's about 500 people that live here. Most are native. It's a nice place to live.

Paulassa Beans: The only way you can get into St. Mary's is either by boat, plane, or in the winter snow machine or dog team. Here, out in the villages, jobs are rare. Most of the subsistence is taught generation after generation by providing subsistence, gathering.

Michelle Thompson: Sometimes, there's no blackberries or sometimes, there's no blueberries or no salmonberries. We depend on it. Sometimes, it doesn't give us what we expect.

Narrator: The sun rises over St. Mary's on Alaska's lower Yukon delta. Marcia Beans is in her second year as a home visitor. She plans her visit with her supervisor Michelle Thompson

Michelle Thompson: During this home visit, I'll be doing an observation. We've done this before where I'll just sit back and observe you. Then, when we get back, we'll review this together.

Marcia Beans: Hi, Michael! Michelle's is going to be coming with me for an observation. She'll be observing me as a home visitor.

Narrator: During the home visit, Michelle observes as Marcia conduct language and reading activities and pays attention to dental health.

Agnes George: It's not hot. Michael: Hot. Agnes George: It's not hot. Marcia Beans: Look, I'll show you this guy. Agnes George: He's going to brush his teeth too. It's not hot.

Agnes George: He picked that up from his older brother. His older brother tried the adult kind of toothpaste and it was hot. Well, to him it was hot. So every time he tries something, he'll think it's hot.

Agnes George: He's going to put some on. See. Marcia Beans: There you go. You do a good job in your home. Well, thank you very much for having me visit again.

Agnes George: I'll expect you next week. Marcia Beans: Bye. That was a good visit.

Michelle Thompson: Because in a small community like this, you know everybody; but sometimes, you don't have nobody to turn to and letting that family or that parent know they have somebody. They need support too.

Marcia Beans: I felt really good. It made me feel stronger to be observed by her as a supervisor. It betters me to...the other visits I go to.

Narrator: Dental health is high on the agenda for Early Head Start. At today's socialization, brushing activities take on special importance.

Marcia Beans: We encourage you parents to start brushing your children's teeth and taking care of them and even going to the dentist, for even as young as they are now, to get them checked. It is painful to have to go through the surgery. It's really painful to see because I witnessed that myself.

Adult: Do you guys know how to brush your teeth? Do you stay in spot like this or do you go all around?

Narrator: Because Early Head Start home visitors come from the community, they share a way of life with the families they serve. Activities are designed to reflect and honor their native culture and heritage.

Adult: (Native word) Can you say that? That's how you say brown in Yupik.

Narrator: It's moose hunting season. Today's socialization focuses on "moose" as a common theme.

Group: (singing) A hunting we will go, a hunting we will go. We'll catch a moose and put him in the boat. At last we have some food.

Narrator: Strips of dried fish, local berries, and moose are served as the theme continues during mealtime conversation.

Michelle Thompson: What kind of moose can we catch? Not the momma, not the baby. Child: Not the sister. Michelle Thompson: Only what? Child: The daddy moose. Michelle Thompson: The daddy ones. Yep, that's what we catch.

Michelle Thompson: They need to know where they are coming from. It's good for them to learn at that early age: where they come from, what we do, how we survive here.

Paulassa Beans: I mean, you have, like, nine different hats. You're a social worker, you're a health provider, you're a friend, and you're even a dentist.

Narrator: Early Head Start's contribution to this remote and tight-knit community is positive and measurable.

Debi Baldwin: I think the appeal for Early Head Start is we're building wonderful early childhood professionals from people in the community who will continue to live there and work in the community long after they leave their job at Head Start.

Michelle Thompson: I want the families, the children to learn to respect each other - to respect their parents, to respect their elders. That's something we're losing.

Narrator: In the wide open spaces of rural Texas, Cora Hammond provides valuable support to Mary Lee Lockett who is raising her grandchildren. Cora Hammond has been home visiting families here for twelve years – first, for Head Start and since 1996, for Early Head Start.

Cora Hammond: I usually do the deep, deep rural areas. I work in a little community called Tunnis. In Tunnis, we don't even have a store. The nearest one is at least eight miles.

Mary Lee Lockett: Say good morning. Cora Hammond: Good morning. How are you Miss Lockett? Mary Lee Lockett: Fine.

Narrator: Sometimes home visitors are called upon to join with families at crucial times. Cora found herself in this situation when Mary Lee Lockett suffered the loss of her daughter, the mother of three children.

Mary Lee Lockett: There were horses in the road and she didn't see them - horses. She hit one horse then another horse and hit another person that was behind her. When she hit the horse, she died instantly.

Narrator: Cora knew Miss Lockett from growing up in the community and later providing services her daughter's family. Now Miss Lockett was called upon to raise her grandchildren. And Cora was called upon to help by providing home visiting services.

Cora Hammond: It was so devastating, you know. Here she is with three children just like that. It was just devastating to me. I just wasn't sure that emotionally I could handle it because I'll cry at the drop of a hat. I, just for her sake, was wondering, "Well, maybe, I'm not the home visitor that she needs."

Mary Lee Lockett: Cora, she's like a big sister to me, a big sister. She really has helped me. She's a very sweet person, very sweet.

Narrator: Despite a strong and compassionate reaction to Miss Lockett, Cora works hard to maintain her professional role as a home visitor.

Cora Hammond: On my first visit, it was just really emotional for her. But, you know, she was strong. She kind of helped me, I guess you could say, because I knew her daughter so well. I've known her through all the children being born and seeing them. And like I said, you just get really close to your families. You just really do. And we have emotions too. Sometimes, they just kind of be overpowering. But, then you can't let your emotions rule your professionalism. So, you have to tap back in and get going. I just kind of listen to her and I pulled from her strength while she said she was pulling from mine.

Mary Lee Lockett: She helped me a whole lot and gave me the strength to pull through. Her and the good Lord. I told her, "I know I've got to be in for the children." I've got to raise them up myself. I appreciate everything that she's done for me because I've really been down since I've lost my daughter.

Mary Lee Lockett: Alright. Owl Babies, Owl Babies. See an owl? Owl. Keeyana: Owl. Owl. There's the momma. Mary Lee Lockett: That's right. That's the momma.

Keeyana: That's the babies. Mary Lee Lockett: How many babies she got? Keeyana: One, two, three.

Narrator: While Cora supports Miss Lockett during her time of loss, she also assists Keeyana's learning and development. During socialization at the center, Miss Lockett observes her grand daughter and the other children carve a pumpkin and learn about seeds.

Cora Hammond: Look let's feel the seeds. Let's everybody touch them. You probably won't come this close to a pumpkin. This is a real pumpkin. Child: Pumpkin. Mary Lee Lockett: You said pumpkin? Pumpkin.

Narrator: One strategy Cora uses to help Miss Lockett focus on her goals for Keeyana's development is to find opportunities to connect learning to the home environment. Miss Lockett and Cora share a love of gardening. Keeyana shares backyard gardening duties.

Cora Hammond: Do you think these peas will be ready before the first frost?

Mary Lee Lockett: I'm hoping that they do.

Cora Hammond: I bring in seeds to her. I was asking her if she had enough because a couple of weeks ago, I brought in garden seeds, mustard green seeds. See, they're up now. We planted them.

Mary Lee Lockett: Yep, black eyed peas and ham hock and corn. Cora Hammond: My goodness you're making me hungry. (laughter) Oh, you're really making me hungry.

Cora Hammond: I brought her a little sheet about seeds because it tied back to the social where we pulled out the seeds. She's familiar now that the seed is planted in the ground, it sprouts up, and it goes from there and turns into many, many, many. That's what the pumpkin seed was all about.

Cora Hammond: See, he has wings. He has two eyes, two antennas, and he got one, two, three... six legs.
Keeyana: He's going to bite me. Cora Hammond: No, he doesn't bite. He doesn't eat anything but plants.

Narrator: For Keeyana, time spent in the garden is an opportunity for meaningful and connected learning.

Cora Hammond: We counted 6 legs on the grasshopper. We have a lot of children - I know some kids from the big city, my little cousins or something - they're scared of a grasshopper. So, this is in her environment. We use our immediate surroundings to help the children learn. You can get a teachable moment from going to the grocery store. You can see red bell peppers, green bell peppers; and you're learning colors.

Mary Lee Lockett: This is a small child. That's all I know. Cora Hammond: And you're doing a great job! Just keep on working with her for ten or fifteen minutes a day, Miss Lockett. Okay? You're doing a great job. You did an excellent home visit. I want to remind you about policy council tomorrow.

Narrator: Miss Lockett is one of the few grandparents who take an active role in this Head Start program. She contributes an important voice as a member of the policy council. Program director Mary Kay Smith believes the quality of the relationship between Cora and Miss Lockett is best seen in the development of Keeyana.

Mary Kay Smith: I think the relationship between Miss Lockett and Cora, home visitor, is very typical of a very good home-based relationship. Cora has gone in to focus in on Miss Lockett's needs to help her. Anytime you focus on parent needs, you're helping the child.

Cora Hammond: Well you do such a great job, Miss Lockett. And you're such a positive person. You have a good outlook and that really helps me.

Mary Lee Lockett: Thank you.

Cora Hammond: Well, they say to teach is to touch a life forever. I felt that my just being there has left a great impact on her, and it makes me feel really good. You can light a candle and pass it on to somebody else and it takes nothing from the light. So, I feel like I've helped her in that way. You lose nothing by lighting another candle.

Mary Lee Lockett: I want to thank you. I enjoyed doing this now. Cora Hammond: Well, good, I'm so glad. Mary Lee Lockett: I haven't been in so long. Cora Hammond: I know you have.

Cora Hammond: I have a little saying, "I'm always up with the butterflies. I like to see them soar. Soar up. Reach for the top."

Pam McGinley: If you've got the parent involved then you've got it made, I think.

Julie Bostwick-Cosby: How often does someone come into your home and your life and share with you, "Wow! You are doing an awesome job with your son." And I believe young parents don't hear that enough.

Berkis Rodriguez: We really do a lot for the children and the community. It is very important.

Marcia Beans: Just giving them ideas of things that they can do to encourage the child development.

Cora Hammond: My very favorite thing about being a home visitor is working with families. It's a real thrill being a home visitor.

--End of Video--