

# Building Blocks

The Family Nurse Partnership  
(FNP) in England

## Study results

# What is the Family Nurse Partnership?

The Family Nurse Partnership programme or FNP offers young mothers having their first baby support from a Family Nurse. The nurse visits the woman at home during pregnancy and until the baby's second birthday. As FNP has been shown to help young families in the USA the government have introduced it in England.

## FNP aims to help young mums to:

- Have a healthy pregnancy
- Improve their child's health and development
- Plan their own future



# What was Building Blocks?

Building Blocks was a study of how well FNP works in England.

1,645 pregnant teenagers joined the study between 2009 and 2010.

Women were split into two groups. One group was offered FNP and one group had usual care from Health Visitors. All women in the study also had maternity care and any other extra support available to young families in their area.

The study looked at how well the mothers and babies were doing up until the baby's 2nd birthday.

.....

## What did FNP involve?

All women in the study had around 10 antenatal check-ups during pregnancy.

Women in the FNP group had around 32 home visits from their Family Nurse, each lasting about an hour and a half.

Women who did not have a Family Nurse saw their Health Visitor around 16 times, either at home or at a clinic.

# What did women say about FNP?

Women told us that:

They had been scared when they found out they were pregnant.

The FNP programme was easy to understand.

Family nurses were very caring.

Their Family Nurse helped them to be a better mum.

One woman said...

“When I met Jane they didn't judge you. They kind of helped you along with it but they didn't tell you how you should do it. They almost let you figure it out for yourself. They didn't interfere.”



# Our main findings...

FNP did not reduce the number of women that smoked in pregnancy. In both groups 56 women out of every 100 smoked late in pregnancy.

FNP did not reduce the number of small or premature babies. In both groups the average baby weighed 7lb 10z.

FNP did not reduce the number of women getting pregnant again within two years. In both groups 66 women out of every 100 were pregnant again within two years.

In both groups nearly 80 out of every 100 children were seen in hospital as an emergency before their second birthday.

We found that FNP is more expensive than usual care.

## Some other findings...

About four in every 10 mothers in both groups breastfed their baby.

By two years of age around one in 10 children had needed a trip to A&E because of an accident or swallowing something they shouldn't have.

Social services had been involved with 14 per cent of children allocated to FNP and 8 per cent of children allocated to usual care.

Children in the FNP group had better language skills than children who got usual care only.



# What do the results mean?

- FNP does not provide as much help to young families in England as the government expected.
- FNP helped to improve the speech and development of children. We plan to keep following the children to see how they are getting on. This is to see whether providing FNP to young children goes on to help them with their reading and writing once they are in school.
- FNP does not seem to work as well in England as it did in the USA. One idea is that in England the NHS and other services provide care that young women in the USA cannot get. It could also be that some young mothers in England live close to their family and already get lots of help.

# What will happen next?

Finding out what happens to mothers and their children as they grow up will be important. It could be that having FNP helps mothers and children do better when they get older. We plan to continue to follow the Building Blocks children as they start school and look forward to finding how they all get on.

We have seen that some young families have a very hard time and still need lots of extra support to make sure they do well.

We have given our report to the Department of Health in England and it will now be for the government to decide how best to support young families in England.

