

Child HeLP

CINCINNATI CHILD HEALTH-LAW PARTNERSHIP

An Innovative Partnership between Lawyers and Doctors

Promoting Children's Health and Well-being by Resolving Legal Problems



Child HeLP is an Innovative Medical-legal Partnership

- Child HeLP is an innovative medical-legal partnership between two of Cincinnati's leading organizations, the Legal Aid Society and Cincinnati Children's Hospital.
- Every day doctors and social workers see patients with social and legal issues that adversely impact child health. Children with asthma live in apartments with moldy bathrooms that worsen their condition; mothers and grandmothers report difficulty affording food and infant formula; families face utility shut-offs and worry about keeping children warm and safe; and children with disabilities struggle to make sure that schools meet their educational needs. Health care providers alone cannot address these problems.
- As a result of a specialized training program, doctors and social workers now screen patients and families for problems that can be improved through legal assistance. Once these problems are identified, health care providers refer patients to Child HeLP.
- Since August 2008, Legal Aid has operated an on-site Child HeLP office in the Hospital's Pediatric Primary Care Clinic; referrals are also accepted from the Hospital's Hopple Street and Fairfield locations.
- The Child HeLP office is staffed by a Legal Aid lawyer or paralegal five days a week. The cases are handled by Legal Aid attorneys and paralegal specialists working out of Legal Aid's downtown Cincinnati headquarters.

Child HeLP Serves:

An almost entirely low-income, urban patient population. Of the more than 60,000 clinical visits a year, 90% are covered by Medicaid, and 5% are not covered by any type of insurance.

In neighborhoods served by Cincinnati Children's clinics:

- 47% of children live in poverty
- 26% live in extreme poverty
- 36% of families lack safe places to play outside or adequate childcare
- 69% lack funds to buy needed medications, provide sufficient food, or avoid living in substandard housing
- 9% of families experience adult physical violence in the home



I talked with a mom today who was in tears of happiness because of the help you guys – Child HeLP advocates – have given her. She works hard for low pay and had been denied her child care benefits. She now feels like she has won the lottery.

Cincinnati Children's Social Worker



Client Stories...

Improving Housing Conditions

Six-month-old Maya was born prematurely and has Down Syndrome. When Maya visited the Pediatric Primary Care Clinic she had recently been hospitalized for two weeks with a lung infection that appeared to be triggered or worsened by flooding and mold in her home. Maya's doctor referred Maya's family to Child HeLP. The Legal Aid attorney learned that other residents in Maya's community were experiencing similar problems.

Maya and her mother, Ms. Truitt, live in a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development subsidized apartment. Legal Aid attorneys contacted the owner, but the owner would not make the repairs. Legal Aid sued the apartment owner on behalf of five residents, including Ms. Truitt, and asked the Court to force the owner to make the repairs. The Court ordered the owner to make emergency repairs to the five apartments, beginning with correcting the mold and flooding problems in Ms. Truitt's bathroom. Those repairs have been completed and Maya now lives in a healthier environment.

Child HeLP Outcomes:

Since its inception in 2008, Child HeLP has received over 500 referrals each year.

Child HeLP keeps children healthy and families stable by achieving the following outcomes:

- Health hazards are eliminated from children's homes
- Children and families obtain adequate nutrition by establishing eligibility for food stamps
- Children obtain health insurance coverage
- Working parents get help with transportation and childcare
- Children and youth are enrolled in school and get the special education support they need
- Child custody disputes are resolved
- Parents obtain relief from domestic violence
- Families avoid homelessness

Securing Special Education Services

Beverly Long was in a difficult position because the principal of her son's preschool and her doctor at Children's Hospital had different approaches towards her son's care. Ms. Long's three-year-old son, Caldwell was having behavior problems in preschool. Caldwell's principal told Ms. Long that Caldwell could not come to school until he was on medication to control his behavior. Caldwell's doctor did not think prescribing medication was appropriate; instead, Caldwell's doctor referred him to a behavioral health provider and Child HeLP.

The Legal Aid Child HeLP attorney worked with Ms. Long, the school, and the behavioral health provider to get behavior supports and special education services in place for Caldwell. The attorney monitored the effectiveness of the services and worked to ensure that the school improved services that were not working for Caldwell. With the appropriate services in place, Caldwell made great progress and successfully completed the school year without medication.

Praise for Cincinnati's Child HeLP

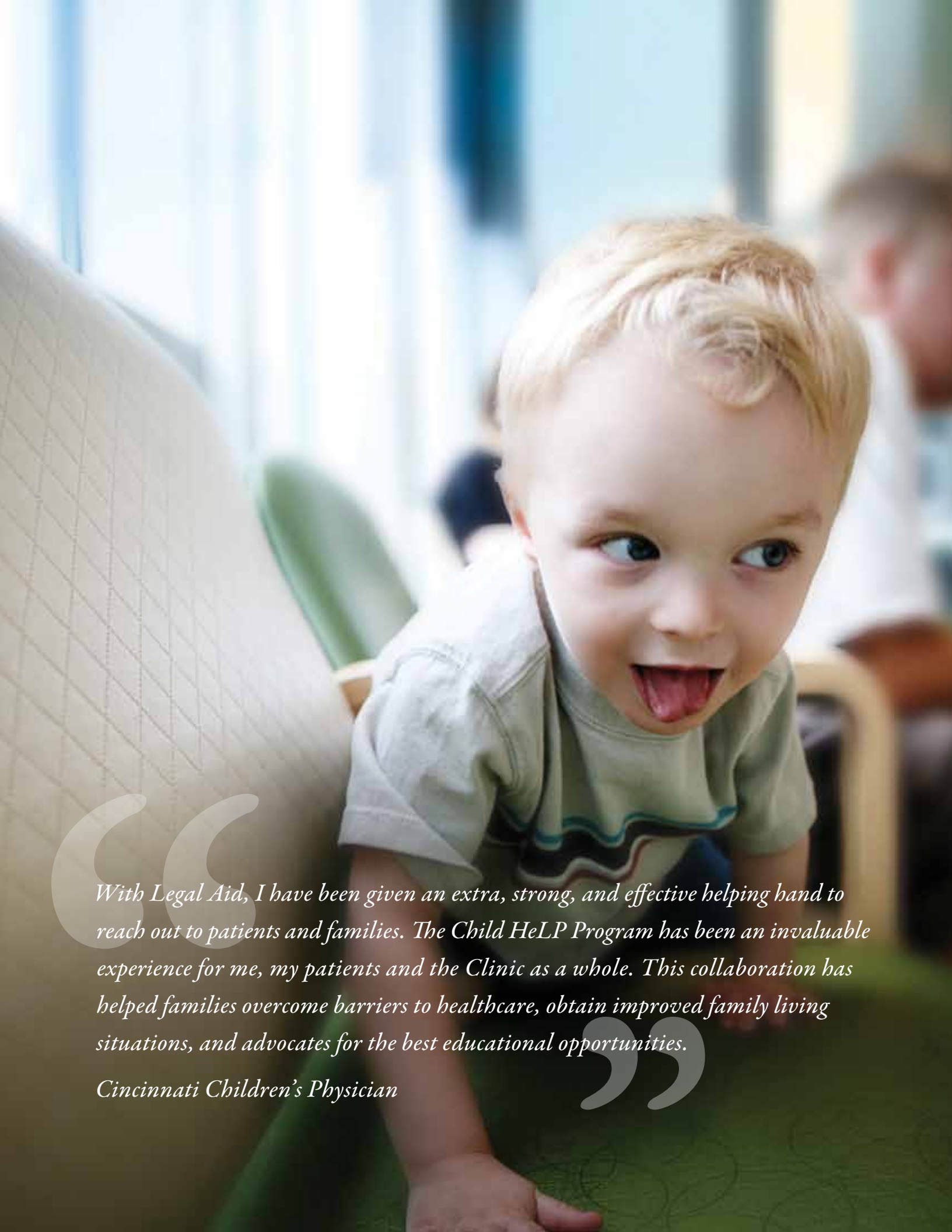
- Hundreds of compelling client stories relate the positive impact of Child HeLP. Legal Aid tracks outcomes and doctors and social workers are kept in the loop regarding positive changes in the family's situation.
- The Cincinnati Child HeLP program has quickly become a model for other cities, as illustrated by the New York Times article quoted below. Under the leadership of Dr. Robert Kahn, Child HeLP has been asked by a national organization promoting medical-legal partnerships to develop a "toolkit" for use by other medical-legal partnerships seeking guidance. The "toolkit" will address how to setup the training component of the program, create the referral system, and organize other aspects of a successful medical-legal collaboration.
- The Senior Attorney managing the Child HeLP office, Donita Parrish, is now Chair of the Ohio Medical-Legal Partnership Taskforce. She spoke recently at an American Bar Association meeting on the principles behind medical-legal partnerships.
- After providing Legal Aid with significant startup funds for Child HeLP, The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati offered Legal Aid a challenge grant opportunity. The goal is to raise funds to sustain Child HeLP.

THIS IS WHAT THE NEW YORK TIMES HAD TO SAY IN A FEATURE STORY ABOUT CHILD HELP.

Doctors and social workers have long said that medical care alone is not enough to address the health woes of the poor, which is often related to diet, living conditions and stress. The pediatric clinic in Cincinnati...now seeks to address at least some of the broader issues by bringing lawyers and doctors – so often foes in the courtroom – together into a close partnership.

Each year, Children's Hospital medical personnel refer approximately 500 families to Child HeLP. Legal Aid attorneys and paralegals helped patient families with a wide-range of legal problems. The New York Times summarized patient family needs as follows:

Some needed help getting food stamps, heating aid or cash welfare that had been wrongfully denied; some received help with evictions or home repairs; other got legally mandated help for children with learning disabilities.



With Legal Aid, I have been given an extra, strong, and effective helping hand to reach out to patients and families. The Child HeLP Program has been an invaluable experience for me, my patients and the Clinic as a whole. This collaboration has helped families overcome barriers to healthcare, obtain improved family living situations, and advocates for the best educational opportunities.

Cincinnati Children's Physician



Barry Zuckerman, MD
Founder, National Center for Medical Legal Partnership
Boston Medical Center

“Cincinnati’s Child HeLP program has already set the quality standard for delivering great results in the pediatric setting. We’ve turned to them repeatedly to share their vision and leadership with our national network of medical legal partnerships.”

Robert Kahn, MD, MPH
Pediatrician and Medical Director, Child HeLP

“The presence of legal advocates on-site has transformed the way our clinic cares for low income children. Doctors feel empowered to raise issues like poor housing and hunger with families because we know we have powerful help at hand. Doctors have discovered that sometimes our most effective ‘prescription’ is a referral to a lawyer! At this point, we wouldn’t ever want to go back to the old way of practicing.”

Ellen Lawton, Esq.
Executive Director, National Center for Medical Legal Partnership
Boston Medical Center


“The Cincinnati Child HeLP program leads the nation in the integration of effective legal assistance with health care. Their intensive focus and investment in quality planning, training and evaluation is setting the standard for other medical-legal partnerships.”

Dave Phillips
Co-founder, Cincinnati Works and President, Legal Aid Society Board of Trustees

“Cincinnati Works’ research shows that Legal Aid’s assistance resolves problems and helps our job seekers focus on getting and keeping a job. Through Child HeLP, families are getting the same kind of help so they can focus on their children’s health and well-being.”

Michael Fisher
President and CEO, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center

“Our goal at Cincinnati Children’s is to be the leader in improving child health and we aim to reach that goal, in part, by delivering the best in family centered care. Child HeLP delivers on both accounts: it focuses on the health of our most vulnerable children and it helps ensure families can meet their most basic needs. We are deeply committed to the program’s continued success.”



3333 Burnet Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45229
www.cincinnatichildrens.org

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF
GREATER CINCINNATI

215 E. 9th Street, Suite 200
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
www.lascinti.org