

Attachment 1



Grant Summary

Initiative:	Healthier Beginnings
Project Name:	<i>Growing Great Kids</i> TM Parenting & Childhood Development Program (Year 8)
Funding Period:	December 1, 2017 – November 30, 2018
Date of Funding:	December 1, 2017
Project Coordinator:	Kathleen Richard, LMSW
Project Administration:	Life Choices of North Central Louisiana
Total Funding Approved:	\$ 124,000.00

Program Summary

The *Growing Great Kids*TM program is a nationally recognized voluntary home-based visitation program that utilizes and deploys educational curriculum for intensive parenting and childhood education services targeted at critical points in a child's development. Beginning prenatally, *Growing Great Kids* provides a "how to" guide, or roadmap, for supporting parents and developing parenting competencies. It provides a structure for each home visit or group, and takes the "guess work" out of parent contacts and supervision.

*Growing Great Kids*TM puts difficult concepts into simple language by offering examples of practical "how-to's" in the following areas:

- Building relationships with families that focus on program goals
- Growing parental empathy and nurturing relationships
- Doing activities that support childhood health, growth and development
- Integrating the latest information on supporting early brain development into daily parenting practices
- Gaining an understanding of parental/family values
- Communicating to facilitate open discussion and parental empowerment
- Making age-appropriate toys from common household items

- Enhancing family relationships
- Extending families' support systems
- Addressing concerns and exploring solutions
- Cultivating critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Promoting parental self-care and health

Growing Great Kids™ program objectives are as follows:

- **Prevention of Child Maltreatment** through parenting skill development and monitoring of home environments.
- **Facilitation of Positive Pregnancy and Child Health Outcomes** by teaching proper prenatal and postnatal care.
- **Improving Family Functioning** through the development of parenting and problem solving skills.
- **Optimization of Child Growth and Development** by enhancing parental knowledge of child development and linking with relative community resources.

Year 8 objectives are as follows:

- **Continue Wellness Events**

Life Choices understands the importance of preventative care. However, access to that care by some clients is limited due to transportation and/or health care coverage. Life Choices would like to continue to host wellness events for GGK™ participants. Wellness issues to be addressed would include information about healthy exercise, the importance of having a medical home, and oral health. Events also encourage the building of support systems outside the limited contact with GGK™ staff.

- **“What Works” Conference**

Life Choices will participate in the annual “What Works” conference hosted by the Children’s Coalition. This training conference brings together leading experts with local data that will provide the Growing Great Kids’ staff with better knowledge and skills to help advocate for children and families in North Louisiana. Our staff will also participate as conference exhibitors to share information and network with other organizations that serve low-income families in North Louisiana.

- **All Home Visitors To Maintain A Full Case Load**

Growing Great Kids™ home visit program has been well received among the clients of Life Choices. Life Choices currently has one fulltime home visitor and two new part-time home visitors who are both registered nurses. The fulltime home visitor will continue to maintain a maximum caseload of 20-24 points. The two new part-time home visitors/registered

nurses will obtain and maintain a caseload of 12-16 points while also providing a medical presence in the homes to encourage additional positive results regarding the health and safety of the client families.

- **Partner with other Life Choices and Community Programs**

- Growing Great Kids home visit program staff would like to make sure that clients are offered well balanced services. Growing Great Kids' staff plans to partner with our Fatherhood program, Work Life course, Healthy Relationships curriculum, Cooking for Life, Early Steps of Louisiana, Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana, and the Family Counseling Center.
- Fatherhood Program: Growing Great Kids' staff has found a huge need for support for home visit participant fathers. By involving fathers in the Fatherhood programs at Life Choices, fathers will receive more individualized support.
- Work Life course: One of the greatest needs that client families have are jobs and work related training and skills. "Work Life" is a job preparedness curriculum designed especially for people from backgrounds of generational poverty. Life Choices will offer "Work Life" classes during the new funding year.
- Healthy Relationships Curriculum: One Life Choices' staff member is trained in REAL Essentials, a relationship education and leadership curriculum, provided by The Center for Relationship Education in Denver, Colorado. The REAL Essentials curriculum is specifically designed to help young people combat the relational challenges, obstacles, and temptations they will face. "The sexual health components of REAL Essentials are SRA (Sexual Risk Avoidance) approved. All lessons are inclusive, evidence-based, and medically accurate."¹ Growing Great Kids will actively refer both young male and young female participants to work through the healthy relationships curriculum when it is offered twice each year.
- Cooking for Life: One area, due to lack of education, which can cause poor health among adults and children who participate in the Growing Great Kids' program is nutrition and food preparation. By participating in Cooking for Life (CFL) group classes, program participants will learn about intuitive shopping, food preparation, and balanced nutrition. Funding for CFL during year one was provided by Living

¹ www.myrelationshipcenter.org

Well Foundation. Year 2 funding has been secured through a community grant from Jonesboro State Bank.

- **Early Steps of Louisiana:** Early Steps provides services to families with infants and toddlers who have a medical condition likely to result in a developmental delay, or who have developmental delays. Life Choices will provide space at our center for Early Steps to conduct therapy sessions with program participant's children with disabilities and delays. This partnership will ensure that program participant's children have the best resources for proper health and development.
- **Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana:** To promote healthy and balanced food choices for participant families, Life Choices is participating in the Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana's Snack Program. Growing Great Kids' participant families will receive one sack of healthy snacks each month for their families.
- **Family Counseling Center:** Growing Great Kids' home visitors often encounter clients that are living with mental health illness. Ginny Hixon, LPC, from the Family Counseling Center is partnering with Life Choices by providing counseling once a week (half-day) every other week at our location. This partnership will allow our clients a familiar and comfortable setting to receive professional counseling when needed.

In-Home Special Initiatives

In addition to using the Growing Great Kids and Growing Great Families curriculum modules with clients, Life Choices would also like to conduct special healthy initiatives in client's homes. The topics will be congruent to the topics discussed at each of the Wellness events to emphasize the concepts of each topic. The in-home special initiatives to be addressed would include education about Healthy Nutrition, Speech and Hearing, as well as Vision and the Effects of Technology on Sight Development.

Show Positive Influence on Health Factors

Without a doubt, Growing Great Kids' home visit program is having a positive impact on participants. One of the more concrete ways of measuring that success is by measuring core health factors. The main factors that Life Choices measures are (1) those clients who deliver at full term (at least 37 weeks), (2) those clients who deliver babies at healthy birth weights (at least 5 pounds, eight ounces), and (3) those clients who choose to breastfeed their infant. Since

the inception of the Growing Great Kids' home visit program, Life Choices has noted positive movement in all three areas. Those statistics will be fully discussed in the Year 7 Final Report.

Year 8 Changes

The largest change for Year 8 is the hiring of two RNs to replace two previous home visitors. Both nurses have previously been trained in Growing Great Kids and have served as program supervisor in the past. The nurses will work 20 hours per week as home visitor instead of the traditional 30 hours. Because of their training, the nurses will be able to meet more intense and critical needs – filling a request from several of our local pediatricians. Because of the prior GGK supervision certificates, the three home visitors will begin a weekly team meeting to discuss clients and problem solve together.

Client Testimonies

Testimony 1:

C (client) is the disabled mother of two young daughters. Due to C's vision impairment, she often struggles to provide the care and resources that her children need to support their development. C's home visitor has used the Growing Great Kids' modules creatively to empower C to use strategies and activities to support her children's development through age-appropriate play. C recently stated, "Before participating in the home visit program, I viewed myself as a disabled mom who could not bond with her children. Now, I know that I can provide my children with love and care to help them grow up happy and healthy."

Testimony 2:

K (client) is the mother of a toddler son. K has shared with her home visitor that she struggles with a food addiction which has led to obesity and other health concerns. One of K's concerns is that her struggle with food addiction will become a learned behavior by her son. Using the Growing Great Families modules about Family Values, K's home visitor was able to help K identify what dreams and fears she has for her son and family. After identifying these values, K's home visitor helped K created a goal plan establishing steps to take to overcome K's addiction and model the healthy lifestyle that she wants for her son.