



A Strong Start In Life

A publication of the Milwaukee County Healthy Infant Court

Mission Statement: The Healthy Infant Court puts infants at the center of the court process, engaging parents and other collaborative partners to focus on early child development and social and emotional health, while ensuring positive relationships and access to quality services.

Demographics of Infants that have participated in Healthy Infant Court to date (7/8/2016 to 12/31/2022)

Male 57%
Female 43%

Mean age of HIC infant at start of program **13.4** Months

RACE OF HIC INFANTS

White 16%
African American 57%
Hispanic/Latino 14%
Native American 0%
2 or more races 9%
Undisclosed 4%

- Average age of HIC mothers is 25 years old
- Average age of HIC fathers is 34 years old

43% of HIC infants have at least one parent who self-reported being a part of the child welfare system themselves as a child

11 FDTC cases have also had parents whose infant actively participated in Health Infant Court



Healthy Infant Court Timelines

- Average time cases are in HIC → 15 months
- Average time from TPC to HIC enrollment → 2.7 months
- Average time to permanency initiated → 471 days
- Average time to permanency achieved → 706 days

Results for Parents and Children

Healthy Infant Court (HIC) has been in existence for six and a half years and has experienced positive results for parents and children. HIC is a progressive problem solving court that combines elements of the national Safe Babies Court Team models and the Milwaukee Family Drug Treatment Court, tailored to meet the needs of infants and families in Milwaukee. The HIC approach is designed to provide differentiated case management to effectively address the unique needs of the youngest, most vulnerable children and families in the child welfare system. Our infants are the most vulnerable age group to suffer the life-long effects of early trauma and toxic stress on brain development, and thus benefit from specialized services offered through the relationships forged through this program.

Treatment and Engagement

In HIC, we strive to give parents and caregivers more support than they may experience in a traditional child welfare case. First and foremost, infants and their caregivers work with an Infant and Family Mental Health (IFMH) Specialist, a therapist who specializes in services based on the unique needs of infants and their families. Parenting during these years presents special challenges and opportunities that the IFMH Specialist can help guide.

Additionally, the team works together to refer to and aid infants and caregivers with service providers and community supports that will help them be successful throughout their case and beyond. Service referrals are specific to the needs in each case but include Milwaukee County Birth to Three, individualized parenting and specialized parenting, and home visiting agencies. The team also assists families in connecting to healthcare providers based on the unique needs of each infant.

Permanency for Infants

The goal of HIC is for children to reach lasting permanency quicker, through reunification with a parent or parents, adoption, or placement with a legal guardian. HIC continues to strive to reach permanency outcomes which include children spending less time in the system and parents improving their understanding of their children and their children's unique needs.

2022 Permanency Outcomes*	HIC Infants	Comparison Group
Reunification	69.2%	35.8%
Guardianship.....	23.1%	14.2%
Adoption.....	0%	48.3%
Other	7.7%	1.1%
No permanency achieved.....	0%	0.6%

*Data compares infants enrolled in HIC who achieved permanency in 2022 to all children 0-3 (at the time of discharge) under DMCPs supervision who achieved permanency in 2022

