



Healthy Start

Okaloosa and
Walton Counties

Baby Business Vol. 9, 2026

***Grant Recipient: Thank you
Emerald Coast Community
Wellness Foundation!***



Healthy Start is thrilled to have been awarded a grant from the Emerald Coast Community Wellness Foundation to support the expansion our Fatherhood program. This

funding will allow us to onboard an additional T.E.A.M. Dad coach and broaden our reach across Okaloosa and Walton Counties, helping more fathers build the skills, confidence, and support they need to be actively and successfully engaged parents. Building strong families begins with a whole family approach.



Wrapped With Love: Healthy Start Doula Program



**Linconyer
Campbell-Baldwin**



Kimberlee Truesdale



Chasity Ables



Carlee Anderson



Drisana Coons
Doula Coordinator



Jill O'Reilly

Meet our Doulas!

2025 was a year of growth for the Healthy Start Doula Program. We expanded our team and now have five certified and insured doulas servicing clients in Okaloosa

and Walton Counties, with Drisana Coons, our Doula Coordinator overseeing the doula team and clients.

Last year, our doulas were present for 13 births and worked very closely with the four labor and delivery hospitals in our community. This close collaboration helped ensure mothers received consistent and compassionate support through pregnancy, labor, delivery, and postpartum.

Research shows that access to doula care can reduce the risk of preterm birth by up to 22%, helping more babies arrive healthier and closer to full term. Our doulas play a vital role in improving local birth outcomes and experiences by providing continuous emotional, physical, and informational support during one of life's most important moments.



Capital Connections & Community Impact



Pictured above (from left to right): Amanda Saffelle (Special Projects Coordinator), Abigail Baumann (Community Liaison), Drisana Coons (Doula Coordinator), and Chinaa Williams (Office Assistant)

At the start of the new year, a few team members attended the **10th Annual Perinatal Mental Health Conference** in Tallahassee, a statewide gathering of healthcare professionals, researchers, advocates, and community partners committed to improving perinatal mental and behavioral health. The 3-day event featured expert keynote presentations, interactive workshops, poster showcases, and collaborative discussions focused on best practices, emerging research, and innovative approaches to supporting families across Florida. It was great fun and we cannot wait to use what we learned to enhance our work with mothers in Okaloosa and Walton Counties!

Sharing Updates and Exploring Opportunities for Collaboration:

Winter Access Meeting



Pictured above (from left to right): Ardelle Bush (Executive Director), Abigail Baumann (Community Liaison), Naomi Brown (West Florida AHEC), and Amanda Saffelle (Special Projects Coordinator)

In December, Healthy Start hosted a luncheon for our bi-annual Access Meeting, where Naomi Brown and Kelli Taylor of West Florida AHEC, presented on several of their key initiatives, including the Tobacco Cessation Program, the Healthy Aging Program, and Health Navigation Assistance, which helps clients navigate insurance options and coverage needs. The informative presentation was followed by updates from meeting participants, allowing

partners to share resources, highlight current efforts, and strengthen connections across organizations.

Thank you to the community representatives who joined us from 20 different agencies!

- West Florida AHEC
- LSF Head Start
- CDAC
- Healthy Start/Connect
- Gulf Coast VA
- Diana Health
- Healthcare for Kids PPC
- Early Steps
- Healthy Families
- Beyond Disabilities
- CALM House
- The Pearl Project
- Catholic Charities of NWFL
- Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast Maternal Navigator Program
- Walton County Department of Health
- A Bed 4 Me
- Florida Department of Health/WIC
- Lakeview Center
- PanCare
- Gina G Enterprises

If you or your organization would like to receive an invite to the next access meeting, please visit our website by [clicking here!](#)

2025 Safe Sleep Summary



3,000 Charlie's Kids Safe Sleep books distributed to Labor & Delivery hospitals in Okaloosa and Walton Counties in 2025!

Okaloosa County

English: 1,620

Spanish: 420

Walton County

English: 780

Spanish: 180

Healthy Start distributed 3,000 safe sleep books to local labor and delivery hospitals last year as part of our ongoing Safe Sleep initiative. These books, provided to new parents before being discharged, use simple language and engaging illustrations to reinforce the ABCs of safe sleep and help families build safe sleep habits from day one.

In Florida, sleep-related causes remain one of the leading contributors to infant deaths, with the majority linked to unsafe sleep environments - making education at the very start of a baby's life critical to prevention.

Target Circle Giving Campaign: Vote for Healthy Start!

We're a **Target Circle** participant
and here's how you can vote for us.



1 Choose
My Target



2 Tap
Cast votes



3 Find us &
vote

Do you love Target as much as we do?? ***Help support Healthy Start by voting for us in the Target Circle app!***

Your vote helps direct community giving dollars to local organizations making a difference for families right here in our local area. Simply open the Target Circle app, click My Target in the bottom righthand corner, click Cast votes, find our organization, and vote!

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2026!***



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28 APRIL | 2026

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[Resource Directory](#)

Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa & Walton Counties | 850-833-9284
amanda@hsow.org | <http://healthystartokawalton.org/>

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn!



Healthy Start is a free program that provides education and care coordination to pregnant women and families with children under the age of three.

Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties | 1130 Eglin Pkwy Unit 101 8508339284 | Shalimar, FL 32579 US

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