



HOME VISITING

Ensure each child in Pennsylvania has the opportunity to grow up in a safe and healthy home environment. When families are successful, our communities are successful. Evidence-based home visiting provides services that increase parenting skills, bolster nutrition and help ensure a healthy pregnancy for first-time moms, aid young children with literacy and meeting developmental milestones, and much more. These voluntary sessions play an important role, especially for those new to parenthood. With far too few Pennsylvania families receiving evidence-based home visiting services, we are working to expand its reach through increased funding for the programs and through multiple avenues of referrals, including the recently launched Department of Human Services' Medicaid home visiting initiative.

DATA POINTS

Only **5%** (or approximately 17,000)

Pennsylvania low-income families who could benefit the most receive evidence-based home visiting services.

There are **6** evidence-based home visiting models that operate in Pennsylvania and receive state funds:

- Early Head Start
- Family Check-Up
- Healthy Families America
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers
- SafeCare Augmented®

At least **ONE** evidence-based home visiting model operates in each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

By shifting to virtual home visits through telephone or video technology, home visitors are working through the

COVID-19 pandemic to continue supporting families with young children.

POLICY PRIORITIES:

- 1. Increase the number of children and families receiving evidence-based home visiting services to strengthen families and meet the comprehensive needs of infants and young children most in need of services.**
 - a. Expand evidence-based home visiting financing and strategies using data analysis and research findings for the highest-risk families with young children, including low-income families and those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - b. Explore additional federal and state financing options for evidence-based home visiting services, including issuing findings in a cornerstone report to be published in early 2021.
 - c. Monitor the Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Medical Assistance Programs' (OMAP) home visiting initiative along with the planned expansion in January 2021 and explore tracking of referrals to evidence-based home visiting.
 - d. Monitor the release of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) Request for Applications (RFA) in early 2021 with new contracts expected to start in July 2021.
 - e. Monitor state appropriations requested by OCDEL to backfill loss of federal MIECHV funds (as done during past two budgets) and funding requested by OMAP to support the expansion of their Medicaid home visiting initiative in 2021.

- f. Analyze the newly released OCDEL Needs Assessment report and its expected impact on funding distribution on a county/community level basis.
- g. Monitor the selection by DHS for implementing the statewide resource and referral tool and explore tracking of referrals to evidence-based home visiting.
- h. Monitor guidance from OCDEL and/or the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HOMVEE) clearinghouse related to the continuation or flexibility of home visiting services via tele-visits following the public health emergency (currently January 2021 but another extension is expected).

LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY ACTION NEEDED TO ADVANCE POLICY PRIORITIES:

- State appropriations to continue funding the two home visiting line items: Community Based Family Centers line and Nurse-Family Partnership line.
- Federal stimulus funding – one-time emergency funding of \$100 million in MIECHV to support states' home visiting programs to aid costs of transitioning to virtual visits.
- Federal reauthorization and funding of MIECHV.

ACTIONS WE'RE WATCHING:

- Expansion of home visiting contracts between the Department of Human Services and Medicaid managed care organizations from two visits to a time period of 18 months beginning January 2021.
- OCDEL Request for Applications (RFA) expected to be issued in early 2021 with contracts effective July 2021.
- Childhood Begins at Home cornerstone report exploring diversification of funding options to support home visiting in the long-term.
- DHS selection of bidders for the Resource and Referral Tool Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) which is likely to increase referrals to evidence-based home visiting.
- Reauthorization of the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program in FFY 2022, along with potential increase in federal MIECHV funding.

