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Summary of the Rigorous Research on Evidence-Based Home Visiting Programs

Home visiting programs provide expectant and new parents with in-home support and education through a trained professional (e.g., nurse or social worker) or paraprofessional. Since 2010, the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program has provided the largest source of funding for qualifying programs. Qualifying programs are designated as evidence-based through the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness project.



EMERGING EVIDENCE FOR IMPACTS ON CHILD AND FAMILY WELLBEING

Parents play a critical role in shaping children's early development. Improving parents' knowledge, social support, and coping and problem-solving skills, as well as connecting families to community and health resources during the prenatal and early childhood periods, promotes positive long-term child development. Teaching parents the skills for warm and responsive caregiving can buffer the long-term negative effects of childhood stress and adversity.

Although individual program models have been shown to impact a variety of outcomes that are important in the prenatal-to-3 age period, comprehensive reviews show that evidence-based home visiting programs have the most consistent impact on improving parenting behaviors.

States can support evidence-based home visiting programs by investing state dollars, including Medicaid funding, into the evidence-based home visiting programs with favorable impacts on parenting practices.

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING

The Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center at Vanderbilt University analyzes rigorous evidence to determine which policies are proven to produce positive outcomes for young children, their families, and society. Our comprehensive review of evidence demonstrates that providing evidence-based home visiting programs is effective for improving parenting skills, but current research does not support a specific state policy lever to guide the most effective implementation of programs.

RIGOROUS STUDIES FIND THE FOLLOWING IMPACTS

Evidence-based home visiting programs improve child-parent relationships.

- Home visiting led to small but significant effects in improving parenting behaviors and skills and the quality of the children's home environments.
- Significant effects emerge within the context of many more null findings.

For more information on evidence-based home visiting programs:

- Refer to our comprehensive evidence review for additional detail on and citations for the above-referenced studies: <https://pn3policy.org/policy-clearinghouse/evidence-based-home-visiting-programs/>.
- Refer to our Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap for state progress and variation: <https://pn3policy.org/pn-3-state-policy-roadmap-2023/us/home-visiting/>.
- Refer to our state policy lever checklist for necessary considerations to maximize the effectiveness of evidence-based home visiting programs: <https://pn3policy.org/state-policy-lever-checklist-hv/>.