State Home Visiting Programs

Children and Families Program

National Conference of State Legislatures
What is Home Visiting?

- Visitors going to the families’ homes to help expecting and new parents
- Participation is voluntary
- Visitors may be trained as nurses, social workers or child development specialists
- Visits teach parents about health, child development and learning activities that foster their child’s development.
- Screening to help parents identify possible health and developmental issues.
Why should legislators think about home visiting programs?

- Home visiting is already going on in every state
- Questions about the most effective approaches and coordination between programs
- Federal home visiting funding gives state officials an opportunity to fund new home visiting services and strengthen existing programs
  - Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
  - $1.5 billion over five years (FY2010 - FY2014)
Brain Development and Home Visiting

- Early experiences shape brain development in the first two years as children's brain architecture develops.
- Cognitive skills, emotional and social competence, and physical and mental health.
- Key child and adult outcomes:
  - School readiness
  - Academic achievement
  - Juvenile justice and crime
  - Employment
Return on Investment

- Effects of quality home visiting
  - cut the number of low-birth-weight babies by 50 percent
  - reduce the rate of child abuse and neglect by nearly one-half
  - increase reading and math test scores in grades 1-3 by 25 percent
  - increase children’s high school graduation rates by 60 percent

- Cost-benefit studies demonstrate returns on investment from $1.75 to $5.70 for every dollar spent
  - child welfare
  - K-12 special education and grade retention
  - criminal justice expenses
What Makes Home Visiting Effective?

- Evidence-based models
  - Nurse Family Partnership
  - Healthy Families America
  - Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
  - Parents as Teachers
- Locally developed approaches
Research-based Standards

• Targeted
  • First-time parents
  • Single parents
  • Teen parents
  • Substance abuse and/or maternal depression

• Intensive
  • Early
  • Frequent
  • First 2-3 years of child's life

• Specialized training
  • Nurses, social workers, early education specialists
  • Model specific training and curriculum
Key Questions for State Legislators

• Priority goals
  • improving maternal and child health,
  • increasing school readiness
  • reducing child abuse and neglect

• Funding programs that demonstrate high-quality services and measurable results

• Shifting funding to programs with stronger evidence of effectiveness

• Sustainable home visiting programs
  • Future changes in federal funding
  • Focus investments on programs that produce clear improvement in outcomes
Home Visiting

• Early childhood investment to support parents and improve the outcomes for young children and families

• Research shows that it produces returns on investment in better outcomes and reduced government spending in health, schools, child abuse and criminal justice

• Further information or questions:
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