

Home Visiting—A Proven Strategy for Helping Families Thrive and Ensuring School Success

Home visiting delivers early education and support to families where they are—in their homes and on their terms. Through stand-alone programs or in partnership with center-based services, voluntary home visiting educates families and brings them up-to-date information about health, child development and school readiness, and connects them to critical services. Home visiting is a bridge that links the resources of the community with the safety of the home environment, empowering even hard-to-reach parents to build a better future for themselves and their children.

Home Visiting Promotes Early Learning One Family at a Time

Home visiting offers parents a personalized approach to enhancing their children's readiness to learn in the ways that matter for later school success.ⁱ Some studies have shown that:

- Participating families talk more, read more and have more positive interactions with their children. They engage in more educational activities at home and in their communities.ⁱⁱ
- Children show improved early literacy, language, problem solving, social awareness and competence, and basic skills.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Children have higher scores on achievement and standardized tests.^{iv}
- School attendance improves.^v

Home Visiting Improves Parenting and Family Health

Home visitors build trusting relationships with parents, helping them get the services and supports they need, and encouraging them to become more involved in their children's development and to achieve their own personal goals. Some studies have shown that:

- Participating parents know more about child rearing, use more positive discipline, are more confident about parenting, have better communication skills, have less parenting stress, and are more involved with and securely attached to their children.^{vi}
- Families who receive home visiting are more likely to have health insurance and a medical home, to seek prenatal and well-child care, and to get their children immunized.^{vii}
- Families rely less on public assistance, have a healthier interval between pregnancies, fewer problems with substance use, and less criminal justice involvement.^{viii}

Home visiting has a lasting impact on children and families

Some research has shown that the benefits of home visiting can endure long after program involvement ends:

- Home visiting has been associated with long-term improvements in children's reading and language skills.^{ix}
- Children demonstrate better school performance and improved standardized test performance in elementary school.^x
- Participation in home visiting is associated with higher rates of high school graduation.^{xi}

Home visiting is an effective, research-based and cost-efficient way to bring families and resources together to ensure that children grow up healthy and ready to learn.

The research cited in this fact sheet draws upon a variety of methodologies. Studies cited include those utilizing random assignment to intervention and control conditions, quasi-experimentation with matched comparison groups, and longitudinal studies. Because home visiting services are delivered in real-world settings, however, we also cite findings from case studies and single group investigations, which capture how families truly experience these services.

ⁱ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000), *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, J.P. Shonkoff & D.E. Phillips (eds.), Washington D.C.: National Academy Press.

ⁱⁱ Chambliss J. & Emshoff, J. (1997), *The Evaluation of Georgia's Healthy Families Program*; Katzev, A., Pratt, C. & McGigan, W. (2001), *Oregon Healthy Start 1999-2000 Status Report*; Galano, J. & Huntington, L. (1997), *Year V Evaluation of the Hampton, Virginia Healthy Families Partnership*; Kamerman, S.B. & Kahn, A.J. (1995), *Starting Right*, New York: Oxford University Press; Wagner, M. & Spiker, D. (2001), *Multisite Parents as Teachers Evaluation: Experience and Outcomes for Children and Families*; Administration for Children and Families (2003), *Research to Practice: Early Head Start Home-Based Services*, Washington D.C.: DHHS, www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/ehs/ehsintro.html.

ⁱⁱⁱ Administration for Children and Families (2003), *Research to Practice: Early Head Start Home-Based Services*, Washington D.C.: DHHS, www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/ehs/ehsintro.html; New York University Study on School Readiness of Parent-Child Home Program Participants, 2003; Coleman M., Rowland, B. & Hutchins, B., *Parents as Teachers: Policy implications for early school intervention*. Paper presented at the 1997 annual meeting of the National Council of Family Relations, Crystal City, VA, Nov. 1997.

^{iv} Pfannenstiel J. & Seltzer, D. (1989), *New Parents as Teachers: Evaluation of an Early Parent Education Program*, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 4, 1-18; Arkansas Statewide Study of HIPPY, 1999, conducted by Dr. Robert Bradley of the University of Arkansas; Levenstein, P., Levenstein, S. & Oliver, D. (2002), *First grade school readiness of former child participants in a South Carolina Replication of the Parent-Child Home Program*, *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 23, 331-353.

^v Baker & Piotrkowski, 1996, *National Council of Jewish Women Center for the Child* (U.S. Department of Education funded study of HIPPY).

^{vi} Pfannenstiel J. & Seltzer, D. (1989), *New Parents as Teachers: Evaluation of an Early Parent Education Program*, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 4, 1-18; Wagner, M., Iida, E. & Spiker, D. (2001), *The Multisite Evaluation of the Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program: Three-Year Findings from One Community*; Administration for Children and Families (2003), *Research to Practice: Early Head Start Home-Based Services*, Washington D.C.: DHHS, www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/ehs/ehsintro.html; Galano J. & Huntington, L. (1997), *Year V Evaluation of the Hampton, Virginia Healthy Families Partnership*; LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. (2001), *Healthy Families Arizona Evaluation Report*; McLaren, L. (1988), *Fostering mother-child relationships*, *Child Welfare*, 67, 353-365.

^{vii} Berkenes, J.P. (2001), *HOPES Healthy Families Iowa FY 2001 Services Report*; Klagholz & Associates (2000), *Healthy Families Montgomery Evaluation Report Year IV*; Greene et al. (2001), *Evaluation Findings of the Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program*; Katzev, A., Pratt, C. & McGuigan, W. (2001), *Oregon Healthy Start 1999-2000, Status Report*.

^{viii} Holtzapple, E. (1996), *State of Arizona Office of the Auditor General, Performance Audit, Annual Evaluation: Healthy Families Pilot Program*; Nelson, C., Gordon, T. & Hofman, K. (2000), *Healthy Families Pinellas Evaluation*; Williams, Stern & Associates, *Healthy Families Florida Statewide Evaluation: Summative Report* (2002);

^{ix} Arkansas Statewide Study of HIPPY, 1999, conducted by Dr. Robert Bradley of the University of Arkansas; DeVito, P.J. & Karon, J.P. (1984), *Pittsfield Parent-Child Home Program, Chap. 1, Longitudinal Evaluation Pittsfield Public Schools, Final report*; Drazen S. & Haust, M., *Raising reading readiness in low-income children by parent education*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, August 1993.

^x Drazen S. & Haust, M., *Lasting academic gains from an early home visiting program*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, August 1996; Levenstein, P., Levenstein, S. & Oliver, D. (2002), *First grade school readiness of former child participants in a South Carolina Replication of the Parent-Child Home Program*, *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 23, 331-353.

^{xi} Levenstein, P., Levenstein S., Shiminski J.A., & Stolzberg J.E. (1998), *Long-term impact of a verbal interaction program for at-risk toddlers: An exploratory study of high school outcomes in a replication of the Mother-Child Home Program*, *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*; 19, 267-285.