Home Visiting Alliance Begins

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Research Bolsters Calls for Investing in Home Visiting Programs

Research shows the early years of life matter because the basic architecture of the human brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood. Like the construction of a home, the building process begins with laying the foundation, framing the rooms and wiring the electrical system in a predictable sequence. Early experiences literally shape how the brain gets built, establishing either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all of the development and behavior that follows. A strong foundation in the early years increases the probability of positive outcomes. Healthy brain development requires caring and nurturing relationships with adults. Investments in early childhood programs like home visiting provide families with the support they need for the development of healthy and successful children. In the first years of a child’s life, caregivers play an essential and active role in their baby’s healthy brain development, which can be difficult without support. Many parents and caregivers encounter challenges like stress, geographic and social isolation, and poverty that can adversely impact their ability to support their child’s development in the early years. Home visiting programs can provide families with much needed support, including education, health and mental health guidance, as part of a comprehensive and coordinated system of care.

Evidence-Based Home Visiting Programs are voluntary programs that pair new and expectant families with trained professionals who provide parenting information, resources and support during pregnancy and throughout the child’s first years of life. Home visiting programs provide families with early and intensive support and are a proven strategy to improve outcomes for Tennessee’s children and families. Home visiting programs have the potential to reduce child abuse, improve educational success, improve parent and child health and coping skills, all of which contribute to reduced governmental costs.

Research into how the brain develops is shaping early childhood policies and programs:

Home Visiting: Improving Outcomes for Children:

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Home Visiting in Tennessee

In Tennessee, there are currently three evidence-based home visiting program models receiving state and/or federal funding. They include Healthy Families America (Healthy Start), Nurse Family Partnership and Parents as Teachers. Two promising approaches, Maternal Infant Home Outreach Worker (MIHOW) and Nurses for Newborns, also currently receive funding in Tennessee. MIHOW focuses on families who are economically disadvantaged and geographically and/or socially isolated with children birth to age 2. Parents from the local community serve as outreach workers and role models. They educate families about nutrition, child health and development, and positive parenting practices. Nurses for Newborns sends specially trained pediatric nurses to the homes of families facing medical, social or environmental risks for the baby.
### Evidence-Based Family Home Visiting Program Models

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<th>PROGRAM MODEL</th>
<th>ELIGIBILITY</th>
<th>PROVEN OUTCOMES</th>
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<td>Early Head Start</td>
<td>Low-income pregnant women and families with a child under age three.</td>
<td>• Improved child development and school readiness</td>
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<td>• Reduced child maltreatment</td>
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<td>• Improved family economic self-sufficiency</td>
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<td>Healthy Families America</td>
<td>Vulnerable pregnant women and families with infants. The program continues</td>
<td>• Improved maternal and child health</td>
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<td>until the child turns age four.</td>
<td>• Improved child development and school readiness</td>
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<td>• Improved family economic self-sufficiency</td>
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<td>Nurse-Family Partnership</td>
<td>Vulnerable pregnant women expecting their first child. The program continues</td>
<td>• Improved maternal and child health</td>
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<td>Parents as Teachers</td>
<td>Vulnerable pregnant women and families with infants. The program continues</td>
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Creation of the Home Visiting Leadership Alliance

The Home Visiting Leadership Alliance (HVLA) includes leadership from home visiting programs, state departments and other stakeholders from across the state. The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) has administrative responsibility for the HVLA through a grant agreement with the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH). HVLA is co-chaired by TDH and TCCY and meets quarterly. The first meeting was on January 13, 2016.

The Home Visiting Leadership Alliance (HVLA) is staffed by Sumita Keller Sumita.Keller@tn.gov.

Information on the HVLA and its progress will be available on TCCY’s website at http://www.tn.gov/tccy/topic/tccy-hvla-home-visiting-leadership-alliance.

Pay for Success

As quality prevention programs experience shrinking funding opportunities and find government often lacks the long-term commitment to invest in prevention programs that improve outcomes for children and families, communities are exploring alternative ways to fund effective, evidence-based programs. Pay for Success (PFS), or Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) offer governments a new way of pursuing proven programs and bringing them to scale.

Two years after establishing a PFS transaction for Pre-K, Utah saw success with the quality early education program and the PFS model, resulting in the first payment to investors for PFS in the U.S. By investing in quality early education, Utah experienced a reduction in the number of children requiring special education services. The resulting cost savings for the school districts and government were then submitted as payment to the investor. Salt Lake County, Utah has also selected Parents as Teachers home visiting program for a new PFS project to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

The state of South Carolina worked with the Institute for Child Success to conduct a feasibility study and has begun a Pay for Success partnership with grant funders and private investors to provide initial funding to increase access to Nurse Family Partnership home visiting programs in the state.

Through a grant with the Tennessee Department of Health, TCCY is excited to explore this new and innovative financing structure for evidence-based home visiting programs in the state.

Initial Results Released for First Social Impact Bond for Early Childhood Education Show Success: http://bit.ly/1om9dTL


Kristi Paling has joined TCCY as the Upper Cumberland regional coordinator. Prior to joining TCCY, Paling worked at the Department of Children’s Services for 15 years, most recently as a supervisor-program manager in the Training Division. A long-time supporter of the Upper Cumberland Council on Children and Youth, she operates out of the Upper Cumberland Regional Health Facility Office. Her email is Kristi.Paling@tn.gov.


Sad News

TCCY staff mourns with co-workers who suffered losses recently. Noble Cody, father of Lindsey Cody, East Tennessee regional coordinator, died January 4 in Cookeville. William "Bill" Wise, father of Northeast regional coordinator Diane Wise, died January 23. Both men were 93 years old and were veterans. Please contact TCCY Director of Field Operations John Rust (John.Rust@tn.gov) for more information.

On January 29, Dr. Gerald Stow died. Dr. Stow was president/treasurer of Tennessee Baptist Children’s Homes for 15 years and then served 15 more years as Ambassador for Tennessee Baptist Children’s Homes. He was the first chair of the Commission after its most recent substantial reorganization in 1988. He served as chair for six years and as a member for nine. More information on his life: http://bit.ly/20LB6me.

Mark Your Calendar


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In the News
Woodruff, Judy and Cat Wise, PBS Newshour, "How home visits for vulnerable moms boost kids' brainpower," http://to.pbs.org/1S0wvea.


Research Information


Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or ability to pay, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity operated, funded or overseen by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY). It is the intent of TCCY to bind all agencies, organizations or governmental units operating under its jurisdiction and control to fully comply with and abide by the spirit and intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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