

VOLUNTARY EVIDENCE-BASED HOME VISITING IN CALIFORNIA



Research shows relationships fuel early brain development and provide the foundation for lifelong health and success. Yet we also know that parenting a very young child places enormous physical and emotional demands on adults. Some families may not have what they need, or know where to turn for support if they want it, even when it is within reach in their own community.

Voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs match new and expectant parents with trained professionals who provide ongoing, individualized support during critical points in pregnancy through a child's first year(s) of life.

- **Home visitors are social workers, registered nurses, or parent educators** formally trained in a particular home visiting program model.
- **Home visitors work with families on a regular basis**, often beginning in pregnancy or shortly after the birth of a child, and continuing for up to 3 years. Visits typically last an hour, and range in frequency from weekly to monthly according to particular program guidelines.
- **Families are in the driver's seat** – they set the program pace, their own personal goals, and focus their home visit on their own interests and questions.
- **Home visitors offer parenting advice**, coach parents toward their goals, and assist families in securing needed health screenings and safety net resources.

What California families say about voluntary evidence-based home visiting:

"It changed my views on a healthy relationship. Helped me grow as a person and my knowledge on how to keep my baby and myself healthy physically and mentally."

"It's made me a better person and mom, helped me make better decisions for myself and my family. Helped motivate and empower me to get back in school, get a job, etc."

Voluntary evidence-based home visiting is an umbrella term for certain program models that are backed by rigorous research studies, and meet federally established criteria for effectiveness, replicability, and quality. Although programs are distinct from one another, they share common core principles and features:

- **Voluntary:** Parents always opt in, and all visits are arranged in advance, according to a family's schedule, preferences, location of choice, and needs.
- **Comprehensive:** Programs are multifaceted and designed to foster the physical health, mental health, and education of both parents and children.
- **Family-centered:** Home visitors focus on recognizing and reinforcing clients' strengths and are trained to partner with families in culturally responsive ways.
- **Purposeful:** Informed by science on child development and attachment, programs empower and equip parents with the tools and skills to manage parenthood, foster strong family relationships and be their child's first and most important teacher.
- **Replicable:** Programs have formal training, fidelity mechanisms to monitor how programs are aligned to intended outcomes, and established evaluation protocols.
- **Flexible:** Programs are designed to work within a variety of local agency settings and can leverage and optimize many existing child and family serving systems
- **Effective:** Backed by decades of research, evidence-based home visiting is proven to boost both parents and children across a range of domains.
 - Support the optimal development of children
 - Prevent child abuse and neglect
 - Promote healthy family relationships
 - Increase the confidence and competence of parents
 - Promote family economic self-sufficiency
 - Maximize utilization of safety net supports

Two-thirds of California families with babies and toddlers face substantial challenges, yet voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs reach fewer than 2% of California babies and toddlers. In California, the four largest evidence-based home visiting programs (listed below) are funded by various federal and local means, and locally anchored within a diverse variety of public and private organizations across the state.

Model	Counties	Families	Funding
<p>EARLY HEAD START HOME-BASED OPTION (EHS) Goals: Provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services according to Head Start Performance Standards. Eligibility: Low-income pregnant women and families with children birth to age 3, most of whom are at or below the federal poverty level or who are eligible for Part C services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Structure: Weekly 90-minute home visits and two group socialization activities per month for parents and their children. Home Visitor Staff Requirements: Knowledge and experience in child development and early childhood education; principles of child health, safety, and nutrition; adult learning principles; and family dynamics.</p>	36	10,181	Federal-to-local Administration for Children and Families grants; various matching funds
<p>HEALTHY FAMILIES AMERICA (HFA) Goals: Focuses on reducing child maltreatment, improving parent-child interactions and children's social-emotional well-being, and promoting children's school readiness. Eligibility: Women begin during pregnancy or within the first three months after a child's birth and continue until children are between 3 and 5 years old. Structure: At a minimum, weekly hour-long home visits until children are 6 months old, with the possibility for less frequent visits thereafter. Home Visitor Staff Requirements: Paraprofessional parent educators with at least HS completion and relevant experience; Associate or Bachelor degree preferred.</p>	15	2,516	California Home Visiting program (federal MIECHV funding); First 5 Commission funding, various matching funds
<p>NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP (NFP) Goals: Designed to improve prenatal health and outcomes, child health and development, and families' economic self-sufficiency and/or maternal life course development Eligibility: First-time, low-income mothers and their children. Enrollment begins during pregnancy (no later than the 28th week of gestation) and concludes when the child turns 2 years old. Structure: One-on-one home visits. Home Visitor Staff Requirements: Registered public health nurses.</p>	21	4,501	California Home Visiting program (federal MIECHV funding); First 5 Commission funding, various matching funds
<p>PARENTS AS TEACHERS (PAT) Goals: Provide parents with child development knowledge and parenting support; early detection of developmental delays and health issues; prevent child abuse and neglect; and increase children's school readiness. Eligibility: Program enrollment may occur anytime between pregnancy and kindergarten for at least two years. PAT affiliate programs select the target population they plan to serve and the program duration. Structure: One-on-one hour-long home visits occurring at a minimum monthly, with more frequency for higher-need families; monthly group meetings. Home Visitor Staff Requirements: Paraprofessional parent educators with at least HS completion and 2 years' relevant experience; Associate or Bachelor degree preferred.</p>	11	2,774	First 5 Commission funding; Tribal MIECHV funding; various matching funds

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