

## The Top 5 Benefits of Home Visiting Programs

June 2015

Home visiting programs provide structured visits by trained professionals and paraprofessionals to high-risk parents who are pregnant or have young children. These programs support families by providing health check-ups, screenings, referrals, parenting advice, and guidance with navigating other programs and services in their community. The programs also monitor progress on children's developmental milestones. Quality home visiting programs help parents provide safe and supportive environments for their children,<sup>1</sup> and over time, families and home visitors build strong relationships that lead to lasting benefits for the entire family. Benefits include:



**MOMS AND BABIES ARE HEALTHIER.** During and after pregnancy, home visiting programs promote maternal health by helping mothers schedule regular doctor's visits, improve diets, reduce stress levels, and quit smoking or substance abuse. Babies benefit as well. One study found that mothers who participated in a home visiting program were half as likely to have a baby born low-birthweight,<sup>2</sup> which greatly reduced these babies risk for health and developmental problems.<sup>3</sup>



**CHILDREN ARE BETTER PREPARED FOR SCHOOL.** Home visiting programs promote positive parenting practices that help parents better prepare their children for school. Parents enrolled in home visiting programs are more likely to have a safe play environment at home, provide age-appropriate books, and engage children in structured teaching activities.<sup>4, 5</sup> Home visiting programs have also demonstrated long-term, positive impacts on children's academic achievement.<sup>6</sup>



**CHILDREN ARE SAFER.** Home visiting programs are associated with reduced rates of child maltreatment and injuries.<sup>7</sup> In one program, children of participating families experienced 40 percent fewer injuries between the ages of two to four,<sup>8</sup> and they were 35 percent less likely to visit an emergency room compared to children not enrolled. Mothers who participate in home visits also have lower stress levels and increased sensitivity during interactions with their children.<sup>9</sup>



**FAMILIES ARE MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT.** Mothers with higher levels of education work more hours, have higher family income levels, and provide more cognitively stimulating home environments for their children.<sup>10</sup> Participating in a home visiting program leads to higher rates of enrollment and more hours spent in educational or training programs.<sup>11, 12</sup>



**HOME VISITING PROGRAMS SAVE MONEY.** The short- and long-term benefits of home visiting programs largely outweigh the overall costs incurred from implementation. RAND found that high-fidelity home visiting programs for at-risk families have a \$5.70 return for every tax dollar spent from reduced spending for health care and welfare services.<sup>13</sup> Another study of a home visiting program in Durham, North Carolina reported saving \$3.00 for every \$1.00 spent on the program during an infant's first six months due to reduced emergency care visits.<sup>14</sup>

Citations on back. Click for: [Web version](#), [PDF version](#), [CFRP's Home Visiting research](#).

- <sup>1</sup> “States and the New Federal Home Visiting Initiative: An Assessment from the Starting Line.” Pew Center on the States Washington, D.C. (2011)  
[http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/home\\_visiting/HomeVisitingAugust2011Reportpdf.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/home_visiting/HomeVisitingAugust2011Reportpdf.pdf).
- <sup>2</sup> E. Lee, et al. “Reducing Low Birth Weight through Home Visitation: A Randomized Controlled Trial.” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 36 (2), 154-160. [http://www.healthyfamiliesnewyork.org/Media/pdf/HFNY\\_low\\_birth\\_weight\\_article.pdf](http://www.healthyfamiliesnewyork.org/Media/pdf/HFNY_low_birth_weight_article.pdf).
- <sup>3</sup> Hack, M., Klein, N. K., & Taylor, H.G. (1995). Long-term developmental outcomes of low birthweight infants. *Future of Children*, 5, 176-196.
- <sup>4</sup> Jones Harden, B., Chazan-Cohen, R., Raikes, H., & Vogel, C. (2012). Early head start home visitation: The role of implementation in bolstering program benefits. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 40(4), 438-455.
- <sup>5</sup> Kitzman, H., Olds, D. L., Henderson, C. R., Hanks, C., Cole, R., Tatalbaum, R., et al. (1997). Effect of prenatal and infancy home visitation by nurses on pregnancy outcomes, childhood injuries, and repeated childbearing. A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 278(8), 644–652.
- <sup>6</sup> Kitzman, H. J., Olds, D. L., Cole, R. E., Hanks, C. A., Anson, E. A., Arcoletto, K. J., ... & Holmberg, J. R. (2010). Enduring effects of prenatal and infancy home visiting by nurses on children: follow-up of a randomized trial among children at age 12 years. *Archives of pediatrics & adolescent medicine*, 164(5), 412-418. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20439791>.
- <sup>7</sup> Harriet L. MacMillan and others, “Interventions to Prevent Child Maltreatment and Associated Impairment,” *Lancet* 373 (2009): 250–66. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19056113>.
- <sup>8</sup> Olds, D. L., Henderson, C. R., & Kitzman, H. (1994). Does prenatal and infancy nurse home visitation have enduring effects on qualities of parental caregiving and child health at 25 to 50 months of life? *Pediatrics*, 93(1), 89-98. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8265329>.
- <sup>9</sup> K. S. Howard and J. Brooks-Gunn. “The Role of Home-Visiting Programs in Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect.” *The Future of Children*, 19 (2), 119-146. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ856318.pdf>.
- <sup>10</sup> Carneiro, P., Meghir, C., & Parey, M. (2013). Maternal education, home environments, and the development of children and adolescents. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 11(s1), 123-160. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1542-4774.2012.01096.x/full>.
- <sup>11</sup> Love, J., Kisker, E., Ross, C. M., Schochet, P. Z., Brooks-Gunn, J., Paulsell, D., et al. (2002). *Making a difference in the lives of infants and toddlers and their families: The impacts of Early Head Start. Volumes I-III: Final technical report [and] appendixes [and] local contributions to understanding the programs and their impacts*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start Bureau.
- <sup>12</sup> LeCroy, C. W. & Krysik, J. (2011). Randomized trial of the Health Families Arizona home visiting program. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(10), 1761-1766.
- <sup>13</sup> “States and the New Federal Home Visiting Initiative: An Assessment from the Starting Line.” Pew Center on the States Washington, D.C. (2011)  
[http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/home\\_visiting/HomeVisitingAugust2011Reportpdf.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/home_visiting/HomeVisitingAugust2011Reportpdf.pdf).
- <sup>14</sup> Dodge, K. A., Goodman, W. B., Murphy, R. A., O’Donnell, K., Sato, J., & Guptill, S. (2014). Implementation and randomized controlled trial evaluation of universal postnatal nurse home visiting. *American Journal of Public Health*, 104 (S1), S136-S143. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4011097/>.