

Home Visiting

Trusted Support to Improve Family Well-Being



Parenting can be a joyful, yet daunting, experience. Caregivers want what is best for their children, but often face stress and challenges in meeting their families' needs.

Having a trusted and supportive network to rely on during this time helps caregivers navigate the choppy waters with improved health and hope for the future.

Home visiting offers caregivers trusted information, tools, and support to foster young children's healthy development. When caregivers have help with their critical role, they have greater freedom to make choices that improve their families' well-being. Increased access to these programs can reduce adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and build the foundation for children to thrive and our state to prosper.

Iowa's Pro-Family Policy Opportunity

Lawmakers have several options to support home visiting services in Iowa:



Expand access to evidence-based programs, allowing all families with young children to participate.



Increase flexibility of funds to allow programs to provide services to families in the prenatal period.

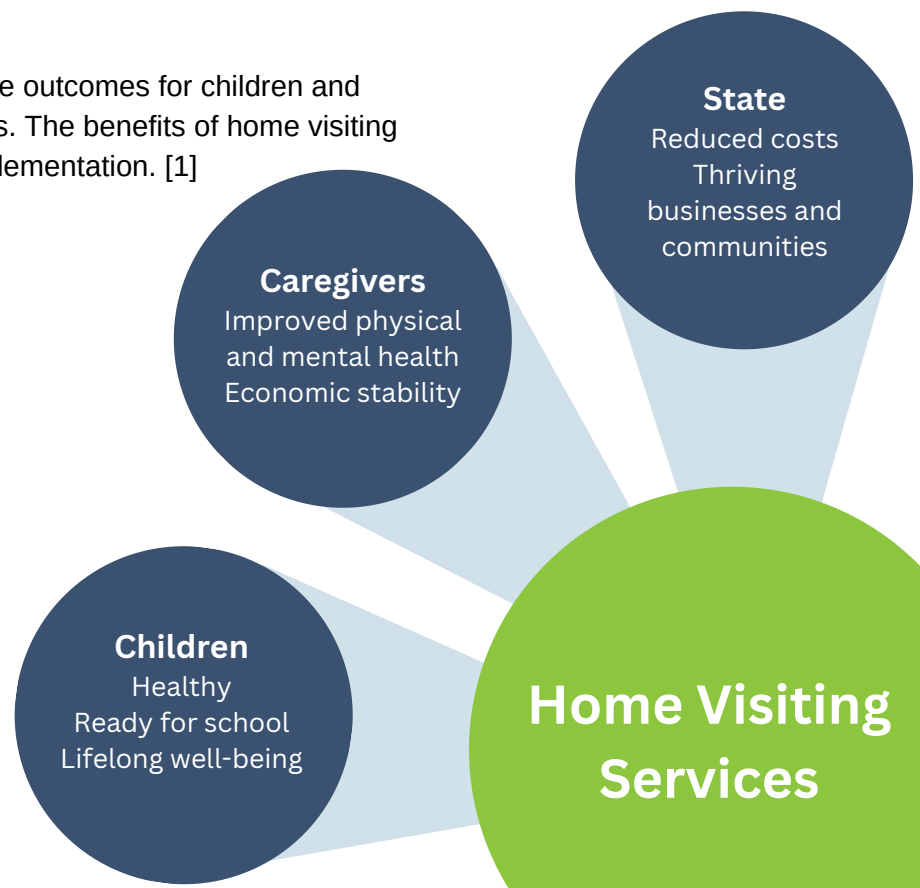


Support an awareness campaign to reduce stigma in accessing services and increase enrollment.

Supporting families in the early years produces long-term benefits.

Evidence-based home visiting can achieve positive outcomes for children and families while creating long-term savings for states. The benefits of home visiting have been shown to far outweigh the costs of implementation. [1]

- **Children:** More likely to grow up in homes that promote healthy development, leading to improved health and readiness in school and reduced behavior and mental health concerns.
- **Caregivers:** Improves conditions that can cause stress and mental health challenges and helps caregivers care for themselves and their families. Promotes healing and positive parenting practices to disrupt intergenerational trauma. Increases family economic stability. [2]
- **State:** Reduces burden on Iowa's child welfare and justice systems as families have safer, healthier home environments. Reduces household violence and crime and juvenile delinquency in Iowa.



Children
Healthy
Ready for school
Lifelong well-being

Caregivers
Improved physical
and mental health
Economic stability

State
Reduced costs
Thriving
businesses and
communities

**Home Visiting
Services**

Home visiting sets families up for success.

Safe, stable, and nurturing **experiences early in a child's life lay the foundation** for future health, learning, and success. While caregivers play a central role in providing these experiences, they cannot do it alone. Caregivers need reliable support and information that promote an entire family's well-being.

Caregivers want what is best for their children, but **social and economic conditions often limit the choices** they can make, the opportunities they have, and the network available for support. As a result, caregivers may experience significant stress and worsening health and mental health.

Home visiting increases caregiver capacity to focus on their families in ways they desire. Trained staff regularly visit a family's home to coach and support caregivers in areas related to health and well-being, child development and school readiness, and positive parent-child relationships. Home visitors also connect families to community resources and opportunities, share strategies for addressing particular concerns, and encourage healthy behaviors (e.g. smoking cessation and breastfeeding). They may help parents reflect on their own childhood trauma and how they can prevent intergenerational trauma with their kids. [3]

Home Visiting in Iowa

While most Iowa communities offer home visiting services to families with children ages 0-5, not all families qualify or can access these services. In addition, most services begin after a child is born, while research shows improved outcomes when home visiting begins in the prenatal period. The infrastructure and expertise are in place to expand services to more families.

- Approximately **35 percent of eligible children** under the age of 3 are served by Iowa's home visiting programs. [5]
- **59 agencies across the state** implement at least one of these five evidence-based home visiting programs: Early Head Start Home-Based Option, Family Connects, Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Parents as Teachers. [6] Most counties offer at least two options to address family needs.
- Several **different funding sources support** evidence-based or promising models: Early Childhood Iowa, Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visitation (MIECHV) program, Iowa Child Abuse Prevention Program (ICAPP), and the Healthy Opportunities for Parents to Experience Success—Healthy Families Iowa (HOPES-HFI) program.

Learn more at www.iowaaces360.org



Potential Impact

Home visiting support helps caregivers build safe environments and strong relationships that prevent and protect against adverse childhood experiences with Iowa's next generation.



Two out of three new mothers in Iowa report experiencing at least one stressor in the 12-months prior to giving birth. Greater stress while pregnant can lead to poorer birth outcomes for the mother and baby and health consequences that extend a lifetime for the baby.



Research shows that home visiting reduces child abuse and other ACEs that can lead to health, mental health, and behavior challenges through adulthood. Reducing ACEs by even 10% would equate to an annual savings of \$58 million annually in the U.S. as related illnesses are also reduced. [1]



Cost-benefit analyses show that high quality home visiting programs offer returns on investment ranging from \$1.75 to \$5.70 for every dollar spent due to reduced costs of child protection, K-12 special education and grade retention, and criminal justice expenses. [4]

Sources

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3. Kilburn, M. R., & Karoly, L. A. (2008). The Economics of Early Childhood Policy: What the Dismal Science Has to Say about Investing in Children. Occasional Paper, RAND Corporation.
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