

Home Visiting

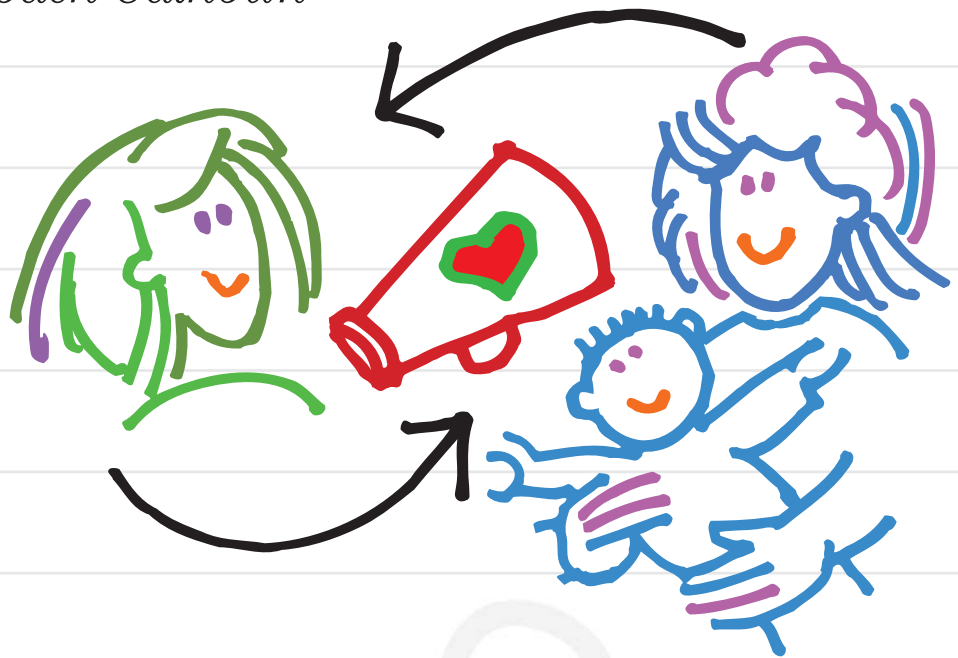


Home Visiting

“You can’t start expert coaching too early.”



– *Coach Calhoun*



➔ Just as young athletes develop positive instincts and good practice habits when their parents apply advice from experienced coaches, children benefit in many ways when parents take advantage of community home visiting programs, which often start before the child is born.

Moment of Victory

Every child grows up in a nurturing environment, eager to learn and ready to succeed.

"She never judged me or my situation. I could ask her anything and she gave me information on child development, sleeping habits, potty training, discipline and available community resources. She took a lot of the fear away and made me a better mother."

Nurturing Families Network program participant

Team Stats That Cut It

Home visiting has been shown to:

- Promote family stability and well being;
- Enhance child development and school readiness;
- Improve health outcomes for mothers and children; and
- Foster positive parenting and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.



Game Situation

A healthy family functions with a success rate like none other. A healthy family performs in a way that is tops for children and adults. That includes maintaining the health and safety of family members, providing conditions for emotional growth and motivation, helping to shape values, teaching social skills, promoting love of learning and creating a happy place for fun and rest.

Yet contemporary life is full of challenges. Both parents are often working. There are fewer hours for relaxation and down time. Trying to make ends meet, many parents work more than one job or work evening shift when they would wish to be home with their family. Other families face divorce, or the loss of one parent. Single parenting with all of these family responsibilities is tough on many.

Most families have an inner strength that enables them to do a good job no matter what the stressors. But sometimes a family coach could be an extra support and great help.

Home visiting programs can help parents with the details of how to best nurture and care for their child and how to develop confidence in this new and special role.

Home visiting can strengthen families by expanding parents' knowledge of their child's development month by month through the early years.

It pays to master the fundamentals.

Trained home visitors meet with a family when they are expecting their first child. Visiting parents-to-be and parents after the birth is a proven powerful way of helping parents be the best parents that they can be. Home visitors give parents the information and tools they need to promote the growth and well-being of their child and information to meet their own needs as well.

Over several months home visitors share their knowledge about community resources and child development with new parents. These special visitors tailor their visits to meet the unique goals and challenges of each family. They bring books, educational activities and other materials with them into the home.

Home visitors stay involved with the family and assist parents in achieving their long-term goals. This might mean returning to school, finding a better job or a new place to live. For the child, home visiting can mean significant improvements in school readiness, language and social skills. It also means early identification and intervention when developmental warning signs are present.

“Full Court Press” Game Plan

Change the rules and you change the game.

All parents need and deserve support. Being a parent may be the toughest job a parent will ever have.



Many grandparents are raising their grandchildren. They, too, can benefit from visiting coaches about how to be the best parent/grandparent for the child.

What parents and other family members can do

- If you are pregnant or parenting your first child, consider whether home visiting would be useful to you as extra support. If so, make a connection with the Nurturing Families Network home visiting program or other family support center by calling Help Me Grow at 1-800-505-7000. A care coordinator is there to assist you.
- As your family grows, develop regular family routines such as meals, chores and errands. Regular family roles and obligations help children with self-control and other positive outcomes.
- Share parent/child time that is fun together. Parental warmth and supportiveness contribute to healthy development, particularly when combined with high expectations of your child.

What obstetricians, pediatricians, and nurses can do

- Help your patients anticipate the life-changing event they are about to experience. Assure them that all parents need and deserve support – parenting is wonderful, joyous, and often a very tough job.
- Tell parents how critical the first few months and years of life are for their child's future and, most importantly, tell them about the vitally important role they play.
- Let parents know that it's important how they are feeling and adjusting to the role of parenthood. Suggest home visiting if a parent might benefit from family support and empowerment to give his or her child the best possible start in life.

What schools and community can do

- Collaborate with quality home visiting programs and link families to such family-strengthening services if parents seek support or might benefit from such support in the early months of parenting.
- Remember to support fathers in the early months as key to a child's development, security and constancy.

What policy leaders can do

- Integrate home visiting with early childhood education and family support services. This combination has better outcomes for children than using any of these programs alone.
- Ensure that home visiting programs are of high quality with evidence-based models and practices.
- Advocate a two-phased approach of home visiting coaching for the family with significant stress. This can include visits once a week for the first three to six months, followed by less frequent but regular visits for two years.
- Promote home visiting programs such as the Nurturing Families Network as a fundamental strategy to help families address challenges and ensure the positive growth and development of children.

Read More About Home Visiting

The Nurturing Families Network

If you are pregnant or parenting your first child, call 1-800-505-7000 to talk to a care coordinator.

2-1-1 Infoline

This is a free community service administered by the United Way of Connecticut and funded by the state Department of Social Services and your local United Ways. Dial 2-1-1 or visit www.infoline.org to get information on home visiting services near you. The phone line is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year

Parents As Teachers

This nonprofit organization, which started in Missouri but now serves all 50 states, helps parents understand their role in encouraging their child's development right from birth. Visit www.parentsasteachers.org or call the national headquarters in St. Louis, at (314) 432-4330. In Connecticut visit ConnPAT www.connpat@earthlink.net

Home Visiting: Strengthening Families by Promoting Parenting Success

This policy brief, from the the National Human Services Assembly, explains how home visiting improves the chances that children from at-risk families will enter kindergarten ready to learn. It also evaluates several of the better-known and evidence-based home visiting programs and offers recommendations for communities to consider. Download the 18-page report from the Assembly's website, at www.nassembly.org. (Click on the link in the right column for the Family Strengthening Policy Center, then click on Policy Briefs.) You may also call the Assembly's headquarters in Washington, D.C., at (202) 347-2080