

WestEd CHVP External Evaluation Issue Brief #2: The Impact of Home Visiting Programs on Communities

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During fall 2014, the WestEd California Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) external evaluation team conducted ten site visits in eight counties in California. Forty-five home visitors were interviewed and 12 family focus groups with 64 family members were conducted. Families also completed an Exit Survey upon completion of the program or upon early termination. The home visitors and family participants of the focus groups and Exit Surveys were asked the following questions to determine the impact of the program beyond the families being served in the community.

Home Visitor Interview Questions:

- Do you believe your services are making a difference in the community?*
- How, or why not?*

Family Focus Group and Exit Survey Question:

- Have you provided support or help to any other parents, friends or neighbors based on the support or information you received in home visiting?*

Home Visitor and Family Quotes:

"I'd like to think that we are helping people get an education and be more employable and be quality employees and have kids that are ready for school and be parents who will encourage their kids in school. We create healthier families and build relationships between adults in families that spread out to others."

"I think there are long-term things... Clients help each other. They will give us clothes their babies out-grew and ask us to give it to another mom. They learn about reciprocity...share materials with others they know."

"It makes a big difference in this type of community that is low income, rural, [with] limited opportunities for the families. They have a lot of barriers to achieve what they want and these services help provide the support for the push they need to hurdle the barriers."

"I've shared with other moms but the biggest impact which surprised me was sharing with my family because they were very impressed."

"The [handouts] were used by my pregnant friend after we used them. The 'tummy time' [handout] was used by my neighbors who watch their new grandson."

"[I] got [my friends] into groups that could help them."

**Positive Changes Reported in Communities Served by the
California Home Visiting Program**

Community Impact	Examples
Improved educational outcomes	Clients achieve their educational goals. Children are ready for school.
Stronger family and partner relationships	Better communication seen in families. Clients learn empathy for others.
Increased employment rates	Clients gain employment.
Greater financial independence	Clients move away from public funding. Families rely less on TANF/monetary assistance. Families pay taxes. Families rely less on public funding.
Improvements in psychological well-being	Clients are mentally stable in the community. Clients pass on psycho-educational materials.
Increased awareness of and access to resources	Clients learn to access resources and utilize them better.
Improved parenting skills	Clients learn about their children and child development. Community gains education about breastfeeding.
Development of support systems with positive role models	Home visitors become models for mothers who lack a support system.
Reduction in emergency room visits	Reduction in ER visits. Families learn preventative care. Communities are provided information on pre-term labor and post-delivery care. Clients plan their own health care. Dissemination of information on immunizations.
Safer environments for children and families	Better start for children. Healthier families in the community. Community receives hands-on education for breastfeeding. Families plan their own health care. Community receives education about immunizations.
Increased word-of-mouth referrals	Snowball/domino effect. Small changes are made visible in the community. Clients share information within and beyond their own community. Clients refer other parents to the program. Home visitors utilize information for their own children. Clients utilize the social media to pass on information.
Increased awareness of and access to community resources	Home visitors link agencies to one another.

For more information on the WestEd MIECHV External Evaluation, contact Karen Moran Finello (Principal Investigator) at kfinell@wested.org.