

## Ten Evidence-Based Practices for Home Visiting Programs

Susan Hegland & Kere Hughes

Department of Human Development & Family Studies

Iowa State University

Strategy	Recommendation	Research Support
1. Program Match	a) Match program goals to family needs and program resources.	Families with high levels of need make gains only with more intensive services from more highly trained professionals (Gomby, 2005).
2. Home Visitor Qualifications	a) Match qualifications of home visitor (e.g., paraprofessional, professional) to that demonstrated in model.	Paraprofessionals do best in programs with limited goals and a prescriptive curriculum; highly qualified home visitors needed for families with multiple, complex issues (Gomby, 2005).
3. Preservice & Inservice Training	<p>a) Provide the same intensity (i.e., hours, group size) of pre-service training by qualified instructors as specified in the evidence-based model.</p> <p>b) Provide the same frequency and intensity of inservice training as specified in the model.</p> <p>c) Assess home visitors' understanding of adult learning styles as well as program goals and strategies through activities such as role plays and case studies.</p>	<p>Most effective training is spaced in time and includes on-site consultation and assessment of learning (Epstein, 1993).</p> <p>In less effective home visiting programs, staff receive less training—both pre-service and on-going; these changes have been linked to weaker outcomes (Gomby, 2005; Schorr, 1977; Yoshikawa, Rosman, &amp; Hsueh, J., 2002).</p>
4. Supervision	a) Ensure program fidelity by providing ongoing review of home visits by both supervisor and home visitor using written documentation, on-site observations, or videotapes.	Home visits tend to drift from a focus on parent-child interactions to pleasant, chatty, visits between host and guest (Peterson, 2002; Roggman, Boyce, Cook, & Jump, 2001).
5. Home Visitor Retention	a) Minimize turnover of home visitors through competitive salary and benefits packages.	High turnover, due to low wages for home visitors, is linked to negative program outcomes (Gomby, 2005).

Strategy	Recommendation	Research Support
6. Family Recruitment	a) Recruit families in need of services.	Up to 40% of families recruited fail to enroll (Gomby, 2005), limiting generalization of results.
7. Cultural Sensitivity	a) Ensure that home visitors use strategies and activities consistent with cultural values of family, not just parent, especially if the parent lives with an extended family.	Strategies and activities that are inconsistent with the cultural beliefs and values of the family are less likely to be implemented, and more likely to lead to drop outs (Cowan, Powell, & Cowan, 1998; National Research Council, 2000)
8. Family Engagement	a) Maintain family engagement during visits. b) Jointly plan for parent follow-up activities. c) Review parent follow-up at next meeting.	Less effective home visitors praise the parent, and demonstrate activities, rather than jointly planning, implementing, and reviewing activities (Hebbeler et al. 2002).
9. Parenting Focus	a) Address needs recognized by the parent. b) Ensure that children in families with high needs participate in a high quality early care and education program.	Home visiting program are more successful at changing self-reported parenting attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors; child programs are more successful at changing child outcomes (Gomby, 2005; Love et al., 2002; Sweet & Appelbaum, 2004)
10. Program Intensity and Duration	a) Monitor frequency and duration of home visits. b) Minimize attrition by scheduling home visits at family's convenience. c) Monitor who is dropping out and why.	Families who stay with home visiting programs tend to be ones who least need the program, while highest need families drop out at rates above 50% (Gomby, Colross, Behrman, 1999; Innocenti, 2002; Wagner, Spiker, & Linn, 2002). High attrition limits generalization of results.

### Program Resources

- Buyse, V., & Wesley, P. (2004). *Consultation in early childhood settings*. Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes.
- Cripe, J., Hanline, M., & Daley, S. (1997). Preparing practitioners for planning intervention for natural environments. In P. Winton, J. McCollum, & C. Catlett, (Eds). *Reforming personnel*

*preparation in early intervention: Issues, models, and practical strategies.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Epstein, A. (1993). *Training for quality: Improving early childhood programs through systematic inservice training* (Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 9). Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

Hughes, K. (2005). Providing interventions to infants and toddlers through Family-Guided Routines Based Interventions (FGRBI): Implications for learning disabilities. In G. Sideridis & T. Citro (Eds.). *Research to practice: Effective interventions in learning disabilities* (pp. 169-191). Weston, MA: Learning Disabilities Worldwide.

Iowa SCRIPT Team (2004). *Family centered services: Guiding principles and practices for ensuring family centered services and practices.* <http://www.state.ia.us/earlyaccess/doc/fcs04.pdf>

Klass, C. (1996). *Home visiting: Promoting healthy parent and child development.* Baltimore MD: Brookes.

Wasik, B. & Bryant, D. (2000). *Home visiting: Procedures for helping families* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### Research References

Bilukha, O., Hahn, R., Crosby, A., Fullilove, M., Liberman, A., Moscicki, E., Snyder, S., Tuma, F., Corso, F., Schofield, A., Briss, P., (2005). The effectiveness of early childhood visitation in preventing violence. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28, 11-39.

Cowan, P., Powell, D., & Cowan, C. (1998). Parenting interventions: A family systems perspective. In I. Sigel & A. Renninger (Eds.). *Handbook of child psychology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.): Vol. 4: *Child psychology in practice* (pp. 3-72). NY: John Wiley.

Gilliam, W., Ripple, C., Zigler, E., & Leiter, V., (2000). Evaluating child and family demonstration initiatives: Lessons from the Comprehensive Child Development Program. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15, 41–59.

Gomby, D. (2005). *Home visitation in 2005: Outcomes for children and parents.* Committee for Economic Development: Invest in Kids Working Group: [www.ced.org/projects/kids.shtml](http://www.ced.org/projects/kids.shtml). October 15, 2005.

Gomby, D., Colross, P., & Behrman, R. (1999). Home visiting: recent program evaluations—analysis and recommendations. *The Future of Children*, 9 (1), 27-43.

Goodson, B., Layzer, J., St. Pierre, R., Bernstein, L., & Lopez, M. (2000). Effectiveness of a comprehensive, five-year family support program for low-income children and their families: Findings from the Comprehensive Child Development Program. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15, 5–39.

Goodson, B., Layzer, J., St. Pierre, R., Bernstein, L., & Lopez, M. (2000). Commentary: Good intentions are not enough: A Response to Gilliam, Ripple, Zigler, and Leiter. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15, 61–66.

Hebbeler, K. & Gerlach-Downie, S. (2002). Inside the black box of home visiting: a qualitative analysis of why intended outcomes were not achieved. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 17, 28-51.

Innocenti, M. (2002). Evaluating programs in real time: Interpreting puzzle pieces. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 22 (2), 86-90.

- Love, J., Kisker, E., Ross, C., Schochet, Brooks-Gunn, J., Paulesel, D., Boller, K., Constantine, J., Vogel, C., Fligni, A., Broady-Smith, C. (2002). *Making a difference in the lives of infants and toddlers and their families: The impacts of Early Head Start*. Washington, DC: Administration for Children, Youth, and Families.
- National Research Council. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. (J. Shonkoff & D. Phillips, Eds.) Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Peterson, C. (2002). Reflections on the challenges of program evaluation. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 22 (2), 82-85.
- Ramey, S., & Ramey, C. (2003). Understanding efficacy of early educational programs: Critical design, practice, and policy issues. In A. Reynolds, M. Wang, & H. Walberg (2003). *Early childhood programs for a new century* (pp. 35-70). Washington DC: CWLA Press.
- Roggmann, L., Boyce, L., Cook, G., & Jump, V. (2001). Inside home visits: a collaborative look at process and quality. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 16, 53-71.
- Sweet, M. & Appelbaum, M. (2004). Is home visiting an effective strategy? A meta-analysis of home visiting programs for families with young children. *Child Development*, 74, 1435-1456.
- Wagner, M. & Clayton, S. (1999). The Parents as Teachers Program: Results from two demonstrations. *The Future of Children*, 9 (1), 91-115.
- Wagner, M., Spiker, D., & Linn, M. (2002). The effectiveness of the Parents as Teachers program with low-income parents and children. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 22 (2), 67-81.
- Wasik, B., Ramey, C., Bryant, D., & Sparling, J. (1990). A longitudinal study of two early intervention strategies: Project CARE. *Child Development*, 61, 1682-1696.
- Yoshikawa, H., Rosman, E., & Hsueh, J. (2002). Resolving paradoxical criteria for the expansion and replication of early childhood care and education programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 17, 3-27.