

Home Visiting and Child Care

Extending the Reach of Home Visiting

Series on Home Visiting's Connections to Larger Systems of Support

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Many young children spend time in nonparental care while one or both parents are working. For example, in 2019, 59% of children from birth through age 5 who were not yet in kindergarten were cared for in at least one weekly nonparental care arrangement, with the highest percentage attending center-based settings (e.g., child care centers, preschool, pre-K, Head Start).^{1 2} Families who are working and have their children in child care are often less able to participate in traditional home visiting programs.

With 90% of brain development happening during this time, and growing understanding of the importance of early relationships as the foundation for healthy development, linking child care and home visiting can be an effective strategy for reaching more families and supporting child, family, and provider development.

When these two systems – home visiting and child care – work together:

- Children can benefit from greater access to developmental support from both the adults and the environments that surround them.
- Families can benefit from the availability of high-quality child care, and from the support of home visiting staff who understand their strengths and challenges and can meet them where they already are to reinforce positive parenting practices, help families set and achieve their goals, and connect them to resources in the community.
- Child care providers can benefit from the coaching, support, and resources that a home visitor can provide. This can help to expand providers' understanding of child development; engage families in developmentally appropriate, responsive interactions with their children that foster strong parent-child connections; and provide an extra link between home and early learning settings. This can be especially important for home-based child care providers who often have limited opportunities for intentional, tailored professional development to improve the outcomes for young children.
- Home visiting programs can benefit as they are able to enroll more families – especially those who might not be part of a traditional home visiting program because visits typically take place during the workday – and they can help families connect to child care when that is needed.

¹ <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=4>

² <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020075REV.pdf>

In short, intentional collaboration between home visiting and child care creates a more connected developmental environment around the child that is grounded in strengths-based and relational support, is culturally competent, and enhances the quality of interactions and instruction. It meets families where they are, supports the adults in children's lives, and connects their home and early learning experiences.

Promising Examples

The National Home Visiting Network set out to uncover examples of collaboration between child care and home visiting. Several evidenced based home visiting models – ParentChild+, HIPPY (Home Improvement Program for Preschool Youngsters), Parents as Teachers – have created adaptations to work with child care providers. Among the many examples we discovered, the following two illustrate what is possible when home visiting and child care work together.

ParentChild+ Home-Based Child Care Model

ParentChild+ found that many families who rely on family, friend, and neighbor care or home-based care do not have access to quality school readiness supports. The ParentChild+ Home-Based Child Care Model³ was created to build upon the success of the core family home visiting model with its focus on adult-child interactions and learning, and to have the child care provider as the target recipient of service. This approach helps child care providers strengthen their interactions with the children in their care, enhance the learning environment, and develop effective ways to share materials and information with parents that can then enrich the home environment. The home visitors (or early learning specialists) provide 48 visits to the child care provider while children are in care, offer 1:1 modeling of school readiness activities, and coach providers to implement best practices in a culturally competent and data-driven way. Early learning specialists leave behind 12 books/educational materials for the provider's learning environment, send additional books home with each child, and connect the child care providers and families to community resources.

Essential Lesson:

Rather than focusing exclusively on parents (which is the core model of ParentChild+) this initiative recognizes family child care providers as important developmental partners and equips them with the knowledge, materials, and coaching to strengthen children's learning experiences and extend that learning into the home.

Connecticut Early Years

Connecticut Early Years⁴ is an innovative, relationship-based model that brings together the strengths of child care and home visiting to support all families with infants and toddlers. Since launching in the fall of 2024, the pilot has served families in participating child care centers and family child care homes in New Haven and Hartford. Each participating program is paired with a Family Consultant -- hired, trained, and supervised by a local home visiting agency -- who is embedded in the child care setting and serves as a trusted resource for families, teachers, family child care providers, and directors. Family Consultants meet with families at least twice a month providing parenting guidance and support. They use the Family Map Inventory to help families identify needs and set goals; PICCOLO to highlight and reinforce rich parent-child engagement; and

³ <https://parentchildplus.org/our-work/home-based-child-care-model/>

⁴ <https://arclab.hdfs.uconn.edu/connecticut-early-years/>

the Ages and Stages Questionnaire/Sparkler to support child development. At its core, the model is driven by a commitment to advancing school readiness and long-term child outcomes, and holistic family well-being, including mental health and economic stability. Connecticut Early Years is funded as a pilot by the Office of Early Child Development with programmatic and research leadership from the University of Connecticut. Conversations are underway to explore how the model can expand statewide.

Essential Lesson:

Unlike a traditional referral partnership, Connecticut Early Years embeds a family-support professional within the child care setting, making home visiting-style support accessible to working families and adding critical support for teachers and the family-teacher relationship.

Collaboration Tips: Home Visiting and Child Care

Home visiting programs can partner with child care by:

- Referring families to child care resources in their community and other needed supports such as material needs, health care, mental health services, and more.
- Building relationships between home visitors and child care providers so they can share observations, identify strengths and concerns, and coordinate support for children and families.
- Delivering home visiting curricula and professional development to child care providers to bolster understanding of child development, early relationships, and parent-child connections.
- Embedding home visitors in child care programs to support working families who may not otherwise be connected to a home visiting effort.
- Recognizing and elevating both child care and home visiting as valuable professions that share a set of core competencies and are both helpful for families with home visiting's focus on parenting and child care's focus on quality early learning environments outside the home.
- Advocating for sustainable public investment in both fields by calling attention to the need for public financing to support the cost of quality programming, livable wages, and strategies to address burnout and staff turnover.

Helpful Resources

Connecting Home Visiting Families to Early Care and Education Services and Resources - <https://www.jbassoc.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Connecting-Home-Visiting-Families-Early-Care-Education-Services-Resources.pdf>

ParentChild+ Family Child Care Initiative - https://www.nhvrc.org/wp-content/uploads/HV_Models-to-Support-Home-based-child-care.pdf and <https://parentchildplus.org/our-work/home-based-child-care-model/>

Connecticut Early Years - <https://arclab.hdfs.uconn.edu/connecticut-early-years/>

Evaluation Report: Home Visiting for Home Child Care Providers - The Power of Early Childhood Partnerships - https://coloradolab.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/PDG-Case-Study_Evaluation-Brief_FINAL_.pdf

National Institute for Early Education Research - State of Preschool 2025 Yearbook - <https://nieer.org/yearbook/2025>