



2009 Early Learning Action Alliance Issue Brief: Evidence-Based Home Visiting

Initial coalition members:

American Federation of Teachers
Washington

Business Partnership for Early
Learning (BPEL)

Child Care Resources

Children's Alliance

Children's Home Society of WA

Community Network Coalition

Denise Louie Education Center

Economic Opportunity Institute

First Five Fundamentals of Pierce
County

Kirlin Charitable Foundation

League of Education Voters

League of Women Voters
Washington

Minority Executive Directors
Coalition of King County

Nurse Family Partnership

Parent Trust for Washington
Children/Parents as Teachers
State Office

Program for Early Parent Support
(PEPS)

Reach Out and Read

SEIU, Local 925

SOAR

WA Association for the Education of
Young Children (WAEYC)

WA Chapter American Academy of
Pediatrics

WA Educators in Early Learning

WA State Child Care Resource &
Referral Network

Washington State Family Child Care
Association

Washington Federation of State
Employees (WFSE)

White Center Early Learning
Initiative

WPEA/UFCW 365

Children are born learning and all children in Washington deserve the chance to succeed in school and life. The more exposure children have in their earliest years to new experiences, the stronger their social, emotional and intellectual foundations—the building blocks of future learning—become. We know that children learn best when they have consistent, positive attention from the people who love them most, whether at home with a parent, with a child care provider or in preschool with a teacher.

Investing in voluntary, evidence-based home visiting to meet the needs of at-risk, low income families will ensure that thousands of families can access support to help their children get off to a best possible start in life.

WHAT IS HOME VISITING?

The stress of a newborn baby can be difficult for any family; for families who lack extended community or family support, the stress can be overwhelming.

Evidence-based home visiting programs promote children's health and help them to develop the social, emotional, and intellectual skills they need to succeed in school and life. The programs also decrease the risk of child abuse, neglect, and future violent crime by providing families with information, support, new skills, encouragement and links to other community resources.

These voluntary and intensive services, which serve low-income families, work directly with the families for approximately two years; some programs begin prenatally or soon after delivery and others focus on ages 2 and 3. Home visitors work with the primary care-taker(s) and the child on a variety of skill sets and information. Most programs also include a group component.

HOME VISITING IN WASHINGTON

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature appropriated \$3.5 million to support investment in evidence-based home visiting programs such as the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), Parents as Teachers, and the Parent-Child Home Program.

These funds are administered by the Council for Children & Families (CCF). There are currently 13 programs receiving state funding and all of these programs must leverage local and private dollars. CCF also tracks program outcomes of participants.

The Early Learning Action Alliance is convened by the Children's Alliance.
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BENEFITS OF HOME VISITING

Children who survive abuse or neglect are more likely to turn to crime, and most likely comprise a significant number of children deemed “not ready” for kindergarten. Not only do these programs spare children and communities from the devastating consequences of child abuse and neglect, they also have been shown to provide an extremely high return on investment to taxpayers, including lowering levels of criminal activity and increasing high school graduation rates.

For example, rigorous research of the Nurse-Family Partnership Home Visiting shows that by age 15, the children of the mothers in the treatment group had 48 percent fewer substantiated reports of abuse or neglect as compared with peers not enrolled in the program. Mothers and children in the program also experienced significantly lower arrest rates (61 percent fewer and 59 percent fewer) than the control group that was not enrolled in the program.

A randomized control study of Parent-Child Home Program found that, of the children researchers were able to follow through high school, 84 percent of the children finishing the program graduated from high school compared to 54 percent of those who did not receive the intervention.

A recent study by Head Start founder Ed Zigler found that in third grade, children who participated in Parents as Teachers and preschool outperform their peers who attended preschool only on standardized achievement tests. The study showed that developmental delays were resolved early and participation significantly reduced the likelihood of a child's need for special education services.

A recent study by the Washington Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) found that home visiting programs, such as NFP, can return \$3.02 for every dollar spent.

A SMART INVESTMENT IN WASHINGTON'S FUTURE

Communities that prioritize early learning see substantial social and economic returns. Smart investments in early learning yield positive returns for families and communities across Washington State.

Protect voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs to serve at-risk families. Parents are their children's first and most important teachers and research shows that home visiting programs provide parents with the support they need to get their children ready for school. Keep Washington's \$3.5 million investment to provide services through the Council for Children and Families for 1600 at-risk families each biennium in Washington.