



**OHIO  
CHILDREN'S  
BUDGET**  
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# ISSUE BRIEF

## ISSUE: Evidenced-Based Home Visiting

Voluntary, evidence-based home visiting brings early childhood development and health professionals to new parents to help them cultivate strong, healthy relationships with their children, give children the emotional security required for healthy development and provide parents with the knowledge to understand their child's needs, as well as their own. For those who elect to participate in a home visiting program, providers regularly visit the homes of vulnerable families (typically once per month), starting while the mother is pregnant and continuing through the first few years of the child's life. During this critical period of physical, emotional, and cognitive development for young children, parents receive support and guidance on how to create a safe, stimulating environment that promotes growth and learning. Voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs allow motivated parents to learn how to succeed in their new role and provide children a healthy start with their first and most important teachers—parents.

### Policy

Ohio's voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs include the federally-funded Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program and the state-funded Help Me Grow program.

Most evidence-based home visiting is administered through the Ohio Department of Health, but communities across the state have also invested in home visiting programs that are administered through various local agencies using private and public dollars.

Ohio's voluntary home visiting program uses three evidence-based models: 1) Healthy Families America; 2) Nurse-Family Partnership; and 3) Parents as Teachers.

### Challenges

In 2017, only 9,612 families were served by *MIECHV* and *Help Me Grow*, accounting for only about 14% of Medicaid births in Ohio. Although an integral part of the continuum of services provided to Ohio's most at-risk kids, there is little coordination between home visiting programs and other early childhood services, such as publicly funded child care and preschool.



## Opportunities

[Quality evidence-based home visiting programs offer a \\$5.70 return on every public dollar invested by improving kids' school readiness, child and parent health, and overall family self-sufficiency.](#) Serving more families and ensuring that we are reaching those who are most at-risk will offer the state a significant return on public investment.

Several local communities have made significant long-term investments in quality, evidence-based home visiting, offering a wealth of expertise and outcome data that the state can use as a model for increasing home visiting capacity and ensuring positive outcomes for families.

## Support Child Well-Being: Recommendations

In order to reach Ohio's most at-risk parents and children and leverage more local and federal investment, the state should triple the number of families served by evidence-based home visiting programs. Increased investments in home visiting would also support system infrastructure and build capacity to serve more families over time. Further, it would promote system evaluation to ensure that programs are serving the unique needs of Ohio's most vulnerable families and applying the programs with rigor and fidelity to ensure that they are driving improvement in child and family outcomes.

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