



An Overview: Home Visiting

HEALTHY PARENTS & BABIES / A RAISING ILLINOIS PRIORITY

The prenatal period and the first moments and years of life are critical for brain development and laying the foundation for future health and success. Babies do not come with instruction manuals, but home visiting may be the next best thing.

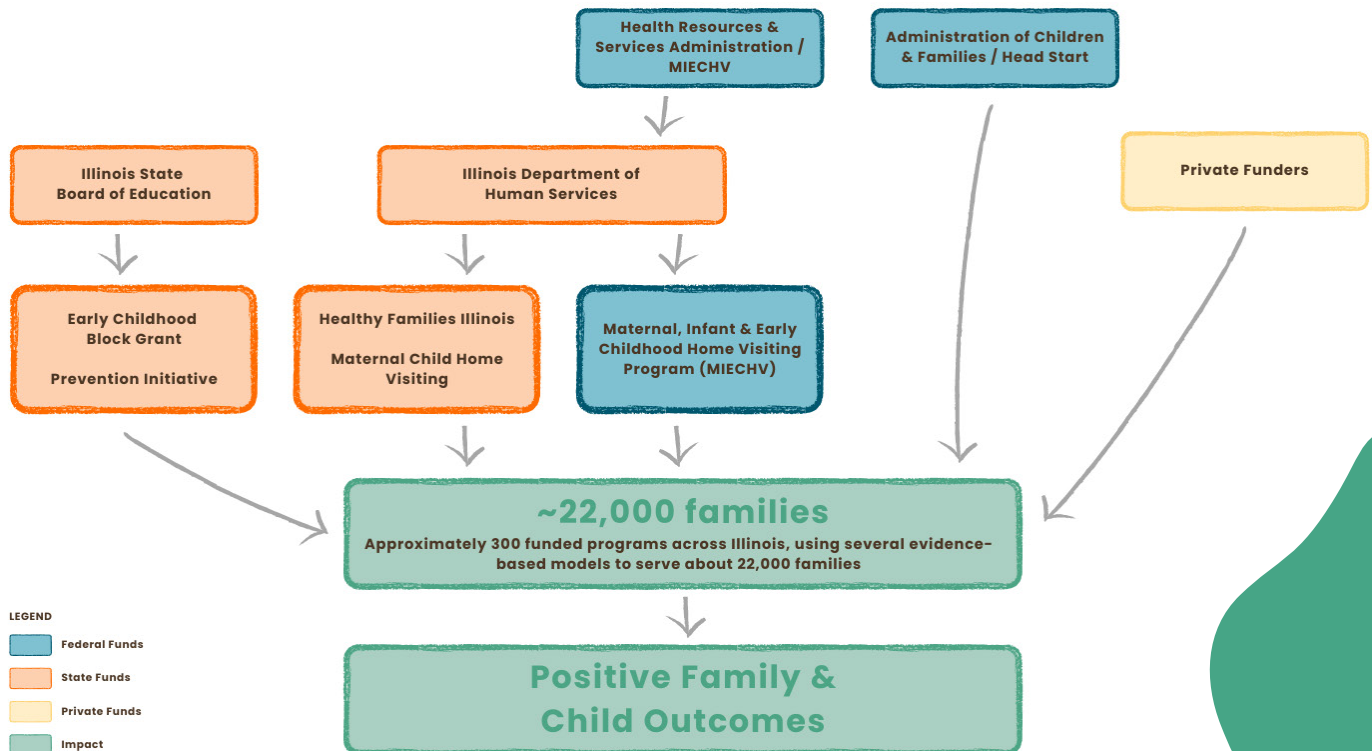
For more than 30 years, Illinois has supported home visiting as a key pillar in the continuum of infant and early childhood experiences and as a critical resource that supports the long-term health, development and well-being of children, families and caregivers.

Voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs, which are delivered by trained support professionals, **empower pregnant persons and families** to create positive home environments and to build strong relationships with their young child. Home visitors listen to and partner with caregivers to determine what is most important and impactful for their family, provide best practices and offer connections to a broad array of vital community resources.

Home visiting services, which in Illinois are supported by both state- and federally-funded resources, are **continuously proven to result in robust outcomes for families and communities**, including:

- Improved birth outcomes
- Increased rates of breastfeeding and immunization
- Increased uptake of well-child visits and developmental screenings
- Reductions in avoidable hospitalizations and injury, which translate to savings in health care spending

A Map of Home Visiting in Illinois

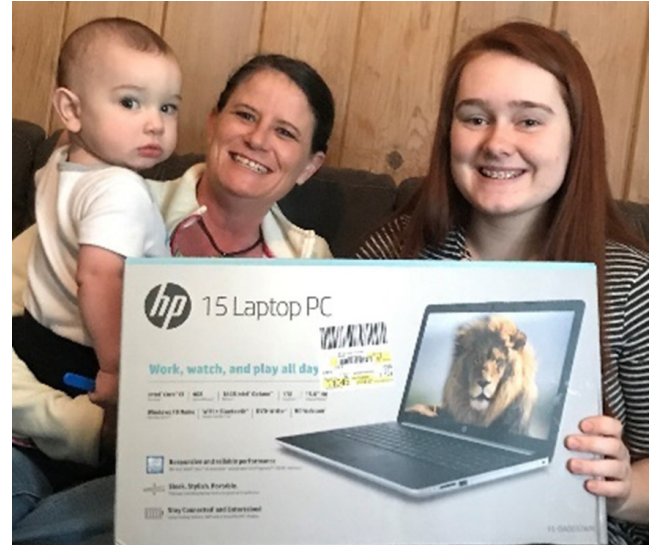




The Voices of Home Visiting

Darian Brown is a home visiting participant at Cornerstone Foundations for Families, an IDHS funded program in Quincy, Ill. Darian wanted to return to school but was unable to attend classes while caring for her young son, Wyatt. After learning of Darian’s circumstances, the local home visiting program utilized community resources to purchase a laptop for her to participate in online classes. She has since graduated from college and is employed!

“First Steps has helped my family in many ways! From providing educational and parenting information to providing financial assistance for a laptop to make it through school. I am very thankful for the program.” – Darian Brown, Parent



Driving to Reach More Families

Annually, Illinois serves an estimated 22,000 families with home visiting services. However, due to limited funding, program eligibility is typically limited by family income or other factors – leaving many families who could benefit from such a critical resource without access.

In fact, **Raising Illinois estimates that closer to 37,000 families with children birth to age 3 would likely benefit from home visiting services** – an access gap of 15,000 families.

Through intentional investment and strategy, Illinois can offer robust home visiting services that support all expecting parents and those caring for young children to establish healthy foundations, leverage opportunities for children’s developmental and future successes and achieve their full potential.

RAISING ILLINOIS CURRENT HOME VISITING PRIORITIES

- Ensure the **passage of the Governor’s proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget** (HB2319, SB289) which includes:
 - **\$5 million for IDHS evidence-based home visiting programs** (27.9% over FY 2023) to serve an additional 500-650 families
 - **\$75 million for ISBE preschool services and prenatal-to-age 3 programs**, like home visiting, (12.5% over FY 2023) to create thousands of new slots and improve existing program quality
- Leverage funding increases to **boost compensation for the early childhood field**. Home visitors are highly qualified professionals that are persistently under compensated – and low wages drive turnover that impacts families.
- Expand the reach of programs through a **coordinated approach across funding streams**, particularly for prenatal and doula services and programs serving infants and toddlers. Alignment and coordination across the funders to implement these funding increases is necessary to lay the groundwork for the multi-year Smart Start Illinois investments.
- Leverage **new funding for program quality supports**, such as Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, and enhancements for programs serving priority populations.

Raising Illinois believes that every expecting family, infant and toddler in Illinois should have equitable access to affordable high-quality learning experiences, health services and economic supports that they need during their most formative years—creating the strongest foundation for their success in school and life. Learn more at www.RaisingIllinois.org.