

Chicago Early Learning Tour--November 2019
Home Visiting in Illinois: A Cross-Systems Approach

- **Home visiting is a priority in Illinois** – Governor Pritzker’s most recent ECE budget focused on expanding home visiting programs statewide.
- **A growing body of research shows that home visiting can be a highly effective intervention.**
 - Home visiting programs are voluntary, free of charge to eligible families, and serve families from the prenatal period to age 5.
 - Trained professionals visit families in their homes to provide vital information, parental support in scaffolding children’s development, early identification and referral, and connection to community resources.
 - Home visiting programs have been shown to improve children’s health and education outcomes.
- **Illinois has implemented several home visiting models** – Illinois is leveraging both state and federal funds to expand its home visiting programs in order to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their families, and to combat maternal mortality disparities.
 - **FAN (Facilitating Attuned Interactions)**
 - Conceptual model and practical tool for building relationships and reflective practice
 - Home visiting professionals are often trained in the FAN approach.
 - FAN focuses on increasing parental confidence and self-awareness, strengthening parent-child relationships, and promoting the healthy development of parents and their infants.
 - Widely disseminated and scalable model
 - Developed in 2005 and first implemented Illinois, this model is now used in 13 states across the US, including rural areas of California
 - FAN is a component of Health Families America & Nurse Family Partnership
 - Impact – FAN has been found to increase reflective capacity of home visiting professionals, decrease burnout, and increase collaboration with families.
 - FAN has been integrated across systems – home visiting, primary care, early intervention, child welfare, early learning, and early childhood mental health
 - Illinois plans to use PDG funds to develop a Pre-K FAN model
 - **Family Connects International**
 - Universal, community-based approach to supporting newborns and their families
 - Goal is to reach every family with a newborn in a specific community, regardless of income or socioeconomic status
 - Nurse makes 1-3 visits to a family during the first 12 weeks after birth to complete a medical assessment of the newborn and mother, make referrals to medical providers if needed, and link the family to community resources.
 - Replicable model – has been implemented in 12 states, including Illinois & California
 - Chicago’s Department of Public Health is currently piloting Family Connects
 - Known as Welcome Baby in South Los Angeles
 - Impact – Family Connects is an evidence-based program
 - Evaluations show it improves parenting behavior and parents’ mental health, and reduces emergency medical care for infants.

- **Community-Based Home Visiting Doula Program (HealthConnect One)**
 - What is a doula?
 - A doula provides emotional support, physical comfort, education and advocacy to women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the newborn period.
 - Prenatal and postpartum visits + labor, birth, and lactation support
 - Doulas are increasingly being viewed as key to reversing the persistent birth disparities experienced by marginalized women of color in the US.
 - African-American, Native American, and Alaska Native women are *three times* more likely to die from pregnancy and birth complications compared to white women.
 - African-American babies are *two times* more likely to die before their first birthday than white babies.
 - What are the essential components of a community-based doula program?
 - Trains and employs trusted members of communities that face high risks of negative birth outcomes to become doulas and provide services in their community
 - Values doulas as community health workers and supports them with livable wages, extensive training, and supervision
 - Provides doula services at no cost to participating women in the community
 - Collaborates with community stakeholders and institutions
 - Provides culturally sensitive peer-to-peer support and continuity of care – “The community can heal itself, we just ask the right questions.”
 - What is the impact of community-based doula services?
 - Improved birth outcomes & significantly lower c-section rates
 - Higher breastfeeding rates
 - Reduction in preterm births and low birth weight infants
 - Improved newborn safety practices
 - Lower rates of maternal postpartum depression
 - Delay of subsequent pregnancies
 - Scalable model and national replication
 - Illinois
 - HealthConnect One + Ounce of Prevention Fund conducted the first pilot doula program in Chicago in 1996.
 - By 2006, HealthConnect One had developed 22 community-based doula replication sites across Illinois, and in 14 other states.
 - Today, every woman who receives home visiting services in Illinois has the option to also receive free doula services from a trained professional.
 - California
 - Several community-based doula programs have been implemented across the state.
 - HealthConnect One has a doula program in Southern California (South Bay) and will soon lead another one in Contra Costa county.
 - SisterWeb is a community-based doula program for African-American, Latinx, and Pacific Islander pregnant women in San Francisco.

- How is Illinois funding doula programs?
 - State - Prevention Funds (mandatory state funding set-aside for birth-to-3 services)
 - Federal - Early Head Start & Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funds
 - Exploring Medicaid reimbursement for doula services and expansion of Medicaid to include postpartum services
 - Oregon and Minnesota have established Medicaid reimbursement for doula services.
 - Private - Phyllis Glink, Executive Director of the Irving Harris Foundation, emphasized that philanthropy has funded various home visiting pilots in Illinois to build models that are deeply based in the needs of local communities.
- Next steps - embedding doula programs within the early childhood system
 - Nurse Family Partnership + other home visiting programs
 - New York City just launched New Family Home Visits - will be the largest, citywide home visiting program in the US
 - Universal model - all families who choose to participate will be matched with services that best fit their needs, *including doula support*, and will be offered up to 6 home visits.
 - Maternal and infant mental health services
 - Community clinics and/or WIC

About the Early Learning Tour Panel

Intersection of Early Learning and Public Health Systems

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Panelists:

- Diana Rauner, President, Ounce of Prevention Fund
- Ireta Gasner, Vice President of Illinois Policy, Ounce of Prevention Fund
- Michele Jackson-Brown, Doula Program Manager, Ounce of Prevention Fund
- Nick Wechsler, Director of Program Development, Ounce of Prevention Fund
- Linda Gilkerson, Infant Studies, Erikson Institute
- Brenda Blasingame, Executive Director, HealthConnect One
- Tikvah T. Wadley, Lead Doula Programming, HealthConnect One
- Shannon Lightner-Gometz, Deputy Director, Office of Women's Health and Family Services, Illinois Department of Public Health
- Phyllis Glink, Executive Director, Irving Harris Foundation