

Targeted Home Visiting Key Message Platform

Overarching key messages

- 1. The first three years of a child's life are critical to making sure everyone has the opportunity to live happy, healthy, fulfilling lives.**
- 2. During the first three years of life, a positive, healthy relationship with a parent or caregiving figure is the most important factor for successful development.**
- 3. Research shows financially stressed families face increased challenges that can create strain and instability that pressures relationships between parent and child.**
- 4. Because early impacts are cumulative, healthy development from day one is important and will have significant long-term positive effects for the child and parent.**
- 5. Targeted home visiting supports high-risk families where they are most comfortable – at home – with trained professionals providing flexible family coaching and support based on the individual needs of the family.**
- 6. High quality home visiting programs are proven to be one of the best ways to support strong early development because they promote long-term self-sufficiency by strengthening or restoring the critical family and social infrastructure for parents and children.**
- 7. The high risk pool is growing, as more Minnesota children live in poverty today than any time in recent history – one in three infants and toddlers, more than 70,000 children. This is a moral, social and economic crisis for our state, and we must act now to make Minnesota better for everyone!**

The first three years of a child's life are critical to making sure everyone has the opportunity to live happy, healthy, fulfilling lives.

- Consensus research says children who meet healthy physical and cognitive developmental benchmarks during their first three years are more likely to be prepared for and successful in school, have healthier relationships with peers and adults, and ultimately have healthier, more stable and prosperous lives
- These earliest development years form the critical brain architecture on which all future brain development is based
 - During these years, a child's brain is generating more than 73 million neural connections each day, developing lifelong wiring we use to process information and execute social, emotional, and even physical responses
- By age three, a child's brain has already gone through 85 percent of its total development¹
- If the human body is a house, then the brain is the wiring. The right wiring is essential to the successful function of the house, and it's much easier to properly wire a house in its early building stages

During the first three years of life, a positive, healthy relationship with a parent or caregiving figure is the most important factor for successful development.

- Study after study shows that essential factors for healthy brain development are positive, loving parent or caregiver relationships²
- These relationships not only provide a safe and healthy environment for physical growth, but also positive interactions that support healthy learning, emotional and social development
- Creating nurturing environments and relationships between a child and adults help children manage traumatic stress in healthy ways throughout their lives

Research shows financially stressed families are more likely to have strain and instability that pressures relationships between parent and child.

- A recent study demonstrated that financial strain, not demographics, was the common characteristic in families that reported more negative parent-child relationships³

¹ Thompson, R.A. & Nelson, C.A. (2001). Developmental science and the media: early brain development. *American Psychologist*. 56(1), 5-15.

² Heckman, James. "Schools, Skills, and Synapses." 2008.
http://jenni.uchicago.edu/papers/Heckman_2008_EI_v46_n3.pdf (one example of a study – also a good general resource)

- Impoverished parents are more likely to be socially isolated, struggle with housing and food, work long and odd hours, be less educated, all factors that create barriers to developing positive developmental relationships with their children
- By the time they are three-years-old, children from low-income families have heard 30 million fewer words than their wealthier peers.⁴ This is a critical gap when we know that talking and interacting with babies is a significant part of healthy development

Because early impacts are cumulative, healthy development from day one is important and will have significant long-term positive effects for the child and parent.

- Early support for at-risk families to ensure strong child development, and family development, can make a dramatic difference in the life of a child and makes the best use of public resources
- The impact of nurturing relationships start before birth, as healthy birth weight and full-term births have both been proven to be important factors for healthy brain development

Targeted home visiting supports at-risk families where they are most comfortable – at home – with trained professionals providing flexible family coaching and support based on the individual needs of the family.

- Home visiting empowers at-risk parents with parenting and family support tools to become self-sustaining, healthy families
- Support for families is flexible to meet their specific needs, whether that’s training on parenting skills, establishing connections to social and community services, pre-natal and pediatric health care, or even as simple as having another trusted, stable adult with whom to build a relationship

High quality home visiting programs are proven to be one of the best ways to support strong early development because they promote long-term self-sufficiency by strengthening or restoring the critical family and social structure for parents and children.

- In one study it was found that the combination of providing high-quality home visiting to at-risk families coupled with quality preschool for their children resulted in better school readiness outcomes for their children compared to their peers who did not receive home visiting. Children from families receiving home visiting services were also more likely to score passing grades on third grade skills tests than children with just preschool⁵

³ “Don’t Forget the Families.” *Search Institute*. 2015. <http://www.search-institute.org/downloadable/SearchInstitute-DontForgetFamilies-Report-10-13-2015.pdf>

⁴ “The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3.” University of Kansas, 2003. <http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf>

⁵ Parents as Teachers. April 2007. “The Parents as Teachers program: its impact on school readiness and later school achievement: A research summary.”

- In a study of one high quality targeted home visiting program, at-risk families receiving home visiting support spent 30 percent less time on welfare, 30 percent fewer child ER visits, and had 50 percent fewer child arrests^{6,7}
- One long-term study identified approximately \$34,000 of return to the state for every at-risk child receiving home visiting⁸
- Possibly one of the most valuable elements of home visiting for at-risk families is that it ends their isolation and provides a stable, health relationship with an adult for both the child and parent

The high risk pool is growing, as more Minnesota children live in poverty today than any time in recent history – one in three infants and toddlers, more than 70,000 children. This is a moral, social and economic crisis for our state, and we must act now to make Minnesota better for everyone!⁹

- Stabilizing our most at-risk families when it can have the greatest impact in helping their children succeed is essential to closing economic and educational opportunity gaps in Minnesota.
- Our state's economy cannot afford to have 70,000 future students and workers not find their path to success

⁶ David L. Olds; John Eckenrode; Charles R. Henderson Jr.; Harriet Kitzman; Jane Powers; Robert Cole; Kimberly Sidora; Pamela Morris; Lisa M. Pettitt; Dennis Luckey. "Long-term Effects of Home Visitation on Maternal Life Course and Child Abuse and Neglect: Fifteen-year Follow-up of a Randomized Trial." JAMA. 1997;278(8):637-643.

⁷ David Olds; Charles R. Henderson Jr.; Robert Cole; John Eckenrode; Harriet Kitzman; Dennis Luckey; Lisa Pettitt; Kimberly Sidora; Pamela Morris; Jane Powers. "Long-term Effects of Nurse Home Visitation on Children's Criminal and Antisocial Behavior: Fifteen-Year Follow-up of a Randomized Controlled Trial." JAMA. 1998; 280:1238-1244.

⁸ Karoly, Lynn A., Peter W. Greenwood, Susan S. Everingham, Jill Hoube, M. Rebecca Kilburn, C. Peter Rydell, Matthew Sanders, James Chiesa, Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don't Know About the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-898-TCWF, 1998.

⁹ Minnesota Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics. (2014).