

The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Children's Mental Health Research & Policy Conference

# Evaluating Fidelity, Implementation, and Effectiveness in Early Childhood Intervention: The Experiences of Three National Home Visiting Program Models

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**Chair:** Kirsten M. Ellingsen, PhD, *University of South Florida (USF), Director, National Research and Evaluation Center (NREC) for HIPPI USA.*

**Discussants:** Carla Peterson, PhD, *Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education, College of Human Sciences and Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Studies Iowa State University (ISU)*

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Parents as Teachers (PAT)*

# Fidelity, Implementation, & Effectiveness

- *Symposium Overview: Evidence & Establishing Effectiveness in national models of Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs*
  - Assessing and documenting Fidelity and Implementation
  - Identifying influences on program outcomes: Process Variables
  - Impact Studies: Methods, Measures and Replication
  
- ***Paper 1: Early Head Start (EHS) Research and Evaluation Project***
- ***Paper 2: Parents as Teachers (PAT)***
- ***Paper 3: Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI)***
  
- *Discussion: Challenges Establishing Evidence of Effectiveness*

## Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

*“There is growing evidence about how critical the early years are to a child's development. It is becoming increasingly clear that the development of the brain in the early years is a pathway that affects physical and mental health, learning, and behavior throughout the life cycle. Evidences show that children who are well nurtured during this period tend to do better in school and stand a better chance of developing the skills required to contribute productively to social and economic development”*

[\(http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/\)](http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/)

# Program Effects and Effectiveness

State and federal investments in early care and education programs were explicitly intended to improve school readiness for low-income children. *(Burchinal, et al. (2009) Early Care and Education Quality and Child Outcomes, OPRE Research –to-Policy Brief #1)*

“Although we may expect early childhood programs to produce beneficial effects, a scientifically sound evaluation is required to know whether they fulfill their promise. The variation in early childhood intervention approaches suggests that such evaluations are needed for the full range of program models, ideally with the ability to ascertain the effects of varying key program features.”

# Evidence Based Programs (EBP)

## *Home Visiting as a Service Delivery Model*

Are they effective? Do they work? How do we know?

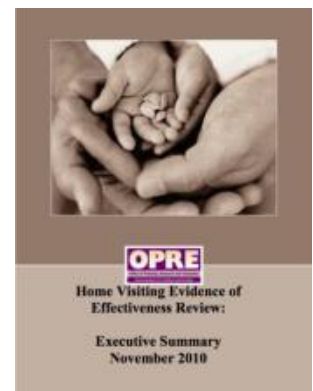
“While they share a common objective, early childhood interventions are highly varied in their methods; there is no uniform model.” (p. xvi )

[http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND\\_MG341.sum.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG341.sum.pdf)

## Key federal initiatives and national efforts

### Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program,—(MIECHV) Funding for Evidence Based Models

- HomVEE team reviewed literature
- 8 Domains of outcomes
  - (1) maternal health;
  - (2) child health;
  - (3) child development and school readiness;
  - (4) reductions in child maltreatment;
  - (5) reductions in juvenile delinquency, family violence, or crime;
  - (6) positive parenting practices;
  - (7) family economic factors; and
  - (8) linkages and referrals.
- Prioritized 11 programs
- Criteria
- 7 Programs initially endorsed, 13 now



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# Paper Presentations

# Discussion



## Future of Home Visiting

- Opportunities for Cross-Model Collaboration
  - HVRN : Shared measures, core dimensions, collaboration

*Daro, D. 2012, Collaboration Beyond MIECHV: Creating Sustainable Change presented at the National Summit for Quality in Home Visiting*

- “MIECHV is not the end goal, but rather an important opportunity for transformative change to improve support to young children and their families.”
- Requires an “appreciation that replicating with quality and attention to the critical elements of any model is very difficult work”.
- Cross model collaboration
- Understanding the need to collect data to monitor implementation and to assess program outcomes.

# What are Shared Challenges?

- Fidelity Matters
  - Are the programs implementing the curriculum as intended? Where is variability in implementation?
- Understanding Process Variables
  - Understanding how key components relate to parent and child outcomes will inform further program development and successful replication.
  - How do differences in amount, intensity, duration and quality of services relate to program outcomes ( for both parent and child) ?
- Conducting Impact Studies
  - Resources, training, measures, data collection and entry

## Rigorous Program Evaluation

“To understand which programs are effective, a rigorous evaluation is necessary that isolates the effects of the program on child and family outcomes from other influential factors.” (Karloly, L. A., Kilburn, & Cannon (2005) Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results, Future Promises, p27 )

## Recommendations

- Learn about the program
  - Talk to key stakeholders
  - Site visits
  - Observations of implementation (e.g., home visits, parent group meetings, training, supervision)
- Understand model organization, aim, curriculum, context and populations served across the US to understand where potential differences exist and how these influence outcomes.
- Process Matters
  - what is actually happening?

# Questions?

# Contact Information

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