

Early Support for Families Act

Introduced by Representatives Jim McDermott, Danny Davis and Todd Platts

- Purpose:** To improve the well-being and development of children by providing mandatory funding for grants to States, tribes and territories to establish or expand programs providing voluntary home visitation for families with young children or families expecting children.
- Amending:** The initiative becomes a new Subpart 3 of Title IV B of the Social Security Act.
- Funding:** \$100 million in FY 2010
\$250 million in FY 2011
\$400 million in FY 2012
\$550 million in FY 2013
\$700 million in FY 2014
- Allotments:** State allocations are based on the number of children under 200% of poverty.
- State MOE:** States must maintain prior spending on programs providing home visitation for families with young children and families expecting children.
- Federal Match:** 85% in FY 2010, 80% in FY 2011 and 75% in FY 2012 and thereafter.
- Use of Funds:** To provide voluntary home visitation through programs that adhere to evidence-based models that have demonstrated significant positive effects on important child and parenting outcomes. A growing portion of the funds (starting at 40% and rising to 60% over five years) must be used for programs with the strongest evidence of effectiveness.
- Evaluation:** HHS must conduct an independent evaluation of programs receiving funds under the Act to assess the impact on child and parent outcomes, including child maltreatment, child health and development, school readiness, and links to community services.

Early Home Visitation Has a Strong Record of Success In Strengthening Families and Helping Children

The Early Support for Families Act, introduced by Representatives McDermott (WA), Davis (IL), and Platts (PA), would fund home visitation programs that provide instruction and services to families in their homes. These programs are designed to enhance the well-being and development of young children by providing: information on child health, development, and care; parental support and training; and referral to other services. Visits typically begin during pregnancy or shortly after a child's birth and may last until a child is age four. Home visits are conducted by nurses, social workers, other professionals or paraprofessionals. Numerous studies have concluded that early home visitation programs improve outcomes for children and families in a variety of ways.

Reducing Child Maltreatment –

- ▶ The Department of Health and Human Services has determined that there is a growing body of evidence that suggests that some home visitation programs can be successful as a child maltreatment prevention strategy. (The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, Children's Bureau)
- ▶ Early childhood visitation programs are effective in preventing child maltreatment, reducing reported maltreatment by approximately 39%. (American Journal of Preventive Medicine)
- ▶ Home visitation programs lead to positive changes in a child's home environment, including improvements in their mother's parenting efficacy, use of non-violent discipline, and the quality of the child-parent interaction. (The SPHERE Institute)
- ▶ Research shows that parents who receive at least 15 home visits experience less perceived stress and maternal depression, while also expressing higher levels of paternal competence. (Child Welfare League of America)
- ▶ These programs offer voluntary coaching on parenting skills and other assistance to new parents to help prevent child abuse and neglect, which in turn helps prevent future crime and violence. Home visiting programs have been shown to reduce kids' and moms' later arrests by about 60%. (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids)
- ▶ Researchers also have found that home visitation programs lead to a significant reduction in potential abuse and neglect as measured by emergency room visits and treated injuries, ingestions, or accidents. (Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago)

- ▶ A meta-analysis of 43 programs with an explicit focus on preventing child abuse and neglect for families with children under three years of age found a significant, positive overall treatment effect on Child Protection Services reports of abuse and neglect and on injury data. (Chapin Hall Center for Children at the U. of Chicago)

Promoting Greater Stability Within the Family –

- ▶ Evaluations of home visitation programs have found that new parents who participate in these programs have reduced welfare dependence and higher rates of school completion and job retention. (Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago)

Improving Health Care Outcomes For Children –

- ▶ Children who receive home visitation are found to have improved socio-emotional and physical development; better immunization coverage; better access to, and use of, medical care; and improved family planning. (American Journal of Preventive Medicine)
- ▶ Studies also have concluded that, among children living in low-income single parent homes, those who received home visitation services had a significant reduction in the incidence of drug use and in the number of sexual partners, compared to similar children who did not receive such services. (American Journal of Preventive Medicine)

Increasing Education Preparation and Long-Term Success –

- ▶ Toddlers who were visited experienced early literacy skills, social competence, and parental involvement in learning. (Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago)
- ▶ Children who received home visitation services have fewer long-term school suspensions compared to children that did not receive services. (American Journal of Preventive Medicine)
- ▶ Studies have found that children who received home visitation had stronger school performance, fewer behavioral problems, and higher rates of high school graduation relative to children who did not receive such services. (Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago)

Advancing Sound Fiscal Policy –

- ▶ Some home visiting programs that target high-risk and/or low-income mothers and children return up to \$2.88 per youth for every \$1 invested. (Washington State Institute for Public Policy)
- ▶ Research has shown that home visitation programs reduce abuse and neglect and juvenile delinquency, and ultimately save taxpayers over \$50 billion annually. (Child Welfare League of America)