

Share Your Story...

Illinois Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Development Home Visiting Program

Home visiting has a demonstrated track record of improving infant and maternal health outcomes. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, it is providing a critical way to engage children and families who are especially vulnerable during this time. Home visitors are on the front lines in supporting families by going above and beyond to quickly adapt and find creative ways to meet the basic needs of children and families.

Through its “Share Your Story” initiative, the Illinois Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program in the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development has provided an opportunity for home visitors to share on-the-ground stories of their experiences, including the bright spots as well as challenges. The focus of these stories is to bring attention to the amazing work they do, to share what has been working in serving families, and to illustrate how home visitors can be supported to continue carrying out their work.

Center for Prevention Research and Development

The Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) team has been concerned about how COVID-19 policies and procedures are affecting the home visitors and coordinated intake staff on the frontlines providing vital services and resources to families. With that in mind, CPRD—with the assistance of the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting leadership team—created a survey to provide the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) with up-to-date information and guidance on how to best support home visiting professionals at this time.

Survey results were disseminated to an array of partners, programs and funding streams in Illinois to provide insights into the work lives of home visiting staff during COVID-19. They—in turn—could use the information to create policies, procedures and supports to enable and enhance the ability of home visiting staff to continue providing quality services to families.

be good to yourself



Like many home visiting teams, the biggest challenge that CPRD faces during this time is not being able to have in-person contact with team members and officemates. As one person shared, “At the office, we would wander into another coworker’s space, plop down in a chair and talk about an issue or work together on a project.” Now, the team continues to work together via Skype calls. While this provides a structured way to communicate and collaborate with one another, it does not allow for the same kind of camaraderie and interactions that colleagues miss having at the office.

One new policy that the CPRD team implemented in response to COVID-19 is working at home. As one teammate commented, “The best thing about working at home is that you are never late to work. You are close to your vending

machine which is called a refrigerator. You have a view of the outside because unlike the office, your house has a window. You have 4-legged office helpers to keep you on task and whom you can blame for errors in typing and data entry because they are sitting on your keyboard. The most challenging part is the transition from work to home because home is work and work is home.”

“We drift down time clutching at straws but what good is a brick to a drowning man.”
-Tom Stoppard

“If you can think of it; you’ve got it.”
-Beth Henley

