

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.

Children's Center of Cicero Berwyn

Recently the home visiting team at the Children's Center of Cicero Berwyn hit a wall. They missed seeing the families and kids. It was becoming a struggle just having phone calls and talking about activities to keep families engaged. Families had used up or never had materials to begin with for the activities. The fluctuating weather was making it more challenging to keep the kids occupied inside....

So, at a team meeting the home visitors decided to plan a day to get to the office, load up all the supplies that were sitting there collecting dust, including art materials, books, puzzles, and blocks; utilize the lending bags to pack them all up along with diapers, wipes (potty seats for the older kids) and a little something for Mother's Day. Then they went to every house for a surprise curbside drop-off....

To say this was the emotional boost that the home visitors all needed is an understatement:

"I thought we'd share the smiles with you to say THANK YOU [families] for all the support you've given us to keep going during this crazy time by allowing us the freedom and autonomy to figure out how to do what we need to, and continue to serve our families... It really makes a difference!" shared Tracy Patton, MSCD/infancy, MIECHV Program Supervisor, Community Outreach Coordinator, Children's Center of Cicero Berwyn.

" All people smile in the same language. "

A member of the home visiting staff team captured some of the families' reactions to the surprise drop-off, and some parents sent photos with notes of thanks and appreciation!



Agency Mission

The Children's Center of Cicero-Berwyn mission statement is, "Partnering with families and community, we provide a strong educational foundation to prepare children for future success."

The organization's purpose is to provide needed care through programs for children and families, and to be a liaison organization with other community agencies.

