

Share Your Story...

Illinois Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Development Home Visiting Program

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 real, on-the-ground stories of their experiences including the positive and uplifting elements as well as the gritty and difficult parts.

The Illinois MIECHV program is highlighting home visitors’ stories to bring attention to the amazing and critical 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.

Macon County Health Department

The Macon County Health Department (MCHD) home visiting team has engaged in numerous initiatives to support families in their program including the following:

- Referring a few families to New Life Pregnancy Center which provides diapers and formula through curbside pickup.
- Supporting a family with children who were too old to qualify for home visiting services, by referring them to the local school district’s “breakfast and lunch pick up.” The family currently has children in a private school but was unaware that they could pick up food from their local district during this time. The children used to receive free lunch at the private school but since the school is not doing food pick up, the mom was struggling to provide enough food. Additionally, the family’s refrigerator just broke and a lot of their food had gone bad. After a few calls a free refrigerator was donated to the family. The mom also received information from local food pantries so she could replace some of the food that had gone bad. She was very appreciative of all the assistance provided.

Program staff realize that during this unprecedented time family struggles may have changed. In order to be able to support families they have adjusted their approach. Program staff are conducting a much larger amount of “cold calls” of MCHD contacts for potential home visiting enrollment to balance the lack of referrals coming in.

Additionally, staff is using this opportunity to check on families’ basic needs such as food, diapers and formula. A list of resources around the program area has been gathered so that families may have those needs met through local food pantries and other agencies. If a family is unable to get to those local agencies on their own, program staff have been authorized to pick up and do a porch drop-off to assist the family.

“Our goal has switched to first make sure the family is aware that MIECHV is here to support them and then a home visiting agency is being offered as additional support and for more one-to-one care. We have received very positive feedback!”

Program staff have embraced the positive changes and noted that this has been a great opportunity to provide emotional support to families during such a hard time. According to Yocelyng Stark, BA, igrow/MIECHV Coordinated Intake staff person, “For those families that may have been on the fence about having a ‘stranger’ in their home, this is an opportunity to build a ‘long distance relationship’, build trust and be able to demonstrate that the work home visitors do go much deeper than a once a month’s ‘how is your baby doing’ check.”

The program staff have taken this time to show families that they really care for them and check on them often. They hope that this will have a long-lasting effect in the relationship between family and home visitor.



Agency Mission

The Macon County Health Department MIECHV program links families to home visiting programs that offer family-focused services to expectant parents and families with new babies and young children. The MIECHV program pairs families with a home visiting program based on each family’s individual needs and schedules. Home visitors emphasize practical parenting skills, as well as family bonding before birth and as children grow up.

“This too shall pass...”

