

Share Your Story...

Illinois Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Development Home Visiting Program

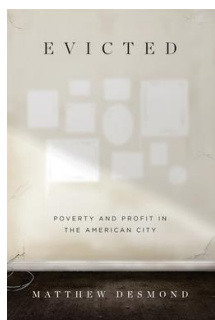
Home visiting has a demonstrated track record of improving infant and maternal health outcomes. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, it is providing a critical way to engage children and families who are especially vulnerable during this time. Home visitors are on the front lines in supporting 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.

Rockford Public Schools District 205

The Rockford Public Schools 205 (RPS 205) home visiting program has been doing some great things such as having staff discussions around work and establishing staff mentorship relationships.

The staff have been participating in book discussions on *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond. The discussions have allowed the staff to be open and honest about their thoughts, reflections and assumptions about poverty and the families that they work with that are impacted by poverty. Staff have been vulnerable and processing a variety of emotions during these discussions. It has been great to connect what they are learning from the book to their work with families.



“Eviction is a cause, not just a condition, of poverty.”

Also, the more established staff have taken on roles as mentors for the new staff. They provide feedback to the new staff around their virtual visits and how the visit could look in-person. The mentors have also provided opportunities for new staff to learn systems and how to enter data. According to Nichole Giovanni, Early Childhood Administrator Home Visiting/Family Programs, RPS205, “The new staff are enjoying having specific staff to go to for questions and the established staff have been able to hone their leadership skills.”

Agency Mission

The mission of the Rockford Public Schools Early Childhood Program is to empower all young children to be effective, enthusiastic and socially competent learners by creating a bond among children, their families, their schools and community.

"The home is the wellspring of personhood. It is where our identity takes root and blossoms, whereas children, we imagine, play, and question, and as adolescents, we retreat and try. As we grow older, we hope to settle into a place to raise a family or pursue work. When we try to understand ourselves, we often begin by considering the kind of home in which we were raised." -Matthew Desmond

