



## Home Visiting

**Home visiting** is a time-tested effective strategy for supporting children and their families in their most comfortable and accessible environment. Developing a trusting relationship over time enables trained home visitors to provide critical services for families of young children and make personalized referrals to other resources that caretakers and children need.

### Key Facts

Home visiting programs are designed for expecting parents and families with children ages zero to five – critical years of brain development – to help families provide safe and supportive environments for their children. In these voluntary programs, trained home visitors and participants regularly meet at the home or another setting that is comfortable for the family, building strong relationships that lead to lasting benefits for the entire family.

Home visiting provides more opportunities for families to access services and deepens the level of the support they can receive. While the programs funded through Birth-to-Three for All DC provide access to a wide variety of services that benefit families, home visiting is the only service that comes directly to them. Additionally, as these programs can last up to five years, families can develop deep and trusting relationships with home visitors who can then help them navigate the many transitions families experience in the time between pregnancy and kindergarten.

### How Home Visiting Works

Home visiting programs address specific maternal, family, and child outcomes through education, counseling, social and emotional support, and other services. Home visitors also provide families with connections to community-based services and resources that are responsive to their goals.

Although individual programs address different needs, common areas of focus for home visiting programs are

- Maternal health and mental health during and after pregnancy
- Child development
- School readiness
- Child health
- Family safety

- Family economic security
- Connections to other resources and services families need

## Why Home Visiting Matters

Research shows that children whose families participate in home visiting programs often are healthier, have safer home environments, and go further in school. Parents and guardians who enroll in home visiting often see positive impacts themselves, such as improved education and employment, and better maternal health and mental health.

## Who Home Visiting Helps

Home visiting eligibility varies by program, but, generally, programs serve expectant parents and families across the District with young children up to the age of five. Some programs may reserve spaces in their program for families with particular experiences, such as families experiencing homelessness, immigrant families, and families with low incomes. DC currently offers 13 home visiting programs that reach more than 750 children and families.

Through Birth-to-Three for All DC, the District will expand the availability and quality of DC home visiting programs. The majority of funding will be dedicated to more child care availability (up to 815) in existing federal Early Head Start programs for children in immigrant families and children in families experiencing homelessness. The remaining home visiting funding may be used in two different ways:

1. To create or expand home visiting programs. To date, DC Health has developed two home visiting programs with the capacity to support 95 children and families: one that supports families in which a parent has an intellectual disability and one that supports families experiencing challenges such as low income, history of substance use, history of involvement with child welfare services, history of parental trauma, exposure to violence, and others.
2. Home visiting funding may also be used to support improvements to programs generally, such as increased wages for home visitors, District-wide training for home visitors, support for capacity-building at organizations providing home visiting, and many other supports.

## What's Next

Currently, the District spends \$5 million each year to support home visiting programs through the Birth-to-Three for All DC. To fully fund these programs, the District will need to allocate an additional total of one to eight million dollars annually, depending on the results of an assessment of the number of DC families who would best be served by a home visiting program. According to the law, DC Health was required to complete this needs assessment by April 2019. The results have yet to be made publicly available.

Fully funding home visiting programs will result in more children and families:

- Receiving accessible, critical support and interventions in the environment where they are most comfortable
- Building relationships with trained supporters. With the help of these programs, families of young children will experience improved outcomes and reduced the number of future health, emotional, academic, and behavioral problems.

### LEARN MORE

Let's make sure DC is a city where equity starts at birth for every family. There are lots of great ways you can take action for DC's littlest residents. Learn more at [Under3DC.org](https://www.Under3DC.org).