

CHILD WELFARE/PARENTING
Pew Center Supports
Research On Home
Visitation Programs

The Pew Center has established 12 new home-visiting research projects to provide policymakers with greater information about how to improve state-based visitation programs. The only existing program that meets evidence-based standards centers on young, low-income, first-time mothers and their children, who are provided services aimed at improving the health of the mother and child and promoting good parenting. The new research initiatives will examine the broader spectrum of groups that could benefit from participation in a home visitation program.

The projects will be spearheaded by hospitals, universities and organizations across the country and will address a variety of issues in implementing visitation programs. Beltsville, Md.-based HBSA Inc. will conduct a cost-benefit analysis of visitation using data from the Nurse-Family Partnership, and The Children's Hospital and Health System in Chicago and Erikson Institute, also in Chicago, will develop a tool to assess the quality of services. Research conducted at New York University will examine the experience of the diverse participants of the Parent-Child Home Program, focusing on Latino and African-American families.

Many of the new research initiatives will focus directly on ways the visitation programs may benefit children. Duke University in Durham, N.C., will explore the pro-

gram's effect on child abuse and neglect rates, using a local nurse home visiting program as a model, while Arlington, Va.-based James Bell Associates will study the ways in which the method and timing of service delivery can reduce rates of maltreatment and childhood injury. Research conducted at Iowa State University, the University of Notre Dame and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services will explore the ways program participation may promote school preparedness and academic success, as well as overall improvement in parenting techniques and family dynamics.

Other research focuses on the program's effect on increasing and maintaining levels of parental involvement. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia will explore the cost of providing services that can promote lasting levels of parental engagement, while the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration's study will focus primarily on paternal participation. The National Center for Children and Families, at Teachers College, Columbia University will look at how to avoid family drop-out from the programs, while Prevent Child Abuse Virginia will examine the differences between families with first-time mothers and mothers with multiple children.

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- Kristin Drouin

