

Home Visiting

Home visiting pairs families with in-home family support workers who help them support their child's healthy development and navigate the barriers to meeting their goals.



Key facts

The DC Home Visiting Council, an Under 3 DC partner, convenes home visiting programs, early childhood stakeholders, and advocates to strengthen home visiting as a strategy to support positive child and family outcomes.

Home visiting services support and enable families to work towards self-sufficiency and build confidence in their parenting journey

1,277

families are served by the 16 home visiting programs.¹

Home Visiting

Home visiting is a time-tested, effective strategy for supporting expectant parents and families with children in the critical years of brain development--ages 0 to 5. In these voluntary programs, trained home visitors and participants regularly meet at the most comfortable and accessible place for families: their home. Families who cannot or prefer not to meet at home can meet with their home visitor in another setting that is comfortable for the family. These often multi-year programs enable home visitors to develop trusting relationships with families over time. As a result, home visitors can support families of young children with their long-term goals and unique circumstances, and make personalized referrals to other resources that caretakers and children need.

Home visiting programs address maternal, family, and child outcomes through education, counseling, social and emotional support, and referrals. Although each program focuses on slightly different needs, common areas of emphasis 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 it 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.



Home Visiting (cont'd)

About Under 3 DC

Under 3 DC is a broad-based coalition of parents with young children, early childhood educators, advocates, community-based organizations, and health professionals who believe every child deserves a strong start and a limitless future. Our work centers on the people experiencing racial and economic injustice every day. It shines a spotlight on the need for more public investments to support families with infants and toddlers. Together, we can set the city on a path to creating and sustaining a high-quality, equitable early childhood system.

[Under3DC.org](https://www.Under3DC.org)

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Who it 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 5. Some programs may reserve spaces in their program for families with particular experiences, such as families experiencing homelessness, fathers, parents with intellectual disabilities, families with a history of trauma, or families with low incomes.

DC currently offers 16 home visiting programs that reach nearly 1,362 children serving 1,277 families.¹ Through the Birth-to-Three Law, the District will expand the availability and quality of DC home visiting programs. The majority of funding will be dedicated to adding more home visiting slots (up to 815) to 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 to create or expand home visiting programs or to support improvements to home visiting programs and infrastructure more generally. Examples of such improvements include increased wages for home visitors, District-wide training for home visitors, and capacity building at organizations providing home visiting.

To date, Birth-to-Three for All DC has enabled DC Health to develop two home visiting programs (funded in FY 2019) with the capacity to support 100 children and their 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. As of FY 2021, DC Health is launching a pilot home visiting program for first-time mothers, which was added to the Birth-to-Three law as part of an amendment in FY 2020.

What's next

As of FY22, the District currently spends \$860,000¹⁵ each year on three Birth-to-Three for All DC home visiting programs. These include Home Visiting for Vulnerable Children, Early Head Start Home Visiting, and Nurse-Family Partnership.

Home visiting programs have been a lifeline for families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and continued funds would allow these programs to continue to play an important role as a trusted and valued resource for families.

As the District's economy recovers, it will be important to fully fund the Birth-to-Three home visiting provisions so that all families who want it can benefit from high-quality, accessible, and responsive home visiting programs. A recent DC Health home visiting needs assessment finds that DC has an inadequate supply of home visiting programs and that other supports for home visiting are needed, many of which could be supported by Birth-to-Three funds.

² Office of Chief Financial Officer. 2022 HCO Department of Health & Child and Family Services Agency. Chapter Budget Book. 2021. <https://fo.dc.gov/node/1536321>