



Home Visiting

Home visiting pairs families with in-home family support workers that help them nurture 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 toward self-sufficiency and build confidence in their parenting journey.

1,374

In 2022, the District's 17 home visiting programs served 1,374 families.

How it works

Home visiting is a time-tested, effective strategy for supporting expectant parents and families with children in the critical years of brain development – from birth to age five. 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 working toward their long-term goals and addressing their unique circumstances, and can make personalized referrals to other resources.

Home visiting programs address parental, family, and child outcomes through education, counseling, social and emotional support, and referrals. Although each individual program focuses on slightly different needs, common areas of emphasis for home visiting programs are:

- Parental 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 are typically healthier, have safer home environments, and go further in school.¹ Parents and guardians who enroll in home visiting often see positive impacts themselves, such as improved education and employment, and better parental health and mental health.²

Who it helps

While home visiting eligibility varies by program, these programs generally serve expectant parents and families across the District with young children up to age five. Some programs may reserve spaces for families with particular experiences, such as homelessness, intellectual disabilities, a history of trauma, or low incomes.

DC's 17 home visiting programs reached 1,374 families in 2022.³



Home Visiting

Learn more

Let's make the District of Columbia a city where equitable opportunities begin at birth. Find out how to take action for our youngest residents and their families.

[Under3DC.org](https://www.under3dc.org)

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Home Visiting in the District

The Birth-to-Three for All DC law passed by the DC Council in 2018 included home visiting in its approach to strengthen the District's early childhood system. The law provided that home visiting funding allocated through the Birth-to-Three law 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 could include increased wages for home visitors, District-wide training for home visitors, or capacity building at organizations providing home visiting.

To date, Birth-to-Three has enabled DC Health to develop a Parent Support Program at Georgetown University that supports parents with an intellectual disability and has the capacity to serve 40 families each year. Birth-to-Three also funds Community of Hope's Parents as Teachers program, which supports families experiencing challenges such as low income, or a history of substance abuse, involvement with child welfare, parental trauma, or exposure to violence. The program has the capacity to support 60 families at a time.

In FY 2021, DC Health launched Mary's Center's Nurse Family Partnership Program as 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 2020.⁴ As of FY 2024, the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF) will administer the program with funds transferred from DC Health.

What's Next

In FY 2024 the District spent \$850,000 on the Birth-to-Three DC 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.⁵ One challenge to implementation for home visiting programs is the lack of a sustained workforce to serve families.

In FY 2025, the Under 3 DC Coalition is calling on DC lawmakers to increase investments in home visiting funding by \$1.5 million to increase compensation for home visitors in locally funded programs. Home visiting programs have been a lifeline for families and increasing support for workers would allow these programs to continue to provide seamless services and play an important role as a trusted and valued resource for families.

It is important that all home visiting programs in the District are sustainably funded so that programs can employ a robust, well-paid workforce that can serve every family who wants to participate in and benefit from high-quality, accessible, and responsive home visiting.

¹ Administration for Children & Families. [Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness. Child Development and School Readiness.](#)

² Michalopoulos, Charles, Kristen Faucetta, Anne Warren, & Robert Mitchell. (2017). [Evidence on the Long-Term Effects of Home Visiting Programs. MRDC.](#)

³ District of Columbia, Home Visiting Council. (2022). [Annual Report.](#)

⁴ Council of the District of Columbia. (2019). [Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Support Act of 2019.](#)

⁵ Gomez, Indra Amara, Lavin, Kelly, Clone, Stephanie, Perry, Deborah F. (2020). [Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting \(MIEHCV\) Needs Assessment for Washington DC.](#) District of Columbia Department of Health and Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.

About Under 3 DC

Under 3 DC, a broad based coalition in the District of Columbia, harnesses the voices and power of parents with young children, early educators, advocates, and health professionals to create transformative social change. The Coalition's efforts center 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.