

What Promotes Family Engagement in Home Visiting?

A Summary from the HV-REACH Project

Home visiting programs can strengthen engagement with families during all stages of interaction, including:



Outreach and awareness

Building program awareness and referrals



Recruitment and enrollment

Efforts to enroll families and a family's enrollment decision



Retention and active participation

Continued family attendance and responsiveness during services

Seven key factors promote engagement

The seven factors are listed in the boxes below. Most factors apply to more than one engagement stage and are shown in the colors for the corresponding engagement stages.

Each factor reflects (1) actions your program can take and (2) circumstances of families, home visitors, programs, communities, and systems that promote engagement (see page 3 for more information). To develop a comprehensive approach to family engagement, program staff can adopt practices to use at each engagement stage that are rooted in these seven factors. The factors are based on research evidence and conversations with state and local program administrators, families, and technical assistance providers.



Outreach and Awareness



Recruitment and Enrollment



Retention and Active Participation

Responsive and trusting relationships with families

Positive program reputation among families and community members

Program fit with and responsiveness to families' and communities' goals, needs, and expectations

Program flexibility to meet family availability

Tailored and easy-to-understand messaging and enrollment processes

Strong and varied partnerships with smooth processes for referrals

Strong and varied partnerships with smooth processes for referrals

Sufficient recruitment resources and timing of recruitment

Example practices that promote engagement



Outreach and awareness

Responsive and trusting relationships with families—

Conduct outreach using messengers who families trust (such as relatives, friends, or community members)

Tailored and easy-to-understand messaging and enrollment processes—

In materials the program and referral partners use, describe home visiting and its benefits in a way that is specific, clear, comprehensive, and reflects families' interests

Strong and varied partnerships with smooth referral processes—

Dedicate resources and time to building interagency partnerships and coordination infrastructure (such as data sharing agreements or centralized intake)



Recruitment and enrollment

Program flexibility to meet family availability—

Tailor to families' preferences on where and when to meet with families, when possible

Program fit with and responsiveness to families' and communities' goals, needs, and expectations—

Offer services that align with families' values, customs, languages, and urgent needs, based on family and community input

Positive program reputation among family and community members—

Actively encourage word-of-mouth referrals from families you serve so others can learn about your program and what to expect from it



Retention and active participation

Responsive and trusting relationships with families—

Continue to provide supportive, nonjudgmental services and promote a favorable home visitor-family match

Program fit with and responsiveness to families' and communities' goals, needs, and expectations—

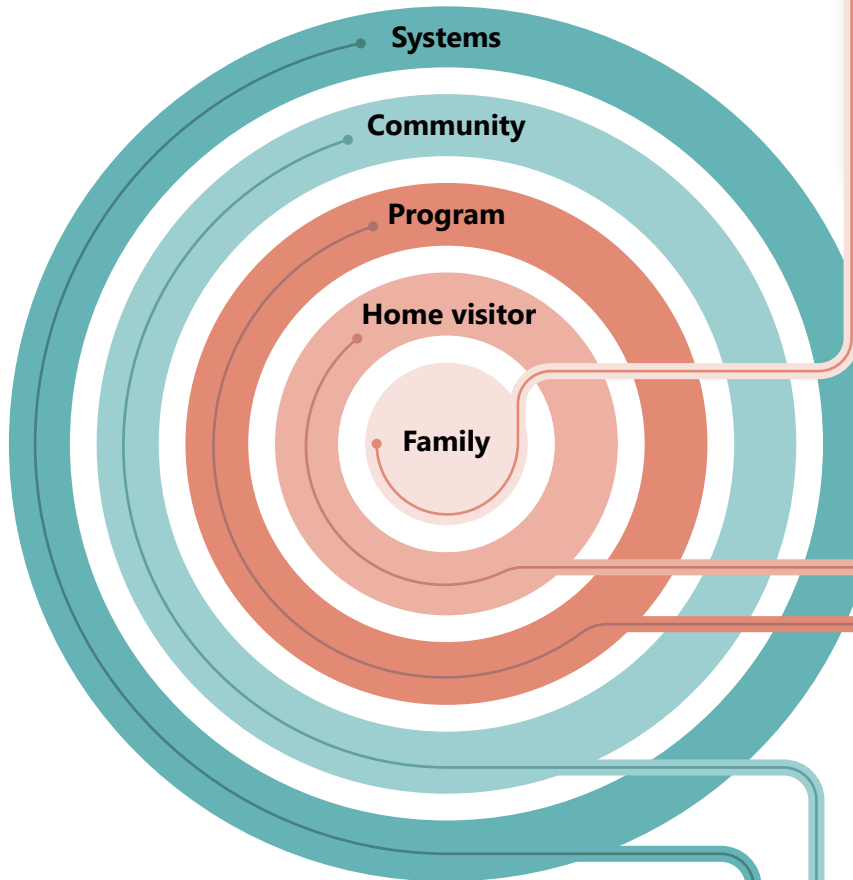
Reassess service plans with families to ensure families are continuing to benefit from the program as their needs, goals, and expectations evolve

Strong and varied partnerships with smooth referral processes—

Commit resources to maintaining partnerships and procedures to link families to supports

When developing program practices, it is important to consider the circumstances within and outside the home visiting program that affect the engagement factors.

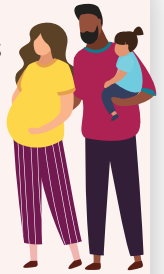
This graphic shows considerations at different levels that can influence family engagement.



Family

The parents, children, and caregivers who are eligible and recruited for or participate in home visiting.

Example of a family circumstance that can affect responsive and trusting relationships with families: Whether families have had positive past experiences with other services



Home visitor

Staff who deliver services to families or recruit eligible families.

Example of a home visitor action that can affect responsive and trusting relationships with families: Whether home visitors acknowledge that families have strengths and experiences that guide their goals and preferences



Program

The agency that implements a home visiting program(s) and the model(s) implemented.

Example of a program action that can affect responsive and trusting relationships with families: Whether program practices encourage a favorable and stable home visitor-family match



Systems

The service and policy environment, including requirements and guidance from funders or program model developers, and partnerships with other service systems that can support outreach or linkages.

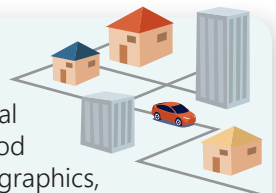
Example of a systems-level circumstance that can affect programs' flexibility to meet family availability: Whether funders and model developers allow flexibility in the meeting times, locations, and frequency of home visits



Community

Where eligible families live and features that define social communities or neighborhood contexts, like cultures, demographics, geographic features, and available services.

Example of a community circumstance that can affect strong and varied partnerships with smooth processes for referrals: Whether resources are available to link enrolled families to, when they need them



About this brief

This brief drew on other products from the Understanding and Expanding the Reach of Home Visiting (HV-REACH) project. To learn more about what promotes family engagement in home visiting, see the [Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation website](#) for:

- A toolkit containing self-assessments and practices based on the seven engagement factors, [The Family Engagement Toolkit: Guidance for Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs on Improving Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention](#)
- A research summary on the facilitators and barriers to home visiting, [Understanding Family Engagement in Home Visiting: Literature Synthesis](#)

About the HV-REACH Project

The HV-REACH project developed and disseminated evidence-informed resources and strategies that home visiting programs can use to increase access to and participation in home visiting services among eligible families. Mathematica conducted this project in partnership with the Brazelton Touchpoints Center and Social Grove on behalf of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families, in collaboration with the Health Resources and Services Administration.

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