

The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin

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A Common Purpose

Q: What is The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin?

A: The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin is a collaborative effort of service providers, public and private funders and evaluators who serve children and families in Wisconsin through a variety of home visitation programs. In order to strengthen their advocacy efforts, home visitation program directors recognized the need to develop common evaluation methods to assess their level of success in supporting families in Wisconsin.

Q: What is the purpose of The Early Years Home Visitation Outcome Project of Wisconsin?

A: The goal of this project is to provide a common outcome measurement process and support its use in home visitation programs throughout Wisconsin. Outcome measurement has emerged as a critical component of nonprofit community-based service provision. By providing the tools for effective program evaluation, the project seeks to improve the quality and accountability of home visitation.

Q: How did this project get started?

A: In early 2000, a group of home visitation program directors began working together to discuss a common outcome measurement system for home visitation programs in Wisconsin. Participation grew as home visitation agencies and funders were invited to participate in the development of this system. Using the United Way of America outcome measurement system, the group developed a program logic model, which identifies common outcomes for home visitation programs. By the end of 2001, the project secured funds to appoint a project director to continue the group's effort in implementing and supporting outcome measurement systems in home visitation programs in Wisconsin.

Q: What are “common outcomes” and “outcome measurement”?

A: Outcome measurement is a method of evaluation, which provides a means for evaluating programs based on the benefit they provide to their participants. This methodology moves away from just counting and reporting the number and types of families served. It provides a means for assessing a programs effectiveness based on its ability to meaningfully impact the lives of their participants. For this project, common outcomes are the benefits to participants that can be measured across different types of home visitation programs.

Q: What outcome measurement model does this project follow?

A: The model used for The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin was developed by United Way of America using some of the nation’s leading experts in the fields of evaluation and nonprofit human service. This process uses the Logic Model and provides a highly practical approach to measuring a program’s impact on its participants.

Q: What process did the project use to determine the outcomes to be measured?

A: The project participants placed heavy emphasis on active participation of a variety of stakeholders. Through active engagement and relationship building, the participants were able to work together and discuss issues that are important in Wisconsin. In the process of reaching common ground among various program models and funding entities, the project participants were able to develop outcomes that make sense for home visiting programs in Wisconsin. Six outcomes were developed based on the following criteria:

- Common across a multitude of home visiting programs.
- Critical to healthy families.
- Reasonable to measure.
- Useable—will be used for decision-making, program improvement.
- Consistent with best practice.

Q: What outcomes were selected for measurement?

A: The following outcomes are currently being measured as part of The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin.

1. Parents interact with their children in ways that enhance their child’s development and early learning.
2. Children are healthy.
3. Children live in a safe environment.
4. Families access formal and/or informal support networks to meet their needs.
5. Children achieve their optimal milestones in development and early learning.
6. Children with developmental delays receive appropriate intervention services.

Q: What indicators and data collection methods are being used by The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin?

A: The detailed logic model which includes the outcome indicators, data collection methods and screening schedule is being piloted by ten sites in Wisconsin. After successful completion of the project pilot, this information will be available for public dissemination.

Q: How can I find out more about The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin?

A: Contact Audrey Laszewski of Performance Works at 920/405-6747 (fax/voice) or e-mail outcomesproject@gmail.com

Project Participants

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Inc.

Children's Hospital and Health System's Child Abuse Prevention Fund

Children's Service Society of Wisconsin

Dane County Department of Human Services – Division of Public Health

Exchange Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Inc.

Family Resource Centers of Sheboygan County

Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin

Healthy Families of Waukesha County, Inc.

Lakeshore Family Resources, Lakeshore CAP

Parents Plus of Wisconsin (*PIRC* - Parental Information and Resource Center)

University of Wisconsin Extension – Family Living Program

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services