Integrating System Concepts with Mixed Research Methods: the Cross-Site Evaluation of Supporting Evidence-Based Home Visiting Grantees

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Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) Grants

- In 2008 ACF’s Children’s Bureau funded 17 grantees in 15 states to:
  - Select home visiting program models that were evidence-based (as defined for purposes of the grant)
  - Leverage the grant funds to build infrastructure to implement, scale up, and sustain their selected programs with fidelity to their evidence-based models
  - Participate in local and cross-site evaluations

- The grantees have engaged partner organizations to build infrastructure and implement and sustain home visiting programs over a 5-year period
## Home Visiting Program Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Visiting Program Model</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Number of Grantees Selecting Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurse-Family Partnership</td>
<td>First-time pregnant women &lt; 28 weeks gestation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Families America</td>
<td>Pregnant women or new parents within two weeks of infant’s birth</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents as Teachers</td>
<td>Birth or prenatal to age 5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SafeCare</td>
<td>Birth to age 5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triple P</td>
<td>Birth to age 12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Koball et al. (2009). Grantee plan updates.
### Diverse Grantees and Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Type</th>
<th>Grantees (n=17)</th>
<th>Partners (n=226)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local or state agency</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-profit organization</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care organization/Hospital</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-based service provider</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer or support organization for home visiting model</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (such as school districts, advocacy groups)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2010 EBHV Partner Survey, Mathematica Policy Research
### Partners’ EBHV Goals also Diverse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Total (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement/Operate HV</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build HV Continuum of Care</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish Partnerships and Collaboration</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevent Child Abuse/Neglect</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grantee Specific or Other</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure or Sustain Funding</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Parent Outcomes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build Infrastructure</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Quality or Evaluate HV</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build Community and Political Support</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Child Outcomes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate to Partners and/or Public</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train, Coach, or Supervise HV Workforce</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan and Develop EBHV</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2010 EBHV Partner Survey, Mathematica Policy Research
Cross-Site Evaluation Design
Mathematica and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago funded to conduct a six-year cross-site evaluation

Goal: identify successful strategies for adopting, implementing and sustaining high-quality home visiting programs

The evaluation was designed using a participatory approach, building on local evaluation plans, with minimal data requirements and utilization-focused reporting
Systems Evaluation Concepts

- **Grantee-specific systems:** collective groups of interrelated, interdependent individuals and organizations that directly or indirectly influence child abuse prevention.

- **Through systems change activities,** grantees develop infrastructure capacity to improve implementation, spread, and sustainability of EBHV programs.

- **Systems change:** changes in the scope (boundaries), relationships, and perspectives of those involved, directly or indirectly, in grantees’ EBHV systems.
EBHV Evaluation Conceptual Framework

Grant Funds and Requirements, Program and Evaluation Technical Assistance, PLN

Cross-Site Evaluation Feedback

System Attributes

Local Evaluation Feedback

Infrastructure Capacity

Goals ↔ Activities

Infrastructure Changes ↔ Fidelity ↔ Family and Child Outcomes

EBHV Supporters


PLN = peer learning network.
Evaluation Domains and Research Questions

- **Systems change** – How did grantees build infrastructure capacity to implement with fidelity, scale up, and sustain evidence-based home visiting programs?
- **Fidelity** – Were the home visiting programs implemented and delivered with fidelity?
- **Costs** – How much does the delivery and support of each home visiting program model cost?
- **Child and family outcomes** – Do these programs improve child and family outcomes?
- **Process** – How did grantees plan and implement their grant initiatives?
Mixed Evaluation Approaches

- Developmental: Track grantees’ development of infrastructure; document evolution of logic models, activities and results; use social network analysis to measure networked boundaries, relationships and perspectives

- Formative: Monitor planning, implementation, and fidelity to evidence-based models; recommend improvements in projects

- Summative: Develop and collect child and family outcome measures; review findings of outcome evaluations
Systems: Developmental Evaluation Approach

- How do grantees define system? Who or what is in their systems? What does change involve and look like? How to measure systems change?

- How do grantees adapt within their complex systems in response to their changing situations and environments?

- Nested levels: core operations, organizational, community, state, and national

- Infrastructure capacities: planning, operations, workforce development, funding, collaboration, communication, political support, evaluation/data
Systems: Mixed Evaluation Methods

- Grantee-specific evaluation plans and theories of change that grantees update in response to critical events and other changes in their plans and environments

- 2 waves of social network analysis surveys to track change in scope, relationships and perspectives of partners in each grantee system.

- Grantee-specific partner reports

- Tracking of grantees’ development through calls, progress reports, site visits, and peer learning network calls
Early Evaluation Findings
Grantees Working in Complex Environments

- EBHV programs are operating in complex, dynamic environments, supported by networks of collaborative partners working at the organization, community, state, and national levels.

- An unstable economy with severe state budget cuts and loss of EBHV funds led grantees to focus on building fiscal capacity – sometimes at the expense of other infrastructure development and implementation of local evaluations.

- Partners were significant in carrying out joint activities, sharing resources, and making decisions.

Source: “Assessing the Need for Evidence-Based Home Visiting: Experiences of Grantees” and Recruiting and Training Home Visitors: Experiences of Grantees,” Mathematica Policy Research
Sample Evidence-Based Home Visiting Grant Logic Model

**Inputs**
- **National:**
  - ACF, ARA grants
  - FRIENDS
  - Model Developers
  - MPR-CH Team

- **State:**
  - Governor
  - Legislature
  - State agencies
  - Provider coalitions

- **Community:**
  - County agencies
  - Steering committee
  - Private funders
  - Target population
  - Service providers

- **Implementing Agencies:**
  - Organizational support – leadership, planning, funding, evaluation
  - Direct operations – Managers, supervisors, home visitors

**Activities**

- **Create:**
  - Needs assessments and plans
  - Legislation and regulation
  - TA and consultation system
  - Program reporting and evaluation system
  - Dissemination of evidence – based models

- **Context:**
  - Program adaptations certified
  - National funding sustained

**Short-term Results:**
- Outputs, Outcomes
  - Increased knowledge of EBHV programs
  - New state funding streams
  - Increased coordination among EBHV models across state

- New service providers in service network
  - Coordinated referral system in place
  - Community support for EBHV

**Long-term Outcomes:**
- Comprehensive EBHV services available
  - Target population gets needed services

- Expansion of EBHV programs to new areas, populations
  - State funding sustained

**EBHV Goals**
- Implement EBHV programs with fidelity
- Scale-up, expansion of EBHV program with fidelity
- Sustain EBHV programs with fidelity

**Outputs, Outcomes**
- Home visitors operate program with fidelity to model
- Train staff
- Program funding maintained
- Evaluation implemented

**Program reporting and evaluation system**
- Program adaptations certified
- National funding sustained

- Home visitors operate program with fidelity to model
Grantees Building 3 Kinds of Infrastructure

- **Program foundation**
  - Planning
  - Collaboration

- **Program implementation support**
  - Operations
  - Workforce development

- **Sustaining the program**
  - Fiscal
  - Evaluation
  - Communications
  - Community and political buy-in and support

Source: “Assessing the Need for Evidence-Based Home Visiting: Experiences of Grantees,” Mathematica Policy Research
Partners are Essential to Infrastructure Building

- Grantees and their partners most active in foundation building activities and least involved in implementation activities
- Some systems more active than others in building foundation and sustaining infrastructure
- An important predictor of the level of system infrastructure activity was goal alignment – where partners shared goals, there was more foundation and sustaining activity
- Within systems, partners were more active in building infrastructure when they perceived that the quality of collaboration among their EBHV partners was high
Next Steps

- **Local evaluations**
  - Capture lessons learned and add to the literature through process studies and family and child outcome studies.

- **National cross-site evaluation**
  - Continue documenting adaptations and enhancements
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