

1.5 Home Visiting

Percentage of families with young children with access to home visiting services

Purpose

The ability to identify and support families in need is a key contribution of an early childhood system. Ideally, this measure would gauge how well the system is identifying the need for family support and, when indicated, providing that support. While data limitations may not make that particular analysis possible at this time, many systems can track the availability of home visiting services, which research has demonstrated positively impact outcomes for families and children. The goal of this measure is to understand a community's capacity to deliver home visiting services. These data can be compared with the community-defined need or demand for home visiting services, which may be based on risk factors or results of bedside screens following the birth of a child.

Definition

This measure compares the availability of home visiting services in a community compared to the number of live births. The numerator

is the number of maternal and infant home visiting slots, and the denominator is live births. While some home visiting programs offer services to families with toddlers or older children, the majority of home visiting is offered to pregnant women and families with newborns or infants, making the number of live births a reasonable estimate of the number of families potentially eligible for home visiting services. In communities that do universal bedside screens, the denominator can be the number of families screened as eligible and/or in need of home visitation.

As with ECE capacity, the goal is not universal services. The need or demand for home visiting services will be defined differently by communities. Some may define risk factors through indicators such as poverty, education level, or native language, and use population-level data (e.g., birth records) to calculate the population for which home visiting services may be targeted. Others may conduct infant or maternal risk screenings to determine who would benefit from home visiting. Others may want to broaden this to capture additional parent support services.