

Family Violence Prevention Fund

Domestic Violence and Home Visiting: Federal Policy Recommendations

As home visitation programs are expanded, there is an unprecedented opportunity to prevent domestic violence among vulnerable young families and to effectively intervene when domestic violence is already occurring. This is essential both as a means of preventing child abuse and neglect and improving maternal and child health outcomes. By integrating domestic violence into all aspects of these programs, the investment of federal dollars will go even further in achieving home visitation's intended outcomes and fulfilling its promise for millions of American families. As policy makers look to scale up these programs, we ask them to consider the following recommendations:

1. Fully fund the home visitation training program established in the Violence against Women Act that would help domestic violence experts train and partner with home visitation providers to safely assess families who are experiencing or have experienced violence and link them to appropriate community based resources.
2. Include comprehensive training for home visitors in any new home visitation program or legislation. Include specific strategies for:
 - a) Preventing domestic violence in families at-risk of violence due to vulnerabilities;
 - b) Identifying and responding safely to domestic violence where it already exists;
 - c) Understanding the impacts of domestic violence on children's health and well-being and strategies for working with mothers to reduce its impact;
 - d) Working with men and fathers, when it is safe to do so, by linking them with community resources and helping them understand the importance of being non-violent parents and partners.
3. Reauthorize and fully fund the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, including resources and requirements to better link child abuse prevention efforts with those that support mothers experiencing domestic violence.
4. Reauthorize and fully fund the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, which includes a new program to better meet the needs of children whose mothers are being served by domestic violence services agencies, once appropriations exceed \$130 million.
5. Fund ongoing research on the most effective methods for integrating domestic violence awareness, prevention and interventions into the multiple home visitation programs, including community- and culturally-based programs.
6. Collect additional, improved data as home visitation programs are expanded nationally to measure the ways in which violence impacts the families served. More specifically, expand the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) to cover more states and study the link between violence and pregnancy outcomes.

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