

What impact does Connecticut's home visiting program have on families at risk of child maltreatment?

CHAIYACHATI, B. H., GAITHER, J. R., HUGHES, M., FOLEY-SCHAIN, K., & LEVENTHAL, J. M. (2018). PREVENTING CHILD MALTREATMENT: EXAMINATION OF AN ESTABLISHED STATEWIDE HOME-VISITING PROGRAM. *CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT*, 79, 476-484.

What can we learn from this study?

Approximately one-third of children entering out-of-home care are infants and toddlers under age 3. This study examined the **impact of Connecticut's statewide home visiting program (Nurturing Families Network) on child maltreatment** for socially high-risk families by tracking three key child welfare outcomes — investigated reports of maltreatment, substantiated reports of maltreatment, and out-of-home placements.

Study details:

- **Population:** First time mothers who were identified as socially high-risk (2,662 voluntary participants, 4,724 eligible non-participants)
- **Data source:** Screening and enrollment data linked to Connecticut's CPS records
- **Methodology:** Longitudinal cohort, comparison group matched on risk scores and sociodemographic characteristics
- **Dates:** CPS records for children born between January 1, 2008, and December 31, 2011, tracked from birth through December 31, 2013.

What are the critical findings?

- The **percentages of families with CPS investigations were similar between the home-visited group and the comparison group (21% for both)**. The authors note that increased monitoring of participants (surveillance bias) may be a barrier to detecting the impact of home visiting programs.
- Home visiting was associated with a **22% decrease in the likelihood of CPS substantiations**. In addition, among families that did have a substantiated report, the first substantiation occurred later in the child's life for families involved with home visiting than for families that did not receive home visiting services.
- A **smaller percentage of home-visited families had an out-of-home placement (3%) than comparison families (4%)**, but this result was not statistically significant.

Why is this important for our work?

These results highlight the potential for home visiting as an important approach to preventing child abuse and neglect. The lower rate of substantiated maltreatment among families involved with home visiting is consistent with a recent assessment in Kentucky. It may take time for other states to see similar outcomes, given the length of time families need to be tracked to determine long-term CPS outcomes.

This summary synthesizes the findings of a single research study. To learn more about home visiting in child welfare, please review the following resources: [Are home visiting programs effective in reducing child maltreatment?](#) and [Which home visiting programs are effective in reducing child maltreatment?](#)

For additional information, [see the abstract](#) or email KMResources@casey.org.