

Do home visits improve outcomes for children of refugee families?

HILADO, A., KAKUYAMA-VILLABER, R., BOND, M. H., PONTING, C., & KORFMACHER, J. (2025). [HOME VISITING AS A BRIDGE: SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE FAMILIES THROUGH TRANSITION AND GROWTH](#). CHAPIN HALL AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CROWN FAMILY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, POLICY, AND PRACTICE.

What can we learn from this study?

Resettled immigrant and refugee families face complex emotional and practical challenges as they adjust to life in a new country, often with limited social support. Effectively supporting these families during resettlement requires a deep understanding of how their immigration journey — before, during, and after arrival — impacts child and family well-being. Drawing on perspectives of refugee families and home visiting program directors and staff in Illinois, this study examined how home visiting programs can be a bridge during this transition period by providing personalized services in the comfort of families' homes.

Study details

- **Population:** 1,000 immigrant and refugee families served by nine home visiting programs across Illinois, along with 36 participant interviews
- **Data sources:** Home visiting data, interviews, questionnaires
- **Methodology:** Time-to-event model; [Baby TALK](#) engagement strategies
- **Dates:** 2021 to 2024

What are the critical findings?

- **Languages represented:** 28 languages/dialects were represented in the study with the majority of participants speaking Spanish, English, or Arabic.
- **Length of engagement:** Services spanned several years, with families participating for an average of 28 months and receiving about 46 home visits.
- **Engagement strategies:** Baby TALK strategies effectively reduced the likelihood of families exiting the program without completing it. Strategies included:
 - Using the prompt, "Tell me about your baby"
 - Focusing on family functioning and well-being
 - Acknowledging predictable [touchpoints](#) with families using the Brazelton framework
 - Using objective language during sessions
- **Developmental milestone:** Of the children screened, 90.9% (2,771) met developmental milestones, while 9.1% (278) did not and were referred for early childhood services.
- **Family needs:** During the first six months of services, basic essentials — such as food, clothing, and medical support — were most critical but decreased in urgency by 18 to 24 months. Families identified ESL programs, citizenship support, adult dental care, and employment as ongoing top priorities.

Why is this important to our work?

Child and family well-being systems play a vital role in supporting diverse communities, including immigrant and refugee families navigating the challenges of resettlement. This requires cultural humility, ongoing learning, and practices that recognize how migration, trauma, and systemic barriers impact family well-being. This study provides insight into the emotional, social, and practical challenges affecting child development and stability in these families. It also highlights the value of home visiting programs in increasing access to essential resources during a vulnerable transition period. Understanding how these supports build trust, resilience, and stability is key to creating more equitable, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive child welfare systems.

To learn more, see: [Are home visiting programs effective in reducing child maltreatment?](#) and [How do economic supports benefit families and communities?](#)

This summary synthesizes the findings from a single research study. For additional information, [access the article directly](#) or email: KMResources@casey.org