

Home Visiting is Essential—Referral Guidance for Providers Supporting Families During COVID-19

What is Early Childhood Home Visiting?

Before the current health crisis, home visitors were already a critical link for new and expectant parents, providing one-on-one support, at no cost to eligible families, to promote infant and child health, foster educational development and school readiness, and help prevent child abuse and neglect.

Now more than ever, home visiting is an essential service for families as they navigate social isolation, economic uncertainty, the challenge of balancing work without childcare, and other unique and heightened stressors brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Home visiting is available for parents of young children, starting prenatally and continuing up to age five.

Home Visiting is Available During the COVID-19 Pandemic

While our state moves through the phases of the [Restore Illinois](#) Plan, home visits cannot occur face to face until it is deemed safe. However, home visiting programs in Illinois are doing our part to prevent the spread of coronavirus by supporting families through virtual home visits. Home visiting programs across the state are connecting with parents and caregivers virtually through a variety of different platforms including FaceTime, Google Hangouts, Duo, phone calls, and more.

Families already enrolled in home visiting can continue to receive services, and many programs are still conducting recruitment to enroll eligible families in available home visiting slots. Through virtual visits, home visitors can still do developmental screenings, provide information on children’s developmental milestones and early learning, provide linkages to community resources, screen for and provide referrals for maternal depression and intimate partner violence, and reduce social isolation for parents. Virtual home visiting can be a lifeline for families during COVID-19.

How can I refer a family to home visiting?

1. Search for local programs in your area using the iGrow website, at <http://igrowillinois.org/find-a-program>. Local programs will have details on how to enroll in home visiting services.
2. In some communities, Coordinated Intake (CI) workers can guide families to the right programs. Check the attached table to find contact information for CI workers in your area. You can call these numbers to connect to a CI worker to discuss home visiting options.
3. Email Gov.HomeVisiting@illinois.gov or contact MIECHV Project Director Lesley Schwartz at (312) 324-4420 with questions on home visiting.



Additional Supports for Families with Young Children

Resource	Information	Website
Emergency Child Care	To find emergency child care in your area, call 888-228-1146	Visit the COVID-19 Emergency Provider Search at https://emergencycare.inccrra.org/
Public Health Information	Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH.illinois.gov) has a statewide, 24-hour COVID-19 hotline (1-800-889-3931)	Visit the Illinois Department of Public Health at http://www.dph.illinois.gov/
Mental Health services for parents and caregivers of young children	Call the Erikson Institute intake line at 312-709-0508 (English) or 312-934-6446 (Spanish)	Visit the Erikson Institute at https://www.erikson.edu/center-children-families/
Urgent Essential Needs & Benefits	Call the IDHS Help is Here toll-free line at 1-833-2-FIND-HELP or the ABE hotline at 1-800-843-6154	Visit the Application for Benefits Eligibility (ABE) portal at https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/
Local service provider search tool	The Service Provider Identification & Exploration Resource (SPIDER) application allows family-serving providers across the state to search for early childhood, parenting, health and mental health, substance use, domestic violence, and other services by geography.	Visit https://spider.dcf.illinois.gov/Search/SearchAgency
Governor's Office of Early Childhood COVID-19 Resources for Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional Well-being • Emergency Child Care • Protection for My Family & Household • Essential Resources • Resources for Immigrant Families • Resources for Children with Special Needs 	Visit the Governor's Office of Early Childhood COVID-19 page at https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/COVID-19-For-Families.aspx
Shriver Center for Poverty Law resources to aid communities seeking support during the COVID-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care • Criminal Justice • Disability • Domestic Violence • Economic Impact Payments • Employment/Unemployment • Compensation • Food • Healthcare • Housing • General Lists of Resources • Immigrant Communities/Public Charge • Legal Aid • LGBTQ 	Visit the Shriver Center for Poverty Law's resource page at https://www.povertylaw.org/article/covid-19-resources-for-individuals-and-families-in-illinois/