

HOME VISITING AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS BRIEF



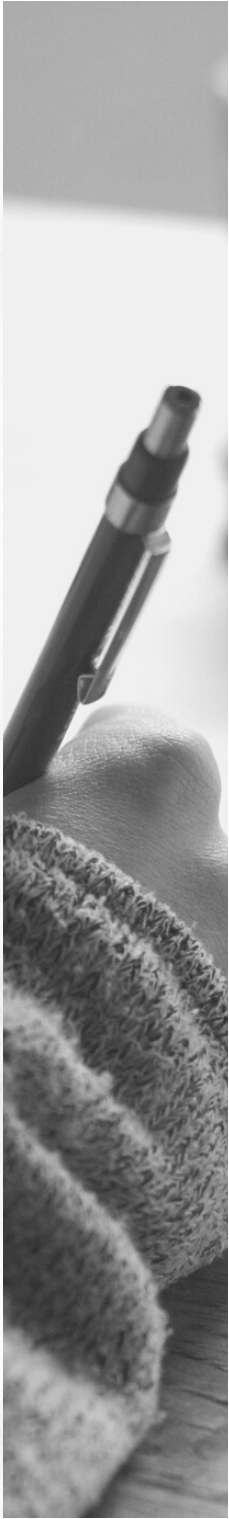
Overview

Home visiting and parent coaching programs provide a pregnant or parenting teen the supports and resources to succeed. Home visiting programs vary, but generally connect parents of young children to nurses, social workers or others trained to provide two-generation services, resources, and coaching on how to promote the health and development of young children while supporting the caregivers. Home visiting programs often are evidence-based and focus on maternal and child health, school readiness, family economic success, and safety. Family support programs usually have staff (often peer support staff) to provide resources and services, including referrals to other programs. Most of these services and practices focus on two-generation approaches and family resiliency.


Is a pregnant or parenting teen eligible to participate in home visiting or family support programs? Pregnant or parenting teens are eligible to participate in a wide variety of these programs. Most are free for those with low income.

What home visiting models are available in Colorado? Home visiting models implemented in Colorado that serve pregnant or parenting teens include Early Head Start Home-Based Option, Healthy Families America, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), Nurse-Family Partnership (for first-time moms only), Parents as Teachers, and SafeCare. There are family resource centers and local home-grown programs such as [Genesis \(Boulder County\)](#) and My Family and Me (Otero County). Some of these programs can continue until a child turns 3 years of age, while other programs are 8-12 weeks and follow a set curriculum. Service providers often provide a warm hand off referral or teen parents can make a referral to the different programs on the Colorado Office of Early Childhood's website [here](#).





Can a teen parent get support and help with questions about their child's development through a home visiting or family support program? Home visiting and family support providers often provide immediate resources, such as diapers, but also provide screening and referrals, including for [maternal depression](#) and child developmental screenings. These providers are seen as a “trusted messenger” and provide coaching so teen mothers can become the best parent they can be. Different program providers offer flexibility in being able to meet in the home or at another location comfortable for the parent. Teen parents respond to having validation of the challenges being a teen parent brings and to strengths-based approaches. The [Touchpoint parenting](#) and [Strengthening Families](#) approaches are useful with teen parents to “recognize that the parent is the expert on their child.” According to a Colorado service provider, “this might get sometimes overlooked with parenting teens when they have a lot of adults helping with the care of their child.” There is also [evidence](#) on the importance of engaging fathers during [pregnancy](#) and in [home visiting](#) and family support programs.



Other Practice Approaches to Consider:

- Educate the teen parents about the program so they understand what areas of support the program provides.
- Use open ended questions to encourage the parent to share challenges and needs.
- Use summarizing/reflective statements so the parent knows you are listening.



What messages work when engaging pregnant or parenting teens? A 2015 [brief](#) by The Pew Charitable Trusts examined messaging for home visiting programs. Pregnant and parenting teens may see home visiting programs as an intrusion into the home, punitive or possibly they might think, “I’m doing something wrong.” Highlights from the brief included:

- Prospective participants respond most negatively to the phrase “home visiting” and instead find concepts such as “family support and coaching” much more appealing.
- Mothers were most receptive to messages focused on their immediate needs (like paying for diapers) rather than long-term outcomes for their children.
- The idea of working with a “family support provider” rather than a “home visitor” is more appealing.
- Programs that demonstrate flexibility and an understanding that each family is unique was important.
- The youngest mothers rated help accessing services as especially important.
- Information on a flyer that was rated especially appealing was “We will meet you at your house or at a place you choose.” This showed flexibility and put them at ease about meeting with a stranger.

Source: [Family Support and Coaching Programs, The Pew Charitable Trusts, October 2015.](#)

Rural Communities

Colorado rural communities have [challenges](#) similar to other rural areas across the country including social isolation, possible food insecurity, and low rates of prenatal and maternal care. Home visiting programs might address [some of these health challenges](#) that exist in rural communities. Colorado rural counties offer home visiting and family support programs and often these programs are the only touchpoint with pregnant and parenting teens. Check [here](#) to see if a home visiting or family support program is in a rural community.

COVID-19 Implications

A trend in response to the pandemic is utilizing telehealth for home visiting services. Although not a replacement, a recent Child Trends [article](#) discussed some of the emerging promising practices. Colorado providers can utilize this approach to stay engaged with teen clients. The federal government recently provided [guidance](#) on relaxing HIPPA confidentiality requirements.



Resources

Colorado Office of Early Childhood, Department of Human Services, Family Support
Colorado has [family support programs](#) in place to assist parents with the child's well-being.

Colorado Family Support Programs Referral List – search by county (Maintained by the state and is not a comprehensive list of all Colorado programs.)

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tofgyf-SSlcYKhSEefu4DIQpIOG1AT9ZTzXoiNfgImE/edit#gid=1545306827>

[Colorado Home Visiting Coalition Resources](#)

[Challenging Situations in Home Visiting Webinar](#)

[Seven Strategies for Conducting Services Virtually](#)