



children's home + aid

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Examples of the Success of MIECHV-funded Services in Illinois

Illinois Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Care Pilot funded by MIECHV

The I Pick Home Visiting pilot provides home visiting to abused and neglect youth in the foster care system who are pregnant or parents. The pilot brings together the child welfare and early childhood systems to improve outcomes for youth in foster care and their children.

Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funding is supporting an innovative pilot program that provides evidence-informed home visiting services to young adults in the foster care system who are pregnant or who are already parents. The I Pick Home Visiting (IPPYC) pilot began in October 2016 and provides home visiting to eight communities in Illinois with the largest concentration of young adults in the foster care system who are parents or who are pregnant. Since October, 30 young parents have been referred to the program and eight are currently receiving services, with another eight parents and their children soon to be enrolled.

- Laura* became pregnant during her first year at Illinois State University (ISU). Originally from Chicago and as a youth in foster care, Laura had no support in the Bloomington-Normal area. Rather than drop out of school as she was advised to do by her foster care caseworker, Laura decided to continue at ISU and was referred to the Healthy Families home visiting program supported by MIECHV funding. Since her case was opened in February of this year, Laura has been linked with a doula who will assist her at her birth, attended WIC and doctor appointments, and connected to the Bloomington Crisis Nursery for postpartum support. The home visitor has also helped Laura to create a postpartum plan in concert with her professors at ISU to ensure she can continue to attend classes and complete assignments. Laura meets regularly with her home visitor and has expressed that she now feels more confident and prepared for the birth of her child.

Home visiting funded through MIECHV

These examples come from the MIECHV-funded Healthy Families home visiting program in Bloomington and Normal, Illinois in McLean County.

- After becoming pregnant at the young age of 16, Sarah* turned to the Healthy Families home visiting program in Normal, IL for support. Sarah's home visitor provides her with parenting education, encouragement, and access to child care so that she can remain in school and complete a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program, all while parenting. Not only is Sarah at the top of her class in the CNA program, but she also maintains a 4.0 GPA in her other high school classes. Sarah has given up her extracurricular activities in order to care for her one-year-old son in the evening. Sarah says that being with her son is better than

any other activity she could be doing. Even at 16, this young mom is planning a brighter future for herself and her son.

- Erika* always planned to start college at a four-year university after high school, but with the birth of her son, her plans changed. Erika's home visitor worked with Erika to establish her family goals and help her achieve those goals, which include getting a college education. By providing young mothers with access to basic needs like clothing and diapers, the Healthy Families program allows mothers to focus on larger goals rather than worry about where they will get the next diaper. This past fall, Erika successfully enrolled at Heartland Community College in Bloomington. Over the past few months, she's had near perfect attendance and recently passed all of her classes with A's and B's. Although Erika misses her son while she's in class, she knows the sacrifice is for the good of her and her family. Erika has often stated that getting an education is important to her because she wants to be a good role model for her son.
- Facing eviction from her Bloomington home, Alicia* turned to Healthy Families to help fight the eviction because she thought the eviction reason to be untrue and unfair. Alicia's home visitor helped her read the lease to understand her rights as a tenant, and also provided her with support to let her know she wasn't in the wrong or deserving of being treated that way. Healthy Families also linked Alicia with free legal counsel and the agency's Crisis Nursery care to take care of her children while she's in court. Alicia stated she primarily wanted to keep her home for her children's sake because she didn't want them to be raised in a shelter, which would've been her only other housing option had she been evicted. Through perseverance, resilience, and consistently seeking connection to resources, Alicia won her court case against her landlord and was able to remain in her home. Alicia was overjoyed to have won the case and states how relieved and blessed she is that her family is able to remain in their home together.

The examples below are from the South Side Early Learning Network (SELN), a MIECHV-funded coordinated intake and direct services collaboration serving the Greater Englewood community on Chicago's South Side. Much of the Greater Englewood community is in Mr. Davis' 7th Congressional District.

Henry Booth House provides home visiting services as part of the South Side Early Learning Network funded by MIECHV.

- Kyra and her boyfriend, Jared, have been participants in the home visiting program for nearly three years. In 2014, Kyra was a first-time mom with no income, living with her mother, while Jared lived in an unstable situation. With home visiting support, Kyra attended all of her prenatal appointments. After her son was born, Kyra wanted to work and was able to enroll in a job readiness program and obtain childcare through one of the Henry Booth House daycare centers. When her child turned one year old, Kyra started her first job as a cashier. During home visits, Jared began to see the importance of his role as a father and decided to return to school to get his high school diploma. With assistance from the home visitor, Jared is currently employed and a full-time student. Kyra and Jared also both learned how to budget and save money, which allowed the family to recently move into their first apartment. They are planning to get married in 2017. With home visiting support and encouragement, Kyra and Jared are stronger parents and a stronger couple.

ChildServ *provides home visiting services as part of the South Side Early Learning Network funded by MIECHV.*

- When Mary Ann enrolled in the home visiting program, she was pregnant and living in a homeless shelter. After expressing that living in the shelter was causing her stress, the home visitor went over breathing exercises with Mary Ann to help calm her anxiety. Through the home visiting program, Mary Ann attended all of her prenatal visits and was provided with a lead for a job and received interview coaching. Today Mary Ann is a pharmacy technician at Walgreens. With the assistance of her home visitor, Mary Ann is no longer homeless and now lives in a one-bedroom apartment, where she continues to attend group meetings and home visits.

Women's Treatment Center *provides home visiting services as part of the South Side Early Learning Network funded by MIECHV.*

- A young mother to three children, including two in foster care, Jessica was referred to Women's Treatment Center (WTC) in 2015. A victim of domestic violence, Jessica was referred to a therapist through WTC to help her recover from the traumatic experience of being shot by her mother's significant other. Jessica also received help with her special needs children. The home visitor made weekly visits and provided parenting coaching to Jessica. Jessica went to court in 2016 for reunification and her children were returned home. The judge remarked that he was impressed with the home visiting program and was confident that Jessica would continue to receive parenting support through the program.
- After her children were placed in foster care due to her alcohol addiction, Kate enrolled in the home visiting program at Women's Treatment Center. With the support of her home visitor, Kate was referred to a domestic violence support group that helped her separate from her abusive husband. Since she began the program, Kate has been dedicated to her weekly visits and her parenting education curriculum. Kate will go to court in April for reunification with her children, who are expected to be returned home. At a previous court hearing, the judge stated that he was very impressed with the progress that Kate has made.

Family Focus *provides home visiting services as part of the South Side Early Learning Network funded by MIECHV.*

- Brittany* enrolled in the home visiting program at the age of 16 with a one-year-old child. Growing up, Brittany experienced multiple, severe forms of trauma and was raised by caregivers who faced substance abuse, mental illness and poverty. As a result, Brittany struggled to have positive interactions with her baby. She was physically assaulted by her adult relatives several times while holding her son. As he grew into a toddler and continued to be exposed to violence and conflict in his home, the young child exhibited developmental delays, severe tantrums, aggression towards others and self-harming behavior. With the help of a therapist, Brittany began to understand how both she and her baby were impacted by the violence around them. She was able, through therapy and with coaching from the home visitor, to start making healthy decisions and to access resources to keep both her and her child safe. She grew more able to nurture him and to help him feel safe. Motivated by a

desire to give her child a better childhood than she had, and helped along by home visiting services, Brittany graduated high school on time and was the first in her family ever to enroll in college. She moved into a supportive housing program that provided a safe, peaceful environment for her and her child, and enrolled her child in a high-quality preschool. While the family still faces challenges, Brittany is employed and looking forward to moving into her own apartment. Brittany's son, who will start kindergarten next year, is helpful, inquisitive and playful. Moreover, his preschool teachers have not identified any delays or concerns regarding his learning or his emotional-behavioral functioning in school.

**All names have been changed to protect the identities of the individuals*

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