

Twenty-two years ago, Maine was one of the first states in the nation to invest in the health and well-being of its youngest citizens by establishing a statewide home visiting program for new parents.

The Maine Families Home Visiting Program remains one of the state's most critical cost-saving investments to improve childhood health and learning outcomes, prevent child abuse and neglect, enhance future productivity, and reduce future demand on tax supported services.

Maine Families Home Visiting is a **voluntary** program available for pregnant parents, expectant couples, and parents or primary caregivers of children from birth to age three. It is offered in every county of the state, through a well-established and rigorously accountable system of performance-based contracts with **local agencies**.



Services are delivered by **highly trained specialists** to ensure safe home environments, promote healthy growth and development for babies and toddlers, and provide key connections to needed services. Family visitors use a non-judgmental and compassionate approach that empowers parents with skills, tools, and confidence to nurture the healthy growth of their baby.

The intensity and length of service is matched to family needs in response to an individualized needs assessment. This allows for **careful optimization of resources**, in which highest-need families receive more frequent visits over a longer period of time. Priority is given to adolescent parents, families living in poverty, and families struggling with substance use, mental health, co-occurring, or family violence issues. As a result of the **high quality, accountability, and demonstrated results** of the *Maine Families Home Visiting* program, Maine receives continued funding from the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant. This federal grant, together with critical funding from the state, allows *Maine Families* to continue strengthening the well being of families in every county of our state.

With a baseline operating budget of about \$8 million for direct service, the statewide network of 11 local *Maine Families Home Visiting* contracted agencies employed over 110 extensively trained and certified professionals **serving more than 1,900 parents annually**. The program's performance-based contracting structure, together with its commitment to evaluation and quality assurance, demonstrates an exceptionally high level of accountability, as well as consistently **positive outcomes** for participating children and their families.

In 2021, all Maine Families Home Visiting sites continued to safely provide services to families in spite of the pandemic. Families received consistent contact through a flexible offering of either in-person visits (when safety allowed) or via telephonic and/or video communication. Families were connected to needed resources, and in some cases, visitors provided contactless drop-offs of necessary items such as food, safety supplies, and diapers. Isolation was reduced and families described their visitors as lifelines during Covid-19.



Quick Facts FY2021

All *Maine Families Home Visiting* contracted agencies share a single web-based Electronic Records and Information Network that allows for statewide evaluation and continuous quality improvement. All available data points listed were generated by this system for the reporting period October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021, unless noted otherwise. Comparative data indicated by * is from the *Kids Count Data Center* and *National Child Health Survey 19/20*.

SERVICE DELIVERY

- **1,665** families with **1,739** children were served
- **432** caregivers were pregnant
- **1,926** total caregivers participated
- **19,052** home visits were conducted
- **23.1 months** was the average length of participation per family

ADULT PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age, Marital Status, and Language

- 12% of participants were 21 or younger
- 30 participants were 17 or younger
- 45% of caregivers were married
- 9% of families primarily spoke a language other than English; over 15 different languages were represented

Education level

- 10% of primary caregivers had not completed high school (23% without a diploma continued their education while participating)
- 45% of primary caregivers had not completed any education or training beyond high school

Household income

- 44% of families had an annual income of less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level
- 69% of families had an annual income of less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level

CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES

Protecting Children from Violence, Abuse, and Neglect

In FY2021, Maine Families continued to serve many families involved with Child Protective Services (CPS). Of the 118 families involved with CPS at enrollment, 100 had no further reports for child abuse or neglect during their participation with Maine Families. Family visitors prevent child abuse and neglect by helping families to build skills and confidence for managing the stresses of parenting. Family visitors provide tools to help understand child behavior and address behavior challenges.

Postpartum Care

- 82% of mothers received a postpartum care visit with a health care provider within 8 weeks of birth, increasing the opportunity to take measures to plan their next pregnancy.
- 94% of adult participants had insurance.

Caregiver Screening

- 69% were screened for depression
- 78% participated in a parent-child interaction assessment
- 100% whose intimate partner violence screening indicated the presence of violence in the relationship accepted a resources referral

Child Health

- 89% of children 19-35 months had up to date immunizations (*71% 24-35 months statewide)
- 97% of children had an identified Primary Care Provider (*56% statewide)
- 99% of children had health insurance (*94% statewide)
- 73% of children were covered by MaineCare (*45% statewide)
- 75% of children were up to date with the most recent well-child check-up
- 68% of mothers who enrolled prenatally continued breastfeeding for at least three months

Secondhand Smoke

Family visitors provide ongoing support for tobacco cessation and eliminating child exposure to second-hand smoke. In FY2021, 91% of participating children were not exposed to secondhand smoke. 96% of parents that smoke received a referral for smoking cessation.

Developmental Support, Screening, and Intervention

Families complete developmental screenings with trained visitors, and 83% of children had timely developmental screenings. As a result of screenings, 161 children were identified with possible developmental delays and 94% of those were provided supports to help address those delays early—before more costly remediation is needed in school. Maine Families encourages early literacy activities, and 97% of participants reported reading, singing, or telling stories with their child daily.

Home Safety

Family visitors help families to prevent child injuries and trips to the emergency department by providing regular home safety education/assessments and assisting with safety improvements.

- 3% of enrolled children had injury-related visits to the ER
- 76% of families reported they always placed their babies on their backs, without bed-sharing or soft bedding.

Increasing Family Self-Sufficiency

- 1,471 families were linked to at least one community resource.

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