

Investing in a Child's First Coach

Voluntary home visiting programs help parents and children reach their potential

A great athlete's road to success inevitably includes guidance from a skilled, dedicated coach. Likewise, a child can reach his or her greatest potential with the help of a caring and knowledgeable parent.

How do we help at-risk young parents become caring and knowledgeable coaches for their children? Voluntary home visiting programs, funded by the federal **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)** program, offer quality, one-on-one mentoring to new moms in challenging circumstances, with impressive outcomes.

What is home visiting?

Voluntary home visiting is a program offered to new and expectant mothers, many of whom are single, low-income, and teenagers.¹ Mothers who participate gain access to a qualified professional who provides home-based coaching during pregnancy and infancy—which includes health advice, mentoring on child development, and education and employment goal-setting.²

The benefits:

- **Families:** By coaching mothers during pregnancy, home visiting programs help **improve birth outcomes**. The Every Child Succeeds home visiting program, for



“A parent is a child's first coach. Let's help them also be their child's *best* coach.”



— Bonnie Blair,
Five-time Olympic Gold Medalist (Speed Skating) and Mom

example, reduced infant mortality rates by 60 percent.³ Another study found that the Nurse-Family Partnership program **cut child abuse and neglect by 50 percent.**⁴

- **Students:** Home visiting programs help parents stimulate their infant's development by emphasizing speaking and reading. Likely as a result, a study of the Healthy Families America home visiting program found that **27 percent fewer children needed special education** in elementary school.⁵
- **Communities:** Many teen moms drop out of high school when they have a baby. Home visitors coach parents on how to continue their education and find stable employment. A study of the Early Head Start home visiting program found that this coaching resulted in a **\$3,600 increase in mothers' average annual earnings.**⁶

Reauthorize MIECHV to build strong families

The obstacles of poverty and teenage parenthood put many families at-risk of negative outcomes. Many athletes know the urgency of those situations, but they also know that a single coach can make all the difference.

Without reauthorization, nearly 150,000 parents and children will lose an important coaching program that improves the well-being of American kids.

1. HRSA 2017.
2. Ibid.
3. Donovan et al. 2007.
4. Olds et al. 1997.
5. Caldera et al. 2007.
6. Jones Harden et al. 2012.

To learn more about the benefits of home visiting programs, visit www.StrongNation.org/Home-Visiting

Champions for America's Future

Athletes and coaches promoting policy solutions for at-risk kids to compete in life

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites five organizations comprised of law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, business executives, pastors, and prominent coaches and athletes who promote solutions that ensure our next generation of Americans will be citizen-ready.

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