Developing a Home Visitation Model

Replicated in three communities, this program helps parents find work and reduces stress levels in vulnerable families.

►Description: The Allied Drive Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) is an innovative home visitation and employment program developed by Dane County in partnership with several other organizations. It is designed to improve life outcomes of the most vulnerable families in Madison's Allied Drive community with a special emphasis on economic self-sufficiency, positive infant and child development, and maternal and infant mental health.

►Results: During this second three-year grant period, 148 adults and 209 children were served and 91 percent of families were in compliance with their family plans. Between 12 to 24 months after program entry, the percentage of primary caregiver parents who were working increased from 32 percent to 54 percent, and rates of food insecurity declined significantly. Levels of stress, depression and anxiety also improved.

►Partnerships: The academic partner presented ECI results at professional conferences and published a research paper in the Journal of Infant Mental Health.

►Next Steps: The program has been replicated in three other locations in Dane County. ECI continues to improve its home visitation model and is now conducting clinical interventions in households. Future evaluation work will focus on improving understanding of the program's impact, learning whether the ECI has a role in increasing early childhood program enrollment and reducing costly mental health and child protective services interventions. ECI holds promise for becoming a best practice model for home visitation targeted at highly challenged, low-income families with its innovative emphasis on economic self-sufficiency through employment and training.

Several funding sources have been critical to ECI's sustainability. The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families currently provides $247,500 annually, which is matched by Dane County. Additional resources have been leveraged to support the employment and economic assistance programs as well as several staff positions.