

## Exploring Home Visiting Curriculums

Lindsey Lopez COTA/L MPH CHW IMH-E  
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### NMAIMH competencies addressed:

#### Theoretical Foundations

- Pregnancy & early parenthood
- Infant/very young child development & behavior infant/very young child & family-centered practice relationship-focused
- Therapeutic practice family relationships & dynamics attachment
- Separation, trauma, grief, & loss disorders of infancy/early childhood
- Cultural competence

#### Direct Service Skills

- Observation & listening screening & assessment
- Responding with empathy advocacy life skills safety

#### Working With Others

- Building & maintaining relationships
- Supporting others/mentoring
- Collaborating resolving conflict empathy & compassion

#### Communicating

- Listening
- Speaking

#### Thinking

- Analyzing information
- Solving problems
- Exercising sound judgment
- Maintaining perspective planning & organizing

#### Reflection

- Contemplation
- Self-awareness
- Curiosity
- Professional/personal development
- Emotional response

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Home Visiting programs across New Mexico are currently exploring new or additional curriculums to serve children ages 3-5. It may take some time and thought as to what may work best for your program, community, and families that your program

serves. As New Mexico Home Visiting expands into supporting families of ages up to five years of age, there are several things that must be taken into consideration, including a curriculum that works up to the age of 5. Factors to consider include the age of the children it will support, cultural relevancy to address and support the cultural diversity in our state, that it is evidence based, and of course the overall cost, which will include the required training. Curriculums provide a framework that will provide guidance and support for Home Visitors who will then support families to encourage and promote development within their children in areas such as early literacy, health, safety, motor skills, social development, and much more. This article will briefly explore some of the most used curriculums around the state of New Mexico.

## **New Mexico Home Visiting Standards**

The New Mexico Home Visiting Program Standards state that each program is required to implement an approved curriculum/model and train their staff to fidelity within 60 days of hire and refers to Curriculum within Standard 5 (See Standard 5.1 and 5.2 of New Mexico Home Visiting Program Standards). This standard is focused on curriculum implementation, which sets the expectations for curriculum, home visiting practices, and fidelity that aligns with New Mexico's Home Visiting Long Term Outcomes (UNM, HSC, ECLN 2021).

### **HV-5. Curriculum and Program Implementation (Service Delivery):**

This standard defines the use of a specific research-based curriculum, a combination of curricula and approved home visiting models and for approval of a home visiting curriculum or model not listed under "approved curriculums and models" section.

**Rationale:** During prenatal home visits New Mexico Home Visiting Programs are required to provide information on infant/child development, including developmental guidance using a recognized curriculum. Then during home visits provided after the baby is born and up to 36 months of age, they are required to provide developmental guidance and parent-child interaction support based on a research-based curriculum. The approved curricula include *Partners for a Healthy Baby*; *Portage Project's Growing: Birth to Three*; and *Partners in Parenting Education (PIPE)*. Using a research-based, recognized curriculum ensures that the families served through their home visiting program are receiving information and materials that have been developed through a process of rigorous study and research that ideally can offer evidence of effectiveness. Home visitors who use a curriculum benefit from years of work by a group of thoughtful practitioners and researchers who have combined their knowledge and talents and provided a resource that can be used with confidence to benefit families and their very young children. Practitioners who use the curriculum are drawing from a bank of collective wisdom [(Epstein, 2008), CYFD, 2016]

A program that is looking for a curriculum to use for their families that is evidence-based and/or strengths-based can have a conversation with their Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) Manager/Monitor to ensure that it is approved by the state (UNM, HSC, ECLN 2021). Some curriculums that are used across New Mexico are First Born, Partners for a Healthy Baby, Nurturing Parenting, Parents as Teachers (PAT), Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), SafeCare, and Nurtured Heart. These have proved to be quite successful within our state (UNM, HSC, ECLN 2021). It may also be beneficial to have a conversation within your program and your ECECD Manager/Monitor regarding why it may be best to have an evidence-based curriculum for Home Visitors to use as a model (UNM, HSC, ECLN 2021).

## **Curriculums**

### **First Born**

The First Born curriculum “supports child development in the areas of social emotional development, language, literacy, and problem solving” (FBP, 2021). The program supports family and community change and believes in investing early to improve the outcomes of “happier families and healthier communities” through weekly visits (). It is a relationship-based curriculum that includes parents and family members and supports ages prenatal to three (FBP, 2021).

### **SafeCare**

SafeCare is an evidence-based curriculum for parents and caregivers who are at risk or have been reported for maltreatment, abuse, or neglect (Child Welfare, 2021). This model follows home visits that support families with home safety, healthcare, and parent-child interactions up to age five (Child Welfare, 2021). There is direct-skill training to parents and caregivers in the areas of behavior management, planned activities, home safety, and child healthcare skills to promote a stable and secure relationship (Child Welfare, 2021).

### **Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)**

NFP is an evidence-based curriculum and program that empowers first time mothers to create a better future for them and their baby by keeping children healthy and safe and transforming lives (NFP, 2021). Nurses work with pregnant moms with regular home visits up to age two years old, supporting outcomes such as health, nutrition, safety, and development of the child (NFP, 2021). There is an extensive network of training and support built into this curriculum (NFP, 2021).

### **Parents as Teachers (PAT)**

PAT is an evidence-based curriculum that is a comprehensive parent education model used by Parent Educators (PAT, 2021). The model supports families with children up to the age of five years or kindergarten (PAT, 2021). The curriculum focuses on increasing knowledge of early childhood development, early detection of delays or health issues, prevention of abuse and neglect, and increase school readiness (PAT, 2021).

## **Nurturing Parenting**

Nurturing Parenting is a curriculum/program that is family centered and designed to build nurturing parenting skills to prevent abuse and neglect and support healthy attachment and parent-child interactions (Nurturing Parenting, 2021). The long-term goals are to prevent multiple teen pregnancies, decrease substance abuse, and break generational cycles of abuse by teaching positive parenting behaviors (Nurturing Parenting, 2021). This program serves up to age five years old and has other piece to explore such as home based, group, and beyond the ages of five years old (Nurturing Parenting, 2021).

## **Partners for a Healthy Baby**

Partners for a Healthy Baby is a research-based curriculum that focuses on improving birth outcomes, reduction of the rates of child abuse, and increase in time between pregnancies. It strengthens families, enhances the child's health and developmental outcomes, supports family stability, and family economic self-sufficiency (Florida State University, 2021). The program uses simple, concise, and easy to read handouts to support home visits with additional information (Florida State University, 2021). This program serves families with children up to the age of three (Florida State University, 2021).

## **Nurtured Heart**

The Nurtured Heart Approach is relationship-based program that supports parenting skills and school readiness (Children's Success Foundation, 2018). This approach supports families in the areas of behavior, social, and development (Children's Success Foundation, 2020). The practices are considered "evidence informed" based on research and supports working with children with social, cognitive, and behavior challenges (Children's Success Foundation, 2020).

Having a curriculum that provides Home Visitors and families a framework for structuring support, education, and information is a foundational piece to home visiting. This serves as a guide and reference for the progression of home visits, topics, activities, resources, models, and quality of services provided. There are a variety of successful curriculums that Home Visiting programs are using across the state of New Mexico. Some programs use multiple curriculums with unique focuses to support their individual family needs within communities. There is a variety from which to explore based on the needs of your diverse community and program. These will serve as the foundational framework to guide Home Visitors to support families and New Mexico's Home Visiting Long Term Outcomes.

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## **Questions to encourage discussion and reflection...**

- Why do you feel it is important to have a curriculum for the families you serve?
- What are the long-term benefits of introducing and completing a curriculum with the families?
- How would you introduce a curriculum to the families you serve?

- If you have multiple curriculums within your program what are some of the benefits of this?
- What is your comfort level with the change to the ages served, now up to age 5 in providing curriculum support?
- What supports are you seeking for yourself within your program and with your UNM-CDD Consultant in regards to providing support for children up to age 5?

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## References/Additional Resources

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