



Connecting Home Visiting Through IRIS

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Home visiting programs play a unique role in supporting families with young children and are both an important referral source and a key destination for referrals within a community's early childhood system. Through trusted, ongoing relationships, home visitors may be the first providers to recognize changing family needs and connect caregivers with additional support. At the same time, programs like healthcare providers, WIC, and Early Intervention, regularly encounter families who could benefit from home visiting.

IRIS strengthens connections by creating shared referral pathways, improving communication across organizations, and providing referral data to help partners better understand how families move through their local systems.

STRENGTHENING REFERRAL PATHWAYS

Many organizations are well positioned to identify families who could benefit from home visiting. Pediatric providers may recognize opportunities to support first-time parents; Hospitals may connect new families to ongoing services before discharge; Community navigators and coordinated intake programs often help families identify the home visiting model that best fits their needs.

Likewise, home visitors regularly identify opportunities to connect families with additional supports, including developmental services, healthcare, behavioral health, food assistance, housing resources, childcare, and other community programs.

By creating shared referral pathways both to and from home visiting, IRIS helps communities reduce fragmented referral processes and makes it easier for providers to coordinate care around shared families rather than working in isolation.

SUPPORTING STRONGER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Home visiting programs are most effective when they are connected with the broader network of organizations serving children and families in their community. IRIS Networks strengthen these partnerships by bringing healthcare providers, Early Intervention, WIC, behavioral health providers, coordinated intake programs, family resource centers, and other early childhood partners into a shared referral network.

These partnerships create opportunities for providers to better understand one another's roles, communicate more effectively, and coordinate support for families as their needs change over time.

Rather than relying on informal relationships or disconnected referral processes, communities can build shared expectations for collaboration that benefit both providers and families.

USING IRIS DATA TO UNDERSTAND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Every referral contributes to a broader understanding of how families move through a community's early childhood system.

IRIS provides data that can help communities better understand how home visiting fits within that system. Communities can explore questions such as:

- Which organizations are referring families to home visiting?
- Where are home visitors connecting families for additional support?
- Where are referral pathways underutilized?
- What services are families accessing most frequently?
- Are referrals resulting in successful connections?

These insights can support continuous quality improvement, strengthen community partnerships, inform strategic planning, and demonstrate the impact of coordinated referral efforts over time.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Whether you are a home visiting provider considering IRIS or a community provider looking to strengthen your community's referral network by engaging with home visiting partners, these questions can help guide your conversations.

If You're Exploring IRIS for Your Home Visiting Program...

- Where do you experience the greatest challenges when coordinating referrals with community partners?
- How could greater visibility into referral outcomes strengthen your follow-up with families and partner organizations?
- What referral and partnership data would help demonstrate your program's reach, impact, or value to funders and community partners?
- Which organizations do you collaborate with most often, and how might a shared referral network strengthen those relationships?

If You're Growing an IRIS Network...

- How are families currently being connected to home visiting, and where might those referral pathways be strengthened?
- What unique perspective could home visiting programs bring to your community's referral network and cross-sector partnerships?
- How could stronger collaboration with home visiting programs improve coordination for families receiving services from multiple organizations?

- What referral and partnership data would help demonstrate the impact of home visiting within your community's early childhood system?

Communities that intentionally connect home visiting with the broader early childhood system create stronger referral pathways, more collaborative partnerships, and better experiences for families. By supporting these connections, IRIS helps communities build coordinated systems where organizations work together, and families can more easily access the services they need.