



NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP: AN EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPACT

Evidence of effectiveness from clinical trials is often not required for public health programs. This is changing as policymakers, public health officials and the communities they serve increasingly demand proven approaches for addressing public health issues – fueling a rising interest in evidence-based public programs.

The most significant aspect of program effectiveness is impact – what is the outcome of the program that otherwise would not have occurred without the program intervention? A growing body of research in the social and behavioral sciences has demonstrated that certain approaches and strategies for working with young children and their families can positively impact major social problems.

“Main conclusion: Rigorous studies support the effectiveness of the Nurse-Family Partnership.”

– The Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy

RESEARCH CRITERIA

Randomized, controlled trials are generally the highest quality, unbiased evaluation to demonstrate the actual impact and effectiveness of a program. In order to be identified as an evidence-based program the following research criteria must be met ¹:

- ✓ Evaluation research shows that the program produces the expected positive results
- ✓ The results can be attributed to the program itself, rather than to other extraneous factors or events
- ✓ The evaluation is peer-reviewed by experts in the field
- ✓ The program is “endorsed” by a federal agency or respected research organization and included in their list of effective programs

Nurse-Family Partnership meets all four of these criteria.

THE COALITION FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY

Evidence-based policy is public policy informed by the results of scientifically designed studies that show conclusively that an approach is effective. The non-profit, non-partisan Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy (CEBP) provides policymakers and practitioners with clear, actionable information on programs that work, as demonstrated in these studies. The programs identified by the organization set the standard for future public investment committed to solving social problems.

A new report by the CEBP concludes that rigorous studies providing the highest level of confidence clearly support the effectiveness of Nurse-Family Partnership. The CEBP provided the analysis to aid policy discussions in response to Congressional and Administration interest in expanding early childhood home visitation service. The CEBP noted its findings of “strong evidence of effects on life outcomes of children and mothers” by Nurse-Family Partnership are consistent with the results of an authoritative evidence review recently published in *The Lancet*, one of the top medical journals.²

1. What Works, Wisconsin - Research to Practice Series, Issue 6, October 2007. University of Madison

2. <http://www.evidencebasedpolicy.org/docs/Update%20-%20Evidence%20on%20home%20visitn%204.23.09.pdf>

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM RESOURCES

Forward-looking leaders are increasingly looking for sound information to help them make smart decisions about evidence-based policy. The following resources provide clear, accessible guidance on what constitutes strong evidence of an intervention's effectiveness:

- **Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy:** The Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy is a non-profit, non-partisan organization whose mission is to promote government policymaking based on rigorous evidence of program effectiveness. In April 2009, the Coalition concluded that rigorous studies support the effectiveness of the Nurse-Family Partnership. www.evidencebasedprograms.org
- **Standards of Evidence as outlined by the Society for Prevention Research:** The Society for Prevention Research is committed to the advancement of science-based prevention programs and policies through empirical research. The Standards of Evidence book, developed by a committee of prevention scientists appointed by the Society of Prevention Research, provides the requisite criteria that must be met for preventive interventions to be judged, tested and efficacious. www.preventionresearch.org/StandardsofEvidencebook.pdf
- **U.S. Office of Management and Budget, "What Constitutes Strong Evidence of Program Effectiveness":** The U.S. Office of Management and Budget resource provides an overview of the Program Assessment Rating Tool which was developed to assess the effectiveness of federal programs and help inform management actions, budget requests and legislative proposals directed at achieving results. For more information visit: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/part/2004_program_eval.pdf
- **U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, "Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence":** The U.S. Department of Education developed a guide to provide educational practitioners with tools to distinguish practices supported by rigorous evidence from those that are not. The tools help practitioners to identify evidence-based interventions and to help them make major improvements in their schools and, collectively, in American education. www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorous/vid/rigorousvid.pdf
- **Blueprints for Violence Prevention,** a project of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado. The Blueprints mission is to identify truly outstanding violence and drug prevention programs that meet a high scientific standard of effectiveness. In doing so, Blueprints serves as a resource for governments, foundations, businesses, and other organizations trying to make informed judgments about their investments in violence and drug prevention programs. Blueprints reviewed over 650 programs with published research in peer-reviewed literature and found Nurse-Family Partnership is one of only 6% of the programs that clearly work, or even appear promising. <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/modelprograms.html>



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