



Growing the Evidence through Innovation: Highlighting Programs that Involve Fathers

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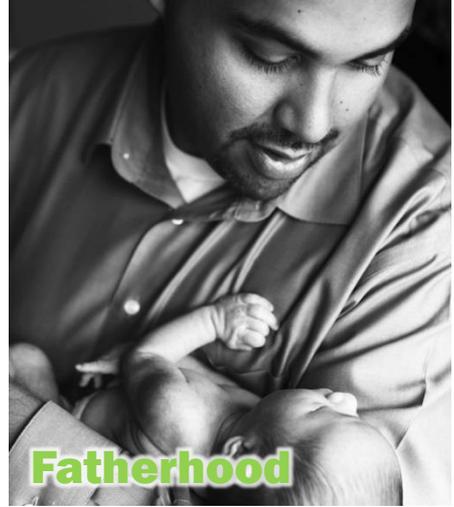
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Rigorous Research to Strengthen Families and Enhance Public Policy



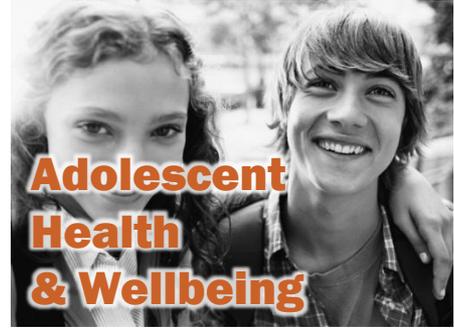
**Family Structure
& Wellbeing**



Fatherhood



Early Childhood



**Adolescent
Health
& Wellbeing**



Child Welfare



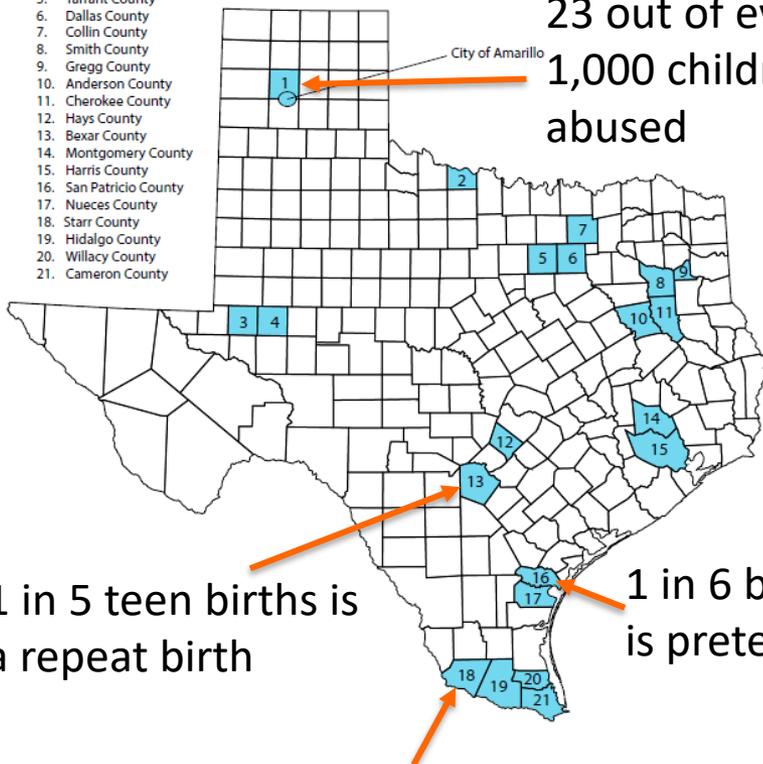
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MIECHV Home Visiting in Texas

MIECHV Texas Home Visiting Program by County

Current as of May 2016

1. Potter County
2. Wichita County
3. Ector County
4. Midland County
5. Tarrant County
6. Dallas County
7. Collin County
8. Smith County
9. Gregg County
10. Anderson County
11. Cherokee County
12. Hays County
13. Bexar County
14. Montgomery County
15. Harris County
16. San Patricio County
17. Nueces County
18. Starr County
19. Hidalgo County
20. Willacy County
21. Cameron County



- Serving 21 Texas counties
- More than 7,200 families served to date (since 2012)
- Three evidence-based program models that target mostly mothers: NFP, PAT, HIPPY
- THV involved fathers from the beginning



Texas Home Visiting
Good People • Great Parents



Data Sources

**27 home visiting programs
9 communities in Texas**

FATHERS

7 focus groups with 40 fathers
and father figures

MOTHERS

Survey of 1,390 mothers

HOME VISITORS

Survey of home 172 visitors
Interviews with 50+ home visitors

PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Interviews with 27 program
coordinators

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE DATA



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Evaluation Findings of Innovative Efforts to Engage Fathers in Home Visiting

- Fathers participate in home visiting programs to enhance their child's health (infants) and school readiness (toddlers)
- Over 1/3 of fathers attend at least one home visit; but fathers participate in ways we typically don't measure
- Work schedules are the major barrier to father participation, but many fathers state they did not feel welcome
- If you want fathers to participate – ASK THEM
 - And schedule appointments when they can attend
- Father participation is associated with staying in the programs 7 months longer



Why do fathers participate in home visiting?

For Their Child

- Fathers care deeply about giving their child an advantage in life
- Fathers of infants (or with pregnant partners) stress the baby's health as a major impetus for program participation
- Fathers of toddlers want their children to be ready for school

To Learn Parenting Skills

- Fathers want to learn less harsh discipline strategies than their fathers used on them



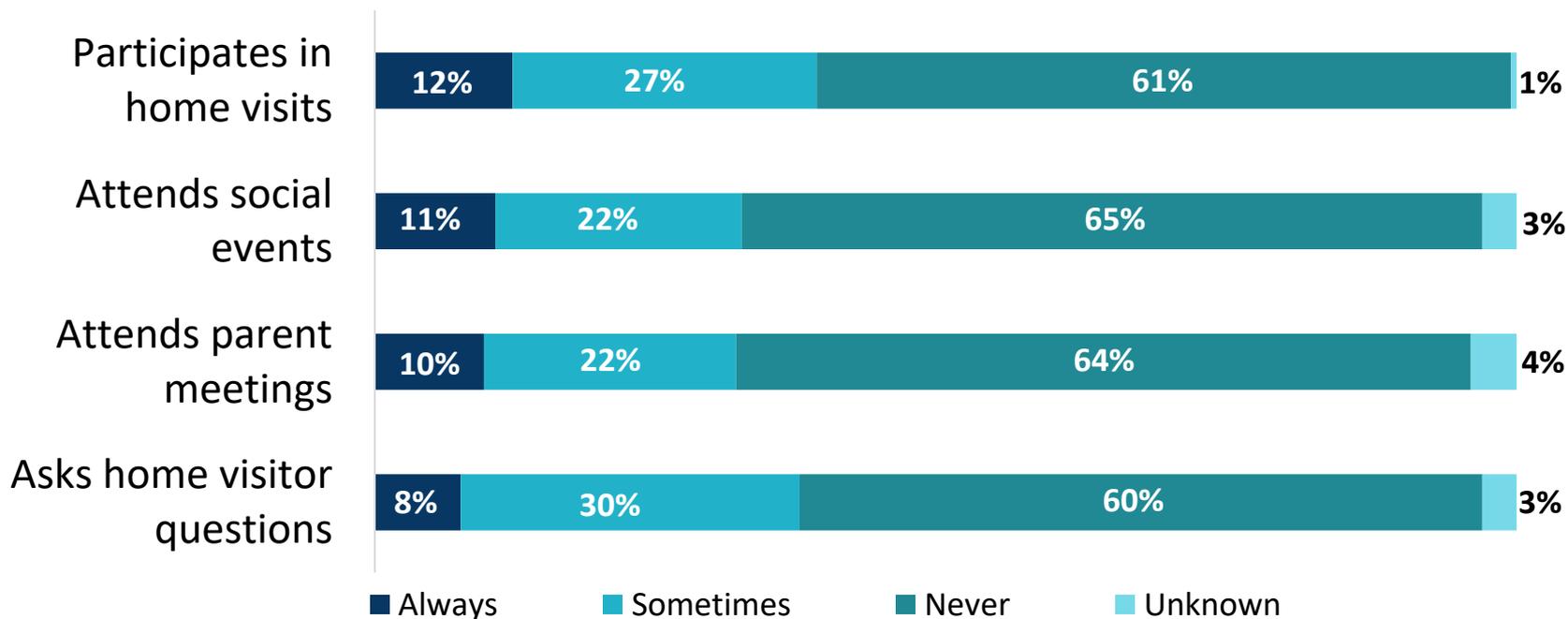
How do fathers participate in home visiting?

- Fathers participate in ways we typically don't measure
- 37% of fathers attended at least one home visit
- 75% asked mom questions about the home visit
- 66% practiced home visiting lessons with children
- Of fathers who attend any home visit, they attend about 2 out of every 5 visits



Observable Father Participation

How often does your child's father engage in the home visiting activity described?

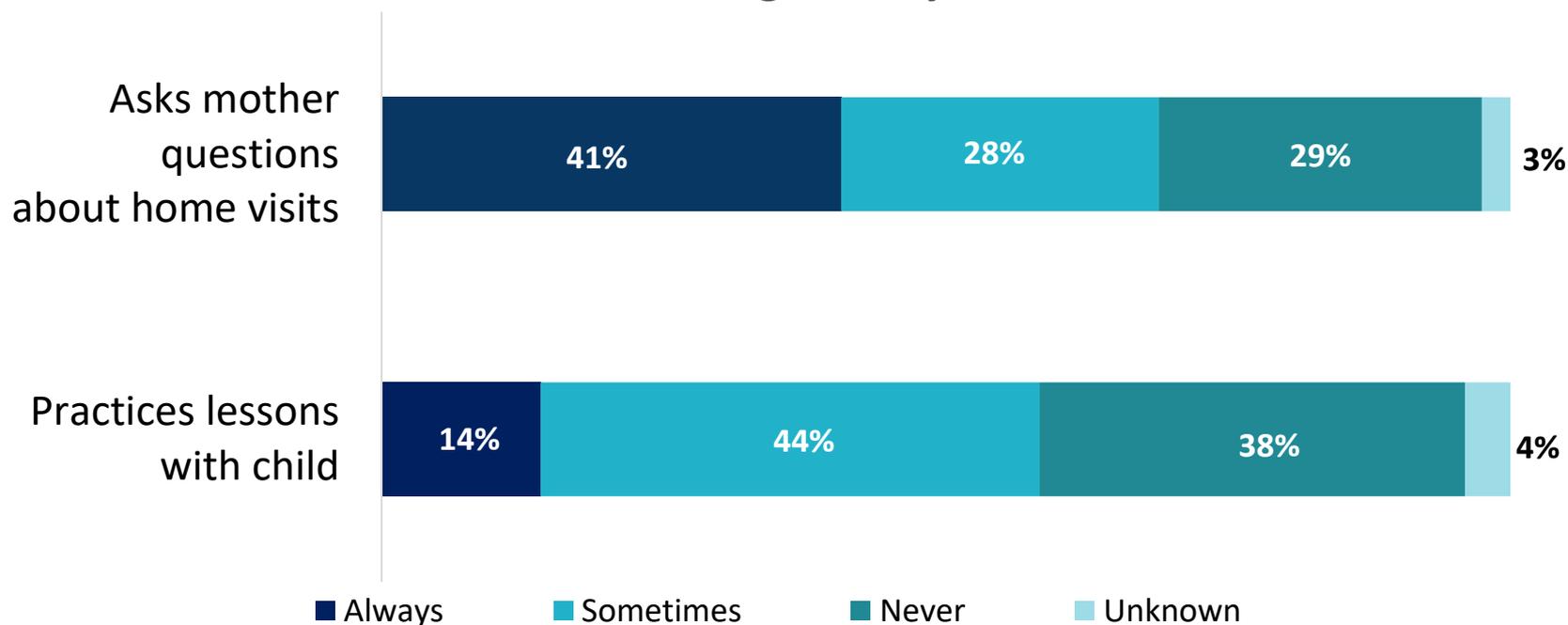


Source: Mothers' Attitudes Survey (N=199)



Unobservable Father Participation

How often does your child's father engage in the home visiting activity described?



Source: Mothers' Attitudes Survey (N=199)



What prevents father participation?

Work schedules are largest barrier

The majority of the time I am working. I have noticed, however, when I am at the house, my son will pull on me so that I can participate with him and my wife in the home visit. But, most of the time I am working.

—Father, Dallas

Fathers don't believe the programs are for them

I have attended two of them (home visits). It was the main priority ones that involve the father, and all the other ones were more like for the mother. You know, like breastfeeding, and so on and so forth.

—Father, West Texas



How can states increase father participation?

- If you want fathers to participate – ASK THEM
- To get fathers to attend one home visit – schedule the visit to accommodate his work schedule
- To keep him coming back, communicate to him why he matters
- Deliberate strategies are most effective – and simple
 - Address program-related materials to both parents
 - Provide materials for fathers to review when he is absent from visit
 - Schedule visits when he can attend

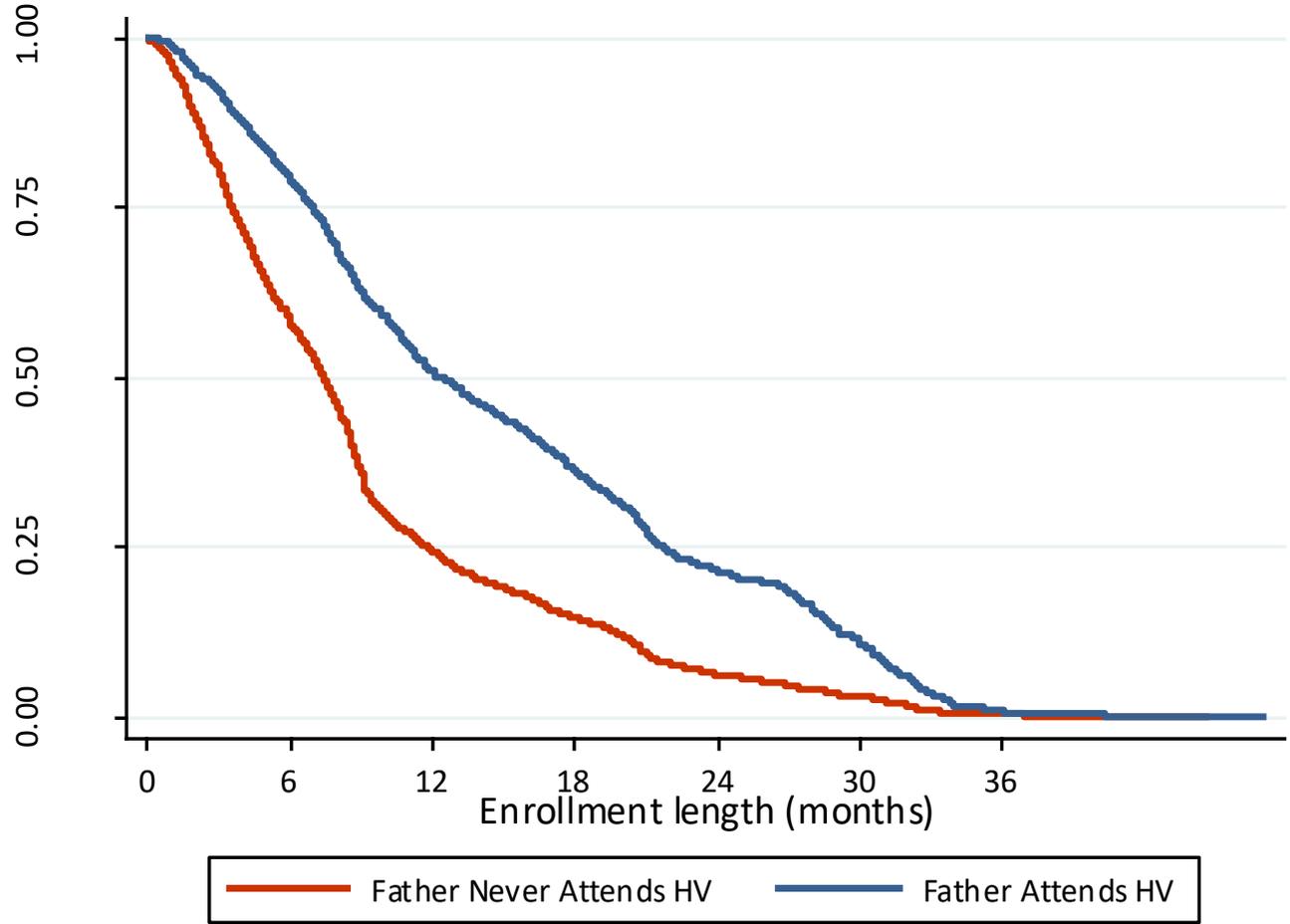


Why should states encourage father participation?

- Two parents are invested in the program and the outcomes for their child
- On average, families stay in the home visiting programs 7 months longer if fathers participate in the program
- Greater retention means that families benefit more from programs



Families with participating fathers stay longer





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Other Studies of Fathers in Home Visiting

- Texas Home Visiting, MIECHV Evaluation. Father Participation Evaluation and Father Participation and Retention Evaluation. Childandfamilyresearch.org
- Sandstrom, Gearing, Peters, Heller, Healy, and Pratt. 2015. “Approaches to Father Engagement and Fathers’ Experiences in Home Visiting Programs.” OPRE Report no. 2015-103, Washington, DC: OPRE, ACF, HHS.
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/20151130_fahv_report_finalized_b508.pdf
- Dads Matter Evaluation. Guterman and Bellamy
- Family Foundation for expectant couples. Feinberg and Ammerman



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