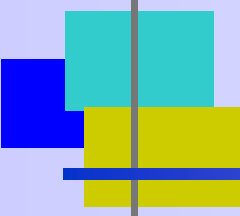




Evaluation and Program Issues in Home Visiting

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Current State of Knowledge Re: Effectiveness

- The Future of Children Report (1999):
Healthy Start, PAT, HIPPIY, CCDDP,
Healthy Families America & Olds
- Appelbaum & Sweet meta-analysis
(1999)
- Nurse Family Partnership Project (2002)
- Comprehensive Child Development
Program (1998)



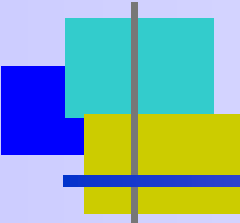
Outcomes in the Meta-analysis

- Child development: cognitive and socio-emotional
- Prevention of child abuse: actual and potential abuse measures and parent stress
- Enhanced child-rearing: parenting behaviors and attitudes
- Enhanced maternal life course: education, employment, public assistance



Effect of Results on Policy

- Strong belief in the early years
- Search for a silver bullet
- Vocal policy advocates
- Denial (“those results apply to those other programs”)
- The nature of home visiting



Questions about Outcomes for Home Visiting

- What are the desired outcomes of home visiting?
- How reasonable are they?
- Match between goals and outcomes
- For whom should we expect the outcomes?
- Universal or targeted?



Desired Outcomes

- Reduction in abuse and neglect
- Reduction in parenting behaviors associated with abuse/neglect
- Health outcomes for moms and babies
- More confidence and skills in parenting
- Enhanced maternal life course
- Increased literacy skills
- Kindergarten readiness



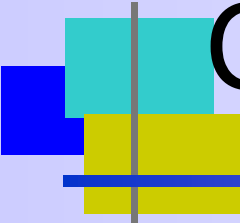
Fidelity to the Model

- What happens on a home visit?
- Families in crisis
- Variability within a model
 - (a) individualization
 - (b) maintaining quality
 - (c) staff beliefs
- Diluted interventions

Inside the Black Box

Hebbeler & Gerlach-Downie (2002)

- 21 PAT case study families; 9 HVs; 60 other mothers in focus groups
- What happened on the home visits
- How the visitors saw their work
- How the parents saw the program
- Provision of social support is not enough and behavior not directly affected



Challenges to Home Visiting

- Increasing the engagement of families
- Attrition
- Staffing
 - paraprofessional v. professional
 - finding and hiring
 - training and supervising
 - keeping visitors



Recommendations for Programs

- Specify theory of change, both short-term and long-term goals for parents
- Include adult behavior change as goal
- Intensity is important
- Improvement before expansion
- Embed home visiting in more comprehensive programs



Recommendations for Evaluators and Programs

- Determine our standards for program effects
- Perform theory-driven evaluations
- Randomize when the question calls for it and for “big deal” policy questions
- Descriptive and qualitative studies to understand better the process