



February 14, 2018

CHILDREN NOW

To: The Honorable Holly J. Mitchell
Chair, Senate Budget Committee

The Honorable Philip Y. Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

From: Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty
Myra Duran, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
Nourbese Flint, Black Women for Wellness & In Our Own Voice: The Ntl Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Olivia Golden, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Frank Mecca, County Welfare Directors Association of California
Michele Stilwell-Parvensky, Children's Defence Fund - California
Ted Lempert, Children Now
Frank Daidone, Acting President CEO, Nurse-Family Partnership Nat. Service Office

RE: Adopt the Governor's CalWORKs Home Visiting Initiative Proposal and Invest Additional \$50 Million per Year to ensure that Every CalWORKs Family with a Pregnant Woman or Young Child has Access to Voluntary Evidence-Based Home Visiting Services

Dear Chairpersons Mitchell and Ting,

Our organizations are leaders in the fight against child poverty in California. We are writing to urge you to adopt the Governor's proposal to establish a voluntary evidence-based early home visiting program for first-time, young pregnant women and parents served in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program. This budget allocation would allow County Human Services Agencies to partner with local programs providing voluntary evidence-based home visiting services to pregnant women and families with children under two-years of age who are CalWORKs recipients, when the child is their first born and when the parents are younger than 26 years of age.

Additionally, we ask that you allocate an additional \$50 Million to extend and enhance the reach of these services – proven to positively impact family well-being, health and economic self-sufficiency – to families in which parents are older than 25 and/or in which there is a child under age two, even if that child has older siblings.

Research on the Benefits of Early Home Visiting

Voluntary evidence-based home visiting program models (such as Early Head Start Home-Based Option, Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Parents as Teachers) have a robust evidence base. These models are backed by decades of research demonstrating effectiveness at promoting children’s health and development and fostering positive parenting skills. When implemented with fidelity to their model standards, these programs can prevent children’s involvement with social welfare, mental health, and juvenile corrections systems, which in turn has the potential to result in considerable cost savings for states. Below are the positive effects detailed by the Center for Law and Social Policy and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in a brief on the topic.¹

- **Home visiting programs effectively support healthy child development, beginning in the prenatal period.** Pregnant women who receive home visiting have better birth outcomes, and home visiting programs have a positive impact on breast feeding, immunization rates, infant hospitalizations, and maternal depression and stress.
- **Home visiting programs increase children’s school readiness.** Studies of various home visiting programs have shown positive impacts on children’s cognitive development and behavior, higher grade point averages and achievement scores at age 9, and higher high school graduation rates from high school.
- **Home visiting programs enhance parenting skills.** Research shows that home visiting programs help parents increase positive parenting actions and reduce negative ones, have more responsive interactions, create more developmentally stimulating home environments, engage in activities that promote early language and literacy, and know more about child development.
- **Home visiting programs can improve family economic self-sufficiency.** By helping parents enroll in educational and training programs and pursue employment, home visiting programs can help counteract the negative consequences of economic insecurity. Studies have found that compared with a control group, more parents participating in home visiting programs work, are enrolled in education or training, and have higher monthly incomes.

The research shows that voluntary home visiting programs help us to support families with infants and toddlers to get the best start while also meeting the goals of the federal TANF block grant and the CalWORKs program.

¹ <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/CLASP-CBPP-Joint-Brief-FINAL.pdf>

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your committees to adopt the Governor's Budget proposal and fund a \$50M investment additional investment in this program, in order to allow Counties to serve all pregnant and parenting CalWORKs families with a child under age two with voluntary evidence-based home visiting services.,

CC: Gail Gronert, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Jason Sisney, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Cyndi Hillery, Assembly Republican Fiscal
Anthony Matthews, Office of Assembly Member Phil Ting
Marla Cowan, Office of Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula
Jennifer Troia, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Chris Woods, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Teresa Pena, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Matt Osterli, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
Luan Huynh, Office of Senator Holly Mitchell