

Family Connects

Supporting Every Family at Birth



The Family Connects model is a population-health intervention that aims to reach every family with a newborn in a given community (including adopting, fostering and kinship-care families, as well as mothers who have experienced a loss or are separated from their newborn). The model is designed to identify needs and make connections based on a nurse assessment, including a health assessment of mother and newborn. Our *universal approach* screens all families in a population at a specific time point, identifying family-specific risks and connecting each family with community resources that can help them mitigate those risks.



Why take a universal approach?

Reaching all families in a community has a positive impact on health at a population level.



Population health is the health outcomes of all individuals, most often defined by shared geography (communities, cities, states, nations). Health-care professionals partner with these populations to promote health, prevent disease, and address health inequities. Achieving population impact in a community necessitates reaching a significant number of people within that community. That's why the Family Connects model requires that our disseminating partners reach at least 60% of the eligible population. Some programs have been able to exceed this rate significantly via intentional partnerships with obstetric and pediatric clinicians and other key local stakeholders.

All families have needs around the birth of a child.

While all families have needs, those needs vary across families based on the stresses they may be experiencing: financial concerns, interpersonal violence, social isolation, lack of knowledge regarding infant care and child development, maternal depression, or simply the challenge of coping with a crying infant. The Family Connects randomized controlled trials (RCT) revealed that 94% of families seen had one or more needs for specific education, recommendations, or community service referrals. All families benefit from the supportive guidance provided by Family Connects nurses.



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Family needs are not limited to those with demographic risk factors only.

This short-term, universal program addresses many family needs that would not necessarily be identified by a program that targets demographic risk factors alone. All families need support at this time, but not all families need long-term intensive services. The Family Connects model does not replace more intensive home visiting programs for those families that need and choose them. Rather, it serves as a screening and triage approach to ensure optimal matching of families with other community services. Only families with identified needs for more intense and more expensive programs receive them, resulting in cost efficient programming.

Offering the service to all families reduces stigma.

Offering a universal newborn nurse home visiting program to everyone can remove any stigma associated with accepting this type of service and can normalize a postpartum assessment/triage service as a regular part of delivering babies within the community. Across the research trials, the participation rate between private and publicly insured populations was 40% private and 60% public. The high level of initial participation and completed visit rates in both the research trials, and within active certified programs indicates the normalization of accepting a service that is offered to all. Because of economies of scale, universal reach means that the per-family cost can be reduced and recruitment can be less complicated, less ambiguous, and less stigmatizing.

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The data generated with a universal program provides important information.

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Reaching population-level impact can lead to informative aggregate data regarding the service needs and gaps within the community and can help inform future funding and policy decisions.