

Strengthening the Home Visiting Workforce Through Individualized Coaching

Statement of Problem

Research demonstrates that [high-quality early childhood home visiting programs](#) are powerful platforms for providing caregivers with needed information and guidance as they support their children's social, emotional and academic learning. This, in turn, helps children enter kindergarten ready to learn and succeed academically throughout their school years. Much of the success of these programs rests on employing and retaining high-quality staff.

Strengthening the home visiting workforce is recognized as a [priority area for research](#) and practice, and many local implementing agencies have strategies for [professional development and practice-based training](#). There has also been increasing attention on the role that [mental health and well-being](#) play in a home visitor's job satisfaction, burnout and retention. Locally, [Creating Collaborative Communities \(C3\)](#), led by the [Health Federation of Philadelphia \(HFP\)](#), is one example of an initiative that aims to strengthen workforce capacity by offering Philadelphia home visiting programs access to relevant, quality professional development, organizational technical assistance and peer support.

The C3 initiative has illuminated additional needs for and gaps in professional development opportunities for the home visiting community. One of these gaps, strongly supported in the literature, is the need for [individualized coaching for home visitors](#). Coaching is a widely recognized component of professional development in [early childhood fields](#) to encourage practitioner growth and improve client outcomes. While research on coaching home visitors is still in the early stages, [experts posit that these benefits hold true](#) for the field of home visiting as well. There is a need to empirically examine the primary components of coaching home visitors in order to advance research and practice.

Description

The Early Childhood Home Visiting Coaching Pilot in collaboration with HFP, seeks to improve home visitor recruitment and retention, enhance knowledge and skill-building (particularly around capacity to work with families struggling with substance abuse, child maltreatment, mental health and interpersonal violence), and attend to home visitor well-being.

We will work closely with HFP over the next 2 years to develop an individualized professional coaching program for home visitors in Philadelphia and evaluate its success. Our mixed-methods evaluation will characterize the implementation of the coaching pilot and assess outcomes experienced by home visitors and coaches.

In collaboration with HFP and an advisory group of home visitors, program administrators, and professional coaches, we will first use a consensus-building technique (modified Delphi process) to identify the key components of the coaching model to be tested. In this process, we will iteratively collect input from an expert

panel of home visiting and coaching professionals to reach consensus on intervention priorities, characteristics and delivery logistics. This approach affords us the opportunity to ensure the pilot reflects best practices in the field, is responsive to the needs of home visitors and is implemented feasibly across local home visiting sites.

During implementation of the coaching program, we will use a multi-method approach to assess program delivery and perceived impact. Semi-structured interviews with home visitor participants and coaches will allow us to describe intervention fidelity, understand factors influencing engagement in the intervention, and identify short- and medium-term impact of home visitors' participation. We will also administer longitudinal surveys to assess expectations for coaching participation, anticipated outcomes, goal attainment, and measures of home visitor well-being, knowledge and skills.

A strength of this pilot is the implementation of the intervention across multiple home visiting agencies and models, which will allow us to assess the generalizability and robustness of the coaching process given the diversity of contexts, professional backgrounds and training requirements, and organizational cultures that exist across home visiting agencies. Moreover, the plan to develop a coaching workforce that is inter-organizational encourages collaboration, professional networking and broad-reaching skill advancement across the home visiting community in Philadelphia.

Next Steps

We are in the process of recruiting Delphi expert panel participants and plan to launch the first survey in Fall 2023. Delphi findings will be used to inform intervention design, refinement of the evaluation plan and development of a coaching checklist to aid in ensuring the coaching model is implemented as intended.

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PolicyLab Leads

Meredith Matone
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Director

Dr. Matone's research interests include maternal and young child health, as well as family well-being. She focuses on building community and public agency research partnerships to support improvements in

policies and programs that serve mothers and infants in under-resourced communities. She is experienced in large-scale program evaluation, mixed-methods research designs, and use of administrative data for observational study designs in areas of child and caregiver health.

Dr. Matone is a senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, a faculty affiliate at The Field Center, and a board member of the Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Youth Children. Dr. Matone received her Doctor of Public Health, specializing in child and adolescent health and development, from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is an alumnus of the Doris Duke Fellowship for the Promotion of Child Well-being program and a former Stoneleigh Foundation fellow.



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Senior Research Manager

Stephanie Garcia (she/her) is a senior research manager at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She oversees the day-to-day activities of several community-engaged, mixed-methods research and evaluation projects and supports strategic planning and team building for a team of maternal and child health (MCH) researchers. She has methodologic and content expertise in program evaluation, participatory research methods and public health systems. Her research interests include maternal and early childhood well-being; intimate partner violence and community violence; and understanding how organizations/systems can effectively work together to support families.

Prior to PolicyLab, she coordinated a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)-funded technical assistance center at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health that focused on supporting state agencies in adopting evidence-informed MCH programs/practices. She received her Master of Public Health in community health sciences, specializing in MCH, from the University of Illinois at Chicago.



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Team

Katherine Kellom

Administrative Manager

Katherine Kellom (she/they) is an administrative manager at PolicyLab and the director of the Qualitative Research Core at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She has worked at nationally top-ranked institutions with teams comprised of experts in their fields conducting qualitative, mixed and multi-method research for more than ten years. Beginning as a research assistant at the University of Pennsylvania's Mixed Methods Research Lab, Katherine currently serves across a variety of project teams to provide conceptual and technical support for clinical and community-based research projects. She has extensive knowledge and valuable practical experience applying qualitative research methodologies with a focus on integrating key stakeholder perspectives and goals into research designs.

Katherine leads and advises project teams using qualitative methods to achieve research aims on projects ranging from small pilots to state-wide, mixed-methods evaluations. Katherine is an expert in facilitation techniques and in the use of the qualitative data analysis tool, NVivo; she provides training in both areas. As director of the Qualitative Research Core, Katherine manages and supports staff members and qualitative team members in the Core and at PolicyLab, ensuring skillset development and access to the resources needed to contribute high-quality work to various project teams.

Katherine received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Bryn Mawr College in 2009, majoring in psychology.



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Diya Nag **MPH, CHES**

Clinical Research Coordinator

Diya Nag (they/she) is a clinical research coordinator at PolicyLab and the Qualitative Research Core at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In this role, she supports research surrounding service coordination for home-visited families experiencing intimate partner violence as well as the integration of home visiting into clinical systems. Additionally, Diya works on school-based projects aimed at increasing student access to mental health services. She lends support through her expertise in qualitative research methods including

conducting interviews, focus groups and qualitative coding analysis.

Previously, Diya worked as a sexual health educator in Philadelphia high schools. During their graduate studies, they completed research regarding barriers to accessing quality fertility, pregnancy, and birth care for transgender men and nonbinary people. Additionally, they were a part of the LGBTQ Health Projects Team at the NYC Department of Health.?

Diya received her bachelor's degrees in biology and in science, technology, and society from Vassar College and her Master of Public Health from Columbia University.



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Clinical Research Project Manager

Katie Wu (she/her) is a clinical research project manager at PolicyLab and the Qualitative Research Core at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In this role, she works on qualitative and quantitative projects across many content areas with a particular interest in social determinants of health and maternal child health programs. She is passionate about applying high-quality and trauma-informed qualitative methodology to center patient, family and community voices.

Ms. Wu has qualitative expertise in program implementation and evaluation, semi-structured interviewing, and qualitative data analysis. She has experience training students and teams in qualitative data analysis methods and software. Her recent qualitative work includes a multi-method evaluation of a Utah-based social needs screening and community health worker program and a multi-method evaluation of a therapy model aiming to improve parent-child attachment for parents in substance use disorder treatment.

Ms. Wu also has experience working on population-based quantitative projects at PolicyLab, including a project examining trends in psychotropic medication prescribing to children enrolled in Medicaid. She received her bachelor's degree in biology and her Master of Public Health from the University of Pennsylvania.



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