

CHICAGO HOME VISITING PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

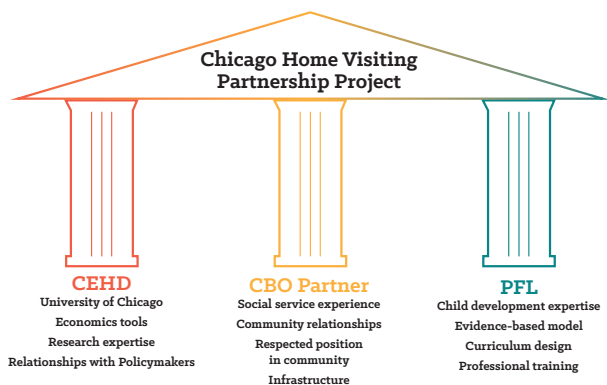
Request for Partnership

PURPOSE

Babies begin learning before birth, and the skills they develop in the earliest years form the foundation they can build on throughout their lives. To help Chicago families make the most of this window for early development, and to advance the science on learning and skill development, the Center for the Economics of Human Development (CEHD) at the University of Chicago and Preparing for Life (PFL), Ireland have partnered to address these questions.

The goal is to find out more about how interactions with caregivers influence children’s cognitive and socioemotional development and how home visitors support parents. This knowledge gained will provide policymakers with evidence to push for the best policies for children and families, and parents, caregivers, and early childhood education professionals can have support for their work promoting skill development.

To reach those goals, we seek an experienced social services or early childhood organization with a commitment to strengthening families and communities. The partner will be the third pillar in this new home visiting project in the Chicagoland area.



This project will leverage the skills and expertise of its partners. CEHD has years of experience evaluating social service interventions for young children and families using the most advanced economics tools available. Since 2008, PFL has created and implemented one of the most successful home visiting programs in Ireland.

This project will adapt and implement PFL in Chicagoland to support children and families and measure the impact to guide future programs and policies. **We seek a partner who shares our commitment to children and families and to grow the general understanding of best practices that best serve families.**

This document outlines the proposed research project and expectations from CEHD, PFL, and a community based organization (CBO). It provides details on requirements for consideration, details on how to submit a letter of intent, and contact information so we can address any questions and concerns.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This project launched in 2021 motivated by the need for more precise research on the mechanisms at work in home visiting programs that drive child and family outcomes. The researchers at CEHD, including Nobel Laureate James Heckman, have long been interested in how early experiences shape the lives of children and influence the adults they become. In this capacity, the Center has worked to understand the critical drivers of optimal outcomes in skill formation and human development.

Through our work, we have come to understand the enormous impact of early interactions with caregivers on later life outcomes. Home visiting can be an effective and efficient way to encourage and boost these interactions.

CEHD’s research has been widely used by advocates and policymakers to support the idea that high-quality early experiences lead to better outcomes for children and their families. CEHD and PFL are excited to partner with an organization in our community who can work with us to provide services to families, improve outcomes for children, and contribute to the body of evidence that will shape tomorrow’s policy landscape.

Preparing for Life

CEHD has a long-running relationship with Preparing for Life (PFL), a well-established early intervention program in Ireland designed to improve school readiness. Preparing for Life is a program of Northside Partnership, a community based non-profit established to support social and economic regeneration in Dublin City, Ireland.

The current program in Dublin is provided on a progressive universal basis in targeted neighborhoods (defined by a range of demographic factors, including poverty, unemployment, and low school attainment). Parents and partners join before the birth of their child and remain with the program until their child enters school at age five. The program provides home visiting, prenatal education, baby massage, evidence-based parenting programs, and case-management support for families.

The core of PFL is the home visiting process in which trained home visitors meet with the parent and child at least monthly (although the visits take place more regularly in pregnancy and early infancy). The visits are structured around the delivery of 200 age-appropriate tipsheets which cover the primary areas of child development:

1. Cognitive Development
2. Social Emotional Development
3. Nutrition
4. Rest and Routine
5. Safety and Security
6. Parental Support
7. Transition to School

The home visitors who work with parents one-to-one to establish a collaborative, reciprocal relationship, supporting the parent over time to build a warm, secure attachment to their child, are the backbone of the approach. Throughout the process, the home visitors seek to identify and build on the parents' inherent strengths and resources. The tipsheets describe the child development process and provide simple, practical, suggestions on how to encourage healthy child development and positive social relationships. The home visitors provide an opportunity for the parent to experiment with new practices and offer positive feedback and support.

In addition to home visiting, the program provides additional services. These include prenatal education and breastfeeding support as well as baby massage to promote secure attachment. As the child ages, parents can participate in evidence-based parenting group programs. The home visitors in Ireland are accredited Triple P Parenting providers and they facilitate the group sessions. The home visitors also help the family manage practical challenges and direct them to local services and resources.

PFL is designed to create the following outcomes in the lives of children:

- Strong cognitive, language, literacy and social/emotional development, with children reaching key milestones
- Increased school readiness
- A nurturing, safe and positive home learning environment
- A responsive relationship with parents/caregivers
- Positive child health and wellbeing
- Strong attachment with parents
- Increased rates of intentional and actual breastfeeding

Additional expected outcomes for parents include positive birth outcomes and greater self-efficacy in their role as a parent.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The goal of PFL is to **support** parents to **nurture** children, so the child, the family and the community can **thrive**. PFL celebrates all accomplishments (big and small) and recognizes the potential for growth in everyday interactions. PFL values the strengths, resources and capability of participants, staff and community partners and works collaboratively to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and families. PFL believes in constantly striving to improve and learn, to find ways of connecting theory and practice and in translating this into improvements in program delivery.

PFL has been the subject of a comprehensive randomized controlled trial involving more than 200 families. Beginning in 2008, the evaluation followed the first cohort of participants from intake into the program until school entry. This trial has identified significant outcomes for children in cognitive development, social emotional development, physical health and wellbeing and parenting practices at age 5. A follow-up study at age 9 demonstrated significant outcomes in the area of cognitive development and school attainment. The age 9 study took place five years after the program ended, demonstrating that the outcomes were sustained over time. An additional follow-up study is planned for 2024, when the children turn 13.

Ongoing Project

CEHD and PFL are looking to partner with a local social service organization to implement PFL in the Chicagoland area. This partnership project will include the program implementation and a research study and randomized control trial (RCT). Our aim is to study how home visiting influences short and long-term outcomes of children and families and the role of home visitors.

Our Goals: This project will utilize the skills and expertise of all three partners (CEHD, PFL, CBO) to support child development. We expect to gain a robust understanding of the mechanisms involved in optimizing skill development in the early years.

This partnership will begin with a formal partnership agreement and last for the duration of the intervention. Because PFL is a five-year program with an emphasis on school readiness, this formal partnership could last from five to eight years, depending on the amount of time it takes to adapt materials, pilot the program and recruit a suitable number of families.

Long-term follow-ups of the participants and staff will be part of the research. In order to study the effects of this intervention on the lives of participants, the research team will reach out to participants in the treatment and control groups to regularly collect data with greater frequency in earlier follow-ups. These data will include information about life events, academic performance, health and family resources. Study protocols will be developed in partnership with the CBO and community it serves.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

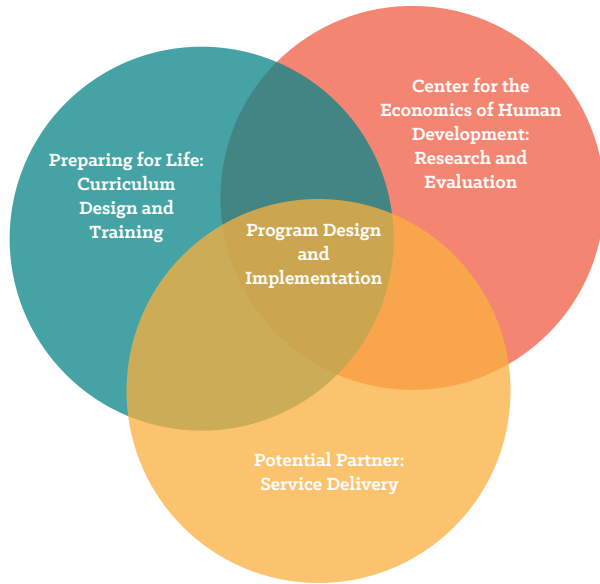
For this RCT, the CBO will be asked to recruit two times as many families as they are able to serve, to establish both the treatment (visited) and control (not visited) groups. The treatment families will receive monthly home visits and group services conducted by the CBO's home visitors following the Preparing for Life Model. Content, structure and other details will be adapted to the needs of the communities served. Some of these details will include:

- Home visit content
- Data collection methods
- Structure and frequency of home visitor supervision
- Materials to be used in the home
- Methods for engaging families

After we formalize needed partnerships and finalize the details of the research study, we intend to run the experiment for the amount of time it takes to adapt the materials, pilot the intervention and recruit the desired amount of families and serve them for the duration of the program.

The control group will not receive home visits or group services like the treatment group, but will continue to be engaged as part of the study. CEHD and PFL in partnership with the CBO will determine what benefits to offer the control group families for their participation before recruitment begins.

Roles:



COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP ROLES

The precise roles and structure of the project dependent on scale, structure, goals, and needs of the CBO. Therefore, please note this outline represents one potential structure of roles within the project.

CEHD Responsibilities

For this project, CEHD can expect to:

- Fund the home visiting program operations that could include:
 - » HV salaries
 - » Supervisor's time allocated to the supervisory duties of the HVs on this project
 - » Materials needed for conducting home visits with families in this project
 - » Transportation costs to and from families' homes in this project
 - » Training costs
- Design the research project and evaluation in partnership with PFL, CBO and research and community advisors.
- Lead data collection efforts
- Collaborate with PFL and CBO to adapt and design the PFL model to fit local contexts
- Participate in training sessions on model implementation
- Conduct data analyses and lead evaluation reporting

PFL Responsibilities

For this project, PFL team members can expect to:

- Conduct model training of HV and supervisors
- Oversee ongoing coaching and supervision (fidelity, support and maintenance)
- Provide CEHD and CBO with materials, resources and schedules of curriculum
- Lead adaption of materials to local context
- Be available for onsite consultation
- Advise on research design

CBO Responsibilities

In the project, the potential implementation partner can expect the following responsibilities:

- Collaborate with the PFL and CEHD teams to adapt the curriculum
- Employ home visitors for this project
- Recruit up to 215 qualifying families for pilot, treatment and control groups (total)
- Attend trainings in model implementation, data collection and professional development
- Home visitors can expect to:
 - » Participate in trainings
 - » Provide home visiting and group services to participating families
 - » Participate in supervisory sessions both one-on-one with supervisor and in groups with peers
 - » Video record home visits on a regular basis for the purposes of reflective supervision, family coaching, and research
 - » Work with the PFL and CEHD teams to change and improve processes
 - » Collect required data (demographics, assessments, screenings, etc) on agreed upon schedule
 - » Engage families to reduce attrition
- Supervisor can expect to:
 - » Participate in trainings (including on how to conduct reflective supervision)
 - » Conduct reflective supervision sessions regularly with individual staff members
 - » Review recorded home visits and provide HV with feedback on work with families
 - » Collaborate with research team on data collection, study design, and interpretation.

TIMELINE

Early 2022:

- Begin search for community partner

Mid 2022:

- Finalize partnerships
- Begin adaptation of program to community goals

Late 2022:

- Begin to recruit families for pilot program

2023:

- Continue pilot program
- Begin to recruit families for full implementation
- Begin data collection and analysis

2024 and Beyond:

- Continue serving families
- Continue data collection and analysis
- Conduct follow-up data collection every 2-10 years after program completion

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPLICATION EVALUATION

To be considered for partnership, the organization should submit a 1-4 page letter of intent that includes the following information:

- Brief overview of your organization and mission
- High-level overview of what kinds of services you provide
- The geographic areas where you provide services
- Why you are interested in partnering with CEHD and PFL
- Why you are interested in collaborating on this project
- What value do you think this project would bring to the communities you serve?
- What is your experience working with researchers, if any
- Any other relevant information

Select organizations will be invited for conversation with CEHD and PFL to assess mutual fit. One to three organizations will then be invited to submit a formal application. The applicant will be asked to provide more detailed information about the organization's history, current activities, social service practices and research tasks.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If you have any questions about this project or its requirements for consideration, please contact the home visiting support team. We are happy to help guide you through this process. You can send an email to: CEHDhomevisiting@uchicago.edu, or call us at (872) 212-4544.