

RCW 43.216.155 Home visitation programs—Findings—Intent. The legislature finds that:

(1) The years from birth to three are critical in building the social, emotional, and cognitive developmental foundations of a young child. Research into the brain development of young children reveals that children are born learning.

(2) The farther behind children are in their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development, the more difficult it will be for them to catch up.

(3) A significant number of children age birth to five years are born with two or more of the following risk factors and have a greater chance of failure in school and beyond: Poverty; single or no parent; no parent employed full time or full year; all parents with disability; and mother without a high school degree.

(4) Parents and children involved in home visitation programs exhibit better birth outcomes, enhanced parent and child interactions, more efficient use of health care services, enhanced child development including improved school readiness, and early detection of developmental delays, as well as reduced welfare dependence, higher rates of school completion and job retention, reduction in frequency and severity of maltreatment, and higher rates of school graduation.

The legislature intends to promote the use of voluntary home visitation services to families as an early intervention strategy to alleviate the effect on child development of factors such as poverty, single parenthood, parental unemployment or underemployment, parental disability, or parental lack of a high school diploma, which research shows are risk factors for child abuse and neglect and poor educational outcomes. [2007 c 466 § 1. Formerly RCW 43.215.145, 43.121.170.]