District of Columbia MIECHV Innovation Award

Background

The District of Columbia (DC) Department of Health's Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program identified family recruitment and retention as a challenge, as more than half of families were not being retained at one-year post enrollment. The Fussy Baby Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN) model was chosen to be implemented to address family engagement by providing professional development on the model to home visitors. The FAN model is originally derived from work that the Erikson Institute had implemented with families who had fussy babies.[1] Over time, these core processes have been refined into a professional development model that is being used by home visiting programs across the country.

This project aimed to demonstrate improvement in the following priority area(s):

- Priority #1: Recruitment, engagement, and retention of eligible families to MIECHV-funded home visiting programs.

> **Resources**
>
> DC MIECHV Program
> Fussy Baby FAN Resources
> MIECHV Innovation Awards

Project Activities and Highlights

The DC MIECHV FAN Project chose to focus on family retention through FAN training and implementation support for home visitors and DC MIECHV leadership. The FAN model is designed to strengthen staff capacity to be attuned to the parents/caregivers they serve. Strengthened staff capacity promotes family engagement and increases the likelihood of families staying enrolled in home visiting to promote positive child/family outcomes.

Project Activities
- Conducted two levels of training for home visitors as well as for supervisors that taught the five core processes of the FAN – Calming, Feeling, Thinking, Doing, and Reflecting—as well as the ARC of Engagement.
- Provided supports for home visitors through supervision and FAN learning and reflection tools to integrate the FAN model into their daily practice with families.

Lessons Learned
- Consider using a streamlined phase of FAN implementation to reduce burden on home visitors.
- Promote the goodness of fit between training elements and the culture and context of serving families to demonstrate relevance.

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Findings
- Home visitors reported gains in all six FAN-related skills after Level One training (see Figure 1). Home visitors who implemented the FAN with higher fidelity retained a greater percentage of their families.

Sustainability
- A Training of Trainers (ToT) for DC MIECHV FAN staff was developed and implemented to make the FAN model more accessible and affordable for regional teams and to sustain and spread the model beyond DC.

Recommendations for the Home Visiting Field
- Provide opportunities to explore how best to tailor the FAN model to the needs and interests of families.
- Encourage home visitors to be transparent about their use of the FAN model with families as anticipatory guidance.

Figure 1: *Home Visitors reported gains in FAN-related skills from pre- to post-FAN*
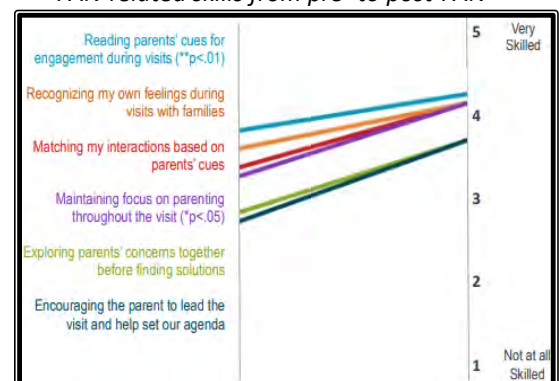
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[1] Gilkerson, L., Hofherr, J., Steier, A., Cook, A., Arbel, A., Heffron, M.C., Murphy, J.M., et al. (2012). Implementing Fussy Baby Network approach. *ZERO TO THREE, 33*(2*)*, 59-65.