

## Background

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program staff and non-MIECHV staff across Wisconsin (WI) identified three distinct training needs through a survey: 1) supporting improvement of parent-child interactions (PCI), 2) better understanding of social emotional development, and 3) comprehensive training on a variety of parent mental health topics. To address the identified needs, a professional development strategy was developed and centered on improving parent-child relationships in a relational way - including the introduction of a new, validated assessment tool and offering follow-up coaching to home visitors and supervisors.

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.
- Priority #2: Development and retention of a trained, highly skilled MIECHV-funded home visiting workforce.

### Resources

[WI MIECHV Program](#)  
[Home Visitor and Parent Interviews](#)  
[MIECHV Innovation Awards](#)

## Project Activities and Highlights

WI MIECHV developed the Brief Early Relational Assessment (B-ERA), an adapted version of the evidence-based Parent Child Early Relational Assessment (ERA), to be used in the home visiting context to promote improved parent-child relationships. In addition, a system of training, coaching, and guided practice was developed to support implementation of the B-ERA and to provide enhanced professional development opportunities in the areas of infant/early childhood social emotional development, attachment, and support for the parent-child relationship.

### Project Activities

- Expanded professional development offerings to 11 unique trainings and conducted 50 sessions for 907 participants.
- Developed the B-ERA tool using previously collected data from 5,445 parent-child dyads, and piloted the tool with home visiting families.

### Lessons Learned

- Foundational training about PCI is essential for home visitors before using an advanced tool like the B-ERA.
- The B-ERA created intentional space for the home visitor to discuss the parent-child relationship during home visits.
- Utilize existing common platforms to disseminate project materials efficiently and support implementation.

## Evaluation Summary

### Evaluation Findings

- Of the 19 parents asked if they would recommend the B-ERA after being involved in the pilot, 100% said yes. The acceptability of the B-ERA experience was generally supported by parent and home visitor interviews.
- The B-ERA training supported home visitors' successful use of the assessment and intervention indicated by fidelity ratings (2.66, 2.26, and 2.48 on a 1-3 scale).

### Sustainability

- The newly introduced professional developmental trainings are now part of the regular ongoing trainings and continue to support home visitors in their knowledge about PCI which is essential before using the B-ERA.

### Recommendations for the Home Visiting Field

- Provide a Community of Practice for supervisors in home visiting programs to address questions and receive support and consultation from each other.
- Promote home visitor participation in professional development focused on using relational assessment tools.