JANUARY 22, 2026

Home Visiting as a Bridge: Supporting Resettled Families through Transition and Growth

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CROWN FAMILY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, POLICY, AND PRACTICE
Advancing a More Just and Humane Society

Aimee Hilado, Ph.D., LCSW
Reiko Kakuyama-Villaber, M.Ed., M.A.
Jon Korfmacher, Ph.D.

OUR RESEARCH TEAM

Aimee Hilado
Co-Principal Investigator
UC Crown Family School

Reiko Kakuyama-Villaber
Co-Principal Investigator
Chapin Hall

Melissa Bond
Methodologist/Analyst
University of Arizona

Carolyn Ponting
Methodologist/Analyst
University of Oregon

Jon Korfmacher
Consultant
Chapin Hall

Acknowledgments: *The project was funded by the University of Chicago and Chapin Hall Joint Research Fund in 2024 in partnership with Baby TALK, Inc., UChicago Crown Family School, and the UChicago Refugee Wellness Lab.*

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The Importance of the Early Years

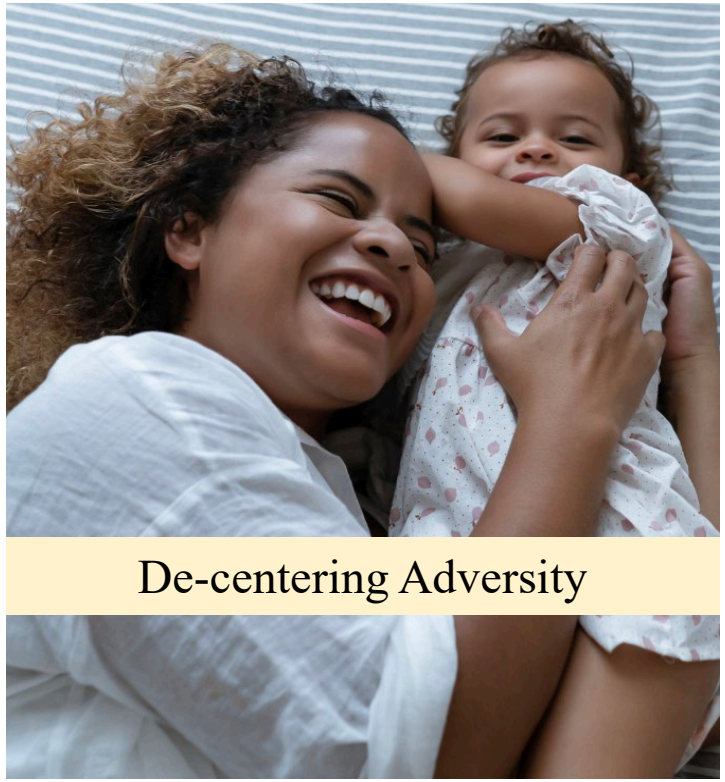
IECMH Trends

Early Development Matters

Resettled Family Risks

Pre- and Post-resettlement Factors

Resilience & Belonging



De-centering Adversity

Home Visiting as a Promising Practice

Children and Youth Services Review 176 (2025) 108378

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Children and Youth Services Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/childyouth

The Baby TALK home visiting model and refugee families: A randomized controlled trial

Aimee Hilado [a,*], Tara Chiatovich [b], Christine Leow [c], Yinmei Yang [d]

[a] University of Chicago, Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, USA
[b] DataKind, USA
[c] The Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University, USA
[d] Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC), USA

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September 2025

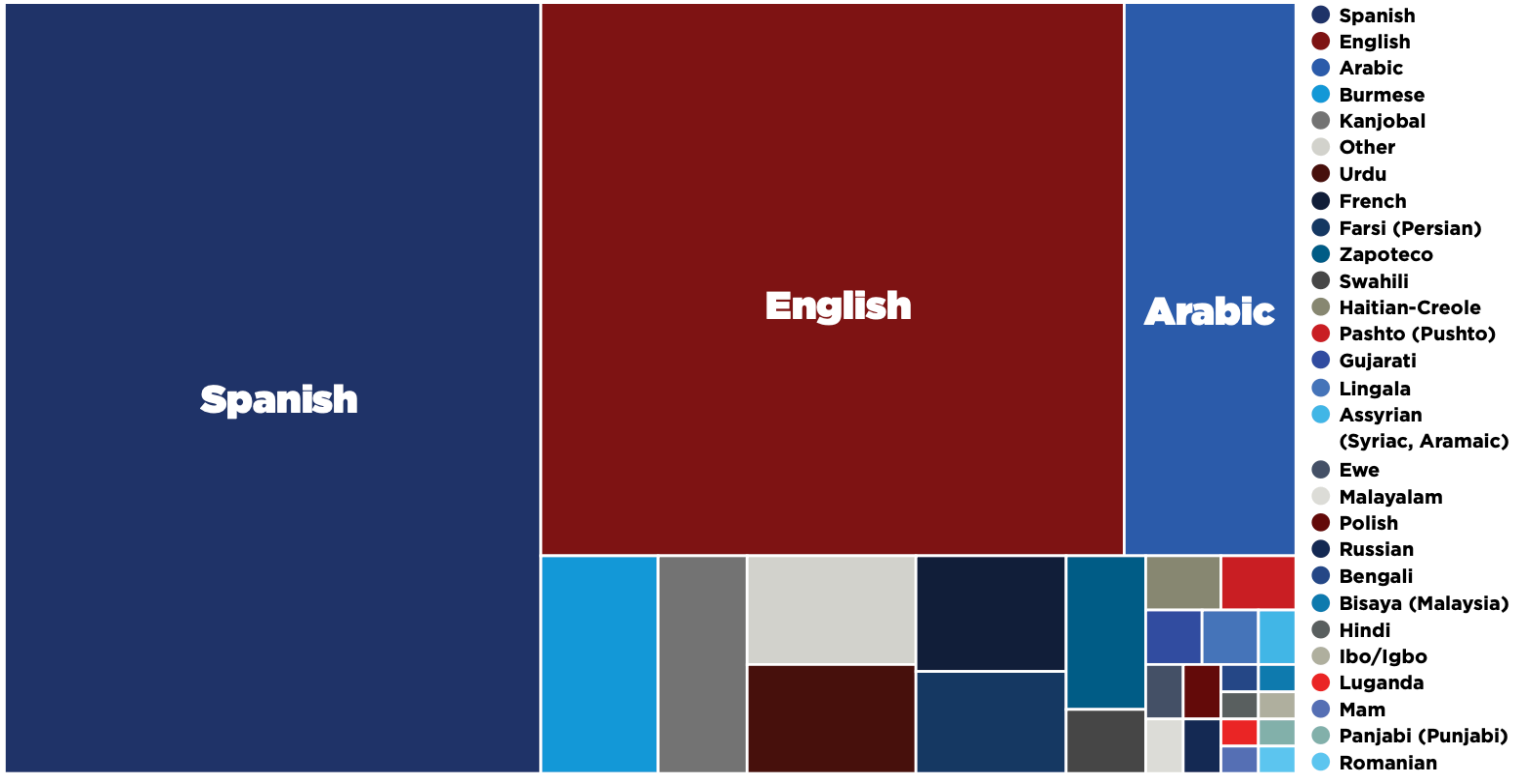
HOME VISITING AS A BRIDGE

Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families Through Transition and Growth

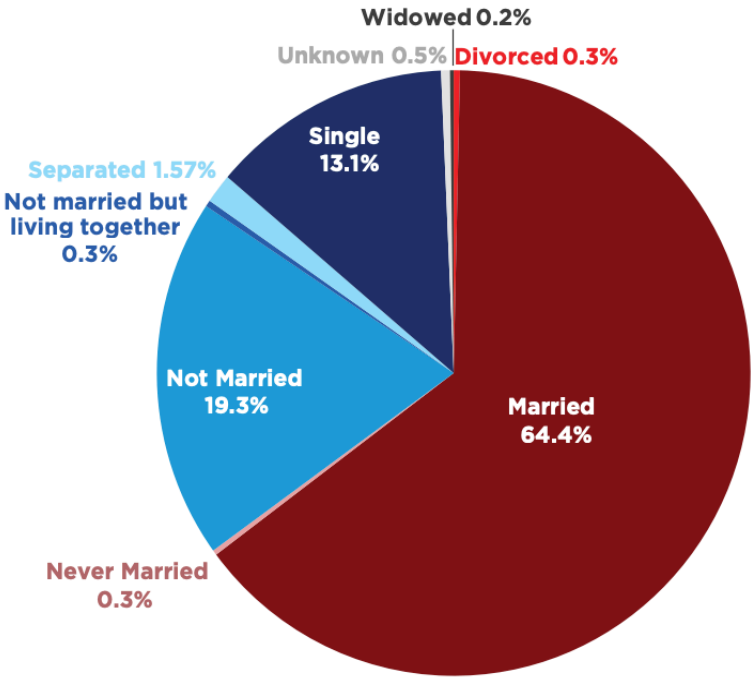
Bridging Services and Relationships: A Mixed Methods Study of Refugee Home Visiting Engagement and Emotional Support

Languages Represented

We gathered data from 1,000 families from nine home visiting programs across Illinois using the Baby TALK Model. The sample represents 28 languages/dialects, with the majority of families speaking either English or Spanish. Arabic was the third-most-spoken home language.

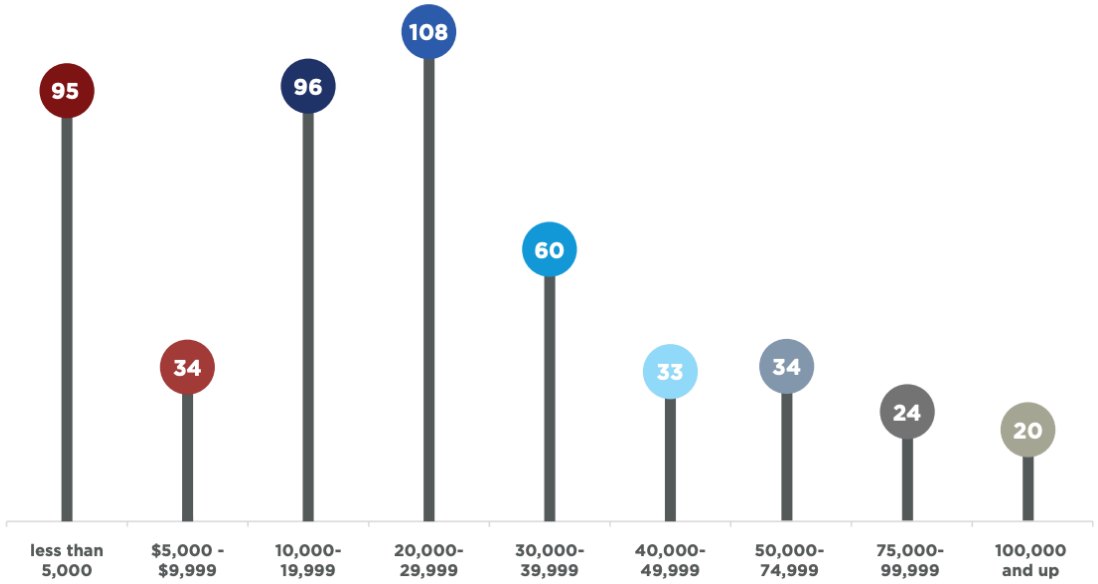


Head of Household Marital Status



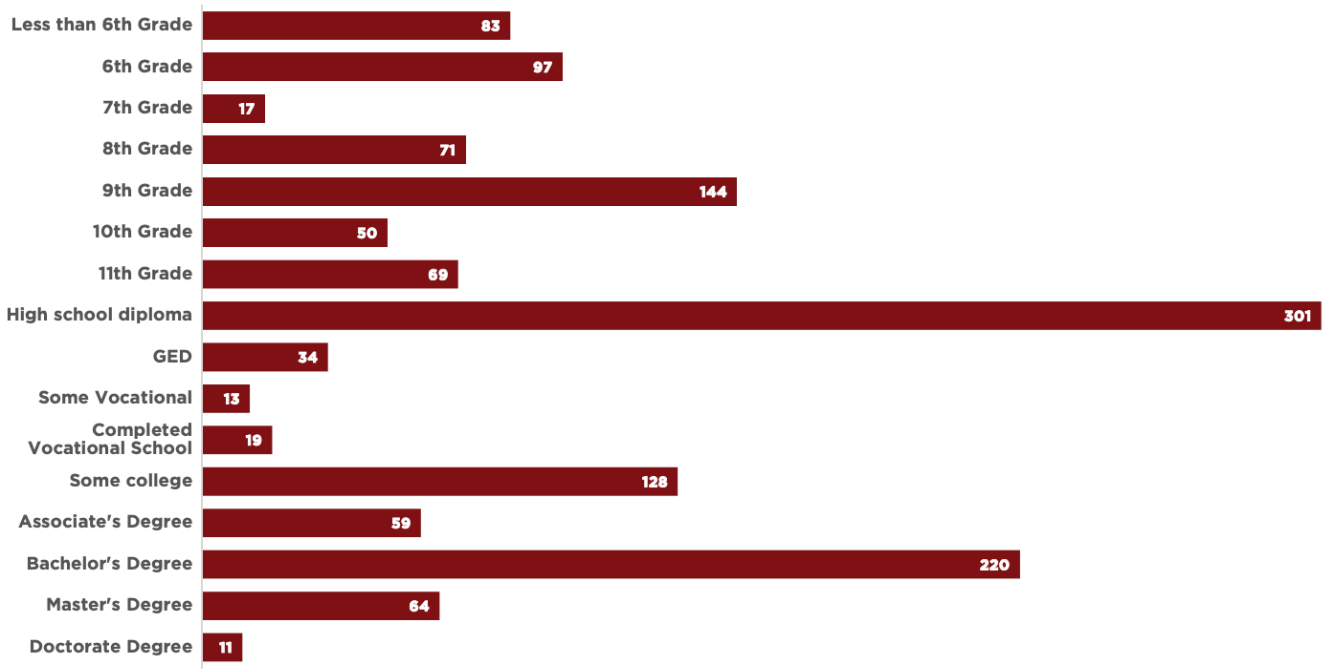
Head of Household Range of Income

Family income ranged from those with less than $5,000 to over $100,000 annually.



Head of Household Education Levels

This graphic shows the highest level of education attained by the head of household in our sample. Most participants had a high school diploma or less.



Length of Engagement & Number of Visits

- Many families participated in home visiting services over several years, often enrolling multiple children at once. In some cases, a newborn would begin receiving services just as an older sibling completed the program.

- **Average length of engagement:** 28 months

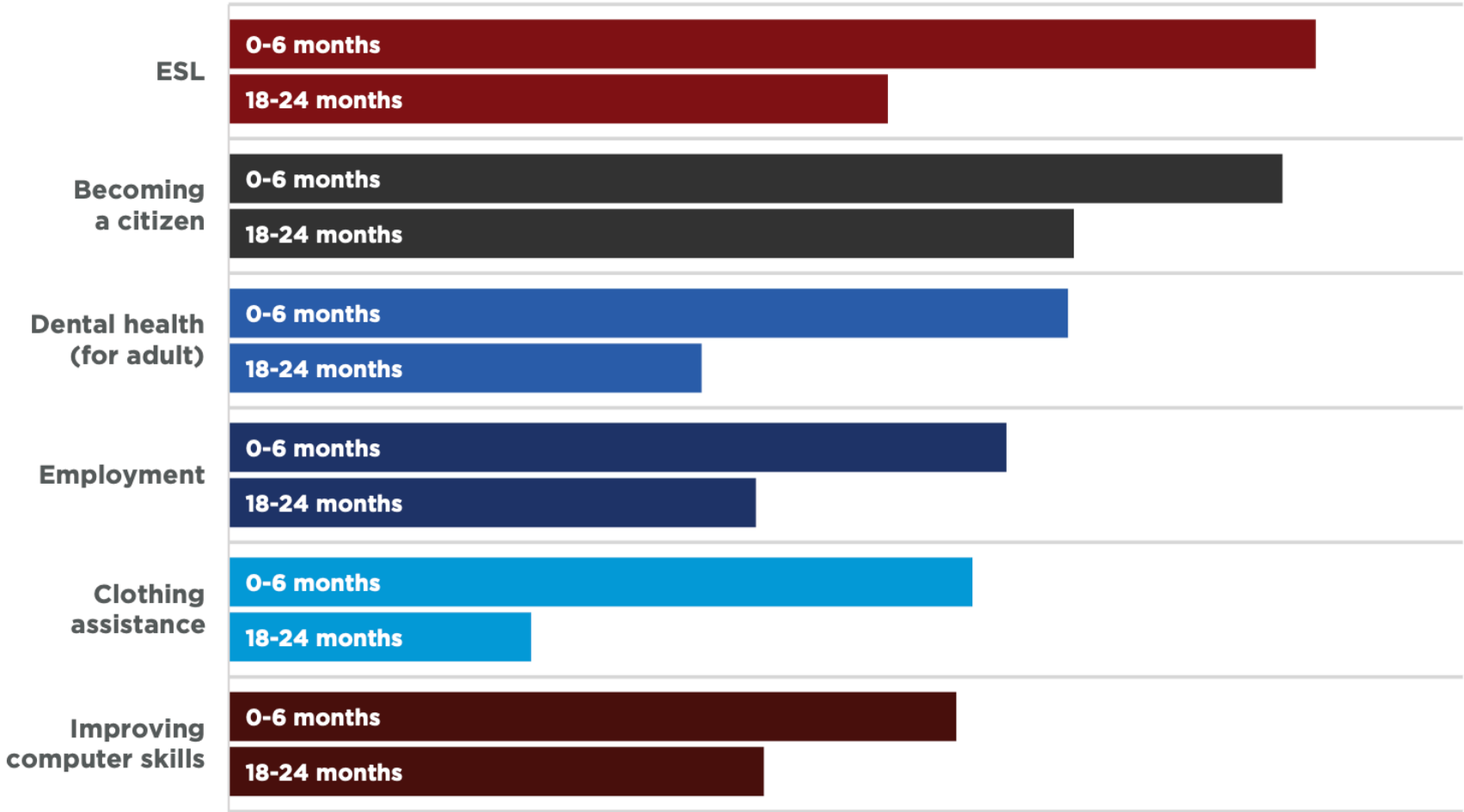
- **Average number of home visits** (personal and group encounters): 46

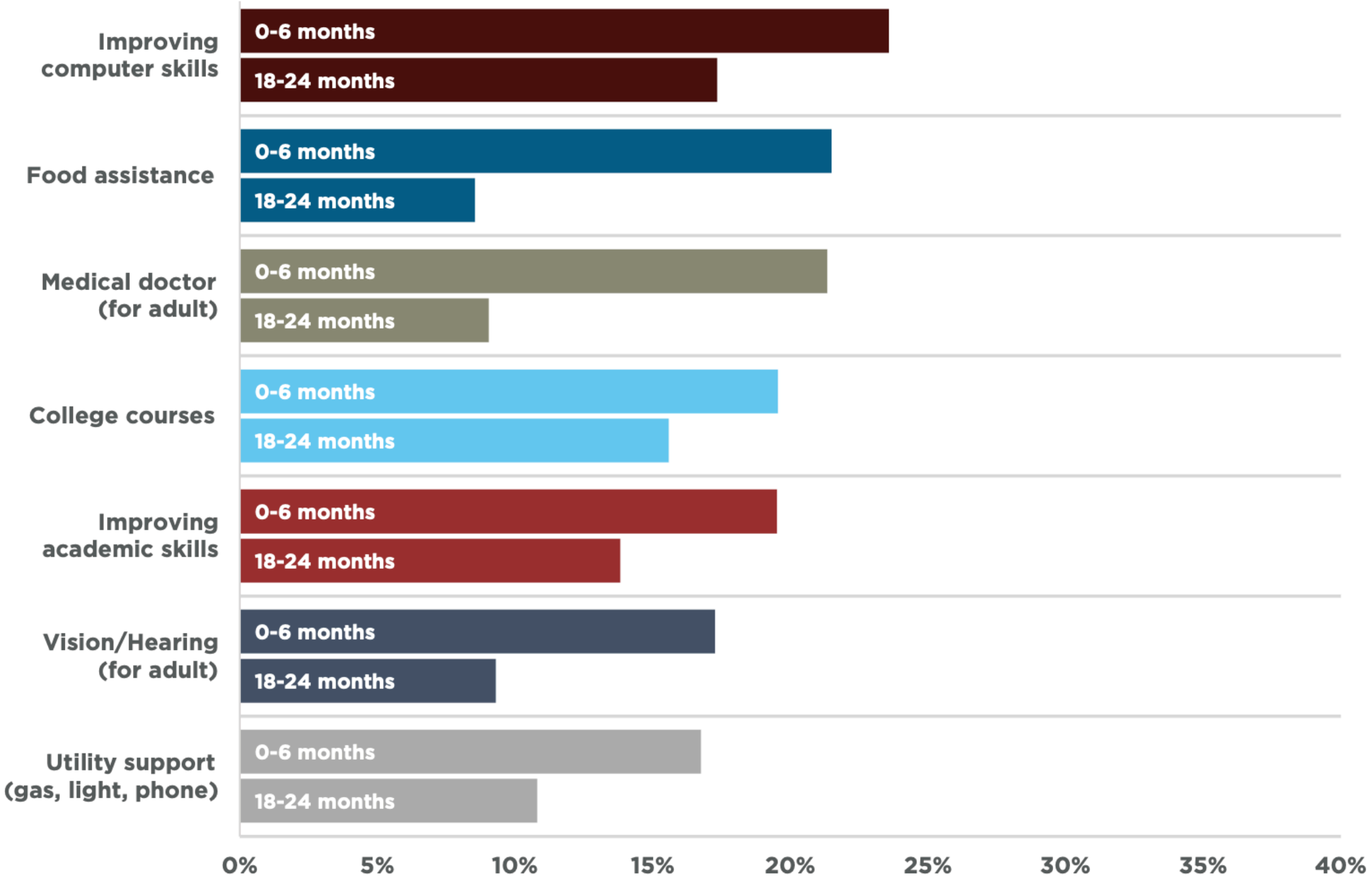
HOME VISITING AS A BRIDGE:

Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families Through Transition and Growth

Families' Greatest Needs

The resources resettled families prioritized shifted over time. In the first six months of enrollment, access to basic needs (such as food, clothing, and medical contacts) was critical. By 18–24 months, these needs decreased, while English language training and immigration support remained top priorities. This shift reflects home visiting's core role in connecting families to essential resources early in the program.

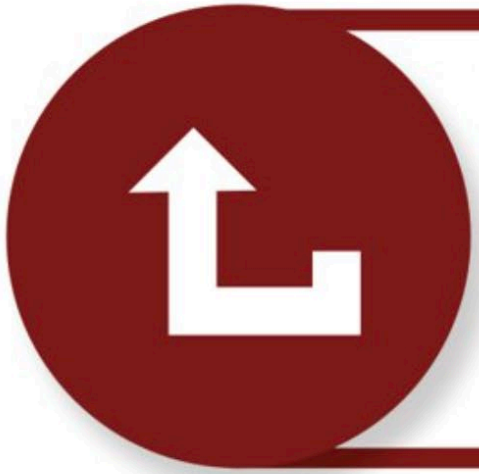



Improving computer skills
0-6 months
18-24 months
Food assistance
0-6 months
18-24 months
Medical doctor (for adult)
0-6 months
18-24 months
College courses
0-6 months
18-24 months
Improving academic skills
0-6 months
18-24 months
Vision/Hearing (for adult)
0-6 months
18-24 months
Utility support (gas, light, phone)
0-6 months
18-24 months
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%
40%

Baby TALK Strategies for Engagement

- **Methods:** Home visiting data from 898 families (47,757 visits total) were examined to understand the effects of using ten distinct Baby TALK engagement strategies on family participation over a three-year service period.
  - Using a time-to-event model[6], the results suggest specific strategies promote, limit, or had neutral/no effect on retention in the program.

Statistically significant predictors of retention in home visiting services over the course of a 36-month service period.



Use the following Baby TALK strategies increased the likelihood of families exiting the program.

- Focusing on meaning making during sessions i.e., asking the caregiver to describe their understanding of observed behavior.
- Narrating behaviors for the child during play sessions.

The following Baby TALK strategies had no significant effects on program retention or attrition.

- Focusing on child mastery or parent mastery.
- Prioritize engagement by valuing caregivers' and children's efforts over the end goal.
- Use the pivot strategy: address a caregiver's concern, then link it to the child's development or behavior.

Themes

Participant Overview

5
Program Directors

14
Home Visitors

16
Parents

8
Languages Represented

Personal stories illuminate the impact of home visiting

A Broade
Pare

ed Approach
orts

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Cap

Void

"I most like when there are people, a real human being is with me, listening to me or accompanying me because the papers, I do read those and everything and I try to practice them but I feel like support, their voice, their ear, are so much more powerful than the papers." *(Parent, Honduras)*

Themes

Balancing Loss, Identity, and Hope

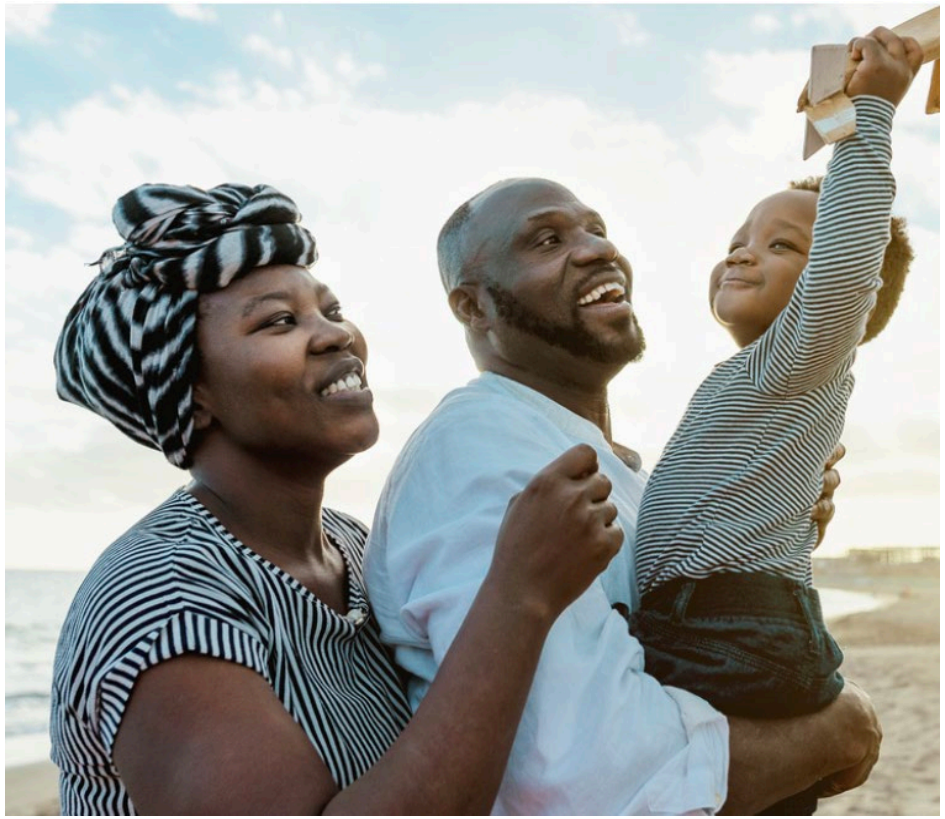
> “I want them to be good people, too. I don’t want them to always be happy because I have gone through that as well. The act of going through sad things makes people stronger, so I don’t want their path to be easy. I want them to fall so that they can arrive… I don’t know how to express it, but I want them to stumble so that they become strong.” *(Parent, Mexico)*

Themes

Building Independence & Belonging

Home visiting helps families gain self-reliance while strengthening their place in the community.

> "[We must] recognize their value to society and their value to this country and our neighborhood [and] school community… and help them feel welcome." *(Program Director)*



Lessons Learned

- Professional qualities necessary for engagement

Vision:

We envision a society in which all families are engaged in trustworthy relationships to ensure child well-being and positive outcomes for families.

Landscape of Home Visiting Research

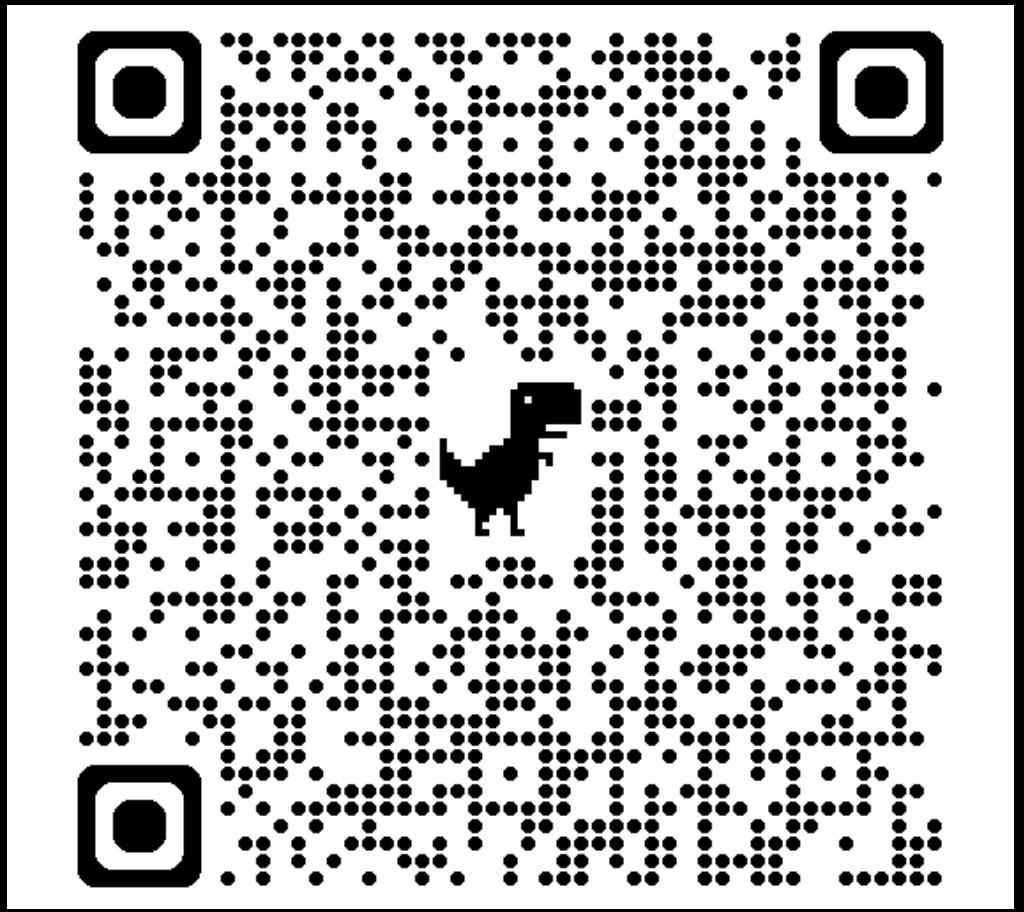
HARC
Home Visiting Applied Research Collaborative

HVWFD
INSTITUTE FOR HOME VISITING
– WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT –
& Jackie Walorski Center for Evidence-Based Case Management

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
EARLY
CHILDHOOD

- What works best for whom?
- Supporting home visitors
- Integrating services

Access the study report:



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Connect With Us

Reiko Kakuyama-Vallaber, M.A., M.Ed. Researcher, Chapin Hall **(Co-PI)**
Email: rkakuyama@chapinhall.org

Jon Korfmacher, Ph.D.
Senior Research Fellow, Chapin Hall
Email: jkorfmacher@chapinhall.org

Aimee Hilado, PhD, LCSW
(Co-PI)
Asst. Professor, UChicago Crown Family School
Director, UChicago Refugee Wellness Laboratory
Email: ahilado@uchicago.edu

ChapinHall.org
@Chapin Hall
@Chapin_Hall
@ChapinHall
@ChapinHallCenter

crownschool. uchicago. edu
@university-of-Chicago-crown-family-school
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Hilado, A., Kakuyama-Villaber, R., Bond, M. H., Ponting, C., & Korfmacher, J. (2025). *Home visiting as a bridge: Supporting immigrant and refugee families through transition and growth.* Chapin Hall and the University of Chicago Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice.

Hilado, A., Chiatovich, T., Leow, C., & Yang, Y. (2025). The Baby TALK home visiting model and refugee families: A randomized controlled trial. *Child and Youth Services Review.* 108378. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2025.108378

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