ADJUSTING TO VIRTUAL HOME VISITS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY:
Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Kayla Kakavand, MPH[1]*, Martha Bock, MPH[1]*, Diana Careaga, MPH[2] & Sharlene Gozalians, DrPH, MPH, CHES[1]
[1]LA Best Babies Network, [2]First 5 Los Angeles
*These authors contributed equally to this project

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

LA Best Babies Network (LABBN), located in downtown Los Angeles, California, is the oversight entity of a network of over 700 home visiting staff at 14 hospitals and 26 community-based organizations across Los Angeles County. These home visiting staff provide three different home visiting models (Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers, and Welcome Baby). LABBN provides the training, technical assistance, and data and communications management for home visiting programs funded by First 5 LA, LA County DMH, DPH, and DPSS.

The LABBN Technical Assistance (TA) Team works with program managers and supervisors across all three home visiting models to support best practices and improve programmatic outcomes through targeted technical assistance.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced Los Angeles County Home Visitors to shift from conducting in-home visits to conducting virtual visits beginning in March 2020. In response, the LABBN Technical Assistance and Training team launched a **Virtual Home Visiting Support Response;** a series of virtual trainings, consult sessions with experts, resource guides aimed at improving the quality of virtual home visits, and transitioning in-person programmatic trainings to an online platform. Our poster describes this response.

VIRTUAL LEARNING AND ASSESSING FOR NEEDS

- To ensure that programmatic trainings continued to meet the objectives set forth by the fidelity framework, LABBN's Training and TA team swiftly transitioned all required pre-scheduled in-person trainings to a virtual platform.
- In order to assess the technical assistance needs of program managers and staff, LABBN created and administered a series of online surveys. Surveys were sent at regular time intervals (i.e., monthly or bi-monthly), and asked program managers and staff to identify areas of support needed.
- **Table 1** describes the surveys administered.

TABLE 1. VIRTUAL HOME VISITING SURVEYS

Survey Title	Survey Audience	Survey Description
COVID-19 Site Assessment Survey	Welcome Baby, Healthy Families America, and Parents as Techers Program Leads	The COVID-19 Site Assessment Survey was administered monthly beginning in March 2020-2021. The Survey was designed to provide technical assistance, resources, and gathered information about which policies and procedures were in place at hospitals and community-based organizations. Information gathered from the surveys: • Telecommuting/remote-work status • Virtual visit platforms being used • Updates to staff roles and responsibilities • How consent was being collected • How support was being provided to staff during the virtual transition • Tracking the quality of virtual home visits • Basic essentials needed by families • Technology needs for sites and families • Client receptiveness to virtual visits • Changes in client enrollment • COVID-19 positive clients/families and support being provided to clients/families • Topics and areas for support needed from LA Best Babies Network
Client Satisfaction Survey	Welcome Baby Program Leads	During the COVID-19 Pandemic, LA Best Babies Network converted the Client Satisfaction Survey to an online survey link; prior to the pandemic the survey was administered in-person during home visits. The survey which is administered on a rolling basis throughout the fiscal year helped LA Best Babies network continue to track client satisfaction with home visits and the Welcome Baby Program. The Welcome Baby Client Satisfaction Survey Categories: • Background Information and Virtual Visit Satisfaction • Welcome Baby Program Satisfaction • Interactions with Welcome Baby staff • Topics covered during home visits • Partner Engagement • General Feedback
Monthly Site Survey	Welcome Baby, Healthy Families America, and Parents as Techers Program Leads	Every month, Welcome Baby and Home Visiting Sites submit Monthly Site Surveys. During the virtual shift, LA Best Babies Network's Technical Assistance Team began including questions to help capture current and pertinent information and needs from sites. Monthly Site Survey themes and questions: • COVID-19 successes and challenges • Virtual visit successes and challenges • Staffing changes • Topics of interest for upcoming manager leads meetings, Peer to Peer Webinars and trainings • Focusing technical assistance efforts on providing resources and tools related to virtual visits and COVID-19

EMERGING THEMES OF SUPPORT NEEDS

- At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to remote work, virtual trainings and virtual home visits, staff and program leads reported the following common challenges:
  - Staff and clients lacking the infrastructure (quality internet connection and proper video software) needed to complete visits
  - Program supervisors, staff, and clients being uncomfortable with using video platforms
  - Overall low programmatic engagement of home visiting staff and clients
  - Difficulty obtaining client consents electronically, since in-person, written consent was no longer viable
  - Balancing home life and work life (i.e., children/ childcare, pets, virtual schooling)
- This prompted LABBN to provide extensive support in basic remote team management, learning and navigating new technologies, managing staff anxiety, and securing methods for obtaining electronic consent.
- As time went on, managers became more comfortable with the basic technical and programmatic aspects of remote work and virtual home visiting. The reported needs of managers shifted in turn to focus more on supporting virtual best practices and maintenance of a virtual program.
- Consistently throughout the pandemic, managers sought support for connecting to outside community resources and improving virtual outreach strategies.

TABLE 2. VIRTUAL HOME VISITING SUPPORT RESPONSE

TA Provided	Description and Topics Addressed	Audience and Delivery Method
Oversight Meetings	Bi-weekly meetings with home visiting program funders, program managers, and community support partners to discuss updates from the home visiting sites, address programmatic support needs centered on virtual home visits and remote work, and create creating guidelines and protocols for achieving programmatic objectives virtually. **Topics:** methods for supporting remote work, best practices for providing virtual visits	**Audience:** Family Strengthening Oversight Entity **Delivery Method:** GoToTraining
Monthly Manager Meetings	Monthly meetings lasting 2.5-3 hours; breakout rooms were used as a method to create small group discussions centered on discuss specific successes and challenges of virtual home visits. **Topics:** methods for supporting remote work, managing stress/anxiety and modeling resiliency, strategies for utilizing new video technology to conduct programmatic activities, creative ways to engage whole families in virtual home visits, best practices for providing virtual home visits	**Audience:** Welcome Baby (WB), Healthy Families America (HFA), and Parents as Teachers (PAT) program leads **Delivery Method:** Zoom
Reflective Supervision Groups	Groups of up to 15 program leads convened once a month with a trained facilitator to explore a program managers' reactions, feelings, and experiences within his/her work with parents and children. **Topics:** managing stress/anxiety and modeling resiliency	**Audience:** WB, HFA, and PAT program leads **Delivery Method:** Zoom
Webinars	31 webinars held between May and October 2020. **Topics:** methods for supporting remote work, strategies for utilizing new video technology to conduct programmatic activities, creative ways to engage whole families in virtual home visits	**Audience:** WB, HFA, and PAT program leads and direct-service home visiting staff **Delivery Method:** Zoom, GoToTraining
Consult Sessions with Content Experts	Sessions with multiple content-expert consultants to support home visiting program managers in their shift to virtual home visitation. **Topics:** strategies for utilizing new video technology to conduct programmatic activities, creative ways to engage whole families in virtual home visits, best practices for providing virtual home visits	**Audience:** WB, HFA, and PAT program leads and direct-service home visiting staff **Delivery Method:** Zoom
COVID-19 FAQ Document	FAQ documents detailing important policies and procedures for conducting virtual visits. **Topics:** methods for supporting remote work, strategies for utilizing new video technology to conduct programmatic activities	**Audience:** WB, HFA, and PAT program leads **Delivery Method:** Email
Virtual Visit Guide	A compilation of resources and best practices for remote team management and virtual home visits. **Topics:** methods for supporting remote work, strategies for utilizing new video technology to conduct programmatic activities, best practices for providing virtual home visits	**Audience:** WB, HFA, and PAT program leads **Delivery Method:** Email, Discussion during monthly meetings
Protocol Creation and Refinements	Updates to and creation of protocols for programmatic procedures to reflect virtual home visiting procedures, based on changes identified during webinars, meetings, and consult sessions. **Topics:** best practices for providing virtual home visits	**Audience:** WB program leads **Delivery Method:** Email, Discussion during monthly meetings

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

- Transitioning an in-person program to remote, virtual work requires significant oversight and consistent support. The oversight provided by LABBN was successful in mitigating challenges and maintaining program outcomes for 40 home visiting sites across three program models in Los Angeles County. Success can be attributed to four key components of oversight support:
  - Modeling positive behaviors
  - Creating multiple opportunities for peer learning
  - Providing various methods and modes of support
  - Maintaining a robust system of information exchange

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