

# Family Visit Coaching

## Background

The County of San Diego began an effort in 2015 to achieve more timely family reunification by using a portion of its Title IV-E waiver funds to invest in a promising approach to parent/child visits: Family Visit Coaching (FVC), which is based on the Visit Coaching (VC) model developed by Marty Beyer, PhD. This model was developed to promote active engagement between a coach and parents before, during, and after visitation with the child. This model differs from the traditional supervised visits approach used by most child welfare agencies in that parents interact with a coach during visits who focuses on the family's strengths and the children's needs.

## Study Population

- 160 families who participated in FVC but did not complete the program
- 217 families who completed the program
- All families were in family reunification status with the County of San Diego
- The target population was families whose social workers believed the families faced large obstacles to reunification (e.g., families who were seen as "resistant" or not making progress on case plans)

*"My visiting coach was amazing. **She helped me get my confidence back. She helped my self-esteem. She would lead me through visits like bring a craft. And then sit down and talk to me about how the visit went and **show me the positives.**"***

## Research Approach Overview

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the program's effect on family reunification, reunification timeliness, and parenting efficacy.

## Results

- About half of the time, it took nine months or more between the time of removal and the date of referral to FVC.
- Families who were referred to FVC had much lower odds of reunification within 18 months than other families in family reunification status, even after controlling for other variables.
- Although they started out at a great disadvantage, families who completed FVC services had reunification outcomes that

## Program Goals and Evaluation Methods

Goals	Evaluation/Measurement Strategies
Improve reunification within 18 months	Nearest neighbor propensity score matching (PSM) and logistic regression modeling to compare reunification outcomes of the referred, participated, and completed FVC groups to those receiving business-as-usual services.
Improve reunification timeliness	Nearest neighbor PSM and ordinary least squares regression modeling to compare time to reunification outcomes of the referred, participated, and completed FVC groups to those receiving business-as-usual services.
Improve parenting efficacy	Comparison of pre- and post- parenting skills assessment scores of parents served by visit coaches; qualitative interviews with FVC participants and a comparison group of families that received visitation as usual.

compared closely to the general population. There is no statistically significant positive effect of completing FVC on reunification within 18 months.

- Program dosage was related to likelihood of reunification within 18 months. Families who had more than 30 visits had the best outcomes, and each additional visit was associated with better outcomes, even after controlling for other variables.
- In pre- and post-tests of parenting skills, using a shortened version of the independently

validated Parenting Skills Assessment, 10th version, there were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) improvements in 14 out of 15 parenting domains.

- Interviews with program participants showed that parents who participated in the program, versus parents in the general child welfare population, had improved relationships with their children, better practical parenting skills, and a greater sense of self-efficacy.
- In interviews, program participants were universally positive.

### Probability of Reunification in 18 Months by Number of FVC Visits

