# Supporting evidence for creating integrated data systems

### Recommendation #2. Create integrated data systems

a. Continue to build on the home visiting mapping tool to inform state and local efforts. To understand the full spectrum of services available to families, integrate home visiting service information with data systems for other services, including child care and early intervention.

b. Design and implement a workforce registry, leveraging the home visiting mapping tool data as a starting point, that crosses service sectors so individuals and their education and professional development activities can move with them as they cross between different early childhood careers.

The evidence presented here suggests that **creating integrated data systems** will benefit home visiting coordination efforts across California. Over the course of this study, stakeholders shared the importance of strengthening the home visiting system across counties, programs, and home visiting models. Many stakeholders shared that during the pandemic, home visiting programs responded in ways that addressed past challenges to collaboration. For example, staff participated in more cross-model trainings through Rapid Response Virtual Home Visiting webinars and partnered with other local agencies to distribute food and resources to families. However, a key missing piece in facilitating this ongoing collaboration in the future is high-quality data, both programmatic and family-level data specifically. Accessing and integrating home visiting data is a top challenge for home visiting programs and administrators, limiting the workforce's effectiveness at meeting families' needs. For example, at this time, California does not have a system to compile unduplicated data across home visiting programs funded through CDSS and CDPH, let alone across locally funded home visiting programs.

## Data integration

Integration of home visiting data across state agencies and with data from other services, such as Medi-Cal and child welfare, is an initial step that will enable policymakers and community leaders to plan and utilize resources based on existing home visiting services, as well as in the larger context of other social services. The California home visiting mapping tool (Figure 1) and accompanying data snapshots can be used to present integrated data and inform ongoing home visiting policies and program decisions. State agencies like CDPH have been involved in data discussions with other departments around larger data interoperability work; they noted that this tool is an important first step in thinking through key metrics and planning for the future.

**Figure 1**. California home visiting mapping tool screenshot
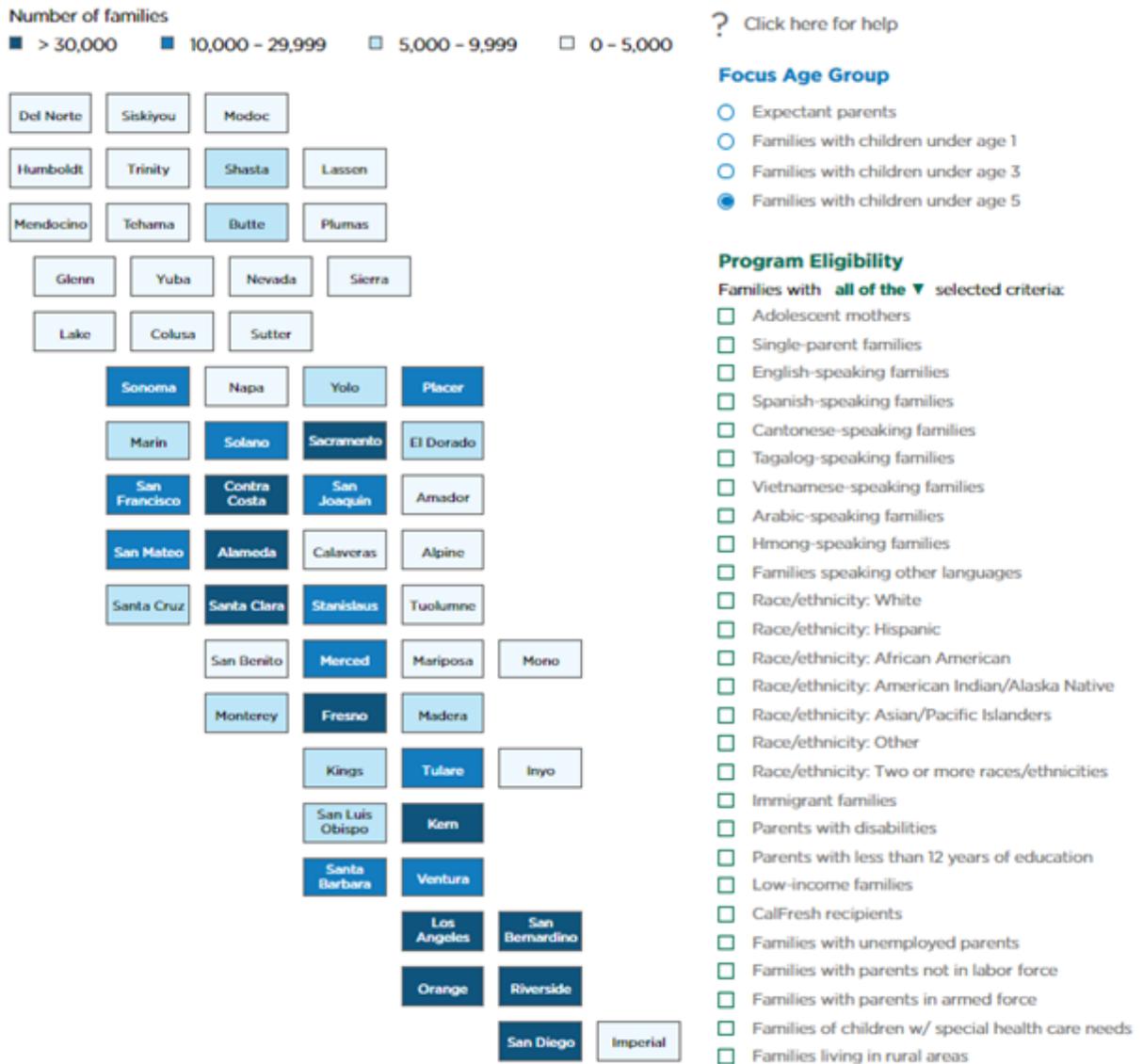


Source: The California home visiting mapping tool

The mapping tool groups data at the county, regional, and state levels, which policy advisors in the state reported are helpful for conceptualizing larger funding decisions. However, most decisions are made at the local level, including zip codes, legislative districts, etc. The ability to aggregate data at these localized levels is important for the sustainability of the mapping tool and to support decision-making for home visiting programs and funders.

To explore the feasibility of collecting home visiting program data at a more local level, home visitors were asked about whether they or someone in their program could provide information about families at the neighborhood or zip code level. Most home visitors reported that their programs already collect information on the neighborhoods and zip codes in which participating families live (Table 1), and more than half of home visitors were confident that they or their supervisors would be able to report those data. Importantly, very few home visitors (5% or less) reported that their programs *do not* collect this information at all.

**Table 1**. Who at your program would be able to easily provide information about…

| | NEIGHBORHOODS THAT FAMILIES SERVED LIVE IN (N = 396) | ZIP CODES THAT FAMILIES SERVED LIVE IN (N = 394) |
|---|---|---|
| My self (home visitor) | 69% | 53% |
| Supervisor | 57% | 60% |
| Program Manager | 42% | 47% |
| Office/Administration | 26% | 36% |
| No one/We do not collect this information | 5% | 4% |
| Other | 5% | 3% |

Source: Home visiting workforce follow-up survey, 2021

As shown in Figure 2, existing data systems in California are siloed. Home visiting programs are administered through federal (Head Start and Part C), state (CalWORKs, MIECHV, and F5CA), local (First 5 county commissions), and private agencies. Each agency and funding mechanism requires a specific data collection and reporting process. Therefore, home visiting data are currently documented based on different standards and formats, making it challenging to combine or link. For example, the exact number of home visiting programs in California is still unknown due to the different reporting requirements across funders. In addition, data about visiting programs are isolated from data systems used by other services (e.g., child welfare), even when these programs are sometimes implemented by the same state or local agency.

**Figure 2.** Siloed data systems from California home visiting programs and other social services for families with young children.
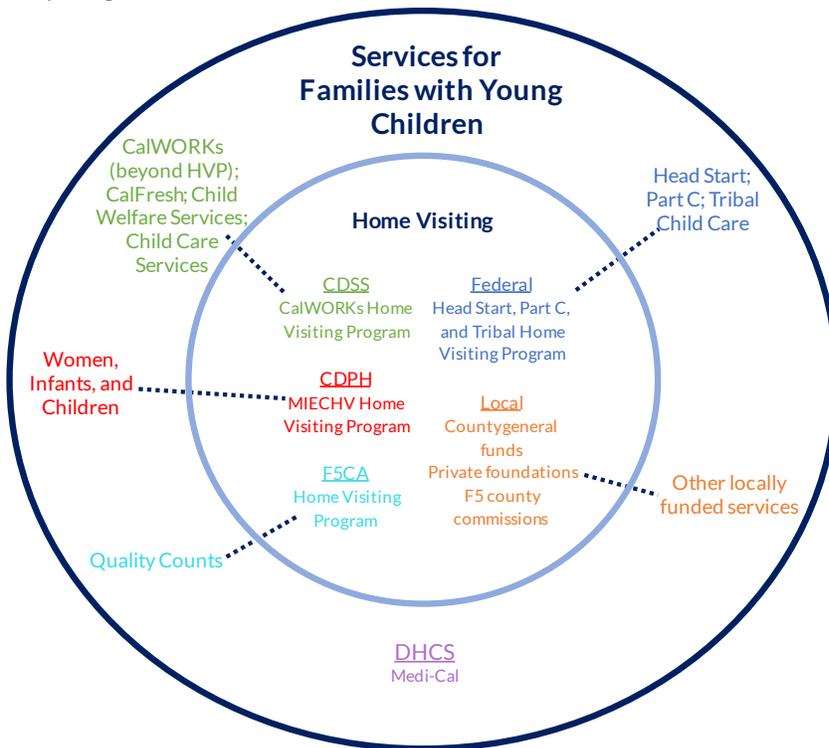
## Home visiting workforce registry

Designing and implementing a home visiting workforce registry that leverages data from the mapping tool and crosses early childhood service sectors will allow staff's education and professional development activities and credentials to move with them as they cross between home visiting and other early childhood jobs.

In the early 1990s, workforce registries were developed in the early childhood field to provide recognition for early childhood professionals. According to the National Workforce Registry Alliance (NWRA),[25] the purpose of a workforce registry is to:

- Promote professional growth and development

- Capture data about early childhood and afterschool practitioners in a variety of roles

- Provide a framework for professional development as part of a state career level system

- Place individuals on a career level based upon verified educational information

- Recognize and honors professional achievements of the early childhood and afterschool workforce

- Inform policymakers and partners

The California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry is an efficient, web-based system designed to verify and securely store and track the employment, training, and education accomplishments of early childhood care and education teachers and providers.[26] In 2020, the California Master Plan for Early Learning and Care recommended collecting data regarding provider language, qualifications, and program setting as part of the Workforce Registry, and sharing information about the workforce through an early childhood data system dashboard.[27] In the home visiting context, this will support efforts to increase the home visiting workforce, as current data estimate that home visiting programs are only reaching about 11 percent of eligible families.

## Summary

Over the past 18 months, stakeholders shared that accessing and integrating home visiting data, such as the characteristics of families served or number of funded slots by program, is a top challenge for home visiting programs and administrators. The lack of data informing policy and program decisions limits the effectiveness of the workforce in meeting the strengths and needs of families. The California home visiting mapping tool can be used to present integrated data to inform state and local decision-making for home visiting programs and funders. Additionally, the state may leverage this mapping tool to design and implement a workforce registry that crosses service sectors, allowing individuals and their education and professional development activities to move with them as they cross between different early childhood system careers.

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[25] https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/early-childhood-workforce-registries.pdf
[26] https://www.ccala.net/about-workforce-registry/
[27] https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/master-plan-for-early-learning-and-care/