2021 Impact Analysis Report

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................................... 1
About the Home Visit Project .......................................................................................................................... 2
About the Randomized Controlled Trial Study ............................................................................................. 2
Key Findings from the RCT Study .................................................................................................................. 3
  Home visits reduced chronic absenteeism .................................................................................................... 4
  Home visits improved teachers’ connections with their students ............................................................... 5
  Home visits improved teachers’ connection with students’ families ......................................................... 6
  Teachers feel home visits improved students’ engagement and achievement ...................................... 7
  Home visits made teachers more confident students can grow ............................................................... 8
  Parents had positive experiences with home visits ................................................................................ 9
  Students had positive experiences with home visits ........................................................................... 11
Supplemental Analysis #1 by Dallas Independent School District ......................................................... 13
Supplemental Analysis #2 by Stand for Children Texas ........................................................................... 15
Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................................ 16
This report summarizes research conducted to examine the impact of the Stand for Children Home Visit Project. The Annenberg Institute at Brown University conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) research study to measure causal effects of the Home Visit Project. The Dallas Independent School District (DISD) and Stand for Children Texas conducted independent, supplementary analyses.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the W.W. Caruth, Jr. Fund – Communities Foundation of Texas for their belief in our work and for funding the research project. Without the financial support of our generous funders, over the past six years, who believed in the impact and importance of trusting relationships between educators and families, none of this would have been possible.

We also thank the Annenberg Institute at Brown University under the leadership of Dr. Susanna Loeb for conducting the RCT, and the Dallas Independent School District Research Review Board under the leadership of Dr. Larry Featherston for conducting supplementary analysis, and Eileen Horng for her ability to synthesize the results and tell a compelling story of the work.

We would also like to thank the five Texas school districts who partnered with us for the research project: Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District (CFBISD), Dallas Independent School District (DISD), Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD), Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District (HEBISD), and Richardson Independent School District (RISD). We are grateful to the teachers, students, and families for their time and willingness to open their hearts and homes to each other to help advance the understanding and importance of a strong foundation of trusting relationships aimed at surfacing and closing the opportunity gaps for all children.

I believe everyone should participate in HVP because it allows you to step back and remember why you do what you do. It’s important to remember that we are here for our students. Visiting families at their homes is crucial for building a strong relationship with your students and their families.”

- Teacher, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD
The Home Visit Project began in 2015 when a group of Stand for Children Texas educator fellows identified authentic family engagement as their top need to better support students. The search for successful family engagement practices led fellows to Parent Teacher Home Visits, whose model became the foundation of the Home Visit Project.

The Home Visit Project does not assume that educators are naturally equipped to establish trusting relationships with their students’ families. Therefore, teachers are trained on how to conduct relationship-building home visits which strengthen partnerships between teachers and families. The training addresses what many educators perceive to be barriers to family engagement - lack of time, concerns about safety, and language and cultural differences – and offers concrete steps to overcome those barriers. The training also addresses the assumptions teachers might have about families, how those assumptions impact relationships, and how to confront them. After addressing barriers and assumptions, the training outlines a protocol for scheduling and conducting home visits in a way that demonstrates respect for parents and families.

Based upon community organizing principles, these home visits are scheduled (rather than impromptu) meetings between families and teachers as partners – the teacher as the expert on the curriculum and the family as the expert on the child. The goal of these visits and the resulting relationships is to illuminate a more complete picture of every child, as well as to understand a family’s unique hopes and dreams for their child concerning both academic and personal development. Teachers conduct one visit with each selected family in the fall to build trusting relationships and a second visit to the same families in the spring to help them build their capacity to support schooling at home. During these visits, teachers are asked to follow the relationship-building protocols shared during the training. They are also asked to contact the students’ families at least once every six weeks throughout the school year to further strengthen their relationships with the families.

Stand for Children is an American education advocacy group. Founded in 1996 following a Children’s Defense Fund rally the non-profit advocates for equity in public education. Stand for Children’s mission is “to ensure all students receive a high quality, relevant education, especially those whose boundless potential is overlooked and under-tapped because of their skin color, zip code, first language, or disability.”

http://stand.org/

The Annenberg Institute at Brown University conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) of the Home Visit Project during the 2019-20 school year to measure the causal effects of the Home Visit Project on students, parents, and teachers. This study was conducted in five Texas school districts which partnered with Stand for Children Texas. Across the five districts, 580 teachers signed up to participate in the study – half were randomly assigned to the treatment group to participate in the Home Visit Project; and the other half were assigned to the control group. Additionally, to reduce selection bias, the research team randomly selected students for the treatment teachers to visit rather than allowing the teachers to select which students to visit. Treatment teachers were provided a list of six students to visit. If they were unable to visit one of these students, they were instructed to request an alternate name from the research team.

The research team obtained administrative data for 8,944 treatment and control students across the five districts. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only attendance data has been made available to the research team thus far. Additionally, the research team surveyed parents and students who had been visited by a teacher and received 422 completed parent surveys and 73 completed student surveys. Finally, the research team surveyed both treatment and control teachers at the beginning of the school year (pre) and at the end (post). Of the 353 treatment teachers, 214 completed the survey at the beginning of the year before they conducted any home visits, and 152 completed the survey after conducting home visits. Of the 347 control teachers, 233 completed the beginning-of-year survey and 142 completed the end-of-year survey.

The mission of the Annenberg Institute at Brown University is to understand the causes and consequences of educational inequality and to reduce this inequality through innovative, multidimensional, and research-informed approaches. We premise our work on the conviction that reduced inequality and improved educational opportunities lead to enriched lives for children and youth, ultimately contributing to more just and flourishing societies.

https://www.annenberginstitute.org/
Key Findings from the Randomized Controlled Trial Study

- Participation in the Home Visit Project reduced students’ chronic absenteeism, particularly among early elementary students.
- Participation in the Home Visit Project improved teachers’ connections with their students and students’ families.
- Teachers feel home visits improved students’ engagement and achievement.
- Participation in the Home Visit Project made teachers feel more confident in the ability of students to grow.
- Parents and students who participated in the Home Visit Project had overwhelmingly positive experiences.

School District Partners

The research study was conducted in the five Texas school districts which partner with the Home Visit Project: Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District (CFBISD), Dallas Independent School District (DISD), Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD), Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District (HEBISD), and Richardson Independent School District (RISD).
Participation in the Home Visit Project improved student attendance, particularly among early elementary students. The randomized controlled trial study found that participation in the Home Visit Project significantly reduced early elementary students’ chronic absenteeism - defined here as missing at least 10 percent of school days in an academic year. Overall, students who received a visit were 2.8 percentage points less likely to be chronically absent relative to those who did not receive a visit. This difference was found to be statistically significant at a p<0.001 level. Given that this was a randomized controlled trial study, this difference cannot be attributed to chance. Rather, this suggests that being visited by a teacher participating in the Home Visit Project caused early elementary students to attend school more and be less likely to become chronically absent.

The research suggests that this effect on student attendance is due to a combination of a student’s teacher participating in the Home Visit Project and the student being visited. Students who were randomly selected by the research team for the teachers to visit were 2.1 percentage points less likely to be chronically absent relative to students of control teachers. Additionally, these students were 1.8 percentage points less likely to be chronically absent relative to other students in their class who were also taught by the treatment teacher but had not been selected to be visited by that teacher.

**Home visits reduced chronic absenteeism**

My child understood that the school is interested in his well-being. The friendly conversation helped us feel welcomed into the community. Their time investment in their students was commendable.”

- Parent
The research team combined 11 teacher survey items to create a Student Connection construct (see chart for specific survey items). The teachers were asked to rate each item on a scale from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (very true). Across all 11 items, the average ratings were higher for the treatment teachers than the control teachers, and most of the differences were found to be statistically significant. Additionally, the treatment teachers had an overall average rating 0.17 points higher than the control teachers. This difference was found to be statistically significant at a p<0.001 level.1

These findings are particularly powerful given the nature of the randomized controlled trial study. Because all teachers who signed up to participate were willing to conduct home visits, indicating a predisposition toward relationship-building, and teachers were randomly assigned to be part of the treatment or control group, the only thing which differentiates the groups is participation in the Home Visit Project. Consequently, one can attribute a causal effect to these findings. In other words, participation in the Home Visit Project caused teachers to feel stronger connections with their students.

Treatment teachers rate Student Connection measures more highly than control teachers.

Source: RCT treatment teacher end-of-year survey (N=152). RCT control teacher end-of-year survey (N=142). Response choices: 1 – Not true at all, 2 – A little true, 3 – Somewhat true, 4 – Very true

Note: Survey items in chart listed from greatest to least absolute difference between treatment and control.

1Not all treatment or control teachers completed the teacher survey, and therefore these results may not be representative of all treatment or control teachers.
**Home visits improved teachers’ connections with students’ families**

The research team also combined 14 additional teacher survey items to create a Family Connection construct (see chart for specific survey items). The teachers were also asked to rate each of these items on a scale from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (very true). Across all 14 of these items, the average ratings were better\(^3\) for the treatment teachers than the control teachers, and most of the differences were found to be statistically significant. Overall, the average rating was 0.17 points higher for the treatment teachers than the control teachers. This difference was found to be statistically significant at a p<0.001 level.

Again, because teachers were randomly assigned to be part of the treatment or control group, we can imply causality. In other words, participation in the Home Visit Project caused teachers to feel stronger connections with their students’ families. Additionally, on the post-surveys, 98 percent of the treatment teachers reported that they felt home visits improved their communication with families.

### Treatment teachers rate Family Connection measures more highly than control teachers.

![Chart showing the comparison between treatment and control teachers on Family Connection measures.](chart.png)

- **Source:** RCT treatment teacher end-of-year survey (N=152). RCT control teacher end-of-year survey (N=142).
- **Response choices:** 1 – Not true at all, 2 – A little true, 3 – Somewhat true, 4 – Very true
- **Note:** Survey items in chart listed from greatest to least absolute difference between treatment and control.

\(^3\)Note that for one of the items (I find it challenging to communicate with the families of my students), it is “better” for the rating to be lower. Therefore, a negative difference between treatment and control teachers is a positive outcome.
Teachers feel home visits improved students’ engagement and achievement

The surveys also asked the treatment teachers to reflect on the impact of participating in the home visits on their students. Specifically, teachers were asked if they felt the home visits improved student attendance, engagement, behavior, and achievement. Most of the treatment teachers reported that they observed improvement in all four areas. Specifically, 95 percent of the teachers said they observed student engagement improving after visiting a student’s home; and 94 percent said they observed improved student achievement.

![Teachers report improvements in student outcomes as result of home visits.](chart)

Source: RCT treatment teacher end-of-year survey (N=152).
Response choices: Greatly declined, Somewhat declined, No change, Somewhat improved, Greatly improved
Note: Survey items in chart listed from largest to smallest percent somewhat or greatly improved.

“Most of the students that I visited felt a special connection to me and my partner teacher after our visit with them, and it made them want to try more in class.”

- Teacher, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD
Home visits made teachers more confident students can grow

The research team asked teachers how possible they thought it was for students to grow in six different areas: intelligence, grit, content interest, behavior, effort, and talent. The teachers were also asked to rate each of these items on a scale from 1 (not at all possible) to 4 (very possible). Across all six of these items, the average ratings were higher for the treatment teachers than the control teachers, and overall, the average rating was 0.09 points higher for the treatment teachers than the control teachers. This difference was found to be statistically significant at a p<0.05 level.

Again, the benefit of a randomized controlled trial study is we can be confident that statistically significant differences are not due to chance but attributable to participation in the Home Visit Project. That is, participating in the Home Visit Project made teachers more confident that their students can grow over time, particularly in their ability to persevere.

![Chart showing ratings and p-values for different areas of student growth.](chart.png)

**Source:** RCT treatment teacher end-of-year survey (N=152). RCT control teacher end-of-year survey (N=142).

**Response choices:** 1 – Not at all possible, 2 – A little possible, 3 – Somewhat possible, 4 – Very possible

**Note:** Survey items in chart listed from greatest to least absolute difference between treatment and control.

"Sometimes you have to see where students have been in order to help prepare them for where they will go."

- Teacher, Dallas ISD
Parents had positive experiences with home visits

Among the parent survey respondents, nearly all (97 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that the home visits were a positive experience for themselves and for their child. Additionally, 96 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they were “happy that the teacher was able to see my child in our home environment” and 94 percent agreed or strongly agreed that “we felt honored when we received the invitation from the teacher to visit our home.”

Parents report positive home visit experience.

I believe the experience was extremely positive for my child and my family! We always had a warm relationship with the teacher and teacher’s assistant, but the visit increased that even more. We also enjoyed offering hospitality to them, allowing us to care for them a bit with a cup of coffee and conversation.”

- Parent
The surveys also asked parents to reflect on the impact of participating in the home visits. Overwhelmingly, parents reported that they believed the home visits improved the teachers’ understanding of their child’s academic as well as social and emotional needs. Most also felt the home visits improved how much the teacher supported their child academically and emotionally. Additionally, 92 percent of the parent respondents felt that their child was more connected to their teacher because of the home visit, and 90 percent felt themselves to be more comfortable communicating with the teacher due to the home visit.

Parents report improvements as result of home visit.

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Parents [expressed how much it meant to them to meet with me and be able to trust their child is safe and well cared for at school when they are not around.]

- Teacher, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Respondents Who Reported A Little or A Lot Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well the teacher understands your child's social and emotional needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How connected your child feels to the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well the teacher knows your child's academic needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much your child is emotionally supported by the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your comfort in talking with the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much your child is academically supported by the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable you are with contacting the teacher with any concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How confident you are that the teacher treats your child fairly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How friendly and caring the teacher is towards you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How eager your child is to go to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How welcome you feel at your child’s school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How difficult it is for you to understand what the teacher means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How nervous you are to talk with the teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RCT parent survey (N=422).
Response choices: A lot worse, A little worse, The same, A little better, A lot better.
Note: Survey items in chart listed from largest to smallest percent a little or a lot better.
Students had positive experiences with home visits

While not as many students completed the surveys, those who did corroborated what the parents reported. Among the student survey respondents, 97 percent reported the home visit was a positive experience for themselves and their families. About 90 percent were happy the teacher was able to see them in their home environment, and 89 percent felt honored when they received the invitation from their teacher to visit their home.

Students report positive home visit experience.

Source: RCT student survey (N=73).
Response choices: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree
Note: Survey items in chart listed from largest to smallest percent agree or strongly agree.

“I became more open and understanding to why a student may be having a bad day. I looked beyond the initial behavior to see the underlying reasons”

- Teacher, Dallas ISD
The surveys also asked students to reflect on the impact of participating in the home visits. As with the parent respondents, most of the student respondents believed the home visits improved their teachers’ understanding of their academic as well as social and emotional needs. Most also felt the home visits improved how much the teacher supported them academically and emotionally. Additionally, most felt the home visits improved their comfort in communicating with their teacher; how connected they felt to their teacher; and how comfortable they were approaching their teacher with any concerns. Finally, most of the student respondents reported that having their teacher visit them at their home made them feel more welcome at school and more eager to attend school.

Students report improvements as result of home visit.

![Chart showing students report improvements as result of home visit.](image)

Source: RCT student survey (N=73).
Response choices: A lot worse, A little worse, The same, A little better, A lot better.
Note: Survey items in chart listed from largest to smallest percent a little or a lot better.

“After the home visit and based on what the parent shared about her daughter, I have extended grace, mercy, and patience towards the child.”

- Teacher, Richardson ISD
The Dallas Independent School District (DISD) Research Review Board conducted an independent set of analyses of the impact of the Home Visit Project on student attendance and achievement for early elementary students (Pre-Kindergarten through grade 2) for the 2016-17 school year. The research team created an exact match comparison group based on eight factors: campus attended, grade level, race, gender, LEP status, Special Education status, home language, and Fall iStation performance. The researchers then compared the attendance and academic records of students who participated in the Home Visit Project with students in this matched comparison group. They found that students who had been visited by their teachers had higher school attendance rates than those in the comparison group. This difference was found to be statistically significant overall and for Pre-Kindergarten.

Supplemental Analysis #1 by Dallas Independent School District

School attendance rates higher for students visited by teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Participant Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Kindergarten</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>0.6 days***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>-0.2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Grade</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>0.6 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Grade</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>0.5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>0.5 days***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DISD 2016-17 attendance data.

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001
The researchers did not find a statistically significant difference between the two groups on student achievement outcomes. However, they did find that Kindergarten Supera Reading and Language scores were noticeably higher for students who participated in the Home Visit Project relative to the comparison group.

![Bar chart showing reading and language assessment scores for participants and comparison groups.](chart.png)

Reading and language assessment scores higher for students visited by teachers.

Source: DISD 2016-17 attendance data.

The supplemental analysis conducted by DISD supports what the Annenberg Institute research team found with their randomized controlled trial study – the Home Visit Project appears to have a significant impact on student attendance which likely has a positive effect on student achievement.

> “[Home visits] changed the way I see the children. Instead of teaching to children I do not know very well, it changed to teaching children that [had] treated me as a guest in their homes.”

- Teacher, Dallas ISD
Supplemental Analysis #2 by Stand for Children Texas

Stand for Children Texas also conducted independent analyses of the impact of the Home Visit Project based on surveys of participants over four years from 2016-17 through 2019-20. These surveys asked participating teachers if they felt that visiting the homes of their students improved student attendance, student engagement, student behavior, student academic achievement, communication with parents, and their own job satisfaction. Overwhelmingly, teachers reported observing a positive impact in all six of these areas after conducting the home visits.

Participating teachers report improvement in student outcomes, communication with parents, and personal job satisfaction.

The supplemental analysis conducted by Stand for Children Texas also supports what the Annenberg Institute research team found with their randomized controlled trial study – participating teachers perceive the Home Visit Project having a demonstrated impact on student outcomes, such as attendance, engagement, behavior, and academic achievement.
**Conclusion**

The randomized controlled trial study conducted by Annenberg Institute allows us to identify causal effects of the Home Visit Project. Since teachers (and consequently their students) were randomly assigned to participate in the program or not, any statistically significant differences found can be attributed to participation in the Home Visit Project. The research team combined numerous survey items to create a Student Connection construct representing students’ feelings of connection with the teacher and engagement at school; a Family Connection construct representing parents’ feelings of connection with the teacher based on open communication and trust; and a Student Growth construct representing teachers’ beliefs in the ability of their students to grow in different areas such as intelligence, effort, and talent. The researchers found a statistically significant difference when comparing the treatment and control groups across all three of these constructs, indicating that participation in the Home Visit Project had a positive impact on the connections between teachers and students, the connections between teachers and their students’ families, and teachers’ attitudes towards the ability of students to change and grow.

The randomized controlled trial study further found a statistically significant difference in chronic absenteeism rates between students who had been visited in their homes by their teacher and students who had not (the latter including students in the same class as well as students in control classrooms). Consequently, we can conclude that participation in the Home Visit Project increased student attendance. The Dallas Independent School District (DISD) conducted an independent analysis and similarly found that students participating in the Home Visit Project had greater school attendance than a matched comparison group. The analyses do not provide direct evidence that participation in the Home Visit Project improves student academic achievement, however they do suggest a strong possibility of an indirect effect. The randomized controlled trial study found that teachers observed that students’ academic achievement improved after home visits, and four years of participant surveys conducted by Stand for Children Texas support this finding as well.

Despite the interruption of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Home Visit Project implementation during the spring of 2020, early elementary school students receiving home visits were significantly less likely to be chronically absent than their non-visited peers. The disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic has left many students disconnected from school and has resulted in higher rates of chronic absenteeism across the country; this study suggests home visits could be an impactful approach to improve student-educator relationships and engagement in the coming recovery years.

Further, the findings of the RCT study conducted by Annenberg Institute along with the supplemental analyses conducted by DISD and Stand for Children suggest a theory of action wherein the Home Visit Project changes teachers’ beliefs and attitudes as well as the connection between teachers and their students and students’ families. These changes appear to have a positive impact on student attendance and engagement at school which, in turn, likely improves students’ academic achievement.

“I changed my perspective dramatically. I became more empathetic to their lives and upbringings. I began to teach their heart first instead of their minds. I became more engaged with them and became more compassionate and an admirer of their hearts.”

- Teacher, Dallas ISD