Safety First: Addressing Home Visitor Safety in High-Risk Communities

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The Problem
Illinois MIECHV operates in 13 high-risk communities, which include many highly publicized violent neighborhoods.

The Survey
To gain a better understanding of home visitor perceptions of risk and unsafe experiences, as well as how to better address safety concerns, we surveyed home visitors about safety in 2015.

Results
Statewide, home visitors report high levels of concern about potential threats in both the homes and neighborhoods in which they work.

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

Statewide, home visitors report high levels of concern about potential threats in both the homes and neighborhoods in which they work.

UNSAFE EXPERIENCES

While home visitors reported high levels of concern about safety, it is encouraging that they did not report high levels of unsafe experiences compared to their perceptions of risk.

Risk-Reduction Strategies
Home visitors reported practicing a wide range of safety best practices and attending trainings held by their agencies.

Follow Up
Illinois MIECHV created a website with safety best practices, trainings, and safety-related resources: http://igrowillinois.org/safety-home-visiting/

Next Steps
• Further research is needed to identify safety-related opportunities and challenges on a national level and to address home visitor safety without providing disincentives for engaging with families.
• Home visiting funders, models and agencies ultimately must be responsible for ensuring that this research is diffused into practice in order for individual home visitors and the families they serve to benefit.