

20 years!

connections



Alberta Home Visitation
Network Association

Vol. 18 Issue 1

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Message from the Director

20 years! Wow! What an accomplishment for the Alberta Home Visitation Network Association (AHVNA).

We started out in a one room office with one staff person and have grown to where we are bursting at the seams with the number of staff who have joined our organization in the past three years. We have expanded both the program administration team as well as the training team to meet the needs of home visitation programs as well as the early childhood member programs in the province. The AHVNA membership continues to serve agencies and programs that work with families who have children ages zero to six, including First Nations communities, Metis settlements, Family Resource Networks (FRN) and others.

This journey would not have been possible without the commitment of the AHVNA membership and the Board in their desire to make this world a better place for children. This is done by promoting positive parent-child interactions and improving parenting skills and child development knowledge, all while supporting the parents so that their children will have the best start in their lives.

Throughout this issue you will see glimpses of the past through a history of AHVNA and reflections of various agencies. There are moments of the present here too, with agencies and programs sharing their various experiences in the work they do with families and in their agencies. Kathy Archer encourages

each of us to think about what our purpose is and what type of leader we want to be, speaking to the work that we engage in.

The agencies have continued to demonstrate leadership within their communities and AHVNA is part of their team by providing some of the resources they might need to accomplish their goals.

AHVNA continues to provide support and training for programs by listening to their needs and trying to meet them where they are at, as has been demonstrated over the past two years during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have been touched by the wonderful comments from agencies about AHVNA and our amazing staff. It has been a great joy and a privilege to provide services for agencies knowing that we have a similar purpose and goal. It is heartwarming, and an honour, to be in the company of so many caring and committed practitioners in our province. ❤️

"Sane leadership is the unshakeable faith in people's capacity to be generous, creative, and kind. It is the commitment to create the conditions for these capacities to blossom, protected from the external environment. It is the deep knowing that, even in the most dire circumstances, more becomes possible as people engage together with compassion and discernment, self-determining their way forward."

~ by Margaret Wheatley from the book,
Who Do We Choose to Be?

Lavonne Roloff is the provincial director of the Alberta Home Visitation Network Association (AHVNA).

3 Perspectives of 20 Years with AVHNA

by Brandy Berry

When I was asked to share Healthy Families Healthy Futures' thoughts and experiences with the Alberta Home Visitation Network Association (AHVNA) for the past 20 years, I wanted to capture a few differing reflections to more fully articulate our long-lasting and wonderful relationship.

First, I asked Linda West, our previous executive director, to share some history around AHVNA's beginnings. This is what she shared:

"In the late 1990s, funding from Alberta Child and Family Services for home visitation was available in most regions of Alberta following five pilot programs which ran in Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer. Healthy Families Healthy Futures (HFHF) applied for funding for a regional home visitation program in 1999, receiving their first funding in 2000. With so many new programs starting in the province, provincial network meetings were held in Red Deer to support training and continuity as well as connection to Child and Family Services. These meetings morphed into the Alberta Home Visitation Network Association, or AHVNA for short.

The home visitation model primarily utilized was based on Healthy Families America, with training provided originally in the USA. HFHF sent our first two Program Directors, Lavonne Roloff and Patricia Baggett, to Chicago for their training. Later, AHVNA coordinated Albertan trainers to travel throughout the regions to provide training on the model to all staff providing home visitation services.

In 2002, Lavonne Roloff became the AHVNA provincial director. HFHF's loss became AHVNA's gain. Lavonne has provided leadership and training as well as opportunities for networking for home visitation programs throughout Alberta and beyond. Quality training opportunities have supported quality programming, so that our home visitation programs are able to provide support to families with young children.

I participated with Lavonne, Child and Family Services, and staff from other home visitation programs in developing Alberta Home Visitation Program standards, which were approved by the Ministry in 2004. These standards have been reviewed over the years, but to date have not been changed." ❤️



**Healthy Families
Healthy Futures**

Brandy Berry is the executive director of Healthy Families Healthy Futures Society, a proud member of AHVNA for 20 years.



Next, Pam Pearce, a current and original staff member of HFHF, volunteered her thoughts:

“Twenty years ago, I was hired as a home visitor for HFHF in Westlock. At that time, Lavonne Roloff was my supervisor. During the next few months, Lavonne guided and directed me into the role of a home visitor, and her wisdom and experience were invaluable. Unfortunately for us, and fortunately for AHVNA, Lavonne went on to work for them during that first year as the provincial director of the network.

For the next 16 years, I continued working as a home visitor for HFHF, and during this time had tremendous support and guidance from Lavonne and AHVNA. AHVNA offered many trainings throughout the years that were valuable and instrumental in helping and supporting me to become the best home visitor I could be. This benefitted the families I supported and worked with to become the strong, supportive, loving parents they wanted to be. I learnt through these trainings how to reach individuals who were maybe never given any type of encouragement or praise, and how this would positively impact the children in their care. Home visitation comes from a strengths-based approach which when used with families strengthens the family circle of parenting.

I have been a program manager at HFHF for last five years and the wonderful, continuous support from AHVNA has not stopped. I have looked to them for trainings for my staff and also for myself. The staff at AHVNA is very supportive and helpful and if some kind of training is needed, they will do their best to bring it to us for our teams. As we experience the difficulties of COVID, many of the trainings have been available virtually, which is huge for us as we can then continue to keep the quality and consistency in training within our staff as people move in and out of roles.

The AHVNA team is very friendly, helpful, and extremely accommodating for us, especially when I was new as a supervisor and had many errors in registering staff. I was always met with a laugh from Bev or Lavonne, and I was made to feel like I was doing a great job!!” ❤️

Finally, I will provide my own reflections.

Throughout the years I have worked at HFHF, I have held different roles and have had many different interactions with AHVNA. As a home visitor, I received high quality trainings and was able to attend and participate in provincial meetings that enhanced my ability and confidence to do my best and to connect with others across the province.

As a program manager, I was invited to share my own and HFHF’s experiences and knowledge through opportunities to present at provincial meetings and participate in different committees that respectfully sought feedback, consultation, and our regional rural perspectives. We have always felt like our voice and experiences are welcomed, recognized, and appreciated.

In my role as executive director of HFHF, in addition to the above mentioned points, I have also had the opportunity and privilege to become part of the AHVNA board. This chance has not only supported a greater connection to home visitation programs across the province, but it has also provided me with a deeper appreciation for AHVNA’s role in all of the wonderful work that is being done. I need to commend Lavonne and the AHVNA staff for their hard work and ability to be flexible, responsive, and open to new ideas and feedback. Their ongoing and invaluable support makes the work we do easier.

I am going to close by quoting Pam Pearce because I could not find a way to say it better myself.

“They say it takes a village to raise a child, I believe that’s true. I also believe it takes a village to support and build a community to raise that child and family, and AHVNA is definitely part of my village!! Congratulations AHVNA on your 20 Year accomplishment, and here’s to many more years of community partners working together!!” ❤️



Starting a New Program In a Pandemic? Call AHVNA!

by City of Leduc FRN

AHVNA has been a great support for the City of Leduc Family Resource Network (FRN) over the last two years as we navigated the growing pains of starting a completely new program, and during a pandemic no less.

We have benefited greatly from all the high-quality training opportunities that have been provided. The way that AHNVA has provided connection post-training to network with other home visitors and discuss implementation of the skills that have been developed during those trainings has been invaluable.

The facilitators are always engaging, skilled, and professional in their delivery. AHVNA has consistently increased their own skill base surrounding virtual trainings. By keeping up with the evolving ways of online delivery, AHVNA fosters a learning environment that continues to be interesting and engaging.

AHVNA staff were a key support to us in being available for consultation in the early development of our program. Looking back on their consultation, it really did help us build our vision for home visitation, parent education, and community presence. We are so grateful for their openness to share their wisdom in our field and help support the next generation of Home Visitors build the skills and expand their tools when supporting our communities and families.

A special shoutout to AHVNA's PhD student who compiled a report that outlined a strong curriculum guide that helped highlight some best practices for our team moving forward. It is such a wonderful asset to have an organization that helps our province build a strong foundation and provide clear standards for family work.

The training opportunities created by AHVNA offer skill building, but beyond that, they offer an environment of reflective practice. We are so grateful for the networking opportunities that have stemmed from receiving training with AHVNA and the easy access we have to their expertise! They are so efficient in responding to questions and follow up! ❤️

Cheers to the next 20 years!

Cassy Nelson, Kaylene McKinney, and Johanna Barron are the faces of The City of Leduc FRN.

Online Makes a Difference: Starting a Home Visitation Program During a Pandemic

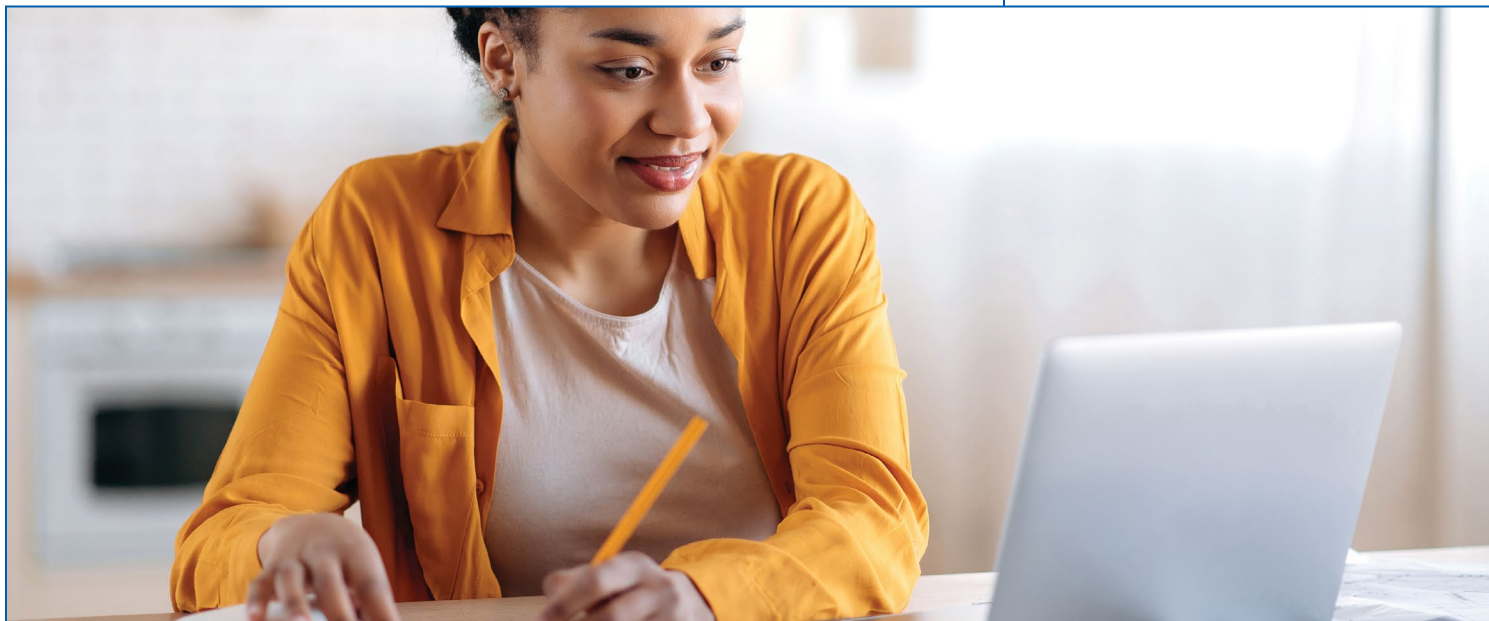
by Wendy Koene

Home visitation is new to our organization. We understood what home visitation was, but we did not have a framework to implement a program. Another long-standing home visitation program advised us to contact AHVNA, saying they provided great training, and they were right. The staff at AHVNA were so approachable, helpful, and are always prompt in answering any questions we have.

During COVID, AHVNA staff quickly facilitated course providers to do online courses. In the last year we took the opportunity to take a full slate of courses online, something we could have never done in person because we're in northern Alberta. We now feel confident in offering a quality home visitation program. We continue to take other courses, enhancing what we have already learned.

AHVNA staff have shown us kindness, patience, understanding, and professionalism. They have years of experience and a high standard of excellence, which has provided us with the skills and confidence to do this work with families. ❤️

Wendy Koene is a coordinator with the Peace Region Family Resource Network.





Never Alone: 25 Years of South Region Parents as Teachers

by Rose Boersma

South Region Parents as Teachers (SRPAT) in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada celebrates 25 years of serving young children and families! During its 25-year history, SRPAT has seen, and been part of, a commitment to continuous quality improvement as the sole Canadian Parents as Teachers international affiliate model program. With a commitment to evidence and best practice, Parents as Teachers (PAT) home visitation has evolved and innovated for over 35 years and is a worldwide leader in home visitation.

SRPAT's humble beginnings start in 1996, delivering PAT home visits to families on the northside of Lethbridge. In 1997, Downey Associates evaluated the program and determined the program to be one of three (out of over 200) newly funded projects based on solid research, utilizing best practice, and demonstrating positive outcomes. As a result, in 1999, the program expanded to the entire city as a Community Action Program for Children (CAPC). Since the early 2000s, SRPAT has been delivering PAT home visitation services to families in rural southwestern Alberta. Now, the agency is also a Family Resource Network (FRN) home visitation spoke program within four FRN Networks, and is honoured to provide PAT programming to families in Lethbridge, including urban Indigenous families, and

across rural southwestern Alberta through a network of seven rural satellite offices.

SRPAT was an inaugural member of the Alberta Home Visitation Network Association (AHVNA) and has benefited from AHVNA membership in many ways over the past 20 years. The previous program manager served as a member at large on the AHVNA board, agency staff have accessed more trainings that we can count, the agency has presented during the Touch Point Series and provided content for the Connections publication, and staff have participated in a myriad of AHVNA meetings, AGMs, and conferences.

Conference sessions have served as markers throughout my personal home visitation journey in my roles as home visitor and program manager. One of the most memorable conference speakers was Monique Gray Smith. I will never forget when Monique shared her experience as an Indigenous child, of never recognizing herself on the cover of a book. Her comment was profound and has stuck with me to this day. From that time forward, when we are selecting resources for our agency and families, we intentionally strive to ensure our materials and resources represent the diversity of all the amazing families we serve.



Being connected to AHVNA is one reason the agency has achieved our 25-year celebration milestone. We have never felt alone. Having both affiliation with a comprehensive, trusted home visitation model and being connected to AHVNA means our agency has been supported and equipped to focus on doing what we do best—delivering PAT services to young children and their families. We know we are not alone.

SRPAT wishes AHVNA, its staff, directors, and membership the very best on your 20th Anniversary. Thank you for being strong advocates for quality home visitation for Alberta's families, communities, and organizations. ❤️

Rose Boersma is the program manager with South Region Parents as Teachers in Lethbridge, Alberta.



Alberta Home Visitation
Network Association

by Lavonne Roloff

AHVNA History

In 1998 and 1999 there were two “Creating Healthy Families” conferences and a “Healthy Families in Region 11” conference held in the province of Alberta. Participants at these conferences encouraged the provincial government to develop voluntary, long-term home visitation programs as a way of assisting families with children aged zero to six years, who might be at risk of neglect or abuse. There were over 800 community members and agency representatives who participated in these conferences.

While all three of these conferences focused on the development, delivery, and outcomes of the Healthy Families America program, it was discovered that many similar home visitation programs already existed in the province. These included Invest in Kids, Great Kids Inc., Teaching Family Model, and Parents as Teachers. The Westview Health Region had invested in a home visitation program with a Healthy Families America focus. Three home visitation programs in Edmonton participated in a national study on home visitation. Several Healthy Families/Healthy Beginnings programs were initiated, and there were early intervention programs funded through health and education such as Head Start and Early Head Start.

The benefits of home visitation are:

- Moms and babies are healthier
- Children are better prepared for school
- Children are safer
- Families are more self-sufficient

Home visiting programs save money. RAND found that high-fidelity programs for at-risk families have a \$5.70 return for every tax dollar spent from reduced spending for healthcare and welfare services. Another study of a home visiting program reported saving \$3.00 for every \$1.00 spent on the program during an infant's first six months due to reduced emergency care visits.

The overwhelming message from conference participants was that there was a need for a provincial network to support and provide opportunities for community-based programs about the possibility of supporting home visitation in the province. In 1999, a group of interested individuals met to share information about home visitation programs in their communities.

In 2001, the home visitation initiative was launched by the Ministry of Children's Services in response to recommendations made in "Start Young-Start Now!" report from the Task Force on Children at Risk by the Alberta Children's Forum (1999) and the provincial task force on Children at Risk.

As program funding for home visitation programs became available throughout the province, the need for a provincial network became more apparent. The members secured funding with the Muttart Foundation, which was matched by Alberta Children's Services.

This provided stable funding for five years and allowed the network to develop an infrastructure. During this time Hull Services served as the fiscal agent. The association continues to be funded through Alberta Children's Services and various other funding grants, where applicable. AHVNA generates revenue through membership fees and course registration fees for other training relevant to the field.

Incorporated as a non-profit society in 2001, AHVNA is a provincial association that promotes quality home visitation throughout the province. In 2005, the network became a registered charity. The current mission is "to support the provision of quality, voluntary, home visitation services promoting the best possible outcomes for Alberta families with young children."

The association is governed by a board of representatives with representation across the province, bringing perspectives from both rural and urban communities. Over the years, under the leadership and vision of the

various Board chairpersons—Shauna Seneca, Marianne Symons, Marianne Dickson, and most recently Lisa Sauve—AHVNA has grown. In the early years, the Board members were integral in establishing the network. The association benefitted from the expertise of the board and agency members who served on many committees and working groups to support the work of the home visitation programs. They shared evidence-based research and best practice resources with one another to strengthen the practice of home visitation in the province with the goal of supporting families.

AHVNA is a member-driven organization comprised of interested individuals, community-based agencies, home visitation programs, family resource networks (FRN), early childhood programs, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Settlements. There are over sixty provincially funded home visitation programs with Alberta Children's Services, and the majority are AHVNA members. The association membership is comprised of programs throughout the province that have an interest in home visitation as a practice and early childhood with an emphasis on ages zero to five.

Initially, a full-time provincial coordinator was hired in 2002. The title was later changed to provincial director. Over the years more staff have joined the AHVNA team, including a training coordinator, training coach/facilitators, family violence specialists, and program administration staff.

AHVNA members worked with Children's Services staff to generate the home visitation standards in 2004. These served as a blueprint for home visitation programs in setting up guidelines for their programs.

AHVNA provides training and support for provincially funded home visitation programs as well as other agencies working with families in the ages zero to six years range. There has been a huge emphasis on working with the provincially funded home visitation programs that are spokes within the HUB and spoke model of the Family Resource Networks. Training such as the Great Kids Inc-Integrated Strategies and Parent Survey courses, Developmental Parenting, Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO trademark) and HOVRs provide support for staff in their work.

Other training workshops/programs that support working in the human services are also offered. In 2015, AHVNA developed a Family Violence screening protocol for home visitation programs. However, the screening tool has been used in many areas other than home visitation because family violence affects all types of human services. AHVNA also designed a Reflective Supervision workshop that emphasizes the importance of reflective practice.

In the fall of 2019, agencies were asked to submit an Expression of Interest to continue offering home visitation in their communities. This was to ensure that home visitation is offered throughout the province and accessible to anyone who would benefit from this service. In April 2020, programs were informed of their funding and because of this process, the number of home visitation programs in the province has increased. More home visitation programs are available throughout the province and have a greater reach.

Home visitation programs are an integral part of every Family Resource Network in the province.

AHVNA staff and members have served on provincial as well as national committees to support the work of family-serving agencies. Ultimately, we hope to support practitioners in the vital work they do with families and their children so that they will improve their parenting skills, parent child interaction, and provide a safe, nurturing environment for their children. All of this makes a difference in the lives of children! ❤️

Lavonne Roloff is the provincial director of the Alberta Home Visitation Network Association (AHVNA).

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Are you lost? Lead with Purpose

by Kathy Archer

What is the point of being in a Leadership role?

Why are you here?

Why do you do the work you do?

Why for this agency? Why at this time?

What's the point in coming to work each day?

You might be shaking your head right now, saying, "I have no idea."

Are you lost?

Leaders of all kinds get lost.

Leaders lose track of where they are, what they are supposed to be doing, and for what reason. If you are one of these lost leaders, you might notice that you spend more time running around putting out fires rather than on what you "should" be doing. Leaders who feel lost miss the priorities. They often burn themselves out.

If you are lost, you might feel lost!

- I don't know what the point is anymore.
- My work doesn't fill me up.
- I don't feel like I accomplish anything in a day.
- I just chase fires and never get to the meaningful work.

When a leader loses their way, they become bitter, agitated, and not very much fun to work for.

The whole point of leadership is that we are going somewhere.

We have people in leadership to lead the organization to a certain point. When we are clear on that direction, our team can come alongside us more willingly. Consider these leaders and their direction:

- A mountain climber guides their group to a particular destination in the mountains.
- A cruise ship captain knows which ports to dock at and on what days.
- A mother heading out may list what she needs to pick up before making her way back home.

Each of these individuals is clear on their direction and why they are going there. You need to get clear also!

So what is your purpose?

What is your point or your purpose in leading this organization?

The answer to that question may not come readily to you. But when you invest time in discovering the answer, or indeed a variety of answers, you will find it changes the course of your day as well as your relationships. Identifying your core purpose makes it easier to lead, and thus people will follow you more willingly.

Your purpose may seem to change over time.

I found that my purpose changed many times in my duration as a leader.

- At times, my purpose was to get my team through accreditation, contract negotiations, or proposal writing.
- I had the purpose many times of getting new programs up and running.
- At other times, I was focused on building a strong team after some challenges.
- Looking back, I see my overall purpose was to grow the staff who reported to me. It was to leave a legacy of leadership.

What about you? Are you running around like a chicken with your head cut off, not knowing where you are going? It might be time to find some direction.

Leading with purpose means you have a clear sense of what you are doing and where you are going as the leader of your team and the organization.

Finding your core purpose.

So how do you find your purpose? It's not a simple, two-minute exercise. It is a mindful process that takes some time. If you want to get clear on your purpose, intentionally set aside some time to go through the process of review, reflection, and identification.

• Review

Start by looking back over your career and your life. Identify peak moments. These are the times that you were "on top of the world." Look for patterns and similarities. When were you most alive, engaged, and feeling fulfilled?

• Reflect

Have some conversations. Talk to your staff, peers, colleagues, family, and perhaps a coach. It's also great to do this kind of work in a group. Work together with some peers to mine for the gold!

Then contemplate, ponder, and my favourite, write—journal about your purpose. Just let yourself answer the questions I listed at the beginning of the article. You'll be surprised what you discover.

• Identify

Start somewhere with identifying what your core purpose is. You may alter it and tweak it as time goes on to get the words right but start somewhere. Putting some words to your focus gives you a sense of direction.

Gaining a sense of direction.

Leaders who move forward with a sense of purpose find they are more effective. They also find they are more fulfilled. Take the time to get a sense of direction. Identify your core purpose by reviewing and then reflecting. Trust that in doing so, you'll unearth some things you didn't know before that get you and your team back on track.

Leadership development coach Kathy Archer helps women develop confidence, maintain their composure, and lead with integrity! She is the author of Mastering Confidence and the host of the Surviving to Thriving podcast. Kathy blogs for women leading in nonprofits at www.kathyarcher.com/blog.

Theory of Change

by Meghan Pitre

In August of 2020, our home visitation team doubled in size with the addition of four new home visitors. We were thrilled with the opportunity to grow our team, and to share our passion for supporting families in their parenting goals and hopes to grow within their communities.

Together, our team explored *Developmental Parenting: A Guide for Early Childhood Practitioners* (Roggman, 2008) through AHVNA's book club series. Having read about the Theory of Change, the supervisors thought this would be a wonderful tool to use with the team to strengthen our commitment towards the shared goal of supporting families.

Delving into this, we split up the assignment into three parts. First, an email was sent to all home visitors, encouraging them to look over and fill out the Theory of Change worksheet included in the developmental parenting book. These questions encouraged home visitors to explore what they believe the main goals of home visitation to be, and what differences we hope to see in participants who have attended the home visitation program, as compared to those who have not. The questions encouraged thought into what process would be required to support such changes to occur, and what our roles are, personally, to encourage this change to happen.

Next, after completing the worksheet, everyone came together for a team meeting to discuss and review their answers. We were pleased to find many similarities between answers and had some passionate discussion regarding our hopes for the program.

By exploring the differences we anticipated between caregivers who have attended home visitation and those who did not, we were able to articulate the hopes and goals we had for the program more clearly. These parents would better notice and anticipate their children's needs,

be more cognizant of their own parenting goals, and have increased confidence to achieve them, knowing they had access to the right information and supports to encourage them.

By looking at what caregivers would achieve, we were able to delve in to how this would affect children. We hoped to see children who developed strong attachments, a sense of belonging, and the skills and supports to grow into well regulated, resilient adults. Our home visitors discussed that although we couldn't necessarily stop children from facing adversity or stress, the difference we encouraged in their caregivers would give them the appropriate emotional and physical supports to overcome such challenges.

Lastly, having explored what differences we expected and hoped to see in our families, we continued by exploring how our program would foster these changes. Reflected through their individual answers, home visitors shared common beliefs that through community referrals, strength-based relationships with both spokes and families, supporting parent-child interactions, and putting parents in the "driver's seat," we would be able to work towards their individual goals and be there to support our families as they thrive.

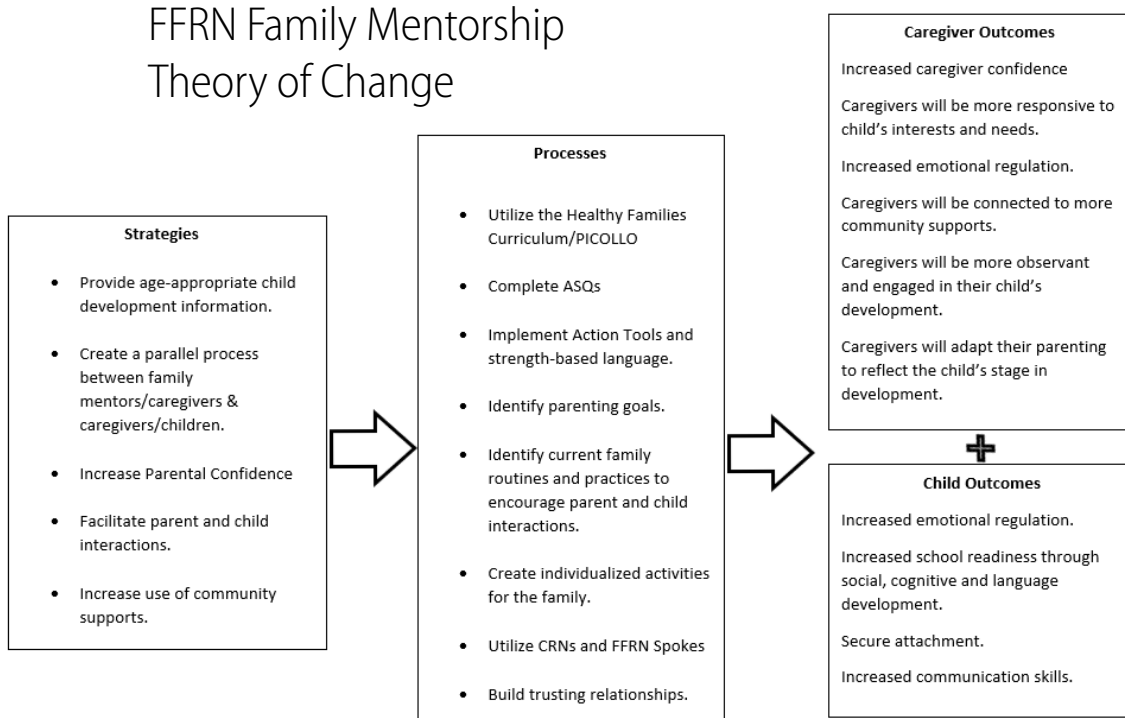
The outcome was a strong, renewed vision for our home visitation program. The experience not only allowed us a concrete way to support our mission but allowed us to explore the various ways our team members believed we could achieve this. We were able to celebrate how we, as individual people, could come together—with all our different ways of thinking, strengths, and knowledge—to continue working towards a shared passion of supporting caregivers and their children, and towards an entire community that thrives. ❤️

Meghan Pitre is a team leader with Family Futures Resource Network in Edmonton.

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FFRN Family Mentorship Theory of Change



20 Years In: What People Say About Us

Feedback from the people who use our services is an important part of how we at AHVNA plan our work. We are always looking for the gaps and trying to fill them with the latest research and knowledge. Since it's our 20th anniversary, we asked home visitors around the province to let us know how we've done so far. Here's what people had to say.

How has AHVNA impacted Home Visitation over the past 20 years?

"It has supported agencies in learning, supporting, growing and doing better in all aspects. AHVNA facilitates the training to train agency staff, who support families in growing knowledge. This knowledge spreads to community, province and country to have stronger, more resilient children, families and future communities and leaders." - Velvet Buhler, Healthy Families Healthy Futures

"The training and opportunities that AHVNA has provided to me over the 11 years that I have been a home visitor, is what helped shape me to be the HV that I have become. I have also built amazing connections with other staff and professionals to continue to feel supported outside of meetings and workshops." - Melissa Tubbs, Town of Sylvan Lake FRN

"AHVNA has provided the continuity and community needed to do such vital work! The training, support and connections has allowed professionals from all across the province the opportunity to grow and improve their practice, and make lifelong connections with other practitioners." - Kerry Kentfield, Terra Centre

"The training has been super helpful in ensuring we have the latest information and research to support families." - Christy Elliott, Wildrose

"AHVNA has helped to create universal standards and consistency throughout home visitation programs." - Danielle Heisler, Leduc County FRN

"AHVNA has built credibility and awareness to the value of Home Visitation. Historically, Children's Services invested in reactive core services to support children and families once they had already reached crisis. When Home Visitation began as intervention for high risk/vulnerable families, it was viewed by many in the CS world as a soft-touch approach to working with families with nice little babies.

AHVNA played a critical and pivotal role in educating our colleagues in the field on importance of Early Intervention and Prevention and always backed this up with evidence-based research.

AHVNA has been the constant and driving force behind developing protocols, guidelines and standards for the service delivery. This has led to a strong Provincial network of agencies supporting each other as we built our unique programs under the overreaching common goal of strengthening families by enhancing protective factors.

AHVNA continues to grow in strength and capacity. The next 20 years will be just as exciting!" - Marianne Dickson, Wild Rose Community Connections

"I think AHVNA has impacted Home Visitation many ways over the last 20 years. One way that comes to mind first and foremost is creating and striving toward a standardized, recognized profession. While Home Visitation looks different per program, there are some common strands within it and AHVNA has helped solidify this.

Another way AHVNA has deeply impacted Home Visitation is the quality training that is offered and at a reasonable cost. Many trainings have been offered by top individuals in their field. AHVNA has listened to what the members want and try to find quality presenters on that topic.

Lastly, I will comment on the connectedness and community created. The team at AHVNA has done a wonderful job at pulling practitioners together creatively during the pandemic. Through book clubs and check ins, the sense of connectedness is still there." - Rene Killam, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society



How has Home Visitation changed over the past 20 years?

"As new knowledge, insights, strength-based teaching, improved language evolves, AHVNA has evolved with it, passing all this on through their trainings." - Velvet Buhler, Healthy Families Healthy Futures

"Families' needs have become much more complex since I first began working in Home Visitation 14 years ago." - Alissa McDonald, Town of Sylvan Lake FRN Enrichment Centre

"Less prescribed/offering of the answers... and transformed into a very REFLECTIVE partnership with parents and helping them find the answers within themselves that can be best applied to their families." - Cassy, City of Leduc FRN

"Home visitation is much more supported, staff are adequately trained and much more able to respond to the needs of the community." - Melissa Mendes Hurst, Terra Centre

"I have only been a home visitor for 2 years. The change I have seen is through the pandemic. AHVNA has provided so much support and easy access to training virtually now." - Angela Kinzel, Sylvan Lake FRN

"As Home Visitation contracts rolled out across the Province in 1999, agencies gathered over coffee and shared our visions, experiences, talents, gifts, wisdoms, connections and expertise. This modest collaboration and shared passion led to formalizing this group into a society and then a Charitable Organization."

Having AHVNA mobilized in such an organized manner has afforded our members with training and supports to enhance the capacity of practitioners to deliver quality services.

It has also allowed for the collection of data over 20 years that demonstrates the need and outcomes of Home Visitation." - Marianne Dickson, Wild Rose Community Connections

"In terms of what the overall goal is, probably not much. In terms of the efficiency and quality of work provided, it has become more streamlined, valuable, efficient, thanks to AHVNA." - Kristina Borrows, Children's Cottage

What was the funniest thing that occurred during/on the way to/from an AHVNA training or home visit?

"A few years ago, I drove for an hour to a little farm to complete an intake visit with a family. Upon arrival, I didn't think much of the field of sheep and goats, so many sheep and goats!

But as I was leaving, it was the goats that had climbed on top of the car that caught my attention. Luckily, it was not my car and the mother said she was used to it." - Melissa Tubbs, Town of Sylvan Lake FRN

"Travelling for training has always been a highlight and I miss it terribly. It is a great way to connect with our own staff as well as others in the field. One of the most fun trips involved planning our leaving and returning around ensuring we could stop for Crooked Creek Donuts (if you haven't been there, you've missed something special) and sending pictures of us eating them to the staff we left back in GP." - Tanice Jones, Grande Prairie Family Education Society

"Working with toddlers...the funny moments never stop!" - Cassy, City of Leduc FRN

"Not really funny but impactful! I had the best time getting to know my co-supervisor on a road trip to Red Deer! During that trip we went from coworkers to friends!" - Kerry Kentfield, Terra Centre

"On a visit we had outside, I was walking to the park with a mom and her 2 kids. The 5 year old spotted a zucchini plant in someone's yard and was SO EXCITED there were hotdogs growing!! Funniest thing ever." - Christy Elliott, Wildrose

"Is it funny when a mom is changing her baby's poop diaper on my tailgate in the parking lot? Or in the hatch of the back of my car?" - Danielle Heisler, Leduc County FRN

"Another great memory I have is at the first offered Great Kids Inc training, my team and I were standing in the parking lot discussing the training and somehow it transitioned to talking about babies and first time moms. I wasn't a mom yet at that time but I had just found out I was expecting. My coworker, as she was making a joke, got down in front of me and put her ear to my belly and said her joke about a baby talking to her from in there. Little did she know, there was someone in there! My little

baby boy, who is now turning three years old next week. I will never forget that moment." - Rene Killam, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

"One of our home visitors was late for a visit a few weeks ago because there was a stubborn moose on the highway." - Kristina Borrows, Children's Cottage

"My car's battery died right in front of the house where I had to enter. After the visit, I walked to my car without saying anything to the family. It was snowing outside. Once in the car, I called a towing service; however, it arrived 30 minutes later. The children noticed I was in my car and started jumping in front of the window to play with me despite my gestures to ask them to keep quiet. The mother, alerted by the children's noise, found that I was still there and asked me if something was wrong. All ashamed, I told her the truth. Luckily the tow truck showed up just as she was asking me to come home." - Aurelie Minka, IGLF

"During a home visit, I was visiting with a mom who had a toddler, preschooler, and was pregnant. We were outdoors and she was sitting on a bench. I noticed, she was shifting and repositioning herself during the first minutes of the visit. I asked her if she was alright, needed anything and she replied she had been having contractions for a while! Shockingly, this hadn't prompted her to reschedule/cancel our visit that morning. Now that's what I call engaged!" - Rose Boersma, South Region Parents as Teachers

"My coworker and myself were given a key to our room on night before an AHVNA training and when we entered our room, there was a man there watching tv. They gave us the wrong room!" - Pam Pearce, Healthy Families Healthy Futures



connections

Coming up

The next issue of *Connections* will focus on engaging families. If you would like to submit an article or resource for this topic, please contact the AHVNA office by June 15, 2022.

Hearing from you

Connections is published two times per year by the Alberta Home Visitation Network Association. We welcome comments, questions and feedback on this newsletter. Please direct any comments to Lavonne Roloff, AHVNA provincial director, by phone at 780.429.4787 or by email to info@ahvna.org.

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WITH LOVE

by Val Crosby

I'm sure we have all written in a Schedule A or annual report the phrase, "shift and adapt program delivery to adjust to the changing needs of the families we serve"...or something like that. We know the plans we start the year with are often not the completed projects we end with. Somewhere along the way we evaluate, reassess or, as per the new buzz word, PIVOT to meet the changing needs of our client base (or as we like to call them, "families").

Never has that been more apparent than in the last two years of Family Resource Network (FRN) rollout and pandemic roll-in. As agencies struggled to adapt and learn and design (or redesign), we often looked to the "powers that be" for guidance. Our agency was tasked with rebuilding after the loss of PLC funding and creating a new home visitation program. We looked to AHVNA for support, and they have never let us down.

Lavonne and Shannon and the entire team answered numerous questions, countless emails and telephone calls, and listened to far too many venting conversations. They were able to support the home visitation agencies that were moving into the FRN model either from existing programming or from scratch. They were able to create programming to support the needs that no one could have anticipated in the programming/funding shift...in a pandemic.

The shift to online training, the new program creation, and the individual program support was done with seamless efficiency and grace. I'm sure it didn't feel that way to them in the moment, but from the outside looking in, they made it seem easy peasy.

As an outspoken frustrated agency lead, I never hesitated to reach out to them for guidance and support. They were able to create learning and networking opportunities for us. They developed and facilitated safe spaces to be heard and connect with other agencies experiencing the same issues. And most importantly, they nurture a love and respect for the home visitation process.

We talk and hear often of parallel practice. AHVNA was able to show us how to meet families where they are—how to slow down and make sure the family was confident in the skills mastered before they moved on to the next steps. They were able to showcase how you walk alongside the family and build on their strengths—just substitute "agency" for "family." Above all they were able to connect with us in an authentic way and help us find hope, which led to success.

I am a card-carrying member of the "I LOVE AHVNA" club. They even asked me to speak at the provincial level and accepted and supported my topic of "How NOT to set up a HV program in 6 steps or less." Talk about supporting vulnerability and letting me tell my truth.

They are a fearless group of professionals who put their heads down and did what they needed to do to help us through the last two years. We are looking forward to what comes next, all the while confident we will be supported through whatever comes our way by the amazing team at AHVNA.

I'm just hoping it's not zombies....I hate zombies. ❤️

Val Crosby is the executive director for the Mackenzie Family Resort Network in High Level, Alberta. She considers herself the president of the AHVNA fan club.



Alberta Home Visitation
Network Association

If you would like additional copies of the publication, visit the AHVNA website at www.ahvna.org/Resources/Publications/. See Vol 18 Issue 1.