



The Family Connects model is an evidence-based approach to supporting all newborns and their families. *Community alignment* is a core component of the model. It is critical to the success of the program to understand the needs of families and capacity of service providers to meet those needs. The goal is to improve the accuracy and efficiency of connecting families with the right service, at the right time, in the right amount. This starts before the first home visit occurs by reviewing available information, engaging in discussions with parents and providers, and developing communication pathways and key partnerships.

This work, led by a local community alignment specialist, uses a system of feedback loops to ensure the nurses have access to updated contact and capacity information for community agencies. The community alignment specialist also actively works to identify gaps in support for families and collaborates with partners to help address those needs.

Why Does Community Alignment Matter?

Community alignment impacts all levels of the Family Connects program. No two families are identical – each will have their own goals, strengths, needs, parenting style, and cultural and language preferences. It is essential for nurse home visitors to have an up-to-date directory of resources that addresses these needs. Community-level outcomes are dependent on the program’s ability to make appropriate and timely connections to effective community resources. Increased communication among agencies reduces inefficiencies and puts organizations in position to do their best work. As a whole, the core components of Family Connects – the nurse home visit, data and monitoring, and community alignment – provide a larger picture about rates of risks for families, gaps in capacity or services, and community strengths.

What Does Successful Community Alignment Look Like?

The process of community alignment is ongoing and iterative – there isn’t a finish line. When a community launches a Family Connects site and begins to get a picture of the strength and needs of the population, gaps and trends will begin to emerge from the data. A strong foundation of community alignment creates the environment for positive change. Family Connects sites have shared examples of success in addressing the need for material goods, such as car seats, diapers, and cribs; as well as improvements in transportation policies, access to health care, and improved program referral and acceptance rates. Each community will determine what system level change they hope to effect.

COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT PROCESS

COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT IS AN ITERATIVE, EVOLVING PROCESS THAT REQUIRES CLOSE ATTENTION TO CONTEXT, RELATIONSHIPS, SYSTEMS, AND DATA



UNDERSTAND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

- Gain understanding of historical context and community priorities
- Review needs assessments & available data
- Conduct listening & visioning sessions
- Explore knowledge & attitudes about home visiting and population health approaches

IDENTIFY SERVICES & PARTNERS

- Identify community collaboratives and coalitions
- Identify maternity care providers & pediatric providers
- Identify high quality resource & referral information sources
- Identify potential champions and partners



CREATE ESSENTIAL CONNECTIONS

- Create Agency Finder resource directory
- Establish Community Advisory Board
- Engage with medical providers, home visiting programs, champions, and other referral partners
- Attend community collaborative meetings

MAINTAIN THE PROCESS

- Update and improve Agency Finder
- Communicate about successes and barriers
- Identify and address gaps in resources
- Continually cultivate new relationships
- Use data to inform future community priorities

