

The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin



# Final Report on Improving Home Visiting Performance



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Funding provided by Children's Hospital of  
Wisconsin Community Services  
Project management services provided by  
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# The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin

## Final Report



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## From the Leadership Team to Our Stakeholders

### Where We Began To Where We Are

It's been an exciting 15 years for us advancing home visiting quality through a grass-roots effort to improve home visiting practice in Wisconsin. As we are now at the sunset of our work together in the Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of WI (Outcomes Project), we'd like to take this time to share with you a summary of the work we've done together. What started out in the late 1990s as discussions on improving home visiting quality, has blossomed into a successful initiative of 10 home visiting programs committed to collect common outcome data, implement best practices, and explore new practices. We are gratified by the sheer number of families reached by home visiting programs participating in the Outcomes Project. For example, during our time together, participating home visiting programs worked with over 7,700 clients and conducted over 26,000 developmental screenings, over 7,500 home safety assessments, and over 17,000 infant and child health assessments. We are delighted to acknowledge the work of the Outcomes Project and the significant contributions it has made to the field of home visiting. We far exceeded our initial goals both in terms of contributions and longevity. As project leaders, we've been so impressed with the passion and commitment to quality that our participating



home visiting programs brought to their work with families. Every community should be proud of the work their home visiting program is providing to the most vulnerable populations.

The home visiting landscape has changed dramatically since we formed the Outcomes Project. There is now a strong focus on implementation of evidence-based home visiting models and the allocation of federal Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funding. The level of dedicated federal funding is at an all-time high and systems and infrastructure supports for the field are developing with the goal of improving the quality of home visiting services to give babies the best possible start in life. It has been an exciting journey for home visiting professionals.

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### Successful Implementation of Outcome Measurement

In 2001, the Outcomes Project started out with three goals:

- 1) To determine if common outcomes could be identified across home visiting programs and models
- 2) To determine if a measurement system could be designed to measure the progress on achieving the selected outcomes
- 3) To determine if it is feasible for home visiting programs to integrate the outcomes measurement system in their program operations to improve home visiting quality

By 2008, we met each of the Project's goals with the release of the first Outcome Attainment Report. We demonstrated that common outcomes can be identified and measured across programs, and outcome data can be used to guide program quality. We also learned a tremendous amount about what is required to have high-quality data to drive program decisions. For the past nine years, participating home visiting programs have integrated the outcomes measurement system into their program operations with the guidance and support from the Outcomes Project on data collection, analysis and reporting.

### Transforming Practice Through Leadership and Innovation

As our work together continued, we also became the incubator for new ideas on best practice. We listened to program leaders to understand their most challenging aspects of service provision and developed solutions to those challenges. Together, we developed best practice standards for many aspects of home visiting service provision and provided training and support for their

implementation. Additionally, we were the first in the nation to successfully implement hand-held technology into the field work of home visiting, made possible through a grant from Wisconsin Partnership Program. Our hand-held technology research demonstrated the cost effectiveness of the using laptops and tablet computers in the field to reduce duplicate data entry, eliminate data entry and scoring errors, and provide more efficient use of time for home visitors to work with families.

### Defining Home Visiting Quality and Data-Driven Decision-Making

With funding from PEW Center on the States and in partnership with Erikson Institute, we developed the Home Visiting Program Quality Rating Tool (HVPQRT), designed to measure the quality of programs that provide home visiting to families of young children (including the prenatal period) as their primary form of service delivery. It conceives of quality broadly across multiple dimensions, from the qualifications and practice of the home visitors, to the program theory and model, to the administrative structure of the program. This tool is being used by several states and funding organizations as part of their quality-monitoring efforts as the Erikson Institute is continuing its research with this tool.

Our most recent contribution to the field was a result of a partnership with faculty of Medical College of Wisconsin and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where we developed a care management algorithm for home visitors working with mothers with depression symptoms, funded by the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program. These initiatives have each received national attention and been recognized as contributions to advance best practice for home visiting.

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### Program Policy Impacts and Professional Networking

In the course of our work together, we provided a forum for home visiting program leaders to discuss challenges, jointly identify potential solutions, and to learn with each other. This professional networking forum has been one of the key attributes of the Outcomes Project success over the years. Each year, the Outcomes Attainment Report served as the catalyst for discussion on what has been working for programs and identifying how they can improve their outcomes. Sharing ideas, analyzing comparative data and receiving support often resulted in program improvements that led to high outcome attainments. This report includes testimonials from participating home visiting programs regarding the impact the Outcomes Project has had for them in their programs.

### Looking Ahead

Our hope is that the foundational work of the Outcomes Project has been sufficiently infused into home visiting practice and supportive home visiting infrastructures in Wisconsin. We are encouraged by the commitment to data quality and data driven decision-making that is integrated in overall operations at the programs who participated in the Outcomes Project. We've witnessed firsthand the change in focus and practice and congratulate the participating home visiting programs on a job well done!

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### Outcome Attainment Highlights

The data presented below was obtained from SPHERE, the State of Wisconsin, Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health web-based data system and represents data entered into SPHERE from January 1, 2013, to December 31, 2015. During that time, 2,468 individual clients were served by Outcomes Project participating home visiting programs of which 1,436 were children under the age of 6 and the remaining were age 6 or older. In this final report we are highlighting just a few of our outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

#### Children Reach Their Optimal Developmental Milestones

Home visiting has a long-standing commitment to ensure children reach their developmental potential. The following data was selected for inclusion in this report to demonstrate the strong impact our home visiting programs have in working with families to address potential developmental delays. The ongoing

relationship home visitors develop with families provides ample and unique opportunity for follow-up and provision of early intervention services to address developmental concerns well before the child reaches school. Early identification of developmental delays and intervention helps children be better prepared and ready to learn when they enter the school systems. When compared to other providers\* conducting Ages & Stages Questionnaires®-Third Edition (ASQ-3™) screenings and entering the screening data into SPHERE, Outcomes Project home visiting programs show significantly more documentation of follow-up for additional services than other programs conducting ASQ-3™ screenings. In Wisconsin, the ASQ-3™ is used by many home visiting programs as well as other early childhood professionals and paraprofessionals to screen for developmental delays. The data presented on the next page suggests that home visiting programs involved in the Outcomes Project have demonstrated high rates of documented follow-up services. It should be noted that given the wide array of programs that enter data into SPHERE, it is beyond the scope of the Outcomes Project to investigate and report other organizations protocols for developmental screening and follow-up documentation. We are able to report that Outcomes Project participating sites are committed to quality data collection and documentation to ensure that all families who need developmental services are identified and connected to additional services.

Note: The ASQ-3™ system provides a low-cost, reliable way to screen infants and young children for achievement of expected development and to identify early developmental concerns that need further evaluation. It is commonly used by early childhood professionals

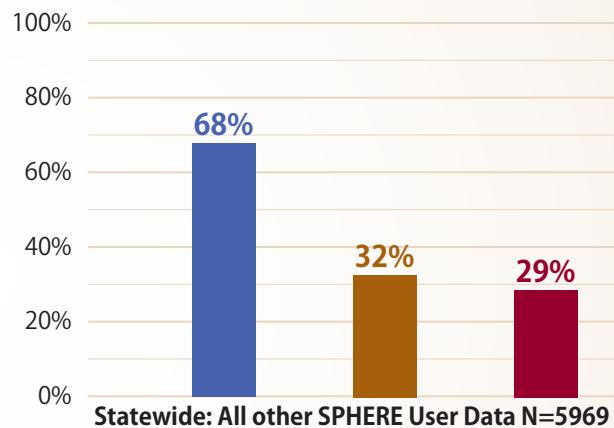
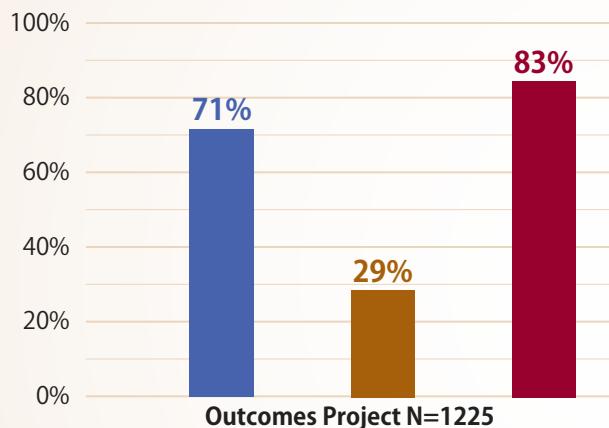
\* Other providers include health departments and a variety of human services providers, some of which may have a limited scope as community outreach programs as well as various health services providers.

<sup>1</sup> Our full Annual Outcome Attainment Reports are available at <http://www.chw.org/childrens-and-the-community/child-abuse-prevention/child-abuse-prevention-fund/cap-fund-home-visitation-outcomes-project/>

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2013-2015 ASQ-3™ Data Clients Most Recent Screening Results



- ASQ-3 age appropriate score
- ASQ-3 with potential delay
- Clients received at least 1 service within 2 months of identification

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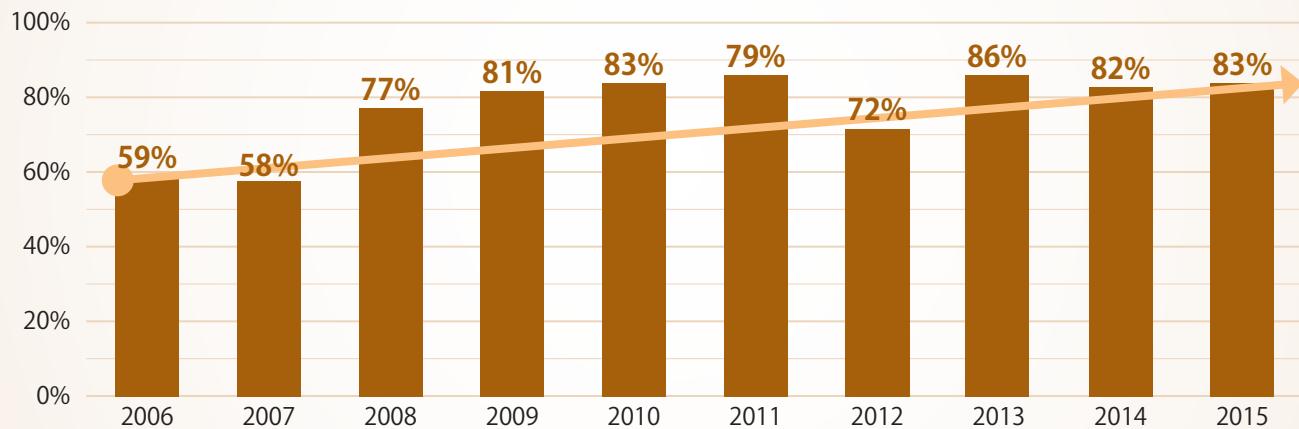


The Outcomes Project holds true to its commitment and vision that comprehensive home visiting providers have a unique opportunity to do more than just screen for developmental delays as it isn't enough to simply conduct a developmental screening. Follow-up to developmental concerns is essential to addressing delays and linking families to appropriate intervention resources. We intentionally focused our efforts over the years to elevate the "standard of practice" within participating programs by integrating steps to ensure data quality through monitoring data accuracy and

completeness. The following table demonstrates our ability to "move the needle" in a manner that benefits children in Wisconsin. Our first outcomes attainment report generated with 2006 data found that 59 percent of children with a potential delay received at least one additional service, and by 2015, we were consistently connecting over 80 percent of children with potential delays to additional services. Through our data quality journey, we learned that high-quality data is essential to quality improvement and better outcomes for children, and requires focused resources to be realized.

### ASQ™ Data Quality Trend Outcomes Project Participating Sites

Percent of clients who received at least 1 service within 2 months of identification of potential delay



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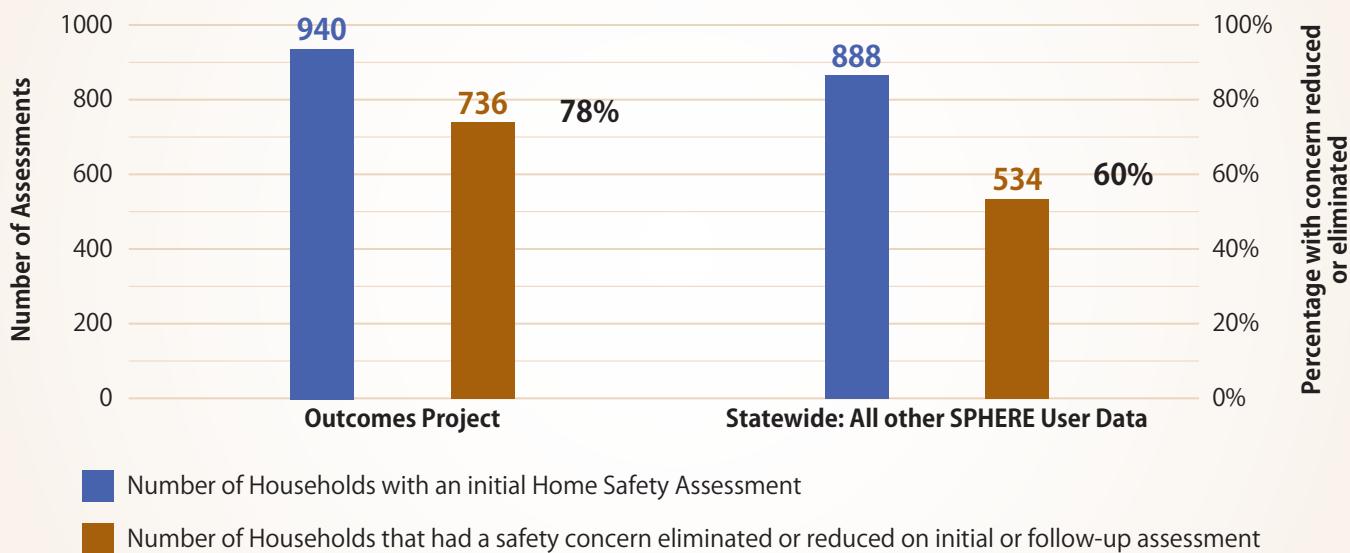
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### Improving Home Safety

As a fundamental service delivery approach, home visiting provides services to families in their homes. This provides an opportunity for home visitors to work with families to ensure their home environment is safe for their children. By conducting safety assessments with the families, home visitors provide education and recommendations in many areas to prevent unintentional injury to children, such as fire, burns, falls, poisoning, drowning, motor vehicle crashes and suffocation. Using a home safety assessment developed by WI Division of Public Health, our data suggests that Outcomes Project sites have been successful in reducing the risk of unintentional injury.



**2013-2015 Reduction and Elimination of Home Safety Hazards**



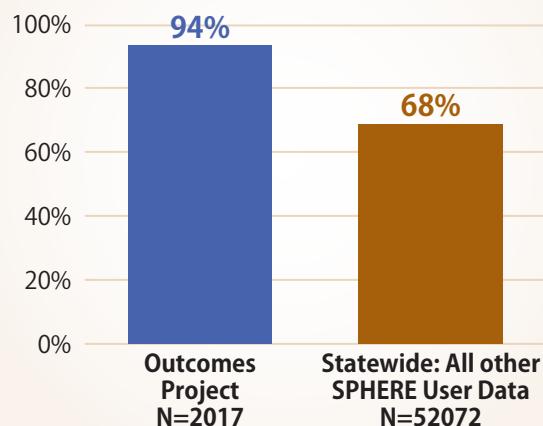
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### Connecting Families To Primary Care Providers

Outcomes Project sites demonstrated their ability to link families to primary care providers, an essential component to ensuring children and families receive the medical care when needed. Over time, we infused a commitment to accurately document the services provided to families in home visits. This standard of practice and investment in data documentation time and resources has resulted in participating programs enhanced ability to tell the collective impact story of their programming.

#### 2013 to 2015 Percent of Clients with a Primary Care Provider



### Participating Home Visiting Programs

#### Name

#### Counties Served

Center for Families

Dane County

Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley

Pierce, Polk and St. Croix counties

Family Resource Center of Sheboygan County

Sheboygan County

Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin

Brown and Door counties

Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin-Parent Connection

Calumet, Outagamie and Winnebago counties

Lakeshore Community Action Programs Inc.

Manitowoc County

Lakeshore Family Resources

Partnership for Families – A collaboration of Family & Children's Center and The Parenting Place

La Crosse County

Safe Babies Healthy Families

Waukesha County

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### Voices from the Field – Participating Program Testimonials

BEST PRACTICE

## Transforming Practice – Best Practice Impact

*“The best practice standards developed by the Outcomes Project have challenged our program to be sure we are providing the BEST programming based on research.”*

*“Through the Outcomes Project, I realized that Best Practices gave home visitation a common language, a common page and a common voice to assist with increasing the professional visibility needed to tell the story about the essential services that home visitation provides to the families we serve. Best practices allow home visitation to strive for excellence so our families can also strive for excellence.”*



*“The Outcomes Project has been essential in making our program a success through leadership transitions. The networking opportunities made available with experienced Healthy Families and Parents as Teachers sites was critical for us in maintaining best practices, and holding us accountable for quality service delivery and quality data collection. It is amazing to see how the challenges are similar across the state.”*

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### Voices from the Field – Participating Program Testimonials



#### Data-Driven Decision-Making



*“As a result of the Outcomes Project, we use data to make decisions:*

- Monitor populations served, to enable long-range planning of the program and grant writing
- Compare program outcomes to those of neighboring counties and/or the entire state
- Monitor timeliness of screening administration by home visiting staff as a whole, or by individual visitors (sometimes a need for additional training is indicated)
- Track and coach home visitors' follow-ups on screens and referrals
- Manage home visitor "caseloads"

*“Another benefit to participating in the Outcomes Project was the common outcome measurement. By having standardized tools and measurements, we have been able to improve best practice standards and the quality of our program. Also, it has been wonderful in showing a collective impact across the state.”*



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### Voices from the Field – Participating Program Testimonials



#### Leadership

*"The Outcomes Project has provided stellar leadership and direction for members as we work together to ensure we follow best practices in programming and implement those programs with fidelity. Through common outcome measurement, we were able to review and improve our work as well as provide and elevate the importance of statewide data in an annual report to stakeholders including our Board of Directors, county health and human services departments, public health departments, hospital and clinic partners as well as government representatives and donors. It served a wonderful purpose and provided our stakeholders with a clear picture of how we fit into the larger vision from a statewide perspective. Additionally, this process and support has been critical in assisting member organizations find solutions to the issues we face individually and as a group. Without state or federal funding, we found the partnership and leadership, not only beneficial but critical to our success."*



*organizations find solutions to the issues we face individually and as a group. Without state or federal funding, we found the partnership and leadership, not only beneficial but critical to our success."*



*"The joint work and opportunities provided, in partnership with the CAP Fund, has been amazing! I had the good fortune to serve on the research team that developed an algorithm for home visitors in response to maternal depression. It is a tool that meets a need in the field and has been distributed nationally. In our organization, the training and tool improved our practices and provided our home visitors with confidence to ask sensitive questions, in turn knowing how to assess imminent risk, all of which is crucial in this delicate conversation. Opportunities like this were available through our partnership – meeting our needs as an organization but also looking at the home visiting field as a whole. I feel incredibly fortunate to have been part of the team."*

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### Voices from the Field – Participating Program Testimonials



#### Professional Networking

*“All good networking programs and opportunities have a foundation of strong leadership. From the beginning, The Outcomes Project identified that in order to be effective and identify solutions to issues that home visitation programs were addressing, dedicated leadership needed to be secured. A statewide network of home visitation programs was successful and effective because The Outcomes Project committed to leadership that focused on data collecting and reporting, best practices and agency-driven agendas.”*

*“One of the things I valued most from the Outcomes Project was that it brought administrators/managers/supervisors and direct service staff (home visitors) together in an effort to best serve families. It gave the home visitors the opportunity to see things from a manager’s perspective and to give their input and feedback into programs processes.”*

*“The Outcomes Project has also provided invaluable support to those who have been a part of it by allowing for open and honest conversations and taking into consideration the thoughts and feelings of everyone at the table as we worked together to provide quality services and data to families across Wisconsin.”*



*“Part of the value we have found in the Outcomes Project is the networking opportunities between sites; but it’s been so much more than that. Our work has extended beyond Wisconsin to impact home visiting on the national level. For example, we worked in partnership with Dr. Jon Korfsmacher of Erikson Institute toward the development of a home visiting program quality rating tool. Most recently, we played a similar role in the development of a perinatal depression screening and management algorithm. The Outcomes Project leadership team led this work and, along with the developers Drs. Christina Wichman and Jennifer Doering, were published in the ZERO TO THREE Journal. This work was also selected for presentation at 2015 and 2016 ZERO TO THREE National Conferences. We are proud of our role in contributing to home visiting at a national level.”*

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### Voices from the Field – Participating Program Testimonials



#### Program Policy Impacts

*"This has been the richest, most effective collaborative partnership we've had the privilege of participating in, and we've gained a shared vision, mission and operational standards for our program improvement and outcome measures."*

*"Our participation in the Outcomes Project has increased our knowledge base, quality data and outcome results have increased our funding and reputation for quality."*

*"The Outcomes Project has provided our home visiting program with a solid template to provide appropriate assessments and in turn support to the families we serve. Long before expectations were placed on home visiting programs by funders, the Outcomes Project was helping us narrate and share our community's home visiting story by allowing us to gather data around what home visiting does for families and what the needs of our home visiting families are."*

## Funding Information

### Financial Contributions

The primary funding for the Outcomes Project has been provided by Child Abuse Prevention Fund of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (CHW). Additional grants from Wisconsin Partnership Program, The Pew Center on the States and Healthier WI Partnership Program totaled nearly \$700,000 were awarded to CHW for the Outcomes Project innovation projects specifically for hand-held technology research, development of the Home Visiting Program Quality Rating Tool, and creation of the maternal depression algorithm.

### In-Kind Contributions

This work would not have been possible without the tremendous in-kind support from the participating agencies and home visiting programs. Their commitment to attend meetings, develop policies, share ideas and commitment to quality data collection, analysis and reporting served as the foundation for this project's success.

Over the years, the outcome data and its related analysis was greatly aided by the ability to use the State of Wisconsin, Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health's SPHERE data system as a repository of Outcomes Project-related outcome data.

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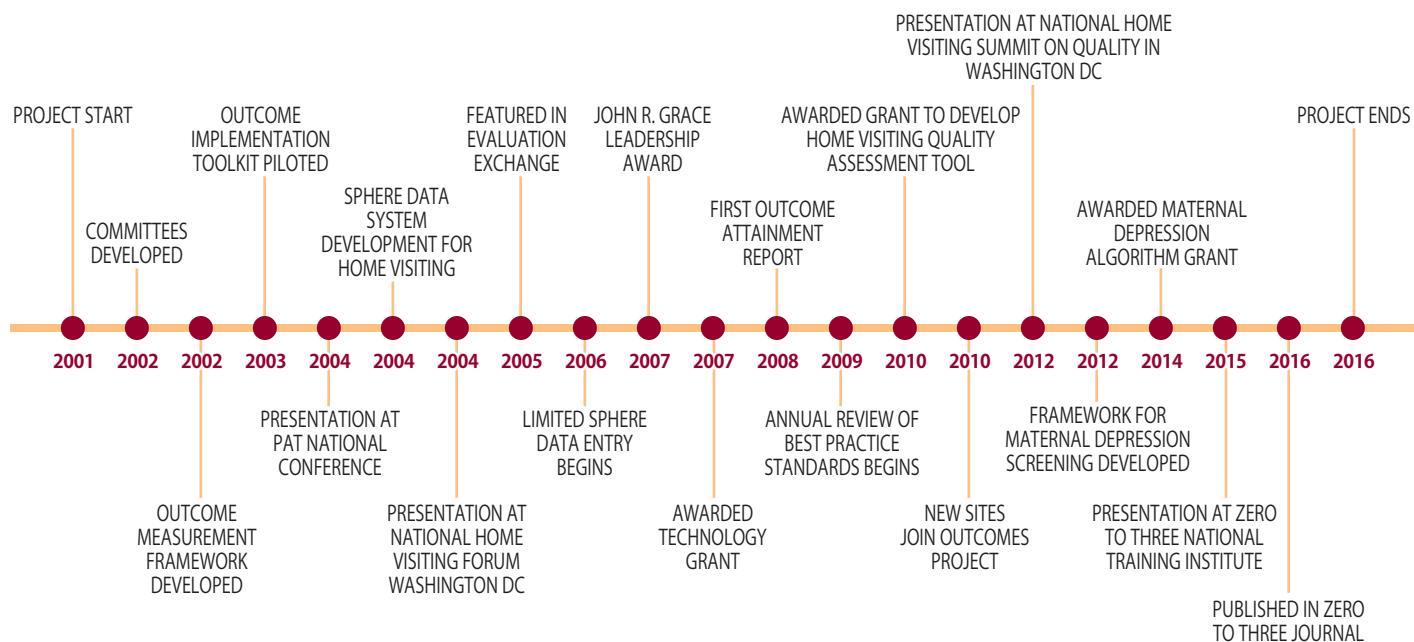
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### The Future

In our final year of operation, the Outcomes Project staff and participating sites leaders have focused on sharing our successful capacity-building strategies to improve home visiting practice with home visiting leaders in the state. We have worked closely with Helen Bader School of Social Work at UW-Milwaukee to integrate our lessons learned into their training and support efforts for home visiting programs in WI. As the work of the Outcomes Project concludes, we are confident in the leadership skills of those who participated in the Outcomes Project to guide home visiting service provision so that Wisconsin kids can have the best possible start in life.



### Project Timeline





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