**Community Perception of Home-Visitation Terminology**

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**Background:**

Home visitation programs are programs that provide services and support families with new babies and young children. These services are provided in the family’s home as a matter of convenience and address issues such as: maternal and child health, positive parenting practices, safe home environments (prevention of child injuries, child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment), reduction in crime or domestic violence, improved family economic self-sufficiency, school preparedness, and access to services. In order for these programs to be successful, families must engage in these services. While the term home-visitation is an accurate representation of these programs, it is thought that many potential clients react negatively to the phrase, “home-visitation”. This study examined the reaction of potential clients to the phrase “home-visitation” and other alternative descriptions of these services.

**Methods:**

Caregivers of young children who would qualify for one of the many home-visitation programs in Oklahoma were recruited to participate in a survey that asks questions regarding their perceptions on descriptive terms for home-visitation programs. Participants were shown each of the following three phrases:

* Home Visitation Program
* parentPRO Program
* Home-Based Parenting Program

These phrases were shown separately to participants four times. After each viewing, the participants were asked to write down the first thought that came to their mind and then whether or not that thought was very negative, negative, neutral, positive or very positive.

**Results:**

With 808 surveys completed, 28% of the participants reacted negatively (response of very negative or negative) to the phrase “Home-Visitation”. The most prevalent negative thoughts for this phrase were: “DHS”, “Wrong”, “supervised”, “Taking” and “Check”. The qualitative responses were analyzed using word cloud graphics in R. Alternatively, “Home-Based Parenting Program” and “parentPRO program” had 93% and 92% positive perceptions respectively. Word cloud analysis for “parentPRO program” showed it was most often associated with “parents”, “parenting”, “help”, and “good”. The words “home”, “parenting”, and “help” were common associations for the phrase “Home-Based Parenting Program”.

**Conclusions:**

These results strongly indicate that the use of language other than “home-visitation” to describe the program will enhance engagement of families and stake holders.