Element 1  Client participates voluntarily in the Nurse-Family Partnership program.  
Nurse-Family Partnership services are designed to be supportive and build self-efficacy. Voluntary enrollment promotes building trust between the client and her nurse home visitor. Choosing to participate empowers the client. Involuntary participation is inconsistent with this goal. It is understood that agencies may receive referrals from the legal system that could be experienced by the client as a requirement to participate. It is essential that the decision to participate be between the client and her nurse without any other pressure to enroll.

Element 2  Client is a first-time mother.  
First-time mother is a nulliparous woman, having no live births. Nurse-Family Partnership is designed to take advantage of the ecological transition, the window of opportunity, in a first-time mother’s life. At this time of developmental change a woman is feeling vulnerable and more open to support.

Element 3  Client meets low-income criteria at intake.  
The Elmira study was open to women of all socioeconomic backgrounds. The investigators found that higher-income mothers had more resources available to them outside of the program, so they did not get as much benefit from the program. From a cost-benefit and policy standpoint, it’s better to focus the program on low-income women. Implementing agencies, with the support of the Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office, establish a threshold for low-income clients in the context of their own community for their target population.

Element 4  Client is enrolled in the program early in her pregnancy and receives her first home visit by no later than the end of the 28th week of pregnancy.  
A client is considered to be enrolled when she receives her first visit and all necessary forms have been signed. If the client is not enrolled during the initial home visit, the recruitment contact should be recorded in the client file according to agency policy. It is recommended that only one pre-enrollment visit be provided. Early enrollment allows time for the client and nurse home visitor to establish a relationship before the birth of the child, and allows time to address prenatal health behaviors which affect birth outcomes and the child’s neurodevelopment. Additionally, program dissemination data show that earlier entry into the program is related to longer stays during the infancy phase, increasing a client’s exposure to the program and offering more opportunity for behavior changes.
Element 5  Client is visited one-to-one: one nurse home visitor to one first-time mother/family.

Clients are visited one nurse home visitor to one first-time mother. The mother may choose to have other supporting family members/significant other(s) in attendance during scheduled visits. In particular, fathers are encouraged to be part of visits when possible and appropriate. The nurse home visitor engages in a therapeutic nurse-client relationship focused on promoting the client’s abilities and behavior change to protect and promote her own health and the well-being of her child. It is important for nurse home visitors to maintain professional boundaries within the nurse-client relationship.

Some agencies have found it useful to have other nurses on their team at times to accompany the primary nurse home visitor for peer consultation. This helps the client to understand that there is a team of nurse home visitors available and that this second nurse home visitor could fill in if needed. This may reduce client attrition if the first nurse is on leave or leaves the program. Other team members, such as a social worker or mental health specialist, may also accompany nurses on visits as part of the plan of care.

The addition of group activities to enhance the program is allowed, but cannot take the place of the individual visits and cannot be counted as visits. It is expected that clients will have their own individual visits with their nurse, and not joint visits with other clients.

Element 6  Client is visited in her home.

The program is delivered in the client’s home, which is defined as the place where she is currently residing. Her home can be a shelter or a situation in which she is temporarily living with family or friends for the majority of the time (i.e., she sleeps there at least four nights a week). It is understood that there may be times when the client’s living situation or her work/school schedule make it difficult to see the client/child in their home and the visit needs to take place in other settings. But whenever possible, visiting the client and child in their home allows the nurse home visitor a better opportunity to observe, assess and understand the client’s context and challenges.

Element 7  Client is visited throughout her pregnancy and the first two years of her child's life in accordance with the current Nurse-Family Partnership Guidelines.

Prenatal visits occur once a week for the first four weeks, then every other week until the baby is born. Postpartum visits occur weekly for the first six weeks and then every other week until the baby is 21 months. From 21-24 months visits are monthly. To meet the needs of the individual family, the nurse home visitor may adjust the frequency of visits and visit in the evening or on weekends. An expectation that a home visitor is available for regular contact with the family over a long period of time, even if families do not use the home visitor to the maximum level recommended, can be a powerful tool for change.

Element 8  Nurse home visitors and nurse supervisors are registered professional nurses with a minimum of a Baccalaureate degree in nursing.

When hiring, it is expected that nurse home visitor and nurse supervisor candidates will be evaluated based on the individual nurses’ background and levels of knowledge, skills and abilities taking into consideration the nurses’ experience and education. The BSN degree is considered to be the standard educational background for entry into public health and provides background for this kind of work. For nurse supervisors, a Master’s degree in nursing is preferred. It is understood that both education and experience are important. Agencies may find it difficult to hire BSN-prepared nurses or may find well prepared nurses that do not have a BSN. In making this decision, agencies need to consider each individual nurses’ qualifications, and as needed, provide additional professional development to meet the expectations of the role. Non-BSN nurses should be encouraged and provided support to complete their BSN. Agencies and supervisors can seek consultation on this issue from their nurse consultant.
Element 9  Nurse home visitors and nurse supervisors complete core educational sessions required by the Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office and deliver the intervention with fidelity to the NFP Model.

It is the policy of Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office (NFP NSO) that all nurses employed to provide NFP services will attend and participate in all core NFP education sessions in a timely manner, as is defined by NFP NSO policy and the NFP NSO contract. Nurse home visitors and nurse supervisors will deliver the program with fidelity to the model. Fidelity is the extent to which implementing agencies adhere to the model elements when implementing the program. Implementing these components provides a high level of confidence that the outcomes achieved by families who enroll in the program will be comparable to those achieved by families in the three randomized, controlled trials.

Element 10  Nurse home visitors, using professional knowledge, judgment and skill, apply the Nurse-Family Partnership Visit-to-Visit Guidelines, individualizing them to the strengths and challenges of each family and apportioning time across defined program domains.

The NFP Visit-to-Visit Guidelines are tools that guide nurse home visitors in the delivery of program content. Nurse home visitors use strength-based approaches to working with families and individualize the guidelines to meet the client’s needs. The domains include:

1. Personal Health (health maintenance practices; nutrition and exercise; substance use; mental health)
2. Environmental Health (home; work; school and neighborhood)
3. Life Course (family planning; education and livelihood)
4. Maternal Role (mothering role; physical care; behavioral and emotional care of child)
5. Friends and Family (personal network relationships; assistance with childcare)
6. Health and Human Services (linking families with needed referrals and services)

Element 11  Nurse home visitors apply the theoretical framework that underpins the program, emphasizing Self-Efficacy, Human Ecology and Attachment theories, through current clinical methods.

The underlying theories are the basis for the Nurse-Family Partnership Program. The clinical methods that are taught in the education sessions and promoted in the NFP Visit-to-Visit Guidelines are an expression of these theories. These theories provided the framework that guided the development of the NFP Visit-to-Visit Guidelines, Nurse Home Visitor and Supervisor Competencies, and Nurse-Family Partnership Core Education Sessions. They are a constant thread throughout the model and Nurse-Family Partnership clinical nursing practice.
Element 12  A full-time nurse home visitor carries a caseload of no more than 25 active clients.

Full time is considered a 40-hour work week. Agencies may have a different definition for full time, and should pro-rate the nurse’s caseload accordingly. At least half-time employment (20-hour work week) is necessary in order for nurse home visitors to become proficient in the delivery of the program model. Existing teams that already are in place but do not meet these expectations should consult with their nurse consultant.

Active clients are those who are receiving visits in accordance with the NFP Visit-to-Visit Guidelines and the plan established by the client and the nurse. In practice, clients are considered participating if they are having regular visits. Agencies can establish their own policies regarding a timeframe for discharging missing clients. It is expected that supervisors will work with their nurse home visitors to monitor caseloads and utilize the program to serve the number of families they are funded to serve. The contract between the NFP National Service Office and the Implementing Agency states that the Agency will:

1. Ensure enrollment of 23 to 25 first-time mothers per full-time nurse home visitor within nine months of beginning implementation; and
2. Ensure that each nurse home visitor carries a caseload of not more than 25 active families; and
3. Maintain the appropriate visit schedule.

Element 13  A full-time nurse supervisor provides supervision to no more than eight individual nurse home visitors.

Full time is considered a 40-hour work week. It is expected that a full-time nurse supervisor can supervise up to eight individual nurse home visitors, given the expectation for one-to-one supervision, program development, referral management and other administrative tasks. It also is assumed that other administrative tasks may be included in time dedicated to NFP, including the supervision of some additional administrative, clerical and interpreter staff. Refer to the sample supervisor job description found in the Implementing Agency Orientation Packet. The minimum time for a nurse supervisor is 20 hours a week with a team of no more than four individual nurse home visitors. Though NFP discourages smaller teams, even teams with less than four nurse home visitors still require at least a half-time supervisor. Existing teams that are already in place but do not meet these expectations should consult with their nurse consultant.
Element 14  Nurse supervisors provide nurse home visitors clinical supervision with reflection, demonstrate integration of the theories, and facilitate professional development essential to the nurse home visitor role through specific supervisory activities including one-to-one clinical supervision, case conferences, team meetings and field supervision.

To ensure that nurse home visitors are clinically competent and supported to implement the Nurse-Family Partnership Program, nurse supervisors provide clinical supervision with reflection through specific supervisory activities. These activities include:

1. **One-to-one clinical supervision:** A meeting between a nurse and supervisor in one-to-one weekly, one-hour sessions for the purpose of reflecting on a nurse’s work including management of her caseload and quality assurance. Supervisors use the principles of reflection as outlined in NFP supervisor training. Supervisors who carry a caseload will make arrangements for clinical supervision with reflection from a qualified person other than the nurse home visitors he/she supervises.

2. **Case conferences:** Meetings with the team dedicated to joint review of cases, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO™) data reports and charts using reflection for the purposes of solution finding, problem solving and professional growth. Experts from other disciplines are invited to participate when such input would be helpful. Case conferences reinforce the reflective process. Case conferences are to be held twice a month for 1 ½ to 2 hours per case conference.

3. **Team meetings:** Meetings held for administrative purposes, to discuss program implementation issues, and team building twice a month for at least an hour or as needed for team meetings. Team meetings and case conferences alternate weekly so there is one meeting of the team every week.

4. **Field supervision:** Joint home visits with supervisor and nurse. Every four months the supervisor makes a visit with each nurse to at least one client and additional visits on an as needed basis at the nurse’s request or if the supervisor has concerns. At a minimum, time spent should be 2 – 3 hours per nurse every four months. Some supervisors prefer to spend a full day with nurses, enabling them to observe comprehensively the nurse’s typical day as well as her home visit, time and case management skills and charting. After joint home visits with a supervisor and nurse, a Visit Implementation Scale is completed and discussed.

Element 15  Nurse home visitors and nurse supervisors collect data as specified by the Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office and use NFP reports to guide their practice, assess and guide program implementation, inform clinical supervision, enhance program quality and demonstrate program fidelity.

Data are collected, entered into the ETO software and subsequently used to address practice. Data are utilized to guide improvements in program implementation and demonstrate fidelity. The ETO reports are tools with which nurse home visitors and supervisors assess and manage areas where system, organizational, or operational changes are needed in order to enhance the overall quality of program operations and inform reflective supervision of each nurse. It is expected that both supervisors and nurse home visitors will review and utilize their data.

Element 16  A Nurse-Family Partnership Implementing Agency is located in and operated by an organization known in the community for being a successful provider of prevention services to low-income families.

An Implementing Agency is an organization committed to providing internal and external advocacy and support for the NFP program. This agency also will provide visible leadership and passion for the program in their community and assure that NFP staff members are provided with all tools necessary to assure program fidelity.
Element 17  A Nurse-Family Partnership Implementing Agency convenes a long-term Community Advisory Board that meets at least quarterly to promote a community support system for the program and to promote program quality and sustainability.

A Community Advisory Board is a group of committed individuals/organizations who share a passion for the NFP program and whose expertise can advise, support and sustain the program over time. The agency builds and maintains community partnerships that support implementation and provide resources. If an agency cannot create a group specifically dedicated to the Nurse-Family Partnership program, and larger groups are in place that have a similar mission and role dedicated to providing services to low-income mothers, children and families, it is acceptable to participate in these groups in place of a NFP dedicated group. It is essential that issues important to the implementation and sustainability of the NFP program are brought forward and addressed as needed.

Element 18  Adequate support and structure shall be in place to support nurse home visitors and nurse supervisors to implement the program and to assure that data are accurately entered into the database in a timely manner.

Support includes the necessary infrastructure to support and implement the program. This includes the necessary physical space, desks, computers, cell phones, filing cabinets and other infrastructure to carry out the program. Further, this includes employing a person primarily responsible for key administrative support tasks for NFP staff, as well as entering data and maintaining accuracy of ETO reports. This resource is critical to ensuring administrative support and accuracy of data entry, allowing nurse home visitors time to focus on their primary role of providing services to clients. NFP Implementing Agencies shall employ at least one 0.5 FTE general administrative staff member per 100 clients to support the nurse home visitors and nurse supervisors and to accurately enter data into the Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office ETO database on a timely basis.

References


