UNSW research centre for primary health care and equity

Sustained nurse home visiting for vulnerable families: supporting mothers to 'parent effectively despite'

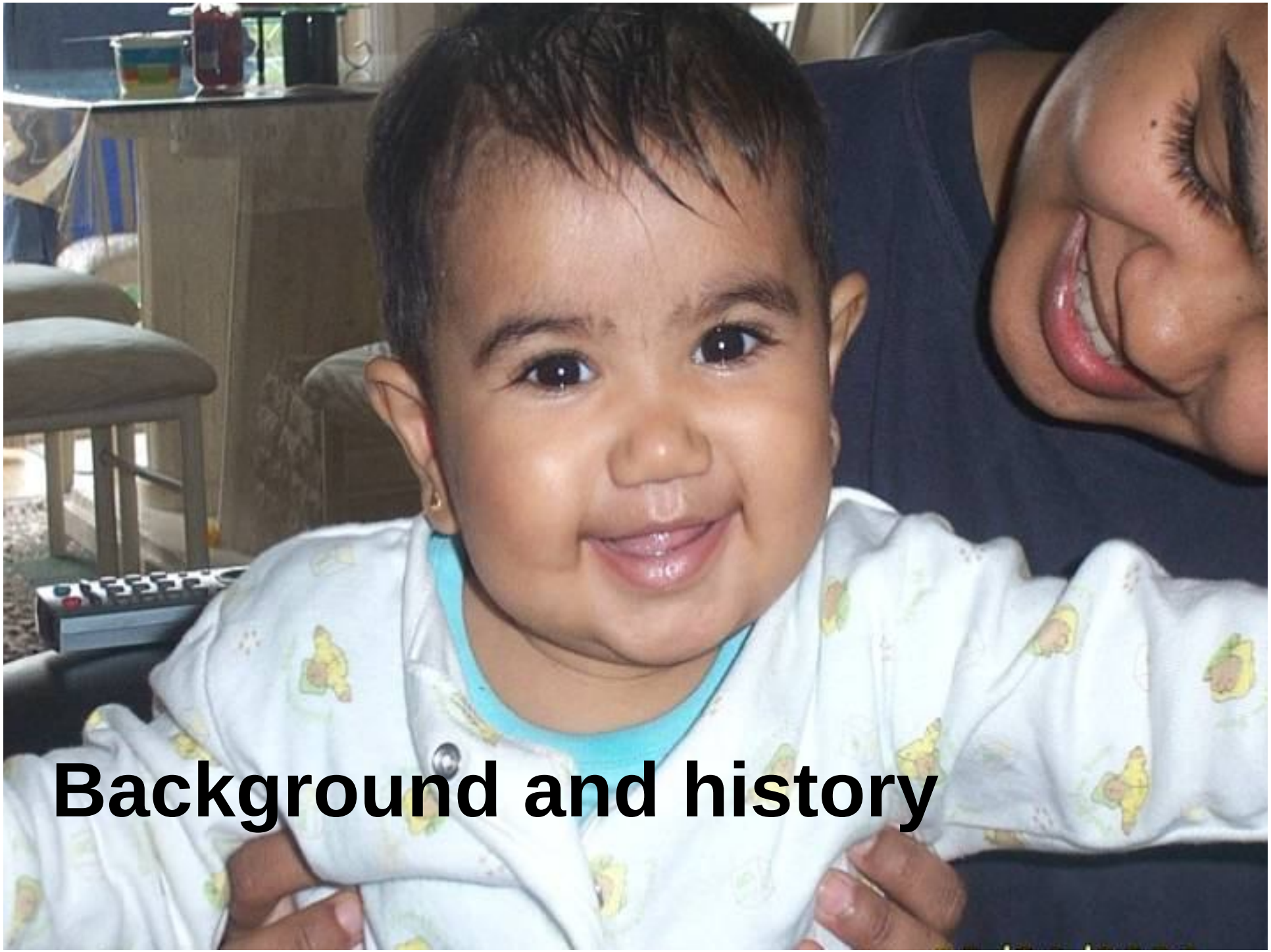
Lynn Kemp

Centre for Health Equity Training Research and Evaluation

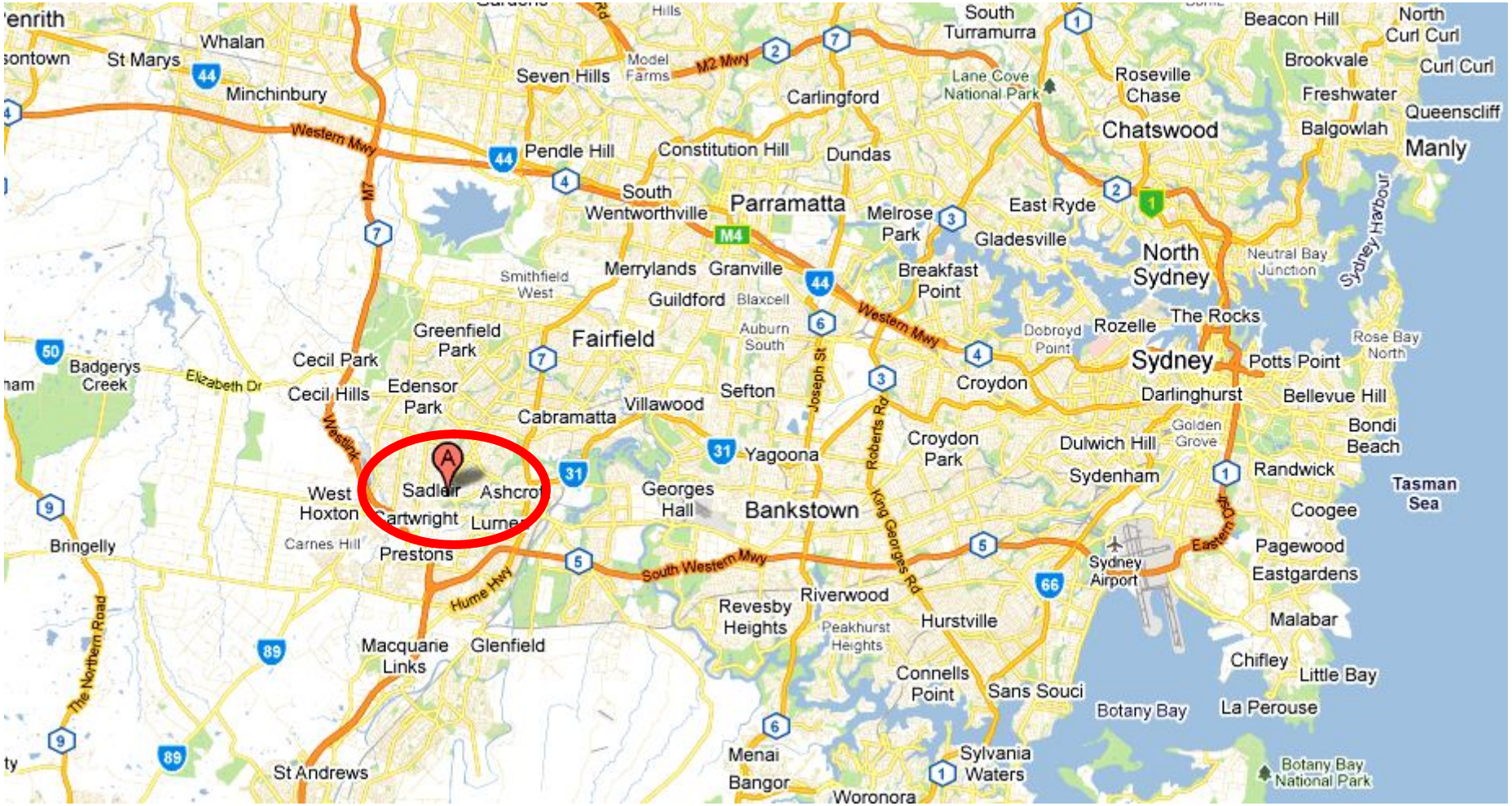
UNSW THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Aims of today

- Background and history
- The Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting (MECSH) program
- Outcomes of MECSH
- How the program achieved the outcomes

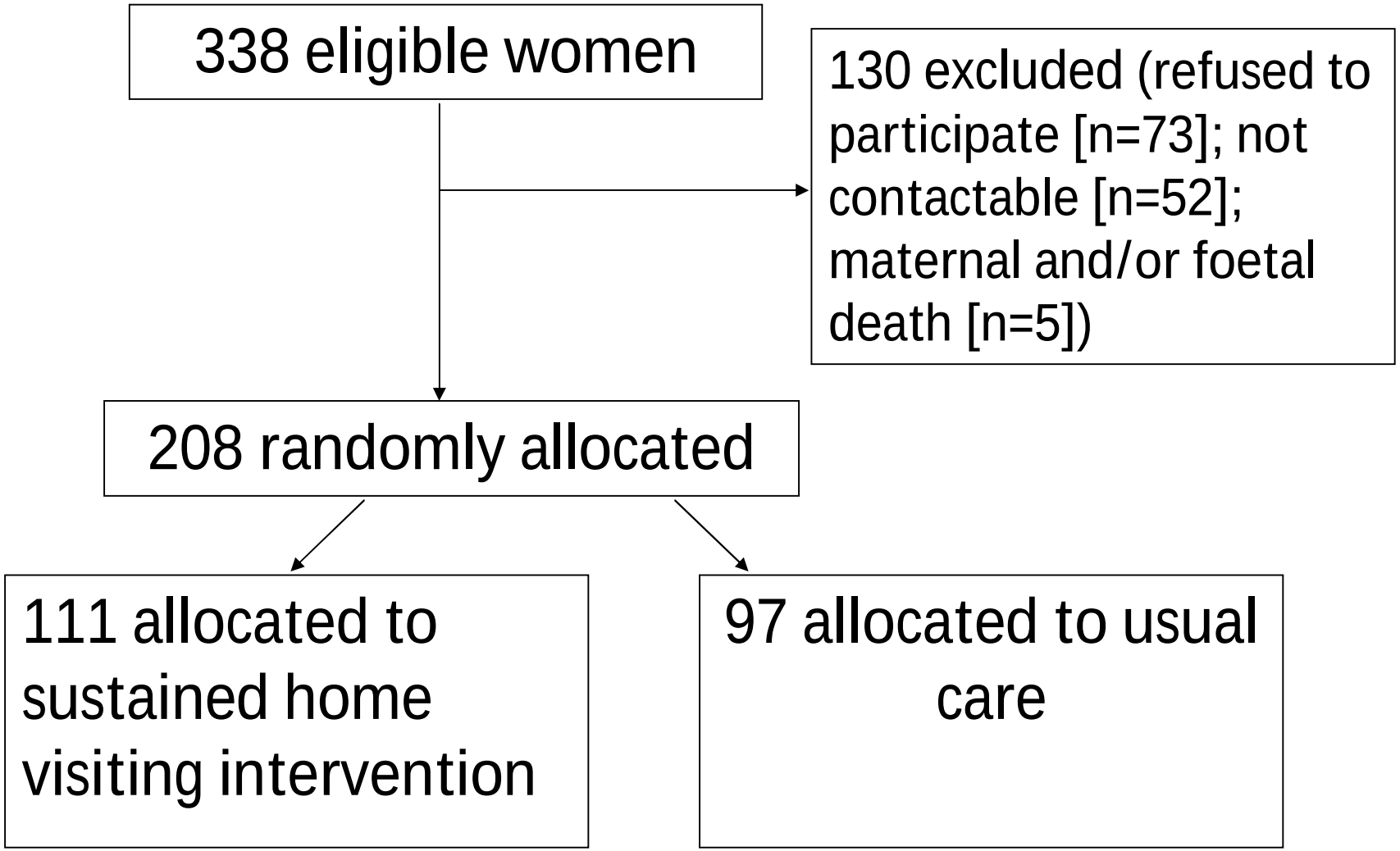


Background and history


Whalan
St Marys
Minchinbury
Seven Hills
Model Farms
M2 Mwy
Carlingford
Lane Cove National Park
South Turramurra
Roseville Chase
Beacon Hill
North Curl Curl
Brookvale
Curl Curl
Freshwater
Queenscliff
Balgowlah
Manly
Chatswood
Western Mwy
Pendle Hill
Constitution Hill
Dundas
South Wentworthville
Parramatta
Melrose Park
East Ryde
Gladesville
North Sydney
Neutral Bay Junction
Sydney Harbour
Smithfield West
Merrylands
Granville
Guildford
Blaxcell
Breakfast Point
Dobroyd Point
Rozelle
The Rocks
Sydney
Potts Point
Rose Bay North
Greenfield Park
Fairfield
Auburn South
Cecil Park
Badgerys Creek
Elizabeth Dr
Cecil Hills
Edensor Park
Cabramatta
Villawood
Sefton
Joseph St
Croydon
Darlinghurst
Bellevue Hill
Bondi Beach
Golden Grove
Dulwich Hill
Croydon Park
Roberts Rd
Yagoona
Sydenham
Randwick
Tasman Sea
West Hoxton
Sadleir
Ashcroft
Cartwright
Lurnea
Georges Hall
Bankstown
King Georges Rd
Coogee
Bringelly
Carnes Hill
Prestons
Hume Hwy
South Western Mwy
Sydney Airport
Eastern Dr
Pagewood
Eastgardens
Riverwood
Revesby Heights
Peakhurst Heights
Hurstville
Malabar
Macquarie Links
Glenfield
Chifley
Little Bay
Connells Point
Sans Souci
Botany Bay
La Perouse
The Northern Road
Menai
Bangor
Sylvania Waters
Woronora
St Andrews
Botany Bay National Park
Tasman Sea

History 1997-2005

- Long term disadvantage
- Fire bombing
- Abandonment


338 eligible women
130 excluded (refused to participate [n=73]; not contactable [n=52]; maternal and/or foetal death [n=5])
208 randomly allocated
111 allocated to sustained home visiting intervention
97 allocated to usual care

Demographics and vulnerabilities

- Average age 28 years (7% < 19 years)
- 48% women born overseas
- 7% Aboriginal member of household
- 27% first-time mums
- Vulnerabilities and risks

Psychosocial distress	43%	Abused as child	12%
Stressors	35%	Domestic violence	7%
Late care	37%	Drugs and alcohol	2%
Mental health	28%	Unsupported	2%

- One risk 50%, more than one risk 50%

The MECSH program

MECSH program goals

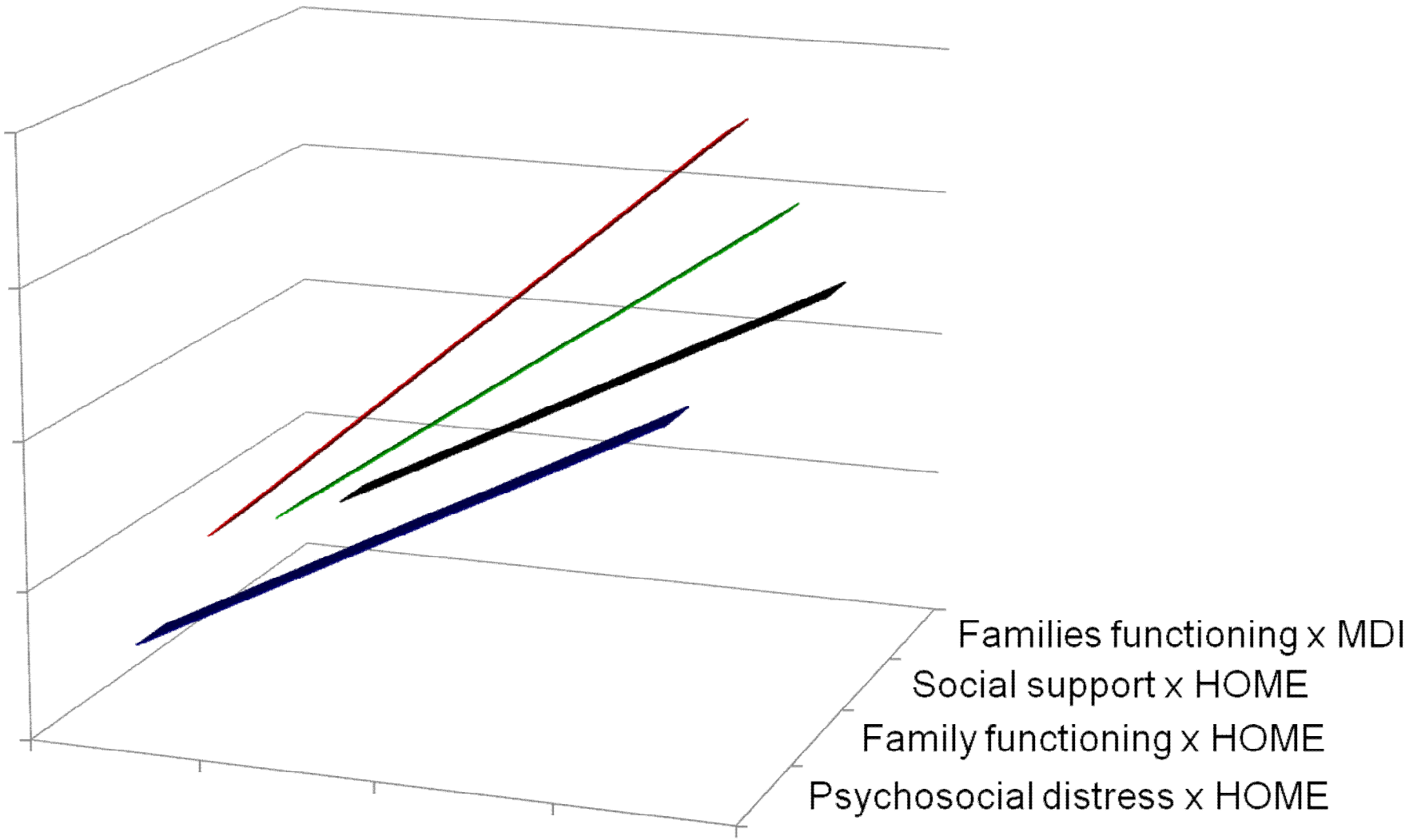
- Improve transition to parenting by supporting mothers through pregnancy
- Improve maternal health and wellbeing by helping mothers to care for themselves
- Improve child health and development by helping parents to interact with their child in developmentally supportive ways
- Improve family and social relationships and networks by helping parents to foster relationships within the family and with other families and services

MECSH program outcomes

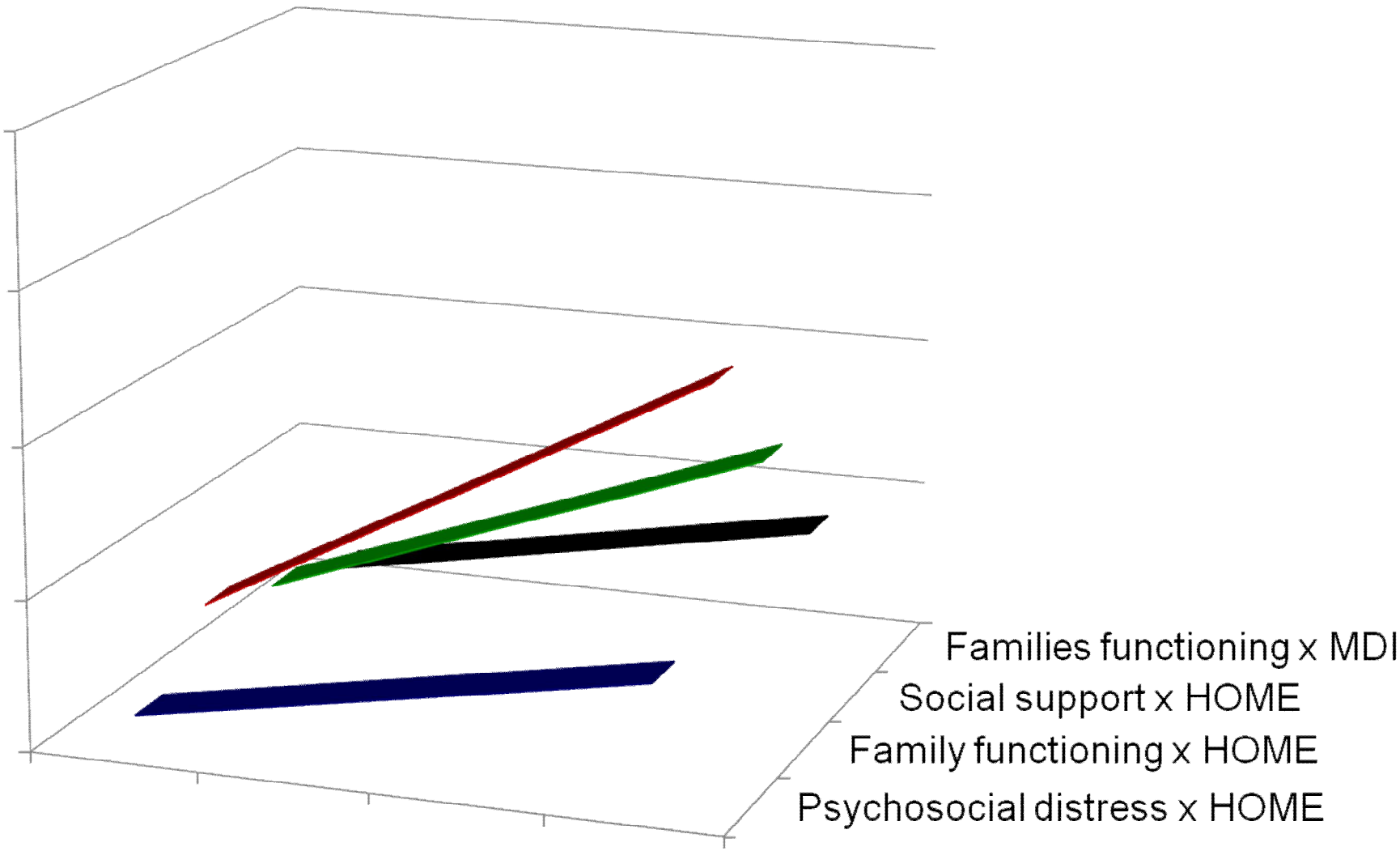
- Children
  - More engaged
  - Improved development
- Mothers
  - Levels of psychosocial distress unchanged
  - Improved health
  - Improved confidence
- Families
  - Family functioning, social support unchanged
  - Improved home environment

How did the program achieve the outcomes?

Control (non-intervention) group



Intervention (MECSH program) group



Control group

"When you're up you're up

When you're down you're down"

Intervention group

"Parenting effectively despite"

Keys to “parenting effectively despite”

- ☒ Can not prevent the changes, instability and difficulties families face
- ☑ Can intercept detrimental parenting processes that may be triggered by these difficulties

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- Improve child health and development by helping parents to interact with their child in developmentally supportive ways
- Improve family and social relationships and networks by helping parents to foster relationships within the family and with other families and services
- **Develop and promote parents' aspirations for themselves and their children**

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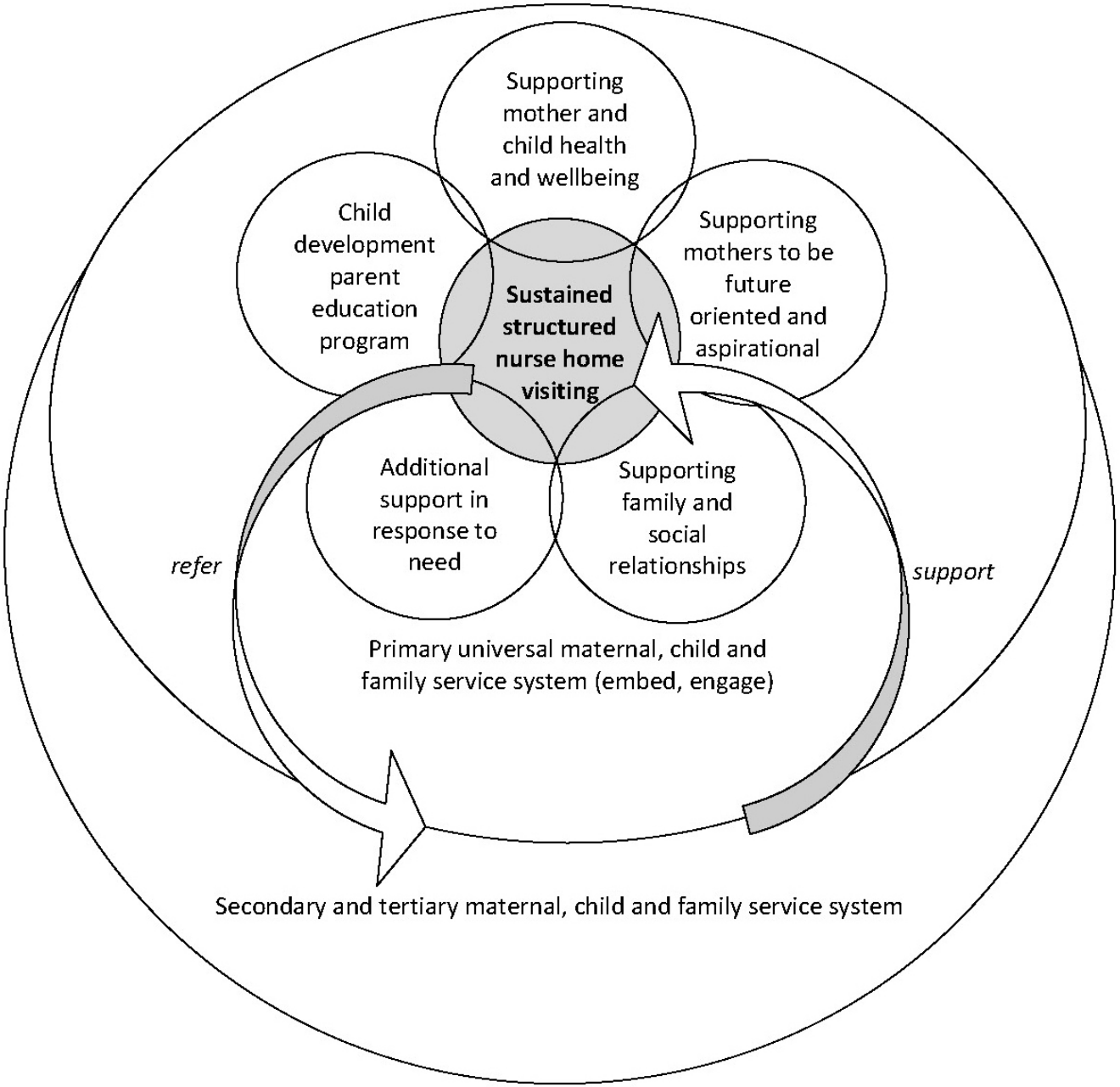
Supporting mother and child health and wellbeing
Child development parent education program
Supporting mothers to be future oriented and aspirational
Sustained structured nurse home visiting
Additional support in response to need
Supporting family and social relationships
refer
support
Primary universal maternal, child and family service system (embed, engage)
Secondary and tertiary maternal, child and family service system

www.cphce.unsw.edu.au

Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting

MECSH At a Glance

About MECSH

Sustained and structured home visiting

- International evidence has shown that home visiting programs comprising intensive and sustained visits by nurses during pregnancy and over the first two years of life promote child health and family functioning.
- MECSH draws together the best available evidence on the importance of the early years.
- The MECSH program is delivered as part of a comprehensive, integrated approach to services for young children and their families.

The Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting (MECSH) program is a structured program of sustained nurse home visiting for families at risk of poorer maternal and child health and development outcomes. It was developed as an effective intervention for vulnerable and at-risk mothers living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

The MECSH program draws together the best available evidence on the importance of the early years, children's health and development, the types of support parents need, parent-infant interaction and holistic, ecological approaches to supporting families to establish the foundations of a positive life trajectory for their children. The MECSH program requires organisations, and practitioners to work differently with families, to truly act on the rhetoric of prevention and early intervention to improve outcomes for some of the most vulnerable families.

The MECSH program is delivered as part of a comprehensive, integrated approach to services for young children and their families. The program is delivered by child and family health nurses who are embedded within universal child and family health nursing services. The program is managed by universal child and family nursing services and embedded within the broader child and family health services system.

Child development parent education DVD
Mother expecting her first child watching the *Learning to Communicate* program.

History of the MECSH Program

Originally titled the Miller Early Childhood Sustained Home visiting program, MECSH was a program of intervention and research conducted in the Miller/Green Valley (postcode 2168) area of south western Sydney, NSW, Australia. The MECSH intervention and trial were funded by the Australian Research Council (LP0560285), Sydney South West Area Health Service, NSW Department of Community Services and NSW Department of Health. It was the first Australian randomised trial to determine the impact of a comprehensive sustained nurse home visiting program commencing antenatally in a population group living in an area of known disadvantage.

Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity

Research that makes a difference

Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting (MECSH)

Program Description

September 2010

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Thank you

- MECSH intervention team
- Supporting services
- Research team
- Funders
- Participating families