

Family and Home Visit Guidance

Purpose

This explains the purpose and expectations of home and family visits.

Guidance

Home visits and family visits are an important aspect of the Early Learning Program. Family visits are valuable in building trusting partnerships with families. The relationship with the family is based on respect for the parents' role as their child's first and most important teacher. Trust is built through listening and understanding the family's perspective and supporting goals that parents have for their child and family. In order to engage families in conversation, an interpreter may need to be present. Be sure to attend to this vital detail when planning home and family visits.

Home and family visits are:

- conversational
- family-driven and meaningful to the family
- focused on family strengths and competencies
- respectful of the family's uniqueness, heritage and culture
- sensitive to the immediate needs of the family
- comfortable to the family in an environment they choose

Home and family visits provide opportunities to:

- listen to parents' questions, expectations or concerns about their child and family
- develop relationships and build trust between staff and the family
- focus individualized attention on family strengths, interests and goals
- help the family set family and child development goals
- help the family develop plans for meeting identified goals and overcoming barriers to success
- share information and resources
- enhance staff and family understanding of the child's temperament and developmental progress
- provide parenting support and enhance positive parent-child interactions
- enhance staff knowledge of the child's family, environment and culture
- enhance parent engagement in the program
- promote and support connections between home and program settings
- support the belief that parents are their child's first and most important teachers

Location of home and family visits

Visits can occur almost anywhere - in the family's home, at the site, at a coffee shop, at a parent's workplace, etc. Visits in the family's home are encouraged because they help you learn about the uniqueness of the family – their culture and traditions, resources, home environment and support system. Visits in the family's home also reverse the power differential between staff and parents; you are entering the family's space and you need to figure out how to become comfortable and engage with the family outside of the early learning site. However, the family's wishes should always come first in choosing the location of the visit. Your safety should always also be a consideration in choosing a location. See *Home Visit Safety Procedure* for more information.

Scheduling home and family visits

Visits are scheduled with families in person or by phone whenever possible. If you have difficulty reaching a family (e.g., they have no phone), sending a note home with the child may be the best alternative. Find a time that works best for both the family and staff. It is important to allow enough time for the family to respond if they need to reschedule. See *In-Person Family Contact Schedule - Center Based* for the timeline of family visits.

Preparing for home and family visits

- review Family File and check with other staff regarding follow up needs
- consider the family's language and literacy level - is an interpreter needed?
- consider how to be respectful of the culture in each family's home
- plan for personal safety
- consider who will be at this visit and how everyone can be involved
- what to bring:
 - resource and referral information as needed
 - *Parent Interest Survey* and *Parent Participation Survey* to review with parent
 - information sheets on Policy Council and Peer Leadership Program opportunities
 - *Family Partnership Plan Form*
 - *Release/Exchange of Confidential Information*
 - *What I'd Like Information About Form* to review with parent
 - information regarding program changes, events and opportunities
 - information regarding community events and opportunities
 - any other materials and information relevant to the purpose of the visit

Related Documents

See Health/Nutrition & Safety section

See Family Engagement section