SUPPORTING HOME VISITORS TO PROMOTE INFANT AND TODDLER SCHOOL READINESS

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Objectives

1. Explore what makes a home visit a unique opportunity for school readiness
2. Discuss the key elements that promote school readiness and family engagement in the home-based option
3. Share strategies to support home visitors in their work with children and families
Outcomes

1. Explain the unique opportunities to support school readiness that home visiting offers
2. Explain elements that promote school readiness and family engagement in the home-based option
3. Use various strategies to support home visitors in their work with children and families
Activity

• Think of someone who was really special to you when you were growing up.

• What made you think of this person?

• What did they do that made them important or special to you?
Every child needs someone who is crazy about them.

Every parent needs someone who...
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

1. Physiological Needs
2. Safety Needs
3. Social Needs
4. Esteem Needs
5. Self-Actualization
How does all this work in the Home-based option?
What Makes the Home-Based Option Unique?

- For Children
- For Parents
- For Staff
- For the community
Support Systems

- Community Supports
- Fiscal Management
- EHS Home-Based Option
- Community Assessments
- Ongoing Monitoring
- Program Governance
School Readiness in the Home?

Courtesy of EHS NRC
§ 1306.33(b)

(1) The purpose of the home visit is to help parents improve their parenting skills and to assist them in the use of the home as the child's primary learning environment. The home visitor must work with parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child's growth and development.
What Is Different in Home-Based?

- Working directly with parents
- Group socializations
- Limited time in the home
- Depend on parents’ work or school schedules
- Community services outreach

The relationship with the home visitor forms the foundation for effective service delivery.

Photo courtesy of EHS NRC
What Is Different for Staff?

The home visitor must work with parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child’s growth & development.

Photo courtesy of EHS NRC
Agree or Disagree?

Human service workers experience “burn out” at a much higher rate than other professions.

Why?

Courtesy of EHS NRC
1304.52(g)(2) When a majority of children speak the same language home visitor must speak their language.

1306.20(f) Home visitors communicate with the families either directly or through an interpreter.

§ 1304.52 Home visitors must have knowledge and experience in child development and early childhood education.

Photo courtesy of EHS NRC
What Is Different for Staff?

- How we engage with families,

AND

- How we support them.

Photo courtesy of EHS NRC
Home Visitor Observable Skills

- Responsive behaviors in home visit
- Relationship between home visitor & parents
- Encourage parent to lead the interaction with their child
- Collaboration with family
Video

Courtesy of Vanderbilt/CSEFEL
Relationship Ready Staff

- Balanced, realistic view of relationships
- Thinking and talking about relationships is comfortable
- Have a generally positive approach
- Assume relationships can survive
- Sees others as resource
- Puts effort into helping relationships work
- Takes responsibility for their role difficult in situations
Relationship Ready Staff
What Makes the Home-Based Option Unique for Parents?

Parents best able to engage when program:
(1) clearly conveyed program purposes,
(2) emphasized child’s needs,
(3) followed through consistently,
(4) helped parents relate to the program as well as to individual home visitors, and
(5) developed systems for tracking families in spite of mobility (Brooks, Ispa, Summers, Thornburg, & Lane, 2003).
For Parents...

Working with parents to develop responsive interactions skills with their children has positive social and emotional benefits for both the children and their parents/caregivers.

It is all about relationships!!
Relationships vs. Interactions

- **Relationships:**
  - Have emotional connections.
  - Endure over time
  - Have special meaning between two people.
  - Create memories and expectations in the minds of the people involved.

“Am I just interacting or am I interacting to build a relationship?”
What Makes the Home-Based Option Unique for Children?

Courtesy of EHS NRC
For Children

The parent-child relationship provides the foundation from which very young children develop the social competences necessary for success later in school and in life.
Child-Level: What Is Involved?

Observe/Document

Reflect/Interpret/Plan = Ongoing Assessment

Reflect/Evaluate

Implement

Finalize Assessment Tool
The Most Valuable Tool Home Visitors Give Parents

OBSERVATION

“... the practice of focusing on the behavior, rituals, and daily give-and-take in the parent-child relationship.”

Adapted from Building Strong Foundations: Practical Guidance for Promoting the Social-Emotional Development of Infants and Toddlers. ZERO TO THREE.
Why Observe and What Does It Look Like in the Home?

- To plan and individualize learning experiences.
- Measure and check progress.
- Understand child’s goals and intentions.
- Build relationships with family.

- An instance of regarding attentively or watching.
- Paying close attention to
  - short, spontaneous acts by children
  - Relationship-building interactions
  - Parent support of child learning & development
Video

Courtesy of Vanderbilt/CSEFEL
Observation: Objective vs. Subjective

• Descriptions of actions
• Descriptions of vocalizations
• Direct quotes of language
• Descriptions of facial expressions and gestures
• Descriptions of creations or pretend play

Photo courtesy of EHS NRC
Documenting Observations

- Observe without interpreting.
- Describe facts not opinions.
- Do not judge.
- Record only what you see and hear. – Don’t assume the child’s feelings. – Don’t assume the child’s motivation.

Photo courtesy of EHS NRC Microsoft Clip Art
Types of Documentation

- Checklists
- Anecdotes from parents
- Photos
- Videos
- Observations from relatives living in the same home.
Observation: Identifying “Lenses”

**Influences**

- Culture
- Temperament
- Personal interests and feelings
- Home visitors’ beliefs or values
- Professional knowledge and experience
"It is well established that families’ ethnic, religious, and cultural traditions and beliefs play a significant role in child rearing and that attention to this aspect of family identity is critical in engaging parents in services."\(^1\)
Cultural Practices in HB

- Obtain information about family’s beliefs and values.

- Read family’s cultural cues.

- Reflect on your own beliefs and values.
Considerations for Observing Diverse Children & Families

- A child’s individual circumstances may play out in what you see.
- Children’s culture may lead different children to respond to the same experience in different ways.
- Dual language learners
- Developmental delays
Dual Language Learners

How do you observe infants and toddlers who don’t speak English?

Photo courtesy EHS NRC
Strategies for Interpreting Observation

- Look for patterns.
- Identify areas where more information is needed from parents or family.

Photo courtesy EHS NRC
Individualizing in Home-Based

What is unique about individualizing experiences for home-based program option?

Courtesy of EHS NRC
Using Child Observation in Planning Learning Experiences

• How does the home visitor observe and document child development?
• How does the home visitor gather information in short periods of time?
• How does the home visitor partner with parent to identify experiences that support the child’s developing skills toward the program school readiness goals?
Observation in the Home...

- Is intentional.
- Is strengths-based.
- Promotes understanding.
- Encourages sustainable learning and growth for adults.

Helping parents observe helps them be responsive to their child.
Engaging Families in Data Collection

Parent & home visitor exchange information based on:

• Observations of the child

• Ongoing infant/toddler assessments conducted by the home visitor or other EHS staff with the parents

Photo courtesy of EHS NRC
Families: Key in the Observation Process in Home-Based

What is the parent’s role throughout the observation and assessment process?

How do you support parents how to observe, what to observe, and why?

Photo courtesy EHS NRC
Engage Families to Observe Their Child

Parent and home visitor exchange information based on:

- Observations of the child

- Ongoing infant/toddler assessments conducted by the home visitor or other EHS staff with the parents

Courtesy of EHS NRC
Engage Families To Observe Their Child

Specific information on:
Their child’s
  – routines
  – interests
  – skills
Their family’s
  – Practice
  – Cultural traditions

ALL FEEDS THE DATA

Courtesy of EHS NRC
Activity: Strengthening Observation Skills

- Identify strategies to help home visitors become keen observers.

- Identify strategies home visitors can use to help parents become keen observers.
A Tool for Home Visitors

When home visitors share their observations with parents, self-awareness is key.

What can leaders do to support staff carry out this task?
A Closer Look at Challenges for Home Visitors

Some families enrolled in the home-based option have challenges that interfere with their ability to focus on their child.

How do you help home visitors balance the extreme challenges with the goal of fostering the growth and development of families and their children?
“It takes a leader to know a leader, grow a leader and show a leader.”

John C Maxwell, Developing the Leaders Around You

Courtesy of EHS NRC
Leaders’ Support for Home Visitors

In reflective supervision:

- What did you see or hear in the home?
- How did parent respond?
- What might be contributing to... at home?
- How might you respond? Or, how would you have liked to respond?

Photo courtesy EHS NRC
Activity

Supervisors:
What do you think your staff need from you? Give examples.

Home visitors:
As a home visitor, what do you need to do your work? What kind of supports do you need?
Coaching for Powerful Relationships

Helping home visitors learn to:

- Be present
- Connect
- Extend Learning
Would **you** want to be a child/family in **your** home visits?

Photo courtesy of EHS NRC
“Home visiting is not a secondary option, or wait station for center-based care, nor an alternative option. It is a viable option for families depending on their circumstance.”

David Jones, Home Visiting Supervisor, OHS
Resources

Resources for home visitors to use with families:


Resources


Resources