

H is for HOME VISITING

Promoting Positive Outcomes for Children and Families

Home visiting programs create opportunities for service providers to support the health, development, and well-being of young children and their families in a familiar environment. During home visits, family members might learn about and practice things they can do to support their own health and well-being or enhance their child's growth and development. Service providers can also help families access available resources for a range of needs, from prenatal care and mental health services to car seats and early education and care providers. Home visiting programs help families advocate effectively for themselves and their children.

Strategies for Quality Home Visits

Here are six strategies that can be used by families and service providers during the home visit to promote positive outcomes for young children and their families.

1. Establish a shared focus for the home visit.

- Discuss the purpose of the visit.
- Share current priorities or concerns.
- Collaborate to identify goals and a plan for the visit.

2. Gather and share information.

- Ask for or share information related to the family's or child's health or well-being.
- Ask for or share information about meeting the family's or child's basic needs (e.g., food, using a car seat).
- Ask for or share information about the child's growth and development.

3. Follow the family's lead during the home visit.

- Schedule the home visit during a time the family has chosen.
- Focus on the family's current priorities, concerns, and preferences.
- Share information and resources in the family's preferred format (e.g., online videos or written handouts).

4. Support family members' capacity and confidence.

- Observe a regular routine or activity for the family, such as feeding.
- Ensure family members have opportunities to practice new ways of interacting with their child.
- Discuss, reflect, and provide feedback about new information or family-child interactions that occurred during the home visit.

5. Adopt a strengths-focused approach.

- Acknowledge the family's capacity and confidence.
- Ask the family to share something they think went well during the home visit.
- Celebrate the family's or child's successes.

6. Make a shared plan to follow after the home visit.

- Collaborate to set a shared goal for the family and child.
- Ensure the plan reflects the family's priorities and expressed needs.
- Include "next steps" for both the family and service provider.

What We Are Doing

The Anita Zucker Center and our collaborators are helping practitioners learn to use evidence-based home visiting strategies that build family members' capacity and confidence as they support the development and learning of young children with or at risk for disabilities or delays during everyday routines and activities.