

# Home Visit Protocol

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## Why Home Visits?

Home visits provide a way for schools to reach out to their students' families and build a relationship of trust and respect. Home visits are especially valuable for hard-to-reach parents.

## Who Should Conduct a Home Visit?

Teachers, counselors, and school administrators. The visitor should know the child well and be familiar with their grades and behavior in class.

## Preparation

- Identify a staff member who has a relationship with the family.
- Choose an accompanying staff member – visits should always be conducted in teams of two.
- Schedule the visit in advance, if possible. Be prepared to have a translator present if necessary.
- Review records, family history, cultural background.
- Make copies of records that need to be shared.
- Prepare informational materials (resources, district brochures, business cards).
- Notify supervisor of location and time of home visit.
- Review safety tips.

## The Visit

### *Arrival*

- Set the tone with a warm introduction.
- Spend 10 minutes establishing a rapport and developing a caring relationship.
- Include all family members in the home who would like to participate.
- Suggest an environment conducive to the meeting – the visit can occur somewhere in the community if the family feels more comfortable.

### *During the Visit*

- Clearly state the purpose of the visit – welcome two-way communication.
- Talk about the students' and families' strengths.
- Spend 10 minutes establishing a rapport and developing a caring relationship.
- Give information about the students and his performance. Ask the parents what they would like to share about the student.
- Establish goals on how the student can improve.
- Share resources and ideas for helping the child learn at home.
- Get their feedback. Ask for the parent to give you suggestions about how you can help the child improve at school.
- Answer questions.

### *Concluding the Visit*

- Summarize the visit.
- Discuss next steps.
- Provide your contact information.
- Say goodbye.

### *After the Visit*

- Write up a short paragraph summarizing the visit.
- Evaluate the visit and how you can improve.
- Follow-through on referrals, action items, etc.
- Send the family a copy of the document.

### **Tips for Making the Home Visit a Success**

#### *Remember to:*

- Be a good listener
- Have specific goals or objectives for each visit
- Be flexible
- Be prompt to your home visits
- Realize the limitations of your role
- Help parents become more independent
- Keep language appropriate
- Dress appropriately and comfortably
- Be confident
- Remember that small improvements lead to big ones
- Be yourself
- Respect cultural and ethnic values
- Monitor your own behavior- the parent is observing you

#### *Avoid:*

- Imposing values
- Bringing visitors without the parent's permission
- Socializing excessively at the beginning of the visit
- Excluding other members of the family from the visit
- Talking about families in public
- Being the center of attention
- Expecting perfection from the parent

## **Safety Tips**

- Try to complete home visits early in the day
- Stay alert
- Dress appropriately
- Leave jewelry at home
- Leave purse at office or trunk
- Carry necessary cash, keys, and driver's license on person
- Remove yourself from dangerous situations
- Travel in pairs when possible
- Survey the neighborhood
- Identify safe areas (i.e. restaurants, telephones, rest rooms, police stations)
- Trust your instincts
- Consider a neutral meeting location if visit cannot be made safely at home (i.e. library, conference rooms, restaurants)
- Take universal precaution by washing hands before/after visit
- Ask family members to come out to meet you if uncomfortable with area
- Keep car in good repair
- Keep emergency supplies in car, include all-weather gear
- Ask family to secure pets before arrival
- Attend safety seminars
- Consider the use of cellular phones or pagers