

**NeighborImpact Head Start & Early Head Start  
Policy & Procedure**

<b>Section: Family &amp; Community Partnerships PC</b>	<b>PC Approval Date: Approval Date: 8-2-05, 1/18/18</b>
<b>Title: Home Visit / Safety Guidelines</b>	<b>Updated: 11/07/2017</b>
<b>Policy #: HS-88</b>	<b>NI Board Approval: 9/12/19</b>
<b>Forms Required: Home Visit form</b>	
<b>Performance Standards:</b>	<b>Page 1 of 3</b>

**Policy:** In order to ensure maximum safety and effectiveness for staff and programs, the following procedure is in place.

**Purpose:** Home visits are a vital part of a family’s Head Start & Early Head Start experience and represents a clear program philosophy that parents are the first teachers of their children. (Frequency of home visits varies from program to program and with staff job descriptions.)

Procedure:

A. Safety when conducting home visits is the first consideration for staff.

1. Employees visit a family for work purposes only.
2. Employees limit the amount of personal information shared with families and use self-disclosure with restraint and with safety in mind.
3. Employees shall not give home phone numbers or addresses to families and shall not encourage families to contact them “anytime”. Families shall not be invited to staff homes.
4. Employees carry center cell phone to all Home visits, Put purse and valuables in the trunk before leaving the Head Start site. Keep only keys and driver’s license a pair of latex gloves for emergencies.
5. Employees notify center coordinator or center staff when leaving for home Visit and shall sign out on designated staff sign out board in classroom.
6. If an employee believes safety may be an issue in conducting a home visit, precautions must be taken; i.e., take another staff member or center coordinator to the home visit. It is also appropriate to ask the parent to meet at the center or office to conduct the visit.
7. Employees conducting home visits should be certain that home visit activities and relationships with parents/care givers are appropriate and cannot be perceived otherwise. Employees who believe they have been harassed should notify their center coordinator immediately.
8. If difficult or inappropriate issues are being dealt with, notify the supervisor, and call immediately following the visit. Employee shall notify supervisor or office staff of expected time of arrival from the home visit.

B. Because the employee role as home visitor may involve working with difficult issues, good communication with the supervisor and good observation skills are extremely important.

1. If the employee has concerns, feels uncomfortable or has a safety fear before, during or after a home visit, the supervisor must be notified immediately.
2. If the supervisor is uncertain about a course of action concerning home visits, both the employee and the supervisor are to consult with the Family & Community Partnership Coordinator.
3. The center coordinator, Family & Community Partnership Coordinator, employee, and will assess the next course of action to assure safety and professionalism. Actions may include visitation in pairs, meeting the parent in another location, assigning another worker, or temporarily discontinuing visiting. Other actions may be determined by the Director or Supervisor.

C. By being aware of one's surroundings, being able to set boundaries, using good observation skills, and "trusting your instincts", home visitors can prevent dangerous situations and ensure safety.

1. When arriving at a home visit, always be alert. Observe the safety of the home/neighborhood before stopping and getting out of the car. If there are questionable activities occurring, leave the area and return to the office. Notify the center coordinator. Questionable activities would include:

- a. intoxicated people or obvious use of drugs
- b. violence (verbal or physical)
- c. police activity
- d. visible weapons
- e. Do not park in the driveway, park on the street

2. Do not enter the yard/home when:

- a. questionable or unknown individuals, cars or activity is present
- b. parents or others are intoxicated
- c. violence is occurring
- d. there is no quick escape route
- e. dogs are loose
- f. you feel unsafe or have an undefined feeling the home is not safe
- g. Set close to the door and where you can see if people can come from other rooms

3. Do not remain in the home or leave quickly when:

- a. violence erupts (verbal or physical)
- b. behavior of the parents or others in the home is erratic or psychotic
- c. parents or others are intoxicated
- d. drugs or drug paraphernalia is in sight
- e. weapons are visible
- f. there are questionable visitors in the home

D. Home visitors and supervisors should learn the skills and methods which will make the interaction with the family productive as well as safe. Some methods will include:

1. Being Tactful and discreet with upset or angry parents
2. Projecting a confident attitude
3. Be prepared to exit gracefully “I don’t feel well”, “I left some papers in my car”,
4. “I’ll come back at a better time”.
5. Avoid threats, accusations, lectures or advice-giving
6. Admit making a mistake
7. Upon entering a home, employee should identify alternate routes of entry and
8. exit from the premises
9. At all times keep in mind the Program’s role with families which is as a helping partner rather
10. than an enforcer
11. Keep supervisor the informed.