

WASHINGTON STATE
HOME VISITING CORE COMPETENCIES

HOME VISITOR CORE COMPETENCIES



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Washington State Home Visiting Core Competencies developed by more than 350 Home Visitors, Supervisors, and community-based program leaders committed to supporting a strong foundation for Washington families through home visiting.

After two years in the making, two unique sets of competencies are ready to be used, tested, and refined by those who work with families daily. One set of competencies is for the role of Home Visitor, and one set is for the role of Home Visiting Supervisor. Each set of core competencies aims to complement, strengthen, and honor the recommendations and competencies developed by state and national entities to date. These include but are not limited to: the Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families: [Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement](#); the Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals: [National Family Support Competency Framework](#); the National Home Visiting Network [Call to Action for Racial Equity](#), and many others.

The creation of the Washington State Home Visiting Core Competencies allowed Washington's home visiting workforce to build upon these foundational resources with their collective expertise and the context of Washington communities where they partner with families. The results are core competencies defined by, "owned by," and written in the voice of Home Visitors and Supervisors in Washington state.



For questions about the core competencies, information about the development process, and additional resources to support competency use in practice, please visit Start Early's website at <https://www.startearly.org/where-we-work/washington/home-visiting-core-competencies/> or email hvstartearlywa@startearly.org

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ORIGINS

Washington's competency work began with an initiative launched in 2020 by the Washington State Home Visiting Core Competency Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee). The Advisory Committee was comprised of funders and representatives of organizations that support Washington's diverse network of early childhood home visiting programs and services. Washington wanted to develop its own home visiting core competencies in order to:

- Define equity in home visiting in Washington and articulate how to demonstrate it.
- Offer Washington's families an assurance of high quality and consistent services provided by knowledgeable and skillful Home Visitors.
- Define the attributes, areas of knowledge, and skills held in common across Washington's diverse home visiting workforce.
- Realize the benefits of core competencies in Washington, as identified by the [Five Ways to Strengthen the Home Visiting Workforce Using Core Competencies](#):
 - Home Visitors can use core competencies for self-assessment.
 - Home Visiting Program Managers can use core competencies to develop job descriptions, trainings, and career ladders.
 - Training organizations can use core competencies to design educational opportunities.
 - Institutes of higher education can use core competencies to design program curricula and related courses.
 - States can use core competencies to encourage the delivery of high quality home visiting services across local agencies.

The Advisory Committee was guided by the value that those who work directly with families (active Home Visitors, Supervisors, and model experts) hold the knowledge and expertise on how to support families with effective home visiting services. Subsequently, Start Early Washington engaged Washington's home visiting workforce to ensure the field itself would determine the process, product, and implementation for two unique sets of core competencies, one for Home Visitors and one for Supervisors.

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PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

A goal was set for the core competencies that 85% of the content would apply to the work of every Home Visitor and Supervisor regardless of the early childhood home visiting service or program model implemented. To achieve this level of applicability across the continuum of home visiting services in Washington, practitioners were first asked how they wanted to be involved in the process. Based on responses, a variety of opportunities were created to cultivate field expertise, lived experience and a range of perspectives. Strategies for workforce engagement included “listening and learning sessions,” surveys, culturally specific focus groups and two drafting teams. Home Visitors, Supervisors and model experts volunteered in drafting teams to create, edit, and approve the current version of the competencies. Their questions, ideas and concerns were addressed in FAQs and are represented in plans for implementation and guidance for the use of the competencies.

The drafting teams centered equity as the guiding principle, and the entirety of Washington’s home visiting workforce was invited to participate in the process to ensure the competencies were informed by, and representative of, the rich experiences of a workforce serving diverse families. Each stage of competency development included processes to ensure equity, statewide representation, and relevancy to the different models of home visiting services offered in the state. [Liberatory Design](#) mindsets, modes, practices, and questions were used consistently to ensure the decisions involved in competency development lead with equity in both the process and product.

GUIDANCE FOR USE

While the best uses of this “first edition” of the core competencies will be discovered over time by Home Visitors and Supervisors, there are several areas identified by the field for how they could and should be used. For example, the workforce stated they intend to use the competencies for self-assessment, planning for individual professional development, informing job descriptions, and recruiting and onboarding new Home Visitors and Supervisors. Similarly, many Home Visitors and Supervisors shared two hopes: that the competencies would demonstrate the depth and breadth of expertise required in their work with families and be used to inform advocacy efforts to increase and improve equity in pay across the home visiting workforce.

Revisions will likely be needed based on how the core competencies are used over time; therefore, ongoing input through shared ideas and feedback by practitioners is actively encouraged.

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[Start Early Washington's home visiting team](#) will use the Washington State Home Visiting Core Competencies to “connect the dots” between the competencies and training opportunities for Home Visitors and Supervisors to promote a high quality and more equitable home visiting system.

The Washington State Home Visiting Core Competencies are intended as a guide to support the development of the home visiting field in ways that are equitable and built to support Washington's diverse families. They should not be used to add responsibilities to job descriptions (already wide-ranging) or increase job requirements or qualifications that further exacerbate the racial differences between the workforce and families receiving home visits. Therefore, all who read and use the Washington State Home Visiting Core Competencies are asked to honor the primary goals, hopes and concerns of the workforce who were involved in their development.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

The practitioner and model expert drafting teams thoughtfully selected the terms used throughout the competencies related to home visiting and family roles. The terms **Home Visitor** and **Supervisor** refer to anyone who performs the functions of a Home Visitor or is a Supervisor of Home Visitors regardless of the job title assigned by their organization. For purposes of competency development, the **“workforce”** includes **Home Visitors** and **Supervisors**.

Given the diversity of ways adults in the home identify themselves and name their roles in relationship to the child, the following terms were regarded as most respectful and inclusive of significant caregivers (other than parents). **Parent/caregiver** refers to those who relate to a child in the capacity of parenting or caregiving (vs. “mother” and “father”). The singular “parent/caregiver” and “child” are used throughout the competencies, even though home visiting may include multiple parents/caregivers and children.

The following list of key terms is provided to support a deeper understanding of the core competencies and is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

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Attributes are a person's characteristics, traits, beliefs, and values.

Core competencies are a combination of observable acts, knowledge, and attributes that are necessary to perform a major task or function in the work setting.

Equity “refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge that adjustments are necessary to correct imbalances.” ([Equity Definition, n.d.](#)) “The ongoing process requires us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.” ([Anti-Racism Resources | Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, n.d.](#))

Historical trauma refers to complex and collective trauma experienced over time and across generations; it is the cumulative, multigenerational experience of emotional and psychological injury by a group of people and their descendants who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance. ([Adapted from Mohatt, N. V., Thompson, A. B., Thai, N. D., & Tebes, J. K. \(2014\) Historical trauma as public narrative: A conceptual review of how history impacts present-day health.](#))

Home visiting includes voluntary, intensive, long-term services provided to parents and caregivers with children (prenatal to age 5) in person (often where the family lives) and virtually — implementing models and services that are validated by a range of criteria (ranging from community designed to evidence based).

Parallel process describes the “interlocking network of relationships between supervisor, supervisees, families, and children.” For example, a staff member's experiences with their “supervisor can

affect [how they] interact with a family. In turn, [how] a staff person interacts with a child, parent, or colleague can then positively spill over and influence the parents' relationship with the child.” ([Adapted from Heffron, M.C. & Murch, T. \(2010\) Reflective Supervision and Leadership in Infant and Early Childhood Programs.](#))

Professional development refers to opportunities intended to improve the knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, and values that shape the home visiting workforce's ability to successfully partner with families to achieve desired outcomes. Such opportunities include training, technical assistance, endeavors related to continuous quality improvement (collection and use of data to inform changes in practice and approach) and other implementation supports (including consultation and coaching).

Strengths-based emphasizes a person's capabilities, self-determination, resourcefulness, and resilience. It is the practice of centering a person's strengths as the foundation of future progress and outcomes.

Trauma-informed begins with understanding the widespread impact of trauma and identifying paths to healing. It clearly identifies when individuals display signs and symptoms of trauma and embeds beneficial information about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices. A trauma-informed approach actively seeks to avoid re-traumatization. ([Adapted from SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach, n.d.](#))

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COMPETENCY STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

The Washington State Home Visiting Core Competencies for Home Visitors define the Attributes, Knowledge, and Skills that support the success and effectiveness of a Home Visitor. This document is organized into **Attributes, Competency Areas** (numbered 1 through 8), **Descriptions**, and **Individual Competencies** (in columns under “Know” and “Do”).

Attributes

Attributes are the common characteristics, traits, beliefs, and values shared by successful and effective Home Visitors. Attributes influence a Home Visitor’s work with families, learning, and relationships. The Attributes listed support the development of proficiency in every competency in each of the eight areas.

Competency Areas, Descriptions, and Individual Competencies

The Home Visitor competencies are divided into eight areas most often associated with the roles and responsibilities of a Home Visitor. Each area’s Description explains the scope of competencies that are addressed in that specific area. What follows each area Description are two columns that list Individual Competencies that a Home Visitor needs to “Know” and “Do” related to the area as defined.

Number and Letter System

The purpose of the numbers (1-8) associated with the Competency Areas is strictly intended for purposes of organization and ease of reference. The same is true for the letters (K/D) and numbers assigned to the Individual Competencies in the “Know” and “Do” columns of each Competency Area. The numbers and use of letters in the competencies **do not** suggest a rank of importance with any one area or Individual Competency to be considered more important than another.

Also important to note, is that there is no intended relationship or alignment between the numbers and letters across the columns of “Know” and “Do” (i.e., K1. / D1. are not intentionally aligned ideas, they are each just the first competency in the list). Once again, the use of numbers and letters is only intended for purposes of organization and reference.

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HOME VISITOR ATTRIBUTES

Attributes Associated with Home Visitor Core Competency Areas 1-8

- believes in the importance of ongoing learning in relationship to high quality services
- committed to keeping skills up to date
- committed to self-care
- creative and persistent in addressing challenges
- curious
- enthusiastic
- empathetic
- open minded
- recognizes one's own implicit bias
- reflective
- respects the invitation to be a guest in someone's home (in-person or virtual)
- trustworthy
- values collaboration and flexibility
- values integrity and ethics
- values planning and organization
- values and appreciates cultural differences
- well-developed personal and professional sense of identity: beliefs and values



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There are 8 Home Visitor competency areas.

Each area has a list of things that Home Visitors need to **“KNOW”** (knowledge) and to be able to **“DO”** (skills).





1. COMPETENCY AREA: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING: EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

DESCRIPTION: A Home Visitor's understanding of and respect for a family's culture is fundamental to an effective home visiting relationship. Respect for a family's culture requires confidence in the value of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging when partnering with families and caregivers. Home Visitors will practice humility and cultivate an environment of continued learning regarding culture and race.

KNOW

- K1.** Recognizes the uniqueness of each family served.
- K2.** Recognizes that each family is unique in its composition of members, roles, values, regard for gender identity and ethnicity.
- K3.** Recognizes the privilege of working in a parent's/caregiver's home.
- K4.** Identifies factors of one's privilege and biases that can impact the effectiveness of interactions with families.
- K5.** Understands the impact of historical and generational trauma on communities and families.
- K6.** Understands that family interactions are influenced by culture and beliefs.
- K7.** Understands that the roles of family members impact parenting and child rearing.

DO

- D1.** Engages in perspective taking — looking at the world from the point of view of others.
- D2.** Exercises cultural humility in interactions with families.
- D3.** Identifies a family's values and what is important to the family about their culture and beliefs.
- D4.** Shows respect and appreciation for a family's values and members.
- D5.** Asks parent/caregiver to identify who their family members are and about the role and relationship they have with the child.
- D6.** Actively seeks out and uses strategies for remaining present and emotionally regulated during visits with families.
- D7.** Skilled in observation, listening, and asking open ended questions.
- D8.** Organizes visits so that they are centered on the parent's/caregiver's immediate and long-term priorities.



1. COMPETENCY AREA: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING: EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

KNOW

- K8.** Understands that situational and generational poverty affects the family system.
- K9.** Understands that a family's economic stress can impact their capacity to fully engage in home visiting.
- K10.** Recognizes one's own bias and values regarding language.
- K11.** Understands that literacy levels and linguistic differences affect parent/caregiver understanding in verbal and written communications.
- K12.** Knows how to access interpretation support if a family's preferred language is different than the Home Visitor's.

DO

- D9.** Screens for culturally appropriate use of language in resources, materials, and referrals shared with a family.
- D10.** Adapts content and methods to meet the needs of parents/caregivers with a range of learning styles and abilities.
- D11.** Supports families to communicate in the language that they choose.
- D12.** Seeks effective methods to support interactions with multilingual families.





2. COMPETENCY AREA: EFFECTIVE HOME VISITING

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers in visits to identify the family's needs and goals, given the cultural and community context, their current circumstances, and the environment in which they live. Visits are delivered in accordance with the home visiting design and practices of the program's organization.

KNOW

- K1.** Knows the processes required to build and maintain trust as the foundation for the home visiting relationship.
- K2.** Understands the role home visiting has in relationship to a family's composition, values, culture, and beliefs.
- K3.** Is familiar with the elements of motivational interviewing.
- K4.** Knows that families differ in ways that support ongoing engagement in home visiting.
- K5.** Recognizes one's bias about family and gender roles.
- K6.** Knows how to set, maintain, and respect boundaries.
- K7.** Knows how to partner with the parent/caregiver to set specific, measurable, and attainable goals.
- K8.** Recognizes behaviors and symptoms that can indicate experiences of trauma.

DO

- D1.** Assesses the family's expectations for the program and home visiting experience.
- D2.** Describes program services, resources, and what the family can expect.
- D3.** Establishes and effectively supports a family's engagement in home visiting.
- D4.** Builds trusting relationships based on respect, utilizing listening skills and other strategies.
- D5.** Practices being "present" in the moment and maintaining self-awareness.
- D6.** Adjusts behavior and interactions with the parent/caregiver according to the family's cultural norms and cues.
- D7.** Interacts respectfully and effectively with the parent/caregiver who represents many forms of diversity.



2. COMPETENCY AREA: EFFECTIVE HOME VISITING

KNOW

- K9.** Knows the difference between typical stress and traumatic or toxic stress.
- K10.** Understands that individuals experience factors of stress and trauma differently.
- K11.** Understands the potential of childhood experiences that could result in toxic stress and trauma in adulthood.
- K12.** Knows the effects of trauma and that trauma can interfere with learning and development at any age.
- K13.** Knows the expected outcomes of home visiting for the parent/caregiver, child, and family.
- K14.** Knows the purpose, process, and appropriate use of information collected in screenings and assessments (depression, newborn, nutrition-health, safety in the home, intimate partner violence, etc.) required by the program.
- K15.** Understands the role of the Home Visitor in the context of the program, the organization, and in working with families.
- K16.** Understands the organization's policies and home visiting program procedures.

DO

- D8.** Recognizes the power dynamic in relationships.
- D9.** Adjusts activities, sharing information, and communication to match a parent's/caregiver's learning style and pace.
- D10.** Supports the family in ways that are meaningful/useful to them.
- D11.** Centers home visits on the parent/caregiver-child relationship.
- D12.** Builds a trusting relationship with the parent/caregiver sufficient to explore factors of stress that impact interactions with the child.
- D13.** Identifies individuals with a significant relationship and attachment to the child.
- D14.** Supports the parent/caregiver in self-reflection to explore thoughts, feelings, strengths, and identify areas for growth.
- D15.** Assesses the parent/caregiver readiness for change.
- D16.** Invites the family to set goals and know what they want.
- D17.** Shares parenting information and facilitates parent/child interaction in accordance with the expected outcomes of the home visiting program and family goals.
- D18.** Ensures personal and family member safety when scheduling and conducting home visits (COVID-19, community violence, etc.).



2. COMPETENCY AREA: EFFECTIVE HOME VISITING

KNOW

- K17.** Knows the boundaries of confidentiality and appropriate ways to share family information (on the phone, in data systems, through email, etc.) inside and outside the home visiting program.
- K18.** Understands the ethical and legal policies and procedures of the organization.
- K19.** Knows the resources available to address legal matters and situations.
- K20.** Understands and complies with federal, state, tribal, and local laws as well as organization policies related to child safety, neglect, and maltreatment.



DO

- D19.** Sets and maintains a consistent schedule that is reliable and predictable. Confirms visits and changes in visit schedule with family.
- D20.** Provides in person home visiting with families where they live or an appropriate alternative venue.
- D21.** Has the technology skills to provide home visiting and to coach the parent/caregiver on the use of technology for virtual visits when appropriate.
- D22.** Creates and updates agreements about the protocols and boundaries for visits with the family to support mutually respectful communications and behaviors.
- D23.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to understand the purpose, process, and use of information collected in a particular screening or assessment.
- D24.** Uses a range of communication, observation, and interview techniques to engage and solicit the information needed to accurately complete required screening and assessment tools.
- D25.** Completes data entry and documentation required by the program accurately and within required timeframes.
- D26.** Implements the organization's protocols for confidentiality.



3. COMPETENCY AREA: PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors recognize the impact of the parent-child relationship on healthy physical growth and social-emotional development. Home Visitors understand that parents and caregivers are experts in their own lives and, therefore, support the parent-child relationship in the context of a family's culture, religion, and community.

KNOW

- K1.** Understands the importance of a Home Visitor's strengths-based support of the parent/caregiver-child relationship and its impact on parent/caregiver-child interaction, child development, and family life.
- K2.** Recognizes and regards the parent/caregiver as the "expert" in all matters related to their child and family.
- K3.** Understands the role of parenting in the context of the family's culture and beliefs.
- K4.** Understands the parent's/caregiver's views about an infant or child through the lens of the family's culture and beliefs.
- K5.** Knows the elements and characteristics of healthy parent/caregiver-child relationships.
- K6.** Understands social influences on parenting and caregiving, including culture, ethnicity, religion, family, peers, mass media, and social media.
- K7.** Recognizes the influence of the interactions between adults who have a relationship with the child.

DO

- D1.** Explores the parent's/caregiver's beliefs, values, and ideas about raising children in the context of their family and community.
- D2.** Promotes the parent's/caregiver's role as an advocate for their child.
- D3.** Identifies family member roles in making decisions that affect parenting and family life.
- D4.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to reinforce their knowledge, understanding, and confidence in their ability to raise the child.
- D5.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to understand that positive, consistently caring, and responsive interaction builds a foundation of trust and secure attachment with the child.
- D6.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to recognize the influence of their own childhood experiences on their interactions with the child.
- D7.** Supports positive interaction between the parent/caregiver and child through observation and coaching.



3. COMPETENCY AREA: PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

KNOW

- K8.** Recognizes the cultural and family influences on methods of behavior management of the child.
- K9.** Knows about adverse childhood experiences and the potential impact on the parent/caregiver-child relationship.
- K10.** Recognizes the impact of the number of children in a family on the parent/caregiver relationship and interaction with the child.
- K11.** Understands the impact of an unexpected or extended period of separation between parent/caregiver and child on their relationship.
- K12.** Knows about the community resources available to families.



DO

- D8.** Partners with parent/caregiver to consider the child's point of view and experiences.
- D9.** Provides positive, strengths-based feedback on behaviors of the parent/caregiver and child to support healthy interaction and relationship development.
- D10.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to recognize developmentally appropriate behaviors of the child.
- D11.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to explore positive strategies for behavioral guidance in the context of their culture and beliefs, including age-appropriate limit setting, choices, natural, and logical consequences.
- D12.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to consider the influences that impact their interactions with their child and their child's interactions with siblings and others.
- D13.** Partners with the parent/caregiver using observation, questions, suggestions, and feedback to recognize and explore ways to repair and strengthen their interactions with the child.
- D14.** Facilitates ongoing parent/caregiver interest in the child's development and status during periods of separation.



4. COMPETENCY AREA: INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors understand a child's development in the context of their family's values, culture, and beliefs. Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers to support and facilitate an understanding of the healthy physical, cognitive, and social-emotional growth and development of their children.

KNOW

- K1.** Recognizes the influence of values, culture, and beliefs on parenting and caregiving, and the significance of children in the family.
- K2.** Understands terms describing developmental domains, including communication (receptive and expressive), motor (gross and fine), problem solving (cognitive), personal-social and social-emotional.
- K3.** Understands the stages and milestones associated with typical early childhood development in communication, motor, problem solving, personal-social, and social-emotional domains.
- K4.** Recognizes the social, emotional, intellectual capacities, and needs of children prenatal to age 5 years.
- K5.** Understands the developmental stages of the parent and baby during pregnancy and the postpartum period.
- K6.** Understands the importance of early brain development and its significance to school success and lifelong learning.

DO

- D1.** Invites the parent/caregiver to share about their culture and beliefs in relation to parenting, caregiving, children, and family member roles.
- D2.** Identifies community supports and written resources related to pregnancy and preparation for the birth of the baby.
- D3.** Observes, recognizes, and responds to the experience a parent/caregiver has with the child.
- D4.** Observes, identifies, and describes behaviors in the parent/caregiver and child interaction to support and strengthen attachment.
- D5.** Supports the parent/caregiver to observe, recognize, and respond to infant/child cues.
- D6.** Supports the parent/caregiver in understanding a child's emotional behaviors, cues, and vocabulary.
- D7.** Supports the family to use their preferred language during visits.



4. COMPETENCY AREA: INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

KNOW

- K7.** Recognizes indicators of possible developmental delays or concerns.
- K8.** Understands the parent/caregiver challenges related to the stages of social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of their child.
- K9.** Knows the strengths and limitations of a developmental screening tool used in home visits.
- K10.** Understands attachment theory and the factors that impact the nature and quality of attachment between the parent/caregiver and the child.
- K11.** Recognizes that strategies in parenting/caregiving change as the child grows and develops.
- K12.** Understands behavior as a form of communication.
- K13.** Understands the connection between language development and school readiness.
- K14.** Recognizes the stereotypes that may exist for a family related to multilingual language development and the use of language in the home and public settings.

DO

- D8.** Supports the parent to recognize the child's current and emerging capacities to support each area of development.
- D9.** Provides ongoing support to the parent/caregiver to recognize the characteristics related to each stage of their child's development.
- D10.** Offers the parent/caregiver information and anticipatory guidance related to developmental milestones.
- D11.** Administers developmental screenings with accuracy and appropriately discusses the results with the parent/caregiver.
- D12.** Provides the parent/caregiver with information, strategies, and referrals when potential developmental delays are suspected.
- D13.** Invites the parent/caregiver to share about their family's experiences with education, medical, legal, and other systems to identify strategies to support a positive experience for them and their child.



4. COMPETENCY AREA: INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

KNOW

- K15.** Understands the impact of the educational experiences of the family and its significance to school success and lifelong learning.

- K16.** Understands the stressors parents face caring for a developmentally disabled or medically fragile infant or child.

- K17.** Understands the impact of trauma on children and their development.

- K18.** Understands the impact of trauma on the parent-child relationship.

- K19.** Understands the impact of trauma on parents/caregivers in their interactions with a child.

DO

- D14.** Identifies parent/caregiver and child behaviors that may indicate a history of trauma.

- D15.** Supports the parent/caregiver to address and prioritize their own mental health and well-being, given the impact it can have on the child.





5. COMPETENCY AREA: DYNAMICS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors are strengths-based and trauma-informed in their interactions. They know about the impact of gender identity, culture, and religion on the community and in family systems and composition. Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers to recognize, develop, and foster protective factors and family resiliency. Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers to address risks and stressors that impact the family's well-being.

KNOW

- K1.** Recognizes that understanding a family's cultural heritage and values is essential to having an effective home visiting relationship.
- K2.** Understands the role and influence of culture and religion on family relationships and values.
- K3.** Recognizes that racism and discrimination lead to systemic barriers that result in trauma for families and communities.
- K4.** Recognizes forms of trauma and their impact on individuals, family dynamics, and in a community.
- K5.** Knows the importance of a family's history and the nature of relationships they have with each other on the Home Visitor-parent/caregiver relationship.
- K6.** Recognizes that power dynamics exist in the relationships between parents/caregivers, child(ren) and with members of the extended family.

DO

- D1.** Remains open minded in matters of religion, race, politics, gender identity, family membership, and engagement.
- D2.** Reflects on one's biases and beliefs and how that impacts the work of home visiting/families.
- D3.** Establishes a trusting, respectful relationship with the parent/caregiver.
- D4.** Asks open ended questions to understand the family's values, culture, and beliefs.
- D5.** Individualizes the home visiting approach to identify, nurture, and build on the strengths and resiliency factors of the family to achieve the family's goals.
- D6.** Suspends one's desire to fix or solve problems for the family.
- D7.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to discuss topics and situations objectively.



5. COMPETENCY AREA: DYNAMICS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

KNOW

- K7.** Recognizes the cultural relevance of topics related to parenting and child rearing (feeding, sleeping, discipline, etc.).
- K8.** Has a working knowledge of the risk factors for child abuse, neglect, maltreatment, intimate partner violence, substance use, and trauma.
- K9.** Is aware of a family's political situation (U.S. and country of origin) that may impact family members and family dynamics.
- K10.** Recognizes factors that cause stress or distress in family dynamics as experienced by the parent/caregiver, child, or extended family members. These include poverty, unwanted pregnancy, unhealthy relationships, mental and physical health issues, death of a family or community member, the cradle to prison pipeline, incarceration, immigration, political situations, etc.
- K11.** Is knowledgeable about resources that can reduce risks and stressors.

DO

- D8.** Exercises respect for each family member and their relationships and roles in the family.
- D9.** Consistent in interactions with parent/caregiver and child.
- D10.** Implements a variety of strategies in visits to include family members who have significant relationships with the parent/caregiver and child.
- D11.** Inquires about changes in family membership and recognizes the impact of such changes on family dynamics.
- D12.** Communicates concern to the parent/caregiver when observations warrant the need for external support.
- D13.** Follows policies and procedures when a family situation may require intervention for the safety of one or more family members.
- D14.** Pursues ongoing professional development related to risks, stressors, and the impact of trauma.
- D15.** Aligns one's professional boundaries with respect to the community they are serving.



6. COMPETENCY AREA: FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors collaborate with parents and caregivers to identify safe and healthy practices that foster health and wellness in the context of a family's culture, beliefs, and resources.

KNOW

- K1.** Recognizes that a family's culture and beliefs influence family health and wellness.
- K2.** Knows that what a family regards as typical or atypical is influenced by their culture and beliefs.
- K3.** Recognizes one's own biases related to physical and mental health.
- K4.** Understands a "safe home environment" consists of physical, emotional, and stable conditions for each family member.
- K5.** Knows the common health and mental health risks and conditions associated with the postpartum period.
- K6.** Recognizes risks in the home environment for a child's accidental exposure to harmful substances.

DO

- D1.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to support their choices for health and well-being.
- D2.** Supports the parent/caregiver in decisions and practices related to the child's physical health and wellness which are not harmful, even when those decisions and practices may be different from one's own preferences.
- D3.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to consider the role family planning may have on well-being and current family relationships.
- D4.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to understand the importance of a secure and supportive relationship with the child.
- D5.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to recognize the child's cues and to respond in a way that strengthens the relationship and development.
- D6.** Can discuss potential implications of health and wellness on a child's physical and cognitive development.



6. COMPETENCY AREA: FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

KNOW

- K7.** Knows the CDC recommendations for safe sleep practices, nutritional requirements, well-child visits and immunizations.
- K8.** Knows the signs and symptoms of common infant and toddler illnesses.
- K9.** Recognizes possible developmental delays or concerns.
- K10.** Understands the stages of early brain development and the impact of interaction with the parent/caregiver.
- K11.** Recognizes the quality of parent/caregiver-child interaction on the mental health of the child.
- K12.** Recognizes the common signs of depression.
- K13.** Recognizes the long-term effects of toxic stress on health and wellness.

DO

- D7.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to understand recommended routines for safe sleeping, feeding, diapering, well-child visits, and immunizations.
- D8.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to explore nutritional needs, practices, and access to foods that support health and development.
- D9.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to identify where childproofing may be needed to ensure physical safety in the environment where they live.
- D10.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to prevent accidental poisoning due to a child's access to substances and to have access to a poison emergency contact.
- D11.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to identify and establish a medical home for themselves and their child.
- D12.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to identify when emergency medical care may be needed and where to get that kind of care.
- D13.** Discusses, identifies, and assesses the parent's/caregiver's system of social and emotional support in the family and in the community.



6. COMPETENCY AREA: FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

KNOW

- K14.** Recognizes the significance and impact of immediate and extended family connections.
- K15.** Recognizes how community conditions and resources can influence family health and well-being.
- K16.** Understands community and historical trauma and how they impact family health and well-being.
- K17.** Maintains an awareness of community specific public health conditions and concerns (COVID-19).



DO

- D14.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to build a healthy network of supportive relationships and to seek emotional support when needed.
- D15.** Addresses concerns related to physical and mental health with the parent/caregiver.
- D16.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to recognize the cues of a child's experience of stress and explores ways to address it.
- D17.** Supports and addresses parent/caregiver concerns related to visible and invisible differences in abilities that a child may have.
- D18.** Administers screenings and assessments as required, related to maternal depression, substance use, domestic abuse, etc.
- D19.** Honors the parent's/caregiver's decisions for sharing or releasing health and other identifying information.



7. COMPETENCY AREA: CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors continually learn from families, colleagues, and others. They develop an effective working relationship with their Supervisor as a partner in ongoing professional development. It is essential for Home Visitors to grow in skills and abilities and to stay current in the knowledge of research that impacts the practice of home visiting, changes in community conditions, and available resources. A commitment to ongoing learning is necessary for Home Visitors to be effective in partnerships with families.

KNOW

- K1.** Understands the role of the Supervisor to partner with the Home Visitor in providing services to families.
- K2.** Understands the concepts and importance of reflective practice.
- K3.** Understands the purpose of reflective supervision.
- K4.** Recognizes the importance of one's ongoing assessment of knowledge, skills, and attributes to impact the quality of services and support to families.
- K5.** Recognizes the importance of keeping up with current research related to areas of working with families in home visiting.
- K6.** Knows reliable sources of information that are culturally appropriate and research based.

DO

- D1.** Routinely assess one's skills, knowledge, and attributes.
- D2.** Sets professional development goals for practice as informed by ongoing work with families.
- D3.** Builds home visiting skills by setting goals, attending training, responding to feedback, and remaining open to other opportunities for ongoing learning and development.
- D4.** Develops a personal safety plan for home visiting.
- D5.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to openly discuss boundaries and establish clear agreements about their working relationship.
- D6.** Ensures that all types of information shared with parents/caregivers are current, culturally appropriate and from research based or otherwise reliable sources.



7. COMPETENCY AREA: CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE

KNOW

- K7.** Recognizes that adults learn in a variety of ways.
- K8.** Understands the relationship between individual well-being and one's ability to help others.
- K9.** Recognizes potential sources of work-related stress and in working with families.
- K10.** Recognizes the importance of self-care and knows how to care for themselves.
- K11.** Knows the appropriate venues for sharing information, gaining input, and support related to supporting families in the program.
- K12.** Knows that behaviors and interactions of a parent/caregiver can inform ways to talk about and share information related to their goals.
- K13.** Knows the importance of asking parents/caregivers about their home visiting experience.
- K14.** Knows the physical, emotional, and environmental signals that indicate when it is not safe to proceed with a home visit.

DO

- D7.** Gathers and uses family feedback about services to improve the effectiveness of home visiting.
- D8.** Collaborates with the Supervisor to develop a professional development plan.
- D9.** Applies the feedback and insights gained in supervision in home visits with families.
- D10.** Seeks guidance from the Supervisor when model or funder requirements conflict with family culture, religious beliefs, or current circumstances.
- D11.** Actively participates in reflective supervision and peer learning opportunities to improve home visiting service delivery.
- D12.** Maintains routines of information sharing with others as appropriate to ensure coordination of services to families.
- D13.** Learns from others to stay informed in matters that impact the timely access of services to families.
- D14.** Remains current in research and best practices related to childcare, safety, parenting, and home visiting.



8. COMPETENCY AREA: COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors are knowledgeable about the network of community resources and referral options available for families. Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers to identify, access, navigate systems, and advocate for themselves and their children.

KNOW

- K1.** Understands situations where a family might seek assistance or assert a right or entitlement.
- K2.** Understands the potential for social stigma associated with types of referrals.
- K3.** Recognizes the conditions of a situation that warrant advocacy and referrals.
- K4.** Knows the criteria of referral sources for accepting families.
- K5.** Knows the steps to take with the family to access resources.
- K6.** Recognizes the factors that impact the effectiveness of referrals.

DO

- D1.** Establishes effective, trusting working relationships with a wide range of community organizations in the best interests and support of families. (child welfare, Indian Child Welfare, law enforcement, health, education, financial, legal, food, mental health, shelters, etc.).
- D2.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to understand, read, and access information needed to make decisions.
- D3.** Provides accurate information and addresses how to use the information provided.
- D4.** Assesses the family's current situation and creates a plan to address and advocate for resources and support.
- D5.** Exercises confidentiality and sensitivity in matters of referrals.
- D6.** Partners with the family to make referrals regarding language and cultural barriers and seeks creative alternatives in the absence of ideal resources.
- D7.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to access best options for resources in the community.
- D8.** Explores the meaning and significance a referral has for the parent/caregiver and considers how past experiences may impact trust or comfort with a referral.



8. COMPETENCY AREA: COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

KNOW

- K7.** Recognizes the impact of limited support and resources in the family network.
- K8.** Knows strategies to use when community resources (shelters, interpreters, etc.) or sufficient financial resources are absent.



DO

- D9.** Establishes a mutual understanding of the goals and purpose of a referral and partners with the parent/caregiver to make the referral.
- D10.** Follows through on referrals given to the family and with the agency where they were referred.
- D11.** Supports the parent/caregiver in identifying and developing functional relationships with service providers.
- D12.** Partners with the parent/caregiver to assess and evaluate if the referrals to other services are meeting their needs and expectations.
- D13.** Connects with those who can make a difference to overcome barriers on behalf of the family.
- D14.** Supports the coordination of services provided by multiple agencies serving a family.
- D15.** Actively seeks and shares information with home visiting team members related to community referrals and the experiences of families.
- D16.** Gets support from the Supervisor or navigators to support access to appropriate, effective referrals.
- D17.** Stays current on changes related to public services that impact the availability and eligibility of families for services.

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