

NM HOME VISITING

Bits and Bites

1st Quarter 2024



Family Support and Early Intervention Division
HOME VISITING



UNM Early Childhood Services Center
UNM Center for Development
& Disability

INSIDE

Family
Engagement:
Key Takeaways
from Our 1st
Quarter
Sessions

Family
Engagement
Tips &
Resources

For More
Information

Family Engagement: Key Takeaways from 1st Quarter Sessions

Engagement and Retention

Family engagement and retention are key to families receiving the maximum benefits of Home Visiting services. Teresa Garza from Youth Development Incorporated (YDI) in the Metro area, Sonya Montano from Presbyterian Medical Services (PMS) Parents as Teachers (PAT) in the Southeast region, Kara Bower from The Welcome Baby Program in the Southwest region, and Louise Hoogerhuis from The First Born Program of Northern New Mexico in the Northeast region shared strategies for fostering engagement and increasing retention rates.

New Mexico Home Visiting Standards: The New Mexico Home Visiting standards provide the core elements that contribute to effective home visiting programs. This includes building strong relationships, implementing the parallel process, and engaging in reflective practice.

The Power of Relationships: Relationships are foundational to the success of home visiting and effective engagement. Establishing relationships between home visitors and families creates a safe space for open communication, allowing families to feel comfortable sharing their needs and challenges. When individuals feel connected, they are more likely to feel valued, participate actively, and seek out their home visitors.

Family engagement starts with the home visitor, and by modeling the desired behaviors such as active listening, home visitors create a welcoming atmosphere that encourages families to participate and engage fully.

Building Trust: Trust is essential for any meaningful relationship. It allows family members to feel safe and secure. Consistent interactions, honesty, and transparency are vital in cultivating trust.

Recognizing Family Strengths: Every family has unique strengths and resources. Acknowledging and celebrating these strengths not only boosts confidence but also empowers families to take an active role in their engagement.

Engaging in Reflective Practice. Reflective practice encourages home visitors to regularly evaluate their interactions and approaches. Reflecting on their experiences leads to more effective strategies tailored to the needs of families.

Implementing the Parallel Process: Kara Bower highlighted, "The way you interact with your staff is how they will interact with their families." Successfully retaining staff leads to successfully retaining families. This is the parallel process, a "trickle-down effect ". The concept of being held in another's mind and the parallel process enhance the quality of the home visiting experience.

Balancing Direct and Collaborative Supervisory Approaches: The agency's leadership plays a crucial role in creating an environment where home visitors feel supported. When leadership prioritizes the well-being of staff, it allows home visitors to be present and effective in their work with families. Regularly tracking retention numbers weekly, allows programs to identify trends, ensure transparency, communicate openly, and address issues directly and proactively.

Intentional Onboarding and Meaningful Professional Development: A structured onboarding process helps new staff understand their roles and expectations. Training and professional development opportunities ensure that home visitors have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN): Embedding the FAN model into the program culture and adopting a family-centered approach supports the retention of staff and families.

Other Strategies:

- Incentives can motivate family participation
- Flexibility in scheduling allows for greater accessibility
- Individualizing for each family
- Promotion of self-care
- Building community partnerships can enhance support and resources
- Maintaining an open and curious mindset
- Reminding oneself of the "Why"

By integrating these strategies, organizations can create a supportive framework that enhances staff retention and family engagement, leading to more successful outcomes for families.

This information was gathered in a Community of Learner Session and a Brown Bag Session.

A recording of these sessions is available on the CDD Home Visiting Portal.

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success."

-Henry Ford

Family engagement begins with the home visitor. Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with families is essential for effective engagement and retention.

Initial Engagement:

- The initial contact is crucial, it can make or break the relationship.
- Smile when you make that first phone call. The person on the other side can tell if you are smiling or not!
- Ensure parents have time to talk and be present. Ask, "Is now a good time to talk?"
- Do not rush the conversation. Be present.
- Ask clarifying questions: "What do you know about our program?", "How would you like this program to help and support you?" "
- Get to know them by asking reflective questions.
- Let the family know that you are there to support them.
- Make sure the family is clear on program expectations and roles.
- Promptly provide services. Schedule the first visit as soon as possible.

Continued Engagement:

- Personalized thank you cards and notes.
- Texting or calling between visits to check on them, and let them know you are thinking of them.
- Promptly provide what you said you would provide (information, answers to questions, resources, etc.).
- Use Reflective questions: "What has that been like for you?" Reorient families by asking: "Are you getting what you need out of our program?",
- Revisit the terms they agreed to when they signed up.
- Periodically revisit goals.
- Discuss what works well and explore challenges with current visits.
- Show gratitude. Thank your families for being a part of the program. Thank them for allowing you into their home.

Resources

1. **A Conceptual Framework for Family Engagement in Early Childhood Home Visiting.**
bit.ly/3X7mba6
2. **Engaging Families in Home Visiting**
uwm.edu/icfw/wp-content/uploads/sites/384/2016/04/Engaging-Homes-in-Family-Visiting.pdf
3. **Family Engagement Part One**
institute4sp.org/modules/family-engagement-part-one-partnering-with-parents
4. **Family Engagement Part Two**
institute4sp.org/modules/family-engagement-part-two-strategies-for-partnering-with-parents
5. **Father Engagement Newsletter**
bit.ly/4dQV8a9
6. **Father Engagement Tips and Resources**
bit.ly/47dFcMB
7. **Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (2022, March 28). Developing and maintaining relationships with parents. Home Visitor's Online Handbook.**
bit.ly/3z2fUod
8. **Sandstrom, H., & Lauderback, E. (2019, April 16). Father engagement in home visiting: Benefits, challenges, and promising strategies.** National Home Visiting Resource Center Research Snapshot Brief. nhvrc.org/brief/father-engagement/

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR AGENCY IN PLANNING GROUP CONNECTIONS:

- **Banker-Led Personal Finance Education**
aba.com/advocacy/community-programs/finelink
- **Bernalillo County Cooperative Extension Service**, Phone: 505-243-1386, 844-409-0562
bernalilloextension.nmsu.edu
- **Family Development Program**, available for presentations throughout the state of NM, Phone: 505-277-8515, emails: paige@unm.edu or vsanders1@unm.edu
fdp.unm.edu/index.html
- **Explora**, Phone: 505-600-6734, email: reservations@explora.us
explora.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Explora-Program-Guides-2024-1.pdf
- **NAMI NM Presentations**
naminewmexico.org/support-and-education
- **Parents Reaching Out**, Phone: 505-247-0192/800-524-5176
parentsreachingout.org



Scan or click [HERE](#) to view the Home Visiting Training Calendar for upcoming professional development opportunities and meetings

Individual registration is required to receive a certificate. If you cannot attend, please cancel in advance to allow those on wait lists to register.

For more information, visit us below.



[CDD/HOME VISITING](#)



[ECSC](#)



NMECED.ORG/HOME-VISITING