

HOME VISIT ETIQUETTE

1. Talk with your family to find the type of communication that works best for them, and be responsible and consistent about initiating and responding to calls or e-mails. **It is the student's responsibility to contact the family weekly.** Ask the family what is the best time to call each week, and then follow through each week with this call. Ideally, set up your next visit before you leave from your previous visit! If this is not possible, call as soon as possible. Don't let a week slip by!
2. Schedule your visit at a time convenient for the parent. If you have some flexibility on this it may be good to visit in the evening when you could meet with both parents. Also, if you're going to be working with the child make sure to consider the child's schedule and optimal times of the day.
3. Try to stay with the schedule and not reschedule unless absolutely necessary. Arbitrarily rescheduling gives the parent the message that they're not important. Also, the parent may have gone to extra efforts for your visit and deserves your consideration. If you can't make the visit because of a conflict, **call right away to let them know.** Be genuine, apologize, and seek another possible visit time right away.
4. Never drop by unexpectedly. Most of us don't appreciate this, and most of the parents won't. This is not respectful behavior.
5. Be on time — this gives the message that you value the parent's time. It also sets an example for the parent.
6. Never bring another person on the home visit unless you've gotten the parent's permission first.
7. Dress appropriately and comfortably. Appropriate dress will vary depending on the families you work with, as well as the activities you're going to be doing with them. Remember, too, that you may be working on the floor with the child so you need to be comfortable.
8. Be aware that offering food or drink is one way the parent has of giving something to you and she/he may feel badly if you refuse. Take a little of what's offered if possible, or, if you must refuse, explain that you've eaten shortly before your visit.
9. Leave your personal value system and standards at home. The house may not be as clean as you like or the parent may shout at the children more than you think is necessary, but as long as it's not threatening the health of the child or family, you may have to overlook a few things. A judgmental attitude on your part will almost certainly guarantee that you don't get invited back.
10. Expect some distractions, and be flexible enough to accommodate them.
11. Always maintain confidentiality with any information the parent shares with you.
12. Be "real" with the parent. This means being honest and disclosing appropriate things about yourself, thereby helping the parent feel on more of an equal basis rather than the receiver of services. Yet, remember that the focus of your discussions should be on the family, not on your busy life or upcoming events.
13. In a sincere way, compliment the parent on something in the home — we all like to think our place is special.
14. Thank the parent for allowing you into their home. If you've agreed to do something (send information, make a phone call) make sure to follow through.

Adapted from: Parent Involvement Resource Manual-Comprehensive materials for teaching parent involvement

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