Home Based Attendance: How to Talk to Families

Partnering with families is the cornerstone of the Early Head Start program and this is especially important when attendance issues arise. The focus in all conversations with families addressing attendance should be positive and solutions based. The goal is to inform parents of the importance of consistent home visits, the impact it has on their child’s development and to work closely together to insure the best possible outcomes for their child and family.

What to Say:

* Young children develop skills through repetition and practice. Missing visits can slow the development of new and emerging skills.
* Some missed visits are unavoidable. Children get sick and emergencies happen but the important thing is to maintain weekly home visits as often as possible
* Your weekly home visit provides an opportunity for you to focus on your role as a parent. You are not only the child’s most important relationship but also the child’s first teacher. This specific time allows you and your child to strengthen your relationship by offering support in all areas of your child’s development. It is a special time you will both look forward to each week.
* Creating daily routines is an important part of children’s feelings of safety and security. Your weekly home visit, as well as other daily and weekly routines, can help your child develop healthy social and emotional well-being.

What Families Can Do:

* Set regular bed and nap times and daily routines so your child will be alert and ready for the activities of the home visit.
* Make sure to tell friends and family your visit schedule and that their calls and visits during that time can be distracting for both you and your child.
* Talk to your home visitor about the program’s illness policy. Home visits can occur even if you or your child have a runny nose or cold as long as there is no fever, vomiting or diarrhea.
* Keep up to date with ongoing well child physicals and schedule medical and other appointments outside of scheduled visit times.
* Keep open communication with your home visitor. You can turn to them for help if you are facing challenges that effect your visit schedule. They want to partner with you to access services and assistance.
* Be a good role model for your child. Set a good example by showing him/her that keeping appointments is important and are only missed if one is truly sick.

**REMEMBER:** No requirement of 85% attendance for individual children and families.