



New York State Parental Information and Resource Center

Technical Assistance Guide

Home Visiting for Teachers

What are the benefits of teachers doing home visits?

Home visits can help teachers:

- Reach families who may not come to school.
- Get to know more members of the family.
- Work with families in their own setting, where they will most likely be more comfortable.
- Gain a better understanding of the family's life and strengths.

Home visits increase communication, trust, and support between families and teachers and result in:

- Increased student attendance rates.
- Increased student test scores.
- Decreased suspension and expulsion rates.
- Decreased vandalism at school sites.

(Parent Teacher Home Visit Project)

Overall, home visiting gives families and schools the opportunity to build a positive foundation upon which all future communication is based.

Goals of the Visit

It is important to understand the goals of the visit prior to meeting with the family. Visits are designed to open lines of communication, not for assessments or interventions. You are not there to pass judgment. You are not a social worker. Home visits are an important first step in establishing a vital partnership with families for the benefit of children's educational experiences.

Home visits can be used to

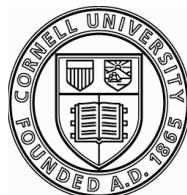
- Welcome new families to a school
- Get families thoughts and opinions on policies and programs
- Understand families' goals, hopes and dreams
- Answer questions
- Demonstrate home learning activities
- Talk about homework strategies
- Get to know the talents and interests of students and parents
- Provide information about community events and resources
- Reinforce positive parenting

Home visits can develop professional relationships between families and teachers. Each co-educator is respected for the expertise they have regarding knowledge of the student and the curriculum. *(Parent Teacher Home Visit Project)*

The goal is not to change families, but to listen and better understand them.

(Harvard Family Research Project)

The Parent/Teacher Home Visit Project (www.pthvp.org) has examples of schools from around the country who have implemented home visits and have seen first hand the positive results.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Jefferson County

Guidelines and Logistics

- Request a visit at least 10 days in advance by phone or letter and follow up with a phone call. Explain why you want to do a home visit, who will be coming on the visit and how long they can plan on you being there.
- Participation in the visits should be voluntary.
- Schedule at a families convenience as much as possible.
- Be prepared for the unexpected (cancellations, sharing of too much information, views very different from your own, new situations and surroundings).
- When you arrive, make small talk and build a rapport with the family.
- Ask where they would like to sit and talk.
- Explain again why you are there, but be flexible in order to meet the needs of the family.
- At the end of the visit, provide information about future parent activities, discuss the possibility of another visit, offer your contact information for future conversations, and thank the family.
- After the visit, it is a good idea to do brief summary notes and document information that could affect the child's school performance and future interactions with the family.

When you first call and ask for a visit, families may be skeptical of your intentions - often when a teacher calls, families assume the worst.

Concerns

Many teachers and administrators are concerned about safety. This is a legitimate concern. No one would ever ask that you put yourself in harms way. The following are tips to keep you safe.

- Carry a cell phone.
- Leave your valuables at home—only carry what you will need for the visit.
- Let someone know when you are leaving for the visit, where you will be, and when you will return.
- If you feel uncomfortable, ask a co-worker to accompany you on the visits.

Support and Funding

School administrators can support home visits by:

- Setting an example and doing home visits themselves.
- Arranging time for teachers to plan and do home visits (allocating faculty meeting time or including family visits as a professional development option).
- Providing mileage reimbursement.
- Providing professional development trainings.

Funding Ideas

- Federal stimulus money
- Title I funds
- Private grants
- Other state and federal dollars that are designated to promote family engagement

Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC)
Families and Communities Together with Schools

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County
203 North Hamilton Street
Watertown, New York 13601

Phone: 315-788-8450
Fax: 315-788-8461
Web: www.nyspirc.org
Email: info@nyspirc.org

This publication was produced in whole or in part with funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, Parental Information and Resource Center program, under grant #84.310.A. The content herein does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Education, any other agency of the U.S. government, or any other source.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County provides equal program and employment opportunities.

Please contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County if you have special needs or are unable to pay.
Revised 12/09