

Families First Home Visiting: Staying Connected

Greetings to all home visitors, lead roles, and case managers,

We recognize there is uncertainty for many as we adjust to these challenging times. It is normal and understandable for us and the families we serve to experience strong emotions like worry, anxiety, frustration, and anger. Maintaining communication with families during these challenging times is important. Home Visitors are encouraged to reach out to families to maintain and continue to build trusting relationships with regular and ongoing telephone based contact. Activating creative engagement strategies to facilitate ongoing nurturing of resilience and wellness during this time is of utmost importance. The Families First program goals and the evidence that has been collected over the years have demonstrated that your work makes a difference. It has been prioritized to continue in the safest ways possible for both families and Home Visitors.

We have received information from Health Child Manitoba Social Innovation Office (Marion Ross) that Growing Great Kids has been developing new conversation guides during this time of physical distancing as well as sharing important tips, best practices, and helpful tools to help you serve families while conducting home visits. Many of these resources will support your efforts to maintain a connection with families while conducting home visits in a different way. Some Home Visitors may have seen these resources on Facebook or via an e-mail; however, in order to have a consistent process across community areas resources will be circulated through your Team Manager and then be placed on the shared R: drive in a folder titled "FFHV Staying Connected" once approved for WRHA use. You will be able to find the resources in the shared drive <R:\HPECD PROGRAM RESOURCES\FFHV Staying Connected>.

Your families will decide how they wish to stay connected. Here are some suggestions for guidance:

- Maintain minimum contact of once per week with Level 1 families.
- During reflective practice connect with your Lead Role to consider what frequency of contact makes sense at this time and adjust level criteria accordingly.
- Contact those who may be especially anxious or stressed more frequently and involve the case manager to assist in supporting the family.
- Send a "package" containing handouts, activities and supplies for activities with a personal note to families once per week. Follow up with a phone call to see how the activities are going.
- Ask parents to have their binder nearby prior to phone visit to review handouts already provided
- Consider beginning home visits with your focus Daily Do
- Facilitate 4-6 Months Basic Care "Keeping Your Baby Healthy", "Body Builders Daily Do" and "Using Routines to Reduce Stress and Increase Stimulation" subsections in particular. Discuss importance of good hand hygiene within these subsections
- Growing Great Families modules such as Reconnecting During Times of Stress Blueprint #3
- Use action tools such as Be Present and Connect, Problem Talk, and Normalizing to talk about feelings and stressors that families are experiencing
- Share and work through Towards Flourishing strategies
- Stay up to date. Visit and share Manitoba Health <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html> and Shared Health <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/> websites for trusted information on COVID 19

Documentation for phone visit conversations will be completed by home visitors within the Documentation Log and the Integrated Progress Notes as per current guidelines.

Please know your safety and the safety of the families served by home visiting remains our top priority. As a reminder, practice social distancing, adhere to IP&C protocols and self-monitor for symptoms.

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April 14, 2020