

Facilitator Guide

Moving Early – Staying Healthy

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Note to facilitator:

The online training module "Moving Early - Staying Healthy" provides an excellent opportunity for home visitors who appreciate the flexibility of distance learning.

The pairing of the online training with a facilitated discussion (a proven more traditional method of education, whose efficacy is widely recognized) is innovative and provides for added value. The discussion allows for the sharing of personal experiences that help to illuminate the information in the module. It also provides opportunities to use the basic skills that are so essential for communication – “serve and return”, listening, facial expressions, vocal intonation, eye contact - things that are absent from today’s communication using technology. (In these days of emails, text messages, "selfies", and social media, it’s nice to meet face-to-face once in a while!) Also, laughter, stories, music, and role-plays as part of the discussion, injects an emotional component to the learning opportunity. These types of elements are incorporated into this Facilitator Guide.

Home visitors spend time with families that have an array of gifts, skills, cultures and many times challenges. The opportunity to share experiences, strategies, solutions, and successes with other family workers is much more powerful than completing the online education alone.

This Guide provides some ideas for a trainer or supervisor wishing to facilitate a follow-up discussion with a group of home visitors who have completed the module. It assumes that the facilitator has also completed the module and is familiar with its contents and resources. You don't necessarily have to be a content expert to lead the activities and discussions. Feel free to adjust and add your own creative ideas.

We hope you enjoy the process!



Introduction/Icebreaker

Begin the session with an active game of Thumbball. With everyone standing, toss the ball (soccer or beach ball with questions written on it) around the group and each time the ball is caught, the person holding the ball answers the question under the right thumb. Include questions such as:

- ❖ What is your favorite physical activity?
- ❖ Have you ever played a sport?
- ❖ What is one way that you get active during your workday?

Ask home visitors: “Who here loves to be active?” Identify those in the group who really enjoy being in motion. Identify someone within the group that will be the motivator to get participants moving during the session.

Build in “movement breaks” throughout the session. Use those suggested in this guide, or use the menu of movement activities from the module for ideas.

Review Learning Objectives

After completing this module, home visitors will be able to:

1. Support families to make physically active choices.
2. Assist families to provide safe spaces and opportunities for young children's physical activity, both indoors and out.
3. Understand and help families to support the attainment of major motor milestones for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
4. Describe and demonstrate activities that parents can play with their children in the home using minimal equipment.
5. Successfully incorporate physical activity into home visits.

Review Vocabulary

In order to review some of the key terms related to this topic, read some of the definitions (page 8 of this guide) and have participants call out the answers. Discuss each concept briefly in the context of the home visitor role.

Walkabout Activity

Write each of the following four items on a chart paper and provide markers. Post each chart on walls throughout the room. Divide the group into 4 and have each group begin at a different paper. Allow 5 – 10 minutes for each discussion then rotate. Have each group add their responses/ ideas to the paper as they go. Do one final rotation so the groups end up at their initial question. Allow a few minutes for each group to read the list of responses. Then ask each group to choose one idea to report out on.

1. When your agency provides group gatherings for families, do you ever focus on this topic? And if so, are there opportunities for physical activity built in? (Rather than just sitting in a circle and talking about the benefits.) Share some of the strategies used or generate ideas for what this might look like.
2. How does this topic make you feel? The creators of this module purposely avoided calling it “Preventing Obesity” and decided to take a more pro-active and positive approach. What do you think of the suggestion to approach it this way with families? Do you think it will help you be more effective?
3. Do you use any technology to assist you in keeping active? (I. e, Fitbit, exercise apps?) What do you think about using such tools with families?
4. How important do you believe this topic to be? With all of the challenges facing the families you work with, does this topic seem less urgent? How then might you weave it in to discussions?

Whole Group Discussion

Engage in a discussion about the differences between knowing and doing. This is a major theme in this module because a lot of the information about the importance of physical activity is generally well known.

Ask how home visitors learn about what motivates each family. Discuss the kinds of positive reinforcement that might be effective in helping families reach their goals. Invite a sharing of success stories.

Role Play

One of the printable documents in the course includes some common reasons that people list for not engaging in regular physical activity and helpful tips to overcome these perceived barriers. However, sometimes these “excuses” might just be people’s way of explaining to others (or a rationalization for themselves) why they don’t do something they know they should do, but are really not interested in doing, don’t find enjoyable, or feel is not a priority for them, etc.

Use the list as a springboard to role-play some conversations. Guide participants to use encouragement instead of persuasion in thinking about how they might respond to a parent’s reasons for not being active. (If participants are familiar with Motivational Interviewing, this may be a useful way for them to approach this conversation with a family.)

Small Groups

Self-Care

Provide paper and colored markers. Ask participants to work in small groups to create an example of a home visitor’s typical daily work schedule. Then have them use a different color to identify places that they could add some movement and healthy activities that might be sustainable. Encourage all group members to consider the implications for their own habits.

Post these around the room and provide an opportunity to see each other’s ideas during a movement break.

Whole Group Discussion

Talk about the types of home visit activities that are most often planned for parent and child. Do they tend to be mostly sedentary? If movement isn’t often part of the visit – why not? Is it more challenging? (Perhaps home visitors believe that some children actually are active enough and so need more assistance to sit and do something focused.) Explore their perspectives.

Partner Conversation

Have participants turn to a partner and discuss the following:

What are your favorite kinds of activities to do with children? How could you make them more active?

Invite a few volunteers to share with the larger group.

Small Groups

Sharing of strategies to get home visitors to move visits beyond the home – do they utilize the community, go for walks, play outside?

Supply pictures of various places in the community. Pass them out to small groups and encourage home visitors to brainstorm how they would initiate and carry out a visit to their chosen location. Have them identify their goals, potential outcomes, and any barriers they may encounter.

Follow-Up Discussion with Whole Group

Home visitors may describe that families are reluctant to play outside in unsafe neighborhoods. If this occurs, ask them to identify some ideas for community resources that may be safe options (such as a local YMCA.)

Individual Reflection

Provide time for individual reflection and writing:

What are your greatest concerns about the physical activity levels of the families you serve? What are your hopes? What do you see as the benefits to helping families learn about this topic and get more active?

Provide an opportunity to share.

Action Plan

Have participants develop an Action Plan:

Identify some ways you will incorporate physical activities into a home visit plan (even if it's not the main emphasis or goal of the visit).

Also, set a goal for your self-care. How might you increase the amount and/or quality of exercise you get? Is it possible to improve your activity during your work day?

Additional Whole Group Topics

Gender differences in play

Display the following quote from the module:

"I talk about the differences with dad. Mom may be a little bit hesitant to let baby go up the stairs and go down the slide. He's more likely to encourage safe risk. I relay that message to dads that you're just as important; you provide extra confidence, which is good for your child to develop these social skills and to help the child navigate life and understand what choices are safe and what choices may not be safe."

- Cinque, Family Support Provider

What are home visitors' reactions to that idea? Have they noticed variation within some families? How do they differentiate for parents depending on their gender and/or preferred play styles?

Explore Variations in Families' Experiences

How does culture affect the habits of individual families and how might that be taken into consideration? In large group, ask home visitors how they present the recommended practices to parents who have different cultural customs.

Could have them work in small groups to generate ideas for conversation starters to learn more about families' experiences and values. For example, a home visitor might ask a parent, "What were your developmental milestones like as a child? Who supported you?"

Invite home visitors to share about their experiences growing up and the expectations their parents had of them regarding physical activities.

Closing

Plant a seed...

Suggest that those who love to be active could serve as a resource and motivator for others in their agency – both staff and families.

Vocabulary Review Terms

Medical Terms

The term for “lying on the stomach.” – **Prone**

The furrowed outer layer of gray matter in the cerebrum of the brain, associated with the higher brain functions such as voluntary movement, coordination of sensory information, learning and memory, and the expression of individuality. – **Cerebral Cortex**

The condition in which a baby's head is tilted. Tightening of neck muscles make it difficult for the infant to turn the head from side to side. Sometimes it is called “wryneck.” – **Torticollis**

The condition characterized by an asymmetrical head with flat spots on the back or sides. – **Plagiocephaly**

The term used to describe the development of myelin around the neurons. This process is mostly complete at the end of the early childhood period. This allows for complete transference of nerve impulses throughout the nervous system. – **Myelination**

On The Move!

The term used is for the act of moving from place to place by various means. – **Locomotion**

During the crawling/creeping phase, where is the majority of the body weight? – **On the belly**

Involves the small muscles of the body in the performance of precise movements. – **Fine motor**

The light-intensity activities of daily life, such as standing, walking slowly, and lifting lightweight objects. – **Baseline activity**

Positioning a baby on his or her stomach while the baby is alert and supervised is often referred to as this. Spending time in this position while awake helps strengthen a baby's head, neck, and shoulder muscles. – **Tummy Time**

Ch-Ch-Changes

An increase in size of the body or its parts is referred to as – **Growth**

Changes in an individual's level of functioning over time is called – **Development**

The process of developmental change characterized by a fixed order of progression in which the pace may vary, but the sequence or order of appearance of characteristics typically does not vary is called – **Maturation**

This document was created for the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood by the Center for Early Childhood Education at Eastern Connecticut State University - with contributions from Doug Edwards. The document is meant to support facilitated discussion groups for home visitors who have completed the online learning module.

