



## Safety Tips for Visiting with a Family



We encourage all home visiting staff, regardless of the specific population they serve, to review the following tips on safety considerations for home visitors. These tips promote staff awareness of their personal safety and surroundings, on their travels and in the home, office, and community settings.

### Personal Safety Fundamentals

- **Trust** your instincts.
- **Be assertive.**
- **Stay calm**, practice self-regulation.
- **Assess the situation** moment by moment.
- **Be aware** of where the exits are in the home you are visiting.
- **Be mindful** of what personal information you share.
- **Leave** if you feel uncomfortable and notify your Supervisor of the situation.

### Plan for your Home Visit

- **Notify your Supervisor** of your plan to see a participant and share the visit location.
- **If you have any specific concerns about the visit**, or if anything seems “off” or unusual about the participant or your plan to meet, relay this to your Supervisor in advance of the visit.
- **Draft a text message that is ready to send** to your Supervisor if issues arise, or preschedule a call from your Supervisor to serve as an opportunity to touch base and leave mid-visit if needed.
- **Confirm in advance** with the participant that you will be arriving as scheduled.
- **Prepare all items** you will need for your visit.
- **Know where you are going** and plan your drive ahead of time.
- **Always bring your cell phone** and have your cell phone charged.
- Make sure your **Supervisor’s phone number** is in your contacts.
- Wear clothing and shoes that **provide freedom of movement**.

### Traveling to the Home Visit

- **Organize your materials** before leaving for the visit.
- **Be alert** and aware of your surroundings.
- **Do not park in a secluded area.**
- **Keep car doors locked** and check your surroundings before exiting.
- If you are being followed, **drive to the nearest police department or fire department.**
- **Leave purse, bags, and bulky items** locked in your car and out of sight.



## Safety Tips for Visiting with a Family *continued*

### During the Visit

- **Do not enter** until you see someone you know.
- **Knock and stand to the side of the door** while waiting for an answer.
- **Take note of others** who are in the surrounding area or home.
- **Listen to your instincts.** If you feel unsafe at any time, or if the situation becomes unsafe/uncomfortable, LEAVE.
- If there is immediate availability of a weapon, **remove yourself from the situation.**
- If there are pets in the house, **ask to move them to another room** if you have allergies or feel unsafe or uncomfortable around the animal(s).
- **Be respectful of people's homes.** Respect personal space and maintain professional boundaries.
- **Be mindful** of what personal information you share.
- **Visually check** the surrounding area when you are leaving.
- **Always carry car keys in the same place** where they are easily accessible.

### Office Visits

- **Plan an emergency escape route** and be aware of how to get immediate help.
- **Arrange furniture** in the office so you are near to the door to prevent entrapment.
- **Never work alone** in your office and only see participants during regular business hours.
- **Make sure personal items are locked** in your desk prior to the participant arriving.
- **Set up your office space** so that any safety hazards for both parents and children are out of sight and out of reach.

### Community Visits

- **Plan the visit** for a safe meeting location.
- **Plan to arrive in advance** of the participant to get settled and oriented.
- **Choose seating** that ensures the privacy of your conversation.
- **Leave all personal items in the car.**

