

SAFETY FIRST

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NMAIMH competencies addressed:

Working With Others:

- Building and maintaining relationships
- Empathy and compassion
- Family Safety

Reflection:

- Self-awareness
- Personal development

Direct Service Skills:

- Observation and listening

Just as things are getting back to “normal,” we are excited to return to the office and resume in-person home visits. However, there is also fear and anxiety about Covid-19 and its variants, which are a concern for many of us. The health and safety of the families that we serve, and our home visitors has always been a priority for the NM Home Visiting Program. Now, more than ever, we must remain vigilant about the recent of Covid-19 and its variants, especially the Delta variant. We will continue to take precautions to keep ourselves, the families we work with, our colleagues and our own families as safe as possible.

First and foremost, it is important to understand that COVID-19 is a public health emergency. The NM Home Visiting Program continues to play a vital role in addressing the needs of pregnant women, young children, and families during this emergency. Home visitors have worked hard to create and long-lasting relationships with their families. Therefore, the home visitor’s role continues to be essential in helping to addressing the potential impact of the emergency on pregnant women, families’ health, and well-being, as well as promoting access to critical health supports, early care and education, and family economic supports.

Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, 65% of the New Mexican population are fully vaccinated as compared to only 50% of the total US population (CDC, 2021). Continuing to promote vaccination among eligible individuals can help home visiting programs protect their staff and children in their care, as well as their families.

In order to prevent outbreaks home visiting programs are encouraged to (HRSA, 2021):

- Ensure that children are up to date with well-child visits and all routine preventive care and pregnant women are up to date with pregnancy-related and routine preventive care.
- Inform families about current public health recommendations related to COVID-19 and vaccinations (Ex: wear masks, wash hands, use hand sanitizer, cover cough or sneeze, keep distance, etc.).
- Encourage COVID vaccination among staff and eligible clients/family members.
- Identify strategies for managing family stress and family basic needs, and support family engagement.
- Collaborate with other service systems and providers to promote access to resources such as child-care, early intervention services, economic and mental health supports, etc.
- Develop emergency operation plans related to COVID-19.
- Address health disparities, family and community needs, and social and structural determinants of health.
- Engage in home visitor self-care

Questions to encourage discussion and reflection...

- Where does your comfort level lie with going into homes?
- Are you comfortable with the safety actions that families will be taking?
- What is your comfort level in talking about safety?
- What steps and procedures do you already have in place?

Additional Resources

- ECECD COVID-19 guidelines

References:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021. COVID Data Tracker. *COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States*. Retrieved on 8/3/21 from:
<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations>

Health Resources & Service Administration, 2021. HRSA Maternal & Child Health. *Important Home Visiting Information During COVID-19*. Retrieved on 8/3/21 from:
<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/Home-Visiting-Information-During-COVID-19#role>