

QUOTE

*"Connection is why we're here.
It is what gives purpose
and meaning to our lives"*
— Brené Brown



BEFORE WE TEACH, WE CONNECT

Every HIPPY home visit is an opportunity to build a relationship. **Rapport is the feeling of trust, respect, and connection that develops between people.** It doesn't mean that a home visitor and parent need to become friends. It means creating a relationship where the parent feels comfortable being themselves, asking questions, trying something new, and even saying, "I'm not sure." **This matters because learning can feel vulnerable.** During a HIPPY visit, parents may practice a new activity, role play as their child, read a story aloud, or try a strategy they haven't used before. They may worry about doing it "right." A strong relationship can make it easier to take that risk. **Rapport is built through small moments.** Remembering something a parent told you last week. Asking about something important to their family. Listening without immediately offering advice. Noticing something the parent is doing well. Following through when you say you'll do something. **You don't have to have a big conversation about building rapport.** Your everyday interactions are building it—or not building it. The goal isn't to make every visit perfect. The goal is to consistently communicate:

- I see you.
- I hear you.
- I respect you.
- I believe in you.

REFLECTION

1. What do I do when a parent doesn't seem interested in talking?
2. When do I feel most connected to the families I serve?
3. What is one small thing I could do during my next visit to strengthen rapport?

TIPS

Simple Ways to Build Rapport

1. **Be genuinely curious.** Try questions that invite the parent to share their perspective, such as, "How did that go?" or "What did you notice?" Then give the parent time to answer.
2. **Remember the little things.** Follow up on something the parent shared during a previous visit. It communicates that you were listening and that what they said mattered. "How was the first day of school?" These small moments show that you are listening and care about the family.
3. **Notice strengths.** Look for what the parent is already doing well. Be specific about what you see rather than simply saying, "Good job." Specific feedback helps parents recognize the skills they already have.
4. **Listen before you solve.** When a parent shares a concern, resist the urge to immediately offer a solution. Sometimes parents need to feel heard before they're ready to consider a solution. Try, "That sounds like it has been a tough week." before jumping into suggestions.
5. **Be yourself—but stay professional.** Be warm, respectful, dependable, and genuinely interested in the family. Let your own personality come through while remembering that you are also representing HIPPY and maintaining a professional relationship.
6. **Follow through.** If you tell a parent you will bring information, check on a referral, or ask about something at the next visit, remember to do it. Trust grows when your actions match your words. Even a small follow-up can communicate, "I remembered, and I care enough to follow through."
7. **Give the parent room to participate.** Make space for the parent to contribute. Ask what they think, invite their ideas, and let them make choices when appropriate. The parent is the expert on their child, and their experience is an important part of the home visit.