

RAPPORT - Starting Strong

Rapport is more than being friendly or making small talk, and isn't simply something that happens at the beginning of the visit. It is the relationship foundation that makes Review, Role Play, Referrals, and Reminders effective. It is the intentional process of creating a relationship in which parents feel respected, valued, and comfortable participating. Research on home visiting consistently identifies the quality of the relationship between the home visitor and parent as an important factor in parent engagement. This means parents are more likely to participate, practice, share concerns, and try new strategies when they feel safe and respected. **As coordinators, we have a unique opportunity to model these behaviors with our home visitors.** Listening before solving, recognizing strengths, creating psychological safety, and approaching challenges with curiosity rather than judgment show our staff what rapport looks like in practice.

Give each home visitor a copy of One Visit at a Time (digital or hard copy). Depending on how much time you want to spend on this topic you can keep it as simple as giving them the insert to read and asking them how they would like to apply the Reflection Questions (on the handout) this week. If you have 10-15 minutes you can use one or two of the **LET'S TALK** questions on the right, which would give your team an opportunity to connect. For a deeper dive into the topic, open with a question, add one or two of the **THREE MORE IDEAS**, and the **TRY THIS** activity below. Any materials needed for the TRY THIS activity are underlined.

TRY THIS: Rapport Detective

Listen to this short home-visit scenario containing several rapport-building and rapport-damaging behaviors. "A home visitor arrives just on time and immediately begins unpacking materials. She asks how the parent's week went while laying out her props. When the parent describes a challenge with her child, the home visitor shares a strategy she could try. Later, she remembers something the parent mentioned during the previous visit and asks about it."

In pairs discuss: What built rapport? What could be changed?"

LET'S TALK:

Discussion questions:

- How do you let a parent know you genuinely care about them and their child?
- What gets in the way of building rapport with families, and what could help us overcome that?

THREE MORE IDEAS of how to use today's insert with your team:

WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE? -

Working in pairs, draw a picture of what rapport looks like in a home visit. What would we see or hear that tells us rapport is being built?

BUILDS OR BREAKS? - Home visits consist of the Entrance, Education (Role Play), and Exit. Share an example of how we build or break rapport in each part of a home visit.

RAPPORT RECIPE - Give each person/pair a blank card. Your task is to create a recipe for strong rapport. What ingredients does rapport include? Write your recipe for rapport on your card. Afterwards discuss: Which ingredient makes the biggest difference in your home visits? Which one is hardest to access on a challenging day?