

Leadership Training

Home Visits

After conducting some light Internet research, I have located a program here in Chico, California that provides a home visiting service for families and children. The program is called Valley Oak Children's Services. Their services are based in Oroville and run through the Oroville Chamber of Commerce. Valley Oak Children's Services is a non-profit organization that caters to all of Butte County. Since 1980, Valley Oak Children's Services has been providing childcare referrals and resources to families. Their funding comes from the California State Department of Education. Valley Oak Children's Services not only caters to parents and families, but also provides services to childcare facilities. If you are a childcare provider, for example, if you own your own day care, you are able to get in contact with Valley Oaks Children's Services. They will set you up with some materials, advice on running your business appropriately and professional growth workshops for your staff. I found this part of the organization most interesting because I could one day see myself utilizing a program like this, if I chose to own my own childcare facility. You may visit Valley Oak Children's Services website at www.valleyoakchildren.org

There are many ways to maintain safety for a home visiting staff. A home visiting staff can maintain safety through leaving the itinerary in the office, leaving valuables at home, carrying only necessities with them, going to homes

in pairs when first starting out, having a car with enough gas, and using locking devices on the car. Home visitors may also avoid parking in deserted areas, they may wear a nametag and introduce themselves, they may scope out the neighborhood prior to conducting the home visit and they may also have emergency back up plans in place. A lot of these home visiting safety precautions will be set in place by the home visiting agency.

There are several cultural considerations in working with diverse families. Professionals must show appropriate sensitivity and respect for families by asking appropriate questions and complying in a respectful manner. When a family is culturally different from your own, it's important to become as educated as possible about the culture of the family you are working with. The experience for all involved will run smoothly and be the most effective when the childcare professional is educated about the family's cultural background, customs and traditions. A simple and easy way for a childcare professional to become educated about a family is to make observations during the first home visit and research accordingly via Internet searches or even asking friends.

Initially, I would use a formative form of assessment to observe my Fragile Family at first. I find power in observation. There is plenty of information that can be absorbed from a simple observational technique. After observing my Fragile Family, I would be sure to jot down questions I would like to ask each family member during my next home visit. This would assist me in creating programs for

my Fragile Family and in researching programs that already exist in order to refer my Fragile Family out. It is important to gain information first and then act on it.

Home visiting programs for at-risk families are extremely beneficial. There is a lot of research backing this up. According to a RAND Corporation study, home visiting programs have a positive effect on parenting attitudes and values, parenting behavior and skill acquisition, parent life outcomes, child cognitive and language development, child physical health, illness and injury and child social competence (naccrra.org).

References

http://www.naccrra.org/sites/default/files/default_site_pages/2013/home_visiting_april_2013.pdf

www.valleyoakchildren.org