

WASHINGTON STATE
HOME VISITING CORE COMPETENCIES

TEAM DISCUSSION GUIDE

*This document is intended to be used with
the Washington State Home Visiting Core
Competencies for **Home Visitors**.*



WASHINGTON STATE HOME VISITING CORE COMPETENCIES
TEAM DISCUSSION GUIDE

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WASHINGTON STATE HOME VISITING CORE COMPETENCIES



TEAM DISCUSSION GUIDE INTRODUCTION

The following is a discussion guide **to be used with the Washington State Home Visiting Core Competencies for Home Visitors**. It can be used in a variety of gatherings such as a regular staff meeting or in-service training. The discussion structure is flexible in that you can decide what questions you want to ask and how many areas of the Competencies you want the group to discuss at a time. It is suggested that 15-20 minutes per competency area is set aside for meaningful discussion. Given this suggestion, consider featuring only one or two areas in the context of a routine meeting. The discussion of one or two competency areas could be a regular item on a meeting agenda over a period of weeks or months. Another idea is to cover more than two area descriptions in the context of longer in-service training events. Given your program and community knowledge and role as a Supervisor of Home Visitors, you are in the best position to decide the most effective way to structure and facilitate an exploration of the core competencies with staff.



For additional information, please visit Start Early's website at [StartEarly.org/CoreCompetencies](https://www.startearly.org/corecompetencies) or email our team directly at HVStartEarlyWA@StartEarly.org



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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Primary goal:

The primary goal of the facilitated discussion is to promote a shared exploration and understanding of the relationship of the [Washington State Home Visiting Core Competencies](#) to the type of home visiting offered by your program and the actual job responsibilities of Home Visitors.

Key objectives:

- Deepen team collaboration, understanding, and collective ownership of high quality services that are grounded in the tenants of the core competencies.
- Identity the extent to which each area applies to your work with families, given the primary features of your program's home visiting services.
- Develop a working knowledge of the nature and content of the core competencies.
- Support home visitor's readiness to complete the [HOME VISITOR Self-Assessment & Development Plan](#) which is designed to inform an individual's plans for continued professional growth and success with birthing persons, parents, caregivers, and children.



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SUGGESTED APPROACH

There are many effective approaches to team exploration of the Home Visitor competency areas!

Each of the eight area descriptions is comprised of a few sentences that describe the focus of a major aspect of home visiting. While the discussion does not focus on the specific competencies that follow the descriptions, some of the competencies listed in the **“KNOW”** and **“DO”** columns will likely be identified in the discussion given the questions you ask.

A list of discussion questions is provided from which you can pick and choose to fit your time constraints. Developing an approach and questions of your own to achieve the same or similar goal of the discussion is highly encouraged.

Before you begin:

- Decide which setting you want to use for the discussion. (Training? Staff meeting? Other?)
- Decide which of the eight competency areas you plan to explore.
- Decide the questions you want to use to facilitate the discussion from the provided or develop questions of your own. To support the decision of what questions to ask, you may want to review the “KNOW” and “DO” list of specific competencies associated with the area to be discussed. You can find them for each area here: <https://www.startearly.org/where-we-work/washington/home-visiting-core-competencies/>
- At least one week prior to the scheduled discussion, let those to be in attendance know the purpose, competency area to be discussed, and the 2-4 questions to be asked for each competency area to be discussed.



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SUGGESTED APPROACH

The approach suggested is to read the competency area description in its entirety and then ask 2-4 related questions. Allow time for responses to each question to be discussed (about 15-20 minutes per area). As the discussion facilitator, you'll see notes to support you along the way.



The **comment** icon indicates something you could say or put in your own words.



The **question** icon is something you could ask the group. (numbered in sequence as Q1, Q2, etc.)



The **tip** icon offers a way to facilitate and enrich the discussion. The **tip** also offers points you may want to add to the responses staff have made to the questions. There are benefits to establishing a routine approach to facilitating the discussion of each area as presented below. However, feel free to make changes to keep staff engaged and involved in ways you see fit.



1. COMPETENCY AREA: **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING:** **EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES**



Read the competency area **description** out loud.



“Let’s explore your thoughts and ideas about this competency area.”

DESCRIPTION: A Home Visitor’s understanding of and respect for a family’s culture is fundamental to an effective home visiting relationship. Respect for a family’s culture requires confidence in the value of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging when partnering with families and caregivers. Home Visitors will practice humility and cultivate an environment of continued learning regarding culture and race.



Do you agree or disagree that this is an important area of competency to develop in your work with a family?



Take time to explore the reasons or ask for examples that staff would offer to support their response.



What are some of the ways you learn about a family’s culture?



Probe for things they do and say with families to learn about their culture.





1. COMPETENCY AREA: **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING:** **EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES**

Q3

Are there ways as a program team we could strengthen the experience of families to feel their culture is understood and respected?



Collect their ideas. Supplement with examples such as learn more together about the culture of the families in our community, translate program materials into the language of families, advocate for more culturally specific resources, etc.



Close the discussion with your own thoughts about the importance of this competency area in practice with families visited in the program and your work as a supervisor to support development of this aspect of their role as a home visitor. Name action steps you commit to take given their feedback. Also, note any upcoming training or other learning opportunities available to them that relate to this area of competency.





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1. COMPETENCY AREA: **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING:**
EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES





2. COMPETENCY AREA: **EFFECTIVE HOME VISITING**



Read the competency area **description** out loud.



“Let’s explore your thoughts and ideas about this competency area.”

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers in visits to identify the family’s needs and goals, given the cultural and community context, their current circumstances, and the environment in which they live. Visits are delivered in accordance with the home visiting design and practices of the program’s organization.



How important do you think it is to learn about the parent’s or caregiver’s culture, community, home environment and current situation before developing goals that address their needs and interests?



Take time for an open discussion and allow for a range of points of view.



What are some specific factors that affect a parent’s or caregiver’s ability to make progress towards their goals and what are some specific factors of your support that can make a difference?



Supplement responses if desired with examples such as history of trauma, depression, illness, culture, and values, etc.



What are some of the features and requirements that define the kind of home visiting our program offers?



Listen for responses such as, ‘we use the Parents As Teachers model’; ‘its voluntary and free to families’; ‘we do visits every week’, etc.



2. COMPETENCY AREA: **EFFECTIVE HOME VISITING**



Q4

There are lots of ways a parent or caregiver may experience the relationship they have with you. What difference do you think it makes that a parent or caregiver experiences you as a partner?

Q5

What features of your relationship with a parent or caregiver best support progress towards achieving their goals?

Q6

Are there ways as a program we could strengthen the experience of families as partners in the services we offer?



Collect their ideas. Supplement with examples that you would organize and pursue such as surveys, listening and learning sessions, advisory committee, suggestion and input emails, etc.



Close the discussion with your own thoughts about the importance of this competency area in practice with families visited in the program and your work as a Supervisor to support development of this aspect of their role as a home visitor. Name action steps you commit to take given their feedback. Also, note any upcoming training or other learning opportunities available to them that relate to this area of competency.



Take time to explore the reasons or ask for examples that staff would offer to support their response. Followup with exploring other ways a parent or care giver may experience you. E.g. expert, teacher, other?



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2. COMPETENCY AREA: **EFFECTIVE HOME VISITING**





3. COMPETENCY AREA: **PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS**



Read the competency area **description** out loud.

DESCRIPTION: A Home Visitors recognize the impact of the parent-child relationship on healthy physical growth and social-emotional development. Home Visitors understand that parents and caregivers are experts in their own lives and, therefore, support the parent-child relationship in the context of a family's culture, religion, and community.



"Let's explore your thoughts and ideas about this competency area."



Do you agree or disagree that this is an important area of competency to develop in your work as a home visitor with a family?



Take time to explore the reasons or ask for examples that staff would offer to support their response.



In what ways do you think a child's physical growth and social-emotional development is influenced by the relationship they experience with their parent or caregiver?



Listen for such responses as, "A parent or caregiver who has a strong relationship may respond quickly to a child's cues like crying when they are hungry or tired." Or "A child may be at higher risk for abuse if the parent feels the child doesn't like them or understand what's age-appropriate behavior."



What are examples of ways you have seen that a family's culture, religion, and community have an effect on the parent-child relationship?



Listen for or supplement examples given such as how culture and religion shape the beliefs about the role of the parent/caregiver, and other adults (e.g. aunties, grandmother, neighbors, etc.); what is considered 'bad behavior' and appropriate discipline, etc.



3. COMPETENCY AREA: **PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS**

Q4

What are the ways you discover a parent's or caregiver's values and beliefs about what kind of relationship they want to have with the child?



Ask for examples of questions or things they listen for (through time) to deepen their understanding of the relationship and interactions they have with a child which are influenced by their culture, religion, and community. Follow-up by asking if someone would share an example they experienced with a family.

Q5

What are ways that you support the development of a positive parent or caregiver and child relationship?



Listen or supplement responses such as using observation and feedback in positive exchanges between child and parent or caregiver, encourage the parent to consider the child's point of view, encourage parent/caregiver curiosity about next developmental steps, etc.

Q6

What are things you say or do to demonstrate respect for the parent or caregiver as an expert in their own lives and the Relationship they have with the child?



Listen or supplement responses such as show interest in hearing about the parent or caregiver's own childhood, respect and support the decisions a parent makes even if they aren't the ones I would make for my own child, etc.

Q7

Are there ways as a program we could strengthen or demonstrate the respect we have for the role a parent or caregiver has in making decisions for the child?



Close the discussion with your own thoughts about the importance of this competency area in practice with families visited in the program and your work as a Supervisor to support development of this aspect of their role as a home visitor. Name action steps you commit to take given their feedback. Also, note any upcoming training or other learning opportunities available to them that relate to this area of competency.



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3. COMPETENCY AREA: **PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS**





4. COMPETENCY AREA: **INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**



Read the competency area **description** out loud.

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors understand a child's development in the context of their family's values, culture, and beliefs. Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers to support and facilitate an understanding of the healthy physical, cognitive, and social-emotional growth and development of their children.



"Let's explore your thoughts and ideas about this competency area."



Do you agree or disagree that this is an important area of competency to develop in your work as a home visitor with a family?



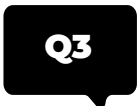
Take time to explore the reasons or ask for examples that staff would offer to support their response.



What do you need to learn about a family's values, culture, and beliefs that relate to child development?



Listen for answers that relate to feeding, sleeping, when they learn to talk and walk, etc. Broaden the conversation with examples if you think it is needed.



What are some of the things we need to know as home visitors to support parents and caregivers around the development of their child?



4. COMPETENCY AREA: **INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

Q4

What are some ways you become a partner to the parent or caregiver in supporting their child's development?



Add to the conversation if needed with examples such as building trust, sharing information they ask for, ask the parent or caregiver if they have concerns, etc.

Q5

What are your thoughts and ideas about developmental screening as part of your work as a home visitor?



Explore the answers to this question listening to their opinions and encouraging a full range of ideas. Prompt with follow-up questions related to concerns with findings, referral sources, what they like or don't like about the tools or process, etc.

Q6

What does the experience of trauma have to do with infant and early childhood development?



Encourage discussion about the impact of different kinds of trauma experienced by the parent or caregiver, child, in the community, school experiences, etc. and related issues of follow-through on referrals.

Q7

Are there ways as a team we could strengthen our own knowledge and skills in home visiting related to this competency area?



Close the discussion with your own thoughts about the importance of this competency area and your work as a Supervisor to support their work with families as a home visitor. Name action steps you commit to take given their feedback. Also, note any upcoming training or other learning opportunities available to them that relate to this area of competency.



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4. COMPETENCY AREA: **INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**





5. COMPETENCY AREA: **DYNAMICS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**



Read the competency area **description** out loud.



“Let’s explore your thoughts and ideas about this competency area.”

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors are strengths-based and trauma-informed in their interactions. They know about the impact of gender identity, culture, and religion on the community and in family systems and composition. Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers to recognize, develop, and foster protective factors and family resiliency. Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers to address risks and stressors that impact the family’s well-being.



What does it mean to you to have ‘strength-based and trauma informed’ interactions with a family in your role as a home visitor?



Allow time for everyone to respond with an answer, or example. If desired, explore what kinds of interactions would not be ‘strength-based’ or ‘trauma-informed’ (such as teaching, problem solving, making assumptions, etc.)



What are some of the ways that trauma is experienced?



Ensure that a full range of examples are brought out. Supplement by mentioning those that are missing which are referenced in the description. Examples: racism, community violence, personal experiences with violence, neglect, etc.



What are ways you learn about the nature of the relationships between those who a parent or caregiver considers to be their ‘family’?



Listen for responses such as, ask questions about who they consider to be close and extended members of their family, observe family dynamics, listen to what is said about family members, etc. Note that relationships between family members change, so this isn’t something that only needs to be assessed one time.



5. COMPETENCY AREA: **DYNAMICS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Q4

In what ways have you experienced a parent's or caregiver's history of trauma impact your work with them as a home visitor?



Ask for specific examples. Explore how a history of trauma can affect: development of trust with a home visitor, their ability to retain or learn information, how successfully parent or caregiver will engage and keep to a visit schedule, etc.

Q5

How do your values which are related to gender identity, culture and religion impact the home visiting you do with a family whose values in those areas may be different?



Follow up with asking for ways they use to remain 'strength-based' in these situations. Suggest strategies such as being honest with yourself about it, discuss the difference with a supervisor or peer, etc.

Q6

How do the relationships and dynamics between family members impact your work as a home visitor?



Listen for responses or supplement by mentioning visits may not occur if family members come into conflict with each other or don't want someone in their home; an absent parent or caregiver may be a focus in visits; who makes decisions about care and discipline of the child affects my support of the parent or caregiver with whom I have the most contact; etc.

Q7

Do you agree or disagree that this is an important area of competency to develop in your work with a family?



Take time to explore the reasons or ask for examples that staff would offer to support their response.





5. COMPETENCY AREA: **DYNAMICS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Q8

What are ways you have found to partner with parents and caregivers to recognize, develop, and foster protective factors and family resiliency?

Q9

Are there ways as a team we could strengthen our own knowledge and skills in home visiting or support each other related to this competency area?



Close the discussion with your own thoughts about the importance of this competency area and your work as a Supervisor to support their work with families as a home visitor. Name action steps you commit to take given their feedback. Also, note any upcoming training or other learning opportunities available to them that relate to this area of competency.





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5. COMPETENCY AREA: **DYNAMICS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**





6. COMPETENCY AREA: **FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS**



Read the competency area **description** out loud.

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors collaborate with parents and caregivers to identify safe and healthy practices that foster health and wellness in the context of a family's culture, beliefs, and resources.



"Let's explore your thoughts and ideas about this competency area."



What role do you have as a home visitor related to this competency area in your work with a family?



Encourage all staff members to respond with an example.



What is important about identifying 'safe and healthy practices' in collaboration with parents and caregivers?



Encourage an exploration of the risks in the relationship if you, as a home visitor, define 'safe and healthy practices' for a parent or caregiver.



What are aspects of 'health and wellness'?



Ensure that a comprehensive list of areas related to health and wellness are identified. e.g., physical, emotional, spiritual, social, mental, etc.



6. COMPETENCY AREA: **FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

Q4

What difference does a family's culture, beliefs, and resources make to what they consider to be safe and healthy practices that foster health and wellness for themselves?

Q5

What difference does a family's culture, beliefs, and resources make to what they consider to be safe and healthy practices that foster health and wellness for the child?

Q6

What are examples of situations that cause you to be concerned about the health and safety of a family member that may require you to act without their permission?



Note situations addressed in your agency's policies and procedures and situations that require action as a mandated reporter if staff miss noting specific situations in their responses. Follow-up by asking if there's an example where they were able to obtain permission or support a parent or caregiver to take necessary action. Comment on your role as a supervisor to be involved and support the home visitor in such situations.

Q7

What community conditions affect a family's health and wellness?



Listen for or supplement with examples such as: outbreaks of illness or infection, lack of medical care or health information in the language of the family, no access to fresh food, lack of transportation to or existence of accessible medical or counseling facilities, violence in the community, etc.

Q8

Are there ways our program could strengthen our work with families to improve our support their health and wellness?



Close the discussion with your own thoughts about the importance of this competency area and your work as a Supervisor to support their work with families as a home visitor. Name action steps you commit to take given their feedback. Also, note any upcoming training or other learning opportunities available to them that relate to this area of competency.



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6. COMPETENCY AREA: **FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS**





7. COMPETENCY AREA: **CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE**



Read the competency area **description** out loud.



“Let’s explore your thoughts and ideas about this competency area.”

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors continually learn from families, colleagues, and others. They develop an effective working relationship with their Supervisor as a partner in ongoing professional development. It is essential for Home Visitors to grow in skills and abilities and to stay current in the knowledge of research that impacts the practice of home visiting, changes in community conditions, and available resources. A commitment to ongoing learning is necessary for Home Visitors to be effective in partnerships with families.



Do you agree or disagree that this is an important area of competency to develop in your role as a Home Visitor?



Take time to explore the reasons or ask for examples that staff would offer to support their response.



What are some things that you have learned from families that have been important to your work as a Home Visitor?



What experiences or tips have you learned or shared with other Home Visitors that have been important to your effectiveness as a Home Visitor?



Encourage many different examples to be noted.





7. COMPETENCY AREA: **CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE**

Q4

Who else has made an important contribution to your professional development and effectiveness in your role as a Home Visitor?



Encourage many different examples to be noted.



State the ways you want them to experience you as their Supervisor as a partner in their professional development.

Q5

What are some areas of research that are important to stay current on as a Home Visitor?



Areas to have mentioned include brain/neuroscience, pregnancy care, child development, maternal health, trauma informed care, developmental screening, etc.

Q6

How do you stay informed about community conditions and resources?



Supplement staff responses if needed. Follow up with noting that this is an area where we can learn from families and their experiences if it is not mentioned. A follow-up question can be to ask if anyone has something to share about recent events in the community or about resources.





7. COMPETENCY AREA: **CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE**

Q7

What are reliable sources of information and research you use?



Note a range of sources including websites, journals, training, conferences, newsletters, etc. including ones that you use most often.

Q8

Are there ways as a team we could strengthen the access to reliable sources of research, information and development of our home visiting knowledge, skills, and abilities?



Close the discussion with your own thoughts about the importance of this competency area and your work as a Supervisor to support their growth and development as an effective Home Visitor. Name action steps you commit to take given their feedback. Also, note any upcoming training or other learning opportunities available to them that relate to this area of competency.





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7. COMPETENCY AREA: **CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE**





8. COMPETENCY AREA: **COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**



Read the competency area **description** out loud.

DESCRIPTION: Home Visitors are knowledgeable about the network of community resources and referral options available for families. Home Visitors partner with parents and caregivers to identify, access, navigate systems, and advocate for themselves and their children.



“Let’s explore your thoughts and ideas about this competency area.”



Do you agree or disagree that this is an important area of competency to develop in your work with a family?



Take time to explore the reasons or ask for examples that staff would offer to support their response.



What are some of the most common referrals you make to services in our community?



Through responses by staff to the question, develop a long list as a team. Deepen the discussion by exploring a range of referrals such as housing, food, diapers, breastmilk, legal matters, mental health, medical, early intervention, emergency, etc.



What are some of the reasons a parent or caregiver doesn’t follow through on a referral?



Explore a range of reasons based on their experience with families such as fear, past experience, services that are not in their own language, readiness for change or capacity to act, transportation, cost, etc.



8. COMPETENCY AREA: **COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

Q4

What are some of the ways you partner with parents/caregivers to support follow-through on referrals?



Ensure mention of examples including ways they check in with the parent or caregiver once engaged in services, ensuring that parents/caregivers know their rights and options, develop a relationship with a contact at referral agencies, ask about their experience with a referral organization, etc.

Q5

Are there ways as a team we could strengthen each other's knowledge and relationships with referral agencies to meet the needs of families in our program?



Close the discussion with your own thoughts about the importance of this competency area and your work as a Supervisor to support this aspect of their services with families. Name action steps you commit to take given their feedback. Also, note any upcoming training or other learning opportunities available to them that relate to this area of competency.





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8. COMPETENCY AREA: **COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**