

CHLD 201: Child Development Practicum I

Family Visit

Learning Outcomes	1. Articulate and demonstrate skills needed to develop supportive, inclusive learning climates, including collaborative, respectful partnerships between children, professionals, family members, and communities that are culturally and linguistically diverse.
DEC Recommended Practices	C11 Environments are provided that foster positive relationships, including peer-peer, parent/caregiver – child, parent-caregiver relationships. F2 Family members and professionals work together and share information routinely and collaboratively to achieve family-identified outcomes. F8 Intra-family, informal, community and formal supports and resources are used to achieve desired outcomes. I 18 Team members focus on the between-sessions time (i.e. build in activities that can be carried out across time and contexts).
NAEYC Standards	2c. Involving families and communities in their children’ development and learning.

Teachers foster positive relationships with families in a variety of ways, including (when the need arises) arranging for additional resources that might be needed by the families. Head Start and some centers, such as the HCC Child Development Lab, have incorporated such additional family support staff into their programs. Prevention Initiative 0-3 programs in Illinois, such as Parents as Teachers, are designed around home-visiting models. There are numerous models and a variety of titles for these positions but they all strive to provide additional support for families. Most parent support specialists provide one-on-one personal visits and sometimes group visits, coordinate center-wide family activities, facilitate the screening process, and serve as a resource to link parents with appropriate community resources. For this assignment you will be shadowing a teacher/specialist/home visitor on a family visit. Any location chosen by the family will be appropriate for this assignment. Sometimes families choose to meet at the center, café or park instead of their home.

If you are placed at a site that does not have such a resource, discuss the assignment with your cooperating teacher and your faculty instructor to arrange a comparable experience. Perhaps the cooperating teacher will be doing a home visit or conducting a parent conference that you can attend instead. Or maybe you can arrange to complete this assignment at an alternate site.

To prepare for the family visit:

- Read Chapter 9: Student Teachers and Families. This chapter will caution about possible pitfalls for you as a student interacting with families.
- Make the arrangements early in the semester for you to shadow a parent support specialist or your cooperating teacher on a personal visit. It may take a little time to actually match your schedule to a family visit; plan ahead. Any personal visit between a parent and early childhood professional will be acceptable but a home visit will provide

new insights into a child and family and provide you a different perspective of the role of early childhood professionals.

While shadowing on the visit:

- Arrive at the prearranged site on time so as not to complicate the schedule.
- Be friendly with the family but limit interactions so the visit can be as close to a typical occurrence as possible.
- Be a good observer and try to be unobtrusive. Watch, listen, and learn from the experience.
- Parents may become uncomfortable if they notice you taking notes on what is said, so delay your note taking until after the session.

After the family/personal visit:

- Debrief with the Parent Support Specialist/home visitor/teacher. Ask if they follow any particular model for their interview techniques.
- Write your notes immediately while the memories are fresh.
- Submit a reflective report of the experience to your course faculty. It should describe the experience and include the following points:
 - What was the purpose of this family visit?
 - How was rapport established?
 - Note what skills were used to support a collaborative, respectful partnership.
 - Was the focus on family-identified topics of concern or the teacher's/visitor's agenda? What evidence supports this conclusion?
 - How did the Parent Support Specialist/teacher model cultural competence?
 - What activities were suggested that the parents could carry out with the child to extend classroom learning?
 - Were there any community resources suggested or did the discussion indicate any previous referrals?
 - What new insights did you gain about the children from this experience that were not evident from your classroom interactions with them?