



FACE Technical Assistance Brief

Home Visiting Safety

What information will I find in this brief?

The purpose of this TA Brief is to provide general safety recommendations for FACE Parent Educators to review and implement when delivering personal visits to their FACE home-based families.

What are my school’s Policies and Procedures in regards to Home Visitor Safety?

If you are not familiar with your school’s policies and procedures in regards to Home Visitor Safety, it is highly recommended that you take time to familiarize yourself prior to delivering any personal visits, as these must be actively and consistently implemented and reviewed by staff at every level of the organization. Parents as Teachers Quality Standards and FACE Guidelines expect all affiliates to have established policies and procedures that address Parent Educator Safety. These policies and procedures should address the following topics: sharing of schedules and communication while in the field; safety considerations during personal visits; clothing and jewelry; outdoor safety and travel; animals and pets; communicable diseases; illegal substances and weapons in the home; and training on Parent Educator Safety.

Sharing of Schedules and Communication While in the Field

- It is highly recommended that you share your weekly schedule with your program Coordinator each week. Refer to FACEresources.org for a weekly schedule template that you can implement in your program.
- Per FACE Guidelines, each vehicle a Parent Educator is provided for the purpose of home visiting is to be equipped with a two-way radio if visits are out of cell phone range, or a cell phone is to be provided to address emergencies when out in the field.

Safety Considerations During Personal Visits

Before the Visit	During the Visit	After the Visit
Review intake forms for possible concerns.	Make a mental note of all possible exits.	Ask the parent to escort you to your vehicle if you feel unsafe.
Map out your route and let someone know where you’ll be.	Conduct the home visit in the front of the home in a common use area.	Observe activities and people outside the home as you exit.
Confirm the appointment – ask who will be present and if any animals are in the home.	Sit near an exit, back against a wall, so you can clearly see down a hallway.	Keep your keys in hand as you walk to your vehicle.
Take only needed items with you.	Listen to your instincts and don’t let your guard down.	Check the backseat and floorboards before entering your vehicle.
Lock purse and other valuables in the trunk.	Leave if you feel threatened or if you notice illegal or peculiar behavior.	Get in your vehicle quickly and lock the doors.



Clothing and Jewelry

- Avoid flashy expensive jewelry and items that could be used to choke or strangle, such as necklaces, neck ties, scarves and lanyards.
- Wear comfortable clothing that is easy to move in and comfortable shoes that are easy to run in.
- Avoid clothing that is revealing or that contains religious or political symbols or messages.

Outdoor Safety and Travel

- Consider road conditions prior to travel and always travel with a full tank of gas and fully charged cell phone in case of emergency.
- Have an emergency kit in the vehicle with items such as jumper cables, First Aid kit, blankets, sand or kitty litter, flashlight, road flairs, flat tire repair supplies, and water.
- Use a FACE magnet on your vehicle or other identifying sign in your window.
- Avoid stopping in remote areas or unsafe neighborhoods if someone is following you or bumps into you. Drive to a well-lit public area, stay in your vehicle, and dial 911.

Animals and Pets

- Ask families to crate their pets or place them in another room during a personal visit.
- If met by a hostile pet, remember to take off sunglasses and do not turn your back to the animal. Do not run, but speak softly and use firm commands. Shield your face and neck if an animal lunges at you.

Communicable Diseases

- Frequent proper handwashing prevents the spread of disease.
- Know your program's procedures for coming in contact with a communicable disease.
- Ask the family to reschedule the visit if someone in the home is sick.
- Sanitize all books and toys after each visit.

Illegal Substances and Weapons in the Home

- Be aware of strong odors when approaching the home. Illegal drug manufacturing will usually provide a smell of burnt plastic or stale cat urine.
- Be aware of glassware throughout the home. If typical glassware is found in strange places throughout the home, or if you see lab glassware or chemical containers, you should leave immediately.
- Heavy traffic in and out of the home could be a possible sign of drug activity.
- Assume every home has a weapon and that every person in the home has access to it.
- Never reach for a weapon.
- Pay attention to individuals in the home if they seem to get agitated.
- Trust your gut instinct and know when to leave.



Training on Parent Educator Safety

- It is suggested that you view the upcoming Home Visiting Safety webinar that will be posted to FACEresources.org in the near future.
- Engaging in reflective supervision will allow time to reflect and promote decision-making skills and will allow collaborative time to problem-solve, resolve conflict, and create an awareness of possible dangers and how to minimize them.
- Parent Educators are encouraged to seek out additional safety trainings regarding home visiting as part of their required professional development hours.

Some important topics for supervisors to consider when creating and reviewing policies and procedures regarding safety include:

- **Safety routines for parent educators while in the field.**
- **Tracking the whereabouts of parent educators.**
- **Planning for contact between parent educators and supervisors in emergencies.**
- **Requiring or providing health and safety training.**
- **Procedures for dangerous situations or illnesses.**
- **Periodic review of safety policies and procedures.**
- **Regular updates of safety policies and procedures by administrators.**