

Scenarios of Miscommunication During Home Visits



Miscommunication due to Tone/Word Choice

Context: A provider is coaching a parent on how to encourage their child's motor development by practicing crawling.

What Happens: Provider says: "You need to put him on the floor more often." Parent frowns and replies: "I do put him on the floor! Are you saying I'm keeping him in the playpen too much?"

Cause: The phrase "you need to" came across as directive and critical, even though the provider simply meant it as a helpful tip.

Resolution: Provider reframes: "He's already doing so well! One way to help him even more is giving him some extra floor time each day so he can practice moving around."



Miscommunication due to Cultural Differences

Context: The provider suggests encouraging the child's independence by letting them feed themselves, even if it's messy.

What Happens: Parent looks uncomfortable and says: "No, that's not how we do it. I feed him—it's my job."

Cause: In the parent's cultural background, independence at mealtimes comes later, and the provider's suggestion felt like it clashed with their family values.

Resolution: Provider responds with respect: "Thank you for sharing that. I see how important it is for you to care for him in this way. Maybe we can find a middle ground—like giving him a spoon to explore while you continue feeding him."

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Miscommunication due to Jargon/Unclear Language

Context: Provider introduces a new strategy and says: “It’s important to scaffold his learning experiences.”

What Happens: Parent nods politely but doesn’t ask questions. Later, when asked how it’s going, the parent says: “I’m not sure what you meant about that scaffolding thing.”

Cause: The provider used professional jargon (“scaffold”) instead of plain language, leaving the parent uncertain but hesitant to ask for clarification.

Resolution: Provider simplifies: “Sorry—I should’ve explained better. By ‘scaffold,’ I just mean giving him the right amount of help. For example, if he’s stacking blocks, you might hand him one at a time until he gets the hang of it.”



Miscommunication due to Assumptions

Context: Provider arrives and sees the child watching TV. They casually say: “Oh, too much screen time can really slow down language development.”

What Happens: Parent feels embarrassed and defensive: “I only put the TV on because you were running late. I don’t let him watch it all day.”

Cause: The provider assumed TV time was a routine habit rather than asking first, which made the parent feel judged.

Resolution: Provider apologizes and reframes: “Thank you for clarifying. That makes sense. Actually, sometimes short shows with songs or gestures can be a great way to model language—would you like me to share ideas for making TV time interactive?”

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