

Effective Use of Home Visits

Caseworkers: Do you ever wonder exactly how to engage families and get business done during home visits?

Supervisors: Do you need tools to help your workers make better use of home visits?

If so, this course can help you.

What is *Effective Use of Home Visits*?

It is a course that helps workers apply concepts learned in Caseworker Core and build skills in effectively conducting home visits. It combines e-learning, field assignments, and group discussion, and it includes a [Supervisory Companion Guide](#).

The course has **three sessions**:

- *Planning for Home Visits*,
- *Conducting Home Visits*, and
- *Documenting and Debriefing Home Visits*

Who is the intended audience?

This course is designed for supervisors and caseworkers. It was primarily developed for newer workers, but it can also be used with any worker who would like to improve skills when making home visits.

Is credit offered for this course?

- If taken through E-Track, participants will receive nine hours of training credit.
- If the course is not taken through E-Track, no training credits will be granted.

How this course is structured:

For each session, caseworkers complete a short (one-hour), self-led online course at their desks and apply the concepts learned in field assignments during home visits. If the course is taken through the RTC, workers discuss their learning with a trainer during a two-hour Guided Application and Practice (GAP) online meeting conducted after they complete each session. Alternately, supervisors can manage this learning process in the agency by having workers complete the on-line

components and field assignments and conducting the GAP sessions during unit meetings.

How this course can help workers:

Effective Use of Home Visits was developed to help workers build skills in conducting meaningful, efficient home visits. Specifically, it helps workers:

- Identify the purpose of each home visit, communicate that to the family, and structure the home visit accordingly.
- Prepare for the logistics (where, when, how long, topics to discuss, who should be present) and potential emotional impact of home visits on the worker and family.
- Identify activities to be conducted in each phase of home visits.
- Re-assess a child's safety, permanency and well-being at each visit.
- Engage families in discussing case plan progress and ways to overcome barriers.
- Be aware of potential worker safety issues during home visits.
- Document home visits.
- Debrief home visits with the supervisor.

How this course can help supervisors:

The [*Supervisory Companion Guide*](#) provides supervisors with transfer-of-learning tools to help workers apply home-visiting skills developed during the course to their jobs. It also provides ideas for conducting follow-up discussions during unit meetings or supervisory conferences. The guide includes:

- An overview of the online course, and recommendations on how to teach and encourage workers to use these skills with their families.
- Links to the three online content sessions (on **planning, conducting, and documenting & debriefing** home visits).
- Key learning points.
- Indicators that staff may have learning needs.

- Explanation of field application assignments and how supervisors can support workers in completing these assignments.
- Ways to customize the learning session to meet the needs of staff.

Supervisors can use all the course materials during unit meetings or supervisory conferences to help workers develop home-visiting skills.

How this course can help your agency:

This course was designed to help improve the quality of home visits throughout Ohio, and was developed to fulfill a requirement of the 2011 *Ohio's Child and Family Service Review Program Improvement Plan*.

How this course can be used in your agency:

Staff can complete the entire course or individual sections to build skills in specific competencies (such as documentation). It can be completed by entire units and discussed during unit meetings, or individually and discussed during supervisory conferences. Specific materials (such as the guidelines for debriefing home visits with supervisors) can be used by workers and supervisors during the regular work outside the course.

What workers and supervisors say about this course:

- *"I got new ideas about how to do things during a home visit," "Listening to other workers talk about how they handle things was great," "I like to work at my own pace and ask questions as needed."* – Caseworkers who participated in the course pilot.
- *"I think this should be required for all new caseworkers," "I can see using this with units as a refresher, with new staff, and with struggling staff," "Some of the materials, especially on documentation and supervision, were excellent and will be passed on to others."* – Supervisors who participated in the course pilot.

You can also access the [final report of the pilot](#) of *Effective Home Visits* to learn more about participants' reactions to this course.

Minimum system/equipment requirements:

Users will need:

- **Internet access** to view the online presentation.

- **Phone** to participate in guided discussions.
- **Headphones** (suggested) to keep others from being distracted.

Tips for success:

Workers and supervisors should discuss the on-line portions of this course, and should debrief upon completion of the field assignments. Users should also:

- Set aside specific time in schedules for completing online assignments.
- Print out materials ahead of time for review and to ease note-taking.
- Set up a quiet, distraction-free learning space 30 minutes before the course begins.
- Become familiar with the online features ahead of time.
- Have a speaker phone with a mute button to keep distracting sounds from interfering with other's ability to hear.
- Make use of the *Supervisory Companion Guide* for ideas and direction.
- Be proactive in applying recommended [Transfer of Learning Strategies](#).

Click on the link for a handout called [Action Plan for Distance Learning](#).

Click on the link to access the online course called [Getting the Most Out of Distance Learning](#).

How to access:

Check E-Track for course offerings and registration.

Supervisors: Follow the link to the [Supervisory Companion Guide](#), which includes the links to the three on-line sessions.

For questions, contact your [RTC](#).