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Family Development during Home Visiting, in partnership  
with Region 9 Head Start Association

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- [Jessica] Hello, and welcome to Early Childhood Education at continued.com. My name is Jessica Lewis and I'm happy to welcome you to today's session titled "Family Development During Home Visiting" in partnership with Region 9 Head Start Association. This session is one of six that focus on the work of home visitors. They can be viewed individually, but we encourage you to view all six. While they do focus on home visitors, all early childhood providers would benefit from the information shared. We are very excited to welcome back Stacy Brown to share her knowledge and expertise with us. Before we get started, let me tell you a little bit about her. Stacy Brown has worked in the early childhood field for 25 years in private preschools, Head Start, and as a kindergarten teacher. For the past 13 years, she has worked for the Family Support Hawaii Early Head Start Program, and served as the Program Director for the past eight years. Welcome everyone. Stacy, I'm gonna turn it over to you now.

- [Stacy] Thank you, Jessica, and welcome everyone to our course on "Family Development During Home Visiting." Here's a couple disclosures for you to check out. So today's workshop will be focusing on family development and the learning outcomes for today will be: participants will be able to list areas of family development, will be able to identify important steps to support families in setting family development goals, and will be able to describe strategies to support families during challenges. So working with families. When I started my career in education a long time ago, I worked for two years in a private preschool, and then I went on to teach kindergarten in the public schools in California. Working with families was something that we did quite briefly, usually during parent teacher conferences or if we needed to talk to families about their child's behavior, or things like that, but it was pretty brief that we partnered or worked with families. It wasn't until I began working for Head Start, and in particular, in a home visiting program, that I really experienced the power of truly partnering with parents and families, and really when we make a commitment and develop a passion for working with the families of the young children that we work with, is we're, is where we're gonna see a lot of very healthy child outcomes and healthy family outcomes as well. So we know that the family is the primary force in preparing children for school

and for life. When families and home visitors work together as partners, children benefit. Supporting family development is an important cornerstone for most home visiting programs, so most of the home visiting programs that I'm familiar with, or I have worked in, family development, working with families, helping families to look at strengths, interests, challenges, needs, and then developing goals with families, are really an important part of the work that we do when we do home visiting. The development of trusting, reciprocal, goal-oriented relationships with families is a key component of family development. Just a side note, this is my little family down here in the corner, so my daughter and my son, and their partners, and my little grandbaby. So this slide, "Building Relationships with Families," we have seen in one of the other workshops that we did, but in case you haven't been able to watch the other workshop about building relationships with families, we're just gonna go over these elements real quickly, because building relationships with families is really the foundation of our work that we do with families, and if we want to really, truly partner with families in developing goals and looking at what are their dreams for the future, what are their dreams for their children, we really start with building the relationships with the family. So we'll look at the elements of that real quickly.

So the first one on here, getting to know families. So when we do home visiting, we are going into the home, and they are so gracious to open up their homes to us, and it's such a wonderful opportunity to get to know families. So we find out, what are their strengths, and really starting with that. We really wanna start from a strengths-based perspective in working with families. What are their strengths? What are their support systems that they have? What are their interests? What are their challenges? So that's another important element, what are those things that are challenging for them, what are their values, what are their expectations for being in the program, learning about the culture of the family. So those are all key strategies and elements to start with in our work with families. The second element here is focusing on the families during home visits. So really finding out, what is the family hoping to learn from participation in a home visiting program? How can the program support them? What kinds of

resources or referrals might they need? What kinds of learning experiences would they like to develop? What kinds of experiences would they like to see for their children, and work in partnership with families to work towards those shared goals for children's learning and development. So we're truly partnering with families, because the family is the expert on their own child, and we support the family in being the child's first and most important teacher. So in coordination with the family, we are, we're partnering with them to plan and create those learning opportunities and experiences for their children, and also for themselves. Employing effective and ongoing communication with families, so very important, especially in this day and age, when we have so many different avenues and ways to communicate with families. Now, when we do home visiting, of course, the majority of home visiting is done in the family home, and it's a face-to-face experience, which is wonderful, but there's other communication that does take place with families, and so finding out the ways that we can effectively communicate with families, so that means, do they answer their phone calls when we need to call and either reschedule or we wanna confirm an appointment? Do they use phone calls, do they use texting, that kind of thing. While, at the time that we are recording this, we are going through the COVID-19 crisis, and so this has been an interesting experience for our home visiting program in trying to provide home visits without going into the home.

So we're doing virtual visits, and so really trying to connect with families in the way that we can connect with them best, and so, you know, finding out if they have the capabilities to do video visiting. Using other forms of communication has been a new experience for our program. So very important that we find out those ways of communicating with families. Along those lines with communication, we want to be sensitive and be aware that some of the families that we will work with are English Language Learners. They might be, have a home language that is different than English. For some programs, we're able to provide services in their home language, but for some families, we might not have staff that speak their language, and so then, we are really employing and identifying other forms of communication in order to still be

able to provide services to families, so you know, using those other forms of communication such as gesturing body language, eye contact, the use of a translator if that is approved of the family, those kinds of things. So we wanna be sensitive and aware that we might be serving families that speak another language. Then the last element on here, working through differences and challenging situations. So, you know, home visiting is not always gonna go perfectly smoothly. There are going to be times where maybe there is a little bit of a mismatch, or maybe we have a different temperament or a different style than a family. Maybe they've had experiences with home visiting before that has maybe been, maybe difficult, or maybe really, really positive, and now this is a new home visitor, and it's going to look a little bit different. So you know, just the understanding that we can work through those differences, and think about ways to support families through challenging situations, and through those differences and challenges, oftentimes, that's where we can really improve and build, continue to build our relationships with families. So we're gonna explore some areas of family development. There's probably a lot, lot more, but we're gonna kind of focus on these six today. So these areas include family well-being, financial literacy and self-sufficiency, services to expectant families, positive parenting, support systems, and community resource connections.

So let's take a look at family well-being. So family well-being occurs when all family members are safe, healthy, and experience opportunities for educational advancement and economic mobility. Support service such as home visiting, early care and education, housing and food assistance, and physical and mental health care positively contribute to the well-being of families and their children. Programs can help families develop strategies to create, continue, or restore family well-being. So I like that, that again, all families are going to be different, and the way that we work with families and address their needs is going to look different. So with some families, when we do home visiting with them, we're really looking to create family well-being. Maybe there are a lot of challenges for a family. Maybe they're experiencing situations such as homelessness or domestic violence, or maybe they're involved in the child welfare

system. So there are a lot of different situations where the family just doesn't have well-being, and so we're gonna start with some basics, and really try to create some family well-being. Some families have a lot of well-being, and they are highly functioning, don't have a lot of challenges, they're healthy, they have opportunities for economic mobility, they've gained education. So for those families, we might be supporting them to continue their well-being, and maybe look at, looking at, other ways that they can continue learning and growing. Or, and the last one here is restoring family well-being. So maybe a family had been doing really well, and maybe they lost their job, or maybe something happened that they weren't able to keep their food benefits, and so maybe something has fallen off, and is creating some challenges. So we're going to maybe target those areas that have impacted their family well-being, and we're going to help restore that. So again, working with each family individually, and looking, where are they at, and what are their needs are regarding well-being. Programs can also combine respectful, goal-oriented family partnerships with strong connections to community resource providers to support overall family well-being. A little bit later today in the presentation, we'll be looking at, specifically some of those community resource providers that we can connect families with, but looking at helping families to make those connections. Our home visiting programs can do a great many things, but we are limited in some of the services that we provide.

So we're, we are usually not doctors or medical providers, so that is we are we can help connect families with those resources. So family well-being is really one of a number of very important outcomes for families. In our home visiting program, we look at, we help families develop goals, and we look at all of the different goals that families are working on, and we have seven different, categories, I guess, of family goals that we try to kind of put the goals into those different areas so that we can look at it for data review and data purposes, and in our program, we have about 65% of our family goals that are developed with families, are related to family well-being. So it's definitely something that our families are needing and wanting: more well-being in their lives. Okay, so one component of family well-being is family health, and so these are some

of the elements of family health are supporting families and accessing health insurance, and health services, including medical, dental, and mental health. So we know that families that do not have access to regular medical care face many barriers in managing family health problems, and they're actually more likely, research has shown, to use emergency care. Particularly challenging in accessing medical care are for our immigrant families. So almost 45% of recent immigrant children from families with low incomes lacked health insurance in the past year. So a large number of immigrant families do struggle with accessing medical care, and so we know that helping families to access those services will increase their well-being. The next one on here is food security, so food security is helping families to make sure that they have enough food, and that they have some resources to make sure that they can get healthy food. We know that hunger is a reality for many, many, many, many families across the United States. It actually has been documented that around 50 million people in the United States are hungry and lack food security, and low income families, low income neighborhoods, are even more affected. They're less likely to have grocery stores and have greater access to food that is less healthy, and food insecurity, or poor access to nutritious and affordable food, can really interfere with the whole family's health.

So that is something that in our home visits, we are working with families to see what kind of, you know, how do they get their food, where's the closest grocery store, do they have access to WIC, the Women, Infants, and Children Program? Do they have access to SNAP, which is otherwise known as food stamps. So do they have access to those resources to help them gain food? How do they get their food, and is it secure, so partnering with them on that. Providing, so supporting families in accessing information on healthy eating. So this is something that we work with families on to help them understand, what does it mean to eat healthy? We talk about the different food groups, different meal portions. We have an experience, usually with some of our younger moms, we work with teen moms, and so, many times, they don't have experience preparing food, so helping them to identify things that they would like to

learn to cook, and have the capabilities in their living, in the their home situation to prepare that food, and providing some new and healthy food experiences for families. So quite a few years ago, we noticed that a lot of our families didn't, they, when we would have salad at our group experiences, the families were not taking the salad. So they just, and when we had conversations with the families, they just didn't really have experience in eating salads, and so we kind of took it back and we talked more about it, and offered more toppings and different things that we added to the salads, and then over the course of a couple years, those same families that were in the program, they would go to the salad first, and they would take plenty of salad. But, you know, kind of like children, when we're exposed to new kinds of foods, it takes a while to get used to it. So really providing information on what it means to eat healthy. Providing information on movement or exercise, that's always a topic that our families in our program enjoy, and if you can see the picture down here, this was an exercise group training that we did with our families, and we had an instructor come in and do some exercises with the families, and they just really, really enjoyed it.

Recently, we had a Zumba instructor come in, and he got all the families up. Some of them were quite hesitant at the beginning, but he got them up and got them moving, had some great music, and they were all laughing and moving, and it was a really great experience. Family planning, this is another area that we might work with families on. We have to be, we have to take care in being sensitive with this topic, because culturally, what we've learned over time is that, you know, family planning can be culturally taboo to talk about, and especially if there's, if we're talking about it with a woman. In some cultures, it is, it's not appropriate to be talking about the subject if there's a man in the house, and in some cultures, family planning is not used. So we have to be really sensitive with that topic. What we really try to talk with families about is if they are planning on being pregnant in the next year, that's what we ask our families, if they plan on having a baby within the next year, and then however they answer is kind of how we can guide the information that we provide. So, if they are interested in having a baby within the next year, we will give them information on taking

prenatal vitamin before they get pregnant, making sure they're not using alcohol or smoking cigarettes or other kinds of drugs, making sure that she's healthy and will be ready to have a healthy pregnant. If the mom does not want to have a baby within the next year, then we will talk about birth control methods or family planning methods that she might already be using, or might be interested in securing. Then if they're not sure, then we kind of go from there and provide information on both. But all of it is done in a really sensitive manner, with no judgment either way on whether they want to have a baby or not. We're just completely objective about it, and just wanna provide information to be as healthy as possible. Mental wellness, so mental wellness, we know that in our world, there's a lot of stress and there's a lot of challenges, there's a lot of hardships, especially if we are working with families that are low income, that are in poverty, that are experiencing other kinds of challenges. We know that it affect the mental wellness of families.

So when we can work with families to identify ways to be more mentally well, or mentally healthy, we definitely support that. So helping families to find those ways to de-stress, to take care of themselves, give themselves time to relax and rejuvenate, and you know, help them to know that their mental wellness directly impacts their child's mental wellness. So in the next workshop that we'll be doing, we'll be diving in a little bit more on the mental wellness, but really important to be helping parents, especially parents of little ones where they might not be getting a lot of sleep, they might not be getting a lot of exercise, their eating might be challenged, and they might be just having a lot of stress, and then you add that on to other stressors that families face, such as living in poverty or having other challenges, and it can really impact their mental wellness, so helping families to identify any challenges in those areas. Now mental health and mental wellness also is another topic that we take very sensitively, because you know, unfortunately, mental, the terms mental health, there is a stigma kind of attached to that in our society, and so many families might think, might get maybe offended or feel a little defensive if you say mental health. So, you know, we wanna think about how we approach the idea of mental health and wellness in a way

that families won't put up a wall, and they'll be open to learning about those ways that they can stay mentally healthy and well. Then the last one on here is living and personal safety. So this might include child abuse and domestic violence or family violence, so this, it's, definitely happens in some of our families. Some of our families are experiencing family violence, and this exposure to violence and abuse can be considered a form of toxic stress, and for children, this can interfere with their early brain development, and can also lead to other negative short and longterm consequences for children. So when families are experiencing family violence, it does very much impact the children or the child, so it's a very important topic. Again, very sensitive subject, and we want to approach it in a way that is appropriate and sensitive for the families.

Personal safety, so we want to support families in recognizing the safety of their neighborhood, and in their community, and you know, when I worked in southern California, I worked in an area that we, the community was very unsafe. There were a lot of different situations in the community that made it unsafe. We had to leave by four o'clock every day, the teachers did. We had a situation where we, there were gangs that came onto our elementary school campus, and luckily it was in the afternoon, not during school time, and so, but we had to run to our cars because they had guns. So just recognizing that, for some of us that are home visiting, we might be home visiting in communities where there is, that might feel a little unsafe. So it's important for home visitors to get training and to be provided with support to safely conduct home visits, but also helping families that live in maybe less safe neighborhoods to find ways to support them in feeling safe and comfortable in their personal space. So we're gonna move on to the next element here, so financial literacy and self-sufficiency. So this is one of my favorite areas to work with families on, is to kind of help develop financial literacy and self-sufficiency. This is one area when families gain housing or they get a new job that pays really well, or they move up with their educational attainment, they just feel so much more confidence, and they feel so good about themselves, and so it's such an honor to be part of this work with families. So when we think about

financial literacy and self-sufficiency, it kind of encompasses a lot of different areas. So number one we're gonna look at here is education. So parents' educational levels are really closely related to income and opportunity. The lack of a high school diploma affects family income, and is a significant predictor of family and child outcome for families and for children. So help, looking at families' educational level, some early Head Start studies have found that mothers that lack a high school diploma, when they lack the high school diploma, this is a critical risk factor related to poor outcomes for children, and, along with single parenting, unemployment, level of poverty, and receiving public assistance. So attaining a high school diploma, and we've probably heard this many times, it's, sometimes we see it on the TV or hear it on a public service announcement or that kind of thing, that the more education that you attain, the more your income is going to increase over the life span. In our program, we do work with some teen parents, and so one of their main goals, and one of the main opportunities that we have in working with those families, is to support them as much as possible to complete their high school education. We've been running a teen parent program in a high school for about 12 years now, and we've had almost 100% of our teen parents have graduated from high school and not dropped out, not had subsequent children, and so they were really able to complete that education and move on to college or move on to employment. So having a high school diploma, really important.

So some of the educational areas that we might be working with families on are, you know, helping them to find a GED program in the community, or a high school diploma program. Sometimes these are found in community schools or local community programs. Sometimes they're located in coordination with some of the high schools, or maybe even a community college. So helping families to find out about these programs and how they can enroll, and help them to find out how to make that work. Sometimes the courses are maybe online, so helping them to access computer, wifi, you know, those kinds of things, to complete the courses. Sometimes they're offered at night, so making sure that they're children or child has childcare in the evening, so helping them problem-solve how they can participate in those kinds of educational opportunities,

helping families to learn about college programs in the community. In this day and age, there's a lot of online opportunities for college, and so that does make it more accessible to some of our, for some of our families. We recently had a mom that finished her, she had had a, an associate's degree, and then she was encouraged to go online and find a program that worked for her, and she completed her bachelor's degree, and then she actually has recently started her master's degree, so such a celebration for that, and through it all, she had two children and then had a third one just recently. So we were very excited about that, so college opportunities. Then for those families that are not interested in college, maybe they are interested in some kind of vocational or technical training, which sometimes are offered through the local community colleges, or sometimes they are offered separately, maybe a hair academy where they're learning cosmetology is one example of a technical training that is separate, possibly, of a college, so, you know, helping them to access those programs.

If you work for a Head Start program, Head Start has great support for parents who are interested in the early childhood field, and so many of our staff are former parents that were encouraged to volunteer in the Head Start program, and then later go on to gain employment and more education, and a great career in early childhood. So one of my coworkers did start off, many years ago, she was a parent, she had two children that were in the Head Start program, and she volunteered and she was very active in their learning, and her teacher, her children were in a classroom-based setting, her teacher encouraged her to take some classes in early childhood, because she showed that she was really good with kids, and worked really well, volunteering in the classroom. So she did take some classes and went on to get her associate's degree in early childhood, and then went on to get a bachelor's degree in child development services, and she's been with our program for almost 20 years now, and she now works as a supervisor and a manager. So Head Start programs are a great opportunity for providing education. Then also on the next one here, employment and job training. So those are, that's another area that we can support families in accessing job training opportunities. So like I said, Head Start is a great opportunity for that, and other forms

of employment. So we might be providing resources or information on a local job search program, or helping families to develop a resume or fill out an application, those kinds of things. So we definitely have, at any given time, we have home visitors that are helping families to access employment, so they are, you know, helping them to fill out job applications and going through some mock job interview opportunities. With our teens every year, the teens that are interested in employment, after they graduate, I do this really fun activity where we get some clothes, we get some business attire and bring that in, and they get to choose their outfit, and they kind of go through this whole interview process where we practice asking them questions, we practice having them talk about their resume, and those kinds of things. So the students really enjoy that and it's fun for the staff as well. So housing is another area that will help families to be more self-sufficient.

So housing, and accessing stable housing, is definitely an issue in most communities. Housing is very expensive, and rent is oftentimes very, very high. Sometimes there's even a lack of housing. So in our community, the housing is extremely high, and it's also pretty difficult to find. So that's an area that we can help families to research the different apartment complexes in the area, looking at the low income housing opportunities, which can be quite a challenge, in most communities, I'm sure, and definitely in our community, helping families with that. So helping them to fill out applications for housing complexes, finding out about local housing options, low income options, and how to get on wait lists and what kinds of documents that they need to have to be accepted into whatever kind of housing. For some of our families, we have, you know, one of their goals is to buy a house. So we will look at that goal and break it down into steps that are manageable and attainable for those families, and in the past two years, we've had two families that have actually been able to buy their own homes. So was that was really exciting to be part of that. In many communities, there are housing programs or asset, housing asset programs where they can take some courses, find out about saving, find out about down payments, they get budgeting information and they go through a course and maybe the program is able to

help them put some money aside for their down payment. So you can check in your community and see if you have that. Financial services is the next one, and financial services kind of includes learning about opening a bank account, learning about credit, learning about buying a car, it encompasses quite a few different things. It also can be support in making sure that families get all of their tax credits and get all of their, file their taxes and learn about that. Then childcare, for families that are working, we might be supporting families into accessing affordable childcare, finding out about childcare subsidies, or maybe even our programs provide childcare, so helping families to access that.

So services to expectant families is another area of family development. So this is a slide that we've seen before in another course, so I'll just go through this kind of quickly, because we've already covered it, but helping expectant families to eat healthy, have an approved exercise or movement program, but key word is approved by the doctor or medical provider, helping expectant families to de-stress and provide some support for mental health resources if needed, helping them to utilize appropriate prenatal care, encouraging the mommy to talk and sing to her tummy because baby can hear and feels very good when mommy does that, helping pregnant mommies to get adequate rest. Sometimes it is difficult, the bigger that you get, the sometimes harder it is to sleep comfortably, so helping them to find those ways to get enough rest. Providing information on how, the importance of staying away from harmless substances during pregnancy, and providing information on labor and deliver, postpartum recovery, and information on breastfeeding. So all of these are ways to provide services and support for expectant families. Positive parenting is another way that we work with families. So home visitors can support parents to make healthy and positive child-rearing choices which reflect their beliefs and their values, the age and stage of child's development, and both the temperament of the child and the parent. So parenting is another topic that can be sometimes sensitive, because it is based on a parent's, you know, how they were parented, and what their values and beliefs are about parenting, so we want to make sure that we are supportive and also providing

appropriate information on parenting. Positive parenting means taking an approach that is sensitive to children's individual needs and addressing the typical challenges that arise in early childhood with empathy and respect. So a lot of this is helping families learn more about child development, which means that they know what to expect with their growing child, and their child's behavior, so that they can respond to it in a way that is proactive and positive for the child, so helping parents to identify and know what to expect. Home visitors can help parents learn to read cues of their child and provide appropriate responses, which will, in turn, support healthy self-esteem in their child. So when we learn to read the child's cues, what the child is trying to communicate to us, and we can provide appropriate responses to that, then that child feels their confidence and their self-esteem grow, because their communication has been effective.

Some of the areas of parenting that we do work with families on are setting limits and boundaries with children, especially with those toddlers and those preschoolers. Their job, really, is to kind of push our buttons, push the parents' buttons, and to helping families to set limits and communicate their expectations to their child, and also, providing information on positive discipline. So discipline is, can definitely be a sensitive topic with families, and so again, through our building of relationships and understanding the culture, the values and beliefs of families, we will understand their ideas about discipline, and providing information on how to discipline children in a positive way. All right, support systems, this is another area where we are supporting families, so we want to help families to identify their current support systems. So this can be their family members, their friends, maybe a church community, maybe a mother's group that they participate in, you know, any kind of support systems that are positive for the family, we want to help them identify those support systems and how those support systems can be helpful for the family. Then we are going to help them form new connections, and these are in both formal and informal networks, in order to enhance social well-being and community life. So we know that when families are more isolated and they have less support systems, they typically will have higher rates of

depression and less health and well-being. So helping them to connect with support systems can be really critical for the family development, the family well-being and family mental health and wellness, so formal and informal ways to create these support systems. So our programs, our home visiting programs can provide opportunities for parents to build relationships with other parents, and we can do this through our socialization experiences, where we're bringing families together for shared learning opportunities and experiences. We might hold parent training events, we might take field trips, we might hold parent committee meetings, so we might bring parents together of geographic clusters or different clusters and talk about what's going on in our program. If you are a part of Head Start or Early Head Start, you will be familiar with Policy Council, and that is another opportunity for families to be involved in our program, and so it's also an opportunity for families to get to know each other, and then volunteer opportunities in our programs, or in the community. So offering different opportunities for taking part in the community will also help to bring families together. So we want to build relationships with other parents, and then also access to community services.

So families may keep many of these relationships with families and community partners as their children transition to other early childhood education programs, and even into kindergarten and beyond. So we have quite a few families that have been in our program that children were young infants when they all got to know each other and they stayed in our program through age three, and then they continued getting together and they stayed friends, and now their kids are in elementary school together, and they're still friends. So they started off as baby friends, and now they're in elementary school, and the families and the children are still together, so it's wonderful. Support systems help to provide a network of relationships that strengthen the capacity of families to support and engage in their children's education and healthy development. So another really important element of our home visiting, our work with families. All right, another important piece of family development that we do in home visiting is to connect families to community resources. So there's many, many different

resources in every community. It does take a while sometimes for home visitors and programs to find out about all of the different resources. At times the resources might change, so depending on their funding or different things like that, we might lose community resources, and we might gain new community resources. So helping home visitors to find out all about those agencies and programs in our community, that can help support our families. This here, this picture here, is of a mommy and a baby in our program, and we hold a health and safety fair every year in our program where we invite a whole gang of community resources, community resource providers to come together and set up a table and they have information and they have little goodies to give out, and all of our families come and are able to find out about a number of different community resources at one time. So it really works nicely for us to hold that kind of event. A lot of communities do have resource fairs throughout the year, so that's something that you can look into in your own community.

So some of those connections that we will help families to make are connections to health and nutrition services, so this might be finding out information on the local community health center, helping to connect them with primary care providers for their medical needs, their dental needs, mental health needs as well. Nutrition services, so I did mention this a little earlier, so helping families to connect with the WIC program, with the SNAP or food stamp benefit program, the food bank, or other opportunities for nutrition services. Connection to housing services, so we talked a little bit about that, helping them connect with housing connectors or low income programs in our community. Financial services, so connecting families with the, a local bank, with their local credit union, or other programs that provide financial services. We have a program here in our community that helps families to start a small business, so if they're interested in some kind of business, they can go to that resource, that agency, and they can help get a down payment or get a loan for whatever they need for their small business. Other social service programs or agencies, we will connect with to support domestic violence, substance abuse, or children with special needs. So we work closely, our program works closely with the Early Intervention Services program

to support children that do have disabilities or special needs. Connections to educational services, so that can be educational services for the parent, so like we talked about before, those high school, helping them to attain high school, college, vocational, or trade services. Then other educational services might pertain to the child. Maybe they're, maybe the family has other children. We have, in the past couple of years, also had some, worked with some immigrant families that didn't have their older children enrolled in school, and so we helped the family to get all of the paperwork that was needed and to get everything done that needed, for the child, it was a third grader, ended up going into third grade, had never been in school before. They were kind of new to the Island and didn't, weren't able to get their child enrolled in school, so that's another support that we can provide. Community events or groups, so in most communities, there's a lot of different kinds of family support, events, health-related events or groups that we can connect families with, and then cultural opportunities can be a really nice way to get families involved in their community. All right, family goal-setting, so the goals of individual families should be a focus for any home visiting program, so helping families to develop goals. From the very beginning, when a family enrolls a child in our program, we seek to establish and nurture a positive goal-oriented partnership. We utilize information provided by families, child and family assessments, and ongoing communication with families to initiate the goal-setting process.

So from the very beginning, we do a needs assessment with families to find out what are their strengths, what kind of programs or agencies are they already enrolled in or involved in, and what kinds of interests and needs do they have. So this really kind of helps us to kind of guide our work with the families in setting goals for the future. Really important to know that setting goals might be a new experience for families, and they might need an extra support in helping to identify family goals. So every year when we are working on goal-setting with families, we always have families that, when we start the conversation about setting goals, they just say, "I don't know, I don't know, "I don't know what I want," or, "I don't want to do anything." So from there, we

can just kind of take some steps back and just kind of identify maybe some ways that they can be their child's first teacher. Maybe they set a goal to read to their child every day, maybe they set a goal to have one family meal together once a day, or maybe every other day, at least one meal together. So they don't always have to be goals to buy a house. It can be as simple as reading to their child every day. The goal-setting process includes identifying strengths, barriers, or challenges, strategies, supports, and of course celebrations. So we want to celebrate even the smallest steps that families take toward their goal, and really celebrate that and help them to keep moving towards their goal. I'm gonna skip down to goals should be reviewed and updated often, and revise as necessary.

So when families are developing their goals, it might change. Something in their life might change that warrants us to have to revise their goal or totally change the goal, and that is perfectly fine. You know, in our own personal lives, I'm sure that that happens to us as well. Maybe we have a certain goal and something changes, and so our goals also change, so being flexible with, and understanding the needs of the family. Then develop SMART goals, and SMART stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely, so we want to think about those elements when we're helping families to develop their goals. All right, so supporting families through challenges, many of the families in our home visiting programs are at an increased risk for challenges in their early relationships because of the stress factors associated with poverty. Families in low income situations experience higher rates of health problems, family and community violence, homelessness, and depression. Home visitors can be instrumental in providing the supports and services that families need to improve their life circumstances, and in developing environments where parents are empowered to be their children's first and most important teachers. Home visitors may need to address the needs of families for food, housing, health care, or other issues before they can focus on other areas of their lives. So really important that we make sure that families are, their basic needs are taken care of and addressed before we're moving on to helping them develop other kinds of goals. So we want to make sure that those

basic needs are met first. Other challenges and special consideration, we're gonna help families that are experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, depression, or substance abuse. Again, these are, can be very sensitive topics, and we're going to just be very supportive, empathetic, and provide those relevant community resources for families. Again, families experiencing these kinds of challenges, oftentimes we're kind of addressing those needs and supporting families a lot in our home visiting before we can work with the child and help the parent to do the learning activities and things like that. We do want to definitely not forget about those learning opportunities for the child, because even families in crisis have, being able to have that time to work their child, read to their child, do a fun activity with their child, that can kind of take them out of their crisis or out of their challenge in that moment, and help them to kind of create joy with their child.

So we don't wanna forget about those child activities in our home visits, but oftentimes we might need to kind of talk about the big challenges first, and then go to the child activity. So five strategies to support families during challenging times: we want to reflect on our perspective, and just think about, you know, when families are experiencing challenges, we may have had the same challenges in our lives, or we may have worked with families that had similar challenges, and we wanna think about that, again that every family is different and every situation is different, so we want to be careful about just giving advice or something that may have worked in the past that may not work with this family or with this situation, so just thinking about our perspective. Helping the family identify and work through their own assumptions, so again, they might have a perspective on the challenge, and so helping them to identify how they're feeling about something and how they might see some of the, some problem-solving strategies. Identify and build on the family's strengths and core relationships, so really important during challenging times that we, first and foremost, support the strengths of the family and those relationships and those support systems that they have, so that hopefully they can use those to build on and find solutions and strategies through their challenge. Celebrate successes while acknowledging

struggles, so it's always, when they get through challenging times, we wanna celebrate it, and also acknowledge the hard work that they put into getting through that struggle or that challenge. Then focus on their core values and aspirations, including important goals they are working toward. So again, you know, sometimes their challenges kind of take them off the path of their goals or their values or what they dream for themselves or for their children, and so we want to help them stay focused on those dreams and aspiration, even if they are going through challenging times. Again, we've talked about father engagement in some of the other workshops, but father engagement is also an important part of family development, so helping fathers to be involved in services, even if they don't live in the home, so really working with families to see the, find the ways that fathers can be involved, providing information on the importance of fathers and father-figures in the lives of young children, sharing about the positive effects of father engagement on the father, but also on other members of the family as well, providing strength-based perspectives to father involvement, and providing resources and supports to fathers.

Some of those resources and supports will be the same that we provide to other family members, but in our individual communities we might have specific resources and special supports that are really tailored towards fathers. In conclusion, supporting family development is an important component of most home visiting programs. Some of the most life-changing work you will do as a home visitors will include working with families to achieve their goals. It's so amazing to work with families that are engaged and passionate about improving themselves and attaining their goals, and family development, like child development, is highly individualized. It never quite looks the same with each family, and the last, on here, addressing the needs and challenges of families is hard work. It can be stressful and straining on home visitors, so as always, don't forget to practice self-care. Take care of yourself so that you can take care of the families. The list of references is provided here, and if you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at this email address, and I want to thank you so much for joining us today, and I hope you all take care.

- [Jessica] All right, thank you so much Stacy. This was really enjoyable. I loved hearing all the stories. I know that everyone watching is really gonna be able to relate to everything and all the examples that you provided of these wonderful ways to promote family development. So thank you so much again, for coming back and sharing all this great knowledge. We appreciate it. Everyone out there, thank you for joining us, we hope you will join us for the last session in this series on home visiting. Everyone have a great day.