

Client-Centered Phone Skills

Many times, the first interaction with our families is over the phone. The following tips can help our clients feel welcomed and heard.

1. Answer a call within 3 rings whenever possible.
2. Introduce yourself:
 1. If the client is calling the clinic, answer the phone and say “Hi, this is Ashley at Michigan WIC. How can I help you?”
 2. If you are calling the client and they answer, say “Hi. This is Ashley from Michigan WIC. I’m trying to reach Julie Smith.”
 3. If you are calling the client’s personal cell phone and they *don’t* answer, leave a message saying “Hi. This is Ashley from Michigan WIC. I am calling about XXX. Please give me a call or text at (222) 222-2222 between XX am and XX pm”
 4. If you are calling the client’s home phone and they *don’t* answer, leave a message saying “Hi. This is a message for Julie Smith. Please call Ashley at (222) 222-2222”. (Be aware of client confidentiality when leaving messages on a non-personal phone)
3. Listen carefully: Take a deep breath and listen carefully. Wait until the client is done speaking before responding. Don’t interrupt them.
4. Use the parent’s and baby’s name during the conversation.
5. Try not to speak too fast or too loud/soft. Matching the tone and speed of your client will help them feel more comfortable.
6. Be honest if you can’t provide an answer: Sometimes you’re asked for information that you don’t know the answer to. Be honest on why you are not able to answer their question and give the name/number of someone else who can help them. Better yet, make the call to the other provider and provide a warm hand-off.
7. End the call smoothly:
 1. Do they have any other questions?
 2. Thank them for taking the time to speak with you.
 3. Be specific on next steps. Will they call you or will you call them?
 4. Do they have your name and phone number?
 5. Did you tell them you would provide them with resources? If so, be sure to follow through.