

Oregon Early Childhood Home Visiting Site Visit & Ride-Along Toolkit

A practical guide for engaging elected leaders, funders, and other decision-makers in understanding the impact of home visiting in Oregon



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Welcome

This is your Home Visiting Site Visit and Ride-Along Toolkit! This resource was created as a collaborative partnership under the leadership of the Center for Coordinating Oregon Home Visiting Systems (CCOHVS) to support meaningful, well-prepared engagement between home visiting programs and community, agency, and elected leaders.

The purpose of this toolkit is simple and powerful: to help programs confidently host site visits and/or ride-alongs that elevate family voice, honor the expertise of home visitors, and deepen leaders' understanding of how home visiting supports children, families, and communities. These visits are not advocacy in the traditional sense; they are learning experiences grounded in relationship, respect, and real-world context.

This toolkit reflects input from family leaders, home visitors, culturally specific program leaders, state partners, national partners, and funders across Oregon. It is designed to be practical, flexible, and adaptable across models and communities, recognizing that no two programs—or families—are the same. Whether you are hosting your first visit or refining an established practice, these tools are meant to support thoughtful preparation, clear roles, and a positive experience for everyone involved.

For more information about this toolkit or the broader work to strengthen coordination and sustainability across Oregon's home visiting system, please contact the Center for Coordinating Oregon Home Visiting Systems (CCOHVS) at ccohvs@pdx.edu.

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is a guide for any home visiting leader who is interested in inviting funders, elected leaders, community members, and other partners into meaningful learning experiences about the important role of home visiting. It is designed to support program directors, supervisors, and home visitors who want to invite leaders, partners, or decision-makers into meaningful learning experiences through site visits and ride-alongs.

The toolkit offers practical guidance to help leaders prepare for and host visits that are respectful, well-structured, and centered on the experiences of families and home visitors. It supports leaders in sharing the value of home visiting in a way that builds understanding, strengthens relationships, and reflects the realities of the work. Ultimately, this toolkit is for anyone who sees site visits and ride-alongs as an opportunity to educate, connect, and deepen shared commitment to children and families.

Why host a home visiting site visit or ride-along?

Home visiting is one of the most powerful ways to support families, yet it *literally* happens behind closed doors - families' front doors to be specific. Inviting elected leaders and other decision-makers to your home visiting program is one of the most powerful ways to illustrate what home visiting looks like in real life and why it matters for children, caregivers, and communities. Going forward, we will refer to any person you'd like to teach about home visiting as "**guest.**"

These visits help guests understand Oregon's relationship-based, prevention-focused approach and the wraparound supports that connect families to health care, early learning, and community resources. By increasing guests' understanding and awareness of Oregon's home visiting system, we can collectively generate increased buy-in and support for home visiting within the Legislature, which may result in more sustainable and expanded funding for this important work!

A Few Terms

- *Program Leader*: This can refer to anyone in the home visiting program or system who could be responsible for the coordination of a Site Visit or Ride-Along
- *Guest*: When we use this term, we are referring to anyone whom you are inviting to learn and experience the practice of home visiting.

What this toolkit includes

Use this toolkit to plan and host two kinds of learning experiences:

- Ride-along: A guest observes a home visit (with family and home visitor consent and clear privacy boundaries).
- Site Visit: A guest visits a program site and meets home visitors, families (who choose to participate), and partners (such as other home visiting models and/or system coordination representatives).
- If neither of these approaches fits, consider the following options:
 - Family panels with past participants
 - Family Connects Oregon (FCO) or other model testimonial videos
 - Multi-model visits (eg, representatives from Healthy Families, Nurse Family Partnership, and Babies1st)
 - Listening sessions in community spaces
 - Recorded or written stories from families or home visitors
 - Postcards with written testimony of HV impact

Quick-Access Resource Bank

- [Invitation email template \(to scheduler or staff\)](#)
- [Formal invitation letter \(optional\)](#)
- [Sample visit plan \(site visit\)](#)

- [Sample visit plan \(ride-along\)](#)
- [Day-of checklist \(staff\)](#)
- [Consent, privacy, and confidentiality checklist](#)
- [Media advisory and Social media templates \(optional\)](#)
- [Letter to the editor template \(optional\)](#)
- [Thank you email + letter template](#)

Quick & Easy Steps to Get Started

- Step 1:** Identify the leader(s) you want to invite (state or federal legislators, county leaders, Community Care Organization leaders, agency leadership, or other decision-makers). Click here to see which legislators serve different areas of Oregon → [Find My Legislator](#).
- Step 2:** Find the right contact (scheduler, legislative aide, or executive assistant). If you're unsure, call the office and ask who schedules site visits.
- Step 3:** Choose your visit format: ride-along or site visit (or offer both options).
- Step 4:** Download and personalize the invitation template with your program details and preferred date window.
- Step 5:** Send the invitation and follow up to confirm logistics, security needs, and participant preferences.
- Step 6:** Plan the visit to be family-centered, safe, and memorable. Use the sample site visit plans in this toolkit.
- Step 7:** Share a one-page program snapshot and a short set of talking points with staff and participating families.
- Step 8:** After the visit: thank the leader, share photos (with releases), and capture key takeaways for your program and Oregon's home visiting system.

What if they respond with “no”?

If your invitee can't attend during your preferred window, don't lose momentum. Consider:

- A. Inviting senior staff (policy advisor, district director, legislative aide), or
- B. Offering alternative dates or a different format (site visit instead of ride-along, or vice versa).

Strategies to Prepare Home Visitors and Families

In consultation with families and home visitors, the following guidance was developed for this toolkit. Thoughtful preparation helps ensure site visits and ride-alongs are safe, respectful, and positive experiences for families, home visitors, and guests. The best practices below reflect feedback from home visiting programs.

- Frame the visit as a learning opportunity with a special guest, focusing on shared learning rather than the guest's title or position.
- Make sure families and home visitors know that their experience with home visiting is valuable and will help improve services for other families.
- Provide families with clear, simple information about the visit in their preferred language.
- Make it explicit that participation is voluntary and that families may say yes or no without any pressure or impact on services.
- Prepare families and staff ahead of time with talking points or a simple outline of what will happen during the visit.
- Provide interpreters when needed so home visitors are not expected to serve as interpreters.
- Only match legislators or guests with families who have volunteered and feel comfortable participating.
- Offer guests a brief orientation so they understand home visiting, the families they will meet, and which topics are private.
- Keep visits short and follow a clear plan.
- Have a backup plan in place for safety concerns or unexpected situations.
- Offer visits in a neutral location (such as an office or library) if families prefer not to host in their home.
- For families who don't want a visitor in their home, but still want to share their story (i.e., small listening sessions, recorded testimonials with consent, or visits in a neutral community space).

Privacy, Consent, and Confidentiality Reminders

Participation is voluntary.

Participation in Leadership Learning Visits is always optional for both families and staff. Families may choose not to participate—or to stop a visit at any point—without any impact on their services, relationships, or future eligibility. Consent is informed, ongoing, and revocable.

Protect family privacy at all times.

Do not share protected health information (PHI), personal identifiers, or case-specific details during the visit or in any follow-up conversations or materials. This includes names, addresses, medical information, immigration status, or any details that could reasonably identify a family.

No recording in homes.

Audio or video recording is not permitted during ride-along visits. Photographs may only be taken with explicit, advance consent from the family and documented release forms on file. Families may decline photos without explanation, and consent may be withdrawn at any time.

Set clear expectations for visitors.

Confirm in advance whether the visiting guest plans to bring additional staff, media, or security. Any additional attendees must be approved ahead of time by the program and the family. Media participation is strongly discouraged during ride-alongs and requires separate planning, consent, and boundaries.

Maintain appropriate boundaries.

Visitors are present as observers, not participants, evaluators, or decision-makers. Families should never feel pressured to share personal information, answer questions, or engage beyond their comfort level.

When in doubt, pause.

If a situation feels unclear or uncomfortable, the home visitor or program lead may pause or end the visit to protect family safety, dignity, and trust.

Program Visit Timeline

Use this timeline for most visits. Adjust as needed based on guest availability and program schedule.

Three to four weeks before your preferred date

- Contact the guest's office to request a visit and identify the scheduler or primary contact.
- Confirm which visit format is feasible (ride-along or site visit).
- Begin identifying potential participants (home visitors, supervisors, partners, and families who may want to participate).

When your visit is scheduled

- Confirm visit time, location(s), and any security or accessibility needs.
- Invite participating staff, families, and community partners.
- Meet with family participants for a prep meeting to answer any questions, give an overview of the visit, confirm privacy expectations and boundaries (e.g. consent form).
- Clarify privacy expectations and photo/media boundaries in writing.

One week before the visit

- Finalize a simple agenda using the sample visit plan.
- Share the plan with everyone participating (staff, partners, and the guest's office).
- Prepare a one-page program snapshot (what you do, who you serve, outcomes, and local needs).
- Rehearse key talking points and decide who will speak to which points.
- If doing media: draft and send a media advisory and confirm photo releases.

Day of visit

- Welcome the guest and orient them to the schedule and privacy boundaries. (Optional: provide the guest with a children's book or children's toy as a Thank You to the child(ren) for participating in the visit).
- Provide name tags, a printed agenda, and your one-page program snapshot.
- Take photos only with explicit consent and approved releases.
- Close with clear "asks" or next steps (policy, funding, or partnership opportunities).
- Consider offering a children's book to the visitor.
- Plan to thank families by offering something for their child or a gift card for the family.
- If your agency policy is to compensate families for their giving of their lived-experience expertise, follow your internal protocols.

After the visit

- Send a thank you email/letter to the guest within 48 hours and include any promised follow-up information.
- Debrief with staff and participating families to capture feedback and lessons learned.
- (Optional/Encouraged: provide a stipend to the parent/caregiver(s) who participated in the visit).
- Share highlights with Home Visiting Funding Partnership Coordinator - Cara Copeland, Cara@StatelyPine.com and Rebecca Brown rebecb@pdx.edu

Optional: Leadership Learning Visit Cycle (Jan–Apr)

- January: Collect local input and stories; gather home visitor and program feedback; identify priority guests to invite.
- January: Finalize visit materials (agenda, talking points, privacy guidance, templates) and confirm internal roles.
- February: Attend trainings and have practice sessions for staff and participating families; refine the visit plan.
- March: Support programs to schedule visits with legislators/decision-makers; confirm logistics and consent processes.
- April: Host visits; document takeaways; complete thank-you and follow-up actions.

TALKING POINTS

Below are talking points designed to help you clearly communicate the value of home visiting—and the value of a coordinated regional and statewide home visiting system. Both the practice of home visiting and the system that supports it are essential to ensuring families have culturally responsive, equitable access to services. These talking points are typically used before or after a Ride-Along, so that attention can remain on the visit itself. Use these talking points as written, or adapt them to reflect your program, community, and audience.

Home Visiting Talking Points (Practice)

- Home visiting is a voluntary, relationship-based service that partners with families during pregnancy and early childhood to support healthy child development, caregiver well-being, and family goals.
- Home visitors meet families where they are—often in their homes or chosen settings—building trust over time and providing culturally responsive, strengths-based support tailored to each family’s needs and priorities.
- Home visiting helps families build protective factors early, such as strong parent–child relationships, confidence in caregiving, and connections to community resources, which can reduce stress and prevent more serious challenges later.
- Families choose to participate in home visiting because it offers practical support, trusted relationships, and guidance that respects their culture, values, and lived experience.

Home Visiting System Talking Points

- Oregon has strong home visiting programs, and with continued investment in coordination, workforce development, and family leadership, we can build a system where more families receive the support they want, when they want it, in ways that work for them.
- Our home visiting system is coordinated at both the regional and state level. In our region we coordinate services to avoid duplication and ensure families receive services that best meet their needs.
- At the state level, the Early Learning Council and their Home Visiting Committee have established the Center for Coordinating Oregon
- Investing in a coordinated home visiting system strengthens community well-being and long-term prevention by building protective factors early. Coordination reduces duplication, improves access, and helps ensure families do not fall through the cracks.
- A strong home visiting system reduces fragmentation, improves referrals, and helps families navigate services without having to figure everything out on their own.

For program leaders

- My name is [your name], and I am a [role] with [Oregon home visiting program] in [community/county].

- Home visiting is a voluntary, relationship-based service that supports families during pregnancy and early childhood (typically birth to age 5).
- In [community], we serve approximately [number] families each year through [model(s)/program type(s)].
- Home visitors partner with caregivers to support healthy child development, strengthen parent-child relationships, and connect families to resources such as health care, early learning, housing supports, and mental health services.
- Home visiting helps families navigate stress, reduce isolation, and build protective factors early—before challenges become crises.
- Our workforce is highly trained and does complex work in real-world conditions. Stable funding helps us hire, retain, and support home visitors and improve continuity for families.
- We appreciate your leadership and would welcome your partnership to strengthen Oregon’s home visiting system so more families can access services when they want them.

For home visitors

- My name is [your name], and I am a [role] with [Oregon home visiting program]. I have been working as a home visitor for [time frame].
- I work alongside families to set goals that matter to them—there’s no one-size-fits-all plan.
- A big part of my job is listening, noticing strengths, and helping caregivers build confidence in their parenting.
- I also help families connect to resources (health care, child care, early intervention, nutrition, housing, and community supports).
- Home visiting is strengths-based and trauma-responsive. We focus on trust, choice, and dignity.
- When families are supported early, it improves outcomes for children and reduces pressure on other systems later.
- There are different HV program models in Oregon. What connects us is a shared commitment to trust, relationships, and family choice.

Prompts for home visitors

- Can you share a moment when a relationship you built made a meaningful difference for a family?
- What keeps you grounded in this work, even when it's challenging?

For parents and caregivers (who choose to participate)

- My name is [your name], and I live in [community]. I chose home visiting because I wanted support during pregnancy/parenting.
- Home visiting has helped my family by [share a short story: child development, breastfeeding support, mental health, connection to resources, parenting confidence, etc.].
- Raising young children is hard work. Having someone consistent to talk to—who listens and helps without judgment—has made a difference for us.
- I'm grateful this support exists, and I hope more families who want it can access it.

Prompts for parents/caregivers

- What made you decide to try home visiting?
- What kind of support mattered most to you?
- How did having a home visitor affect your confidence or stress as a parent?
- What would you want guests or policymakers to understand about families' needs?

For community partners (if applicable)

- My name is [your name], and I am a [role] with [organization].
- Our organization partners with home visiting because it strengthens connections between families and community services.
- Home visiting helps identify needs early and improves follow-through on referrals because families have a trusted relationship with their home visitor.
- Investing in home visiting supports community well-being and reduces long-term costs by preventing problems and strengthening protective factors.

TEMPLATES

Template A: Invitation email to a scheduler or staff

Subject line ideas:

- Invitation: Visit an Oregon Home Visiting Program in [Community]
- Request: Home Visiting Site Visit / Ride-Along in [Community]
- Invitation to meet families served by Oregon Home Visiting

Dear [Scheduler Name],

My name is [Your Name] and I am the [Title] at [Program Name] in [City/County]. I'm reaching out to invite [guest Name] to visit [Program Name] in [City/County] during [Proposed Month/Week]. Please see below for more information about the impacts of our work and a couple of visit options. I'm eager to work with you to explore which visit option might work best for [guest Name].

[Program Name] home visiting program in [City/County] supports families during pregnancy and early childhood through voluntary, relationship-based home visits. We would be honored to share with [guest Name] how home visiting strengthens caregiver-child relationships, supports healthy development, and connects families to local resources. We are part of a regional and statewide network of coordinated service delivery under the leadership of the Center for Coordinating Oregon Home Visiting Systems (CCOHVS) and we would love to share more about this important system work.

We can offer two options:

- 1) Site Visit: Meet home visitors, families (who choose to participate), and partners at our program site.
- 2) Ride-Along: Observe a home visit with clear privacy boundaries and family consent.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to coordinating a meaningful visit.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Program/Organization]

[Phone]

[Email]

Template B: Formal invitation letter (optional)

[Date]

The Honorable [NAME]

[Office]

[Office Address]

Dear [Title and Last Name]:

On behalf of [Program/Organization], I am writing to invite you to visit an Oregon home visiting program in [City/County] during [Month/Week]. During your visit, you will have the opportunity to meet home visitors, parents/caregivers (who choose to participate), and community partners, and to learn how home visiting supports families during pregnancy and the early years.

[Program/Organization] serves approximately [Number] families each year through [model(s)]. Home visiting is voluntary and strengths-based. It helps caregivers build confidence, supports healthy child development, and connects families to resources such as health care, early learning, housing supports, and other community services. We are part of a regional and statewide network of coordinated service delivery under the leadership of the Center for Coordinating Oregon Home Visiting Systems (CCOHVS).

We hope you can join us for a visit and look forward to coordinating next steps with your office. Thank you for your service and for your support of children and families in Oregon.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Program/Organization]

[City, OR]

[Phone]

[Template C: Sample visit plan \(site visit\)](#)

Use or adapt this outline for a 45–90 minute site visit.

- Welcome by the program director and/or board/leadership representative.
- Orientation: quick overview of the visit, privacy expectations, and what the guest will see.
- Program overview (5–10 minutes): who you serve, models offered, staffing, partners, and funding sources.
- Tour and introductions: meet staff, home visitors, and partners; highlight key program components.
- Family voices (optional): a caregiver shares a short story (participation is voluntary; share boundaries in advance).
- Hands-on moment (optional): view a child development activity demonstration or a mock home visit segment.
- Roundtable discussion: Q&A with staff, partners, and families (as appropriate).
- Close: thank you, a clear policy/funding/partnership “ask (call to action),” and next steps.

[Template D: Sample visit plan \(ride-along\)](#)

Ride-alongs require careful planning and explicit family consent. Consider a shorter visit window (30–60 minutes).

- Pre-brief (10 minutes): meet at a neutral location (program site) to review privacy, safety, and the plan.
- Travel to the visit (if applicable): guest travels separately unless explicitly approved by the program.
- Home visit observation: guest observes only; no recording; photos only if the family requests and signs releases.
- Debrief (10–20 minutes): meet after the visit (off-site) to answer questions and share program context.
- Close: thank you, and next steps: provide a one-page program snapshot and contact information. See Appendix B: Guidance on Talking to Legislators

Optional Communications

Template E: Media advisory (optional)

[Your Logo]

Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Program Contact]

[Date] | [Program Contact Email] | [Phone]

[Program Name] Hosts [guest Name] for an Oregon Home Visiting Visit

[CITY, OR] – On [Date], [Program Name] will host [guest Name] for a visit at [Site Name]. The visit will offer a firsthand look at Oregon’s home visiting services and how they support families during pregnancy and early childhood. We will explain how we coordinate with other regional home visiting to maximize investments.

[guest Name] will have the opportunity to speak with parents/caregivers (who choose to participate), home visitors, and community partners about the impact of relationship-based support and connections to resources.

“We are honored to host [guest Name] so they can see the impact home visiting has for families in our community,” said [Program Director].

Open Press Event (if applicable)

WHAT: [guest Name] Visits [Program Name] (Home Visiting)

WHEN: [Date/Time]

WHERE: [Address]

WHO: [guest Name], program leadership, staff, and invited partners

RSVP: [Program Email]

###

[Your Program Mission Statement]

Social media post starters (optional)

- Thank you to [guest Name] for visiting [Program] today to learn about Oregon home visiting and how we support families during pregnancy and the early years.
- Home visiting is voluntary, relationship-based support that strengthens caregiver-child connections and links families to resources. Grateful for community partners who make this possible.
- Today’s takeaway: When families are supported early, kids thrive—and communities do too. Thanks for showing up, listening, and learning.

Template F: Letter to the editor (optional)

Dear Editor,

[Program Name] recently hosted [guest Name] for a visit in [City/County] to learn about Oregon's home visiting services and the impact these programs have on families with young children.

[guest Name] met with home visitors, parents/caregivers (who chose to participate), and community partners to see how home visiting supports families during pregnancy and early childhood through relationship-based visits, developmental guidance, and connections to health care, early learning, and community resources.

[Program Name] serves approximately [number] families each year. These services are shaped by local needs and family voice, helping caregivers build confidence, reduce stress, and strengthen relationships that support child development. The system that supports regional and statewide coordinated services is critical to ensure families have access to these services.

With the support of guests who understand what families need, Oregon can strengthen access to home visiting so more families who want this support can receive it.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title]

[Program/Organization]

Thank You Templates

Template G: Thank you email to scheduler/staff

Dear [Scheduler Name],

Please see the attached thank you letter from [Program/Organization] thanking [guest Name] for visiting on [Date]. We appreciate the time and thoughtful conversation. Please let me know if your office would like any follow-up information.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title]

[Program/Organization]

Template H: Thank you letter

[Date]

The Honorable [First and Last Name]

[Office]

[Office Address]

Dear [Title and Last Name]:

Thank you for taking the time to visit with families and staff from [Program/Organization] during your visit on [Date]. We hope your time with us helped illuminate how Oregon home visiting supports families during pregnancy and early childhood. We need champions like you to support our program and the system that supports us.

[Add any follow-up details you promised to provide, key data, or a brief story (no identifying information).]

We are grateful for your leadership and would welcome future opportunities to serve as a resource as you consider policies and investments that impact children and families in Oregon.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title]

[Program/Organization]

[City, ST]

Day-of Checklist (Staff)

- Confirm agenda, arrival time, and contact phone numbers.
- Confirm who is speaking to which talking points.
- Print the agenda and one-page program snapshot for visitors.
- Confirm family participation and signed releases (if applicable).
- Prepare name tags and a simple sign-in sheet.
- Confirm photo/media boundaries with everyone involved.
- Set up a private space for debrief/Q&A.
- Plan for accessibility needs (translation, mobility, sensory needs).

Consent, privacy, and confidentiality checklist

- Family has received a clear explanation of the visit and can opt out at any time.
- Family consent is documented (and photo releases if any images will be used).
- Guest and accompanying staff understand: no recording; no identifying details shared.
- Staff understand what can/can't be shared and have a plan to redirect questions if needed.
- If media are present, location boundaries are defined, and releases are complete.

Roles and responsibilities (sample)

<i>Role</i>	<i>Primary responsibilities</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Program Director / Lead	Primary contact for the guest's office; sets agenda; opens/closes visit.	Ensures privacy guidance is followed.
Home Visiting Supervisor	Coordinates staff participation; supports prep and debrief.	Helps with talking points rehearsal.
Home Visitor(s)	Demonstrate program components; share role perspective.	No identifying information shared.
Family participant(s)	Share a voluntary story/experience.	Family voice, choice, and boundaries come first.
Partner representative	Explain partnership value and referrals.	Keep remarks brief and concrete.
Communications lead (optional)	Photos, social posts, media coordination.	Use releases; store images securely.

Special Thanks

This document was created as part of the work of the Home Visiting Funding Partnership, a work group of the Home Visiting Committee of Oregon. We would like to thank all the individuals who contributed to this document for their input on its content, thought leadership, and time.

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Alexandra Lantaler, Family Leader
Mica Maggard, Family Leader
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The Home Visiting Model Collaborative
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Megan Turner, Start Early Consulting
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APPENDIX A: Sample Calls to Action (CTA)

You will want to end your visit with a specific “Call to Action.” This is what you want the guest to do after experiencing a Ride Along. Use these as samples or craft your own.

General

- “We hope what you saw today informs how you think about supporting home visiting through policy, funding, and leadership decisions.”

Funding

- “Sustained investment in home visiting allows families to get the support they want early, consistently, and in ways that work for them.”

Legislative

- “Your support for legislation and budget investments that strengthen home visiting programs and systems makes a direct difference for families.”

Systems & Coordination

- “Investing in a coordinated home visiting system improves access, reduces duplication, and helps families navigate services more easily.”

Workforce

- “Stable funding supports a strong, skilled home visiting workforce that families can build trusting relationships with over time.”

Family Voice

- “When family voice and leadership are centered in home visiting, services are more equitable and effective.”

Reflective Close

- “What stood out to you today, and how might it shape the way you support home visiting moving forward?”

APPENDIX B: Guidance for Talking to Legislators

Home visiting programs that operate as 501(c)(3) nonprofits are allowed to talk with legislators and other decision-makers about their work, the needs of families, and the importance of continued investment in home visiting. When done thoughtfully, these conversations are considered education and mission-aligned advocacy, not prohibited political activity.

Site visits and ride-alongs are especially appropriate because they are designed as learning experiences. Explaining what home visiting looks like in practice, how families benefit, and why stable funding and coordinated systems matter helps policymakers make informed decisions. This type of engagement is allowable as long as it remains nonpartisan and focused on the mission.

Nonprofits may also engage in limited lobbying, including asking legislators to support continued funding or policies related to home visiting, provided this does not become a substantial part of the organization's overall activities and does not involve elections or candidates.

What's Allowed

- Educating legislators about home visiting practice, outcomes, and family needs
- Sharing program data, research, and stories (with appropriate consent)
- Asking for continued or increased funding for home visiting or the system that supports it
- Expressing support for mission-aligned policies (without referencing political parties or candidates)
- Hosting legislators for site visits or ride-alongs to learn firsthand

What's Not Allowed

- Endorsing or opposing a political candidate or party
- Campaigning or telling anyone how to vote
- Participating in election-related activities
- Making lobbying a substantial portion of organizational activity

Simple Rule of Thumb: If you are educating and informing, you are on safe ground. If you are campaigning or endorsing, you are not.

For guests who want more detail, the following resource provides clear guidance:

- Internal Revenue Service <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/lobbying> – Guidance on lobbying and political activity for 501(c)(3) organizations

APPENDIX C: Telling Your Story - A Guide for Families (*Modified from a resource shared with permission from Start Early)

Why Stories Matter

Stories help people understand issues in a way that facts alone cannot. When parents share real experiences, listeners are more likely to feel emotionally connected, remember the message, understand how programs affect real families, and see why early childhood investment matters. Stories put a human face on home visiting and help others see children, not just programs or budgets.

You Are the Expert of Your Story

Your story is powerful because it is real. You do not need special training, statistics, or perfect words. Your lived experience makes you an expert. You get to decide what parts of your story to share, how much detail to include, and what feels safe and comfortable.

- *What have you learned about yourself as a parent through home visiting? What part of your home visiting experience feels more important to share?*

Taking Care of Yourself While Sharing

Before sharing your story, take time to check in with yourself. You are never required to share painful or personal details. It is okay to keep details general, focus on growth, or pause if emotions come up.

- *How will you take care of yourself if emotions come up while sharing?*

The Home Visiting Story Framework

- **Who You Are** - Start by sharing who you are and your connection to home visiting.
 - *Where are you from? What program does your child attend? What would you want people to know about you and your family?*
- **Before home visiting** - Share what life was like before home visiting, including concerns about child care, school readiness, or lack of support.
 - *What support were you missing before your child attended a home visiting program?*
 - *What concerns or challenges were you facing?*
- **The home visiting Experience** - Describe what home visiting provided for your child and family, such as early learning experiences, social and emotional growth, or feeling welcomed and supported.
 - *What services or supports made the biggest difference for your family?*
 - *What is one moment that stands out from your child's experience?*
 - *How did staff or teachers support you as a parent?*

The Change or Turning Point

Explain what changed because of home visiting, including growth in your child, increased confidence as a parent, financial security, health, or well-being of your family.

- *What changes did you notice in your child?*
- *How did home visiting impact you, as a parent, and your family?*

Why It Matters Beyond Your Family

Connect your personal experience to the larger importance of home visiting for families across Mississippi.

- *What could be lost if home visiting were not available?*

Developing a Clear and Meaningful Story

To make your story strong, focus on one or two key moments, speak in your own voice, keep it simple and honest, and share what home visiting made possible.

- *What is the one message you want people to remember about the impact of home visiting?*

Choosing the Right Details

When deciding what to include, ask whether the detail helps show why home visiting matters, feels safe to share, and shows growth or impact.

Your Story Is Part of a Bigger Story

Each parent's story is unique, but together they show children entering school ready to learn, parents feeling supported and confident, and communities strengthened by early investment.

- *What hopes do you have for children who will attend home visiting in the future?*

Final Encouragement

Your story matters. You do not need to be perfect—only yourself. By sharing your experience with care and intention, you help others see the true value of home visiting for Oregon's children and families.