

# Customer Service Notes for *wic*

## *Making a Positive First Impression*

For WIC service providers, making a positive first impression with participants is a key to stellar service.

When a new participant arrives at your office, what she sees impacts the impression formed.

Consider the following questions:

- Is the office neat?
- Is the office clean?
- Is she pleasantly greeted?
- Does the waiting room promote a “friendly” environment?
- Are toys available to keep children occupied while they are waiting?

The WIC staff who first interacts with the participant needs to be welcoming and friendly. Making eye contact and smiling can help create a positive first impression. During the participant’s first appointment, it can be helpful to explain the procedures your office follows to complete the visit.

Other WIC staff, such as nutritionists, who will also be meeting with the participant, also need to be welcoming.

WIC staff should not use jargon that the participant may be unfamiliar with. Simple is better when providing explanations. Also, asking, “What questions, if any, do you have for me at this point?” will encourage the participant to ask if, indeed, she has questions. Compare this to asking, “Any questions?” where participants may feel that you would prefer they not ask any or that you may be rushing them through the visit.

With participants for whom English is not their first language, WIC staff should take extra time to ensure that the participant is understanding what is said. If you have brochures in another language, use them.

Also be mindful of the impression you create with a participant over the phone. Be pleasant and helpful and don’t speak too quickly.

When participants leave after their appointment, WIC staff should close on a pleasant note. If another session has been scheduled, the WIC staff member can say, “I look forward to meeting with you next time.” Making that good first impression goes a long way toward building positive relationships with participants!

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. Even when you are very busy and/or stressed, do you remember to smile when welcoming a participant who is new to your office?
2. Is the look of your office inviting and not messy?
3. If you were the participant, would you welcome the opportunity to return to your office?

