

Reframing with HOPE

Reframing is more than “putting a positive spin” on something, it’s a professional skill that helps us see families through a strengths-based, trauma-informed lens. The HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) framework reminds us that children thrive when families experience positive relationships, safe environments, meaningful engagement, and opportunities for emotional growth. Reframing helps us identify and build on these strengths, even when families are navigating stress or adversity. When we change the way we describe a situation, we also change how we think, respond, and partner with families.



How Reframing Supports HOPE Informed Practice

✦ Reframing protects relationships

- Families quickly sense judgment. Labels such as “chaotic,” “unmotivated,” or “overwhelmed” can unintentionally create distance.
- Reframing shifts the focus toward effort, care, and intention, which helps maintain trust and strengthens the partnership between home visitor and caregiver.
- This aligns with the HOPE building block of positive relationships, where families feel respected, valued, and understood.

✦ Reframing helps us identify Positive Childhood Experiences

- Even when families face challenges, they are often already creating moments that support their child’s development.
- Reframing helps us recognize these moments and build on them.

- Example: Instead of: “Parents rely on video games instead of toys.” Reframed: “Parents are engaging their child with activities they know the child enjoys. This shared interest creates opportunities for connection and can be expanded to include other types of play that support development.”
 - This reframing recognizes an existing moment of engagement between parent and child, which supports the HOPE building block of engagement through play and learning. It identifies a positive interaction that can be built upon rather than framing the situation as a deficit.

* Reframing guides supportive next steps

- Deficit-based language stops at the problem.
- Reframing helps us connect what we see to opportunities for support and skill-building, which is central to the HOPE building blocks of engagement and emotional growth.
- Example: Instead of: “The home is chaotic.” Reframed: “The family is managing many responsibilities; we can explore routines that support greater predictability for everyone.”
 - The focus becomes partnership and problem-solving, not criticism

* Reframing shapes respectful documentation

- Home visiting notes may be read by caregivers, supervisors, educators, or other professionals.
- Strengths-based documentation ensures families are represented with dignity and respect, while also highlighting the capacities that can support a child’s positive development.
- This practice reinforces the HOPE principle that families already possess important protective factors.

* Reframing strengthens reflective practice

- How we talk about families reflects how we think about them.
- Practicing reframing encourages us to stay curious, compassionate, and aware of our own assumptions. This reflective mindset helps home visitors remain aligned with the core goal of home visiting: empowering families and building on their strengths.

How to Practice Reframing:

Reframing begins with noticing your initial interpretation and intentionally shifting it toward strengths, intention, and possibility

Consider asking yourself:

- What strength, effort, or intention might exist beneath this situation?
- What stressors or unmet needs might be influencing this behavior?
- How might this caregiver's actions reflect care for their child?

When reframing:

- Look for evidence of effort, awareness, persistence, or love
- Replace judgmental labels with neutral, descriptive language
- Focus on what the caregiver is doing, not what they are failing to do
- Use collaborative language such as “we can explore...” or “we can build on...”

Reframing does not ignore challenges. Instead, it allows us to view those challenges through a compassionate, solution-focused lens that supports dignity, connection, and growth.

Reflection Questions for Home Visitors

Reflective practice strengthens our ability to apply reframing consistently.

Consider:

1. What was my first interpretation of a challenging moment today?
2. What strengths might I have overlooked?
3. What assumptions did I bring into this visit?
4. Did I notice any moments of resilience, warmth, or commitment from the caregiver?
5. How might this behavior make sense when viewed through stress, trauma, culture, or capacity?
6. If a parent read my notes, would they feel respected and understood?
7. How can the strengths I observed guide my next steps with this family?



Examples of HOPE-Informed Reframing

Clutter / limited seating

→ Reframed: “The family is managing many belongings right now; we can explore ways to create comfortable spaces for play and connection.”

Parent rarely leaves the house

→ Reframed: “Parent is creating a home-based environment for their child and may be open to ideas for indoor activities that support movement and learning.”

Parent is very self-critical

→ Reframed: “Parent shows strong self-awareness and is reflecting thoughtfully on how their actions affect their children.”

Home feels busy and chaotic

→ Reframed: “Parent is caring for several children and managing many responsibilities; we can partner on strategies that support smoother routines.”

Parent engages mostly during the visit

→ Reframed: “Parent shows strong engagement during visits and may benefit from ideas for bringing those interactions into everyday routines.”

TV is on most of the time

→ Reframed: “The TV provides background engagement for the family; we can explore ways to add moments of focused interaction during daily routines.”

Parent focuses heavily on academics

→ Reframed: “Parent is highly motivated to support their child’s learning and may be open to exploring how play also builds academic skills.”

Parent is on their phone during visits

→ Reframed: “Parent is managing important responsibilities and may benefit from support in creating brief, focused moments of interaction with their child.”