**Tips for Working with Families and Children at Home**

**by Shannon Barrow**

* Find out what activities parents and child like to do together. That way you can help come up with activity ideas that will support specific learning goals, but will also be enjoyable for the whole family.
* Incorporate toys and materials that child typically uses at home into session activities. Show parents how to use these common items to support language or other learning goals during the week.
* Make sure you give parents a copy of the lesson plan each week and document each visit in writing. Note absences for your records.
* Some parents prefer to process information and suggestions verbally while others want to read articles or refer to websites or books for information. Find out what each parent prefers and try to accommodate his or her specific communication and learning style.
* Don’t forget to document what you discuss with parents at each home visit.
* Encourage parents to work with you and their child during the session. Including them in the activities and games is often the easiest way for them to learn how to support their child’s IEP goals at home.
* If you email with families, save emails for your files (either on the computer or in paper form). You may need to refer to them later.
* Save about 10-15 minutes or so at the end of each visit to discuss ideas and strategies to try for the week, to answer questions, share insights from the visit, and follow-up about any concerns.