

Phone Tips

UPDATED 12-2023

Useful ideas to make phone calls more comfortable for you.

DON'T BE AFRAID OF SILENCE

Some silence is okay

It gives you and the participant time to think about the answers. Include a few “mmmm” and “uh-huh” responses so she knows you are still there and listening.

DON'T INTERRUPT

Respect the participant

Allow her time to finish her thoughts

PRETEND THE PARTICIPANT CAN SEE YOU

Try to smile

At least once or twice while you're speaking – it shows in your voice, even over the phone

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR TONE

Breathing patterns, pauses & speaking pace

Since you cannot see the participant's expressions and they do not see yours; you can never be too polite on the phone. (For example, use “yes,” not “yeah.”)

HANDLE DISRUPTIONS CAREFULLY

If you must end your call

Explain carefully why you must call her back. Reassure her that you are interested and will get back to her as quickly as you can. Discuss a good time to call her back.

IDENTIFY SOMETHING POSITIVE

The participant is doing well & praise her

You may be the only one in her life who tells her she is a good parent. An easy way to do this is phrase your questions so they focus on a success. For example, “Tell me one thing you are doing to make sure Mira is healthy.”