

Online Module 1 – Activity

Open-Ended vs Closed-Ended Questions

An open-ended question requires more than a yes or no answer. Start conversations with an open-ended question to engage a parent or pregnant woman. Using open-ended questions allows a parent or pregnant woman an opportunity to fully express their ideas and thoughts.

Open-ended questions reflect your willingness to listen and partner with families. Refrain from questions that include words or phrases that may be perceived by families as judgmental.

DO – *“Tell me a little about how you care for your child’s mouth.”*

Avoid – *“Do you brush your child’s teeth 2 times a day?”*

ACTIVITY ONE

Test your skill in recognizing an open-ended or closed-ended question by circling the correct response. Answers are located at the bottom of page 2.

1. Are you going to take your child to the dentist? Open Closed
2. How often do you brush your child’s teeth? Open Closed
3. What else might you try to get your child’s teeth brushed? Open Closed
4. What are your challenges to making a dental appointment? Open Closed
5. Do you eat a balanced diet? Open Closed
6. What changes have you noticed in your mouth during your pregnancy? Open Closed

ACTIVITY TWO

Take into consideration what information you are looking for when determining the questions you ask of a parent or pregnant woman. When an open-ended question is asked of the family, the home visitor will discover far more information in a shorter period of time than they would have using a closed-ended question.

If your objective is to discover a child's dental care experience, you may want to ask the following open-ended question while avoiding the close-ended question example:

DO – *“What was your child’s last visit to the dentist like?”*

Avoid – *“Have you taken your child to dentist within the last 12 months?”*

Practice your new skills by rewriting the following close-ended questions as open-ended questions.

1. Do you brush your child’s teeth every night?
2. Don’t you think your child is old enough to drink from an open cup?
3. Do your gums bleed when you brush your teeth?
4. Last time, we talked about how important it is that you go to the dentist.
Have you made a dental appointment yet?

Answers to Activity 1

1. Closed, 2. Closed, 3. Open, 4. Open, 5. Closed, 6. Open