



Families Make the Difference

Parenting Curriculum

This document presents the Parenting Curriculum of the IRC's Families Make the Difference toolkit. This curriculum is intended for use by parent group facilitators providing skills training for parents with children aged 0-5 and is informed by the Families Make the Difference Literature Review. The Parenting Curriculum builds on other training sessions developed and tested by the IRC in Burundi, Liberia and Thailand, and is informed by evidence-based programs such as the Nurturing Parenting Program and the Strengthening Families Program.





Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Session 1: Welcome To Our Families Make the Difference Program An introduction to the Families Make the Difference program and the concept of nurturing children from birth to promote healthy brain development.	8
Session 2: Loving, Playful Interactions Promote Healthy Growth and Development Parents influence and shape their children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.	14
Session 3: I Can Help My Child Learn Positive, Prosocial Behavior When I provide good supervision and spend quality time with my child, I promote positive behavior.	23
Session 4: Empathy and Mutual Respect Between People of All Ages, Religions, Cultures, Races and Genders Promotes Peaceful Homes and Happy, Healthy Children Warm and empathic communication with children increases understanding and decreases frustration between children and parents, improves relationships, and reinforces attachments needed for healthy development.	30
Session 5: I Need to Take Good Care of Myself So I Can Take Good Care of My Children OPTIONAL Parents who respect each other and themselves contribute to an environment that supports children's healthy development. Social and emotional well-being is a necessary ingredient for healthy parenting practices.	37
Session 6: Harmony and Responsibility in My Home All adults are responsible for creating a peaceful, structured home environment that enables children's healthy development. Children need supportive guidance and routines.	44
Session 7: My Home Will Be a Safe Place for My Children and Everyone Will Be Treated with Dignity All children in the home (biological and non biological) deserve to live in a safe, supportive environment. Parents will learn strategies to help all household members handle anger and frustration peacefully.	51

Session 8: Talking and Playing with My Child from Birth Will Prepare Her to Do Well in Life **OPTIONAL** **57**

Parents play a major role in their children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development, helping their children to learn language, solve problems and prepare for school.

Session 9: Clean, Fed and Nurtured Children are Happy and Healthy Children **OPTIONAL** **63**

Parents can have lasting positive effects on children's health when they are involved in their children's hygiene and nutrition through simple routines and guidance.

Session 10: Review and Celebration: A Commitment to Positive Parenting **69**

Group Leader Fidelity Checklist **73**



Introduction

This introduction provides an overview of the research that informs the Parenting Curriculum. The purpose of this section is to define the elements of positive parenting and principles of healthy child development that underpin effective parenting programs.

The Science Behind Parenting

There have been over three decades of research on the effectiveness of parent training programs to improve child behavior, eliminate behavior problems, and prevent and mediate child abuse and neglect. Most of the research on parenting programs has evaluated the effectiveness of parenting training in order to decrease child behavior problems. There are several elements of parenting programs that are particularly effective in changing parenting behaviors and attitudes: teaching positive parent-child interaction skills; increasing emotional and empathetic communication skills; helping parents learn to be consistent when setting limits across settings; and teaching parents the correct use of time out.¹

Positive Parent-Child Interactions: Teaching parents how to positively interact with their children is one of the most effective components of parenting programs. Researchers have found that teaching parents to practice child directed play, to praise desirable behaviors, and to provide positive attention to children decreases aggression and other misbehaviors as well as increases parents' self efficacy.^{2,3} The Parenting Curriculum focuses on how parents can foster optimal development by creating positive, supportive, nurturing relationships with their children. Parenting facilitators will spend Sessions 1, 2 and 3 teaching parents skills to increase their positive interactions with their children.

Emotional/Empathetic Communication: This type of communication helps parents to listen actively as well as encourage young children to regulate and express their emotions appropriately. Empathetic communication helps children feel valued, which can decrease misbehavior due to frustration and anger. Sessions 4 and 5 specifically focus on teaching parents and children empathy skills. Parents will learn how to sensitively respond to children's emotions. Parents will also learn to manage their own anger and frustration in order to communicate more effectively with each other and their children.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). Parent Training Programs: Insight for Practitioners. Atlanta, Ga.

2 The Science of Early Childhood Development. (2007) National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. <http://www.developingchild.net>.

3 Kaminski W. J., Valle, L.A., Filene, J.H., and Boyle, C. (2008). A Meta-analytic Review of Components Associated with Parent Training Program Effectiveness. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, Vol. 36, Issue 4, pp 567-589.

Supportive Guidance and Consistent Routines: Helping parents learn to be consistent as they follow through with developmentally appropriate expectations and limits is an effective component of parenting programs. When children understand what is expected of them at home, at school and in the community, they have a better chance of complying with rules and decreasing externalizing behaviors.⁴ The Parenting Curriculum teaches parents about creating age-appropriate household rules and consequences in Sessions 6 and 7.

Nonviolent Discipline: The Correct Use of Time Out: Time out is a discipline strategy that has been adopted by a number of evidence-based parenting programs including The Incredible Years, Triple P and Parent-Child Interaction Training. These programs represent 30 years of research with families from all over the world. The results overwhelmingly support the use of time out to decrease both aggressive and oppositional behaviors.⁵ Session 7 focuses on teaching parents the correct procedure for teaching and implementing time out with their children. When done correctly, time out teaches children to calm down and self-regulate—a lifelong skill children need in order to be successful in schools and in their communities.

Cognitive and Social Skills: The sessions early in the Parenting Curriculum help parents learn to give positive attention and praise for prosocial behaviors like sharing, cooperation and respect for rules. Session 8 focuses specifically on building cognitive capacity in children through positive interactions with parents. Parents will learn how to help their children develop language skills from a very early age, increase their memory and problem solving skills, and prepare them to do well in school. It is important that cognitive and social skills are learned within the context of a supportive, positive parent-child relationship. These kinds of skills are best learned through play and games.

Optional Sessions

The Families Make the Difference program has 7 core sessions. These sessions all contain evidence-based parenting strategies and should be kept in your parenting program in order to keep it as effective as possible. There are three optional sessions that you may also want to keep in based on your program objectives. You can also take these three sessions out and create (with the help of the CYPD HQ team) other sessions that may better meet your program goals and objectives.

It is highly recommended that programs choosing to implement the Families Make the Difference program in conflict settings use session 5.

In addition to all of the parenting sessions that are in this program, the IRC has developed several other parenting sessions that may be helpful to you when designing your program. You can ask your CP technical advisor for assistance in designing your program.

4 Barth, R., (2009) Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect with Parent Training: Evidence and Opportunities. *The Future of Children*, Vol. 19; 2, p. 95.

5 McGroder, S.M. & Hyra, A. (2009). Developmental and Economic Effects of Parenting Programs for Expectant Parents and Parents of Preschool-age Children. *Partnership for America's Economic Success*. Issue. Paper #10.

Adopting an Active, Participatory Approach

Facilitators will use a collaborative, active learning approach as facilitators of parenting groups by creating discussions with participants, asking questions, and encouraging brainstorming, and the practice of newly acquired skills. This approach is consistent with years of research that shows participants are likely to learn best through active participation rather than passive listening. Some key tenets of this approach are outlined below.

Creating Discussion: Facilitators should foster a give-and-take environment during sessions by asking participants questions that encourage them to repeat key points in their own voices. This curriculum will provide several such questions to encourage active participation and learning. This curriculum will also instruct the facilitator when to use the strategy of brainstorming to encourage participants to generate ideas in collaboration with each other and the facilitator.

Skills Practice: Participants will learn several new skills in this parenting training. Facilitators will lead discussions about these skills and then set up role-plays for participants to practice the skills within the group. The research on effective parenting programs strongly suggests that practicing new skills is a critical element in parent training programs. Role-plays are suggested throughout the Parenting Curriculum with instructions regarding the skills to be practiced. Facilitators can help to ensure success by following these steps:

1. Select participants and give them appropriate roles. Ask for parents to volunteer or select them. Praise them for their willingness to participate in the role-play.
2. Provide all participants with descriptions of their roles.
3. Make sure all participants in the role-play understand the skills they are demonstrating. Have the entire group offer suggestions about what participants can do and say.
4. Stop the role-play if the participants use the skills incorrectly, then offer further instruction to help them practice the skill correctly.
5. Process role-playing afterwards by asking participants in the various roles (parents, children) how they felt.
6. Ask the other participants in the group to give positive feedback only to the person that was in the parent role.
7. The facilitator can offer detailed descriptive praise of the role-play and what was learned.

Working in Pairs and Small Groups: Working in pairs and small groups promotes listening and communication and can help activities feel varied and engaging. Facilitators should move around the room to assess the pair/group work. Pairs/Groups may be asked to present their ideas either orally or in writing. Groups/pairs can be formed in the following ways:

- › Participants work with others sitting near them or at the same table.
- › The Animal Game: Select three or four animals, goat, cow, duck. Begin with a participant and have them say goat, then have the next participant say duck, and the next one say cow, the next participant goat, and so on until every participant

has said goat, duck or cow. Now have everyone stand up in a circle away from the tables. Then ask participants to close their eyes and they begin making the sound of the animal they called out. Participants making their animal sounds with their eyes closed then must find the others in the group making the same animal sound. Once everyone finds all the animals (all the goats, all the ducks, etc.) in their group, they can begin their group work.

- › Participants form groups by calling out numbers that you assign. You start them off by having the first participant call out 1, and the next 2, and so on. Those who call out the same number form a group. If facilitators want groups to all have the same number of participants, divide the total number of participants by the desired number of groups. For example, if you have 20 participants, and want groups of 4, participants should count off from 1 to 5.

How to Use the Parenting Curriculum

In addition to this manual, there is also a five-day Parent Group Facilitators Training Guide and PowerPoint to help parent group facilitators understand how to use the Parenting Curriculum. Parent group facilitators are expected to attend the training and follow each session of the curriculum as detailed in order to deliver the most effective program and ensure fidelity. In addition to each detailed session outline, this curriculum includes a fidelity checklist to help facilitators monitor their own fidelity. Please contact the IRC's Child Protection technical unit for more information about parent group facilitator training.

Preparing for and Conducting Parent Skills Training for Groups

- › Prepare materials before each parent skills training session.
- › Create a safe, fun environment so parents actively participate throughout the program.
- › Create a collaborative atmosphere by fostering discussions and encouraging participants to think critically about the ideas and concepts presented, as well as to contribute knowledge based on their own life experiences.
- › Teach and model skills/behaviors/activities for parents.
- › Set a respectful tone. Everyone has a right to voice his or her ideas and opinions.
- › Manage your time well and complete as many of the activities as possible in each session.

Session 1

Welcome to our Families Make the Difference Program



An introduction to the Families Make the Difference program and the concept of nurturing children from birth to promote healthy brain development.



Objectives

1. Participants will meet each other and the facilitators.
2. Participants will receive an overview of the Families Make the Difference program.
3. Participants will be given an opportunity to express their hopes for this program and their children.
4. Participants will set up Parent Support Groups (PSGs).
5. Participants will understand nurturing, positive parenting foundations.



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for arrival and departure
Flip chart and markers, if available (if not, pen and paper)
Parenting Curriculum
Parent handout for Session 1
Facilitator fidelity checklist



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Please make sure to give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- › Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



(20 mins)

1. Introduction and Welcome

- ▶ Welcome parents and praise them for attending. Suggestion for greeting:
“We are so happy you are here today! We are excited to be able to share information about parenting that is based in biological and social science from all over the world. This will be a collaborative process where we will all share information and learn together!”
- ▶ Introduce yourself. Briefly tell parents about your experience working with other parents and, if applicable, speak a little about your own children.
- ▶ Have parents introduce themselves. Facilitate this by asking parents what they do in the village and encouraging them to share their children's names and ages.



(20 mins)

2. Parents' Hopes and Expectations

- ▶ Ask parents in the circle to share their expectations for the program and hopes they have for their children.
- ▶ Write each parent's name on a flip chart or on a piece of paper with his/her expectations and hopes.
- ▶ Tell the parents you will keep this list to review halfway through the program and at the end of the program to ensure their needs are met.



(20 mins)

3. Families Make the Difference Overview

With introductions complete, explain the Families Make the Difference program, noting that the program **is based on research and on the experiences of parenting programs around the world.**

- ▶ There will be 10 sessions and participants are expected to attend all of them.
- ▶ Each session will last around two hours. Participants will sign in at the beginning and sign out at the end of each session. At the end of each session they will receive handouts that review important information from that week. These handouts will help participants practice the skills learned in the group with their children.
- ▶ Participants should not hesitate to ask questions or raise concerns: Everything participants say is important!
- ▶ All participants will belong to a Parents Support Group. These are small groups (4–6 parents per group) so everyone can support each other and help people who missed sessions catch up if necessary.
- ▶ Parent facilitators will also visit participants at home periodically throughout the program to learn about they you are using their new skills with their children.
- ▶ Ask participants if they have questions?



(15 mins)

4. Developing Group Guidelines/Expectations

Introduce this exercise by saying something like, *“In any group gathering, it is helpful to have guidelines to help us manage ourselves and our time, and to remind us to respect one another.”* Please ask parents to offer guidelines they think are important.

List rules on a flip chart or piece of paper. Usually 3–5 rules are enough, but allow parents to determine the number. For example, the group may decide to list:

- Punctuality and attendance (a certificate will be given to those who attend all 10 sessions).
- Respect and attention.
- Confidentiality (information shared in the group is not exchanged outside of the group).

Parents may also choose to elect a parent chairperson for the group and now would be a good time for them to do that.



(20 mins)

5. What is Nurturing/Positive Parenting?

- Ask parents what they think of when they think of the word “nurture.”
- Then stimulate discussion by saying something like,

“We are going to spend the next several weeks talking about positive, nurturing parenting. We are going to talk about how you can promote your children’s development by enjoying time with them, praising them, and loving them!”



Parent Activity: “When I was a child...”

- Ask parents to recall experiences that were nurturing to them when they were children. Ask parents to think about the following:
 - One good memory I have of my childhood is...
 - The **positive** feeling I had then was...
 - The feeling I have remembering this today is...
- Then ask parents to imagine what their children might say years later:
 - One memory I want my children to have of me is...
- Have parents discuss their responses in pairs. Facilitators should allow five minutes for discussion and listen in as parents share. Then have parents share their children’s “memories” with the whole group.
- Write each parent’s desired memory next to his or her name on a flip chart or paper and come back to these during the last session of the program.

Note To Facilitators

Today, focus on the **positive**, nurturing aspects; you do not need in this first session to dwell on painful memories of abuse, neglect, violence or corporal punishment. It is important that parents have a positive, supportive experience in this first session. We want to emphasize how they can contribute to the healthy development of their children by being supportive!

Explain this to parents by asking the following questions and, if necessary, by explaining and giving examples:

- What is parenting that helps children to develop into healthy, respectful children?
 - Encourage parents to give real examples from their own families or others they know. Encourage parents to share and dialogue based on these examples and ideas about nurturing. Focus on the positive.
- How do parents nurture children?
 - Discuss with parents different ways to nurture their children, such as
 - talking to their children in a soft tone of voice, hugging their children, bathing their children, and so on.
 - Parents can also nurture by example: children learn from what they see more than what they hear. If you tell them act peacefully and work hard, but you are violent or lazy, expect your children to follow your example and not your words.
Children are like sponges that observe and absorb everything.
 - Nurturing is a lifestyle, like being a good citizen, a caring person, a faithful friend.



Parent Activity: Play Doba Doba!

- Have parents stand and ask them to place their arms above their heads, place their arms at their sides, place their arms in front of them, etc. At times, do something opposite than what you ask parents to do. For example, a facilitator might say, “*Put your arms at your side,*” to parents, but the facilitator will put her arms above her head. The game will go something like this:

You say Doba and place your arms in front of you and the parents follow.

You say Doba, Doba and place your arms above your head.

You say Doba and place your arms at your side and parents will likely follow (when you say just Doba they were supposed to place their arms in front).

Keep playing until just one parent is left!

Most parents will follow the facilitator’s actions and not her words! Tell parents that their children will do the same!

- Tell parents the story of the two lions:

An old man is teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he tells the boy. “It is a terrible fight and it is between two lions. One lion is evil: he is anger, abuse, violence, jealousy, impatience, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, neglect, selfishness, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego.”

The old man continues, “The other lion is good: he is joy, peace, love, hope, laughter, color, music, dance, togetherness, patience, intelligence, serenity, tenderness, humility, empathy, respect, forgiveness, play, happiness, gentleness, friendship, growth, safety, dignity, kindness, benevolence, generosity, comprehension and listening, truth, compassion and faith.”

Then the old man tells the boy, "The same fight is going on inside you, and inside every other person, too."⁶

The grandson thinks about this for a minute and then asks his grandfather, "Which lion will win?" The old man looks to the young child, smiles, and simply replies, "The one you feed."



6. Home Assignment

(5 mins)

- › It is the first session, so the assignment is an easy one: tell parents that, until the next session, they should try to enjoy the company of their children, spend time with them, listen to them, nurture them and love them as much as possible.
- › Also explain the support groups to parents and help them form such groups. Use the parent support group guidelines to accomplish this. This guideline is a separate document in the toolkit.



7. Evaluation

(10 mins)

The evaluation of this first session should also be simple. Ask the follow four questions:

- › What did you like best about the session?
- › What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?
- › How was this session helpful?
- › Have you any other comments or suggestions?



8. End of Session Activity

(10 mins)

Ask for a volunteer to move into the center of the circle and tell the others that they will have an opportunity to say something positive about this parent (only positive remarks are allowed; this is a praising exercise). Each parent in the group will offer a positive statement to the parent in the middle of the circle. *The facilitator will perform this exercise from now to the end of every session, focusing on a different parent each time. Every parent will have a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and receive praise.*

The facilitator should start this exercise by telling the parent in the middle something like, *"I appreciated your contributions to our group tonight," describing in detail a specific contribution, and add, "You are a kind and positive member of our parenting group."*

Give every parent in the group an opportunity to praise statement this parent. Then, if appropriate, have them do a "group hug" by hugging the parent next to them.

Praise all participants and thank them for their participation.

Please give parents their handout(s) after they sign out at the end of the session.

- › Make sure each participant signs the attendance form. If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the attendance sheet. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well.

6 Source: <http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/TwoWolves-Cherokee.html>

Remember, too, that if someone misses a session, remind him/her that he/she can catch up in the parents support groups; home visits will help, also.



9. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)

After the session, both facilitators need to check off all completed activities on the fidelity checklist; if there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the fidelity forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Session 2

Loving, Playful Interactions Promote Healthy Growth and Development



Parents influence and shape their children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.



Objectives

1. Parents will understand how the brain develops in childhood.
2. Parents will understand how both mothers and fathers help children learn
3. Parents will understand that the parent-child relationship is critical to a child's social, emotional, physical and psychological development.



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for arrival and departure

Flip chart and markers, if available (if not, pen and paper)

Parenting Curriculum

Color photos of children's brains (these photos show how abused and nurtured brains look different in developing children)

Parent handout for Session 2

Facilitator fidelity checklist



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- › Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time. The facilitators must be on time. Review notes from Session 1, including the fidelity checklist.
- › Review the group participant evaluations and make any needed changes based on their feedback.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



(10 mins)

1. Introduction

- ▶ **Welcome** parents and praise them for being there: It is wonderful that they came back this week and let them know how much you appreciate this opportunity to spend time with them! Put energy and enthusiasm into your greeting, it will pay off.
- ▶ Review the group guidelines/rules created in Session 1.
- ▶ The home assignment was for parents to go home and spend some time enjoying their children. **Praise parents for their nurturing efforts.** Ask questions such as: *What did you notice about your child's behavior? How do you think your child was feeling? How did it make you feel to spend this nurturing time with your child?* Ask how the Parent Support Groups went.



(10 mins)

2. Parent Activity

Facilitators will spend a little time at the beginning of all remaining sessions teaching and practicing nurturing and positive activities for parents to try at home with their children.

For Session 2, teach parents the following song. Tell parents that singing to children helps with language development and the following song also teaches children about feelings. In the future, ask parents about the songs they sing to their children or games they play; if possible, practice these during this period.

When you're happy and you know it clap your hands (clap hands twice).

When you're happy and you know it clap your hands (clap hands twice).

When you're happy and you know then your face will surely show it.

When you're happy and you know it clap your hands (clap hands twice).

Repeat the song, with the children and parents clapping their hands, and then repeat with the following stanzas:

When you're mad and you know it stamp your feet.

When you're sad... wipe your eyes

When you're scared...scream out loud.

When you're cold...shake and shiver.

When you're hot...fan your face.

In your next session, select songs that are positive and help children learn about feelings, family, friendship and positive values. Use local songs parents are familiar with.



(30 mins)

3. Child Development Overview, With a Specific Focus on Brain Development

Introduce the topic by saying the following:

“The information in today’s session can help you change your child’s life! We are going to give you information about how the brain works and develops. We are going to learn about how human beings become respectful students, smart and productive citizens, and good people.”

- › Child development refers to the biological, social and psychological changes that children experience from birth until adulthood. These changes influence children’s physical, social, emotional and intellectual capacities.
- › Early childhood is the most intense period of brain development during the human life span. About 80 percent of the brain structure is completed during a child’s first three years of life. Adequate physical, emotional and intellectual stimulation and nutrition are essential for development during these years when child’s brain is most sensitive to the influences of the external environment. Parents’ love and attention helps to ensure that each child reaches his or her potential. A parent’s love is like the switch to turn on a light or the key to turn on the engine of a car.
- › The more stimulating and loving the early environment, the more a child develops and learns. High levels of stress during early childhood caused by violence or neglect (lack of attention and affection) can increase the risk of mental and physical health problems, learning difficulties, and social/emotional deficiencies. These in turn that can lead to lifelong problems.
- › Parents (both moms and dads) have an essential role to play in supporting their children’s physical, social, emotional and cognitive development with love and stimulation. Parents have the key to turn on their child’s brain. Building strong women and men starts on the day of their births— and even before—but the first five years of life are critical!
- › Ask parents if they have any questions so far.



(20 mins)

4. The Amazing Brain

The brain is made up of cells called neurons, which communicate by means of electric impulses called synapses. We are born with over 80 billion brain cells called neurons, though most of them are not activated. It takes social experiences to activate our neurons!

- › The brain’s synapses, or circuits, enable children to learn language, to learn to walk, and to think and manage emotions. Synapses are like electrical wires that, when connected, turn on the lights. If the synapses between neurons are used repeatedly, they become permanent and strong if they are not used repeatedly, they remain weak and even die through a process called “pruning.” Stress and violence destroy synapses, while love, caring and positive stimulation reinforce synapses.
- › The pruning process cannot be reversed; once neurons have been pruned they are gone forever. Brains have the ability to form new connections between different neurons throughout our lives, but neurons show the greatest “plasticity” when we

are young! Young children who have experienced or witnessed violence need a chance to reconstruct their brains through positive, loving interactions with parents!

- **Positive attention and nurturing build more connections between neurons.** The more love and affection we give to our children, the more brain cells will be active. Love is the key ingredient in brain activity, more than books and lectures. If we do not participate in loving, positive interactions with children, if we do not nurture them, important neurons will die. When neurons die, a child is not able to learn and develop as well as children who have had positive interactions with their parents.
- **Toxic stress** caused by repeated abuse, neglect, and/or exposure to violence inhibits brain development. The affects of this kind of stress changes the way young brains develop. Children exposed to abuse and neglect have physically different brains than children raised in nurturing environments.

Images of the Brain

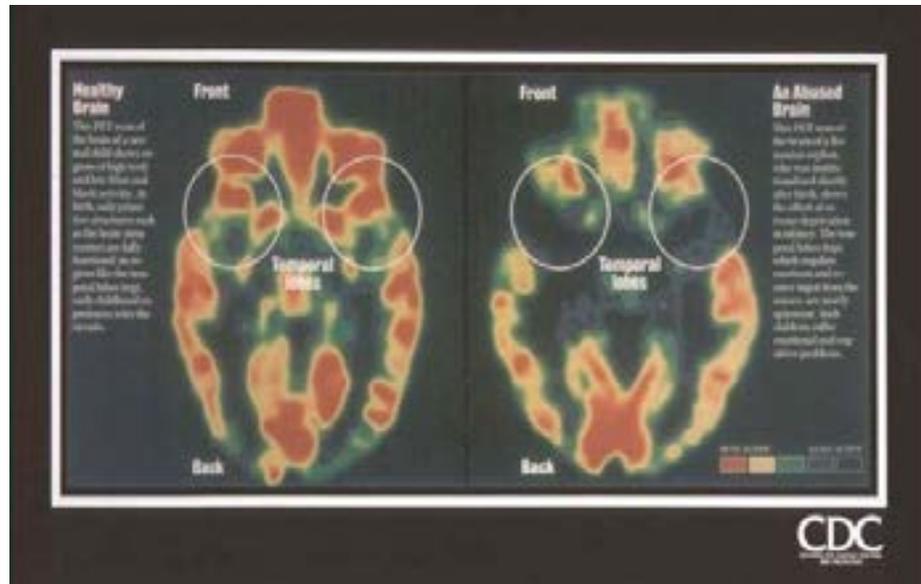
Parents shape how their children's brains develop by the way they interact with and care for their children. Hundreds of years of brain studies in the fields of psychology and neurology have produced an amazing body of knowledge. Scientists now can take images of electric activity in the brain between the neurons. These images are called electroencephalograms.

- Show parents the pictures of the brains of children who have been abused and those who have been raised in a protective and nurturing environment. *(Facilitators will be provided copies of these slides to show parents.)*^{7,8}



7 Source: http://www.sdvoicesforchildren.org/news_detail.php?iNWSID=229

8 Source: <http://wellcommons.com/users/jestevens/photos/2011/jul/22/217506/>
There are many more brain images located on the internet.



- > Split parents up into groups of two or three to talk about the differences in the brains pictured above. Allow parents about 5 minutes to address the following questions in their groups.
 - What's the difference between these two brains (in the top black and white picture)?
 - Both brains belong to three year olds; why is one so much bigger?
 - One of these children was loved and nurtured by her parents and the other neglected. Abused and neglected children sometimes have smaller brains. Their brains are associated with developmental problems that affect their lives in school (cognitive/intelligence), in their communities (social/cultural/religious), in their personal lives (emotional/psychological), and in their growth and well-being patterns (health). Point out the CDC colored brain scans and ask parents what they notice about these two brains.

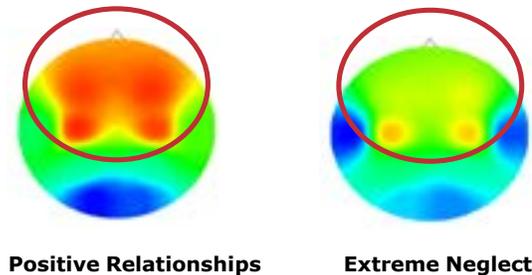
Note to Facilitators

We want to engage parents in a dialogue about how our parenting skills and practices directly correlate with brain development. Show them the color prints of the two brains (below). The color red in the images indicates electrical activity between the neurons and synapses. Explain how the nurtured child's brain shows much more activity, while abused child's brain is less active (and frequently smaller).

Parents make the difference: Parents help a child to reach her potential—to be smarter, happier, more friendly, more caring. But parents must nurture and love their children and spend time with them. Both mothers and fathers can provide this kind of quality time with their children.

- > Ask parents if they have any questions.

Profound Deprivation Affects Brain Power



Source: C.A. Nelson (2008); Marshall, Fox & BEIP (2004).

Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

If you can, show the group a video on brain development; helpful resources and videos are available at the Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu>.⁹

- › Young children learn at a very fast rate, absorbing everything. They quickly develop important skills, like walking and talking, and they start learn to interact with people. Parents have a critical role to play in helping their children learn about the world around them!
- › Ask parents if they have any questions?

Essential Ways Parents (Moms and Dads) Can Help Children to Develop Their Brains

- › Start this discussion by suggesting that parents can stimulate their young child's development in many positive ways. Ask them to think about and then discuss ways to do this (2-3 minutes). Write their answers on a flip chart or piece of paper. The following are some suggestions to stimulate discussion. Emphasize that parents can do different things to nurture their child at different stages of development.
- › **“Serve and Return”** is a process between infants and parents that shapes the architecture of the developing brain. Infants and toddlers communicate with caregivers with sounds, gestures, and facial expressions. Parents who respond by communicating back contribute to the fundamental wiring of the brain, especially in the earliest years.¹⁰
- › **Proper nutrition** is one important thing parents can do for their child's development. Children need a balanced diet that includes protein. But do not

⁹ Source: C.A. Nelson (2008); Marshall, Fox & BEIP (2004) quote by Dr. Shonkoff's, Harvard University
¹⁰ www.developingchild.harvard.edu

force children to eat when they are not hungry. Children will tell you when they are hungry and when they are full. Ask parents to offer examples of how children tell us when they are hungry or full?

- **Talking and playing** with children are essential components of healthy relations and reinforce parent-child bonds. From the moment the children are born, they learn from parents! Talking peacefully to children in complete sentences can help them learn language and increases their vocabulary, which in turn prepares them for school.
- Help children learn to communicate by using words to describe emotions. For example, parents can say to a child, *"You are angry that I took away the pot you were banging on. Here, you can play with this ball instead."*
- Talk to children about their surroundings and environment. Parents can say to a child, *"That is a cow. It gives us milk!"*
- One of the best times to talk to infants is while feeding them! Babies are usually in an alert state when they are feeding, ready for interaction and open to learning. When children are older, parents can still spend quality time with them during meals. Sit down and eat together! This lets children know they are important and part of the family! Parents can spend mealtime encouraging good behavior and developing your positive relationships with their children.
- Parents help children develop new skills when they play with them. Even copying a baby's sounds stimulates the child's brain. Play builds positive relationships between parents and children.



(15 mins)

5. Attachment

Ask parents to describe in their own words how the discussion so far bears on the idea of *attachment* (the relationship parents have with their children).

- Infants are biologically programmed to attach to their parents in order to grow and develop: it is human nature! Infants can and do attach to more than one parent!
- As scientists such as John Bowlby and Michael Rutter have shown, babies respond to touch, voice, and the faces of their parents from the very beginning of their lives.
- Young children are dependent on parents for their physical survival and their emotional well-being. Researchers and parenting experts (Powell, Hoffman, Cooper and Marvin, 2009) have identified that, in order for children to feel safe and protected, parents must always be bigger, stronger, wiser and kind. Parents need to respond sensitively to their young children's needs and feelings.
- Sensitive parenting helps children learn to trust. Trust has lasting positive effects on children, improving their thinking and memory skills, their self-esteem, and their ability to cooperate with others and form friendships.

Guided Parent Discussion: Ask parents to talk about how they show their young children kindness. Ask caregivers how they act in wise ways with their children.



(10 mins)

6. Skills Training: Practicing Nurturing Interactions

- ▶ Parents will practice their new understanding of the importance of loving, nurturing interactions to foster their child's development.
- ▶ Pick two parents to help with this skills practice. One parent will play a parent and the other an infant around 9 months of age.
- ▶ Ask the group to remind everyone about “serve and return and tell them you are going to practice this.
- ▶ Tell the parent to smile at the baby and tell the baby to smile back. Then have the baby make some sounds and have the parent imitate them back to the baby. Remember to provide active coaching support if the parents practicing the skill need help.
- ▶ Praise the two parents for practicing their skills in front of the group.
- ▶ Split all parents into pairs to practice the “serve and return” role-play. If some of the parents have babies with them in the session they can practice with their babies.



(5 mins)

7. Home Assignment

- ▶ Have parents think of times during the day when they can spend 10 to 15 minutes fostering their child's development by using nurturing, loving parenting skills.
- ▶ Ask parents to practice “serve and return” activities with their children during the coming week.
- ▶ Also ask parents to do at least one thing they enjoy themselves during the coming week. Explain that it is important for them to nurture themselves so they can be nurturing to their children.



(10 mins)

8. Evaluation

Ask the following four questions:

- ▶ What did you like best about the session?
- ▶ What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?
- ▶ How was this session helpful?
- ▶ Have you any other comments or suggestions?



(10 mins)

9. End of Session Activity

Ask for a volunteer to move into the center of the circle and tell the others that they will have an opportunity to say something positive about this parent (only positive remarks are allowed; this is a praising exercise). Each parent in the group will offer a positive statement to the parent in the middle of the circle. The facilitator will perform this exercise from now to the end of every session, focusing on a different parent each time. Every parent will have a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and receive praise.

The facilitator should start this exercise by telling the parent in the middle something like, “I appreciated your contributions to our group tonight,” describing in detail a

specific contribution, and add, “You are a kind and positive member of our parenting group.” If appropriate, have the parents do a “group hug” like they did in Session 1.

Give every parent in the group an opportunity to praise this parent.

Praise all participants and thank them for their participation.

Make sure each participant signs the attendance form. If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the attendance sheet. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. Remember, too, that if someone misses a session, remind him/her that he/she can catch up in the parents support groups; home visits will help, also.



10. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)

After the session, facilitators need to check off all completed activities on the fidelity checklist; if there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the fidelity forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Session 3

I Can Help My Child Learn Positive, Prosocial Behavior



When I provide good supervision and spend quality time with my child I promote positive behavior.



Objectives

1. Parents will learn that proper supervision of children increases safety, and that spending quality time with them shapes positive, desirable behavior.
2. Parents will understand that attention (positive or negative) reinforces behavior accordingly.
3. Parents will explore loving interactions through feeding, bathing, daily routines and chores.



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for arrival and departure
Flip chart and markers, if available (if not, pen and paper)
Parenting Curriculum
Songs lyrics, if available
Parent handout for Session 3



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Please make sure to give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- › Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- › Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time. The facilitators must be on time.
- › Review notes from the previous session, including the fidelity checklist.
- › Review participants' evaluations and make any needed changes based on their feedback.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



(10 mins)

1. Introduction and Review of Home Assignment

- **Welcome** parents and praise them for attending. It is wonderful they that they have returned for the third session; let them know you appreciate this opportunity to spend time with them! Don't forget to ask about their families and their children now that you know them a little better.

Guided Discussion with Parents

- The home assignment from the last session was for parents to spend positive, nurturing time with their children and also to do something to nurture themselves. Give every parent a chance to talk about what they did for themselves. **Ask about home assignment and praise them for practicing their new skills.**



(10 mins)

2. Parent Activity

Facilitators will spend a little time at the beginning of all remaining sessions teaching and practicing nurturing and positive activities for parents to try at home with their children.

Ask parents if they have a song they would like to sing today. If someone has a suggestion, sing that song. If no one has a suggestion, teach this song:

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Head shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Eyes, and ears, and mouth, and nose.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

(Point to each body part as the group sings the song. Sing it through at a normal pace the first time, then sing it again fast, and finally sing it slow. Children love it!)



(5 mins)

3. Briefly Review Child Development

Begin by asking participants the following: *What are some of the important points the group learned about child development during the last session?* Prompt the discussion to cover the points below:

- Child development refers to the biological, social and psychological changes that children experience from birth until adulthood. These changes influence children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual capacities.
- Early childhood is the most intense period of brain development during the human life span. About 80 percent of the brain structure is completed during a child's first three years of life. Adequate physical, emotional and intellectual stimulation and nutrition are essential for development during these years when child's brain is most sensitive to the influences of the external environment. Parents' love and

attention helps to ensure that each child reaches his or her potential. A parent's love is like the switch to turn on a light or the key to turn on the engine of a car.

- › The more stimulating and loving the early environment, the more a child develops and learns. High levels of stress during early childhood caused by violence or neglect (lack of attention and affection) can increase the risk of mental and physical health problems, learning difficulties, and social/emotional deficiencies. These in turn that can lead to lifelong problems.



(15 mins)

4. Teaching Young Children To Be Good Family and Community Members

- › Children do not come into the world knowing how to behave socially. Babies are born without any memories.
- › Remind parents about brain development, as discussed in Session 2. Brain cells are called neurons. Connections between neurons create memories and knowledge.
- › Babies are born with special brain cells called mirror neurons. Mirror neurons work the same way as an actual mirror. Babies and young children learn in part by mirroring or mimicking their parents' actions.

Ask parents if they remember the first time they smiled at their babies and they smiled back.

- › One way that parents can encourage polite behavior in their children is by modeling this kind of behavior.
- › Children mimic what they see more than they do what they are told to do. If you tell a child to be nice to people, but then treat your friends negatively, your child will treat others negatively as well.

Ask parents to think of a behavior their infant or young child recently copied. Have them share their examples with the group.

Guided Parent Discussion

Ask parents to form groups of two. Ask these groups to list two or three positive behaviors they have modeled, or want to model, for their children. Have the groups share their lists. Record the lists on the flip chart or a piece of paper. Tell parents they will now examine ways to encourage these positive behaviors.

PARENT TIP

Parents can encourage positive behaviors from their young children by describing their own positive behavior and modeling positive behavior!



(20 mins)

5. The Golden Rule of Psychology: Children Want Adult Attention

All children crave attention from their parents and other adults they love and respect. Children learn to command the attention they want in positive and negative ways. Providing them with the attention they desire reinforces both positive and negative behavior.

- › When a parent praises a child for a good behavior such as sharing, that parent encourages more of the same.
- › In the same fashion, parents reinforce negative behavior such as fighting.

- › Parents need to be cognizant of the behaviors they reinforce. If a parent gives more attention to children when they misbehave, they are inadvertently reinforcing negative behavior.
- › When children misbehave in ways that are annoying, but not harmful to themselves or others, parents can ignore that misbehavior. If children are whining and arguing but no one listens, there is no point in them continuing that behavior. They eventually get the message: this is not the way for them to get their parents' attention. When parents yell at or hit children, they are providing the child with negative attention and reinforcing negative behavior.
- › The more positive attention that parents give to positive behaviors, the less that children will seek attention by doing negative behaviors.

Facilitators should note at this point that they will talk about ways of handling dangerous and violent behavior later in the program.

Talk about two parenting tools that will help parents encourage positive behavior (and decrease negative behavior) in their children. These tools are called **praise and ignore**: *Praise refers to positive attention for positive behavior, and ignore refers to the withdrawal of all attention (positive and negative) for nondangerous misbehavior.* **Ignoring is not the absence of praise; it is the absence of all attention for negative behavior.**



(10 mins)

Guided Parent Discussion

Ask parents why is praise good for children. If necessary, offer answers such as:

- › Shows love and affection.
- › Helps children feel good about themselves.
- › Helps children learn what kind of behaviors are valued and expected.
- › Helps children's brains build healthy social and emotional connections.

Again, ask parents how they themselves benefit by praising children. If necessary, offer answers such as:

- › Helps parents feel positive about their child.
- › Builds a positive relationship with child.
- › Reinforces children's desirable behaviors.
- › Frees parents from disciplining a child because he/she spends more time seeking parents' positive attention.

Praise is telling a child that he or she is doing something well. Parents praise children by saying things such as:

- › I am so proud of the way you are doing your homework so carefully.
- › Thank you for saying "please."
- › That is very polite.
- › I think it is so nice that you are sharing the ball with your friend.

Effective praise, expressed with a positive tone of voice and facial expression, tells the child specifically what he or she did well.

- Ignore refers to the withdrawal of all attention (positive and negative) for nondangerous misbehavior. The strategy of ignore can be applied to children who are 2 years and above. Children under the age of 2 years do not have the words to tell us when they are upset or want something. Parents do not want to ignore babies that are crying!
- Ask parents to think about when their children misbehave. *What are there children seeking when they whine, nag or yell?*
- Tell parents that one of the most powerful ways to help eliminate annoying behaviors is for parents ignore them. Scolding a child negatively reinforce the child's negative behavior.
- Several factors are critical to successfully ignoring children's misbehaviors:
 - **Ignore immediately.** Delaying the ignore response will confuse your child if too much time passes between action and response.
 - **Ignore consistently.** This helps your child to learn the limits to his or her behavior and to determine which behaviors result in more desirable attention.
 - **Ignore “with your whole body.”** To have an impact on behavior, must get the message. When you ignore, make sure to:
 - Look away.
 - Keep a neutral facial expression.
 - Talk with others in child's presence.
 - Restrict physical contact.
 - Engage in other normal tasks.
 - Offer positive attention immediately after the child stops misbehaving.



(10 mins)

Guided Parent Discussion

Brainstorm a list of behaviors parents want to teach their children. Then for each behavior, brainstorm at least one praise statement. Then ask them to think about some behaviors they can ignore and write these down. Remind participants that we cannot ignore violent and/or dangerous behaviors.



(20 mins)

6. Praise and Ignore Practice

Note: Facilitators might want to do both practices with the entire group first, coaching a couple of parents to demonstrate the exercise, and then split parents into smaller groups.

Have participants pair off and practice the following scenario: A parent is playing with her child. The parent prompts the child to share his toy, the child does, and the parent praises the child for sharing. The parent can also praise the child for being friendly or kind, or she might tell the child that she loves spending time with him. Have the parent model sharing by offering a toy to the child. Then have the participants switch roles and repeat the exercise.

Next ask the groups to practice ignoring. While the parent and child are playing, have the child begin yelling at the parent because he did not get his way. Tell the parent to turn away from the child and to pretend to take up another household task. As soon as the child stops yelling, have the parent return their attention and praise the child for talking in a quiet, respectful voice. Then have the participants switch roles and repeat the exercise.

Note: The facilitators should help parents practice. These skills can be difficult to learn, so facilitators can repeat the role-play until parents feel more confident about ignoring and praising.

After practicing the above skills, ask each parent how he or she felt playing the child who was praised. Ask how it felt playing the parent who gives praise.



(10 mins)

7. Supervision of Young Children

- ▶ Children under age 5 need safe adult supervision and attention. If parents are going to use attention to encourage positive behaviors in young children, they must spend enough time supervising their children. If parents are unable to provide supervision due to work or other commitments, they must leave their children with trusted caregivers.
- ▶ When parents leave young children with a caregiver, they should ask them about the time spent with that caregiver: about what they did and how they feel about the person. Parents should listen if children say they feel uncomfortable around a caregiver. This kind of discussion allows you to share in your child's day and lets your child know that you are concerned about their safety and well-being.
- ▶ Ask parents to discuss who might be appropriate caregivers for their children. How might a parent know a person would be appropriate to care for a child? Guide participants in a brainstorm.



(5 mins)

8. Home Assignment

- ▶ Have parents practice **praising** at home with their children during the coming week and, if necessary, ignoring their child. In order for parents to practice praising, they will need to spend quality time with their kids. Encourage parents to enjoy the quality time they spend with their children
- ▶ Ask parents to be prepared to report about their praising practice, as well as the quality time they spend with their children, during next session.



(10 mins)

9. Evaluation

Ask the following four questions:

- ▶ What did you like best about the session?
- ▶ What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?
- ▶ How was this session helpful?
- ▶ Have you any other comments or suggestions?



10. End of Session Activity

Ask for a volunteer to move into the center of the circle and tell the others that they will have an opportunity to say something positive about this parent (only positive remarks are allowed; this is a praising exercise). Each parent in the group will offer a positive statement to the parent in the middle of the circle. A facilitator will perform this exercise from now to the end of every session, focusing on a different parent each time. Every parent will have a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and receive praise.

The facilitator should start this exercise by telling the parent in the middle something like, “I appreciated your contributions to our group tonight,” describing in detail a specific contribution, and add, “You are a kind and positive member of our parenting group.” “Group hug” if appropriate.

Give every parent in the group an opportunity to praise this parent.

Praise all participants and thank them for their participation.

Please give parents their handout(s) after they sign out at the end of the session.

- Make sure each participant signs the attendance form. If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the attendance sheet. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. Remember, too, that if someone misses a session, remind him/her that he/she can catch up in the parents support groups; home visits will help, also.



11. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)

After the session, facilitators need to check off all completed activities on the fidelity checklist; if there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the fidelity forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Session 4

Empathy and Mutual Respect Between People of All Ages, Religions, Cultures, Races, and Genders Promotes Peaceful Homes and Happy, Healthy Children



Warm and empathic communication with children increases understanding and decreases frustration between children and their caregivers, improves relationships, and reinforces attachments needed for healthy development.



Objectives

1. Parents will improve the quality of communication with their children by learning how to respond sensitively to children's emotions
2. Parents will explore the concept of empathy and learn techniques to increase empathy
3. Parents will spend quality time with their children using empathetic communication skills towards their children.



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for arrival and departure
Flip chart and markers, if available (If not, pen and paper)
Parenting Curriculum
Parent handout for Session 4



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Please make sure to give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- › Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- › Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time. The facilitators must be on time.
- › Review Session 3, including the fidelity checklist
- › Review participants' evaluations and make any needed changes based on their feedback.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



(20 mins)

1. Introduction

Welcome parents and praise them for returning for the fourth session. Smile and be positive, energetic and sincere.



(10 mins)

Guided Discussion with Parents

- Take a moment to ask parents how they feel. Feelings are important. If parents feel they are learning and if they feel their relationships with their children are improving, they will be eager to engage further. If they don't feel this way, recognize their efforts, praise them for trying, and explain that and change takes time. Urge them to have patience.
- Ask how the parent support groups are going? Are they encouraging and nurturing one another?

Note to facilitators

If a participant is absent, encourage others in the group to reach out to that parent. They can do this through the parent support groups (if they have phones, they can exchange numbers). Encourage parents to meet beyond the sessions to share their ideas and parental strategies skills; encourage them to support and mentor each other; urge them to solve problems they might be having with their children peacefully and constructively; and most importantly, ask them to share their happiness and accomplishments with the group when their parenting skills are working. **This is a support group, not a group for criticism or gossip. Parents are here to help each other, to nurture each other.**



(10 mins)

Guided Discussion with Parent

- Ask about home assignment and praise parents for practicing their new skills.
- The home assignment was for parents to go spend some time enjoying their children, praising good behaviors and ignoring minor misbehaviors.
- Ask parents if they remember some of the ideas discussed during the last session. Ask them how parents can praise children.
- Next ask if anyone praised his or her child. If they did, ask them what they praised and how their child responded to that praise.
- Ask how the parent felt about spending quality time with his or her child?
- Praise parents for any effort they made to spend nurturing time with and praising their children.
- If there is time, practice praising and ignoring for a few minutes.



(10 mins)

2. Parent Activity

Facilitators will spend a little time at the beginning of all remaining sessions teaching and practicing nurturing and positive activities for parents to try at home with their children.

- Ask parents if they have a song they would like to sing today. If someone has a suggestion, sing that song. If no one has a suggestion, have the parents practice the game below. Emphasize that the games they learn in these sessions are meant to be played at home with their children! The point is to get parents to practice play and praise!
- Have parents think of an animal. Then ask them to think about how that animal sounds and moves. Go around the circle ask each parent to act out his or her imaginary animal while the others guess what kind of animal they are pretending to be. Do this with every parent!



(25 mins)

3. Principles of Communication

Children, like adults, have different styles of communication. There are some principles of communication that should be understood by parents who want to successfully communicate with their children (the following must list can be augmented with parents' opinions and examples):

- Every child, like every adult, is unique and has a specific kind of temperament: outspoken, introverted, articulate, shy, dynamic, timid...
- Babies and toddlers use verbal and nonverbal ways of communicating their needs before they learn to talk. These ways of communicating are called cues. The cues, such as crying or reaching out for something, are many and varied.
- If available, show magazine pictures of babies and toddlers ask parents what these babies and toddlers are trying to communicate.
- Talking to infants and children helps them to develop language. Help your children understand language by talking in complete sentences and explaining words they do not understand to them. Parents should describe their environment and talk about feelings from the moment their child comes into the world. Children also learn to communicate with gestures and expressions well before they speak.

Facilitators can ask parents how they might support young children developing language skills. Use the prompts below to start the discussion if necessary.

- **Watch and listen to the baby.** Imagine what she is thinking and feeling.
- **Repeat the sounds the child** uses and have “conversations.” Remember “serve and return”!
- **Read, sing, and tell stories to young children.** These are fun ways to help children understand the meaning of new words and ideas.
- **Talk about activities—play, household chores, visits—in real time, as the activities unfold.** Remember: playing is the best way to communicate with infants and children!



(10 mins)

Parent Activity: Practice Communication with Young Children

- Have the parents form groups of two. Ask one of the parents to pretend he is a baby. The “infant” can make sounds and faces, look around the room and at his “parent.” The parent can practice “serve and return” skills. Have the parent imitate (respectfully) the sounds and faces the infant makes. The parent should notice and describe what the infant looks at. After five minutes, have the participants switch roles.

Speaking the Child’s Language

- Children use their imaginations and invent fantasy worlds while play. Parents should encourage imaginative play and even join in from time to time! Children are creative and when you sit down and join their play, you will encourage language development and build their self-esteem!
- Sometimes it can be hard to figure out what infants and young children are trying to say. It is easy to misinterpret children’s actions. Many times children and adults communicate in “different languages” and that can be the source of major conflict, frustration and misunderstanding. When children are sad, tired or hurt, for example, parents can mistake their withdrawal as stubbornness or disrespect. Children need help working through these difficult emotions. Facilitators will talk about a process for helping children deal with challenging emotions during this session.

Effective Communication Takes Time and Respect

- Ask parents how they perceive communication with their children. Ask if anyone has ever used or heard dismissive expressions like, “It’s just a child, it does not matter what she says,” or “Don’t waste your time explaining anything to her, she is not going to understand it anyway.”
- Parents need to show that they respect what children are telling if children are going to feel valued and loved.
- **Parents need to dedicate time!** Spending time communicating is an excellent way to build a trusting relationship with your child.
- Communication is dialogue and requires participation by both parties, parent and child.
- Ask parents if they have any questions about communication.

Note to Facilitators

It is important to explain the difference between **empathy** and **sympathy**. Sympathy is to feel pity or sorrow for someone else’s misfortune. Empathy is the ability to step into another person’s shoes and experience his feelings. Empathy takes imagination and work. It sometimes helps if people have shared similar experiences.



(10 mins)

4. The Concept of Empathy

- Write the word **EMPATHY** on the flip chart or a piece of paper so parents can see the word.
- Brainstorm with the parents about possible meanings of the word.
 - Empathy is the ability for one person to perceive the emotions, needs and desires of another person. It is the ability of one person to walk in the shoes of another person and feel what that is like.
 - As it relates to nurturing parenting, empathy is the ability to perceive the emotions, needs and desires of a child. It is the ability to respond to a child in a nurturing way, focusing on the positive welfare of the child.

- Empathy, to put it most simply, is the ability to understand and act with care.
- › Start a discussion by asking parents this question: why is empathy so necessary for parents to be successful? If needed, offer some of the following reasons (there are many more than listed below):
 - Empathetic parents ensure that their children's needs are met.
 - Parents who demonstrate empathy for one person teach children to care for themselves and for others. Children need to learn to understand others' feelings; if they do, they are better able to help them.
 - When we respond empathetically to infants, we communicate to them that they are important. When children say things like "I am tired...I am cold...I am sleepy," and their parents empathize with them, they are contributing to their healthy social and emotional development.



(15 mins)

5. Empathy Through Steps Technique

- › Being empathetic, understanding others feelings and needs, helps parents to understand why children behave in a certain way, and therefore helps parents react in a more constructive and nurturing manner.
- › A simple technique, "Identifying and Honoring Your Child's Feelings," can help parents improve empathy.

Step 1 Identify the feeling

Step 2 Determine the reason

Step 3 Honor the feeling

Step 4 Take action: help the child with his feelings.

- The first step to mastering the "identifying and honoring your child's feelings" technique is to identify or label the emotion someone is feeling: "*Sammy, you are really afraid right now, aren't you?*" Parents who express themselves this way are teaching their children to identify their own feelings. Children need to put words to feelings that are new to them.
- The second step is to understand why the child is feeling scared: "*Sammy, why are you so scared?*" Sometimes children can't say why they feel as they do. Honoring their feelings is even more important when children have difficulty expressing them.
- The third step is to honor a child's feelings: "*I am afraid because the monsters in the closet are very scary.*" Don't dismiss their reasons. If a child doesn't know why he is afraid, honor his confusion: "*I know you feel afraid, but I am here to protect you.*" In both instances, Sammy and his feelings are honored. Facilitators can point out examples of poor empathy: "*Well, that's the dumbest thing I ever heard—afraid of monsters in your closet!*" or "There is nothing for you to be afraid of. There are no monsters. It's all in your imagination." Such statements belittle the child and do not honor his feelings. If parents belittle the child, he or she might not talk to them about feelings anymore.

Note to facilitators

Acts of violence like shaking, hitting, and even verbal abuse, are not acts of empathy—even though parents may tell the child afterward how much they love them and that the act of violence was for their own good. Such behavior creates an impression that people who care about you also hurt you. This is not only confusing to children, but it fosters in them a propensity toward violence. We want children to experience mutually satisfying relationships and learn to care about others. This starts with having a mutually satisfying relationship with you!

- The fourth step is to act—to help the child with his feeling. Sometimes the situation may require the parent and child discuss together possible actions that may remedy the situation: *“Let’s brainstorm what we can do to help you feel safer.”* Sometimes the situation simply requires the parent to comfort the child or share in his joy: *“What a great job you did last night sleeping in your own bed. I bet you really feel proud!”*



6. Parent Activity: Practicing the Four Steps of Empathy

(10 mins)

- Take a few minutes to brainstorm with parents about words that describe feelings. Facilitators will then coach two parents in this practice while the group observes.
- Tell the participant who will play the child that he is 5 years old. The child has just had an argument with a friend and is feeling sad.
- The participant playing the parent will help the child identify his or her feeling by saying something like, *“Oh, you look sad.”* Then the parent can ask, *“What has happened?”* The child can say, *“I got into an argument with my friend and they are not being nice.”* The parent then moves to step three and says something like, *“It does not feel very good when we argue with our friends. I know you must be feeling sad about that.”* Then the parent can say to the child, *“How would you like me to help?”*
- After the exercise, ask the parents to positively comment and praise the role-players for their efforts.
- If there is time, have parents pair off and practice the four steps.



7. Home Assignment

(5 mins)

- Tell parents that for the next two weeks, they are going to practice a fantastic new technique, maybe the most important parenting tool they can learn: *empathy!* Parents can use the four-step approach:

Step 1 Identify the feeling.

Step 2 Determine the reason.

Step 3 Honor the feeling.

Step 4 Take action: help the child with his feelings.

Parents can also follow the four-step process to understand their own feelings: *“What do I feel? Why? The way I feel is okay, I can accept the way I feel no matter how logical or inappropriate it is. I will honor my feelings. I will deal with those feelings safely and constructively.”*

- Agree with parents that they will spend time playing with their kids. Not working, but playing!



8. Evaluation

(10 mins)

Ask the following four questions:

- What did you like best about the session?
- What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?

- › How was this session helpful?
- › Have you any other comments or suggestions?



(10 mins)

9. End of session Activity

Ask for a volunteer to move into the center of the circle and tell the others that they will have an opportunity to say something positive about this parent (only positive remarks are allowed; this is a praising exercise). Each parent in the group will offer a positive statement to the parent in the middle of the circle. *The facilitator will perform this exercise from now to the end of every session, focusing on a different parent each time. Every parent will have a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and receive praise. "Group hug" if appropriate.*

The facilitator should start this exercise by telling the parent in the middle something like, *"I appreciated your contributions to our group tonight,"* describing in detail a specific contribution, and add, *"You are a kind and positive member of our parenting group."*

Give every parent in the group an opportunity to praise this parent.

Praise all participants and thank them for their participation.

Please give parents their handout(s) after they sign out at the end of the session.

- › Make sure each participant signs the attendance form. If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the attendance sheet. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. Remember, too, that if someone misses a session, remind him/her that he/she can catch up in the parents support groups; home visits will help, also.



10. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)

After the session, facilitators need to check off all completed activities on the fidelity checklist; if there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the fidelity forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Session 5

I Need to Take Good Care of Myself So I Can Take Good Care of My Children



Parents who respect each other and themselves contribute to an environment that supports children's healthy development: social and emotional well-being is a necessary ingredient for healthy parenting practices.



Objectives

1. Participants will explore their own psychological, social and emotional needs in order to take care of themselves.
2. Participants will understand the impact of parents' stress on children



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for arrival and departure
Flip chart and markers, if available (If not, pen and paper)
Parenting Curriculum
Parent handout for Session 5



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Please make sure to give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- › Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- › Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time. The facilitators must be on time.
- › Review Session 4, including the fidelity checklist
- › Review participants' evaluations and make any needed changes based on their feedback.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



(10 mins)

1. Introduction

Welcome parents and praise them for being in your group today! Let them know how much you appreciate this opportunity to spend time with them!

Guided Discussion with Parents

- Review the hopes and expectations parents had for this program from the first session. Ask all parents if their expectations are being met.
- Ask about home assignment and praise parents for practicing their new skills.
- The assignment from the last session was to practice at home the four steps empathy technique:

Step 1 Identify the feeling.

Step 2 Determine the reason.

Step 3 Honor the feeling.

Step 4 Take action: help the child with his feelings

- Ask parents to give examples of times they were able to complete this four-step process with their children.



(5 mins)

2. Parent Activity

Facilitators will spend a little time at the beginning of all remaining sessions teaching and practicing nurturing and positive activities for parents to try at home with their children.

Ask parents if they have a song they would like to sing today. If someone has a suggestion, sing that song. If no one has a suggestion, have the parents practice the game below. Emphasize that the games they learn in these sessions are meant to be played at home with their children!

Ask participants to stand up in a circle stretch and relax.

- Give each participant a number: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...
- Create a rhythm by clapping..
- Explain the exercise: everyone in the group is going to tell the other participants something about herself and then ask a question of another participant by calling out a number. People need to be attentive, to react to the statement if their number is called.

- > Rules: If someone called upon does not answer, she or he is eliminated; if someone responds to the wrong number; she or he is eliminated; and if someone calls a number that was already eliminated, the caller is also eliminated. For example:
 - *Clap, clap, clap* My name is Peter *clap, clap, clap* I like pineapples warm *clap, clap, clap* What about you 14? *Clap, clap, clap.*
 - (Now it is number 14's turn) *Clap, clap, clap* I have never tried them *clap, clap, clap* But I want to tell you *clap, clap, clap* I dream of a house *clap, clap, clap* I will build on the beach *clap clap clap* What about you 7?
 - *Clap, clap, clap* I wouldn't like to live by the ocean *clap, clap, clap* But I want to tell you I am a good swimmer and I love to fish *clap clap clap* what about you? (Now is 1's turn).
- > Laugh and have fun.



(15 mins)

3. Empathy Starts with Understanding Our Own Feelings

- > Ask parents to remember what *empathy* means. Brainstorm with them about their ideas concerning empathy.
 - Make this key point: *"When we talked about empathy, we talked about understanding the way that someone else feels. This is related to feeling compassion toward others."*
- > Ask parents if they remember the four-step "Identifying and Honoring Your Child's Feelings" technique introduced during Session 4. Review the steps again (write on flip chart):
 - Step 1** Identify the feeling.
 - Step 2** Determine the reason.
 - Step 3** Honor the feeling.
 - Step 4** Take action: help the child with his feelings.
- > Present the idea that parents can also use the four-step technique for themselves and each other. Adults can identify their own feelings, figure out why they are feeling that way, honor their own feelings, and then respond to them. It is important that parents show compassion to themselves, and not just their children!
- > Ask participants if anyone has tried using the technique on themselves? Let parents share their experiences.



(15 mins)

4. Parent Activity: Managing difficult feelings

Talk with parents about handling their own feelings, especially those that everyone experiences, feelings such as sadness, anger, jealousy, hatred, disdain, rage, intolerance, etc.

Divide parents into pairs (couples or spouses should be separated for this activity). Tell them, *"We are going to think about situations when we get angry or experience other difficult feelings. Ask them to answer the following questions:*

- > *"When do I get really annoyed? What makes me feel very angry? What do I do when I get really angry? Do I lose control? Do I become violent?"*

After 5 minutes, ask parents to regroup in the circle. Ask some of them to share what they talked about with their partner.



(5 mins)

5. Violence and Effects on Children

- › Sometimes parents get overwhelmed and stressful situations become hard to handle. Sometimes children witness this anger or even bear the brunt of their parents' frustrations.
- › Research indicates that children who are victims of violence can suffer terrible developmental consequences. Children who witness violence can experience the same negative consequences: lower brain activity and neuron connectivity, inhibition of development of certain areas of the brain, and so on.
- › Parents teach children by *what they do* more so than by *what they say*. If parents tell them to be nice but then scream and yell, they are teaching them that screaming and yelling is acceptable when they are angry.
- › Remember: *children do what we do!* It is important to handle conflict in safe, calm ways. Tanzanian Proverb: *MTOTO UMLEAVYO NDIVYO AKUAVYO!* (*The way you raise a child is how he will grow up!*)
- › Parents who treat each other with kindness, respect, tolerance and dignity are modeling healthy, loving behaviors for their children. When parents act in nurturing ways toward each other, they are nurturing their children as well as themselves.
- › Nurturing, positive parenting is a lifestyle not only for children, but also for all human beings. Adults need to cultivate their own inner peace, tolerance, and positive thinking.
- › Ask participants if they have any questions?

Note to facilitators

Emphasize the importance of both mothers and fathers using the following skills and techniques.



(5 mins)

6. Skills for Handling Negative Thoughts and Feelings

- › There are times when everyone handles feelings poorly. For example, some people yell at or physically hurt others, some people drink alcohol to excess, some people ignore others or refuse to talk at all. Angry, negative thoughts can prolong negative feelings. It can be difficult to resist change these responses, but people can cultivate alternative ways that are more positive.
- › Ask parents how they handle negative feelings; Write their responses on the flip chart. Tell them they are going to learn a couple of techniques to help them handle negative feelings constructively.



(10 mins)

Skill #1: RELAX the Body and Mind

Research shows that relaxation is one of the most effective ways to reduce negative feelings, worry and general stress.

Deep Breathing: One way to relax the body is to breathe deeply and slowly. Close your eyes. Inhale through your nose and then breathe out through your mouth. When we breathe in, we want our stomach to extend: This is a different kind of breathing, and it will feel strange at first. Have the group try it in unison and offer the following instructions:

- Close your eyes and put your hand on your stomach.
- Breathe in very slowly and try to pull the air all the way into your stomach (so that your stomach pokes out).
- Now breathe out *very* slowly through your mouth (feel your stomach go back down).
- While breathing out, try to relax all of the muscles in your body.
- It might help to count to three slowly while you breathe in and again count to three slowly while you breathe out.
- Repeat five times. (Wait until everyone finishes the exercise.)
- Now have parents open their eyes. Ask them how they feel? Emphasize to them that if they practice this technique just a few minutes every day, they should feel more relaxed. They can pause to do exercise whenever they feel stressed to help them calm down.

There are also other ways to relax mind and body. Ask participants if they can offer methods. People might suggest prayer, meditation, naps, and so on.



(10 mins)

Skill #2: Think POSITIVE Thoughts

Sometimes our spouses, neighbors or children might say or do something that makes us angry, sad, nervous or scared. Have parents try the “positive self-talk” steps outlined below to help themselves stay calm. It is never okay to act violently toward another adult or child out of anger.

- Identify the feeling of anger.
- Ask yourself, why am I angry?
- Then tell yourself something positive about that person. You might say, for example, *“He is stubborn sometimes, but I love him because he has a big heart, because he takes care of the house, or because he makes me laugh when I am sad.”* Or you can tell yourself something positive about a situation causing you stress: *“I am having problems paying my debt, but I will find the courage to learn from this situation.”*

Everyone has a positive side. When you get angry try to remember that positive side.

Now tell participants that they are going to make positive statements about ourselves. The better parents care for themselves, the more they can care for others, including their spouses and children.



(10 mins)

Parent Activity: “I am a Good Parent and a Good Person”

- Ask parents: “What are important techniques for nurturing parenting?” Let them explain or suggest the examples below, if needed:
 - Love
 - Attention
 - Praise
- The more we praise our children, the more we build their self-confidence, social skills, intellectual capacity and positive feelings and memories.

- › Ask Parents, *“Do we praise ourselves as people? Do we praise ourselves as parents?”*
- › Being a parent is very rewarding, but also challenging. Facilitators might tell parents, *“Praise yourself because you are trying. You all have wonderful skills and abilities and being here shows you are trying to be even better parents! You care for your children and you love them.”*
- › Divide participants into three small groups to facilitate more in-depth sharing.
 - Ask participants to describe their positive skills and abilities as parents to each other. Ask them to talk about what they do well as a parent, a spouse, a woman, a man. Ask them to list their best qualities: for example, that they are smart, hard working, considerate, etc.



(10 mins)

Skill #3: Take Time to Take Care of Yourself

Tell parents,

“You are all doing the difficult job of being a parent! We have learned many things that we are practicing with our children every day. We are learning how to take the best care of our children.” “But who is going to take care of you? We have to take care of ourselves. How are we going to take care of our children, give them our energy and love, if we do not have that energy or love for ourselves? If we do not love ourselves it will be difficult to love our children and teach them to love themselves and their families.”



Parent Activity: Ways to Care for Ourselves

- › Brainstorm with the whole group ways they can take care of themselves. Explain where they can go to get help if they need it: churches, the district social welfare office, etc.
- › If needed: explore with parents why drinking in excess is not a healthy way of dealing with stress, and help them think of healthier ways to care for themselves.
- › Parents can teach each other techniques to relax and find peace. Encourage parents to call upon each other for help in becoming better parents.
- › Tell parents: Taking care of yourself is a major step toward being a better parent!



(10 mins)

7. Home Assignment

- › Have parents choose one way to take care of themselves during the coming week! Practice this method to increase positive thoughts and feelings.
- › Tell parents you will ask them about the nurturing time they spend with their children during the week. Write down their goals to review at the next session.



(10 mins)

8. Evaluation

Ask the following four questions:

- › What did you like best about the session?
- › What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?

- › How was this session helpful?
- › Have you any other comments or suggestions?



(10 mins)

9. End of Session Activity

Ask for a volunteer to move into the center of the circle and tell the others that they will have an opportunity to say something positive about this parent (only positive remarks are allowed; this is a praising exercise). Each parent in the group will offer a positive statement to the parent in the middle of the circle. *The facilitator will perform this exercise from now to the end of every session, focusing on a different parent each time. Every parent will have a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and receive praise.*

The facilitator should start this exercise by telling the parent in the middle something like, "I appreciated your contributions to our group tonight," describing in detail a specific contribution, and add, "You are a kind and positive member of our parenting group."

Give every parent in the group an opportunity to praise this parent.

Praise all participants and thank them for their participation.

Please give parents their handout(s) after they sign out at the end of the session.

- › Make sure each participant signs the attendance form. If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the attendance sheet. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. Remember, too, that if someone misses a session, remind him/her that he/she can catch up in the parents support groups; home visits will help, also.



10. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)

After the session, facilitators need to check off all completed activities on the fidelity checklist; if there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the fidelity forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Session 6

Harmony and Responsibility in My Home



All adults are responsible for creating a peaceful, structured home environment that enables children's healthy development; children need supportive guidance and routines.



Objectives

1. Participants will understand that positive parenting techniques such as setting rules and following through with consequences are important for all children in their care.
2. Participants will learn techniques for reinforcing good behavior and decreasing misbehavior.
3. Participants will learn how to establish discipline that recognizes the dignity of all household members



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for arrival and departure
Flip chart and markers, if available (If not, pen and paper)
Parenting Curriculum
Parents' hand-out for Session 6



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Please make sure to give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- › Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- › Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time. The facilitators must be on time.
- › Review Session 5, including the fidelity checklist
- › Review participants' evaluations and make any needed changes based on their feedback.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).

Note to Facilitators

This session may be difficult and uncomfortable for some parents; they might feel a sense of guilt because of the harsh discipline techniques they have used with their children, or they may harbor feelings of resentment against their own parents who may have treated them harshly as children. Be aware of this and **highlight the positive**, so parents realize they can learn new, nonviolent discipline techniques to use with their children, and that they do not need to blame their own parents because they often were doing the best they could. Research has taught us more effective, less harsh discipline strategies.



(5 mins)

1. Introduction

- **Welcome** parents and praise them for attending this sixth session.
- Tell parents that during this session, they will learn to set household rules, to encourage compliance with those rules, and to handle misbehavior.



(10 mins)

2. Guided Discussion

- Ask parents about their home assignment; praise them for trying, noting that trying is the important part of the process of becoming nurturing parents. Ask them if they used the four-step “Identifying and Honoring Your Child’s Feelings” technique to identify their own feelings.

Step 1 Identify the feeling.

Step 2 Determine the reason.

Step 3 Honor the feeling.

Step 4 Take action: help the child with his feelings.

- Ask parents if they discussed further ways to take care of themselves during their parent support groups?
- Ask parents their families and children. Have they noticed changes in themselves regarding the way they interact with their children? What positive, nurturing techniques are they using with their children?



Parent Activity: Encourage Playful Parent-child Interactions

Ask if any of the parents wants to sing a song or has prepared an exercise or game they want to share. Encourage participation, imagination and joy!

If no one offers a song or game, teach the following activity:

The Mama Halima Song

The facilitator says *Mama Halima*; parents repeat *Mama Halima*. The facilitator says *is stirring ugali*; they repeat *is stirring ugali*. The facilitator says *by her right hand*; they repeat *by her right hand*. (The facilitator and the participants pretend to stir with their right hand.)

Sing the rest of the song in the same way as above.

Mama Halima is stirring ugali with her left hand (have participants start stirring with their left hand in addition to their right hand).

Mama Halima is stirring ugali with her right leg (have participants start stirring with their right leg, in addition to their right and left hands).

Mama Halima is stirring ugali with her left leg (have participants start stirring with their left leg in addition to their right leg, right and left hands).

Mama Halima is stirring ugali with her head (have participants start stirring with their heads in addition as well).

Mama Halima is stirring ugali with her waist (same as above).

Thank participants and ask if their children would enjoy singing this song with them!



(10 mins)

3. Children Need Discipline, Guidance and Structure

- ▶ What do we mean by discipline? Ask parents to describe their notion of discipline.
- ▶ Children need to be guided by parents to learn how to become good community and family members. They need to know which values/principles will help them to thrive (respect, compassion, responsibility, kindness, self-esteem, generosity and affection)!
- ▶ Parents can help children learn to respect for adults and become productive members of the community. Parents can set household rules, use their attention strategically, and follow through with consequences for good (and bad) behaviors. Parents and children must have reasonable expectations of each other: parents should expect their children to follow their examples of good behavior, and children should expect parents to protect and guide them.



Parent Activity

- ▶ Open up a dialogue about expectations and make a list on the flip chart. Give parents a few minutes to create a list of desired behaviors.
- ▶ There are positive, effective discipline strategies that teach children prosocial behaviors, and there are negative, less effective violent discipline strategies that can teach children violent behaviors.
- ▶ Ask parents why discipline with dignity is important. Explain that violence is humiliating and *humiliation only creates frustration and resentment. If you humiliate your children and disrespect them, you are teaching them that is okay to humiliate people and disrespect them.*

For children to learn best, our words and our deeds must be the same: you say treat people with respect then you must respect people including children!

- › If parents respect children, understand their feelings and treat them with empathy, they will feel good about themselves. You are teaching them that everyone deserves to be treated with kindness, respect and dignity.



(10 mins)

4. Principles of Effective Discipline

- › **Infants do not need discipline!** You cannot spoil a baby if you pick them up when they are crying. Crying is an infant's way of communicating with us when they have a need.
- › **Discipline is most effective when parents spend quality, positive time with their children!** If children feel that the time they spend with parents is unpleasant (if parents are always yelling at them, complaining, making them work) they will not want to be with them and they will not respect them. Fathers and mothers must set limits for their children, but they should also enjoy their company and play with them. Parents who spend time creating a loving, positive relationship with their children foster respect, and their children will want to please them—and follow the rules they set!
- › **Treating all children the same way.** If parents favor some children (for example, their own) over others (step kids or orphans), they are teaching discrimination. The child will think it is okay to treat some people badly, particularly people who are different from them. Treating all children the same teaches fairness, justice, peaceful resolution of conflict, love and consistency. Parents will also get children to cooperate with them and with others.
- › Ask parents what they think about the statement, "*We often treat children differently.*" Allow time for parents to think about this before saying something like, "*Children need to be treated with respect and dignity consistently if they are going to learn to treat others the same way.*" Consistency gives children a sense of control and helps them to understand their environment. If a child is praised consistently for doing her homework, she will be more likely to continue to do her homework in the future! Children are also likely to follow household rules when those rules are clear and enforced consistently.
- › All children in a home need to be treated with the equal respect and dignity by the adults in the home—male or female, birth children or and foster children, all need to be treated equally. Parents who do this are modeling positive behavior for all the children in the family!



(10 mins)

5. Creating Household Rules

Parents should have reasonable expectations about children between 9 months and 3 years following household rules—these youngsters are just learning about limits! If parents want their 18-month-old child to clean up her mess, they will need to help her do it until she can understand for herself her responsibilities. Children this young should not be expected to remember and follow rules like older children. Children ages 3 to 5 need to be informed about household rules. If parents expect a certain behavior from their child, they must make sure the child knows the rules. Those rules need to be

age appropriate and communicated effectively. If the child follows the rules, praise him or her.

Later in the session, facilitators will address the idea of consequences for not following rules.



(20 mins)

Parent Activity

Ask parents to divide themselves into small groups of three or four, and have each group come up with two or three rules for their young child. Encourage parents to be clear and concise with their rules. Remind them that, with young children, the fewer rules the better! Young children can only remember and to respect a few rules.

Facilitators can provide examples of clear, polite, positive rules:

- › Everyone in the house must wash their hands before eating; whoever does not wash his hands will not be allowed to eat.
- › Everyone in the house will be treated equally and with respect; if anyone shows disrespect to another, she will not be allowed to participate in fun family activities.
- › Everyone is expected to do chores; if someone chooses not to complete his chores, he forfeits outdoor play time for the day.

Once the groups have established their rules, select two parents role-play a parent explaining rules and consequences to a child. Emphasize that parents need to explain the rules of the house to children in a polite, positive manner. Have the parent in role-play say something like, *“I am really proud of you and I want to continue to help you do well at home and with your friends, so I want to tell you about our household rules. There are three important rules in our house and the rules apply to everyone! The first rule is: everyone is treated with respect in our house. The second is: everyone will do his own chores. The third is: everyone will wash her own hands before eating.”*

- › When rules are set up and agreed upon, parents do not need to threaten their children with punishment, because children will understand the consequences of breaking the rules. For example, parents may establish a rule that children will go to bed at 8 p.m. If they do not follow this rule, they will not be allowed to play outside the next day. *Make sure to follow through with the consequence. Children must realize that they will be held responsible for not following the rules.*
- › **Earning Privileges:** If children comply with the rules, give them a reward, like spending more playful time with you! Parents need not reward them every time, but occasional rewards go a long way in reinforcing their good behavior!



(30 mins)

6. Alternatives to Harsh Discipline: Encouraging Good Behavior

So far the group has discussed a few ways to encourage good behavior and handle misbehavior: setting household rules, and earning or denying privileges. It is now time to revisit some of the other strategies addressed in earlier sessions.

The Golden Rule of Psychology: Parents reinforce children's behavior with positive reinforcement (“I love you when you clean up after yourself”) or negative reinforcement (“I am going to hit you with a stick if you keep whining”).

Children crave attention, whether it be positive or negative. (Facilitators can briefly remind parents about Session 3.) If parents pay attention when children whine, argue and yell, they send a message that these negative behaviors get their attention. When parents hit children because they did something wrong, they can reinforce that wrong behavior. Conversely, if parents encourage a child for good behavior, they reinforce such behavior. Remember praising and ignoring? Praise is one of the most powerful tools available to shape a child's behavior. When your child behaves well, tell him why it is good, and he will want to do more of it!

- ▶ **Praising:** Praise helps to build self-confidence, empathy, optimism, and strong relationships with parents. Praise helps children develop healthy brains. Praise and love are the keys to intelligence and development.
- ▶ **Ignoring:** Children will behave accordingly when they realize they will not receive attention for misbehaving. Remember how to ignore?
- ▶ **Distraction and Redirection (especially for young children):** When a child is exhibiting undesirable behavior, parents can turn their attention to other things. For example, when a child cries after a parent takes from her a toy that belongs to her brother, the parent might start talking about an animal on the farm or say to the child, "Mary, have you seen the food grandma is cooking?"

Facilitator Note

The following exercise serves as a review of Session 3; explain to the group that behavior change takes practice!

CAVEAT: Some behaviors cannot be ignored. When the child is hurting someone else or herself, parents should use others techniques, such as time out, lose a privilege, etc. The group will learn about using time out in the next session.



Parent Activity: Practice "Praising or ignoring my child"

Ask two parents to role-play a parent with a son or daughter about 5 years old. Ask the parents what behaviors they like or dislike of their own children (quiet play, screaming and yelling...and so on).

- ▶ Ask the volunteers to act out different situations so they can practice praise and ignore techniques (2 minutes for each practice; have the parents switch roles and techniques).
- ▶ Ask the rest of participants to observe and comment, *positively*.
- ▶ Explain to parents that there is never enough praise when the child tries to do something well. Praise encourages more positive behavior and makes your child feel good about herself!
- ▶ Repeat the practice with different parents (up to 15 minutes). Emphasize that praise and ignore is not only an exercise they need to practice at home, it is the most effective way to help children learn behaviors that will help them socially and in life.



7. Home Assignment

(5 mins)

Have the group decide on two or three household rules (and consequences for not following those rules). The group should practice these rules and consequences with their children at home. Remember: If children are under the age 3 will need lots of support, guidance and reminders about rules. They are just learning! Also, tell

parents they should be prepared to review how their home practice and support group meetings went at the beginning of the next session.



8. Evaluation

(10 mins)

Ask the following four questions:

- › What did you like best about the session?
- › What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?
- › How was this session helpful?
- › Have you any other comments or suggestions?



9. End of Session Activity

(10 mins)

Ask for a volunteer to move into the center of the circle and tell the others that they will have an opportunity to say something positive about this parent (only positive remarks are allowed; this is a praising exercise). Each parent in the group will offer a positive statement to the parent in the middle of the circle. *The facilitator will perform this exercise from now to the end of every session, focusing on a different parent each time. Every parent will have a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and receive praise.*

The facilitator should start this exercise by telling the parent in the middle something like, “*I appreciated your contributions to our group tonight,*” describing in detail a specific contribution, then adding, “*You are a kind and positive member of our parenting group.*”

Give every parent in the group an opportunity to praise this parent.

Praise all participants and thank them for their participation.

Please give parents their handout(s) after they sign out at the end of the session.

- › Make sure each participant signs the attendance form. If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the attendance sheet. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. Remember, too, that if someone misses a session, remind him/her that he/she can catch up in the parents support groups; home visits will help, also.



10. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)

After the session, facilitators need to check off all completed activities on the fidelity checklist; if there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the fidelity forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Session 7

My Home Will Be a Safe Place for My Children and Everyone Will be Treated with Dignity



All children in the home (biological and non biological) deserve to live in a safe, supportive environment. Parents will learn strategies to help all household members handle anger and frustration peacefully.



Objectives

1. Parents will understand how violence between adults in the home affects children's development and behavior.
2. Parents will understand how harsh corporal punishment affects young children as they develop
3. Parents will learn how to teach young children to calm down.



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for arrival and departure
Flip chart and markers, if available (If not, pen and paper)
Parenting Curriculum
Parents' handout for Session 7



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Please make sure to give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- › Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- › Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time. The facilitators must be on time.
- › Review Session 6, including the fidelity checklist
- › Review participants' evaluations and make any needed changes based on their feedback.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



(5 mins)

1. Introduction

- ▶ **Welcome** parents and praise them for being there. Let them know how happy you are to see them!
- ▶ Give a brief overview of today's session: how violence in the home affects children and alternatives to corporal punishment and verbal violence.



(10 mins)

2. Guided Discussion

- ▶ Ask about the home assignment and praise them for trying.
- ▶ Ask if their children followed the household rules, and if they praised their children or resorted to a consequence? Praise parents for any efforts they made.
- ▶ Ask parents about their use of the handouts in their parent support group meeting. Did they review the handouts and practice the skills? How did it go?
- ▶ Encourage parents to keep practicing the skills in their support groups and to continue to support each other in their learning!



(10 mins)

Parent Activity: Playful Parent-Child Interactions

- ▶ Ask if any of the parents wants to sing a song or has prepared an exercise or game they want to share. Encourage participation, imagination and joy!
- ▶ Another option is to teach the following game:

"I see with my little eye..."

"I Spy" or "I See" is a fun word game. One person says, "I spy with my little eye, something..." and here he gives a hint. Others try to guess what that something is by asking questions.

Provide an example, using something everyone can see:

I spy with my little eye, something that is straight.

Is it part of the building? No

Is it small? Yes

Is it bigger than a book? No

Is it brown? No

Is it blue? No

Is it expensive? No

Is it your phone? No

Is it sharp? Yes

Is it a knife?

No

Is it a pencil?

Yes! Congratulations!



(5 mins)

3. The Effects of Violence: Toxic Stress

- ▶ When children experience harsh physical discipline or are exposed to violence, when they are neglected or mocked, when their parents drink too much alcohol, they can suffer **toxic stress**.
- ▶ Toxic stress can disrupt the development of a child's brain, increase the risk of illness, and interfere with children's ability to think and solve problems, well into their adult years.
- ▶ Children learn that violence is an acceptable way of reacting when angry. Children will be more likely to use violence when they are angry.



(20 mins)

Parent Activity: "Body mapping: when I was a child"

- ▶ Have parents pair off for the next activity (*If they have access to pens and paper, ask parents to draw an outline of their bodies.*)
- ▶ Have them close their eyes and picture themselves as children. Ask them to think about the oldest memories of themselves as children (ages 3 to 5). Ask them to remember feelings of joy, pain, worry. Allow time for them to recall their memories and feelings.
- ▶ Then have parents share one painful memory and one happy memory with their partners. (*If participants have pens and paper, have them mark on their body maps where they experience the feelings and memories. They can indicate positive feelings with a circle and negative ones with an x.*)
- ▶ Ask for two or three volunteers to share one of their memories with the group. Ask these volunteers if adults understood their feelings? That is, did the adults, especially their parents, acknowledge their feelings?

Analyze the activity. Just as when they themselves were children and wanted their parents to understand their feelings, so too their children need them to be empathetic and respond to them in kind, loving ways. When children experience strong feelings (positive and negative), the memories of those feelings help determine the kind of person they become as adults. .



(5 mins)

4. Parents Need for Personal Time (Tanzania proverb: Haraka haina baraka: rushed actions have no blessings!)

It is important for parents to take care of themselves in order to respond to their children's needs in a calm, nurturing way. Tell the group,

"You are not the only parents in the world who get angry at your kids. We all do. But we learn to stay in control, not only to spare our children the anguish of having an angry parent who yells at them, but also because screaming and hitting your child only teach them to do the same when they are upset. When parents control their tempers, they are modeling appropriate skills for their children."

Facilitators should remind parents about the relaxation skills they learned in Session 5.

- Remind parents about their breathing exercises and the power of positive thinking.
- Ask parents if they have been using these strategies and praise them for their efforts!



(10 mins)

Parent Activity: Taking Personal time to Calm Down

- Ask them to think about their physical reactions to anger. Examples are clenched fists, tight jaws, tense muscles.
- Have parents practice deep breathing and positive thinking in groups of two: one parent playing the parent and another a misbehaving child. The parent should walk away, take deep breaths, and respond calming to the child with a consequence—assigning an extra chore for his misbehavior.



(15 mins)

5. Using Time Out to Help Children Calm Down

- Time out is a positive discipline technique, an alternative to corporal punishment. It is related to the concept of *ignoring*: when a child exhibits negative behavior, parents should place her in a “time-out space,” a separate area with no contact or communication with adults or other children. Parents should keep the child in time out until she has calmed down. Remember that young children love attention, and in a time out parents remove all attention. Time outs are best used when children behave aggressively.
- **TIME OUT WILL ONLY WORK IF TIME IN IS QUALITY TIME.** Parents and children need to enjoy quality time together if they are to develop loving and nurturing relationships.

Time outs work best when parents observe the following guidelines:

- Time out will not work for children younger than age 3, because younger children need their parents to help them calm down. It is best to use distraction and redirection for children under 3.
- Time out works best for children between the ages 3 to 10.
- Be sure to explain clearly the reason for a time out: **“You hit your brother and that is not acceptable, so you have to go to time out.”**
- Make sure you have an appropriate area to use for time outs—a place that is quiet and away from other people engaging in fun activities.
- Everyone in the home needs to understand and respect the rules of time out; no one should talk to or interact with the child until time out is over and the child has calmed down.
- Establish (if possible) the duration of a time out. It usually takes three minutes for a child to calm down. A child is ready to come out of time out when he or she:

No longer yells and screams.

Sits quietly.

Breathes slowly and peacefully.

- › It is critical that parents reengage the child soon after he or she has calmed down. Parents should give positive attention to any positive behavior they observe after time out ends.
- › Time out works best for aggressive behavior. Parents have learned other strategies for other misbehaviors.
- › Remember: **First explain time out to your child and then practice it.** Tell children, “From now on, when you hit or hurt another person you will need to take a time out to calm down.”
 - Once you tell the child that he or she is going to time out, they must go, no matter what they do or say. They may say, “*I promise to be good now,*” or “*But I love you!*” Ignore such statements and lead the child to the time out place peacefully (or with minimum force, such as calmly taking the child by the arm).
 - After time out, praise and redirect the child to an appropriate behavior.



Parent Activity

(15 mins)

Have parents practice time out. Facilitators should coach two parents in front of the group. Then parents can practice in groups of two where one adult is the “parent” the other the “child.”

- › Have the “parent” initiate a time out for the child.
- › Instruct the “child” to try to avoid the time out: he might whine, protest, sulk, blame others, promise to be good, complain of illness—anything to avoid the punishment.
- › Have the “parent” gently but firmly lead the “child” to the time out place.
- › Encourage other participants positively comment after the role-play. Ask how the “parent” felt and then how the “child” felt”.
- › Ask parents to think about a good time out space they can use in their homes.
- › Now have everyone in the group pair off to practice time out.



6. Home Assignment

(5 mins)

- › Instruct parents to sit with their children at home and explain the concept of time out. Parents should practice a pretend time out with their children so they understand the concept and to the goal of the strategy: to help them calm down..
- › Remind parents to take personal time when they find themselves growing angry. The most effective way to respond when a child behaves aggressively is to stay calm! Parents model behavior that children will imitate; children learn from watching their parents!



7. Evaluation

(10 mins)

Ask the following four questions:

- › What did you like best about the session?
- › What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?

- › How was this session helpful?
- › Have you any other comments or suggestions?



(10 mins)

8. End of Session Activity

Ask for a volunteer to move into the center of the circle and tell the others that they will have an opportunity to say something positive about this parent (only positive remarks are allowed; this is a praising exercise). Each parent in the group will offer a positive statement to the parent in the middle of the circle. *The facilitator will perform this exercise from now to the end of every session, focusing on a different parent each time. Every parent will have a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and receive praise.*

The facilitator should start this exercise by telling the parent in the middle something like, “I appreciated your contributions to our group tonight,” describing in detail a specific contribution, then adding, “You are a kind and positive member of our parenting group.”

Give every parent in the group an opportunity to praise this parent.

Praise all participants and thank them for their participation.

Please give parents their handout(s) after they sign out at the end of the session.

- › Make sure each participant signs the attendance form. If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the attendance sheet. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. Remember, too, that if someone misses a session, remind him/her that he/she can catch up in the parents support groups; home visits will help, also.



9. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)

After the session, facilitators need to check off all completed activities on the fidelity checklist; if there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the fidelity forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Session 8

Talking and Playing with My Child from Birth Will Prepare Her to Do Well in Life!



Parents play a major role in their children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development, helping their children learn language, problem solving, and school readiness skills with love and attention.



Objectives

1. Participants will be able to use a variety of techniques to help their children learn school readiness and community life skills.
2. Parents will be aware of their capacity and role in preparing their young children for school and life.
3. Parents will learn age-appropriate expectations of young children.



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for arrival and departure
Flip chart and markers, if available (If not, pen and paper)
Parenting Curriculum
Parents' handout for Session 8
Fidelity checklist



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Please make sure to give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- › Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- › Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time. The facilitators must be on time.
- › Review Session 7, including the fidelity checklist
- › Review participants' evaluations and make any needed changes based on their feedback.

Facilitator Note

Prepare one or two traditional children's stories. Look for positive and nurturing stories that teach good values.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



(5 mins)

1. Introduction and Welcome

- › Welcome parents and praise them for attending Session 8. Acknowledge that parenting is a difficult but essential job.
- › Ask participants about their families and children. Have there been any changes since Session 7? Have they noticed changes in the way they interact with their children?



(10 mins)

2. Guided Discussion

- › Praise parents for practicing their new skills.
- › Ask participants which parental skills they practiced? Did they praise their children? Did they ignore negative behaviors? Did they use positive discipline instead of yelling, criticizing or hitting? Did they use time out? Did both parents practicing the same techniques and supporting each other?
- › Remind parents that it will take time to make discipline with dignity a habit.
 - Take a moment to remind participants about the group rules discussed way back in Session 1, emphasizing the importance of punctuality and attendance (certificates will be given at the end of the program only if participants have attended all 10 sessions), and respect and confidentiality.



(10 mins)

Parent Activity

Ask if any of the parents prepared a fun activity or song to share with the group? If she did, use that one. Otherwise teach this game involving words and memory, drawing and body language:

- › Ask for a volunteer from the group. Show him or her an object or whisper the name of an object (an airplane, a tree, a truck) or an animal.
- › Have the volunteer pantomime (act out) the object or animal.
- › Tell the group they must guess what the volunteer is acting out.
- › Repeat with other volunteers.
- › Now parents how they felt engaging in this activity. Do they think it would be a fun game to play with their children?



(10 mins)

3. Children Learn Best when Parents Encourage Playful interaction

Explain:

- › Young children (ages 3-5) generally like to help parents with household chores. Ask parents to name chores they can help with. *Children under age 5 must have adult supervision or be helped by an older sibling.*

- › Parents model cooperation, teamwork and respect when they contribute to household chores equally. Children learn that it is important for all members to contribute to the family welfare.
- › When parents encourage their children to help with household chores, they increase positive interactions with their children and foster their cognitive development. But remember, children learn best when they are having fun, so turn chores into play!

 **4. Use Conversation and Word Play to Foster Literacy and School Readiness**
(10 mins)

 **Parent Activity: Memories of Story Telling**

Divide participants into pairs. Ask if anyone remembers stories from his or her childhood. Who told the stories and what were the stories about? Give participants 5 minutes to share their memories with their partner. When you bring the group back together, ask if anyone wants to share a story. Allow time for two or three stories. Ask participants what they gained by listening to these stories. *(Possible answers might include: bonding with the storyteller; learning different cultural traditions; learning words and storytelling skills.)*

Research offers a few important lessons about storytelling:

- › There is a **relationship between listening comprehension (understanding) and reading comprehension**. Children who have more conversations exhibit greater understanding, read better and generally perform better in school. Children who learn language skills early do best in primary school.
- › Playing word games with children **builds their vocabulary** and this helps them learn to read and write.
- › The better a child has mastered his native language spoken at home, the more easily the child **will learn a new language in school**. This requires a lot of language use—both listening and speaking.
- › Ask if participants have any questions?

 **Storytelling**
(20 mins)

Ask parents to cite a story familiar to them and their children. What are some well-known traditional stories?

Facilitators can explain that good storytelling is more of a dialogue: When a parent tells a story, he should ask the child **questions about the story**, such as: Who is the story about? Where is the story taking place? What is your favorite part of the story? Parents can ask the child to **predict what will happen as the story unfolds**. A parent might pause at certain points of the story and ask the child, “What do you think the character of the story will do now?”

Note to facilitators: Children under age 3 are not ready for this kind of dialogue, but benefit greatly by listening to parents tell stories. This is how parents develop language skills in infants.



Parent Activity: Practice the storytelling technique

Ask for two volunteers to role-play a parent and child. This practice should last no more than three minutes.

Note to facilitators: Encourage the volunteers who role-play to use parenting skills they have learned during previous sessions. For example, the volunteer playing the parent should use good communication skills and praise the “child” for listening closely and for being a good “audience.”



(15 mins)

5. Narrating Activities and Summarizing the Day

- ▶ Another way to build children’s **vocabulary and verbal skills** as well as their **attention span and memory** is to talk every day activities. When parents cook dinner, they can talk with their children as they prepare the meal. A parent can say, “I’m filling the pot with water. What am I doing?” The child can repeat, “Filling the pot with water.” The parent can ask, “What am I going to do with the water in the pot? What will I put in the pot now? I’m going to put rice in the pot.” The child can repeat, “Put rice in the pot.” Repetition is good for young children. You can also summarize the activity. “How did we cook dinner?” Help the child recount, “First, we put water in the pot. Then we put the rice in the pot. We put the pot on the fire. We peeled onions and cut them up.” Help the child by prompting him if he misses a step or mixes up the order. “I think we did something before that,” or “Putting the pot on the fire comes later. What comes first?”
- ▶ Narrating and recounting activities is a good habit to get into whenever your child is with you and you are doing something. Ask the group to name some activities that would lend themselves to “storytelling.” Possible answers might be: going to the market; working in the garden, attending religious ceremonies or family celebrations, etc.
- ▶ In the evening, after dinner, ask children to go through the day. The child might say, “First I had breakfast. Then I played with Issa.” Parent: “What did you play with Issa?” Child: “We played football.” Parent: “And then what?” Child: “I went with you to the field” Parent: “Did we go straight to the field?” Child: “Yes.” Parent: “I think we stopped to see someone first. Do you remember who that was?” Child: “Oh yes, we saw Auntie Patricia. She gave me a mango. And then we went to the field.” Parent: “Yes, that’s right. Well done! You are so smart. I am impressed with your memory and how well you describe things. And what did we do in the field?” And so on...

Note to facilitators

Point out that feedback to the child has to be positive and gentle, especially if parent needs to give hints!



Parent Activity: Narrating and Summarizing the Day

- ▶ Ask for two parents to practice the narrating activities skill. One participant will be the parent and one a four-year-old child.
- ▶ Have parent and child talk about making and eating dinner.
- ▶ Make sure the parent gives the child positive feedback and gentle hints and praise during the practice. Invite other parents in the group to give some helpful, positive suggestions is the “parent” has a difficult time responding to the “child.”
- ▶ Praise the parents and encourage them to use the techniques at home.



(10 mins)

6. Word Games

The “animal game” is a fun vocabulary game you can play with your child anytime. Games help children from getting bored and misbehaving!

Parents can play this with more than one child at a time. Tell the child or children, “I’m thinking of an animal, and you are going to ask me questions about it until you can guess what animal I am thinking of. But I can only answer yes or no!”.

Conduct a demonstration. The facilitator can say, “*I am thinking of an animal. Ask me any yes/no questions so that you can figure out which animal I am thinking of.*” The group responds with questions:

<i>Is it bigger than a dog?</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Does it have four legs?</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Does it make a lot of noise?</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Is it dangerous?</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Can you eat it?</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Is it a cow?</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Does it give milk?</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Is it a goat?</i>	<i>Yes! Congratulations!</i>

Point out that children learn a lot of vocabulary when they play words games. In the above game, they hear or used the words *bigger, dog, leg, noise, dangerous, eat, cow, milk*. The thinking that your children do asking and answering questions is good practice for school.



Parent Activity: Playing the Animal Game

Have participants form groups of three and practice the animal game. One person will think of an animal and the other two ask questions to try to guess it. *Bring up for discussion any issues you notice as they practice, particularly regarding positive feedback.*



(5 mins)

7. Preparing Children for School

- Ask parents how they might prepare their children for school. Open a discussion and make a list on a flip chart. If needed contribute the following:
 - Sing songs: babies especially love when we sing songs to them!
 - Spend more time talking to and playing with children (counting, piling objects, remember words and letters, drawing and coloring).
 - Encourage children to participate in family matters.
 - Maintain a peaceful, loving atmosphere at home.
 - Encourage positive playing with children including, etc.
 - Practice “serve and return.”
- Praise the parents and thank them for their ideas.



8. Home Assignment

(5 mins)

- Ask parents to think what activities they will try out with their children: storytelling, narrating, summarizing or the animal game.
- Tell parents you are looking forward to hearing how their games go at the next meeting.



9. Evaluation

(10 mins)

Ask the following four questions:

- What did you like best about the session?
- What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?



10. End of Session Activity

(10 mins)

Ask for a volunteer to move into the center of the circle and tell the others that they will have an opportunity to say something positive about this parent (only positive remarks are allowed; this is a praising exercise). Each parent in the group will offer a positive statement to the parent in the middle of the circle. *The facilitator will perform this exercise from now to the end of every session, focusing on a different parent each time. Every parent will have a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and receive praise.*

The facilitator should start this exercise by telling the parent in the middle something like, "I appreciated your contributions to our group tonight," describing in detail a specific contribution, and add, "You are a kind and positive member of our parenting group."

Give every parent in the group an opportunity to praise this parent.

Praise all participants and thank them for their participation.

Please give parents their handout(s) after they sign out at the end of the session.

- Make sure each participant signs the attendance form. If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the attendance sheet. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. Remember, too, that if someone misses a session, remind him/her that he/she can catch up in the parents support groups; home visits will help, also.



11. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)

After the session, facilitators need to check off all completed activities on the fidelity checklist; if there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the fidelity forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Session 9

Clean, Fed and Nurtured Children are Happy and Healthy Children



Parents can have lasting positive effects on children's health when they are involved in their children's hygiene and nutrition through simple routines and guidance.



Objectives

1. Participants will learn how illness is caused by bacteria found in human and animal feces that children touch with their hands, which they then put into in their mouths.
2. Participants will learn hygiene and other techniques in order to reduce the rate of illness in children from fecal bacteria.
3. Participants will know where to go for help with vaccines, malaria and other illnesses.



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for arrival and departure
Flip chart and markers, if available (If not, pen and paper)
Pitcher of clean water, bucket, soap
Parenting Curriculum and fidelity checklist
Session 9 handout(s)



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Please make sure to give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- › Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- › Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time. The facilitators must be on time.
- › Review Session 8, including the fidelity checklist
- › Review participants' evaluations and make any needed changes based on their feedback.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



(10 mins)

1. Introduction

Welcome parents and thank them for coming! Remind them that the next session will be the last in the Families Make the Difference program. Let them know that they can expect some preparation for Session 10 later on during this meeting.



Parent Activity

Ask parents if they have a song they would like to sing today. If someone has a suggestion, sing that song. If no one has a suggestion, play one of the games from Session 8.



(10 mins)

2. Guided Discussion

- ▶ Ask parents which activity they practiced with their children: storytelling, narrating, summarizing or the animal game.
- ▶ Ask parents how their children responded to the home activities how they as parents felt playing these games. Did they have fun?



(30 mins)

3. Parents as the First Line of Defense Against Childhood Diseases

- ▶ When we allow children to play on their own, they play in the dirt and put their hands in their mouths. It is developmentally appropriate for young children to put their hands in their mouth—we cannot stop child from doing this. It is one way they explore and experience the world around them!
- ▶ Unfortunately, dirt is often mixed with animal feces and is full of harmful bacteria called *E. coli*.
- ▶ This bacteria causes **invisible** damage to children's intestines, making it harder for them to absorb the nutrients in their food, and making it easier for the bacteria to cross through the thin lining of the intestines and into the blood stream. This causes a chronic infection.

Guided Parent Discussion

- ▶ Ask participants to think a minute about weeding their crops. What happens when they do not weed crop? Fecal bacteria can have the same effect on children.
- ▶ Many children have an invisible infection. They may not feel sick, they may act happy, but they are absorbing fewer nutrients from the food they eat, and the bacteria in their bloodstream can decrease their immunity to other infections. This is why children are more prone to come down with other diseases like diarrhea, cough and fever.

- › Over time, children with intestinal bacteria will suffer in visible ways: their bodies and brains won't develop because they are not getting the nutrients they need to grow properly. This is called stunting.
- › Stunted children perform less well in school, they are often less vigorous as adults, and they are more likely to have babies born stunted.
- › Talk about the ways that children come into contact with *E. coli*. Ask parents to think about how children come into contact with *e coli*. Let parents generate some ideas first but add the following if necessary:
 - Human feces
 - Animal feces (chickens, goats, cows)
 - Raw meat
 - Unwashed vegetables and fruit
- › Human and animal feces are found:
 - Near latrines and toilets
 - On surfaces that have contact with raw meat
 - Anywhere where animals are eat or live
 - On unwashed hands (especially after defecation)

What Parents Can Do:

- › Keep children separate from the animals. Make a fence or construct a pen for animals.
- › Wash children's hands often with soap or ash before they eat. Wash their hands after they defecate. Wash your hands before you feed them.
- › Dispose of all feces (human and animal) properly in a separate place far away from children. Dispose of used nappies in a toilet or bury them.
- › Make sure to have a supply of clean water for washing. Drink only boiled and filtered water.



Parent Activity: Keeping Children from *E. Coli*

- › Ask parents to think about ways they can create a safe space for their children to play. Do they have a separate place for everyone to defecate that is far away from where children play? Do they keep chickens and other animals in pens?
- › Next ask parents to think about how they will ensure their children will wash their hands frequently with soap and water. Might they enlist the help of older children? What might their new hand washing routine look like? Ask them whether they can construct a separate hand-washing place at home. What materials would they need to do so?


(15 mins)

4. Hand-Washing Demonstration and Practice

Demonstrate for the group proper hand-washing technique. Use running water if available, or else bring a bucket with clean water and a pitcher and a piece of soap. Follow the steps below in the picture.



Let your hands air dry.

Now have parents pair up and take turns washing their hands with soap and water (as long as clean water lasts).

Note to facilitators: If you have access to the internet, the this video on You Tube is useful: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_RwRoIwe6Q


(15 mins)

5. Health and Nutrition Resources

There are people and facilities that can help families with health-related concerns and questions.

Note to Facilitators:

Be familiar with local health resources and discuss them here with parents.



(20 mins)

6. Home Assignment (for the Final Session)

- › Ask parents to create a hand-washing routine with their children. Encourage them to talk about hand-washing and play spaces in the parent support groups. Tell parents not to neglect other parental skills and tools learned in prior sessions.
 - › Preparation for the last session: Ask parents how they would like to pledge a positive commitment to positive parenting in the last session. Tell them you will be inviting their children, family and friends, as well as village leaders, to the last session to celebrate their completion of the 10-week program.
 - If parents are not sure what how to make a commitment to positive parenting, tell them they can make a group pledge to continue to practice positive parenting and to share what they have learned with other community members.
- Suggest they sing a song that honors positive parenting**, or make brief individual pledges. Make sure they decide what they are going to do before the end of today's session today.



(10 mins)

7. Evaluation

Ask the following four questions:

- › What did you like best about the session?
- › What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?
- › How was this session helpful?
- › Have you any other comments or suggestions?



(10 mins)

8. End of Session Activity

Ask for a volunteer to move into the center of the circle and tell the others that they will have an opportunity to say something positive about this parent (only positive remarks are allowed; this is a praising exercise). Each parent in the group will offer a positive statement to the parent in the middle of the circle. *The facilitator will perform this exercise from now to the end of every session, focusing on a different parent each time. Every parent will have a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and receive praise.*

The facilitator should start this exercise by telling the parent in the middle something like, "I appreciated your contributions to our group tonight," describing in detail a specific contribution, and add, "You are a kind and positive member of our parenting group."

Give every parent in the group an opportunity to praise this parent.

Praise all participants and thank them for their participation.

Please give parents their handout(s) after they sign out at the end of the session.

- › Make sure each participant signs the attendance form. If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the attendance sheet. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. Remember, too, that if someone misses a session, remind him/her that he/she can catch up in the parents support groups; home visits will help, also.



9. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)

After the session, facilitators need to check off all completed activities on the fidelity checklist; if there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the fidelity forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Session 10

Review and Celebration: A Commitment to Positive Parenting



Objectives

1. Participants of the program will present the curriculum and what they have learned in front of their families, village leaders, other community members.
2. Participants of the program will receive certificates of participation and make a commitment to positive parenting.



Materials

Separate attendance sheets for all participants, parents as well as invited guests

Flip chart and markers, if available (If not, pen and paper)

Certificates of completion

Parenting Curriculum

Refreshments for participants (if possible)



Before the session: Be Prepared!

- › Read through all of the materials for this session and make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Please make sure to give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- › Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- › Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time. The facilitators must be on time.
- › Review Session 9, including the fidelity checklist
- › Review participants' evaluations and make any needed changes based on their feedback.

Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Each participant **must** sign the attendance sheet with his/her name, age and sex. Both parents are encouraged to attend all 10 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).

Note to facilitators: This is a different session and many more people from the community will attend. This is the only session that will not need an exit attendance sheet.



(20 mins)

1. Introduction

- ▶ **Welcome** everyone and praise everyone for attending this celebration. Smile and be positive: parents have completed the Families Make the Difference program!
- ▶ Both facilitators should introduce themselves as there will be new people attending this session.
- ▶ To bring everyone into the spirit of positive, nurturing parenting, ask the group to sing the song the decided upon in the previous session).
- ▶ Ask the participants to introduce themselves and their children.
- ▶ Then ask for guests to introduce themselves.



(30 mins)

2. Presentation of the Curriculum

The facilitators can introduce the program to the guests, following the guide below:

- ▶ This Families Make the Difference program was developed for families with children age 0-5 in the Kasulu region. The evidence-based program was intended to increase parents' knowledge about child development, and about parents can influence their children's development in positive ways.
- ▶ Families Make the Difference is based on previous IRC experiences in Liberia, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and Thailand.
- ▶ The program curriculum consists of 10 parent group sessions with at least one home visit for each family.
- ▶ Each session lasts approximately two hours.
- ▶ As part of the program, parents create support groups to help each other practice new parenting skills.

Facilitators can now introduce each of the sessions and invite the parents to explain what was discussed and learned during those sessions.

Session 1: Welcome To Our Families Make the Difference Program

An introduction to the Families Make the Difference program and the concept of nurturing children from birth to promote healthy brain development.

Session 2: Loving, Playful Interactions Promote Healthy Growth and Development

Parents influence and shape their children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

Note for Facilitators

Read the title and description of each session and then have parents explain some of the skills and information they learned. Have one parent speak briefly on every session (briefly). This will not only be a presentation to community and family members, but a good review for participants in the program.

Session 3: I Can Help My Child Learn Positive, Prosocial Behavior

When I provide good supervision and spend quality time with my child I increase positive behavior.

Session 4: Empathy and Mutual Respect Between People of All Ages, Religions, Cultures, Races, and Genders Promotes Peaceful Homes and Happy, Healthy Children

Warm and empathic communication with children increases understanding and decreases frustration between children and their caregivers, improves relationships, and reinforces attachments needed for healthy development.

Session 5: I Need to Take Good Care of Myself So I Can Take Good Care of My Children

Parents who respect each other and themselves contribute to an environment that supports children's healthy development: social and emotional well-being is a necessary ingredient for healthy parenting practices.

Session 6: Harmony and Responsibility in My Home

All adults are responsible for creating a peaceful, structured home environment that enables children's healthy development; children need supportive guidance and routines.

Session 7: My Home Will Be a Safe Place for My Children and Everyone Will Be treated with Dignity

All children in the home (biological and non biological) deserve to live in a safe, supportive environment. Parents will learn strategies to help all household members handle anger and frustration peacefully.

Session 8: Talking and Playing with My Child from Birth Will Prepare Her to Do Well in Life!

Parents play a major role in their children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development, helping their children learn language, problem solving, and school readiness skills with love and attention.

Session 9: Clean, Fed and Nurtured Children are Happy and Healthy Children

Parents can have lasting positive effects on children's health when they are involved in their children's hygiene and nutrition through simple routines and guidance.



(15 mins)

3. Ask each parent to share what he or she enjoyed most about the Families Make the Difference program

Ask each parent to share his or her favorite positive parenting strategy. (Parents had been primed to speak briefly in Session 9.)



(20 mins)

4. Praise for Parents and Feedback from Guests

Thank guests for attending the final session. Ask them to share words of encouragement and support. Ask if they have noticed positive changes parents have made. You can also ask guests to talk about how they will continue to support nurturing parents.

-  **5. Encouragement for Continuation of Parent Support Groups**
(10 mins)
- Emphasize to parents and guest parents must support each other in their positive parenting efforts to raising happy, healthy children.
 - Urge parents to continue to gather in their parent support groups to help and encourage each other.

-  **6. Presentation of Certificates and Public Commitment to Positive Parenting**
(15 mins)
- Invite parents to present their commitments to positive parenting in front of the guests. They will have chosen a song, story or a group pledge.
 - Invite the ward executive officer or another official village representative to help you hand out the parent certificates.
 - After the certificates have handed out, invite the officer or representative to say some words of encouragement and congratulations.

-  **7. Home Assignment**
(5 mins)
- Remind parents that they now have the responsibility to continue practicing positive parenting with their children, and that you are hopeful they will share their knowledge with their community and fellow parents!

-  **8. Post-Session Report (Fidelity Monitoring)**
- The co-facilitators should check off all activities on the fidelity checklist. If any items were not completed, please explain why. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.

Group Leader Fidelity Checklist

Facilitators must fill out a separate fidelity checklist after every Healing Families session.

Group Leader 1: _____ Group Leader 2: _____

Name of Community: _____ Date: _____

Session Number: _____

PROGRAM FIDELITY AND METHODOLOGY		Group Leader 1	Group Leader 2
Please circle yes or no for each session step/activity.			
1	Did you review the homework activity with the participants? (That is, did you ask participants if they did their homework, ask participants to share their experience?)	Yes	No
2	Did you follow the activities/exercises as described in the manual?	Yes	No
	Completed session step 1	Yes	No
	Completed session step 2	Yes	No
	Completed session step 3	Yes	No
	Completed session step 4	Yes	No
	Completed session step 5	Yes	No
	Completed session step 6	Yes	No
	Completed session step 7	Yes	No
	Completed session step 8	Yes	No
	Completed session step 9	Yes	No
	Completed session step 10	Yes	No
Completed session step 11	Yes	No	
3	Did you clearly and accurately explain the information as described in the manual, using language that is appropriate and easy for participants to understand?	Yes	No
4	Were you warm, friendly, nonjudgmental and respectful to participants (e.g., smiled, addressed participants politely)?	Yes	No
5	Did you make the participants feel comfortable enough to ask questions and share their ideas (e.g., asked participants to share their views and experiences or if they had questions that were not addressed)?	Yes	No
6	Did you demonstrate active listening when participants were speaking (e.g., make eye contact with participants when speaking)?	Yes	No
7	Did you check to make sure participants understood and followed the session (e.g., by asking open-ended questions)?	Yes	No

8	Did you provide supportive feedback to participants (e.g., praise participants for doing their homework or thank them for sharing their experience)?	Yes	No
9	Did you use stories, personal examples, proverbs or sayings to explain ideas during the session?	Yes	No
10	Did you play games, sing songs, or conduct other energizer and icebreaker activities during the session?	Yes	No
11	Did you complete the skills practices as they were outlined in the manual?	Yes	No
12	Did you give and explain homework activities to the participants at the end of the session?	Yes	No
13	Were you prepared for the session (e.g., prepared flip charts, reviewed the topics and activities, read through the session in your manual)?	Yes	No
14	Did you support each other and equally divide facilitation of the activities in the session?	Yes	No

GROUP PARTICIPATION

15	Did <u>all</u> participants, both male and female, actively participate in the session?	Yes	No
16	Did participants ask questions during the session?	Yes	No
17	Did participants share their thoughts, feelings or experiences during the session?	Yes	No
18	Did participants get along with one another in the group?	Yes	No
19	Did participants appear to understand and follow the topics in the session?	Yes	No
20	Did participants participate in the games, songs and other energizer or icebreaker activities during the session?	Yes	No

TRAINING LOGISTICS

21	Did you provide the families with something to drink? Something to eat?	Yes	No
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ATTENDANCE

22	How many adults are present in today's session?	
23	How many adults were absent from today's session?	

24. If you skipped a step or made any improvements to the session please explain:

End of Session Evaluation for Parents (attach to fidelity form for each session)

Please write what the parents reported for each question.

1. What did the parents like best about this session?

2. What questions would they have liked to have asked that they did not have time to ask?

3. What did they find helpful about this session?

4. Any other concerns or comments?
