

WORKING WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

e-Toolkit on Early Childhood

Empowering Caregivers:

Professionals with Direct Responsibility for Groups of Preschool Children
(Kindergarten Teachers, Preschool Children's Educators, Animators)



by Francesca Ballarin



Terre des hommes Italia

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Terre des hommes Italia Foundation (Tdh-It) (www.terredeshommes.it) is an international non-governmental organisation intervening in twenty-two low-income countries, irrespective of political, racial or religious considerations, in

defense of the rights of children. Tdh-It has been operating in the occupied Palestinian Territories since 2000, where it implements actions aiming at responding to a number of basic needs of children and vulnerable people in Palestinian society while promoting children's and vulnerable people's basic rights, as stated in the international conventions, namely the right to education, health and expression as well as the right to a balanced psychosocial development. Attaining these rights will empower and enable Palestinian children and vulnerable people to become active citizens in their communities.

Tdh-It implements this strategy in partnership with Palestinian NGOs, contributing to their institutional building and development by providing them with technical and financial capacities.

Tdh-It has been working since 2008 in Gaza Strip, where, in partnership with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, it has implemented several projects in the Northern Governorate focusing on prevention and treatment of malnutrition and Iron Deficiency Anaemia. From September 2009 Tdh-It, again in partnership with PMRS, has implemented two Psychosocial Projects funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection (ECHO) in the Southern Governorates of Gaza (Khan Younes and Rafah), where the nutritional component plays an important, yet subsidiary, role in supporting children's wellbeing. The methodology adopted during the first two phases of the action "*Psychosocial and nutritional support to preschool-age children and their siblings in Gaza Strip*", adheres to the *integrated support systems and multi-layered supports* envisaged by the IASC Guidelines on MHPSS in Emergency Settings, giving a prominent role and importance to the caregivers in addressing children's difficult behaviours and special needs.



Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) is a grassroots, community-based Palestinian health organisation. PMRS (www.pmrs.ps) was founded in 1979 by a group of Palestinian doctors and health professionals seeking to supplement the decayed and inadequate health infrastructure caused by years of Israeli military occupation. In the Gaza Strip PMRS operates with four Primary Health Care Centres (PHCs), two ambulances and two mobile clinics providing preventive and curative services to the most vulnerable members of Palestinian society, specialised women's and children's health, health education services, physiotherapy and assistive equipment to the disabled.

PMRS works for the attainment of physical, mental and social wellbeing of Palestinians. Health is viewed as an entry point for social change and community development.

PMRS has been a partner of Tdh-It since 2008.

Francesca Ballarin has worked as Early Child Development – Psychosocial Consultant for Terre des hommes Italia since 2009. She has extensive experience in developing, managing and monitoring humanitarian aid projects and programmes focussing on child protection and education. In the past thirteen years she worked in emergency and post-conflict environments in several countries, among which are Afghanistan, Jordan, Iraq, Occupied Territories of Palestine, Pakistan, Syria and Sudan. She holds a Masters Degree in Psychology with a focus on Clinical Psychology and is an INEE qualified trainer.

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Foreword

There are 1.85 billion children under fifteen years of age in the world today. Tens of millions of them live and grow in contexts of poverty, violence, war and protracted crises. Terre des hommes Italia, founded in 1994, works today in twenty-two countries where it assists and protects 100,000 of the most vulnerable. Since 1979 the Palestinian Medical Relief Society has provided medical services to Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza with focus on children's health.

Although humanitarian programmes target all children equally, experience shows that preschool children are the most difficult to have access to. Being too old to benefit from mother-and-child-care programmes and too young to be reached through schools, children from three to five are rarely specifically targeted.

The experience of Terre des hommes Italia and the Palestinian Medical Relief Society in Gaza presented an exceptional opportunity to work with preschool children within an Early Childhood Development approach. In an effort to share the lessons learned, as well as the working tools and methodologies, this e-Toolkit was designed to provide an overall framework and examples of strategies and tools that were found useful in addressing some of the recurring issues when dealing with preschoolers.

We hope that the e-Toolkit will prove valuable to all professionals who would like to explore how principles of Early Child Development can be translated into projects and activities that may enhance the effectiveness of programmes targeting children in complex emergencies.

Piera Redaelli
Terre des hommes Italia

Dr. Aed Yaghi
Palestinian Medical Relief Society

Acknowledgments

This e-Toolkit would not have seen the light of day without the determination of Francesca Ballarin, Terre des hommes Italia PSS Consultant, and Davide Amurri, Terre des hommes Italia Project Manager in Gaza. Both of them grasped the significance for the various actors working with children in Gaza – the Palestinian organisations and institutions as well as the international ones – of documenting the experience of two years of work with preschoolers in the Southern Governorates of Gaza.

Terre des hommes Italia very much values the perseverance and dedication of all the members of the Tdh-It/PRMS project team. Reema al Haj, the Project Coordinator, deserves a special mention for her daily indefatigable field leadership in implementing the project activities.

Finally, Terre des hommes Italia is deeply grateful to its Palestinian partner, the Palestinian Medical Relief Society in Gaza, which made the project possible, and particularly to its director, Dr. Aed Yaghi, for his continuous support and assistance.

Thanks are due also to all those who supplied the pictures for the e-toolkit, and in particular to photographer Alessio Romenzi, who documented the activities of the project.

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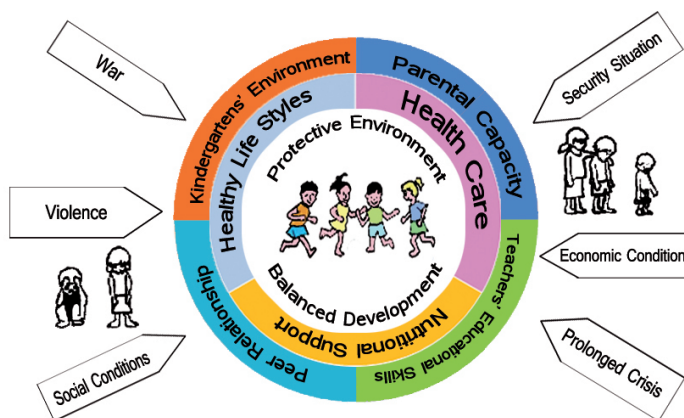
Introduction

In June 2010, together with Francesca Ballarin I was preparing the final presentation to the stakeholders of the results of the project " Psychosocial and nutritional support to preschool-age

children and their siblings in Gaza Strip.”¹

The intervention had aimed at supporting the healthy growth and development of children by empowering caregivers to address children’s physical, emotional, cognitive, linguistic and social needs, promoting healthy life styles within their families and addressing anaemia and malnutrition - all based on a holistic vision of Early Childhood Development (ECD).

We wanted to provide the audience with a pictorial and immediate representation of the whole project’s approach and strategy, and we worked out this one:



In order to achieve the right protective environment contributing to the balanced development of the child, the key point is to work with the parents, teachers and KG directors in improving their knowledge of the ECD principles, and their attitude and practice, within the context of the Gaza Strip, which is undergoing a prolonged and complex humanitarian crisis.

The same strategy has characterised both phases of the intervention:² Terre des hommes Italia and Palestinian Medical Relief have pursued this strategy through a programme of training and follow up, utilising awareness materials and tools to monitor the effective impact on and progress within the target community and its children aged up to six years. By the middle of the second phase we realised that the material our team had gathered so far was worth more than a simple project training and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tool and could instead provide a strong base to build upon, develop and share an ECD toolkit potentially suitable for the whole Gaza context, and, beyond that, a methodology potentially replicable and adaptable in crisis/ post-crisis contexts working with similar communities.

We therefore decided to systematise and revise the work, taking advantage of the networking and participation utilised in the construction of an M&E system for the mental health and psychosocial interventions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, coordinated by the Cluster (humanitarian coordination system) and the line ministries (currently ongoing), and further motivated by the fact that one of the main gaps identified in these interventions (the lack of M&E tools suitable for children of up to six years of age) is addressed by the work we began in 2009.

All the material in this e-Toolkit is based on these experiences, and incorporates the international standards for Early Childhood Development, the collaboration between the two organisations (Tdh-It and PMRS) and the other major stakeholders³ and the work of the project team – a mix of national educators, psychologists, counsellors and social workers – that has built, tested and revised this material coordinated by our psychosocial experts.

We have chosen to present our material as an eTool rather than as a set of manuals - as it constitutes a work in progress and a living document whose framework may be adapted to contexts other than the Gaza Strip.

Davide Amurri

Terre des hommes Italia

Project Manager

1 The project is Psychosocial and nutritional support to preschool-age children and their siblings in Gaza Strip (ECHO/-ME/ BUD/2009/01045) funded by the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection. The project is the first of a two-phase intervention that ended in June 2010; the second being the Psychosocial and nutritional support to preschool-age children and their siblings in Gaza Strip (ECHO/-ME/BUD/2010/01041) that ended in June 2011.

2 See footnote 1.

3 Within the framework of the Cluster approach in Gaza and with the support of the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection.

Empowering Caregivers: Professionals with Direct Responsibility for Groups of Preschool Children (Kindergarten Teachers, Preschool Children's Educators, Animators)

1. Introduction

The role of kindergarten teachers, preschool children's educators and animators is crucial to the optimal development of young children. These professionals are critical in guiding children in the world outside the family, in providing children with appropriate developmental learning opportunities and in establishing the basis for a successful education at school and in their future lives.

Children receiving appropriate stimulation at the physical/motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social levels in the kindergarten or in other structured contexts are the more likely fully to develop thinking and language, control emotions, cope with stress and master social skills. When they enter school they are more likely to succeed and the risk of their dropping out is reduced. As adolescents, they show greater self-esteem and, later in life, they have a greater chance of becoming creative and productive members of society.

In just one generation, these human gains can help break the cycles of poverty, disease and violence that affect so many countries.

Competencies of those professionals with primary responsibilities for groups of children are therefore essential in contributing to the child's optimal development.

With this background, the present booklet aims at providing an overall framework for developing the skills and abilities of kindergarten teachers, preschool children's educators and animators. It provides information on how children learn, on the role of professionals in this process and an overview of developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for preschool children.

The booklet also includes a description of the Kindergarten Teachers' Training programme produced in Gaza by Terre des Hommes Italia (Tdh-It) and the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS), in collaboration with the Canaan Institute of New Pedagogy and with the financial support of the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).¹

The training aims at strengthening kindergarten teachers' competences on Early Child

¹ The projects are namely: Psychosocial and nutritional support to preschool-age children and their siblings in Gaza Strip (ECHO/-ME/BUD/2009/01045), September 2009 to June 2010; and Psychosocial and nutritional support to preschool-age children and their siblings in Gaza Strip (Phase 2) (ECHO/-ME/BUD/2010/01041), August 2010 to June 2011

Development so that they become more effective in supporting child developmental needs. Although learning activities have been developed to address the specific learning needs of kindergarten teachers in Gaza, the contents and methodologies used can also be employed to train preschool children’s educators and animators in similar contexts, or be adapted easily to different contexts.

2. How Children Learn: Learning as Developmental Change²

The developmental work of Jean Piaget³ and John Dewey⁴ describe learning as a process in which the child acts on and interacts with the immediate world to construct an increasingly elaborate concept of reality. This description is thoroughly embedded in the following developmental concepts:⁵

- Sequence of Development (human beings develop capacities in predictable sequences throughout their lives. As people mature, new capabilities emerge).
- Uniqueness of each human being (despite the general predictability of human development, each person displays unique characteristics from birth, which through everyday interactions progressively differentiate into a unique personality. Learning always occurs in the context of each person’s unique characteristics, abilities, and opportunities).
- Sensitive periods (there are times during the lifecycle when certain kinds of things are learned best or most efficiently, and there are teaching methods that are more appropriate at certain times in the developmental sequence than at others).

The continuous learning process Piaget refers to - seen as an interaction between the goal-oriented actions of the learner and the environmental realities that affect those actions - is defined “active learning”. Children construct their own models of reality, which develop over time in response to new experiences and exposure to other viewpoints.

Four critical elements characterise the active learning process:

1. *Direct actions on objects*: active learning depends on the use of *materials* – natural and found materials, household objects, toys, equipment, and tools. Active learning begins as young children manipulate objects, using their bodies and all their senses to find out about the objects. Acting on objects gives children something “real” to think about and discuss with others. Through these types of “concrete” experiences with materials and people, children gradually begin to form abstract concepts.
2. *Reflection on actions*: action alone is not sufficient for learning. To understand their immediate world, children must interact thoughtfully with it. Children’s understanding of the world develops as they carry out actions arising from the need to test ideas or find answers to questions. A young child who reaches for a ball, for example, is pursuing an internal question, such as “Hmm . . . wonder what this thing does?” By acting (grasping, tasting, chewing, dropping, pushing, and rolling) and then reflecting on these actions, the child begins to answer the question and to construct a personal understanding of what balls do. Put another way, the child’s actions, and reflections on those actions, result in the development of thought and understanding. Thus, active learning involves both the physical activity of interacting with objects to produce effects and the mental activity of interpreting these effects and fitting the interpretations into a more complete understanding of the world.
3. *Intrinsic motivation, invention, and generativity*: in this perspective, the drive to learn clearly arises

2 Adapted from Hohmann, M. and Weikart, D. P., “Educating Young Children: Active Learning: Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs”, High/Scope Press, 1995 (included in the CD-ROM on ECCD of The Consultative Group on ECCD. Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1999)

3 Flavell, J., *The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget*, Princeton, NJ: D Van Nostrand, 1963

4 Dewey, John, and James McLellan, “What Psychology Can Do for the Teacher”, in *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings*, Reginald D. Archambault, ed., 195–211. New York: Random House, 1964.

5 See Booklet 0, “Working with Early Childhood”, Chapter 2, “Working with Early Childhood: Reference Framework”

from within the child. The child's personal interests, questions, and intentions lead to exploration, experimentation, and the construction of new knowledge and understanding. Active learners are questioners and inventors. They generate hypotheses and test them out by using and combining materials in a way that makes sense to them. As inventors, children create unique solutions and products. While children's creations may sometimes be messy, unstable, or unrecognizable to adults, the *process* by which children think about and produce these creations is the way they come to understand their world. It is also important to recognize that the errors children make are as important as their successes in providing them with essential information about their original hypotheses. Thus, active learning is an ongoing, inventive process in which children combine materials, experiences, and ideas to produce effects that are new to them. Although adults may take for granted the laws of nature and logic, each child discovers them as if for the first time.

4. *Problem solving*: experiences in which children produce an effect they may or may not anticipate are crucial to the development of their ability to think and reason. When children encounter real life problems - unexpected outcomes or barriers to fulfilling their intentions – the process of reconciling the unexpected with what they already know about the world stimulates learning and development.

3. Role of Professionals with Direct Responsibility for Groups of Preschool Children (Teachers, Preschool Children's Educators and Animators)

As caregivers have the responsibility to support children's optimal development through a variety of appropriate stimulations at physical/motor, cognitive, language, emotional and social levels, one of their primary goals is to encourage active learning.

Especially in organised settings such as kindergartens, summer camps and recreational activities, teachers, preschool children's educators and animators should systematically work with children in order to:

- Exercise and challenge the child's capacities as they emerge at a given developmental level
- Encourage and help the child to develop their unique pattern of interests, talents, and goals
- Present learning experiences when children are best able to master, generalise, and retain what they learn and can relate it to previous experiences and future expectations

Furthermore, in working with young children, professionals should also be able to exercise the Developmentally Appropriate Practice perspective.⁶ This perspective within early childhood education envisages that the teacher, the educator, the animator or caregiver nurtures a child's social/emotional, physical, and cognitive/linguistic development by basing all practices and decisions on:

- theories of child development (see Booklet 0, "Working with Early Childhood")
- the individually identified strengths and needs of each child revealed through authentic assessment (Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children")
- the child's cultural background as defined by their community, family history, and family structure

Years of studies and researches in the pedagogy of young children revealed that there are six main functional areas of competence for professionals with primary responsibility for groups of children:⁷

1. Establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment
2. Advancing physical, cognitive and linguistic competences
3. Supporting social and emotional development and providing positive guidance
4. Establishing positive and productive relationships with families
5. Ensuring a well-run, purposeful programme responsive to participants' needs
6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism

⁶ Bredekamp, V.S. and Copple, C., *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*, NAEYC, 1997

⁷ Adapted from Beaty, J.J., *Skills for Preschool Teachers*, Pearson 2010

Those functional areas are reflected in the Kindergarten Teachers' Training programme⁸ developed in Gaza by Tdh-It and PMRS, in collaboration with the Canaan Institute of New Pedagogy.

4. Active Learning and Developmentally Appropriate Learning Opportunities⁹

Active learning - fundamental to the full development of the child's potential - occurs most effectively in settings that provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities. Developmentally appropriate learning opportunities (closely related to the achievement of the Developmental Milestones) for preschool children are described in the chart below.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN		
<p>Language and Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking with others about personally meaningful experiences • Describing objects, events and relations • Having fun with language: listening to stories and poems, making up stories and rhymes • Writing in various ways: drawing, scribbling, letter-like forms, invented spelling, conventional forms • Reading in various ways: reading storybooks, signs and symbols, one's own writing • Dictating stories <p>Creative Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising objects by sight, sound, touch, taste and smell • Imitating actions and sounds • Relating models, pictures and photographs to real places and things • Pretending/make-believe and role playing • Making models out of clay, blocks and other materials • Drawing and painting <p>Initiative and Social Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making and expressing choices, plans and decisions • Solving problems encountered in play • Taking care of one's own needs • Expressing feelings in words • Participating in group routines • Being sensitive to the feelings, interests and needs of others • Building relationships with children and adults • Creating and experiencing collaborative play • Dealing with social conflict 	<p>Seriation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing attributes (longer/shorter, bigger/smaller) • Arranging several things one after another in a series or pattern and describing the relationships (big/bigger/biggest, red/blue) • Fitting one ordered set of objects to another through trial and error (small cup–small saucer/medium cup–medium saucer/big cup–big saucer) <p>Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing the number of things in two sets to determine "more", "fewer", "same number" • Arranging two sets of objects in one-to-one correspondence • Counting objects <p>Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filling and emptying • Fitting things together and taking them apart • Changing the shape and arrangement of objects (wrapping, twisting, stretching, stacking, enclosing) • Observing people, places and things from different spatial viewpoints • Experiencing and describing positions, directions and distances in the play space, building and neighbourhood • Interpreting spatial relations in drawings, pictures and photographs <p>Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting and stopping an action on signal • Experiencing and describing rates of movement • Experiencing and comparing time intervals • Anticipating, remembering and describing sequences of events 	<p>Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving in non-locomotor ways (anchored movement: bending, twisting, rocking, swinging one's arms) • Moving in locomotor ways (non-anchored movement: running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, climbing) • Moving with objects • Expressing creativity in movement • Describing movement • Acting upon movement directions • Feeling and expressing steady beat • Moving in sequence to a common beat <p>Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving to music • Exploring and identifying sounds • Exploring the singing voice • Developing melody • Singing songs • Playing simple musical instruments <p>Classification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring and describing the similarities, differences and attributes of things • Distinguishing and describing shapes • Sorting and matching • Using and describing something in several ways • Holding more than one attribute in mind at a time • Distinguishing between "some" and "all" • Attributing characteristics to something which that thing does not possess or classifying it wrongly

⁸ Although the training has been developed to address the specific learning needs of kindergarten teachers in Gaza, its contents and methodologies can be used to train preschool children's educators and animators in similar contexts, or easily be adapted to different contexts.

⁹ Adapted from Hohmann, M. and Weikart, D. P., "Educating Young Children: Active Learning: Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs", High/Scope Press, 1995 (included in the CD-ROM on ECCD of The Consultative Group on ECCD. Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1999)

To enable the children to benefit from the learning opportunities necessary for development, teachers, educators and animators should:

1. Organise the environment and routine for active learning
2. Establish a climate for positive social interaction
3. Encourage children's intentional actions, problem solving, and verbal reflection
4. Observe and interpret the actions of each child in terms of developmental principles
5. Plan experiences that build on the child's actions and interests

The chart below summarises the essential features of an active learning setting:

<p>Choice: the child chooses what to do</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children initiate activities that grow from personal interests and intentions 2. Children choose materials 3. Children decide what to do with materials <p>Materials: there are abundant materials that children can use in many ways</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children use a variety of materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practical everyday objects ▪ Natural and found materials ▪ Tools ▪ Messy, sticky, gooey, drippy, squishy materials ▪ Heavy, large materials ▪ Easy-to-handle materials 2. Children have space to use materials 3. Children have time to use materials <p>Manipulation: caregivers encourage children to manipulate objects freely</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children explore actively with all their senses 2. Children discover relationships through direct experience 3. Children transform and combine materials 4. Children use age-appropriate tools and equipment 5. Children use their large muscles <p>Language from the child: the child describes what he or she is doing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children talk about their experiences 2. Children talk about what they are doing in their own words 	<p>Caregiver's support: caregiver recognises and encourages children's intentions, reflections, problem solving and creativity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Caregivers form partnerships with children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Put themselves on children's physical level ▪ Follow children's ideas and interests ▪ Converse in a give-and-take style 2. Caregivers seek out children's intentions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acknowledge children's choices and actions ▪ Use materials in the same way children are using them ▪ Watch what children do with materials ▪ Ask children about their intentions 3. Caregivers listen for and encourage children's thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen to children as they work and play ▪ Converse with children about what they are doing and thinking ▪ Focus on children's actions ▪ Make comments that repeat, amplify, and build on what the child says ▪ Pause frequently to give children time to think and gather their thoughts into words ▪ Accept children's answers and explanations even when they are "wrong" 4. Caregivers encourage children to do things for themselves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stand by patiently and wait while children take care of things independently ▪ Show understanding of children's mishaps ▪ Refer children to one another for ideas, assistance, and conversation ▪ Encourage children to ask and answer their own questions
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5. Training Experience in Gaza: Overview

The Kindergarten Teachers' Training programme has been developed by Tdh-It and PMRS, in collaboration with the Canaan Institute of New Pedagogy and with the support of the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO),¹⁰ on the basis of a learning needs analysis carried out by the Khan Younis and Rafah Governorates in the Gaza Strip, in September 2009.

Initial assessment revealed that kindergarten teachers demonstrate a poor understanding of preschool children's developmental needs and of the impact of the teaching practices on the child development process.

The resulting lack of appropriate stimulation for the child at physical/motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social levels often leads to temporary behavioural difficulties and constitutes a potential risk factor that could seriously challenge the child's further learning processes in school and in their life in general.

Therefore, in the framework of the educational plan (year 2010–2011) and in accordance with the Guiding Principles for Kindergartens of the Ministry of Education in Gaza, the Kindergarten Teachers' Training programme aims at strengthening the teachers' competences on Early Child Development in order to become more effective in supporting child developmental needs.

The Kindergarten Teachers' Training programme places strong emphasis on active learning through participatory group exercises, case studies, role plays, focussed discussions, simulations and practice and is designed using a competency-based approach to learning.

The training is composed of **six Modules (fifty-one hours) delivered over seventeen days** (three training hours per day) as follows:

MODULE 0 - Introduction

MODULE 1 - Early Childhood Development (4 days) - in which key areas of the preschool children's growth, their basic needs and key actors for child development are explored.

MODULE 2 - Dealing with children (5 days) - in which ways of providing children with the appropriate learning opportunities for their development through positive motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social stimulations are explored (this module is designed and delivered by the Canaan Institute of New Pedagogy).

MODULE 3 - Working as a kindergarten teacher (3 days) – in which the crucial importance of the teacher and of the kindergarten environment in providing children with structured individual and group learning opportunities and stimulation to foster development is explained.

MODULE 4 - Communicating with the family (1 day) - in which the tools for and importance of keeping the family informed on the child's progress are discussed.

MODULE 5 - Children in difficult situations (3 days) – in which the causes and consequences of difficult situations in a child's life (such as family problems, violence, etc) are explored and solutions to support the child individually are identified.

MODULE 6 - Summary (1 day) - in which key messages and tools delivered in the training are recalled.

The training also introduces the Child Follow-Up File¹¹ as a fundamental tool to keep track of the child's

¹⁰ The projects are namely: Psychosocial and nutritional support to preschool-age children and their siblings in the Gaza Strip (ECHO/-ME/BUD/2009/01045), September 2009 to June 2010; and Psychosocial and nutritional support to preschool-age children and their siblings in the Gaza Strip (Phase 2) (ECHO/-ME/BUD/2010/01041), August 2010 to June 2011

¹¹ The Child Follow-Up File is an individual form where the teacher lists basic information about the child (name, date of birth, contact

progress, to communicate with the family, and to support children in difficult situations through special care or referral.

For the purpose of the ECHO-funded project in which the training was developed, the Kindergarten Teachers' Training lasts seventeen days, three training hours a day. However, depending on the situation, daily training hours can be expanded and/or learning activities within the session easily further developed. Frequent cuts to the electricity supply in Gaza also made it impossible to use the electronic audio-visual tools in the learning activities. However, in different situations lectures, presentations, pictures and simulations can easily be adjusted and/or introduced in the modules.

6. Kindergarten Teachers' Training – Trainer's Notes

This chapter illustrates in detail the modules and sessions of the Kindergarten Teachers' Training. The description is primarily addressed to trainers – familiar with the adults' learning training methodologies – who would like to replicate the learning activities. Learning activities are therefore explained as instructions to them.

To implement the learning activities successfully, trainers should be familiar with key concepts in Early Child Development, at least as described in the Booklet 0, "Working with Early Childhood", Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children" and in the previous chapter of this booklet. However, throughout the description of the activities specific chapters and paragraphs of the booklets are recalled to make the reference easier. The trainer should also have experience of working with young children so as to be able to recall examples relevant to the specific culture in which he or she delivers the training. Examples and expected lists of items from the brainstorming exercises directly derive from the experience of delivering this training in Gaza. They may be slightly dissimilar in different contexts.

6.1. Training Outline

The aim of the training is to strengthen kindergarten teachers' competences on Early Child Development so that they become more effective in supporting child developmental needs.

By the end of the training teachers will be able to:

- Appreciate the role of the kindergarten, family and community in child development.
- Recognise child developmental needs and provide children with appropriate learning opportunities for development, through a variety of structured pedagogical activities, within the framework of the educational plans of the Ministry of Education.
- Follow up the progress of individual children through individual follow-up files and report challenges and successes to the families.
- Deal with children in difficult situations, addressing their special needs and developing combined strategies with the families to support them.
- Refer to a network of professionals to share experiences and obtain support.

information for the family, etc), keeps track of the child's progress in the five developmental domains (motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social) through a series of qualitative indicators, and records possible difficulties and educational plans to support the child. See Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children" for a more detailed description of this tool.

	Title of the module	Total time	Specific learning objectives
MODULE 0	Introduction	1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are aware of the Tdh-It-PMRS programme, know the training plan and are familiar with one other
MODULE 1	Child development and child needs	11 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are able to appreciate the role of the family, kindergarten and community in child development Teachers are able to explain key aspects of early child development (physical/motor, emotional, cognitive, linguistic and social) and to define the main changes occurring in the child from three to five years; they are also able to take the nutrition of the child into account Teachers are able to recognise the child's main needs at each developmental stage Teachers are able to understand and address individual differences between children
MODULE 2	Dealing with preschool children	15 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are able to use active learning methodologies and provide children with the learning opportunities appropriate for development Teachers are able to provide adequate physical/motor stimulation through specific activities to support physical, motor and fine motor development Teachers are able to provide adequate cognitive stimulation through activities fitting the child's attention span, and formulate activities to develop the child's imagination and creativity, which give the child the possibility to experiment and discover Teachers are able to provide adequate emotional stimulation: encourage and give children the possibility to express their feelings, and develop activities to encourage empathy Teachers are able to provide adequate linguistic stimulation: telling stories, singing songs, drawing letters, giving the child the chance to tell a story, supporting the learning of new words, playing with words, etc. Teachers are able to provide adequate social stimulation: involving all children in activities, encouraging interaction, cooperation, sharing Teachers are able to use discipline and positive motivation (avoiding the use of physical punishment and negative motivation)
MODULE 3	Working as kindergarten teacher	9 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are able to develop structured educational activities in accordance with the MoE educational plan that supports child development and meets children's needs Teachers are able to create a child-friendly environment in the kindergarten Teachers are able to use the Child Follow-up File to keep track of the child's development and use it to communicate with the families Teachers are able to use the resources available in the kindergarten
MODULE 4	Communicating with the family	3 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are able to appreciate the importance of direct communication with the family Teachers are able to communicate with the family on the child's progress using the Child Follow-Up File
MODULE 5	Dealing with children in difficult situations	9 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are able to identify children in difficult situations and provide them with special care Teachers are able to identify difficult behaviour and investigate the causes Teachers are able to involve the family in adjusting to difficult behaviour through the Child-Follow Up File Teachers are able to develop educational plans to modify the difficult behaviour
MODULE 6	Summary	3 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are able to appreciate the role of the kindergarten, family and community in child development Teachers are able to recognise child developmental needs and to address them through a variety of pedagogical activities and educational plans Teachers are able to follow up individual child progress through individual follow-up files and report challenges and successes to the families Teachers are able to deal with children in difficult situations, addressing their special needs and developing joint strategies with the families to support them Teachers are able to refer to a network of professionals to share experiences and to obtain support

6.2 Module 0 – Introduction

OVERVIEW OF THE MODULE

	Title of the session	Timing	Key messages
Session 1	Welcome, and creating a network	60 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tdh-It-PMRS intervention focusses on empowering caregivers and improving children's rearing environment. Therefore, Tdh-It-PMRS works in kindergartens with teachers and directors through training and follow-up, and with families (both mothers and fathers) through awareness sessions Commitment to share experiences, create and strengthen a network of professionals to share experiences and knowledge is crucial for the success of the training.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

SESSION 1: Welcome, and creating a network

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
60 min	1: Welcome and introduction / creating a network

Activity 1: Welcome and introduction / creating a network

Preparation and material: roll of string, flipchart stand, paper and markers, copies of the agenda

10' Introduction: welcome participants and explain the rationale for the Terre des hommes Italia and Palestinian Medical Relief Society project in Gaza. Explain that Tdh-It and PMRS are primarily concerned about the preschool children's wellbeing and particularly about the nutritional and psychosocial aspects of their development. Tdh-It-PMRS intervention thus focusses on empowering caregivers and improving the rearing environment both in the family and in the kindergarten. Therefore, Tdh-It-PMRS will work with teachers and kindergarten directors through training and coaching and with families – both fathers and mothers – through awareness sessions.

Furthermore, the most important lesson learned in implementing a similar project last year is that the more caregivers (families, teachers and directors) share pedagogical views and educational strategies, the more children are able to overcome problems and to develop healthily. We will therefore, throughout the training and in all our activities, stress on strengthening the relationship between the kindergarten and the families.

25' networking exercise and individual introduction: ask participants to stand in circle. Keeping in one hand the beginning of the roll of string, introduce yourself, then throw the roll to another participant asking them to introduce themselves, then keeping the end of the string firmly in their hand to throw the roll to another participant. The game continues until all participants have introduced themselves.

Comment that, through this exercise, participants are now all interconnected and that in the training we will use the network they just created to share experiences and knowledge and that we would like to see this network becoming stronger and stronger.

10' household information and ground-rules: establish ground-rules for the training (stressing on the importance of sharing experiences), explain how breaks and meals are organised, explain where the toilet is in the facility, explain that certificates will be awarded by the end of the training, explain that by the end of each module an evaluation will be undertaken, and distribute the training agenda.

15' starting up: introduce the Tdh-It-PMRS training programme by saying that the training will last seventeen days for three hours a day, and it is organised in five thematic modules plus a final one-day summary:

1. The Early Child Development Module will last four days and we will discover key areas of the preschool children's growth, their basic needs and the key actors for child development.
2. The Dealing with Preschool Children Module will last five days, and with the support of the Canaan Institute for New Pedagogy we will explore ways of providing positive motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social stimulation.
3. The Working as a Kindergarten Teacher Module will last three days and we will explain the crucial importance of the teacher and of the kindergarten environment in providing children with structured individual and group stimulation to foster development.
4. The Communicating with the Family Module will last one day and we will discuss the importance of and tools for keeping the family informed of the child's progress and /or difficulties.
5. The Dealing with Children in Difficult Situations Module will last three days and we will explore the causes and consequences of difficult situations in the child's life (such as family problems, violence, etc.) and identify solutions to support the child as an individual.

The learning objectives for this training are:

- Appreciate the role of the kindergarten, family and community in child development.
- Recognise child developmental needs and address them through a variety of structured pedagogical activities in the framework of the educational plans of the Ministry of Education.
- Follow up individual child progress through individual Follow-up Files and report challenges and successes to the families.
- Deal with children in difficult situations, addressing their special needs and developing combined strategies with the families to support them.
- Refer to a network of professionals to share experiences and to get support.

Let's get started!

6.3 Module 1 – Early Childhood Development

OVERVIEW OF THE MODULE

	Title of the session	Timing	Key messages
Session 1	The importance of early childhood	120 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool age is the most important stage in building the child's personality • The child's personality is developed in the interaction between family, kindergarten and community • Five major developmental areas contribute to the child's overall development process: physical/motor development, cognitive development, linguistic development, emotional development and social development • Children need structured stimulation and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities to progress in their development • Although child development follows the same steps there are individual differences in the growth process
Session 2	Physical development	80 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young children learn and discover the world through physical experience and senses, therefore they move a lot • A child's small muscles are not yet formed, and the child cannot be precise in their movements (e.g. taking hold of the pen correctly) • Children at this age need to develop large and fine motor skills through a variety of movements and exercises
Session 3	Cognitive development	95 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child still has a limited ability to process information and to concentrate (attention span up to 20') • The teacher has to provide children with all the explanations, directions and support they need to be able to perform the task and, in doing so, has to take into consideration the time that children need to process information • The child learns through direct experience, using senses, movement and exploration • Encouraging the child's imagination and creativity is very important
Session 4	Linguistic development	80 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child's linguistic ability depends on how linguistically rich their environment is • Children learn the words and syntaxes they are exposed to and that they have the opportunity to practice • Children from three to five have big differences in linguistic ability
Session 5	Emotional development	70 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have a variety of emotions – positive and negative • It is very important for their development to experience the whole variety of emotions and to give them the chance to express both positive and negative emotions
Session 6	Social development	90 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and emotional domains are strongly interconnected • Relational experiences (especially those with peers) between three and six will shape the child's social behaviour for their entire life • Children learn social abilities primarily through modelling. The teacher is a crucial model for the child • Children need to be involved in different kinds of activities requiring different social skills such as cooperation, mutual respect, gender roles
Session 7	Wrap up	60 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children need an appropriate progression of stimulation to develop physical/motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social abilities • Family, community and kindergarten are crucial to provide the child with positive stimulation

DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

SESSION 1: Importance of early childhood

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
60 min	1: Key aspects of early child development
60 min	2: Influence of the environment: family, community, kindergarten

Activity 1: Key aspects of early child development

Preparation and material: “post-its” medium size (7.6x12.7 cm) and markers for each participant, flipchart stand and paper, blue-tack or adhesive tape.

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 0, “Working with Early Childhood”: Chapter 2, “Working with Early Childhood: Reference Framework”, and Booklet 1, “Monitoring Development in Preschool Children”: Chapter 2, “Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five); paragraph 2.1 Overview of the development in children from three to five years

5’ instructions: distribute five or more post-its for each participant and ask the group to brainstorm individually on the aspects of “development”, capturing each aspect on separate post-its. Allow ten minutes for individual brainstorming.

10’ individual brainstorming

45’ group discussion: ask participants to exchange their post-its with those of their neighbour, then – sorting out participants – ask them in plenary to read in turn each of the ideas. Arrange the ideas along the five domains of child development (physical/ motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social). Continue until all ideas are sorted out.

Comment on and discuss in plenary the aspects that have emerged and also comment on the possible imbalance between aspects (often the resulting chart has poor social and emotional aspects). Introduce the concept of the Developmental Milestone¹² as defined in Booklet 0, “Working with Early Childhood”: Chapter 2, “Working with Early Childhood: Reference Framework”; paragraph 2.2.2 Developmental milestones and other core developmental concepts.

Stick the chart on the wall and keep it there for the entire duration of the training.

Activity 2: Importance of the surrounding environment: the sponge metaphor

Preparation and material: 1 big sponge, 3 bowls, 3 watercolours (red, green and yellow), water, three coloured papers (red, green and yellow) with labels “family”, “community” and “kindergarten”. Before the activity starts dilute the three watercolours in the three bowls.

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 0, “Working with Early Childhood”: Chapter 2, “Working with Early Childhood: Reference Framework”

5’ instructions: divide the participants into three groups and give each group one label: “family”, “community” or “kindergarten”. Assign a different colour to each group. Ask each group to brainstorm on the way in which the environments they represent affect the child’s development. Allow twenty minutes for the group-work and ten minutes for each group to present their work in plenary.

¹² Developmental milestones are the major changes or accomplishments in physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. They evolve according to an orderly sequence of steps and appear within a fairly predictable age range. For example, almost every child between the ages of three and four begins to be able to stand on one foot.

20' group-work

30' presentation and discussion: before asking the groups to present their work in plenary, introduce the idea that the child in building their personality is like a sponge: they “absorb” information and behaviour from the surrounding environment. Then ask each group to present their work and allow comments and integrations from other groups. At the end of each presentation put the sponge into the colour assigned to the group. At the end of the exercise the child-sponge has absorbed all the three colours and it is impossible to distinguish them anymore. Remark that the child’s personality comes from the interaction between the three components and it is crucial that each component plays its role.

5' wrap up**SESSION 2: Physical/motor development**

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
60 min	1: Describing physical/motor development
20 min	2: Child’s physical needs

Activity 1: Describing physical development

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers and blue-tack or adhesive tape.

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1 “Monitoring Development in Preschool Children”: Chapter 2, “Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)”; paragraph 2.1 Overview of the development in children from three to five years and paragraph 2.2 Physical and motor development

10' instructions: divide the participants into three groups and ask one group to describe the physical/motor abilities of the three-year-olds, one group the four-year olds, and one group the five-year-olds. Ask each group to capture their ideas on a flipchart paper and to appoint a rapporteur. Distribute a flipchart paper and markers to each group. Allow twenty minutes to complete the task, and ten minutes for each to report back in plenary.

20' group-work**30' presentation and discussion of the group-work***Activity 2: Child’s physical needs*

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers and blue-tack or adhesive tape.

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1 “Monitoring Development in Preschool Children”: Chapter 2, “Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)”; paragraph 2.2 Physical and motor development

20' presentation and plenary discussion on children’s physical needs: using the progression of physical abilities that emerged during the previous group-work, stress on the idea that children have different abilities at different stages of development. Recall the concepts of Developmental Milestones and Sequence of Development.¹³

¹³ Sequence of Development refers to the predictable steps along the path of development. This pattern is common to the majority of children. The normal sequence of steps in each area of development indicates that a child is moving forward along the development continuum. For example, in observing language development it is important that a child progresses from expression through words, to using verbs and progressing towards more complicated sentences. This sequence, rather than the age at which these skills appear, is the critical factor in evaluating a child’s progress.

Discuss and introduce the idea that children need an appropriate progression of stimulation to develop physical/ motor skills. Children from four to six in particular need to develop gross motor skills – for example by running, by being given directions (start, stop, and turn to command), hopping on one foot and galloping, catching, throwing, and bouncing a ball, jumping over the rope, etc. – and fine motor skills – for example by copying progressively more difficult shapes (from crosses and squares, to circles and curves, to letters), cutting progressively more difficult shapes (from lines to stars), and drawing and colouring within lines.

SESSION 3: Cognitive development

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
75 min	1: Describing cognitive development/thinking
20 min	1: Child's cognitive needs

Activity 1: Describing cognitive development/thinking

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers, post-its, list of questions for the “question shower”, copy of the “Piripillo”

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1, “Monitoring Development in Preschool Children”: Chapter 2, “Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool children (from three to five)”; paragraph 2.3 Cognitive development

20' brainstorming: draw on a flipchart a child with a big head. Ask the teachers to brainstorm “what happens” in the child’s head. Capture ideas on post-its and stick them onto the drawing of the head.

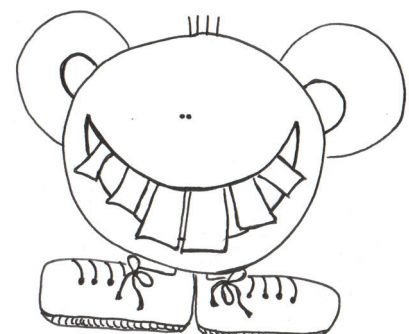
Expected list of items includes: understanding, thinking, attention, considering, memorising, counting, sorting, recalling, sequencing.

If items related to language are mentioned, keep them aside and explain that you are going to discuss the language domain in detail later.

15' demonstration: ask for a volunteer from the participants for the demonstration. Shower the teacher-volunteer with many fast questions, so that they cannot answer. Repeat the same questions at normal speed and give them enough time to answer. Explain that the child has a different speed of processing information and that teachers should adapt to it.

20' demonstration - “Piripillo” drawing: ask participants for two volunteers for the demonstration. Ask the first volunteer to draw on a flipchart a “Piripillo” (Piripillo is an imaginary creature with a big head, small, narrow eyes, prominent teeth, a broad smile, four hairs on the top of his head, big ears, no body, no hands and wearing gym shoes, as shown in the picture). Do not give any clue, so that the teacher is unable to complete the task.

Ask the second volunteer to draw a Piripillo and give her detailed instructions on what to do and how. The drawing should look very much like the original Piripillo.



PIRIPILLO

Explain that children, like the teacher in the first part of the exercise, are often unable to perform because they need explanations, directions and support to understand and complete the tasks.

The conclusion from the two exercises is that teachers have to make sure that they provide children with all the explanations, directions and support that they need to perform the task. In doing so, teachers should also take into consideration the time that children need to process information.

Activity 2: Child's cognitive needs

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 2, "Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)"; paragraph 2.3 Cognitive development

20' presentation and plenary discussion on children's cognitive needs: as for the physical/ motor development, children have different abilities at different stages and they need an appropriate progression of stimulation to develop cognitive needs. Explain that children this age primarily learn through direct experience, using senses, movement and exploration but they have a limited attention span (up to 20').

To develop their thinking abilities children have to experience the concepts of space, time and quantity – possibly through games and story-telling – test and challenge the cause-effect logic, gradually enlarge their attention span through a series of activities that challenge their concentration, create symbolism and conceptual categories sorting out differences and similarities of objects or events, and employ fantasy and imagination. Use the background reading to prepare this presentation/ lecture.

SESSION 4: Linguistic development

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
60 min	1: Describing linguistic development
20 min	1: Child's linguistic needs

Activity 1: Describing linguistic development

Preparation and material: cards with words in different languages, cards with three examples of five major linguistic abilities in each developmental stage (three years, four years and five years), flipchart paper, blue-tack or adhesive tape.

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1 "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 2, "Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)"; paragraph 2.4 Language development

20' Demonstration and discussion: prepare big cards or write on a flipchart the following words in different languages (languages are English, Russian, Italian, Swahili, Chinese, Arabic, French and Turkish)

English	TEACHER	LOVE	CHILD	FRIEND
Russian	УЧИТЕЛЬ	ЛЮБОВЬ	ДЕТЯМ	ДРУГ
Italian	MAESTRA	AMORE	BAMBINO	AMICO
Chinese	師範	愛	兒童	朋友
Arabic	مربية	حب	الطفل	الصديق
Turkish	ÖĞRETMEN	AŞK	ÇOCUK	ARKADAŞ

Ask teachers to read aloud and discuss the meaning. Most of the teachers will understand Arabic only, some may understand English, and exceptionally some may understand Turkish or Russian. No-one would understand Chinese.

Explain that children's language abilities depend on the environment in which they live and on the linguistic stimulation they receive. Children are like the teachers in this exercise: there is too much stimulation, exceeding their linguistic ability. Linguistic stimulation has therefore to be tailored to build on the child's actual linguistic capacity.

40' exercise and discussion: randomly display the forty-five¹⁴ cards you prepared with three examples of linguistic ability in each developmental stage (three years, four years and five years) as follows.¹⁵

1. Ability to describe
2. Ability to pronounce correctly
3. Ability to use pronouns
4. Ability to make sentences
5. Ability to establish causal relations

Stick 3 flipchart papers on the wall, one for three-year-old, one for four-year-old and one for five-year-old children. In plenary with the participation of the group, sort the cards into the three age groups and stick them on the relevant flipchart paper with the blue-tack or adhesive tape. Comment on and reinforce the exercise with concepts of Developmental Milestones and Sequence of Development.

Activity 2: Child's linguistic needs

Preparation and material: cards with words in different languages, cards with three examples of five major linguistic abilities in each developmental stage (three years, four years and five years), flipchart paper, blue-tack or adhesive tape.

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1 "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 2, "Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)"; paragraph 2.4 Language development

20' brainstorming and discussion on children's needs: brainstorm in plenary on what children need to improve their linguistic abilities. Capture ideas on a flipchart. The list produced by the teachers should include: exposure to new words, practicing language abilities by telling stories, being challenged on describing objects and situations, repeating difficult pronunciation, listening to stories with rich language, not being frustrated by mispronunciations or difficulties in speaking, being allowed enough time for self-expression.

Stress that, as for the other domains in development, children may have different individual abilities and need an appropriate progression of stimulation to keep improving. Stress the concept that each child is unique.¹⁶

¹⁴ Five linguistic abilities x 3 age groups x 3 examples= tot of 45 cards

¹⁵ This exercise needs to be tailored to the native language of the child. For example, in English the progression of the ability to describe would be as follows: Three-year-old child: I see car. Four-year-old child: I see big red car. Five-year-old child: I see a big red car with a flag parking in front of the supermarket.

¹⁶ Developmental science provides a framework to understand the sequences and age ranges of expectations. However, the individual patterns by which a child achieves these gains are unique. Equally unique are the genetic and biological inheritance, the relationships within the family, the experiences influencing their development. Particularly, developmental gains trigger an exclusive cascade of changes in the child as well as the environment. With each new skill a child's sense of self and their place in the family, with peers and in other settings, is altered. As new skills bring new responses, so relationships evolve continuously. Therefore, acknowledging each child's individual features and valuing their developmental history is crucial (from Booklet 0, "Working with Early Childhood": Chapter 2, "Working with Early Childhood: Reference Framework"; paragraph 2.2.3. Crosscutting principles in working with Early Childhood)

SESSION 5: Emotional development

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
20 min	1: Importance of the emotions
40 min	2: Identifying emotions
10 min	3: Wrap up

Activity 1: Importance of the emotions

Preparation and material: air-balloons (one for each participant), permanent markers, one piece of string for each participant.

20' animation activity: distribute one balloon to each participant and ask them to inflate them. Ask participants to write on their balloon one emotion (either positive or negative). Instruct participants to tie the balloons to their ankles with string. Then ask each participant to protect his/her balloon and the group to identify negative emotions and get rid of them by bursting the negative balloons. Allow 5 minutes for the game.

In carrying out this activity not all the negative balloons are burst and some of the positive emotions are burst by mistake. Also comment that teachers are resolute in defending their balloon – no matter what positive or negative emotion it represents - as they perceive the balloon as something belonging to them. Children's emotions work in the same way: they are precious to the child and should be allowed, whether positive or negative.

Activity 2: Identifying emotions

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 2, "Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)"; paragraph 2.4 Emotional development

40' brainstorming and discussion: ask participants in plenary to mention positive and negative emotions/feelings and capture them on a flipchart.

Expected emotions/feelings are:

Positive: joy, appreciation, sense of belonging, enjoyment, love, hope

Negative: anger, fear, jealousy, sadness, shame, hate, hopelessness, loss, guilt

For each emotion ask teachers to use their experience to brainstorm the possible causes, the ways the child has to express the emotion, the importance and consequences of allowing/not allowing the child to express it.

Activity 3: Wrap up

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1 "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 2, "Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)"; paragraph 2.4 Emotional development

10' lecture: close the session by highlighting that emotions develop as children respond to life experiences with a full range of feelings. An undifferentiated state of emotions during infancy evolves into a more refined set of feelings in early childhood. Some of the emotional skills learned in the early years are: the ability to accept and express feelings as well as understand others' feelings, the capacity to deal with change, the ability to exercise judgment, the capacity to know and enjoy one's sense of control and influence. It also includes the set of skills involved in learning self-care tasks. Use the background reading to prepare this presentation/lecture.

SESSION 6: Social development

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
75 min	1: Describing social development
15 min	2: Child's emotional and social needs

Activity 1: Describing social development

Preparation and material: list produced during the activity "Key aspects of Early Child Development"

5' introduction: to recall the list produced during the activity "Key aspects of Early Child Development" on social development

5' instructions: using the list produced on the first day (list expected: developing relationships out of the family, simulation, behaviour according to gender, cooperation, sense of belonging), divide the participants into three groups and ask each group to choose one item from the list. Ask each group to use their experience to prepare a five-minute drama-sketch to illustrate the processes described in the list and what a teacher can do to develop social skills. Allow 20' to prepare the sketch and 15' for each group to play and discuss.

20' group-work

45' play and discuss

Activity 2: Child's emotional and social needs

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1 "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 2, "Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)"; paragraph 2.5 Emotional development

15' lecture: explain that emotional and social needs go together at this stage of life. From age three to five children start to build up relationships with peers and with adults other than parents and relatives. They learn ways to cooperate, disagree, share, communicate and assert themselves. Children also learn how to be members of a group and/or to take part in group activities, adapt to group expectations and respect the rights and feelings of others. The young child also learns how to express their feelings in culturally appropriate ways.

Experiences they have in this phase are crucial, as they will influence the children for the rest of their lives. Use the background reading to prepare this presentation/lecture.

SESSION 7: Summary

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
60 min	1: Child's development tree

Activity 1: Child's development tree

Preparation and material: flipchart papers with a tree shape as shown in the picture (one for each group), yellow and green leaves prepared as described below.

Preparation of the leaves: Write or print on yellow and green paper the items described below and cut the paper into leaf shapes.

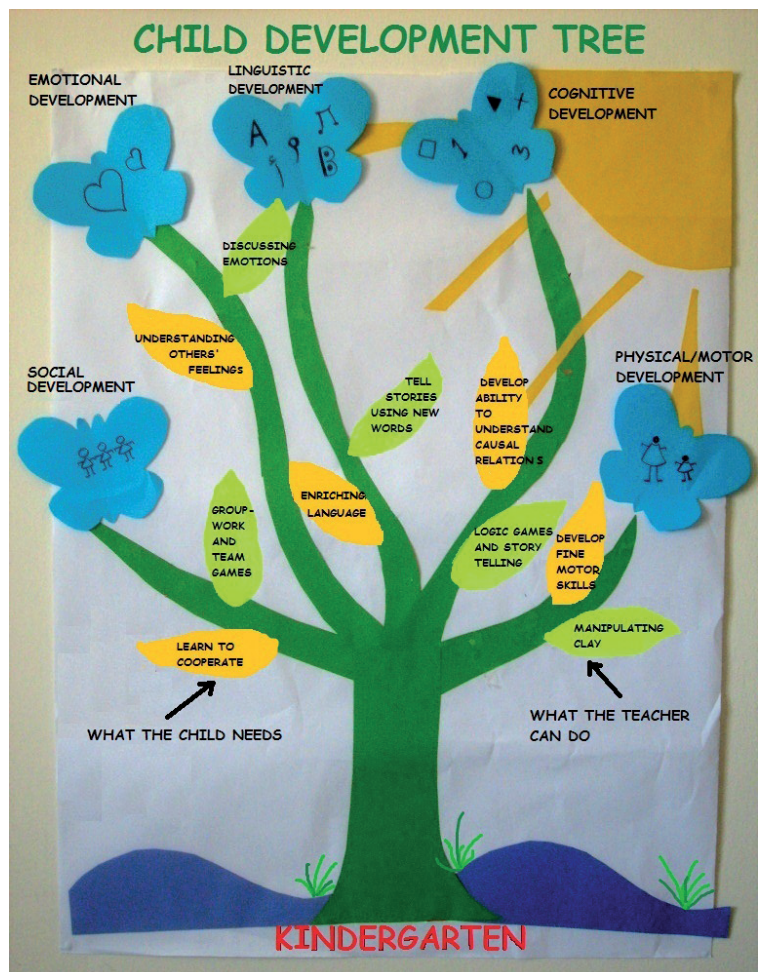
Essential background reading for the trainer: Chapter 4. "Active Learning and Developmentally Appropriate Learning Opportunities", and Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 2, "Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)"

DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN (branches of the tree)	What the child needs (Yellow leaves)	What the teacher can do (Green leaves)
Physical/Motor development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop gross motor skills ▪ Develop fine motor skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical games and animation ▪ Games and activities manipulating clay ▪ Puzzles ▪ Copying progressively more difficult shapes (from crosses and squares, to circles and curves, to letters) ▪ Cutting progressively more difficult shapes (from lines to a star) ▪ Drawing and colouring within lines
Cognitive development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the concentration span ▪ Use imagination ▪ Experience space, time and quantity ▪ Test and challenge the cause-effect logic ▪ Create symbolism and conceptual categories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take into consideration the actual attention span when designing activities ▪ Organise games and exercises aimed at sorting out differences and similarities of objects or events ▪ Story telling ▪ Singing songs ▪ Organise games and stories involving imagination ▪ Organise games and exercises involving progressively more difficult numbering skills ▪ Organise games and exercises involving spatial competencies (cubes, puzzles etc)
Linguistic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enlarge vocabulary ▪ Practice difficult pronunciation ▪ Learn the use of grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Story telling ▪ Ask children to describe objects and situations ▪ Practice pronunciation □ do not chastise children for mispronunciation or difficulties in speaking ▪ Allow children enough time to express themselves
Emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Express their feelings ▪ Understand others' emotions and feelings ▪ Control his/her emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give the child the opportunity to express emotion by talking and drawing ▪ Encourage empathy by mutual cooperation and respect among children ▪ Encourage the child to express emotions in the correct way by discussing reactions and showing examples ▪ Organise play-roles and puppets
Social development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop peer-to-peer social skills ▪ Learn to cooperate, disagree, share, communicate and assert themselves ▪ Learn to be a member of a group ▪ Learn to take part in group activities, adapt to group expectations ▪ Learn to respect the rights and feelings of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group games ▪ Rule games ▪ Team work ▪ Experiment culturally accepted social practices

5' instructions: divide the participants into groups and distribute a tree shape to each group. Explain that each branch of the tree represents one of the developmental domains. Give each group two sets of leaves, one yellow and one green, prepared as described below. Explain that on the green leaves they will find children's developmental needs while on the yellow leaves they will find actions that the teacher can take to support the children's development and to provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities. Ask the groups to sort the leaves according to the developmental domains and stick them on the tree. Give an example to make the task clear. Allow 30' to work.

30' group-work

20' discussion: hang the three trees on the wall, discuss similarities and differences. If there are too many differences and mistakes facilitate the exercise in plenary and build a new "correct" tree. Keep the tree on the wall for the entire duration of the training.



6.4 Module 2 – Dealing with preschool children

This module has been designed and delivered by the Canaan Institute of New Pedagogy (Gaza) and the learning activities could not be described in detail.

The module lasts fifteen training hours and is based on the concepts and description of active learning as explained in Chapter 2, "How Children Learn: Learning as Developmental Change" and Chapter 4, "Active Learning and Developmentally Appropriate Learning Opportunities".

The sessions move along the developmentally appropriate learning opportunities and essential features of an active learning setting illustrated in Chapter 4, "Active Learning and Developmentally Appropriate Learning Opportunities". Through a series of workshops on the use of materials and space the teachers learn how to organise the activities and environment that encourage active learning and optimal development in the five domains.

Moreover, an additional session on discipline has been developed by Tdh-It-PMRS and it is described below.

SESSION 1 Discipline

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
120 min	1: Discipline versus punishment

Activity 1: Discipline versus punishment

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 2, "Describing Developmental Changes in Preschool Children (from three to five)"; paragraph 2.6.5 Discipline.

30' brainstorming: in plenary ask the question, "When you start to carry out an activity and not all the children follow, what do you do?" Tell the teachers to answer recalling their experiences. Capture ideas on the flipchart.

List of expected reactions to the proposed situation are: motivate, ignore, shout, physical punishment, other type of punishment.

DISCIPLINE	PUNISHMENT
Emphasises what the child should do (positive motivation)	Emphasises what the child should not do (negative motivation)
Is an ongoing process	Is a one-time occurrence
Sets an example to follow	Insists on obedience
Leads to self-control	Undermines independence
Helps children change	Is an adult release
Is positive	Is negative
Accepts the child's self-assertion	Makes the child behave
Fosters the child's ability to think	Thinks for the child
Enhances self-esteem	Defeats self-esteem
Shapes behaviour	Condemns misbehaviour

30' role playing/demonstration: ask participants to act as children while you act as the teacher. Explain that the demonstration is divided into two parts. Using one of the experiences that emerged during the brainstorming, simulate a teacher using negative motivation and punishment to deal with children. In the second part of the simulation play the role of a teacher dealing with the same situation using discipline and positive motivation. In commenting on the demonstration, stress on the fact that punishment does not solve problems, or it solves them only temporarily and generates frustration and negative feelings.

30' lecture/presentation: explain that discipline is often misunderstood as punishment. Discipline refers to the methods caregivers (parents and teachers) use to regulate the interaction with children and among children within the social rules. Discipline is guiding and directing children toward acceptable behaviour. Explain that adults help children learn appropriate behaviour by setting good examples.

Present the table "Discipline versus Punishment" and ask participants to suggest examples for each of the differences.

30' brainstorming and group discussion: in plenary ask for successful experiences in implementing positive motivation in practice. Methodologies that are likely to be mentioned are stars, stickers, sweets, tasks, opportunities for expression, clapping, singing songs. Emphasise that to make discipline effective, rewards should be immediate and not delayed, and suit the action. Progress

should be measured according to each individual child's abilities. The teacher should also make sure that all the children are positively motivated.

6.5 Module 3 - Working as a kindergarten teacher

OVERVIEW OF THE MODULE

	Title of the session	Timing	Key messages
Session 1	Teacher's role	55 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher's role is crucial for children from three to five Teacher's tasks and responsibilities encompass caring for children both as individuals and as a group, creating a safe, protective and child-friendly environment in the class, and developing educational plans that take into consideration the child's needs in the five developmental domains
Session 2	Child care	20 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's needs should be addressed both as for individuals and as for groups
Session 3	Kindergarten environment	105 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KG environment should comply with basic standards of safety and protection (furniture, electric plugs, ventilation, water point, water storage, hygiene, nutritional issues) Children's needs and expectations are taken into consideration when organising the KG environment The way the KG environment is organised impacts on the child and on teacher performance and on the relationship between the two With limited resources it is possible to create a child-friendly KG environment
Session 4	Developing educational plans taking into consideration developmental domains	170 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing an educational plan means organising an ordered and structured sequence of actions daily to stimulate the child's development in the physical/motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social domains Results stated in the official MoE educational plan could be achieved through a variety of activities and taking into consideration the five developmental domains
Session 5	Following up children	160 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Child Follow-Up File is a tool to help teachers evaluate and follow up individual children's progress The Child Follow-Up File also helps in communicating with families to share the successes and weaknesses of the child

DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

SESSION 1: Teacher's role

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
45 min	1: Importance of the teacher
10 min	2: Teacher's tasks and responsibilities

Activity 1: Importance of the teacher

Preparation and material: arrange the training space as a kindergarten classroom

5' instructions: divide the participants into two groups and ask them to act as their kindergarten children in two situations, while you will act as a teacher.

10' simulation 1: act as a "good" teacher at the beginning and end of the school day: welcome children as they enter the classroom, hug them, call their names, ask how they are, and what they

did the day before, what they ate for breakfast; encourage them to greet other children; invite them to sit, help them to find their place and wait patiently until everyone is seated. Then simulate the end of the school day. Ask the children to get ready to go, wave them off, smile and encourage them to take leave of each other.

10' simulation 2: act as a “bad” teacher at the beginning and end of the school day: push the children into the classroom, shouting without greeting anyone. Force them to sit and keep silent and still. Then simulate the end of the school day. Tell the children that it is the end of the lesson and push them to get ready and leave the classroom. Do not say goodbye and leave as soon as you can.

20' discussion: comment in plenary on the feelings that the children had during the two simulations. Recall the fact that children learn their behaviour from adults.

Activity 2: Teacher's tasks and responsibilities

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

10' brainstorming: ask the participants which tasks and responsibilities they see as being within the role of the kindergarten teacher. Capture ideas on the flipchart.

The list should include meeting children's needs: reading and writing, playing, feeding, group-work; caring about the children (physical care); creating a child-friendly environment, drawing, hygiene, classroom environment and so on.

Cluster ideas along three categories:

1. Care of children both as individuals and in a group: how to manage children
2. Environment in the kindergarten
3. Educational plan (providing children with developmentally appropriate learning opportunities in the five domains)

Explain that the group is going to discuss these ideas in detail in the following days.

SESSION 2: Child care

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
20 min	1: Child's needs and child care

Activity 1: Child's needs and child care

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

20' group discussion: brainstorm and discuss with the group the main features of the child care in the kindergarten. A key learning point that should emerge from the discussion is that children have both individual and group needs that must be addressed through individual and group care. Capture this idea on the flipchart.

SESSION 3: Kindergarten environment

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
30 min	1: Safety and protection standards
45 min	2: Child-friendly learning environment
30 min	3: Action plan

Activity 1: Safety and protection standards

Preparation and material: printed pictures for the picture show, flipchart stand and paper, markers

10' picture show: hang the pictures showing poor safety and protection standards (topics for the pictures should be: 1 safety standards – furniture, electric plugs, light, ventilation; 2. hygiene - water points, water storage, sewage, toilets; 3. nutrition – junk food, quality of the meal, hygiene during the meal).

Here are some examples of the pictures to show:

SAFETY STANDARDS: FURNITURE



20' discussion in plenary: discuss in plenary how the teacher can contribute to enhancing the kindergarten environment. Keep the discussion around what the teacher can do to improve that, including suggestions to the management. Capture ideas on a flipchart.

Activity 2: Child-friendly learning environment

Preparation and material: cushions, colours, toys, flipchart paper and markers.

For this exercise it should be possible to move desks and chairs in the training room around

5' instructions: divide participants into two groups and give each group a role. The first group would play the children's role and the second group would play that of the teacher. Using material available, ask each group to organise the kindergarten space in the way they think best according to their roles.

Allow 20' for playing and 10' for each group to take a guided tour around the other group's space.

20' group-work

HYGIENE STANDARDS: UNSAFE DRINKING PRACTISES



NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS: JUNK FOOD AND HYGIENE DURING THE MEAL



20' guided tour: ask the group to comment on the choice they made in organising the space, highlight differences and similarities between the two groups.

Activity 3: Action plan

Preparation and material: small coloured papers, a carton box with a slit in the top

10' brainstorming: distribute small coloured papers and ask each teacher individually to write down one or more actions they would take to improve the kindergarten/class environment. Allow ten minutes for the task.

Collect all papers anonymously in a box.

20' discussion: sort the ideas in the box and discuss them in plenary. Encourage participants to commit to the changes they identified for the next school year.

SESSION 4: Developing educational plans taking into consideration developmental domains

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
45 min	1: Definition of an educational plan
120 min	2: Developing an educational plan

Activity 1: Definition of educational plan

Preparation and material: flipchart stand, paper and markers

45' Group discussion on educational plans:

Give the group three subjects to guide the discussion:

1. definition of an educational plan
2. topics and framework of the educational plan
3. educational plan for the group and for children with special needs

Capture ideas as they are discussed. The definition of an educational plan that should emerge is: "An educational plan is a tool with which to plan daily an ordered sequence of actions that stimulate child development in the five developmental domains and provide children with developmentally appropriate learning opportunities".

Activity 2: Developing an educational plan

Preparation and material: copies of the educational plans from the Ministry of Education (one copy each participant), flipchart stand, paper and markers.

5' instructions: distribute the official monthly educational plan from the Ministry of Education¹⁷ and ask the teachers to read it. Divide the plenary into four groups and ask each group to develop a more specific weekly educational plan for the first, the second, the third and the fourth weeks of the first month. The specific educational plans (daily activities) should be based on the achievements indicated by the Ministry of Education, but should also take into consideration the child's developmental needs in the five domains. Allow sixty minutes for each group to develop the weekly plan.

60' Group work

60' Presentation and discussion: allow ten minutes for each group to present the work. Facilitate the integration of the four weekly plans into a monthly plan. Discuss adjustments in plenary and agree to make it the educational plan for the first month in the school year.

SESSION 5: Following up children

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
90 min	1: Following up the child's progress
70 min	2: Using the child's progress follow-up file as a working tool

¹⁷ The official Education Plan of the Ministry of Education in Gaza includes the achievements that children are expected to make by the end of each month (mostly related to reading and writing skills) but does not discuss the teaching methodology.

Activity 1: Following up the child's progress

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers, copies of the Child Follow Up-File (only sections 1 and 2)

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 3, "Child Follow-Up File: Tool for Monitoring and Supporting Child Development"

10' brainstorming: throw out the question "What do we mean by following up the child?" Allow ten minutes in plenary to come up with a shared definition (definition should involve monitoring the child's progress and difficulties).

20' plenary discussion: discuss in plenary the tools and methodologies the teacher uses or used in their previous experience to follow up the children. Make sure in the discussion that the importance of involving the families in the follow-up process is mentioned.

15' lecture on the "Child Follow-Up File"¹⁸: recall the concept of the Developmental Milestone as discussed in Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children" and introduce the Child Follow-Up File, as a tool created to support kindergarten teachers in appreciating the developmental progress of their preschool children and to share it with families.

Explain that, especially in a context where kindergarten teachers are used to caring for an average of more than thirty children, the Child Follow-Up File is a relatively easy tool to help them take into consideration the specific developmental needs of each individual child as well as group of children.

The information provided by the Child Follow-Up File could be used by teachers in many ways:

1. To assess individual developmental progress and decide on any specific pedagogical attention the child may need (e.g. some children are slower than others in performing tasks. Teacher may want to ensure that each child has sufficient time to complete the task successfully).
2. To identify those children in difficult situations and develop, together with the family, ad hoc supporting strategies to help the child cope and avoid developmental problems and delays.
3. To communicate with families on the developmental progress of the child in the kindergarten, discuss the child's strength and weaknesses, and refine pedagogical attention with feedback from parents.
4. To analyse the developmental progress of the children in the class and adjust teaching methodologies (e.g. if the group of children is in general unable to play together without fighting, the teacher may want to address this area of socialisation through specific activities).

The Child Follow-Up File should be filled in monthly for each child and is divided into three sections: information on the child, the child's progress and the child's difficulties.

The section relevant to this presentation is the child's progress follow-up, while the child's difficulties follow-up will be discussed later.

Distribute copies of the child's progress follow-up form and explain that it provides monthly information on the child's developmental progress. Explain that it has been developed selecting a series of indicators deriving from the developmental milestones and in line with the age-level expectations in the Gaza cultural context.¹⁹ The indicators have been selected in order to be

¹⁸ The format of the Child Follow-Up File is available in Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 3, "Child Follow-up File: Tool for Monitoring and Supporting Child Development".

¹⁹ Indicators to be included in the Child Follow-Up File have first of all been identified by the Gaza Psychosocial Workers, then discussed and agreed with the teachers. Examples of these are, for instance, the indicator for linguistic development, "Recall the Holy Quran, Hadith, songs, alphabet, poems", and the indicator for social development, "Know how to behave on social occasions (Eid, ceremonies...)", clearly

significant and simple to assess, and to cover the age span from three to five.²⁰

Behaviour indicating the progressive acquisition of developmental abilities is assessed in the five developmental domains, on a scale ranking how often the ability/behaviour shows up. Using a scale based on the frequency of the behaviour was deemed very important as it minimises the risk of judging a child's performance.

Developmental abilities are scored as follows:

- Always – the child shows the ability/behaviour more than 90% of the time
- Often - the child shows the ability/behaviour about 70% of the time
- Sometimes - the child shows the ability/behaviour about 50% of the time
- Rarely - the child shows the ability/behaviour about 30% of the time
- Never - the child shows the ability/behaviour about 0% of the time

45' plenary discussion: discuss the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and challenges of using the child's progress follow-up form and collate the teachers' feedback on the form. Discuss the form section by section, recalling the developmental domains and milestones.

Activity 2: Using the child's progress follow-up form as a working tool

Preparation and material: beads, copies of the Child Follow-Up File (only section 2), colleagues or trainers to play the simulation, a red shirt.

Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 3, "Child Follow-up File: Tool for Monitoring and Supporting Child Development":

5' Instructions: distribute a blank child's progress follow-up form to each teacher and explain that they are going to observe a 15' simulation of a daily situation in the kindergarten. Their task is to fill in the form in relation to the child wearing a red shirt.

15' Simulation: Three trainers will act as one teacher and two children in the kindergarten in the following situations. One of the trainers playing a child should wear a red shirt. The exercise may require the involvement of other participants:

1. In the class: teacher will implement activities to cover four developmental domains:

- Tell a story (participants should observe linguistic development when the child tries to recall the story)
- Ask the child to carry out some tasks such as recognising colours and trying to count (participants should observe the cognitive development)
- Ask the child about events that happened the day before and their feelings about these (participants should observe the emotional development)
- Ask the child to pick up and join together the beads (participants should observe the fine motor, and eye-hand coordination).

2. In the playground:

Teacher will implement a game of "fisherman" (participants should observe physical motor and social development)

40' presentation and discussion: prepare the layout of the child's progress follow-up form on

referring to the usual activities carried out in the kindergartens in Gaza and to the cultural and social context where the children are raised.

²⁰ Such operational choices are made with specific reference to the Gaza context, where teachers have a limited amount of time to complete the Child Follow-Up File and where introducing two different checklists by age (one for children from three to four and one for children from four to five) would confuse rather than help teachers.

a flipchart, ask teachers to give feedback from the notes taken during the exercise. Discuss the feedback and achieve a consensus on the scoring.

The outcome of the exercise could be that: the child has good physical motor development and eye–hand coordination, but is weak in fine motor (joining the beads); good language skills but poor logical event sequence; can count, sort, but not recognise more than three colours.

End the exercise by mentioning that the child’s progress follow-up form is also a monitoring tool that helps communication with the families.

10’ summary: summarise the entire module recalling the key messages and working tools (monthly educational plan and child’s progress follow-up file).

6.6 Module 4 - Communication with the family

OVERVIEW OF THE MODULE

	Title of the session	Timing	Key messages
Session 1	Communication with families	185 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and open communication between teachers and families is crucial in order to have a shared vision on child development. • Face-to-face communication is more effective than sending messages that are either written or via the child. • The Child’s Follow-Up File helps communication between teachers and families with regard to the child’s individual progress

DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

SESSION 1: Communication with families

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
60 min	1: Advantages of communicating with parents
20 min	2: Communication approaches
20 min	3: Practicing communication approaches - written communication
20 min	4: Practicing communication approaches – verbal communication through the child
45 min	5: Using the child’s progress follow-up file to communicate with families

Activity 1: Advantages of communicating with parents

Preparation and material: paper, colours, blue-tack or adhesive tape, flipchart stand and paper, markers

5’ instructions: pair participants and ask them to sit back to back. Each pair should name an “A” participant and a “B” participant. Task the “A” participant to imagine a scene and draw it. While they draw the scene they have to describe what they are drawing to the “B” participant and the “B” participant should draw the same picture on the basis of the instructions of the partner. Allow 10’ for the exercise.

10’ exercise

5’ instructions: ask the teachers to repeat the exercise sitting next to each other so that the “B” participant can see what the “A” participant describes. Allow 10’ for the exercise.

10' exercise

15' presentation and discussion: hang the two pairs of pictures next to each other on the wall. Ask participants to look and comment on the difference/similarities in the drawing. In the discussion highlight the fact that the "A" participant is the "teacher" while the "B" participant is the mother; the teacher has a vision of the child (drawing) and should be able to pass it on to the mother. Sometimes teachers have a clear idea about the child, but they have no ability to pass it on to families. Direct communication with families helps mothers and teachers to have the same "drawing" of the child.

15' Brainstorming and discussion: ask the plenary to brainstorm and discuss the importance of communication between the kindergarten and the families. Capture ideas on the flipchart.

The key message in the discussion should be that teachers, families and children all benefit from good communication between teachers and families. Core ideas that should emerge from the discussion are: communication helps child development, makes educating the child easier, helps in addressing the child's problems at an early stage (prevention), teachers can support mothers, teachers better understand the child, make a better plan to address their needs.

Activity 2: Communication approaches

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

20' brainstorming and discussion: ask teachers to mention and describe the communication approaches they use to communicate with the families or the families to communicate with the teachers. The list of expected items are: written communication, memo, calls, notes, telephone, direct meetings (family with teacher), indirect meetings (family with KG director).

Activity 3: Practicing communication approaches - written communication

Preparation and material: two empty baskets and two baskets filled with written memos of different shapes and sizes about children

5' instructions: divide the plenary into two groups and ask each group to stand in line. Put one basket full of memos at the end of each line and an empty basket at the opposite end of each line. Explain that the aim of the activity is to transfer as many memos as possible from the full basket to the empty one, passing on the memos hand to hand in a chain. Memos should not be picked up from the ground. Allow 10 minutes for the exercise.

10' exercise

5' comments: explain that the full basket is the teacher and the empty basket is the family: indirect means of communication risk being lost and may not reach the mothers. This can create misunderstanding and lack of communication.

Activity 4: Practicing communication approaches: verbal communication through the child

Preparation and material: message to be whispered in the exercise

5' instructions: ask the group to stand in a circle. Explain that you will whisper a message to one of the participants who quickly has to whisper the message to the next participant, and so on until the message comes back to the first participant. Allow ten minutes to play.

10' exercise

5' comment: compare the original phrase with the final one. Comment that verbal messages through intermediaries are easily misunderstood

Activity 5: Using the child's progress follow-up form to communicate with the family

Preparation and material: case study and one copy of a filled-in Child Follow-Up File for the demonstration, copies of a 2-months' filled-in Child Follow-Up File for the simulation

5' introduction: From the previous exercises draw upon the lesson that communicating directly with the family is the best way to ensure that information is complete and correctly reaches the family.

10' discussion: recall and discuss in plenary the use of the child's progress follow-up file as a tool to communicate with the family in a direct and clear way.

10' demonstration: ask for a volunteer for the demonstration to act as a mother. Act as a teacher who should communicate to the mother the progress of her child. Use the child's progress follow-up file to explain the child's progress and developmental problems.

10' questions and answers: comment on the exercise in plenary, allow questions and clarifications.

5' instructions: group the participants in pairs, one acting as a teacher and one as a mother. Distribute an example of a completed 2-months' child's progress follow-up file to participants acting as teachers. Ask them to explain to the mother the progress and difficulties of her child. Allow 15' to play and an additional 5' to the participants acting as mothers to give feedback on the information received (e.g. was the teacher clear? did they understand how the child was doing?)

20' simulation in pairs

5' to wrap up: summarise the key messages of the session

6.7 Module 5 - Dealing with children in difficult situations

OVERVIEW OF THE MODULE

	Title of the session	Timing	Key messages
Session 1	Children in difficult situations	165 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the positive rearing environment is crucial for the child to display their full developmental potential, problems, difficulties and troubles in the rearing environment have a negative impact on their development Difficult situations may occur in the family, in the kindergarten, in the community or in the child itself (health conditions mostly) Difficult situations affect development; some children show an immediate reaction to the situation, others will only show the reaction later (children at risk) It is important to address these situations through special care to prevent long-lasting consequences for the child Teacher should be attentive to detect early warning signs of unhappiness Some children express their discomfort or distress through problematic behaviour Problematic/difficult behaviour should be distinguished from normal regressive behaviour Early childhood behaviour can be defined as difficult when it persists for a long time with no improvement (more than two months), being particularly intense or appearing/disappearing despite all attempts by the caregiver to understand and address the underlying causes

	Title of the session	Timing	Key messages
Session 2	Supporting children with difficult behaviour	320min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child's difficulties follow-up form and the monthly educational support plan form (third section of the Child Follow-Up File) help to keep the child's difficulties under control and to progress toward solving the problems. The involvement and appreciation of the role of the family in solving the child's difficulties are also essential All difficult behaviour has particular causes and effects, and needs an ad hoc plan to deal with it The method of intervention is individual for each child

DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

SESSION 1: Children in difficult situations

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
40 min	1: Introducing difficult situations for children
45 min	2: Introducing difficult behaviour
80 min	3: Difficult behaviour – case study

Activity 1: Introducing difficult situations for children

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

30' lecture/brainstorming: remind participants of the importance of the preschool period as crucial in child development. Recall also that the child's personality is built on the interaction between the family, the kindergarten and the community. State that, since the positive rearing environment is crucial in order for the child to manifest their full developmental potential, problems, difficulties and troubles in the rearing environment have a negative impact on their development.

Difficult situations may occur in the family, in the kindergarten, in the community or in the child itself. Ask the teachers to brainstorm which type of difficult situation the child could face in the four contexts. Capture ideas on the flipchart. Allow 15' for the brainstorming. Expected list of items is:

- Family: divorce, abandonment by one parent, family frictions, sickness of family members, death of one parent, new baby born, loss of one family member, extreme poverty, neglect, parents prefer one child, parental over-indulgence, family violence, harsh punishment, violent and aggressive behaviour in the family
- Kindergarten: accident in the KG, punishment, ignoring children, preferring children, losing friends, changing teachers, changing KG, problems with peers
- Community: bombing and attacks, disputes between family, accidents (also witnessed), culture of discrimination, harassment, accidents/violence in the street (also witnessed)
- Child: health conditions, physical accident, operation, disability

Once the list is on the flipchart explain that:

1. All these difficult situations affect development; some children show an immediate reaction, others will show a reaction only in the future (children at risk).
2. It is important to address these situations through special care to prevent long-lasting consequences for the child.
3. Teacher should be attentive to detect early warning signs of discomfort or distress by monitoring:
 - attendance
 - change in behaviour

- child dressing and care
- general health condition
- signs of violence
- listening to stories from children
- rumours in the community
- some children express their discomfort or distress through difficult behaviour

10' questions and answers

Activity 2: Introducing difficult behaviour

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

10' brainstorming difficult behaviour: ask teachers to give examples of difficult behaviour they have faced in their professional experience and capture them on a flipchart.

Expected list of items is: aggressiveness, stuttering, extreme shyness, bed wetting, inability to control emotional reactions, stubbornness, persistent crying, persistent finger sucking, nail biting, hyperactivity, lying, stealing, persistent use of bad words, extreme introversion.

30' discussion on the example given by the teachers

5' definition of difficult behaviour: introduce the definition of regression²¹ as defined in Booklet 0, "Working with Early Childhood": Chapter 2, "Working with Early Childhood: Reference Framework"; paragraph 2.2.2 Developmental milestones and other core developmental concepts. Explain that difficult behaviour should first of all be distinguished from normal regressive behaviour. Early childhood behaviour can be defined as "difficult" when persisting for a long time with no improvement (more than two months), being particularly intense or suddenly appearing/disappearing, despite any attempt by the caregiver to understand and address the underlying causes. Highlight the fact that difficult behaviour at this age is merely reaction to the stimulation of the surrounding environment and that it improves easily with appropriate care and special attention.

Activity 3: Difficult behaviour – case study

Preparation and material: flipchart stand and paper, markers

5' instructions: divide the plenary into three groups. Ask each group to brainstorm and choose a case of difficult behaviour faced by one of the teachers in the group. Ask the teacher "owner" of the case to describe it and the group-mates to discuss the causes of the difficult behaviour, the strategy of intervention used and the progress/development of the case. Request also a discussion of the alternatives and suggestions for the strategy to be used. Allow 30' to work on the case and 15' for each group to present their work.

30' group-work

45' presentation and discussion: allow 15' for each group to present their work. In commenting on the strategies to be used to face the difficult behaviour emphasise the role of the family in solving the problem.

²¹ Regression describes the evidence that "progress along the developmental continuum is rarely smooth. Rather, development is often uneven and irregular and occurs in a series of starts and stops. spurts of rapid development are often followed by periods of disorganisation or regression. Then, the child seems to reorganise and there follow periods of calm and consolidation. In difficult situations or periods of stress or change, children often regress to earlier forms of behaviour. This is a normal characteristic of early development.

SESSION 2: Supporting children with difficult behaviour

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
15 min	1: Child's difficulties follow-up form
100 min	2: Dealing with difficult behaviour – part 1
50 min	3: Practicing filling out the child's difficulties follow-up form - part 1
115 min	4: Dealing with difficult behaviour and practicing filling out the child's difficulties follow-up form - part 2
40 min	5: Case study

Activity 1: Child's difficulties follow-up form

Preparation and material: copies of the child's difficulties follow-up form (one copy for each participant), flipchart stand and paper, markers

15' lecture: remind participants of the key issues discussed the day before in presenting the group-works on dealing with difficult behaviour. Specify that the Tdh-It-PMRS experience in Gaza showed that there is a great degree of confusion and misunderstanding around regressive behaviour – especially that arising from a difficult situation – as it tends to be considered a symptom of mental health or psychological problems. This, combined with the poor awareness of the caregivers about the developmental milestones (the behaviour that can be expected from children at certain ages) and about children's needs, makes it very difficult to properly support children facing difficulties. Once the caregivers (teachers through training and follow up and parents through awareness sessions) understood that early childhood difficult behaviour is on the whole merely a reaction to the stimulation of the environment, it was easy to bring about an improvement in behaviour with appropriate care and special attention²². Experience also demonstrates that if difficulties are promptly addressed there is no repercussion on overall child development.

Introduce the third section of the Child Follow-Up File, the child's difficulties follow up²³ and explain how it should be filled in.

Activity 2: Dealing with difficult behaviour – part 1

Preparation and material: copies of the child's difficulties follow-up form (one copy each participant), flipchart stand and paper, markers

5' brainstorming and instructions: ask the plenary to choose six types of difficult behaviour that teachers frequently experience in their professional lives and that they would like to explore in detail. Divide the participants into three groups and assign to each group one difficult behaviour (explain that the remaining three will be discussed later on). Ask each group to build a 10' drama sketch on the difficult behaviour they experienced to illustrate its causes.

Allow 30' for the preparatory group-work, 10' for each group to enact, 15' for each group to discuss and 20' for each group to present and discuss.

20' group-work

²² Within Tdh-It's experience in the Governorate of Rafah and Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip only 2.1% of the preschool children whose caregivers were involved in the programme showed persistent difficulties, and among them 1.7% was able to overcome those difficulties through ad hoc pedagogical strategies jointly developed between the teacher and the family. The remaining 0.4% who did not improve through the ad hoc strategies was referred to specialist institutions (mostly children who manifested speech difficulties).

²³ The format of the Child Follow-Up File is available in Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool children": Chapter 3, "Child Follow-up File: Tool for Monitoring and Supporting Child Development".

75' enact and discuss the three cases

In discussing the cases, the difference between regressive and difficult behaviour needs emphasising, as do the environmental causes.

Activity 3: Practicing filling out the child's difficulties follow-up form – part 1

Preparation and material: copies of the child's difficulties follow-up form (one copy for each participant), flipchart stand and paper, markers

5' instructions: ask each group to fill out the child's difficulties follow-up form for one of the cases illustrated by a different group with the information that emerged in the drama and the discussion. Allow 15' for the task and 10' for each group to present the challenges they faced in filling out the form.

15' group-work

30' presentation and discussion. In particular discuss the challenges of filling in the form and offer clarification.

Activity 4: Dealing with difficult behaviour and practicing filling out the child's difficulties follow-up form – part 2

Preparation and material: copies of the child's difficulties follow-up form (one copy each participant) flipchart stand and paper, markers

5' brainstorming and instructions: divide the participants into three groups and assign to each group one difficult behaviour of the three left from Activity 2. Ask each group to work on an example of difficult behaviour from their experience and to fill in the child's difficulties follow-up form.

Allow thirty minutes for the preparatory group-work, and twenty minutes for each group to present and discuss the case.

30' group-work**60' presentation**

20' final discussion on difficulties, advantages and disadvantages of using the child's difficulties follow-up form.

Activity 5: Case study

Preparation and material: copies of Fadi's success story
Essential background reading for the trainer: Booklet 1 "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 3 "Child Follow-Up File: Tool for Monitoring and Supporting Child Development".

20' presentation of success story from the Tdh-It-PMRS previous experience Illustrate Fadi's success story as described in Booklet 1, "Monitoring Development in Preschool Children": Chapter 3, "Child Follow-up File: Tool for Monitoring and Supporting Child Development".

20' discussion

6.8 Module 6 - Summary

	Title of the session	Timing	Key messages
Session 1	Key learning in the training	165 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool age is the most important stage in building the child's personality • The child's personality develops through the interaction between family, kindergarten and community • Five major developmental areas contribute to the child's overall development process: physical/motor development, cognitive development, linguistic development, emotional development and social development • Children need structured stimulation to progress in their development • Although child development follows the same steps there are individual differences in the growth process • Teacher's tasks and responsibilities encompass caring for children individually and as a group, creating a safe, protective and child-friendly environment in the class, and developing educational plans that take into consideration the child's needs in the five developmental domains. The teacher in particular has the duty of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identifying children in special needs 2. giving them special care 3. involving the family 4. developing the joint plan to support the child 5. suggesting referral to the specialist as last resort • The way the KG environment is organised impacts on the child and teacher performance and on their relationship to one another • With limited resources it is possible to create a child-friendly KG environment • Developing an educational plan means organising a daily structured sequence of actions to stimulate the child's development in the physical/motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social domains • The Child Follow-Up File is a tool to help teachers evaluate and follow up children's individual progress and difficulties • The Child Follow-Up File also helps in communicating with families to share successes and weaknesses of the child • As a positive rearing environment is crucial in order for the child to manifest their full developmental potential, so problems, difficulties and troubles in the rearing environment have a negative impact on development • Difficult situations may occur in the family, in the kindergarten, in the community or in the child itself (health conditions mostly) • Difficult situations affect development; some children show an immediate reaction, others will only show the reaction later (children at risk) • It is important to address these situations through special care to prevent long-lasting consequences for the child • Teacher should be attentive to detecting early warning signs of discomfort or distress • Some children express their discomfort or distress by difficult behaviour • Difficult behaviour should be distinguished from normal regressive behaviour. • Early childhood behaviour can be defined as difficult when persisting for a long time with no improvement (more than two months), being particularly intense or suddenly appearing/ disappearing despite all attempts by the caregiver to understand and address the underlying causes

DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

SESSION 1: Key learning in the training

TIME	LEARNING ACTIVITY
50 min	1: Recalling child development and dealing with preschool children (module 1-2)
40 min	2: Recalling working as a kindergarten teacher (module 3)
30 min	3: Recalling communicating with the family (module 4)
30 min	4: Recalling dealing with children in difficult situations (module 5)
10 min	5: What next?

Activity 1: Recalling child development and dealing with preschool children (modules 1-2)

Preparation and material: Child's Development Trees developed by groups in Module 1, Session 7, Activity 1, flipchart stand and paper, markers

10' instructions: recall the Child Development Tree (developmental domains and the need for appropriate stimulation in each domain). Divide the plenary into five groups and assign each group a developmental domain, ask each group to recall or develop a new activity/exercise that they will implement in the class to stimulate children in the assigned domain. Allow 15' to work and 5' for each group to present the exercise.

15' group-work

25' presentation and discussion

Activity 2: Recalling working as a kindergarten teacher (module 3)

Preparation and material: Three envelopes containing one drawing each. The drawings should represent the following topics: caring for children, educational plan, child-friendly environment. Flipchart stand and paper, markers

5' instructions: divide the plenary into three groups. Distribute one envelope to each group and ask the groups to prepare a summary of the key learning related to the topic in the envelope. Allow fifteen minutes to work and five minutes for each group to present their work

15' group-work

15' presentation

5' conclusion: ensure that all the key messages of Module 3 are recalled. Stress on the commitment to the monthly educational plan developed in the module.

Activity 3: Recalling communicating with the family (module 4)

Preparation and material: rope, at least three paper cutout children, visual aids on ways to communicate with families (e.g. telephone, notes, Child Follow-Up File etc.)

Prepare a paper cutout child tied to a rope 4 mt long (2 mt each end) as shown below.

5' instructions: divide participants into two groups, one will play the role of the family and one will play the role of the kindergarten. Give one end of the rope to each group and ask them (remaining in a group) to reach the child as fast as possible without letting it touch the ground.

5' to play (on the first attempt the paper child will be destroyed almost immediately as each group will pull the rope in an attempt to reach the child quickly).

5' instructions: give the groups another try with a new paper cutout child and rope. Explain that the aim of the game is also to keep the child safe.

5' to play: (the groups will be more careful and the paper child will not be damaged).

10' conclusion: comment on the exercise stating that the child is fragile and that both families and teachers should concentrate and coordinate their efforts to protect the child's safe development. Hang visual aids on the rope as possible means of communication with the families and make the Child Follow-Up File bigger.

Activity 4: Recalling dealing with children in difficult situations (module 5)

Preparation and material: Forty drawings or pictures describing difficult situations that the child may face (ten drawings for each of the four components – family, kindergarten, community, physical condition)

5' introduction and instructions: in plenary recall that difficult behaviour at this age is merely a reaction to the stimulation of the surrounding environment. Divide participants into four groups and assign each group a component of the rearing environment (family, kindergarten, community, child's physical conditions). Mix the drawings and distribute ten drawings to each group. Ask the groups to exchange drawings until the topic is sorted. Allow 20' to play.

20' group-work

5' conclusion: state the teacher's role in difficult situations:

Teacher has the duty of

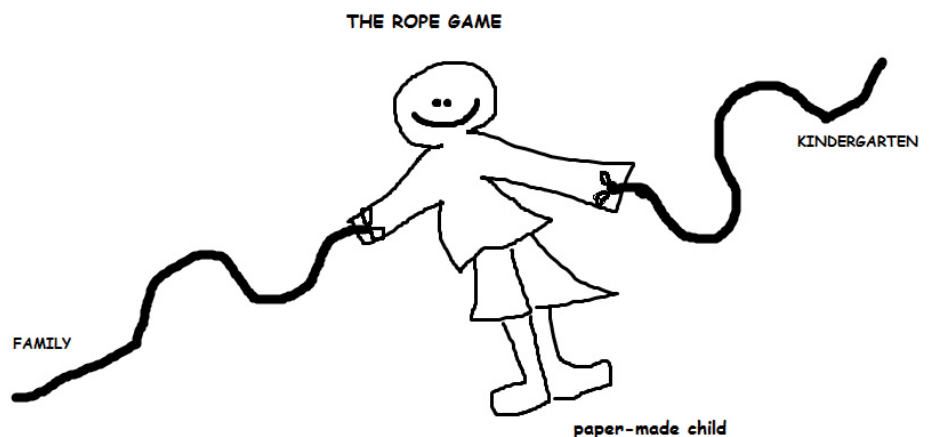
1. identifying children with special needs
2. giving them special care
3. involving the family
4. developing the joint plan to support the child
5. suggesting the referral to the specialist as last resort

20' lecture and discussion: explain again the concept of difficult behaviour emphasising its causes. Discuss the Child's Follow-Up File as a tool to ensure support to children in difficult situations and their families.

Activity 5: What next?

Preparation and material: n.a.

10' lecture: Explain that the training is just the beginning of our work together and that turning knowledge into practice in the classroom is far more challenging. Explain that to face this challenge Tdh-It-PMRS psychosocial workers will keep supporting the teachers throughout the school year through individual follow



up, networking meetings once a month and refresher training if needed.

Individual follow up will happen on average twice a month for each teacher and will give the teacher the possibility of discussing with the psychosocial worker the issues, difficulties, challenges and problems the psychosocial worker experiences in their daily work. This opportunity will also be used to discuss cases of children in difficult situations who may need special support.

Networking meetings are opportunities to exchange experiences, concerns and successes among professionals. Meetings will be held once a month after working hours. Should further learning needs come up during the school year Tdh-It-PMRS staff can organise refresher training on demand.

Wish the teachers all the best in their work and tell them that you will meet them again soon!

7. Essential References for Early Childhood

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WORKING WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

e-Toolkit on Early Childhood

Empowering Caregivers:

Professionals with Direct Responsibility for Groups of Preschool Children
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