

# Naungan Kasih Hybrid Parenting Programme – Companion Guide

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## How to use this guide?

This Companion Guide is designed to be used alongside the Facilitator Manual. While the manual provides guidance on how to introduce the programme, specific instructions on how to deliver each session, and tips on how to support parents throughout, this guide is to support you as you support parents!

It includes information and guidance to help you learn and grow as a facilitator, and information on core skills that parents learn on NKText.

You are encouraged to read through this guide before starting the programme and refer back to it whenever you need support in your role as a facilitator.

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## Overview of the Companion Guide

This Companion Guide is for YOU—it's mandatory reading that provides essential information, strategies, and tools critical for effective facilitation and parent engagement throughout the Naungan Kasih Hybrid Parenting Programme.

The guide includes:

1. **A-E-C-P: Accept, Explore, Connect and Practice**: A detailed explanation of the A-E-C-P (Accept, Explore, Connect, Practice) method—our core facilitation approach to guide meaningful discussions and reflections with parents.
2. **Domains and Stages of Child Development**: Key knowledge on child development (ages 2–9) across five developmental domains to help you better understand and respond to parents' concerns and expectations.
3. **In-person Tips**: Tips for conducting in-person sessions, including onboarding practices, energisers to maintain engagement, and use of calming techniques such as Taking a Pause.
4. **One-on-One Time**: Guidance on delivering and supporting One-on-One Time, a foundational skill introduced during onboarding, practised and applied throughout the programme.
5. **How to Support Parents Who Have Children with Disabilities**: Practical strategies for inclusive facilitation and supporting parents of children with disabilities include communication tips, activity adaptations, and building trust and participation.

### 1. A-E-C-P: Accept, Explore, Connect and Practice

The Accept, Explore, Connect, and Practice (A-E-C-P) method is the main facilitation technique used in the delivery of the Naungan Kasih programme. It involves active listening, collaborative facilitation, building self-awareness, emphasising core principles, and allowing opportunities to practise skills.

It is important that you model this approach throughout the Naungan Kasih delivery!

A-E-C-P stands for the 4 key steps in facilitating a discussion with parents:

- A = ACCEPT
- E = EXPLORE
- C = CONNECT
- P = PRACTICE

A-E-C-P can be applied at any time during the session, practising skills and during reflection. It is also important that you model A-E-C-P so that parents begin to do the same with their own children.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <p>A = ACCEPT</p>  | <p>Accepting parents' contributions encourages them to share and helps build trust. It shows you are listening and that their voices matter. This is also a key skill for parents to model with their own children.</p> <p>Ways to show acceptance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect or rephrase what the parent says to show understanding.</li> <li>• Thank and acknowledge their contributions, especially during difficult sharing.</li> <li>• Use positive body language: nodding, eye contact, leaning in, using their name.</li> </ul> <p>Example from a Group Practice (practicing One-on-One Time):</p> <p>You: How did it feel to be the parent allowing your "child" to take the lead during this practice session?</p> <p>Parent: I was uncomfortable at first because I wanted to tell my child what to do. But then I looked at my "child" and started just following what she wanted to do.</p> <p>You: I can understand that you would feel uncomfortable at first because you wanted to direct the activity. This is perfectly natural. But after a while you were able to allow your "child" to take the lead in the activity and to follow her suggestions. Thank you for sharing.</p> |
| <p>E = EXPLORE</p> | <p>Exploring helps us understand a parent's experience in more detail. It supports problem-solving and helps parents reflect on how their actions affect their child's behaviour.</p> <p>Ways to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask open-ended questions: What happened? When? Where? Who was involved? How did it feel?</li> <li>• Explore both the parent's and child's emotions (if appropriate).</li> </ul> <p>Examples of possible EXPLORING questions from a previous discussion on practicing One-on-One Time:</p> <p>You: What was it like to follow your child's lead? Did you notice anything different in the interaction? What thoughts were you experiencing?</p> <p>How did following your child's lead make you feel? How do you think it made your child feel?</p>   |

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <p>C = CONNECT</p>  | <p>Connect the parent's experience to key parenting principles or themes from the session, such as the House of Support.</p> <p>This helps parents make sense of their experience and see how it relates to broader parenting goals. It also reinforces learning and makes it easier to remember the key messages.</p> <p>Encourage parents to make their own connections to what they've learned.</p> <p>Ways to connect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask: "What can we learn from this experience?"</li> <li>• Highlight patterns or themes across multiple parent stories</li> <li>• Refer back to earlier discussions or visuals (e.g., House of Support)</li> <li>• Use affirmations like: "That's a great example of building trust with your child."</li> </ul> <p>Example from a previous discussion about practicing skills:</p> <p>You: What can we learn from this experience?<br/>[Solicit responses from the group.]</p> <p>Sum up: By spending One-on-One Time with our children and allowing them to take the lead, we build their confidence and self-esteem. They also feel loved and appreciated when we simply notice what they are doing with our full attention. This goes back to what we are learning in the first part of building our House of Support – how we can strengthen our relationship with our child. (Point or refer back to the Building Blocks of the session on One-on-One Time.)</p> |
| <p>P = PRACTICE</p> | <p>Scientific evidence tells us that parents are more likely to use parenting skills at home if they practice them during the session.</p> <p>This means that you have to give parents as many opportunities as possible to practice key skills, whether in Group Practice or Practice in Pairs.</p> <p>Practice may also happen during Reflections, such as when a parent shares a challenging situation. This allows the parent to practice a possible solution to her challenging situation before trying it at home with her child.</p>   |

**Tip:**

Some participants may share a lot during discussions. Here are some tips to use if someone is taking all the time during a group discussion: Thank them for sharing.

- Remind the group that everyone should have a turn.
- Acknowledge the value of their input.
- Offer to continue the conversation during break or after.
- Refer back to their points to show they've been heard.

## 2. Domains and Stages of Child Development

### Overview

It is important to be aware of the different competencies and characteristics of children at different stages (2-9 years old). These characteristics of young children can shape parents' expectations, goals, and activities with their children. It may be that the challenges and problems that parents face are rooted in expecting children to behave in ways that they are not yet developmentally ready for.

### Domains of Child Development

There are 5 domains or areas of child development: physical, socio-emotional, communication and language, cognition, and adaptive. The following chart provides a brief overview of each of these domains.

| Domain                     | Definition  |
|----------------------------|---|
| Motor/<br>Physical         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gross motor skills (e.g., ability to walk, run, jump, throw objects).</li><li>• Fine motor skills (e.g., putting on clothes, writing, copying shapes, colouring with a marker, eating with a spoon).</li></ul>  |
| Socio-emotional            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Awareness of feelings and emotions of self and others.</li><li>• Sense of security and attachment with others.</li><li>• Behaviours, social interactions, and relationship building.</li><li>• Learning through play.</li></ul>   |
| Communication and Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to understand and communicate both physically and verbally with others.</li><li>• Development of complex speech such as complete sentences, comparisons, etc.</li><li>• Knowledge of the alphabet, sing songs, talking about the day, and reading (later in development).</li></ul> |
| Cognition                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intellectual and mental abilities.</li><li>• Ability to process thoughts, hold attention, remember events, and plan ahead.</li><li>• Counting, recognising patterns, cause and effect, experimentation.</li></ul>   |



| Domain   | Definition   |
|----------|--|
| Adaptive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapting the environment.</li> <li>• Autonomy and ability to do things by oneself.</li> <li>• Self-feeding, dressing, toiletry, chores, etc.</li> </ul> |

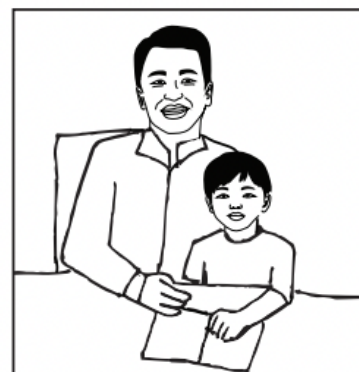
## Stages of Child Development

### Toddler (2-3 years old)

- Food, sleep, cleaning, comfort and safety.
- Strong attachment (bonding) with parent/ caregiver.
- Stimulation and attention.
- Becomes more curious; wants to explore and become more independent.
- Wants to learn how to do new things (e.g. dress and undress) and wants to make own decisions.
- Seeks praise and approval.
- Becomes more independent and continues to explore his or her surroundings.
- Starts speaking sentences and building vocabulary.
- Does not like to lose or take turns, but sharing can be taught.
- May express feelings in dramatic ways. Can begin to learn how to manage emotions.

### Early Childhood (4-7 years old)

- Food, sleep, cleaning, comfort and safety.
- Strong attachment (bonding) with parent/ caregiver.
- Stimulation and attention.
- Learns through actions and play.
- Develops relationships with other children. (Play is important and can teach social values.)
- Has questions; seeks answers.
- Finds it difficult to separate fantasy from reality.



- Expresses feelings in dramatic ways.
- May talk a lot; ask many questions. Answers can be short but should be honest. The child may ask again if it is not clear or if she or he wants more information.
- Does not like to lose, share or take turns, but losing and taking turns can be taught.

### **Middle Childhood (8-9 years old)**

*Middle Childhood includes ages 8 to 12 years old.*

- Food, sleep, cleaning, comfort and safety.
- Strong attachment (bonding) with parent/ caregiver.
- Stimulation and attention.
- Interested in learning in school.
- Starts to want independence and trust.
- Wants to spend time with other children.
- May express interest in religious matters, spirituality.
- May answer back to adults to show that they “know”.
- Can be very self-conscious and sensitive. May be very active. (The child’s unique temperament emerges clearly at this stage.) But can learn to better manage anger and tolerate frustration.



## True/False Game on Child Development

### Instructions

Write your response, True or False, for each statement below. Answers and explanations are provided on the following page.

| No. | Statement   | True/False |
|-----|---|------------|
| 1   | You do a better job as a parent when you feel confident about your abilities to provide care. |            |
| 2   | The brain develops more rapidly when your child is at school age.                             |            |
| 3   | Young children learn better by exploring and playing, instead of being told what to do.       |            |
| 4   | You should talk to your child, even before your child can speak.                              |            |
| 5   | Your child should be scolded when he or she puts something into their mouth.                  |            |
| 6   | Your child drops things just to annoy you.  |            |
| 7   | Children can learn by playing with pots and pans, cups, and spoons.                           |            |
| 8   | Parenting responsibilities only include the feeding of children.                              |            |
| 9   | Many people can provide parenting, even if they did not give birth to the child.              |            |
| 10  | Clinic visits are not important after your baby is 6 weeks old.                               |            |

## Answers

| No. | Statement  | True/False |
|-----|--|------------|
| 1   | You do a better job as a parent when you feel confident about your abilities to provide care.  | True       |
|     | The responsibility of the care, nourishment, and protection of a child is a full-time job. It may often feel frightening, confusing, frustrating, difficult, and exciting for caregivers. You are expected to care for their children, as well as all the other responsibilities of a family and work. The more confident you feel about being able to care for your child, you feel, the better you will be at it.  |            |
| 2   | The brain develops more rapidly when your child is at school age.  | False      |
|     | Brain development starts before birth. During the first 1000 days from conception to 2 years old, the child's brain is developing more quickly than at any other time in life. Your children need good nutrition and health, secure relationships, warm affection, safe environments, and plenty of learning opportunities to help them develop at this critical time. The benefits will be lifelong!  |            |
| 3   | Young children learn better by exploring and playing, instead of being told what to do.  | True       |
|     | Evidence shows that children learn by doing things – especially through play. Creating opportunities for your child to explore the world through play is the best way to help them learn.  |            |
| 4   | You should talk to your child, even before your child can speak.   | True       |
|     | Children learn to communicate by listening and watching others. They learn even better when you talk directly to them. You can encourage language development and communication skills by responding verbally and physically to your children's words, actions, and interests.   |            |
| 5   | Your child should be scolded when he or she puts something into <b>their</b> mouth.  | False      |
|     | Young children put things in their mouth because the mouth is very sensitive. Make sure objects are safe and clean. If a child tries to put something in their mouth which is not safe, take away the object and show the child something else that is safe and clean. Children are always exploring new things and learning new skills. They need a clean, safe, and protected physical environment to be safe from injuries and accidents while they are playing and learning. |            |

|    |   |       |
|----|---|-------|
| 6  | Your child drops things just to annoy you.  | False |
|    | When your child drops things, they are learning! Dropping can be done by accident; however, the child is exploring what happens, how long before there is a sound, and how other persons react.   |       |
| 7  | Children can learn by playing with pots and pans, cups, and spoons.   | True  |
|    | Children do not need store bought toys. They can learn from many household items. Children learn a lot from doing things themselves. Learning to use an eating tool without spilling, for example, helps to develop physical skills. Children also learn by copying what others do. For example, if you want your child to eat a different food, you may need to show the child by eating the food yourself   |       |
| 8  | Parenting responsibilities only include the feeding of children.  | False |
|    | Feeding is very important, but parenting involves the feeding and watching over the child, keeping the child clean, giving the child affection, communicating with the child, and responding to the child's needs. Children also should be protected from being exposed to violence and abuse, both from anger aimed at them and around them.   |       |
| 9  | Many people can provide parenting, even if they did not give birth to the child.  | True  |
|    | Although the mother is the most important caregiver for a young infant, the primary caregiver may also be the father, granny, or another family member. In some communities, children may have many caregivers: a grandmother, aunt, uncle, sister, brother, and a neighbour may share the activities of caring for your child. It is important that your child has a close relationship with at least one person who can give them love and attention. |       |
| 10 | Clinic visits are not important after your baby is 6 weeks old.   | False |
|    | Clinic visits are very important, even post 6 weeks old, as children need to: complete the full immunisation schedule, have ongoing growth monitoring and developmental milestones assessments to identify any challenges early, and receive required medications or health services.   |       |

### 3. In-Person Tips

The following are practical tips and strategies to help you create a positive, engaging in-person experience for parents.

#### Tips for Onboarding Sessions

When you are with parents during the onboarding sessions, consider the following practices to create a supportive, respectful, and engaging environment.

- Ensure all materials and venues are prepared before the session.
- Greet parents when they arrive at the session.
- Understand the relationship between parents and their child. Remember that each relationship is unique.
- Remember that every child develops at different speeds and stages.
- Respect what participants share and be aware of different ages, genders, values, and circumstances.
- Encourage parents to share and respond to each other—praise them when they do it!
- Remind parents of group rules when needed.
- Pay attention to parents who are quiet or struggling and offer support when needed.
- Model the behaviour you want to see among the parents.
- Use energisers to keep live interactions engaging and fun.

#### Taking a Pause

Taking a Pause is a key skill in the Naungan Kasih programme, which was introduced to parents in the NKText welcome flow and during reflection. It's a simple breathing exercise that helps reduce stress and bring awareness to the present moment.

You can also use it to stay calm, especially during challenging moments like responding to tough questions or emotional sharing. It can be as simple as taking one or two deep breaths while noticing your connection to the ground.

Model this practice using the steps and instructions below:

| Steps                             | Instructions  |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Step 1:<br>Preparation            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find a comfortable sitting position, your feet flat on the floor, your hands resting in your lap. [Pause]</li> <li>Close your eyes if you feel comfortable. [Pause]</li> </ul>   |
| Step 2:<br>Becoming<br>Aware      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask yourself, “What is my experience at this moment?” [Pause]</li> <li>Notice what thoughts you are experiencing. Notice if they are negative or positive. [Pause]</li> <li>Notice how you feel emotionally. Notice if your feelings are pleasant or unpleasant. [Pause]</li> <li>Notice how your body feels. Notice any discomfort or tension. [Pause]</li> </ul>   |
| Step 3:<br>Gathering<br>Attention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring your focus to your breath. [Pause]</li> <li>You may want to place one hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath. [Pause]</li> <li>Follow your breath all the way in, how it pauses, and how it exhales out. [Pause]</li> <li>If you notice that you have started to think about something, this is completely natural. [Pause]</li> <li>If you notice that you are feeling very stressed, you may want to reassure yourself by saying “It’s okay. Whatever it is, I am okay.” [Pause]</li> <li>Then bring your awareness back to the feeling of your breath. [Pause]</li> <li>Keep your focus on your breath for a few moments. [Pause]</li> </ul> |
| Step 4:<br>Expanding<br>Awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow your focus to expand to the whole body. [Pause]</li> <li>Allow your focus to expand to the sounds in the room. [Pause]</li> </ul>  |

| Steps                 | Instructions  |
|-----------------------|---|
| Step 5:<br>Reflecting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking a moment to reflect whether you feel any different from before Taking a Pause.</li> <li>• When you are ready, open your eyes. [Pause]</li> <li>• After leading 'Taking a Pause', ask participants if they have any questions about the activity.</li> </ul> |

## Energisers

Energisers are short, interactive activities designed to keep energy levels high and help participants stay focused and connected during sessions. Below are some examples you can use.

### Give me a ...

- Note: Number = a clap
- Give me a 1 = Clap
- Give me a 2 = Clap Clap
- Give me a 4 = Clap, clap clap, clap (start back at 1)

### Do the wiggly (dance)

- Put your arms out, put your arm in, out, in and do the wiggly
- Put your right foot out, put your right foot in, in, out and do the wiggly
- Put your left foot out, put your left foot in, in, out and do the wiggly
- (Continue with any other body parts of choice.)

### The Shake It Off Groove

- Shake your right hand, shake your left hand, right, left and shake it off.
- Shake your right foot, shake your left foot, right, left and shake it off.
- Shake your head, shake your hips, head, hips and shake it off.
- Continue with any other body parts you like.

### Numbered Dance Moves:

- Assign different dance moves to numbers (e.g., 1 = spin, 2 = hop, 3 = twirl).
- Call out numbers, and participants perform the corresponding dance move.



## 4. One-on-One Time

### What is One-on-One Time?

One of the key skills that parents are introduced to during the onboarding session is “One-on-One Time”. One-on-One Time means parents spending quality time with their children to develop a strong sense of security and attachment that will lead to positive parent-child relationships. Here are some key things to note:

- One-on-One Time is very important to children, especially when parents allow them to explore the world through play during this time.
- One-on-One Time lets children know that parents are giving them attention and are interested in what they are doing.
- One-on-One Time is NOT about keeping track of a child's behaviour to make sure that they are behaving properly. This is another important skill that parents will learn later in the programme.

### Why is One-on-One Time Important?

One-on-One Time helps parents build warm, positive relationships with their children. Many parents of children with challenging behaviour often find it hard to enjoy time together, as so much energy is spent trying to manage misbehaviour.

When children are playing quietly or keeping themselves occupied, parents may feel relieved and choose to leave them alone. But this is actually the perfect moment to “attend” to the child—to notice what they’re doing and spend quality time together.

One-on-One Time gives parents a chance to:

- Learn about their child's interests and strengths.
- Show children that they are valued and appreciated, not just corrected when they misbehave.
- Build the child's self-esteem and sense of importance.

Through play, children develop creativity, problem-solving, and an understanding of the world around them. When parents talk about what their child is doing during play, they also help build the child's language and observation skills.

### Important Points During One-on-One Time

#### 1. Listen to Your Child

When someone really listens to you and notices what you are doing it makes you feel good because you feel valued. Think of the people who seem to care about you. You know it because they show an interest in you and let you know that your views matter to them.

It's the same for children. When parents listen and talk to their children, they should make sure they are at the same eye-level as them. This is important with all children and especially important with children using a wheelchair to show they care and that they want to hear their child.

When a relationship between a parent and child is going well, this happens naturally. Children notice their parents' attention and, in return, respond more positively.

## 2. Letting Your Child Lead

Letting Your Child Lead means that parents should allow their children to take the lead in the activity during One-on-One Time. Parents can introduce this to children by simply saying, “**I have 5 to 15 minutes to spend One-on-One Time with you, what would you like to do?**”

It is important because it:

- **Builds Confidence and Self-Esteem:** When parents follow their child's ideas, it shows children that their suggestions are important to their parents.
- **Encourages Autonomy:** Many children spend most of their lives being told what to do or what not to do. This gives them a chance to make their own choices.
- **Helps Parents Grow:** It allows parents to let go of having to be in charge and think of activities to do with their children. Some parents and caregivers may struggle with knowing how to play or spend time with their children.
- **Reveals Children's Interests:** By letting children lead, parents can learn more about what their child like to do. Parents can follow their activity by simply saying, “Yes, let's do that!” – within limits of Goal!

It is important to remind parents that they remain in control of when One-on-One Time begins and ends, and that they can set limits on what types of activities are allowed. Here are some key points to note:

- This is especially important to emphasise in cultures where maintaining parental authority is highly valued.
- If parents feel uncomfortable about Letting Your Child Lead, you can reassure them that they still have the authority to allow their child to take the lead.
- Many children have never been given a chance to decide on an activity or to take the lead. It might feel strange for them at first!
- Parents can help their children by suggesting a number of safe and developmentally appropriate activities that children can choose.

## Children with Disabilities

This section provides information on how to Let Your Child Lead for parents with a child with disabilities. Refer to [How to Support Parents Who Have Children with Disabilities](#) for more information.

It is important that the activities are those that the child likes to do and is appropriate for their children. Here are some tips you can share with parents:

- When talking to a child with disabilities, remember that you are interacting with a child, and keep the same tone and language as you would with any child of a similar age. If the child cannot hear, it is important that you stay still, including your head, while talking with the child. Make sure you are looking at them when you speak, and make sure they are looking at you and can see your face and mouth.
- With a child with intellectual disabilities, always speak clearly, using short sentences. Use the child's name so they know you are talking to them. It is very important to respond to the child's attempts to communicate, so they understand the effectiveness and importance of communication. If a child points to an object of interest, you can point to it and clearly name it to indicate that you have understood and are listening.
- Children with disabilities who are not used to being asked their opinions or being listened to will need more time to build up confidence and trust. It may take time to explore the best ways of communicating with a particular child. Parents may need to be more patient with themselves and their children when spending One-on-One Time with their children.

The following practices can help children with disabilities feel more accepted, included and confident:

- Always ask children with disabilities how best to meet their needs: consider the child as the best expert about their disabilities.
- Always ask if and how a child wants or needs to be assisted. Respect the child's wishes if your offer is not accepted.
- Allow children with disabilities to take the same risks as other children in order to help them to gain confidence. Over-protection denies them the chance to explore, discover what is possible and learn how to keep themselves safe.
- Only help children with disabilities when they need it. Too much support denies them the chance to become independent and can feel patronising.
- Be open and flexible to change to accommodate the children involved.
- Focus on reinforcing each child's strengths and abilities rather than those things they cannot do, for example, a wheelchair user might have strong arms and hands, a deaf child might be great at drawing.

- Build on children's strengths by praising children who say, "I don't understand" or ask for help or thank them for asking and then offer help or an explanation.
- Give children plenty of time to both understand what is being talked about and to formulate their responses.
- Model good communication so that children learn from what they see and hear.

## **One-on-One Time for Parents/Caregivers by Stages of Child Development**

For parents with a child with disabilities, consider the tips in the section above.

### **Parents/Caregivers with Infants and Toddlers (0-23 Months)**

Parents/caregivers with infants and toddlers may not at first know what to do with their children during One-on-One Time. They may ask, "what can I do with a baby who just eats, sleeps, and cries?"

It is important to reassure them that interacting with their young children with focused attention is a wonderful opportunity to increase a sense of attachment and security by attending to their children.

Building a strong sense of attachment can begin even before a baby is born. Babies can hear, recognise voices, and even see light in the womb.

Parents/caregivers:

- Should be encouraged to spend time playing with their infants and toddlers. Simple activities such as mirroring facial expressions and singing songs are wonderful ways parents/caregivers can interact with their infants.
- Also learn how they can help their infant develop by exploring the world through the five senses – hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, and seeing. It is a great way to help one's child develop!
- Can even read to their children or show pictures in books or magazines.

Attending to a child's needs could be especially challenging for parents/caregivers with children who are very young and not able to communicate. Many parents/caregivers may believe that a crying child is one who is hard to manage or difficult. But really the child is just trying to communicate to the parent! The child might be hungry, or need a diaper change, or too cold/hot, or feeling sick, or uncomfortable. It is the parent's responsibility to explore what might be the cause.

Parents/caregivers can be encouraged to **Take a Pause** before reacting negatively to their children, especially when their children are crying. This might stop them from doing very negative things like violently shaking, pinching, or shouting at their children.

## Parents/Caregivers with Young Children (2-9 Years)

Parents/caregivers with young children are encouraged to use words to **Say What You See** in order to really show that they are paying attention to their children.

**Say What You See** means:

- **Describing what your child is doing.** We like to think of this as wrapping your child in language by describing what they are doing. This provides support for their children's activity while also expanding both their thinking and verbal skills.
- **Describing exactly what parents/caregivers see their children doing.** It can be helpful to think of it as talking to someone on the telephone who cannot see what is happening.

### How to Say What You See?

At first it can simply be describing what is happening in detail: the number, the colour, the temperature, the speed, and the behaviour are helpful starting points:

- "You are making a tower with yellow bricks, and here's is a red one you are putting on top. Now you are putting the five animals into the cart and they are going on a journey."
- "I see you are working hard on your homework. I see you are trying hard to figure out this problem. Keep at it!"

This may feel awkward at first as many parents/caregivers are not used to talking to their children during playtime. However, with practice, it becomes easier – just like everything else!

### Tips

Although parents/caregivers often say that describing what their child is doing makes them feel awkward, much to their surprise, their children do not usually notice their discomfort and respond very positively to this attention.

It is normal for parents/caregivers to start off by asking questions instead of "Saying What You See". It is your role as a facilitator to help them learn how to simply describe what the child is doing instead of asking questions.

Another important building block or skill is **naming your child** when speaking to him or her. When parents/caregivers learn to say things like "You are putting the red block on the blue block, Adam," this shows that the parent is giving support and attention to his or her child.

Make only **positive comments** and avoid critical comments.

Remember, this is the child's game. There is no right and wrong in play and, within reason, what a child chooses to play is right for them. The parent's job is to show an interest and say something nice.

## **Parents/Caregivers with Adolescents (10-18 Years)**

Due to various demands that parents/caregivers and teenagers encounter daily, such as school and work, it can be challenging sometimes to find time to spend time together. A strong parent-child relationship is not possible without spending quality One-on-One Time together.

Spending time creates the space for the parent to be more available to their child and they can play a protective role in their lives. This helps parents/caregivers to be more involved in their adolescents' lives, protecting them from risky sexual behaviours.

### **Letting Your Adolescent Lead**

During One-on-One Time with adolescents, parents/caregivers can also allow their children to take the lead. The teens get to choose what the activity or conversation is about. It may even mean that the parents/caregivers and teens can spend One-on-One Time sitting next to each other doing parallel activities with occasional observations. It is important to encourage parents/caregivers to allow their teens to talk about the things that matter to them.

### **Spending Time on Hobbies**

Another good way parents/caregivers can develop positive relationships during One-on-One Time with their children is to spend time with them when they are doing something that they enjoy. For example, seeing their children play a sports match, or demonstrating a new dance move.

### **Sharing of Personal Stressors or Concerns**

As they spend more One-on-One Time together, the teens may also share personal things that give them stress or concern. It is much easier to share personal issues with a parent when they have developed a sense of trust and open communication.

Parents/caregivers may initially want to react in a negative way. Remind parents/caregivers to Take a Pause (or just a few breaths) so that they can respond to their children in a way that keeps them feeling secure.

## 5. How to Support Parents Who Have Children with Disabilities

This provides information on How to Support Parents Who Have Children with Disabilities. Refer to how to [Let Your Child Lead](#) for parents with a child with disabilities during One-on-One Time for more information and guidance.

### Overview on Supporting Parents Who Have Children with Disabilities

#### Communicating with Children with Disabilities

While speech is considered the primary form of communication, words are not the only way to convey meaning. Body language, facial expression, and tone of voice are also powerful means of communication. This has implications for children with different disabilities.

Everybody, regardless of disabilities, is able to communicate in some way. However, children with disabilities can face significant barriers in communicating their views and feelings. One of the main barriers is that people without disabilities often lack a commitment to communicate with children or adults with disabilities. But it is possible to overcome these barriers.

Some points to keep in mind are the following:

- **Attitudes:** Many believe that children with disabilities who do not communicate in the same ways as other children are unintelligent or disobedient. This negative attitude is a major barrier to effective communication.
- **Assumptions:** Children with multiple disabilities are often wrongly assumed to be unable to communicate. Their communication may be more subtle, such as the flickering of eyelids or other small movements. Good communication with children with serious disabilities requires time to build a communication method. A first step is to ask others how the child prefers to communicate.
- **Gender:** It is usually more difficult for girls with disabilities to express their views. In most cultures, the greater expectation of passivity from girls compounds the barriers that they face due to disabilities.
- **Physical environment:** A poorly laid out area without clearly defined boundaries can be confusing to children, especially those with sensory or cognitive disabilities. Lighting and temperature are also essential elements to consider. For example, cold/warm and bright/dark places can affect mood and behaviour. All parts of the environment need to be made accessible to children with physical disabilities
- **Lack of time to build a relationship:** Children with disabilities who are not used to being asked their opinions or being listened to will need more time to build up confidence and trust. It may take time to explore the best ways of communicating with a particular child. Parents may need to be more patient with themselves and their children when spending One-on-One Time with their children.



- **The disabilities:** While in-depth knowledge of all disabilities are not required, it is important to understand if and how the child's ability to use speech and body language is affected, and what specific methods of communication best suit the child.
- **Modelling:** Parents should continue to model the behaviours that they would like to see in their children. This is especially important when it comes to helping children communicate and interact with others.

Here are some practical tips to support parents in communicating with their child with disabilities. You can remind parents that:

- When talking to a child with disabilities, they are interacting with a child, and keep the same tone and language as they would with any child of a similar age.
  - If the child cannot hear, it is important that they stay still, including their head, while talking with the child. Remind them to make sure they are looking at their child when they speak, and make sure that their child is looking at them and that their child can see their face and mouth.
- With a child with intellectual disabilities, always speak clearly, using short sentences. Remind them to use the child's name so they know you are talking to them.
- It is very important to respond to the child's attempts to communicate, so they understand the effectiveness and importance of communication. If a child points to an object of interest, they can point to it and clearly name it to indicate that they have understood and are listening.
- It takes time for children with disabilities to build up confidence and trust, as they are not used to being asked their opinions or being listened to.
- It may take time to explore the best ways of communicating with a particular child. They may need to be more patient with themselves and their children when spending One-on-One Time with their children.

## **Involving the Whole Family Including Children with Disabilities**

Parents/caregivers may encounter resistance from partners or other adults in the family when introducing new household rules or trying to establish new routines.

You should encourage parents to involve the entire family. Make sure that all members of the household. Extended family - grandparents/caregivers, aunts/uncles, cousins - who are living under the same roof should be included in the discussion of household rules.

If anyone in the family has disabilities, make sure they are equally involved. Children and adults with disabilities can face significant barriers in communicating their views and feelings. One of the main barriers is that people without disabilities often lack a commitment to communicate with children or adults with disabilities. But it is possible to



overcome these barriers. Sometimes this process can be time-consuming, but it is necessary to ensure their right to participate.

Children with cognitive, intellectual and/or behavioural learning disabilities take more time to learn and may have difficulty communicating. Many children with learning disabilities can learn to read and write, grow up to have jobs, and have a family of their own. Even children with more severe intellectual disabilities can be supported to participate in school and in their community and will benefit from inclusion.

Children with learning disabilities may have difficulty understanding, remembering, processing and communicating information. Specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia etc, come in many different forms, such as difficulties with letters, numbers, proprioception and coordination.

Here are some tips for supporting parents with children who have learning disabilities:

- Simplify language, summarise information and use a variety of communication methods including gestures, and pictures. Treat children with respect! Communicate in ways appropriate to physical age as well as level of cognitive development.
- Use visual images - photos, drawings, videos - to promote communication, especially when discussing abstract ideas or to help children explain their feelings.
- Consider the use of audio, audio description, easy access, subtitles, simplified (or plain language) and other assistive software.
- Be willing to repeat points, questions or answers several times to be understood.
- Give children adequate time to express themselves.
- Check in to make sure that the person understands the topic or activity to be completed.
- Incorporate hands-on learning activities into routine.

## **Providing Appropriate Support for Children with Disabilities**

The following practices can help parents make children with disabilities feel more accepted, included, and confident during One-on-One Time as well as other times:

- Always ask children with disabilities how best to meet their needs: consider the child as the best expert about their disabilities.
- Always ask if and how a child wants or needs to be assisted. Respect the child's wishes if your offer is not accepted.
- Allow children with disabilities to take the same risks as other children in order to help them to gain confidence. Over-protection denies them the chance to explore, discover what is possible and learn how to keep themselves safe.

- Only help children with disabilities when they need it. Too much support denies them the chance to become independent and can feel patronising.
- Be open and flexible to change to accommodate the children involved.
- Focus on reinforcing each child's strengths and abilities rather than those things they cannot do, for example, a wheelchair user might have strong arms and hands, a deaf child might be great at drawing.
- Build on children's strengths by praising children who say, "I don't understand" or ask for help or thank them for asking and then offer help or an explanation.
- Give children plenty of time to both understand what is being talked about and to formulate their responses.
- Model good communication so that children learn from what they see and hear.