

# **Parents Make the Difference**

**Liberia**



**Note from the authors:** This training module was created in 2012 by the IRC Child Protection team for a project in Lofa County, Liberia. Based on the results of the Parents Make the Difference program in Lofa County, this intervention was revised between 2014 and 2016 in preparation for a second implementation in Monrovia, Liberia. The content of this module was based in previous IRC experiences in parental skills programs in Burundi, Thailand and Liberia. In particular, IRC implemented a parenting skills program in Liberia in 2010-2011 in partnership with the Nurturing Parenting Program.<sup>1</sup> Some components of that parenting program were adapted for this intervention. Our thanks to the Children and Youth Protection and Development (CYPD), Research Evaluation and Learning (REL) and Health technical units of the IRC in Headquarters, our academic partner Duke University, IRC-Burundi and IRC-Thailand and Nurturing Parenting Program for their invaluable contributions to this module, but also their support, encouragement and enthusiasm to help children in Liberia and all around the world. Special thanks and deep acknowledgement for the IRC-Liberia team active during the first evaluation of the intervention and curriculum revisions, including the facilitators Ruth Z.B. Korgbe-Siafa and Rufus J. Kuku (Program Officers/Facilitators), John Zayzay (CYPD Manager) and Sandra Maignant (CYPD Coordinator). Their commitment to the children's cause in Liberia is source of pride and inspiration for the humanitarian family.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nurturingparenting.com/>

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# Session 1

## Introduction: Becoming a Positive Parent

*Parenting is a difficult and very important job of bringing up a child to maximize their potential through love and attention.*

### Objectives

1. Introduce parents and trainers.
2. Present the program and its goals.
3. Set up the rules, clarify fears and discuss expectations.
4. Understand what positive parenting is.
5. Build relationships between facilitators and parents and between the participants.

### Materials

- Attendance forms
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Trainers' guide
- Handout(s) for session
- Plastic sleeves for parents, if possible
- Pencils, if possible
- Notebooks, if possible
- Fidelity checklist

### Before the Session: Be Prepared!

- ✓ Collect all of the materials for this session.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; if possible, sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

### Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.

## 1. Introduction and Welcome

- **Welcome parents** and praise them for being there. Acknowledge that parenting is a difficult job, but the most important job of our lives. We can learn together from our experiences and knowledge, traditions and science. *Note: From this early stage, recognize that each participant has important knowledge to contribute to the sessions since, as parents, they know their child better than anyone else.*
- **Introduce yourself** and tell parents about previous experience facilitating trainings (and as parent if that is the case).

## 2. Parent Introduction Activity: “Make a Friend”

- Ask caregivers to get in pairs and to introduce themselves to each other. Ask them to say their name, talk about their family and children, and to give another interesting fact about themselves.
- Bring caregivers back together as a whole group. Have each person introduce their partner to the whole group.

## 3. Ground Rules

- Punctuality and attendance
- Respect and listen to everyone; all opinions are valid.
- No phones
- Any others? (Get ideas from the group)
- Review Attendance Policy

*Optional: Write these on a flip chart and bring them to hang up at each session.*

## 4. Parents’ Expectations, Hopes, and Worries

- Ask “What are your hopes as we begin this program?”
  - What do you hope for yourself? For your child?
- Ask “What are your worries, or fears, about this program?”

*Optional: Write HOPES and FEARS on a flip chart.*

## 5. Program presentation

The purpose of this section is to tell parents information about the program and to answer any questions they have about the purpose or structure.

- **There will be 10 sessions** and you should attend all of them.
- **Each session will be about 2 hours.** At the end of each session you will receive handouts that review important information from that week.
- We want you to form Parent Support Groups of 4-5 parents each. You as parents can help each other beyond the sessions. You can share ideas and feelings to encourage each other to practice the parental techniques you have learned. The group will help if a parent has missed a session, but we do not expect parents to miss unless something unforeseeable happens.
- **We encourage you to communicate and educate them about what you learned.** This will help you and your partner to be consistent with the parental practices. Spending time with the children is essential, as is spending time with spouses to ensure you both send the same messages and act consistently in raising children.
- **Each session is based on discussion, so don't hesitate to ask questions or to raise concerns.** Anything you say is important, and also respect anything other parents have to say.
- **These sessions do not require you to read or write.** If we write things down, we will also say them out loud. You can do the things we discuss even if you have not had any schooling.

[Stop to check for questions.]

- **We are here to learn from each other and to empower ourselves** by learning techniques to better communicate with our children, to make them better children who respect their parents and traditions, who are stronger, smarter, and good citizens.

- **We are going to learn from evidence and science how children develop and how their brains work.** Some evidence will help us to understand why children act the way they do (what we call children's psychology), understand them better and also understand ourselves.
- **We are going to learn techniques that give us tools and choices in our daily work and lives with our children:** communication techniques and positive discipline techniques that help children learn to behave and respect their parents.

### **Short Game or Energizer**

Develop a short activity to re-energize the group since you have just had a long discussion about procedures and rules. It will be helpful to move around and to do something fun.

## **6. Discussion: What is nurturing and caring parenting?**

### **What does "nurturing" mean?**

- **Nurturing = Caring for**
- Think about your farm or garden. What do you do to make sure your plants are healthy and that they yield a good crop? (*water, take out weeds, protect them from strong sun*)
- These are things you do to CARE for your garden – to NURTURE it.
- **Just like you care for and nurture your garden, we need to nurture our children to make sure they grow up to healthy and successful.**
- In this program, we will also learn how to teach our children to have good behaviors and to reduce bad behaviors.
- Just like your plants, you want to get rid of the bad weeds. We will learn to discipline gently so that you can correct your children in ways that they can continue to grow.
- You also need to nurture yourself in order to be able to nurture your children.
- We will talk about all of these ways to be a nurturing parent.

**PAIR ACTIVITY: “When I was a child...”**

Ask parents to get into pairs. Ask pairs to share with each other their answers to these questions.

*Optional: Write these questions on flip chart to remind them what to discuss.*

- What is one good memory you have of your childhood?
- What was the feeling you had then?
- What is the feeling you have now as you remember it?
- What memory do you want your children to have of you?

Then ask for 1-2 volunteers to share with the group.

**Brief discussion: What do nurturing and caring parents DO? What are their ways?**

These mean ways of acting and talking with our children. **Let us discuss parenting that helps children to develop well and to become happy and successful in the future. Imagine a nurturing and caring parent. What do they DO?**

- **Make a list of BEHAVIORS OF A NURTURING PARENT (verbal or on a flip chart). These should be very specific behaviors** (examples: hug your child, talk to your child). Encourage parents to give real examples they have observed.
- **We do not have to use money to be nurturing.** We can nurture through our words and actions that do not need money.
- **We all have the potential to be a nurturing parent, but it is difficult and none of us is perfect!** We need to make strong efforts and to learn skills to become the best parents we can become. We hope to do that in this program.

**VOLUNTEER ROLE-PLAY: Nurturing Parenting**

Ask 2 parents to demonstrate some nurturing parenting behaviors (one plays the parent; the other plays the child). If needed, coach them by reminding them of the behaviors that the participants listed. *(If the group did not list many, possibilities are praising the child, telling the child you love them, helping them get ready to go to school, etc.)*



## 7. Building Strong Attachments

**These nurturing behaviors build strong connections and closeness between children and parents.** Children become attached to adults who love and nurture them. This means they feel very connected to these adults and feel safe with these adults. This begins when children are just small babies, and we continue to develop this attachment as the child gets older. Having a strong attachment to your child helps them feel safe at home. If they feel safe at home, then they will feel confident about exploring the world around them.

## 8. Nurturing by example

**Children learn from what they see more than what they hear.** If you tell them be peaceful and work hard, but you are violent and lazy, expect your children to follow your example and not your words. Children are sponges that observe and absorb everything. In this program, we will help each other to become good role models for our children.

**STORY ILLUSTRATION:** Tell a story that illustrates the benefits of nurturing.

To finish, let us leave with a picture in our mind of two bird families. In both families, they have just had a full nest of baby birds. When baby birds are first born, what do they need? *(food, warmth, teaching to fly).*

The mother and father of one bird family forgot to give their babies worms to eat, left them in the cold air, and did not teach them to fly. What do you think happened to those birds? *(They become weak and sick. They never learn to fly.)*

The mother and father of the other bird family gave their babies worms to eat, kept them warm the whole day and night, and taught them flying lessons. What do you think happened to those birds? *(They grow healthy and fly away.)*

So the lesson is that your child's life is in your hands. As the parent, you can help them to have a good future. If you nurture and care for them while they are young, they can fly and succeed in the future.

## **9. Home Practice: Small Small Every Day!**

**Find ways to enjoy the company of your children this week.** Think about the ideas you have shared today about caring or nurturing parenting. **Find ways to nurture and love them.** We would be grateful for you to share with the group next week what you tried and how your child responded!

## **10. Evaluation**

Discuss these simple questions with the group:

- What did you like best about the session?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?

## **11. Group praise and closing**

Ask the parents to stand up.

Thank them for their participation and give specific praise for things they did well during the session as a group (*Examples: Thank you for sharing your feelings with us; I appreciate how hard you all tried with the role-plays*).

Close the session with a song, saying, or group hug. (*Please avoid the group hug at any times when there are concerns about spread of disease.*)

**Handouts delivery (as it is the first session, a plastic sleeve and a pen should be provided, if these are possible. You can ask parents to bring the materials each time they come back for the next session).**

*Do not give handouts during the session or parents will get distracted; giving the handouts at the end will help them to remember what it was discussed as they will take a look at them.*

## Session 2

### Child Development: Appropriate expectations

*Science and experience on brain development help us to better care for children to promote healthy brain growth and functioning. Developing appropriate expectations and praising our children help them to develop positive feelings about themselves. Talking with your children and spending time with them helps brain development starting at birth.*

#### Objectives

1. Understand how the brain develops in childhood and how parents affect brain development.
2. Learn that different stages of childhood require different stimulation and different expectations.
3. Learn how to PRAISE children and how that improves their behavior.

#### Materials

- Attendance forms
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Trainers' guide
- Drawing materials for praise pair activities (paper/pencil for each pair)
- Handout(s) for session
- Fidelity checklist

#### Before the Session: Be Prepared!

- ✓ Read through all of the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

#### Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.

## 1. Introduction and Welcome

- Welcome parents and praise them for being there. Smile and be positive. You need all your energy to facilitate this session; put your heart in it.
- Ask about the home practice and praise them for trying.
  - Did they spend time with their children? Did they have fun?
  - Have they noticed any changes since last session in the way they interact with their children?
- Ask if they have formed small groups. Remind them of the purpose, answer any questions, and encourage them to meet.

## 2. Icebreaker (Optional)

Sing this familiar song with parents. Encourage them to join in the singing and motions. Say, “You will know the first part of this song. We have also made up a new part that we will teach you!”

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

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

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

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

NEW VERSES TO TEACH:

*When you're happy with your child, clap your hands (clap hands twice).*

*When you're happy with your child, clap your hands (clap hands twice).*

*When you're happy with your child, then you smile and care for him.*

*When you're happy with your child, clap your hands (clap hands twice).*

*When you're happy with your child, smile at them (clap hands twice).*

*When you're happy with your child, smile at them (clap hands twice).*

*When you're happy with your child, then you smile and care for them.*

*When you're happy with your child, smile at them (clap hands twice).*

If time, you can ask parents if they have other ideas for a verse. *ASK: What else can you do if you are happy with your child?* Then sing the new verse.

### **3. Introduction: Brain Development**

- Today we are going to learn something very important. To show you how important this is, I want to ask you some questions: If you did not have your arm, could your life still go on? (Yes.) If you did not have either of your legs, could life still go on? (Yes.) Now, if you did not have your head – your brain – could life go on? (No.) The brain directs all of life.
- So today we are going to give you information about how the brain works and develops. We are going to learn about brain development affects whether human beings become smart, productive citizens, respectful people, good students, and even “big people” (i.e. successful people) in the future.
- A lot of important brain development happens in the first years of life. **Between 3 and 5 years is a great opportunity to help children develop healthy brains.**

#### **The brain is formed by cells called neurons.**

- We have between 80 and 100 billion neurons in our brain. These neurons work through tiny electrical connections that put them in contact called synapses.
- You can think of this like electricity that flows through a flashlight.

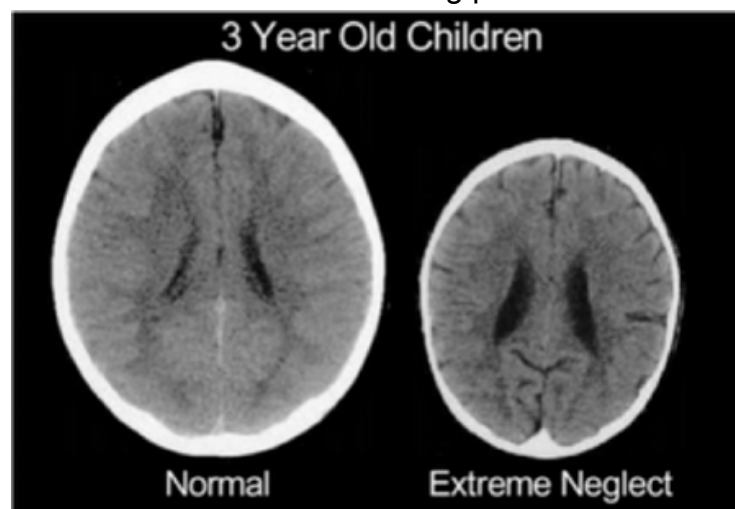
### **We activate those neurons through experiences.**

- Like you have to turn on a flashlight with a button, you have to turn on neurons. If a flashlight has batteries but just sits there, it does not light up. You have to push the button!
- Children are like the flashlight. Their brain does not develop unless you “push the buttons.” You press the buttons through providing a positive environment for them. This includes interacting with them and taking care of their needs, like providing food and keeping them safe.

## **4. Parenting Affects Brain Development**

**ILLUSTRATION:** Show the picture below illustrating that children’s experience when they are young affect their brains.

Print out and show the following picture<sup>2</sup>:



### **Explain Picture**

- On the left is the brain of a normal child. On the right is the brain of a child who has been neglected. The neglected child has a smaller brain and there is less brain material in the center. You can see that the holes are bigger (these are called “ventricles”).

<sup>2</sup> Perry, BD. (2008). Chapter 4. Child Maltreatment: A Neurodevelopmental Perspective on the Role of Trauma and Neglect in Psychopathology. In Theodore P. Beauchaine & Stephen P. Hinshaw (Eds.), *Child and Adolescent Psychopathology* (p. 93-129). John Wiley & Sons.

- So the picture shows that a child with a nurturing environment and positive relationships has a more healthy brain than children who are abused or neglected.
  - **The child in a nurturing environment has had good experiences to build brain connections – to turn on the flashlight!**
  - **Abused and neglected children who have not had good experiences and who have a lot of stress sometimes have fewer connections or unhealthy connections.**
- Because of this, some neglected and abused children have developmental problems that affect many parts of their life:
  - Their MIND can be affected: How clever they are / how well they do in school
  - Their FEELINGS can be affected – more likely to experience sadness and worry
  - Their BEHAVIOR can be affected – could be more aggressive or disobedient
  - Their SOCIAL life can be affected – may have more trouble interacting with friends and other adults.

## **5. How Parents of Young Children Can Help Children's Brains Develop**

- **YOUNG CHILDREN especially are learning at a very fast rate.**
  - This is the age when children learn to do a lot of important skills, like walking and talking. They start to learn how to interact with other people and they start school.
  - They are absorbing everything, discovering what feelings are, learning about the world around of sounds, smells, colors, and social interactions. This early learning is the foundation of their entire life.
  - Because of this, it is important to treat your child as active members of the family now while they are young, rather than waiting to interact with them until they are older.

**Discuss:** How do you think brain development of young children can affect the child's life - both now and as an adult?

**Parents can make a big difference in how children's brains develop!** They can help a child maximize their potential, make her or him smarter, happier, better in school, and a better friend and family member. We will learn how to do that.

### **Two Important Parenting Skills for Brain Development:**

#### **1) Showing love and affection.**

Love helps build more brain connections. If we do not treat children correctly, if we do not nurture them, areas of the brain will not develop and important neurons will die. Then a child is not able to learn and develop as well.

#### **2) Talking to your children.**

Next session, we will talk about communication and teach you how to talk with your children. This helps them to develop new knowledge, to do better in school, and to learn to get along with others.

#### **Building brain connections takes repetition and practice.**

Like a muscle develops through sport, connections between neuron develop through brain activity.

- Example: How does a one-year-old throw a ball? Not very well! How does a 5-year-old throw a ball? Much better! This is because their brains have more connections when they are 5 because they have practiced using their hands and doing things like throwing a ball.
- The result of this practice is strong connections. Think about sewing with thread. The thread makes strong connections between the fabric. We want to help children have strong connections in their brains.

**Summary Point: A nurtured child has a healthier brain, is usually happier and smarter, and is usually more prepared to face adulthood.**



## 6. Skills Training: Praise

Next we are going to discuss one of the most important parenting skills of the program - PRAISE. **Praise is telling your child that you like something that he or she is doing or that your child is doing a good job with something.**

### Praise can...

- Help your child to behave well.
- Build your relationship with your child.
- Build healthy brain connections.

There are two kinds of praise: general praise and specific praise.

- **General praise** is saying things like: "Good job, nice work, good girl."
- **With specific praise, you say exactly what behavior you like.** Specific praises are things like: I love the way you are sweeping the floor...Thank you for saying "please." ... I think it is so nice that you are sharing the ball with your friend...
- Both types of praise must have a POSITIVE word (e.g., Good, Great, Correct, Nice...)

**Discussion: Why is praise good?** (*Ask; then add anything they did not say.*)

- Shows love and affection
- Helps child feel good about themselves
- Teaches which behaviors you like her to do. *When she knows that you like that behavior, she will probably now do that good behavior even more! She might also stop doing other behaviors that you do not like!*
- All of these things help build good and healthy brain connections.

**Both kinds of praise are good things to say to your child.**

Specific praise is especially good because children love earning praise. When you tell them what you like, they will do more of that behavior so that they can get more praise! Specific praise also makes them feel good about their abilities.

**Praise can decrease bad behavior.** For praise to improve behavior, you have to LOOK for the good behaviors that you want that are the opposite of the behaviors you do not want.

Example: If you want a child to stop screaming all the time, LOOK for any time they use a quiet voice and praise that immediately!

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY 1:** One facilitator plays the parent and the other plays the child. The parent is working in the house and the child is playing or helping with chores. The father finds ways to praise the child using lots of praise and especially specific praises such as: “Thank you for being quiet” and “I like that you are playing gently.”

Here you see that you can do praise at any time – even while you are doing other work. **You do not have to have a lot of time to give your child praise.**

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY 2:** Giving praise while drawing. *(Female facilitator should be child; Male facilitator should be the father. This helps to show the importance of fathers as parents.)*

During drawing, be sure to draw with the child and give a lot of very specific praises (Examples: I love the way you are drawing the clouds; You are doing such a good job of playing nicely with the markers; It is so nice that you are sharing your paper with me.)

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Have pairs of participants practice praise while they pretend to do chores and the person playing the child is helping or playing on the floor. Leave some time for questions from the group about the role-play.

## **7. What are appropriate expectations for children?**

This means what you think a child is able to do. **ASK:**

- **What do you expect from your children when they are 3 years old?** (Wait for responses.)
- **What about 5 years old?** (Wait for responses)

Then ask:

Do you think that a 3-year-old should be able to add and subtract big numbers? No

Do you think that a 4-year-old should be sent across the road to fetch something? No

Do you think that a 5-year-old should be able to carry a very big bucket of water? No

Do you think that a 6-year-old should be able to cook dinner by themselves? No

**These activities are for older children! We have to wait for these things until their bodies and brains are ready.** How would a 3- to 5-year-old child feel if you ask them to do these things that are too difficult? What negative effects might they have on them (e.g., get burned trying to cook, hurt their arms carrying the bucket, get hit by a vehicle crossing the street). **Instead, think of smaller things they can do for chores** (e.g., carry a small bucket or bring you things inside the house – not across the road).

Then ask:

Do you think that a 3-year-old can sing songs with you?

Do you think that a 4-year-old can clap their hands?

Do you think that a 5-year-old can count?

Do you think that a 4-year-old could hand you a spoon or cup if you ask?

Do you think that a 3-year-old listens to you and understands some things that you say?

**Yes, these are things that a child can do!** When you help them do these things, they feel good about themselves and develop new skills. These are appropriate for their stage of brain and body development.

**The expectations can contribute to their feelings of negative or positive self-worth.**

- a. Expectations that are appropriate promote a healthy sense of self and communicate encouragement through achievement and effort. They provide children with a sense of confidence and with the ability to please their parents.
- b. Expectations that are too high can be physically dangerous (like too heavy work). Inappropriate

expectations also can discourage a child. Children cannot please their parents no matter how hard they try. The result can be a sense of failure; the child might become withdrawn and less interested in communicating with parents or exploring the environment.

**Summary Point: We must have realistic expectations for children appropriate for their age. We help them and encourage them to do only the things that their brains and bodies are ready to do!**

## **8. Home Practice: Small Small Every Day!**

**PRAISE! Give your child praise this week for good behaviors. Focus on specific praise. What are some behaviors you can look for to praise?** (Get ideas from group.)

We talked about ways to stimulate your child's brain development through talking to them and showing them love. Find ways to do that this week. How are some ways you can stimulate your child's brain this week? (Get ideas from the group.)

## **9. Evaluation**

Discuss these simple questions with the group:

- What did you like best about the session?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?

## **10. Group praise and closing**

Ask the parents to stand up.

Thank them for their participation and give specific praise for things they did well during the session as a group (Examples: Thank you for sharing your feelings with us; I appreciate how hard you all tried with the role-plays).

Sing Together:

When you're happy with your child, **praise the child** (clap hands twice).

When you're happy with your child, praise the child (clap hands twice).

When you're happy with your child, **then your WORDS will surely show it.**

When you're happy with your child, praise the child (clap hands twice).

## Session 3

### Communicating and Connecting with Children

*We can make communication more meaningful and nurturing through increasing interactions, spending time playing, and showing empathy for a child's feelings.*

#### Objectives

1. Improve the quality of communication and understanding between parents and children.
2. Discuss the importance of quality time and play with children.
3. Explore the concept of empathy and learn techniques to increase empathy towards children.

#### Materials

- Attendance forms
- Materials for the ice breaker (playing a familiar game)
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Trainers' guide
- Handout(s) for session
- Toys for the role-play of the playing activity (*anything families will already have at home; e.g., pebbles, pencils/paper, cups and other common household items, cardboard boxes*)
- Fidelity checklist

#### Before the Session: Be Prepared!

- ✓ Read through all of the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

#### Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.

## 1. Introduction and Welcome

- Welcome parents and praise them for being there. Smile and be positive. You need all your energy to facilitate this session; put your heart in it.
- Take a moment to ask parents how they feel. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> session. They know each other.
- How is the Parent Support Group working? Are they encouraging and nurturing each other? How do they feel? Feelings are important. If they feel they are learning and if they feel the relationship with their children is improving, that is great. If they don't, that is also okay; they are trying and the process will take them there.
- Ask about the home practice:
  - Did you praise your child this week? Did you give them any specific praise? *(Get examples of specific praises. However, also praise the parents also for using general praise).*
  - How did you stimulate your child's brain development this week? *(Note: Almost anything they did with their child will stimulate their brain, so praise all efforts.)*

Trying is the important part. If you have started the process, you will get there!

## 2. Icebreaker: Game time! (Optional)

- Choose a very familiar and brief game for parents to play with each other. Choose a game that is appropriate for 3 and 4 year olds.
- Set up any needed materials ahead of time so that this activity does not take a lot of time.
- Ask parents to get in groups of 4-5 people to play the game.
- Say: Later today we are going to talk about playing with our children. We hope this will be fun for you, so today we will try to remember the ways you had fun as a child and do those things again!

### **3. Introduction to Communication: Children have different styles of communication**

Like adults, children have different ways of communicating. Some are shy. Others are very talkative. However, we can find ways to communicate with all children and to relate to them.

Remember our last session about appropriate expectations? **It is very important to have appropriate expectations for how children communicate.** These are some examples:

- You cannot expect a new baby to respond to her or his name.
- You cannot expect a young child not to cry. *Crying is an important and normal part of communication for children. Therefore, parents should not punish children for crying.*
- Many times it is difficult to understand how a child is feeling. They are not able to say it clearly. Sometimes they just act out the feelings instead of talking about them.

**We also need to talk to our children in ways that they understand. Use simple language for young children.** Listening to how your child's responds will let you know how they understood what you said and whether you need to repeat or say it differently.

### **4. Important Rules for Communication**

**It requires mutual RESPECT.**

- Have you ever heard things like, "This is just a child. It does not matter what she says." or "Don't waste your time explaining her anything. She is not going to understand it anyways."?
- What do you think about these statements?
- **Children often understand more than we think they do.** It is important to talk and listen to them. You should not wait until a child is older to talk to them.

**It requires some EFFORT and time.**

- You need to make an effort to communicate with your child. *(Note: You do not always have to take a long time and stop your work to spend time with your children. You*



*can spend time with them while you work by paying attention to them when they are nearby.)*

Communication requires information from both sides, so it is a **two-way conversation** – not a one-way conversation that is only you talking to your child. When you tell your child things, give them time to respond. Sometimes children need extra time to figure out what they want to say.

## **5. Communication Skill 1: Playing**

**Playing with parents is wonderful for children!**

### **Why is Play Important?**

- It relieves parent stress. Having fun with your child makes you enjoy being a parent more. (It is tiring to always teach, correct, and take care of your child. Also have fun with them!)
- It helps children to “become your friend” and not to be afraid of you.
- It opens communication, and your child becomes free with you. They can ask questions and share their thoughts and feelings.
- It helps children behave better. When they have fun with you, they will obey you more.
- You can praise them during play, which teaches them to behave better.
- Talking to your child is very helpful for learning and school.
- Play can promote your good values and beliefs. You can show your child how to be the respectful, caring person that you want them to be.

Playing helps them succeed in school, with their friends, and to become a good person in the future!

**You do not have to take a lot of time!** Sometimes you are too busy and tired to take much time. It is great for kids if you can do this even for a few minutes at a time!

## **HOW should you play with your child?**

**Brainstorm Ideas for Playing:** Discuss age appropriate games parents can play with their children: sports (kicking a football, running), jumping rope, the rock game, house spot, lappa, blocks. Ask parents about games they know, games they play with their children, and games children play among themselves.

- **Choose games good for their age.** Games for 1-year-olds are different than the ones for 3 or 4-year-olds. You can try different games with your child. If they do not understand a game, try an easier one.
- **Choose games that do not have strict rules.**

Guidelines for Playing with Children:

- a. **Follow the child's lead.** If they move to a new activity, just follow them. Do not force them to play anything specific.
- b. **Praise and Talk to children during play!** Copy what the child is doing and saying. This lets them know that you are watching and listening to them. It also teaches them. Give them specific praises for what they are doing.  
  
Example: Peter, I like how you are building a house with those brown sticks and round stones!
- c. **Have fun!** Playing should be fun for both the child and for YOU.

## **ACTIVITY: Playing with my child**

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY 1 – WHAT NOT TO DO:**  
Facilitators role-play playing a game with a child. First, break ALL of the guidelines above.

Decide ahead of time what you will play and what you will do. You can decide on an easy game parents can play with children with the simple play materials you brought (*e.g., marbles, pebbles, colored pencils/paper, cups and other common household items, cardboard boxes*).

Ask participants: “What did you think about how this parent played with their child?” *(After contributions, point out ways that all of the guidelines were broken.)*

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY 2 – WHAT TO DO:**

Facilitators role-play again but FOLLOWING ALL GUIDELINES. (Again, decide ahead of time exactly what you will do.)

**VOLUNTEER ROLE-PLAY:** Ask for 2 volunteers to do a role-play and tell them to try to follow all of the guidelines.

- Agree on the game. You might suggest one and give them a toy to play with (local - nothing fancy).
- The rest of the participants will observe the game for 3 minutes (no more).
- Analyze what happened. What was done well? What are other ideas for improving the play even more?

Close with Reminders: Praise and Talk to the child, Let Child Lead, Avoid Rules

## **6. Communication Skill 2: Introduction to Empathy (Responding to Your Child’s Feelings)**

What is empathy?

*Optional: Write the word EMPATHY on your flip chart so parents can see the word.*

- **Empathy is the ability of one person to walk in the shoes of another person and feel what that is like.**
- As it relates to nurturing parenting, empathy is the ability to perceive the emotions, needs and desires of a child; and to be able to respond in a nurturing way, keeping focused on the positive welfare of the child.
- **Empathy, simply, is the ability to show you care.**

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY:** One facilitator plays the role of parent, the other of the child. The child accidentally spills some oil. First, the parent yells at the child and calls them stupid for spilling.

Ask Parents: How do you think the child is feeling?

Then re-play with the parent responding with empathy: “I know it was an accident. Let’s clean it up together.”

Ask Parents: How do you think the child feels now?

### **Discussion: “When I was a child”**

**ASK:** Think about when you were a child. Did your parents do things that made you feel good? Did they do things that made you feel bad? (Have 1-2 volunteers share their responses.)

Remember these experiences when you are deciding how to treat your own child.

Summary:

- Children have important feelings that affect the rest of their lives. **Children have the same feelings we have but they show them differently.**
- **When you were a child, you wanted your parents and others to understand how you were feeling and to make you feel better. That is empathy.**

### **Discussion: Why is empathy important?**

- Helps us understand how children feel and allows us to help them feel better.
- Shows children you love them and care about them.
- Helps teach children to be caring and empathetic towards others.
- Helps us make sure we do not punish children for small things.
- Empathy gives children the attention they need. When children are very small and they cry, they are telling you many important things. They may be communicating, for example, “Pay attention to me. I need you to love me”, “I am tired,” “I am afraid,” “I am cold,” or “I have pain in my belly.”
- **Sometimes parents respond to their children’s feelings with violence (e.g., beating, yelling).** These are not acts of empathy. They do not show understanding. They teach children that their feelings are bad. **Everyone feels sad or angry sometimes, so it is important to teach children that these feelings are okay.**

- **It is important to understand whether a child made a mistake or whether they are misbehaving.** This can help you decide when a child should be punished or not. *(If child already feels bad for an accident, you can understand that they already feel bad and do not need another punishment.)*

## **7. Communication Skill 3: Steps for Showing Empathy**

**Being empathetic, understanding others' feelings and needs, will help us understand why children behave in a certain way and therefore allow us to react in a more constructive and nurturing manner.**

**This is a simple technique to help you improve your empathy, to understand better your children's feelings and deal with them. It has 4 steps:**

**Step 1** Identify the feeling.

**Step 2** Determine the reason.

**Step 3** Honor the feeling.

**Step 4** Deal with the feelings with the child.

Tell parents the following:

- **The first step is to identify or label what someone is feeling.** ***"Sammy, you are really vex right now, aren't you?"*** You are also teaching your child how to identify her or his own feelings with words. Teaching emotional language is essential. Your child needs to put words to feelings and emotions that are new to him or to her. You can use empathy when your child is having positive feelings, like happiness, and negative ones like fear or sadness.
- **The second step is to determine the reason that **Sammy is feeling vex**.** ***"Why are you vex?"*** Sammy will tell you why, if he knows why. Sometimes children have feelings and don't know why. Discussing their feelings can be important even when children don't know the reason for their feelings.
- **The third step is to honor a child's feelings.** If Sammy knows why, honor his reason. ***"I can understand you are vex because your sister got a bigger piece of***

***fish.***” Don’t dismiss that reason or criticize the child (for example, saying ***“That is stupid to be vex over a piece of fish!”***). This will make the child feel worse.

- **The fourth step is to deal with those feelings with the child. Comfort the child.** Sometimes bringing them close, hugging them, and talking gently to them is all that they need! You can then talk about what needs to be done to solve the problem if the problem can be solved.

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY:** Role-play a situation where a father makes a child stop playing to come and eat dinner. She is frowning, crying, and looking vex. Facilitators can follow the four steps:

- **Identify:** Princess, you look vex. Is that how you are feeling? (Sometimes children do not know the words for their feelings.)
- **Determine Reason:** Princess, why are you feeling vex? (Talk to understand the reason if the child can explain it.)
- **Honor Feelings:** Princess, I understand why you are feeling vex. Playing is so fun and you did not want to stop.
- **Deal with Feelings / Take Action:** You are feeling vex now, but tomorrow I will let you play with your friends again. I am glad that you have fun with them.

**Discuss:** How would we normally handle this here? (e.g., If child crying, may say, “I will make you to cry more!” and punish them.)

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Ask pairs to role-play a situation using empathy when a child makes a mistake. Pretend that you ask your child to get oil and they accidentally waste it along the way. Practice in your pairs using the 4 steps.  
(Ask 1 pair to show the group.)

## **8. Home Practice: Small Small Every Day!**

1. Play with your child. Even 10 minutes of playing will make a positive difference in your child’s life. (*Examples of games: pretending to do things with cups/boxes etc., rolling a small ball, drawing*)

2. Practice empathy. Enjoy learning about your children's feelings! Use the 4 steps:

**Step 1** Identify the feeling.

**Step 2** Determine the reason.

**Step 3** Honor the feeling.

**Step 4** Deal with the feelings with the child. Take action.

## **9. Evaluation**

Discuss these simple questions with the group:

- What did you like best about the session?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?

## **10. Group praise and closing**

Ask the parents to stand up.

Thank them for their participation and give specific praise for things they did well during the session as a group (Examples: Thank you for sharing your feelings with us; I appreciate how hard you all tried with the role-plays).

Close the session with a song, saying, or group hug.

## Session 4

### Discipline with dignity

*Child behaviors are reinforced through positive or negative attention. Positive discipline techniques can improve parent-child relationships, increase behaviors parents want to see, and prevent and stop misbehavior.*

#### Objectives

1. Understand how to improve child behaviors through positive and negative attention.
2. Examine the negative consequences of corporal punishment as a form of discipline.
3. Learn alternative techniques to corporal punishment.
  - Learn Ignoring small negative behavior
  - Learn Redirection for negative behavior.
  - Learn how to use Time-Out for larger negative behavior

*This session is designed to increase parent's understanding of the importance of establishing discipline that treats all family members with dignity. This session is also designed to increase parents' understanding of the reasons parents choose to use corporal punishment and to introduce alternative discipline strategies.*

#### Materials

- Attendance forms
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Trainers' guide
- Handout(s) for session
- Fidelity checklist

#### Before the Session: Be Prepared!

- ✓ Read through all of the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

#### Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.



*Some of the session content may make parents feel uncomfortable; they might feel a sense of guilt because of the bad discipline techniques they have used with their children (especially with elder siblings). Some parents may also experience negative feelings toward their own parents who should have treated them better. Be aware and underline the positive, so parents realize they can do better to their children now and that they do not need to blame their own parents, because you can also overcome mistreatment and use your personal resilience to thrive.*

## **1. Introduction and Welcome**

- Welcome parents and praise them for being there.
- Ask about the home practice:
  - Did you play with your children? What did you play? Did you enjoy it? How did the children respond? Were there challenges?
  - Did you use the 4-step technique to empathy? When? What was challenging? How did your child respond?
  - Ask whether parents have used praise in the past week. Have they had any challenges with praise?
  - Have they noticed any changes since last session in the way they interact with their children?

## **2. Icebreaker: Air drawing (Optional)**

This is one game to get parents moving around and laughing. You can choose any game that is light and fun. This is a serious session, so we want to do something easy and positive.

- Ask the parents to pretend they are holding a pen and to either sign their name in the air or to draw something, like an animal.
- Ask a volunteer to sign now with her/his head in the air, like the head was a pen.
- Ask other volunteer to place her/his hand on the hips. Now ask her/him to sign with her/his hips in the air like they were a pen. (So the whole body will move following the signature made by the hips...)
- This exercise should be fun, so allow for laughter and fun.

- Ask more volunteers and eventually all facilitators and participants can sign with their heads and then with their hips.

### **3. Children need discipline, order and structure. What do we mean by discipline?**

*(Get participant ideas.)*

**Discipline includes many ways to train our children.**

**Discuss: What do we expect / demand from our children?**

*(Optional: Make a list on the flip chart.)*

We talked before about appropriate expectations. **We need to expect from children what they are able to do - no more, no less. Then we can decide when to discipline them based on what is appropriate.**

Are the items we listed about what we expect appropriate?

### **4. Positive Discipline: How to train children in positive ways**

**There is positive discipline (that works) and negative discipline (violent discipline that does not work in the long run).**

Why do we need to discipline with dignity?

- Humiliation only brings frustration and resentment. Violence is humiliating.
- If you humiliate your children and treat them without dignity or respect, you are teaching them they can treat you and others without respect. They will imitate you.
- If you hurt your children physically, you are teaching that hurting is good and that loving and hurting are the same.
- BUT if you respect them and discipline without humiliation and violence, you teach them to solve problems without violence.

What makes discipline effective?

- Not everything can be about discipline. The time spent together between parent and child has to be quality “time-in”. **If children also have positive time with parents, then they are more likely to accept rules and limits.**
- We need clear expectations. For discipline to work, **parents must be consistent, yet flexible. DO NOT THREATEN CHILDREN. You don’t need it!** Just talk to your child, explain what it has to be done or the way you expect them to behave in a language they can understand.

## 5. Giving Clear Instructions

**Before we talk about helping your child learn, let’s talk about how to give children instructions that they can follow.** When we talk to children, we give them a lot of instructions and directions.

**Discuss: What are some things we tell a child to do?** (*Examples: Go get your shoes, Do your homework, Stop hitting your sister*) We especially give children a lot of instructions when we are trying to teach them things.

**There are some ways to give children instructions that will help them obey:**

- **Give one instruction at a time:** Young children cannot remember a lot of things at once. Sometimes adults tell young children to do 3 or 4 things at one time. Usually children forget and then adults get angry!
  - Example: Go get the cup, water and the soap, and tell your sister to get a towel. Bring me everything so you can take a bath...
  - That is too much! How could the parent put this into smaller pieces?
- **Be specific about what you are asking the child to do.**  
 Example: Parent says, “Johnny, go to my room and bring my slippers.” Johnny brings slippers. However, the parent says, “Those are the brown ones. I wanted the blue ones!” The parent should have said, “Johnny, go to my room and bring my blue slippers.”

- **Use simple words and sentences that they can understand.**
- **Be polite!** We want to model respectful behavior. The best way to do this is to be polite to the child. Say please and thank you. This teaches manners, and children are more likely to obey if asked nicely.

## **6. Children's psychology: Children love to earn attention from their parents!**

- **As a parent, the most powerful tool you own to shape your child's behavior is your attention.** Children love earning attention from their parents. They love positive attention (like with praise). But they will take negative attention rather than no attention at all.
- **We reinforce children's behavior by paying attention to that behavior either positively** ("I love it when you are clean and you do your homework.") **or negatively** ("I am going to pepper your eyes and put you under the sun if you do not clean yourself and do not finish your homework.")
- The first one reinforces cleanliness and doing homework; the second one does not reinforce the good behaviors and will teach the child violence, cruelty and hiding things from the parents.
- Remember when we talked about praise? **As parents, praise is one of the most powerful tools you have to shape your child's behavior.** When your child is behaving well, tell him what is good about it, and he will want to do more of it! So, if your child is having a hard time doing her homework, but one day she sits down to try to do her practice, use lots of praise to keep her going! You might say: "Thank you for sitting down to do your homework. I like how you are trying so hard!" She will feel like continuing because she knows you are noticing her good work.

## 7. Discipline Skill 1: Planned Ignoring

We know that children love their parent's attention, whether it is positive or negative. Because they are looking for the attention, ignoring minor negative behaviors is a very effective tool. Think of your attention as a very powerful fuel that feeds your child's behavior. We want to feed positive behavior with lots of praise and attention and not feed into negative child behavior by ignoring.

Ignoring can be used for many behaviors. Here is an example of a situation to ignore: Your child starts crying because she does not want what is served for dinner.

Ignoring means that you don't pay any attention to the crying. You don't say anything to her, don't look at her, don't even smile or frown at her. You can start eating your dinner to show her that you are not paying attention.

- This is very difficult, but teaches the child that this behavior will not get them attention.
- Often we harshly punish children immediately, but sometimes ignoring is more effective. **Ignoring feels like you are doing nothing, but really you are taking away your attention. That is doing a lot!**
- Ignoring is powerful when you have been spending positive time with the children. Then they notice when you ignore them. They miss your attention!

What does ignoring look like?

- **Physical:** Turn your back or move if you need to.
- **Do Another Activity:** Do something else (*e.g., keep doing your work, sing, talk to yourself or others*)
- **Don't say anything to the child.**
- **Keep a calm facial expression** (*If they see you are angry, that is still attention!*)
- **Pretend that the child is not even in the room.**

**Then the parent praises the child immediately when they stop the negative behavior!**

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY:** Role-play a child asking his mother to go to the market. The mother says No. The child

throws self on the ground, screaming, etc. Mother ignores him and just continues preparing to go. Eventually he stops and starts playing on his own again.

**ASK:** What did you notice?

Guidelines:

- **Ignore the behavior all the way through!** Ignoring might sound easy but it can actually be very difficult. **Children don't like being ignored, and sometimes when you start ignoring a behavior, the behavior will get even worse at first! They will try different things to see if they can get your attention.** However, if you keep ignoring, eventually it will decrease and, hopefully, go away! For example, they might start to cry or yell even louder. You don't want to stop ignoring and then give your attention when your child starts to yell louder. That will teach her she can get your attention if she just gets louder.
- **PRAISE your child once the negative behavior stops.** So if she is yelling, as soon as she stops, tell her: "I really like it when you are quiet." or "Thank you for calming down." This will teach your child that negative behavior gets no attention, but positive behavior gets a lot of attention. You are feeding the behavior you want to see happen more.
- **NOTE: Some behaviors cannot be ignored – especially unsafe behaviors.** When the child is hurting someone else or herself, those behaviors require other techniques which we are going to talk about in a minute.

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Tell the participants to break into pairs so they can practice praising positive child behaviors and ignoring negative child behaviors. They can choose any situation (some ideas: a child whining, begging, etc.) The facilitators should walk around the room and help the participants. If a participant is having trouble, the facilitator can help them.

## **8. Discipline Skill 2: Redirection**

**We have another technique to mention to you. It is called Redirection. Redirection is distracting a child with**

**something unrelated. You can use this skill if you notice that your child is beginning to show the early stages of a negative behavior.** It is good for stopping a behavior early before it gets too bad.

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY:** A child, played by a facilitator, says that they want to go outside, but it is raining and they cannot go outside. The child starts to whine and cry a little. The parent, played by a second facilitator, says, “Here, I have a toy you can play with!” The child is distracted and stops whining.

## **9. Discipline Skill 3: Time-out**

Now we will learn another technique that is one you can use for more serious behaviors.

- Time-out is a positive discipline technique. **It can be effective if used alone without beating or other punishments for serious behaviors. If done correctly, it is a technique that can replace beating for behaviors that are very important to stop.**
- You may do something like this already, but the way we will teach it today might be different than the way many parents do it.
- What is time-out? A child is placed in a “time-out space,” which is a separate place with no contact or communication with adults or children. They must stay for a few minutes. Then they must calm down before they can leave time-out.
- Like ignoring, time-out works because you remove all attention from a child. Remember that young children love attention, and in time-out they can’t get any attention or have any fun. It also helps them learn to calm down.

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY:** One facilitator plays the parent, the other plays the child. Also ask for a volunteer from the participants to play the sister.

- Child gets very angry and hits the sister (be careful not to really hurt!).
- Parent says: If you do not play nicely, you have to go to time-out. (Child hits sister again.)

- Parent says: “You hit your sister so you have to go to time-out.”
- Parent leads the child to a corner.
- Child yells and cries while in the corner (Parent ignores all of these behaviors).
- Parent waits 3 minutes (but child is still crying).
- Child calms down. Parent walks over to the child and says: “Your time-out is over. Thank you for being calm. Remember it is important to play nicely.”
- Child plays nicely.
- Parent says, “Thank you for playing nicely.”

Ask the group: What were the steps you noticed?

#### Steps for using “time-out”:

1. **Give one warning** (i.e.: “If you do not put your shoes in the room, you will have to go to time-out.”) If the child does not listen, go to Step #2.
2. **Send child to time-out.** Give the reason very simply. (Ex: “You did not put your shoes in the room, so you have to go to time-out.”). **Once you tell the child that he or she is going to time-out, they must go, no matter what they do or say. They may say: “I promise to be good now” or “But I love you!” Ignore all of those statements and lead the child to the time-out place.**
3. **Time-out lasts 3 minutes.** After 3 minutes, let the child leave time-out *as soon as they are calm. Some children need longer to calm down, so time-out does not end until the child is quiet.*
4. After time-out, **look for a behavior to praise.**
5. Praise a behavior that is opposite to the bad behavior the child did before time-out. *(Example: A child went to time-out because they did not listen. After time-out, praise the child for listening and following instructions.)*

**Remember to stay calm during the time-out procedure.**

**Choosing a time-out place:** Pick a place that is quiet and away from other people and other fun things. However, it must be a place where you can still see the child; eye linking is important. You need to watch to see if they calm down and to make sure they are safe.



Ask parents to think about a good time-out space they can use in their homes that is safe and quiet.

#### Notes About Time-out:

- You only use time-out for serious bad behaviors. (i.e., hitting, kicking, biting, not listening to you, destroying things). Otherwise, ignoring can be used.
- Both parents and other people in the home need to understand the rules and time-out, so that if the child is sent to time-out, no one talks or interacts with the child until time-out is over and the child has calmed down.
- Remember “time-out” works only if “time in” is quality time. Children dislike time-out because they cannot have any positive attention from you. If they enjoy time with you, then they will understand why time-out is a punishment when they misbehave.

#### **Time-out is NOT**

1. **Locking a child in a room/house.**
2. **Locking a child out of the house or making them sleep outside.**
3. **Chasing a child away from home.**

These are more severe punishments that can be unsafe and are not positive discipline.

*(Note: Time-out is good to use with children ages 3 to 10. Sometimes children who are younger cannot understand, so this is not appropriate.)*

**VOLUNTEER ROLE-PLAY:** Ask two volunteers to role-play using time-out in this situation: A parent tells a 3-year-old child to put their shoes in the other room. The child does not do it.

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Have parents choose a partner to practice time-out. One adult will be the parent, the other adult will be the child. Pretend the parent tells the child to do something and the child does not do it. (Tell the child to be a very difficult child so that the parent can practice all of the skills.)

Reverse roles to let both parents practice.  
Discuss the role-play.

## **10. Home Practice: Small Small Every Day!**

- Try these new techniques with your children: ignoring for small behaviors and time-out if bigger behavior problems happen (they might not!).
- Also remember to use lots of praise when your child is doing well! Remember to feed the positive behavior and not the negative behavior. If you believe one of these new skills is not going to work, that is the one you should try! Why not? Dare to do so! You can do it!

## **11. Evaluation**

Discuss these simple questions with the group:

- What did you like best about the session?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?

## **12. Group praise and closing**

Ask the parents to stand up.

Thank them for their participation and give specific praise for things they did well during the session as a group (*Examples: Thank you for sharing your feelings with us; I appreciate how hard you all tried with the role-plays*).

Close the session with a song, saying, or group hug.

## Session 5

### Protecting Children from Disease: Hand washing that works

*Parents can have lasting positive effects on children's health when they are involved in their children's hygiene and in creating safe spaces for play.*

#### Objectives

1. Learn about how illness in children is caused by bacteria, viruses, and parasites found in human and animal feces.
2. Learn hygiene and other illness-reducing strategies, with a focus on hand washing.

#### Materials

- Attendance forms
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Trainers' guide
- Handout(s) for session
- Fidelity checklist

#### Before the Session: Be Prepared!

- ✓ Read through all of the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

#### Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.

## 1. Introduction and Welcome

- Welcome parents and praise them for being there. Smile and be positive. You need all your energy to facilitate this session; put your heart in it.
- Ask about the home practice: Positive discipline techniques.
  - **Did they try ignoring small child misbehaviors?** It is very normal for parents to say that ignoring is difficult at times. If a parent says that it was challenging, praise them for being honest and ask them what made it difficult. Other parents might have suggestions as to how to keep going.
  - **Did they use time-out for bigger child misbehaviors?** Ask parents who did try time-out where they put their child and for how long. Make sure the child was put in a safe (but not fun) area for only a few minutes. The most important thing is that the child is calm before time-out ends.
  - **Are they using praise?** Remind parents that these discipline strategies only work when the child is also receiving positive attention for good behavior.

## 2. Icebreaker (Optional)

Do any of the parents have a fun activity or song to share with the group? If they do, you can use that one. If not you can use any familiar song or game with a positive message and involves movement. *\*Later in the session, there is a song to the tune of "Are you sleeping? Are you sleeping? Brother John...Brother John..." One option is to sing this original song that you will then change later to be related to hand washing.*

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

- When we leave children to play on their own, they play in the dirt, their hands get dirty, and they put their hands in their mouth. **It is developmentally appropriate for**

**young children to put their hands in their mouth.** We cannot stop children from doing this. It is one way they explore and experience the world around them!

- **The dirt is mixed with poop from the animals (chickens, goats, and cows), and this poop is full of millions of harmful bacteria.** There are many kinds of bacteria. For example, one of the names of harmful bacteria is called “E. coli.”
- **This bacteria in the poop causes invisible damage to the children’s intestines, making it harder for children to absorb the nutrients in their food and making it easier for the bacteria to cross through the thin lining of the intestines and into the blood stream.**
- **This causes a chronic infection that stays there, quietly, all the time affecting negatively our children’s health even if they look healthy.**
- **Many children have this invisible infection right now.** They don’t feel sick, they act happy, but they are absorbing fewer nutrients from the food you give them, and the bugs in their blood are decreasing their immunity to other infections. Therefore, they get sick more often from other diseases like diarrhea, cough or fever.
- **Over time, your child will grow less tall and his/her body and brain won’t develop as well.** This is called *stunting*, which means a child who can’t grow.
- Stunted children perform less well in school and are more likely to have babies of their own who are too small.

**Discussion:** Guide a discussion with parents using these two questions. Allow caregivers to generate some ideas first and then add the answers underneath:

- **What are the ways that children come into contact with harmful bacteria, parasites, or viruses?**
  - Human feces
  - Animal feces – chickens, goats, cows
  - Raw meat
  - Vegetables and fruit that are not washed

- **Where are human and animal feces found?**
  - Near places where humans defecate
  - Where we are cooking raw meat
  - Anywhere where animals are laying, walking around, and eating
  - On our hands after we have defecated

**What we can do about it:**

**Keep your children separate from the animals.** If possible, keep the animals in one space (like a pen or cage – or any barrier you can construct) and let your children play in a different space. We will talk later about ideas for creating a barrier without much money.

If this is not possible, **try to identify a place for your children to play where the animals do not usually go.** Are there such places around your home?

**Dispose of all feces (children and animal and adult) and nappies in a separate place far away from children. Preferably you will dispose in a toilet or bury them.**

**Create a way to get clean water, to wash your hands often with soap or ash, and drink only boiled and filtered water.**

**Discuss: Where do you get your water now?** Is this water clean (do you boil/filter?) How can you get clean water?

**HANDWASHING**

**Wash children's hands with soap (or ash) and water often, especially at these times:**

- Before they eat
- After they defecate

Wash YOUR hands at the same times. Also be sure to wash your hands before you prepare food.

#### **4. Parent Discussion: Planning Ways to Protect Your Child**

1. **Ask parents to think about ways they can create a safe space for their children to play.**
  - How can they construct barriers for animals?

- Could they have a separate place for everyone to defecate that is far away from where young children play?
- 2. **Ask parents to think about how they will ensure that their children frequently wash their hands with soap and water.**
  - When will they do this? What will their new hand washing routine look like?
  - Can they can construct a hand washing place at home. What materials will they use?

## **5. Activities: Fun with water and soap! Hand Washing Demonstration and Practice**

### **HANDWASHING STEPS**

*(Optional: Put these on the flip chart). Give the handout.*

- Wet your hands
- Put on soap
- Rub your hands together (20 seconds)
- Scrub backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, under fingernails
- Rinse
- Air Dry (not on a dirty towel)

### **DEMONSTRATE HANDWASHING:**

Now you will demonstrate proper hand washing. Bring a bucket with clean water and a pitcher. You will also need a piece of soap. Follow the steps. As you wash, tell the participants what you are doing.

**TEACH HANDWASHING SONG:** To make this fun for children, we will use this song:

*Wet your hands, Wet your hands.*

*Rub the soap, Rub the soap.*

*On the front and back, On the front and back.*

*You won't get sick.*

*You won't get sick.*

*Scrub your wrists, Scrub your wrists*

*And your fingers, And your fingers*

*Don't forget the nails, Don't forget the nails*

*You won't get sick.*

*You won't get sick.*

*Wash your hands, Wash your hands  
With a soap, With a soap  
When you come from toilet, When you come from toilet  
You won't get sick.  
You won't get sick.*

*Wash your hands, Wash your hands  
With a soap, With a soap  
Before eating, Before eating.  
You won't get sick.  
You won't get sick.*

*Wash your hands, Wash your hands  
With a soap, With a soap  
When you come from playing, When you come from playing  
You won't get sick.  
You won't get sick.*

*Wash your hands, Wash your hands  
With a soap, With a soap  
Before you start cooking, Before you start cooking  
You won't get sick.  
You won't get sick.*

### **Activity: Wash Hands with the Song**

Facilitators can pour water over participants' hands to wet hands. The whole time the washing activity is going on, sing the song over and over.

## **6. Activity: Teaching Hand Washing to Children**

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY:** One facilitator plays the facilitator; the other plays the child. Demonstrate how to teach a child to wash their hands. Teach them each step while showing them. Use good communication skills, including clear instructions and specific praise.

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Have parents pair up in a role-play and take turns pretending to teach their children to wash hands using the song and good communication skills.



## 7. Home Practice: Small Small Every Day!

**Teach your children how to wash their hands. Make it a fun game with the song.** Teach your child each step. Also praise your child for doing it!

- Ask parents to create a hand washing routine with their children this week. Encourage parents to talk about hand washing and safe play spaces in the parent support groups. Tell parents you want them to continue to discuss this issue, as well as nutrition, parental skills and tools, practice parental skills, etc.
- Think of a good slogan we can use for our group related to keeping our children safe from disease!

**Create Safe Space for Play:** Try ways of keeping your child safer, like keeping animals separate and finding places to poop that are away from play areas.

## 8. Evaluation

**Discuss these simple questions with the group:**

- What did you like best about the session?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?

## 9. Group praise and closing

Ask the parents to stand up.

Thank them for their participation and give specific praise for things they did well during the session as a group (*Examples: Thank you for sharing your feelings with us; I appreciate how hard you all tried with the role-plays*).

Close the session with a song, saying, or group hug.

## Session 6

### Preparing your Child for School I: Fun with Words

*Parents play a major role in helping their children prepare for school. Simple ways of talking with children and telling stories can help develop their language skills, which are important for a wide range of academic skills.*

#### **Objectives**

1. Learn strategies for communicating with children verbally in ways that build language skills.
2. Discuss the many ways parents can help children learn and become ready for school.

#### **Materials**

- Attendance forms
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Traditional stories
- Trainers' guide
- Handout(s) for session
- Fidelity checklist

#### **Before the Session: Be Prepared!**

- ✓ Read through all of the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

#### **Attendance (date and place must be written down)**

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.

## 1. Introduction and Welcome

Welcome parents and praise them for being there. Acknowledge that parenting is a difficult job, but the most important job of our lives.

Ask about hand washing home practice: Practicing hand washing with children and Creating Safe Space for Play

Ask volunteers to describe their experiences:

- Did they practice? How did the children respond? Were there challenges?
- Was anyone able to construct a barrier for animals or to find a safe space for children to play away from animals and feces?

**Ask whether parents have used any of the other parental techniques in the past week** (e.g., ignoring, praising, time-out).

- Have they noticed any changes since last session in the way they interact with their children?
- Have they had any challenges using the skills?

## 2. Introduction to the session: Helping children learn through words

**We can use conversation and word play to support our children's literacy skills and school success.**

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY (Negative Example):** The facilitators role-play a parent doing school activities with their child in a very negative way. The parent can be harshly commanding the child and even beating the child while asking the child questions. The child is crying and also gives the wrong answers.

- Ask participants what they think about this approach. Is it working? Why or why not?
- **Lesson: Being harsh is not the best way to help our children learn.** Sometimes beating confuses them. We will learn how to help children learn in ways that will encourage them.

**The activities we will learn today are designed to help children learn.** This will help them to do well in school now and in the future.

**Research has taught us a few important lessons:**

- Learning to LISTEN AND TALK is related to learning to READ. Children who have more conversations understand things better than other children, read better than other children, and do better in school overall.
- **Talking with your child can help your child learn new words. This will help them learn to read and write** (even if school is in a different language!).

### **3. Activity 1: Mirror Game: Describe and Copy**

One of the best ways to build a child's vocabulary while also showing a child that you are listening to him or her is to **DESCRIBE** what he/she is doing **AND COPY** what he/she is saying.

**DESCRIBE:** When you **DESCRIBE** what a child is doing, they are learning how to use words to describe actions. For example, *"You are picking up a big rock. Now you are picking up the small one."* This teaches a child the word "rock" and teaches the difference between BIG and small.

#### **FACILITATOR DEMONSTRATION: Describe Skill**

Facilitator #1 jumps up and down.

Facilitator #2: "You are jumping up and down."

Facilitator #1 turns around.

Facilitator #2: "Now you are turning all the way around!"

This parent used the words "jump," "turn," and "around." These are great words for a 3- or 4-year-old to know!

**COPY:** Copying what a child is saying is also a great way to improve children's communication skills and words. Copying lets the child know you are listening to them. Many times young children feel like no one is listening to them!

### **FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY: Describe and Copy**

We are going to practice DESCRIBE and COPY skills.

- You can do DESCRIBE and COPY while you do anything with your child.
- **We will show you how to do it while moving and dancing with your child.** While your child moves and dances, you describe what they are doing. You also copy what they are doing with your body. Then when the child talks, you repeat the things they are saying.

**One facilitator plays the parent and one plays the child.**

Facilitators demonstrate with the moving and dancing for 2 minutes. The parent copies the child's movements and also anything that they say while they move.

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Divide parents into pairs to practice Describe and Copy through the moving and dancing activity. One plays the parent and one plays the child. Then they switch. Give each person 2 minutes of practice.

**Debrief as a group:**

- Ask 2 volunteers to report what their partner did well when they were the parent.
- Ask the group: How do you think your child will react if you do this with them?

*Reinforce that these skills are not natural for most parents. They take practice but are wonderful for their children!*

## **4. Activity 2: Story Telling**

**Introductory Group Discussion: Memories of Story Telling**

- **Think back to when you were very young. Did anyone tell you stories?** If so, who told you those stories? What were the stories about?
- **What did you gain from the experience of being told stories?** Take 1-2 examples, depending on time. *(Possible answers could include bonding with the story teller, learning cultural traditions, learning history, learning about family, learning to listen for information, words, story-telling skills.)*
- What is one example of a familiar story or a Liberian traditional story that most children and adults know?

*Facilitators should have an example prepared in case the group does not have one.*

**Today we want to talk about ways you can use the storytelling to help your children learn skills for school.** One way is to make story telling into an educational conversation:

**Tell a story. Then ask your child questions about the story.**

Some example questions are...

*(Optional: write these on flip chart)*

- Who is the story about?
- What is the first thing that happened?
- What was your favorite part?
- What do you think might happen next?

**VOLUNTEER ROLE-PLAY:** Ask for two volunteers to play the parent and child. Tell the parent to tell a story to the child and ask the questions above. *Coach and remind the volunteers of the questions as needed.*

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Ask parents to repeat the activity in pairs. Each person has 3 minutes to be the parent.

*Facilitators should walk around and give specific praise to parents as they practice.*

## **5. Activity 3: Talk About Everyday Activities (Narrating and Recounting)**

**TALK DURING NORMAL ACTIVITIES (narrating).** This helps to build your child's vocabulary and communication skills, as well as their attention span.

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY:** The "parent" acts out cooking dinner and talks about what they are doing. They ask the child about it. For example:

- Parent: "I'm filling the pot with water." What am I doing?
- Child: "Filling the pot with water".
- Parent: Filling the pot with water. That's right! Now I'm going to use the water to cook the rice. Where do you think I should put the rice?
- Child: In the pot!

- Parent: In the pot. I am going to put the water into this pot of boiling water. Thank you for talking to me about cooking the rice. You did a great job!

**Let's think about times you could talk about what you are doing with your child.** Take suggestions from the group. *Possible answers include going to the market, cooking a meal, doing laundry, doing the housekeeping, working in the garden/the farm, taking care of the animals, going to religious ceremonies, family celebrations, etc.*

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Ask pairs to choose one of these activities and to pretend to do the activity while narrating it to the child. Each parent should have 3 minutes to practice.

### **TALK ABOUT THE DAY (Recounting)**

- **Ask your child to tell you about something that happened during the day.** This helps children build language, attention, and memory skills. **Help the child remember by asking them questions.**

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY:** Here is an example of a parent asking a child to summarize their day. In this role-play, the parent and child are talking at the end of the day before going to sleep.

1. Parent: What did you do today?
2. Child: "First I had breakfast. Then I played with Issa."
3. Parent: "What did you play with Issa?"
4. Child: "We played football."
5. Parent: "And then what?"
6. Child: "I went with you to the field"
7. Parent: "I think we stopped to see someone first. Do you remember who that was?"
8. Child: "Oh yes, we saw Auntie Patricia. She gave me a mango. And then we went to the field."
9. Parent: "Yes, that's right. Well done! You are so smart. I am impressed with your memory and how well you describe things."

**This is a good activity to practice every evening, even with your young children who are 3 years old.** Whenever you have time in the evening, you can go over the day with your child. Make this fun for your child – not like an exam! Don't overwhelm the child with questions, and do not criticize them if they do not remember something. Only give positive

and gentle feedback. Making this fun will help them feel excited about talking and learning new things.

**VOLUNTEER ROLE-PLAY:** Ask two parents to role-play in front of the group, with one being a parent and one being a child. Tell the parent to help the child talk about what they did that day. *(The child and parent can simply make up any activities they might have done.)*

## 6. Activity 4: “I Spy” Word Game

A fun word game is called “I Spy.” One person says, “I spy with my little eye, something...” and gives a hint. Then other person tries to guess what it is by asking questions about it.

**FACILITATOR DEMONSTRATION:** *(Choose something you can see in the room. Facilitators play with each other.)*

**EXAMPLE** *(will change based on which object you choose.)*  
*I spy with my little eye, something that is sharp.*

|                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Is it part of the building?</i> | <i>No</i>                    |
| <i>Is it small?</i>                | <i>Yes</i>                   |
| <i>Is it bigger than a book?</i>   | <i>No</i>                    |
| <i>Is it black?</i>                | <i>Yes</i>                   |
| <i>Is it blue?</i>                 | <i>No</i>                    |
| <i>Is it your phone?</i>           | <i>No</i>                    |
| <i>Is it straight?</i>             | <i>Yes</i>                   |
| <i>Is it a knife?</i>              | <i>No</i>                    |
| <i>Is it a pencil?</i>             | <i>Yes! Congratulations!</i> |

**Group Game:** Ask a parent volunteer to begin the game by “spying” something. Allow other parents to ask questions and guess. Play for only a few minutes.

## 7. Closing Discussion: Identifying ways to promote school success

**What are other ways that parents can help children to do well in school, either now or in the future?**

Suggestions:

- Let your child know that school is very important.
- Help children get ready for school in the mornings.



- Talk to teachers to understand what your child is learning or to discuss any problems.
- Participate in school activities and groups like the Parent-Teacher Association.
- Play learning games at home, like the ones in this session.
- Praise your child to build their confidence. They will take this confidence to school with them!

## **8. Home Practice: Small Small Every Day!**

**Each day, choose one of the activities to do with your child for a few minutes.** As a reminder, activities were:

- Describe and Copy (what your child is doing)
- Story Telling (with questions for your child)
- Talk during normal activities (narrating) and Talk about the day (recounting).
- Play “I Spy.”

## **9. Evaluation**

Discuss these simple questions with the group:

- What did you like best about the session?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?

## **10. Group praise and closing**

Ask the parents to stand up.

Thank them for their participation and give specific praise for things they did well during the session as a group (*Examples: Thank you for sharing your feelings with us; I appreciate how hard you all tried with the role-plays*).

Close the session with a song, saying, or group hug.

## Session 7

### Preparing your Child for School II: Fun with Numbers and Drawings

*Simple activities with simple objects can help children build numeracy, fine motor, and problem-solving skills. Parents can facilitate these activities to help their young children prepare for school.*

#### Objectives

1. Learn simple techniques to help children build numeracy, fine motor, and problem-solving skills using everyday objects.

#### Materials

- Attendance forms
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Trainers' guide
- Four types of simple found objects:
  - Rocks (10 per pair of participants)
  - Bottle caps of at least 3 different colors (5 of each for each pair of participants)
  - Small and big sticks (3 of each for each pair of participants)
- Handout(s) for session
- Fidelity checklist

#### Before the Session: Be Prepared!

- ✓ Read through all of the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

*Note: This session will need a lot of demonstrations. You will need to practice all the activities and games before you have to do it for the parents.*

#### Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.

## 1. Introduction and Welcome

Welcome parents and praise them for being there.

Ask about the home practice and praise them for trying.

1. Which activities did they try? (*Activities were: Describe and Copy; Story-telling, Talking during normal activities/Talking about the day; I Spy word game*)
2. How did it go?
3. How did the children respond?
4. Are there any questions about any of the activities?

Ask whether parents have used any of the other parenting skills in the past week (e.g., ignoring, praising, time-out).

- Have they noticed any changes since last session in the way they interact with their children?
- Have they had any challenges using the skills?

## 2. Icebreaker: “I spy” (Optional)

Play the “I Spy” game that parents learned in the last session. Play once as a large group, with a parent volunteer starting the game. Next play the game in small groups of 4-5 parents.

## 3. Introduction to the session: Helping children learn through games

- **Today we will continue to talk about how you can help your children learn and do well in school.** Last session we talked about how to teach your children new words and how to communicate better.
- Today we will talk about how to use simple objects and games to help children learn other skills, such as those needed for math, problem-solving, and writing.

## 4. Giving Clear Instructions

**Before we talk about helping your child learn, let’s remind ourselves about how to give children instructions that they can follow.** In Session 4 we discussed some ways to give instructions that will help them listen:

- **Give one instruction at a time.**

- **Be specific about what you are asking the child to do.**
- **Use simple words and sentences that they can understand.**
- **Be polite!**

## **5. Learning Activities**

We will do learning activities you can do with your child

- **These activities are meant for any time you spend with your child, even if you only have a few minutes free.** These are great for times when you are busy and the child is getting bored or causing trouble. These activities can give your child something educational to do while you go about your work for the day.
- **You also do not have to know how to do math, write, or read to do these activities! You do not have to have had any school to do these.**

## **6. Games Section 1: Counting**

**First are games to help your child learn to count.** Children are all different, so they begin learning numbers and counting at different ages. Most can begin learning at age 2 or 3.

### **Counting Games:**

- **Number Songs: These teach your child the number words by making up a song with numbers.** You can start with 1 to 10. Then add more as your child learns. The song can be any tune you like. When you introduce it to your child, you can start out singing and then encourage your child to join in.

**FACILITATOR DEMONSTRATION:** Here is one song you can use to teach your children counting: 1-2 Pick up Shoe, 3-4 Shut the Door, 5-6 Pick up Sticks, 7-8 Lay them Straight, 9-10 Big Fat Ten!

**Group Activity:** Ask parents to please get into groups of 3-4 and make up a counting song of their own.

- **Rock Games: Get out 10 rocks or bottle caps or something else that is small, found easily, and free.**

**In these next games, you and your child will play with rocks.** For each game, start with 5 rocks. As your child learns, you can add more and more.

**\*\*Ask caregivers to go ahead and get into pairs. They will practice with their partner for all of these games. Give each pair 10 rocks.**

- ***Pick up Rocks!*** Put rocks in front of your child in a pile. Pick them up as fast as you can. Tell your child to do the same. Praise them! Challenge them to go faster and faster!

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Each caregiver gets 2 minutes to practice.

- ***Count and Point!*** Put the rocks in a line. Point and touch each one while counting them. Then ask your child to copy you.

**FACILITATOR DEMONSTRATION:** Have a caregiver volunteer to act as a child. First show the child copying each number after the parent. Show how the child can then begin doing more and more on their own. Also show the child making mistakes and the parent repeating it the correct way (*without saying, “No” or criticizing the child.*)

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Each caregiver gets 2 minutes to practice – then switch.

- ***Pick Up and Count!*** Show the child how to pick up the rocks as they count them. Then to put the rocks back down when they count them again. As they learn, you can tell them to pick up different numbers.

**FACILITATOR DEMONSTRATION:** Facilitator plays with a caregiver volunteer acting as the child. First, ask child to pick up all 5. Then say, “Now give me three of them.”

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Each caregiver gets about 3 minutes to practice – then switch.

**ASK: When do you think you can have time to do these games with your child?**

*Remind parents that they do not have to sit and do these with their child for a long time. They can take a couple of minutes to teach their child at first. Then they can just give the child rocks for them to do it on their own – they can just glance at child and praise the child as they [the parent] continue with their other work.*

DURING ALL PAIR PRACTICE: *Walk around and watch closely to make sure parents understand what to do. If they seem too confused, stop everyone and do a new demonstration. If only one or two are confused, you can do a demonstration just with them.*

## **7. Games Section 2: Patterns**

**Patterns can be made with our bodies and using rhythms.**

This helps children learn patterns, which are important for math; rhythm, which is helpful for reading; and movement, which is important for writing and for playing. **These games exercise many parts of your child's brain at one time** (Remind parents of brain development session.)

**I'm going to show you some patterns, and I want you all to do it after me.** (Do the following patterns and ask all parents to stand and copy you.)

#1: *Jump Clap Jump Clap Jump...*

#2 *Run in place Clap Jump Run Clap Jump...*

#3 *Thumbs Up Clap Jump Jump Thumbs Up  
Clap Jump Jump...*

**When you do this with your child, show them the pattern and have them join in until they learn the pattern. Then you stop and tell them to keep going.** This lets them continue the pattern on their own.

You can make up your own movement patterns. What other things can you think of to do (*they might say stomp, slap a leg, hit a can with a stick, etc.*)?

**Ask one participant to lead the game with their own pattern and have all other parents copy them.** Now tell the leader to stop and the others to keep going.

**PAIR PRACTICE:** Have pairs practice very briefly. Each caregiver does one pattern for the other to copy, remembering to stop and let the “child” continue the pattern.

## **8. Games Section 3: Sorting**

*Have parents sit in pairs. Give each pair a set of bottle caps or marbles and a set of sticks.*

- **Sorting objects into groups is another activity that can help with their math skills.**
- To do sorting activities, you need objects that are different from each other. You will ask your child to put things in groups according to similarity.
- **Examples:**
  - Put the bottle caps or other local materials between you and your partner. How can you group those into similar piles? (Answer: sort by color)  
Great! Yes, put the red bottle caps in one pile, green bottle caps in another pile, and blue bottle caps in a third pile.
  - **What kind of sorting can you do with the sticks?** (Answer: Sort by size)

**PAIR PRACTICE:** One of you act as the parent and tell the child to sort the sticks into a pile of big sticks and a pile of small sticks. If you are the child, pretend to make a mistake so that the parents can practice correcting you gently. Remember to give clear instructions and to praise the child!

- **ASK: What can you find around your house for your child to sort?** (*Potential answers: different color beans or seeds, different colored rocks, or different shaped leaves*).

Ask them to explain what types of groups they could ask children to sort using these things (e.g., sort seeds by size, sort leaves by types...) to make

sure they understand how to develop ideas for groupings.

## 9. Notes on teaching children in a way that is fun!

- **It is okay if your child makes mistakes.** This is a learning experience. They won't know it all perfectly the first time.
- **Praise him or her for trying,** even if they are not doing it correctly. Say, "I like the way you are trying to count the rocks." Or "Thank you for listening to me and clapping the pattern. I'm having so much fun clapping with you!"
- If you have two children around, you can **ask children to do it together.** If you have an older child, they may enjoy playing with and teaching the younger ones.
- **If your child becomes very frustrated, make the activity easier and go ahead and show them the answers** after giving them some time to try. They will learn through repetition.

### Wrap up:

- Today you have learned many games to help your child to learn and to prepare for school. These activities strengthen children's brains and give them the building blocks for learning math, writing, and reading.
- **Give Handout:** This handout summarizes what we have learned. You can choose your favorite ones, and you can also try new ways to play them.
- Which ones are your favorites?

## 10. Home Practice: Small Small Every Day!

**Ask parents to practice at least 2 of the games before the next session.**

- **Discuss: When can you do these with your child?** *(Problem-solve with parents about how they can find time and help them think of ways that they can combine playing these games into their daily routines.)*



## **11. Evaluation**

Discuss these simple questions with the group:

- What did you like best about the session?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?

## **12. Group praise and closing**

Ask the parents to stand up.

Thank them for their participation and give specific praise for things they did well during the session as a group (*Examples: Thank you for sharing your feelings with us; I appreciate how hard you all tried with the role-plays*).

Close the session with a song, saying, or group hug.

## Session 8

### Nurturing rules and routines

*Children excel when their environment is predictable and nurturing. Appropriate rules, organized routines, and calm families help children feel happy and safe.*

#### Objectives

1. Discuss how to establish nurturing routines for children.
2. Learn how to integrate techniques and principles learned during previous sessions into their routines more systematically.

#### Materials

- Attendance forms
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Trainers' guide
- Handout(s) for session
- Fidelity checklist

#### Before the Session: Be Prepared!

- ✓ Read through all of the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

**Note:** This session is different from the rest. It is lighter than the previous sessions. It is based more in dialogue and less in activities and it should be a bit shorter to give parents space to think of daily life. The theory is small and it helps more to remember previous sessions and integrate them in daily lives around rules and routines. References to session 1, nurturing parenting philosophy, and session 2, brain development and appropriate expectations, will be needed to make sense of the need of routine and use of techniques systematically. It is therefore recommended that facilitators review sessions 1 and 2 before this session.

#### Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.

## 1. Introduction and Welcome

Welcome parents and praise them for being there. Smile and be positive. You need all your energy to facilitate this session; put your heart in it.

- Ask about the home practice and praise them for trying. *You can spend a little extra time going over home practice and use of other parenting strategies because this session is shorter.*
  - Which activities did they try – Counting, Patterns, or Sorting?
  - How did the children perform?
  - Ask parents to share with the person beside them what they did with their child for the learning activities. *(Remind them that it's ok if they were not able to this week! They can try again this week.)*
  - 2-3 parents to report to the group which games they did, when they did them, and how their children responded.
- Ask whether parents have used any of the other parental techniques in the past week (e.g., ignoring, praising, time-out).
  - Have they noticed any changes since last session in the way they interact with their children?
  - Have they had any challenges using the skills?

## 2. Family rules

**Rules are positive routines that determine clear expectations for children and parents alike.** Children need rules. If we want children to behave in a certain way, children need to know our expectations. **Those expectations must be appropriate for the child's developmental stage.** Children need to know the rules and those rules have to be clear and comprehensible for children.

- **Just small small rules! If you give too many rules or you change the rules too often or don't enforce them sometimes, then your child will become confused or frustrated** and probably won't follow the rules! The fewer rules you establish in your family the easier it will be for

children to follow. Some are absolutely necessary, particularly schedules (time to eat, to go to bed, to have family time, work time, homework, play time, etc.), hygiene habits (wash your hands, take your bath, brush your teeth, etc.), and those you consider must-do's for your children and your family.

- **Discussion: What do you think will happen if there are not rules that are applied consistently?** Main Points:
  - Children will get confused.
  - Their brains will process contradictory information.
  - Children's behavior will be erratic.
  - Your rules will lose their meaning and sense to them.
- **Children need certainty.** That helps their brains and their development in many ways, but also it helps to reinforce your relationship with your child. Setting some limits on your children shows that you care about them, those limits are nurturing rules.
- **Parents must tell children the rules clearly.** Remember our discussion in Sessions 4 and 7 on clear instructions.
- **Rules should tell children what TO do (instead of focusing on what NOT to do):** Try to emphasize positive rules. Children are more likely to obey if rules are positive.

Examples:

- You can play after dinner (instead of "you cannot play before dinner")
- You must do your homework before bed
- You address your elders respectfully (instead of "you don't talk down to your elders")
- Others?

**Discussion: Do your children know the rules of the house? What are those rules? Do your children follow them?**

### **Discussion: Developing Ideas for Family Rules**

**Let's discuss the types of rules that may be helpful for our families.** (List ideas together.) Encourage ideas that are clear and important for families. (*Optional: List on flip chart.*) Possible examples could include the ones discussed above.

Others may be: Treat other children nicely (share, play gently); Eat your breakfast before you go to school; Talk quietly inside the house...etc.

### **3. Routines Song**

This session is about nurturing routines. Establishing positive rules and habits that help children find balance in life, security and certainty in what is going to happen (remember sessions 2 and brain development; everything is interconnected in this curriculum, because everything is interconnected in positive parenting skills). That helps enormously with brain development. You want children to be self-confident, positive and social.

**Songs can be fun parts of routines. For example, the songs below make morning routines fun! Sing these with the parents.**

*This is the way we wash our face, wash our face, wash our face.*

*This is the way we wash our face  
Early in the morning.*

*This is the way we brush our teeth, brush our teeth, brush our teeth.*

*This is the way we brush our teeth  
Early in the morning.*

### **4. Nurturing routines: What are they?**

In addition to rules, another element that will help you with your parenting work is having routines.

- **We call them nurturing routines. Nurturing routines make life predictable for children and make them feel comfortable and safe.** Children like to be able to know what to expect.
- Routines help make your family calmer and more organized.
- **Routines should include specific times for you and your child to spend together.**

### **What are the parts of nurturing or positive routines?**

- **Happens regularly**, they are predictable (often at the same time)
- **Everyone knows them**
- **They are positive and peaceful**

### **There are 2 types of routines: Daily Routines and Family Routines or Traditions**

#### **1. Daily Routines**

- **Things you do every day – A schedule.**
- These help children obey because they know what to expect. They make sure that parents take care of children and remember what they need.
- Routines are very important in getting children ready for school.

### **Discussion: What are examples of daily routines?**

Examples may include: every morning the children have breakfast, brush their teeth and go to school; every afternoon children take a short nap; children wash their hands after eating; every night the children tell mom and dad what they have done during the day; every evening at 9 after they have washed the children go to bed under the mosquito net, etc.

**FACILITATOR ROLE-PLAY:** Facilitators role-play a DAILY ROUTINE between a parent and a child. This routine is what you might suggest that a typical parent does with their child every day. This could include the basic elements of taking care of a child and spending time together (*you do not have to include all of these steps in your role-play*):

- Waking child up in the morning, Making child breakfast, Sending child to school, Going to work, Welcoming child home from school, Asking the child to summarize the day, Helping child with homework while doing chores, Cooking with your child, Child helping with chores, Eating together (wash hands first!!), Having story/devotion time (ask child questions about stories), Putting child to bed at a certain time
- You could even sing your routines song! ... *“This is the way we go to school, go to school, go to school....”*

- **ASK:** What did you notice? (*Note that you used some PMD skills during the role-play!*)

## 2. Family Routines / Traditions

**These are things that do not happen every day but that your family does together to spend time and have fun together.**

**Discussion: What are examples of family traditions and routines?**

Examples may include: Family dinner every Saturday night, Going to religious activity together, Going on a walk together, Going on an outing

*If cultural/traditional and religious routines are not mentioned, ask about them.*

*FOR BOTH TYPES OF ROUTINES: Parents might mention examples of routines that are not nurturing. If this happens, challenge them on this gently if it seems appropriate. You can first praise the parent for a positive aspect of their idea and then provide an alternative to their suggestion.*

**Discussion: Which are the favorite routines of your family (even family traditions) that you think are good for your child?**

- Examples: We celebrate birthdays together, we go to religious services together, we all eat together and talk about the farm, we sit around the fire in the rainy season to listen to grandpa's stories, we always have a party during the mango season and we have competitions on who can eat more mangoes.

## 5. Why are nurturing or positive routines important?

**ASK: Why are nurturing routines beneficial to children?**  
(Get ideas; then add from the list below.)

- They set appropriate expectations.
- Children behave better when they know what to expect.
- They build feelings of trust and security (children know and understand what is happening around them).
- They build good habits (for example, teaching children to be organized).
- They build cultural and religious identity and traditions.

- They develop the child's brain.
- They show empathy (a child may think, "my parents ask me to do things that are good for me because they understand what I need and what I want.")

**ASK: Have you developed new routines as a result of the last 7 sessions?** Possible Responses:

- Playing with my child, praising, being more control, disciplining the child positively
- Teaching games and songs, story-telling, etc.
- **Some routines are not nurturing. Examples of negative routines:** (a) Every Thursday dad goes out with friends, comes home drunk, and hits the children. (b) When children do not their homework, dad beats them with a stick, etc.

## **6. Learning by example: Children will do what we do!**

- **Routines with children are not enough. Positive routines are important for the couple and the whole family too.**
- **Negative routines of couples and families do NOT help children to learn about love and positive social interactions.** Examples: Violence, excessive alcohol consumption, lack of peaceful communication among the members of the family, lack of hygiene in the house that happens all the time.
- **What are some good and bad routines that the adults have in your family that children are seeing?**  
Possible responses: Communication between adults (could be calm or quarrelling), Working together, Domestic violence; Others?  
**How do you think these make the children feel?**

## **7. Home Practice: Small Small Every Day!**

- **Please discuss rules with your children and the other members of the family.** Remember to keep them few and only the ones you really need.



- Also we want you to tell us about your playing time with your child and how you are praising them for what they are and what they do! This is part of positive routines.

***Distribute Session 10 Reading: We are also giving you something to read, which you will be saying at our closing ceremony in Session 10. You do not need to memorize this but we want you to be able to see it ahead of time. You can have someone in your family help you read it and practice it before the ceremony. We will also practice together next time.***

## **8. Evaluation**

Discuss these simple questions with the group:

- What did you like best about the session?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?

## **9. Group praise and closing**

Ask the parents to stand up.

Thank them for their participation and give specific praise for things they did well during the session as a group (*Examples: Thank you for sharing your feelings with us; I appreciate how hard you all tried with the role-plays*).

Close the session with a song, saying, or group hug.

## Session 9

### Managing my feelings and creating a calm home

*Parents' stress and violence in a home can have negative effects on children. Parents' ability to manage their emotions and reduce conflict in the home can promote an environment for healthy child development.*

#### Objectives

1. Parents will identify their psychosocial and emotional needs.
2. Parents will have knowledge of the impact of stress on their children's wellbeing.
3. Parents will learn relaxation techniques.

#### Materials

- Attendance forms
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Trainers' guide
- Handout(s) for session
- A list with the titles of the 10 sessions to help parents prepare for session 10
- An example of pledge to prepare for session 10
- Fidelity checklist

#### Before the Session: Be Prepared!

- ✓ Read through all of the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

#### Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.

## 1. Introduction and Welcome

Welcome parents and praise them for being there. Acknowledge that parenting is a difficult job, but the most important job of our lives.

Ask about the home practice and praise them for trying.

- Did they set up any new rules or routines?
- How did it feel?
- How did the children respond?

Ask whether parents have used any of the other parental techniques in the past week (e.g., ignoring, praising, time-out).

1. Have they noticed any changes since last session in the way they interact with their children?
2. Have they had any challenges using the skills?

*If parents have a problem with a particular technique (playing, ignoring, praising, time-out, storytelling, etc.), you can have a role-play with them here and practice.*

## 2. Identification of parent's psychosocial and emotional needs (30 min)

**ACKNOWLEDGE:** The situation in Liberia is not always easy.

**ASK:** What are some things related to life in Liberia or the Ebola crisis that cause stress in people?

Possible responses: Getting money for the family, feeding the children, or sending children to school can be difficult. Family disputes and arguments with the spouse can happen. The Ebola crisis has brought additional difficulties, stress, fear, and sadness, sometimes from the loss of a loved one.

**EXPLAIN:** We feel stress when we feel like pressure and bad things happening are more than we can handle – when those things feel like they are big heavy weights on our shoulders.

**This is normal!** Everybody would experience high level of stress in a similar situation.

**PAIR DISCUSSION:*****What causes you stress? (10 minutes maximum)***

We break into pairs for this activity so that every single person has a chance to share their feelings with someone. The group discussion is very important, but this pair discussion gives everyone a chance to share.

- We are going to think about when each of us has negative feelings, specifically strong negative feelings of anger, rage, and frustration that are repeated, the ones that happens often.
- **Divide parents in pairs** (couples or spouses should be separated for this activity). Ask them to answer the following questions.
  - When do I feel the most negative? When do I feel very sad or get really annoyed or angry? Who makes me very angry? When does this happen?

**GROUP DISCUSSION:**

**Think about the things you just discussed with your partner about things that make you stressed. What are the emotions/feelings that you have experienced when these things happen, including the Ebola crisis?**

Brainstorm examples. Possible Responses:

- Sadness
- Fear
- Aggressiveness
- Tiredness/exhaustion
- Anger/hatred
- Stress
- Depression
- Sense of control
- Happiness

**What are the things that you do as a result of these feelings?** (These can be positive or negative.)

Possible responses:

- I shout at / beat my children.
- I don't sleep or eat.
- I have palaver with my spouse.

- I cry.
- I drink or smoke.
- I talk to a friend.
- I go for a walk.
- I pray.

**Everyone chooses negative ways to deal with our feelings sometimes.** For example, some people yell at others, some people drink to forget about their feelings, some people ignore everyone else or refuse to talk at all. Sometimes we also think a lot of angry, negative thoughts that make the negative feelings stay even longer.

**There are some alternatives that we can try to do to help ourselves deal with the feelings in more positive ways.**

### **3. Connecting Caregiver Emotions/Behaviors to Children's Behaviors**

**Your stress can affect your children.**

#### **Impact of stress**

- **Parent's stress affects children. When you feel calm it's more likely that your children will feel calm.** When you feel stressed it's more likely your children will feel tense. Your children are like a sponge or the rice that absorb the water, they absorb the stress and the tension in their environment. This is why taking time to take care of yourself can be helpful to your family.
- **Children will be better behaved if parents are calm.** Research has shown that there are a number of undesirable behaviors associated with parenting stress.
- **Both parents and children will feel better and do thing better if you learn how to take care of yourself.**

#### **Impact of violence**

- **Sometimes feelings are overwhelming, and we take out anger on our children.**

- **Research tells us that children who are victims of violence suffer bad consequences** in brain development, psychosocial and physical growth.
- **Children who are witnesses of violence can experience the same negative consequences.**
- **We also teach our children with what we do, not only the way we talk to them.** If we tell them they have to be nice and then we show anger with each other and have palaver, not only are we teaching them to be violent, but we are also sending confusing messages. We are saying one thing and doing the opposite.

**ASK: How may children's behavior be affected by their parents' stress? (Optional: List on flip chart.)**

Answers may include:

- Aggressiveness / Disobedience
- Fear
- Refusing to leave the house
- Crying often

**We will now discuss some positive ways to deal with stress.**

#### **4. Dealing with Negative Feelings Skill 1: Changing our Thoughts**

- **Negative Thoughts lead to Negative Feelings lead to Negative Behaviours.**  
Sometimes our thoughts run away from us, and thinking lots of negative thoughts is only going to make us feel worse and act worse.
- **Positive Thoughts lead to Positive Feelings lead to Positive Behaviors.**
- **Discuss Marriage Example of Changing Thoughts**

##### **NEGATIVE EXAMPLE:**

- A husband sees the wife looking very serious while cooking. She is quiet. He thinks, "My wife is very cold and mean. She is not even talking!"

- Because of that thought, how will he act? (Avoid her, act mean towards her)
- Because of that thought, how will he feel? (Sad, Angry)
- How will he act towards the children?

**POSITIVE EXAMPLE:**

- A husband sees the wife looking very serious while cooking. She is quiet. He thinks, “My wife is working very hard for our family. She is not talking because she feels very tired from all of her work.”
- Because of that thought, how will he act? (Help her, Talk nicely to her, Thank her)
- Because of that thought, how will he feel? (Calm, Safe)
- How will he act towards the children?

**Try to choose Positive Thoughts like the second example.**

Ask yourself:

- “What am I feeling?”
- “Why am I feeling this way?”
- “What am I thinking? Is it a negative thought?”
- “Is there a more positive thought?”

It might be your spouse, husband or wife who gets on your nerves, or a neighbor, or your child. **Try to remember the positive things about people even when you are feeling annoyed** (Ex: “He is stubborn but I love him or her because she or he has a big heart, because he or she takes care of the house, because they love me, because when I am sad that person makes me laugh.) Sometimes it also helps to consider what they are going through – remember to use empathy!

**Try to find a positive thing about the situation that is causing you the negative feelings** (everything has a positive aspect). Example: I am having problems to pay my debt, but I will find the courage; I will be a better person because I will learn from this situation.

**ASK: What are some positive thoughts that you can have about some of the things that make you feel stressed?**

## 5. Dealing with Negative Feelings Skill 2: Relaxation

**ASK: What is relaxation?**

**When an individual is able to feel relieved from strain or tension.** Reaching a relaxed state helps to control our emotions. When stress affects a person's normal functioning, relaxation has proved to be effective in lowering it.<sup>2</sup>

**DEMONSTRATION (NOODLE):** When we feel stressed our bodies can feel tension. Imagine a piece of pasta (spaghetti). When you buy it – before you cook it, it looks like this (Make your body stiff and straight). Now, when you cook it, what does it look like? (Make your body loose and relaxed.)

Ask everyone to try being an “uncooked” and “cooked” noodle. The cooked, relaxed noodle feels better! Today we are going to talk about ways to be more like that COOKED noodle – nice and relaxed.

**EXPLAIN:** We are going to experiment with some relaxation exercises that you can practice at home when you feel stressed.

**SAY: Now we will learn specific relaxation techniques. There are 4 techniques:**

- Step away from the stressful event or situation.
- Count from 20 to 0.
- Deep Breathing
- The safe place

### **Relaxation Technique 1 – STEP AWAY:**

Take a break from the situation if you can. Walk away for just 1-2 minutes to be alone, away from other people. Just waiting this time before reacting can help calm your body and mind.

### **Relaxation Technique 2 – COUNTING:**

Count from 20 to 0 SLOWLY. (Do this together.)

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ummah.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-29139.html>



EXPLAIN: Counting can help calm your mind and body. It can also prevent you from doing something negative (Example: beating your child because you are very angry).

### **Relaxation Technique 3 – DEEP BREATHING:**

**One way to relax our bodies is to breath very slowly and deeply.**

- Breathe in through your nose
- Breathe out through your mouth

When we breathe in, we want our stomach to go OUT (like a balloon filling with air). This is a different kind of breathing, so it will feel strange at first.

**Let's try it together:**

- Close your eyes and put your hand on your stomach.
- Breathe in very slowly and try to pull the air all the way into your stomach so that your stomach pokes out like a ball or balloon.
- Now breathe out VERY slowly through your mouth. Feel your stomach go back down.
- While you breathe out, also try to relax all of the muscles in your body.
- Now repeat that 5 times. (Give them time. Wait until everyone is finished.)
- Now open your eyes. How do you feel? (Get their feedback.)

**How does it feel?** (Ask for 2-3 comments; keep this very brief.)

Practice small small every day. If you practice this just a few minutes every day, you should feel more relaxed. **You can stop to do this just for a couple of minutes when you feel stressed to help calm your body and mind.**

### **Relaxation Technique 4 – THE SAFE PLACE:**

**Now we will learn what is called “The Safe Place.”** It is best to do it together, and then we will discuss. Ask the participants to sit comfortably, to relax their body. If possible, they can lay down on the floor.

**Group Activity: The Safe Place (Script; read this exactly)**

*I'm going to ask you to imagine a place or scene that makes you feel calm and secure and happy. This could be somewhere real that you remember, maybe from a holiday; or it could be somewhere you've heard about, maybe in a story; or it could be somewhere that you invent and make up yourself.*

**Discuss with the parents in which place they would feel safe.**

*Take a few deep steady breaths. Close your eyes and carry on breathing normally. Bring up a picture of your safe place and imagine that you are standing or sitting there. In your imagination, take a look around. What do you see? Now take a look further away. This is your special place. When you're there, you feel calm and peaceful. Imagine your bare feet on the ground. What does the ground feel like? Walk around slowly, noticing the things there. What can you hear? Maybe the gentle sounds of the wind, or birds, or the sea. What can you smell? Maybe it's the sea air, or flowers, or your favourite food cooking? You feel calm and happy.*

*Now imagine that someone special is with you in your place. This is someone who is there to be a good friend and to help you, someone strong and kind. They are there just to help you and they'll look after you. Imagine walking around and exploring your special place slowly with them. You feel happy to be with them. This person is your helper and they're good at sorting out problems.*

*Just look around in your imagination once more. Have a good look. Remember that this is your special place. It will always be there. You can always imagine being here when you want to feel calm and secure and happy. Your helper will always be there whenever you want them to be. Now get ready to open your eyes and leave your special place for now. You can come back when you want. As you open your eyes, you feel more calm and happy.*

## **6. Importance of Praising Yourself**

- **ASK: What is the most important technique for nurturing and caring parenting? Probably loving**

**combined with praising!** Praising is real proof of love. The more we praise our children, the more we build their positive memories, positive feelings, self-confidence, social skills, educational skills, intellectual capacity. We already learned that when we talked about praising our children. Two ways of praising: praising for what you are and for what you do.

- **ASK: But do we praise ourselves as people? Do we praise ourselves as parents?**  
*We often forget to do this! It's GOOD to praise yourself!*

**ASK: What are some ways you can praise yourself?**

- Being a human being is difficult and being a parent is extremely complicated. Praise yourself because you are trying. The fact that you parents are here in this session is a proof: we are trying and we want to be better because we are already good! And we do good things! We care for our children; we love them; we care.

## **7. Taking Care of Yourself**

**The better you care for yourself the more you can care for others including your spouse and children.**

- **We do a difficult job: being a parent.** So we learned how to communicate with our children better, how to discipline them in a positive and nurturing way, how to help them with their health and their school work through exercises, play and games, how to take care of them and give them also freedom and independence, but also discipline and clear set of rules.
- **We learned how to take care of our children. But who is going to take care of you? You have to take care of you!** We have to take care of ourselves. How are we going to be able to take care of our children, give them our energy and love if we do not have that energy or love? If we do not love ourselves, it will be difficult to love our children and teach them to love themselves and their families.

- **ASK: What are some ways you can take care of yourself? Let us share ideas.** Ask parents to tell each other techniques to relax, to play, and to find peace with themselves (Give Examples).
- **Taking care of yourself is a step towards being a better parent. If you take care of yourself you are also teaching your child to take care of him or herself.** We teach our children by example.

## **8. Prepare caregivers for session 10 (15 min)**

**Explain to parents what is going to happen next session: it will be a larger session, and we will invite your children as well as their teachers and health workers.**

- Facilitators will introduce the session and the philosophy, psychology, and science behind nurturing parenting practices.
- Parents will have an opportunity to present what they have done in these sessions.
- Distribute the page with the sessions. If some parents are illiterate that is ok; you will go through them one by one quickly for them to remember.
- Once the sessions have been presented to the big group and you have given examples of how you have used them, parents will make a public commitment and give a pledge.
- Decide a song you will sing in session 10 as an introductory ice-breaker.

### **Activity: Prepare Presentations for Session 10**

Ask parents to divide themselves into 9 groups; each will be responsible for presenting one of the sessions during Session 10. Give them time to prepare what they will say.

### **Activity: Practice Pledge to my positive style of life**

“I declare in front of my family and my community that I will try my best to be a good parent. I will use the techniques I have learned. I will continue loving and nurturing my child with all my capacity and my heart. I will talk to my children and play with them, I will guide them and help them in peaceful and positive ways. So please help me to succeed.”

## 9. Home Practice: Small Small Every Day!

- Pick 2 ways to take care of yourself this week!
- Practice at least 1 way to get rid of negative feelings.
- Prepare for Session 10:
  - Practice their pledge for session 10 (*a bit difficult for illiterate participants but they can ask the Parent Support Group to help with that*).
  - Invite their children and spouses. (Facilitators will invite teachers and health workers)
  - Prepare to talk during session 10 about how they have used the techniques learned in the 9 sessions.
- Continue to practice the techniques you have learned during the last 9 sessions: positive discipline, praising, ignoring, putting the family under the bed net, playing and communicating with your children, following their school work, etc.

## 10. Evaluation Discussion

Discuss these simple questions with the group:

- What did you like best about the session?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions?

## 11. Group Praise and Closing

- Ask the parents to stand up.
- Thank them for their participation and give specific praise for things they did well during the session as a group (*Examples: Thank you for sharing your feelings with us; I appreciate how hard you all tried with the role-plays*).
- Close the session with a song, saying, or group hug.

## Session 10

### Closing Ceremony: Public Commitment to our Children

*Parents share their learning with their families and community members. They are recognized for their accomplishments and make a public pledge to their children to apply the new and positive skills they have developed.*

#### Objectives

1. Present the curriculum and what parents have learned in front of families, teachers and health workers.
2. Reinforce the continuation of nurturing parenting practices.
3. Make public pledges and presentation of diplomas.

#### Materials

- Attendance forms for all participants and not only parents
- Flip chart and markers (optional)
- Pledge
- Diplomas of participation
- Trainers' guide
- Refreshments for participants if possible
- Note taker for the session
- Fidelity checklist

#### Before the Session: Be Prepared!

- ✓ Read through all of the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies of the parent handout for each parent.
- ✓ Arrange for a space conducive to learning and free of interruptions; sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- ✓ Note: This will be a bigger gathering so you might need to change the usual meeting place. If possible, also prepare some refreshments or food.

#### Attendance (date and place must be written down)

Attendance must be recorded for each participant according to the procedures set forth by the program. Procedures should include recording attendance of enrolled participants, as well as anyone they bring with them, such as a child, spouse, or other family member.

## **1. Introduction and Welcome**

Welcome everyone and praise them for being there. Smile and be positive. You need all your energy to facilitate this session; put your heart in it.

Introduce the two facilitators and the translator.

You will not review home practice in this session.

## **2. Icebreaker (Optional)**

To bring everyone into the spirit of positive nurturing parenting ways ask everyone to sing a song (you decided on that song during the previous session).

## **3. Presentation of attendees**

- Ask first children to introduce themselves and their parents if they have verbal skills. Parents can help.
- Ask the rest of participants to introduce themselves.

## **4. Presentation of the curriculum**

The facilitators introduce the program.

- Bases of the program:
  - The program was built as an intervention and research program so we can measure the impact of the sessions. So the first 4 months we presented the program to communities and leaders, selected schools.
  - We selected two groups of intervention. One group has successfully completed the nurturing parenting training and a second group will receive the training in the coming months.
  - The program is based on previous IRC experiences in Liberia and also in Burundi and Thailand, and is evidence-based.
  - It was a 10-session program.
  - Each session was approximately 2-hours long.
  - Parents created parents support groups to support each other.
- Now we are going to introduce each of the sessions and

invite the parents to explain to you what we discussed and learned during those sessions.

Among the participants, find people who can talk about things that they have already done or changed. (It is imperative that participants talk about the details!) Make sure the witnesses give examples of each activity on and encourage personal experiences.

The facilitators read the title of each session and invites one parent volunteer to explain briefly the content (different parents for each one).

### **Session 1 – Introduction: Becoming a Positive Parent**

*Parenting is a difficult and very important job of bringing up a child to maximize their potential through love and attention.*

### **Session 2 – Child Development: Appropriate Expectations**

*Science and experience on brain development help us to better care for children to promote healthy brain growth and functioning. Developing appropriate expectations and praising our children help them to develop positive feelings about themselves.*

### **Session 3 – Communicating and Connecting with Children**

*We can make communication more meaningful and nurturing through increasing interactions, spending time playing, and showing empathy for a child's feelings.*

### **Session 4 – Discipline with Dignity**

*Child behaviors are reinforced through positive or negative attention. Positive discipline techniques can improve parent-child relationships, increase behaviors parents want to see, and prevent and stop misbehavior.*

### **Session 5 – Protecting Children from Disease: Hand Washing That Works**

*Parents can have lasting positive effects on children's health when they are involved in their children's hygiene and in creating safe spaces for play.*

### **Session 6: Preparing Your Child for School I: Fun With Words**



*Parents play a major role to help their children prepare for school. Simple ways of talking with children and telling stories can help develop their language skills important for a wide range of academic skills.*

### **Session 7 – Preparing Your Child for School II: Fun with Numbers and Drawing**

*Simple activities with simple objects can help children build numeracy, fine motor, and problem-solving skills. Parents can facilitate these activities to help their young children prepare for school.*

### **Session 8 – Nurturing Routines**

*Children excel when their environment is predictable and nurturing. Appropriate rules, organized routines, and calm families help children feel happy and safe.*

### **Session 9 – Managing My Feelings and Creating a Calm Home**

*Parents' stress and violence in a home can have negative effects on children. Parents' ability to manage their emotions and reduce conflict in the home can promote an environment for healthy child development.*

## **5. Ceremony: Public Commitment to Our Children**

*Parents share their learning with their families and community members. They are recognized for their accomplishments and make a public pledge to their children to apply the new and positive skills they have developed.*

### **1) Child and Parent Song: “If you’re happy with your child!”**

### **2) The Pledges and presentation of certificates**

Ask parents to stand up and tell their pledge all together like a choir. You can give each one the certificate of participation once they have read the pledge together.

### **3) Ask the rest of the community to help parents with the difficult task and for a round of applause!**