

Secondary Research in Relation to Parenting Models

Providing parenting education to Travellers and ethnic minority groups – best practice approaches

Part Two: Sample Session Layouts

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Part Two: Parenting Education Sessions

This section follows from Part One of 'Providing Parenting Education with ethnic minority groups: Best Practice Approaches', where a set of values, principles and approaches are outlined.

This section provides sample session layouts which can be used to help implement the best practice approaches outlined in part one. It contains suggested activities which can be used as part of a parenting programme. They are laid out in the form of 12 full sessions. They do not need to be, nor necessarily should be, followed as a 12 session programme starting at the beginning and finishing at the end. Each parenting programme run needs to be based on collaboration with the participants, starting with the needs that they identify. These sessions provide a facilitator with suggested activities that can provide open discussion on topics commonly found in parenting programmes, and can be mixed and matched with published parenting programmes or facilitator designed programmes, and are intended as a starting point that assist a facilitator in finding activities and ideas that will work for them and their group to explore the designated topics. Other facilitation methods described in part one, such as using music in a variety of ways can be easily substituted by a facilitator for any activity described here depending on the interests and skills of both the facilitator and participants.

A general approach of working with parents to discover together what they are already doing right, and build on those strengths is used, combined with games and activities that do not require high levels of literacy or full fluency in the English language. As a result all sessions are activity based, and therefore will lend themselves to group work settings with several participants. Many best practice approaches suggest that most benefit is to be gained from working with entire families at once, including older children and any other family members, not only the parents. Therefore many of these sessions or individual activities from within sessions can be used just as easily with a group of parents in a traditional 'parenting group' but can also be used in a family setting with several members all from the one family including parents, extended family and older children, or other settings where parents or carers are present, with or without their older children.

Introductory session

This session can be just for adults, or it can include older children as well in a combined 'family' session. It is an introduction session, and therefore could not be used as a stand-alone session without other parenting sessions following

Aim: To establish the group, get to know each other, and discover what participants want from parenting programme, establish clear ground rules

Warm-up/energiser – ball toss

Explain – This is a game you can play with your children at home any time. We are going to use it now to help us concentrate and focus, and learn each others names.

I'm going to start by saying my name, and throwing the ball to someone else. They catch the ball, say their name, and throw the ball to another person

(Do this until each person has caught and thrown ball at least once)

Now I'm going to say the name of the person I'm throwing the ball too...

(Demonstrate, call out the name of someone in the group and throw the ball to them, allow this to go on until everyone has caught and thrown a few times)

Now I'm going to make it a little more difficult

(Look at one participant, call their name, and then suddenly throw the ball to someone else)

Now say 'You are not allowed to throw the ball to the person you name, if you forget you are out'

Allow game to continue until the first few people are 'knocked out'

Introductions

Explain – now we are starting to get an idea of each others names, its time to sit down, catch our breath, and find out about our children

If we all just say who we are one more time, and then tell us how many children you have, what ages they are, and what their names are. Facilitator leads with 'my name is, and I have/don't have children of my own...gives names and ages (NB, lead by example, NO other details)

Agree content for the individual session

Explain – As this is our first session there are a few important things I was hoping to cover. We need to agree on what topics we will be exploring over the next 12 weeks and I have a number of suggestions about what material can be part of a parenting programme, but I also wanted to check in with you to see if there were any specific issues that you wanted to talk about. After that we need to cover some basic expectations and ground rules, which is something we do at the beginning of every group. Is there anything else that people would like to see covered tonight, or is that OK?

Hopes and expectations

Explain – what we will do now is look at what we all hope to get from this course. I'd like you to break into pairs and talk for a few minutes about what one thing would be important for you to have achieved by the end of the 12 weeks

After 5-10 minutes call all pairs back into the full group. Ask each person in turn what their main hope is.

If literacy is *good* these can simply be recorded on the flip chart.

If literacy is *weak* use the cards and stickers system. Print out (and laminate if possible) the illustrated cards from page 7, or design your own.

As each expectation is named lift up the card and stick prominently on the wall or board. If a hope is named that does not fit any of the pictures use an additional sheet and write a one or two word phrase. Draw, or ask a group member to draw a picture to represent the hope.

Once all the hopes are named, if any of the best practice recommended sessions (see section one) of needs of parents, needs of children, child development, positive discipline, communication or valuing our culture have not been named you can add those cards yourself, and explain that these are your hopes you would like to suggest to the class.

Now hand out sheets of stickers and ask the class to vote for their favourites.

Each person gets 12 stickers (or the same amount as the number of sessions you are planning) explain they can put their stickers on the sessions they would most like to take part in. If one session is really important to them they can put all stickers on that session, or they can put one on each if they want to vote for lots of different sessions.

Expect one or two participants to get slightly confused, and explain again individually.

If this is a family session for parents and older children, you can give the parents and the children different coloured stickers so you can see at a glance if there is a clear difference in needs and wants between the two groups. If necessary you could plan some parent only or young people only sessions to cover topics unpopular with the other group.

Once all participants have voted, give feedback. Tell them what sessions they have voted for, and reassure them that you will be covering these sessions, even if you are including one or two that were not voted so highly.

If a tea break is held at this point another very brief energiser could be held before the start of the session on ground rules

Ground rules

Explain – clear and consistent expectations are an important part of being a member of a family, and also being a member of a group. The group need to agree what rules they want, and how they will stick to them.

Explain clearly any rules that are necessary due to venue or insurance reasons – no smoking rules, etc.

Use flipchart or cards to represent rules – no smoking signs and so on can easily be downloaded from the internet.

Look for suggestions on other rules.

Confidentiality

Almost certainly the first thing someone will say is that ‘what’s said in the room stays in the room’ – if they are an Irish group anyway.

It is important to explain:

1. As facilitator you cannot promise confidentiality, you are not in control of what people do outside the session
2. Any limits on confidentiality in relation to disclosures of child abuse
3. Why being able to talk about what you heard and saw is an important part of learning and growing. Explain that talking about new ideas is not the same as talking about people. Suggest re-wording ‘confidentiality’ to ‘no gossiping’. See what participants think.

It may be appropriate to suggest that ‘no gossiping’ is perhaps an alternative way of understanding the issue of confidentiality, as long as this has been fully discussed and understood by the group.

Once agreement is reached on the ground rules display flipchart or cards prominently, and tell group they will be up for the next few weeks so everyone can see.

Close session by checking in with participants on how they got on. Did they enjoy it? Did it meet expectations?

Culture and Community



Una Doyle

Parents Childhood Experiences



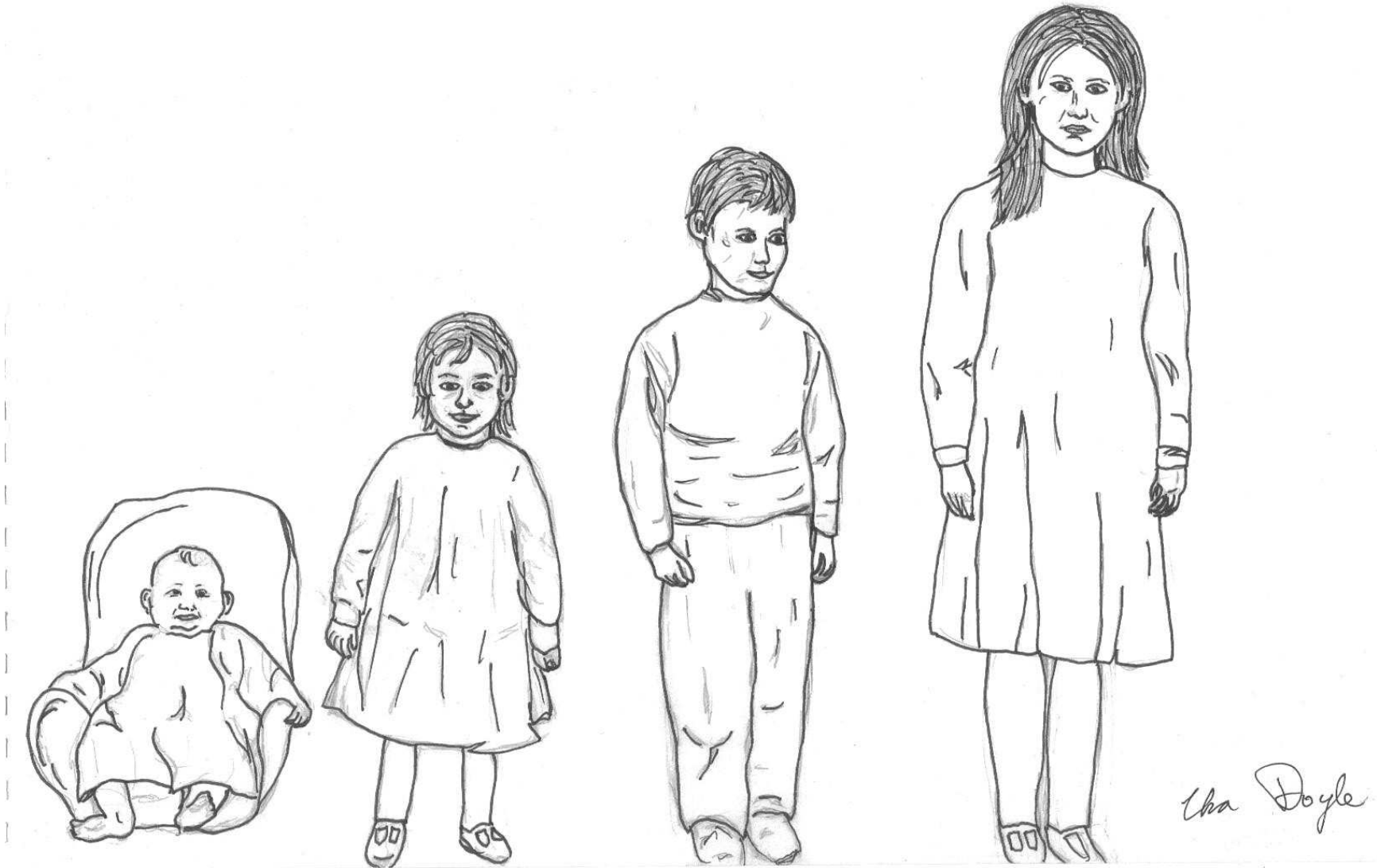
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Children's Rights and Needs



Una Doyle

Child Development

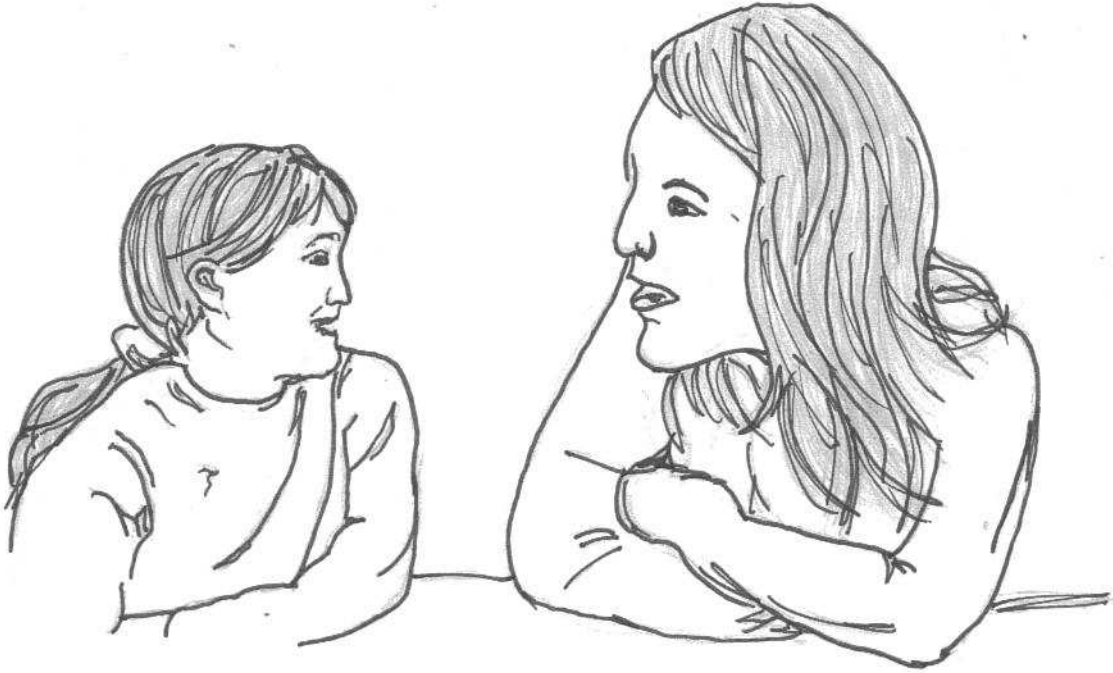


The Importance of Play



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Communication Skills



Uma Doyle

Discipline and dealing with Challenging Behaviour



Una Dofe

Culture and community

This session can be used with mixed groups or groups all from one cultural background. It can be used with parents by themselves, or family groups including older children. It can be used as a stand alone session to explore the important of cultural pride in families, or as part of a parenting education programme

Aim of session: To promote cultural pride as an important part of family and individual identity

Energiser /Introductions– ‘our toy box’

Materials: Empty box

Explain

To get started we will begin with a memory game. These can be fun to play with kids, especially with a larger group. They also help us concentrate at the start of a session.

Today we will be talking about the importance of our culture for our children and ourselves, but we will begin with a very quick look back at our own childhood by thinking of our favourite play things. We will all say our name, and what we liked to play with. We will all pretend to put our favourite toy or plaything in the box. When you get the box you have to call out all the toys that people have already put in the box, say your name, and what toy you will add to the box.

Activity one – old-fashioned children’s games

Explain – facilitator explains again that we are talking about our culture, where we come from, and highlights that this is an important part of children’s identity and well being. A simple way culture can be expressed is through the games that children play. All children in every culture play a variety of skipping, clapping, singing, jumping and ball games.

In this exercise parents are asked to remember, and show to the class a game that they played as a child. Ask them to try and recall any very unusual games that the others may not have seen before.

If the group look hesitant the facilitator can start by showing a simple skipping, clapping or ball game that they remember.

When several games have been demonstrated and played by the group, ask them to discuss any feelings they have.

They may feel nostalgic, or just embarrassed at being asked to play children’s games, or a wide range of other feelings. Allow the group to discuss these feelings openly.

Activity two – Art work - what my culture means to me

Materials – large supply of old magazines, plus plenty of culturally appropriate pictures (download from a Google image search)

A1 size paper

Coloured pens, pencils or markers

Glue or prit-stick

Break main group up into several small groups of three or four. If you are working with groups from several different cultures you may want to set this task individually instead of in small groups so that each participant can focus on their own particular culture.

Ask them to create a collage on what their culture means to them. Expect to see both positive and negative images emerging – importance of family and belonging, as well as experienced of racism and discrimination.

Each small group or individual feeds back to the main group, shows their collage and explains what it means, why they chose the pictures that they did.

Allow plenty of time for discussion

Activity three: brainstorm

Ask the group to discuss ‘How to we help our children to be proud of who they are?’

Open group discussion

Evaluation, wrap up

Facilitator lights a candle, and asks group to think/meditate quietly on one aspect of their culture they are proud of (this helps ground the participants again after any heated debate from the previous exercise)

In the circle, ask each participant to say how they felt about today’s session, and name one piece of learning they will take away with them

(facilitator takes note, do these match the aims of the session?)

Parents childhood experience

This session is most appropriate for parents only. It could be adapted if family sessions with older children are planned. It can also be adapted to use in one-to-one work between a facilitator and an individual family, parent

It can be used as a stand alone session to explore the important of parent's childhood experience on their own parenting practice, or as part of a parenting education programme

Aim: To explore the childhood experience of parents, what positive aspects of parenting practice they learned from their own parents, and what they would like to change for their own children.

Energiser – bip bop bap

Explain as before, a game that helps focus concentration

One person at a time claps their hands and says 'bip'. They pass the clap to the person on their left, who says 'bip', while clapping at the person on their left, who takes the clap, and 'bips' the person on their left.

Once the group have passed the clap around the circle once or twice, the facilitator introduced 'bap'. The person who received the clap can now say 'bip' while passing the clap to the person on their left, or say 'bap' while passing the clap to the person on their right.

Finally, the facilitator introduces the 'bop', where the person with the clap passes it to someone opposite them in the circle.

Once everyone has the idea of this game the facilitator asks the group to start playing quickly, and anyone who gets their bips, baps or bops mixed up is knocked out.

Activity one – a happy childhood memory

Facilitator asks parents to quietly reflect for a few minutes on a time when they felt really happy as a child.

Asks for group feedback. Facilitator also summarizes in simple key words what the happy memories contained for each person
ie Mary felt happy when she spent time with her father, Jane felt happy when she was praised by her teacher. Write key words on flip chart (calling them out clearly as you write them, and making sure to only write individual key words), ie praise, time together, etc. Perhaps one member of the group might be happy to provide simple line drawing illustrations after each concept to add meaning for those with

poor literacy. If not, concentrate on reading each phrase out clearly on several different occasions so everyone knows what is written.

When everyone in the group has given their feedback call out the full list of positive childhood experiences. Allow group to discuss briefly.

Activity two – a happy childhood for all children

Split parents into small groups and ask them to discuss ways that they can give their own children at home the same happy experiences.

Take group feedback and acknowledge/repeat all key ideas.

Activity Three – sad childhood experiences

Repeat activity one, this time asking parents to think of a time as a child when they were sad. You may wish to stress confidentiality issues of any information shared and reassure parents that they do not need to think about or talk about their worst time of sadness as a child. Any time they were sad will do.

Take feedback as before, making a list of the types of experiences that make children sad.

Activity four – minister for health and children

Ask participants to form small groups (3 or 4 participants in each) and ask them to discuss the following question:

If you were minister for health and children (or some other easily identifiable figure in a position of power) what would you do to prevent children having these bad experiences?

Have a range of art materials available so participants can explore the idea through collage or art work if they choose.

Take feedback. In the feedback highlight actions that are in parents control (ie encouraging children to attend school) while clearly acknowledging issues outside the parents control (ie, lack of income, etc.)

Wrap up/evaluation

Ask participants how they felt about today's session, and what idea they want to take home. (Make a personal note how these fit with the aims and objectives)

Needs and Rights of Children

Session appropriate for parents or family sessions including older children, as a stand alone session or as part of a programme, as one-to one work with families or as group work

Aim: To explore the needs of children, to highlight the ideas of basic human rights for children

Energiser/ introduction – stranded on a desert island game

In a round of introductions ask each participant to state if they were going to be stranded on a desert island and could only bring one thing with them, what would that one thing be, and why

Activity one: small group exercise, children's needs

Box of tricks for children's needs activity (plenty of everything)– food items, toys, school books and pencils, story books, clothes and shoes, - cut-outs of love hearts or pictures of parents hugging children, cut out pictures or models of houses and caravans.

Place box of items in the centre of the room

Working in small groups, ask the participants to select items to show what they think children need. Ask them to place the items in a line or a pyramid to show which are most important. Encourage them to look for other items in the community centre or venue, or to draw or write key words on paper to show any items they think are important that are missing.

Take feedback and encourage group discussion. Ask group to debate any differences between the different groups.

Highlight any concepts that have not been represented by physical items. Ensure that all of the following needs are represented:

- Physical needs - Food, clothes, warmth, hygiene etc
- Love and affection
- Stimulation, exploration and play
- Security, stability consistency and routine
- Guidance and control
- Responsibility
- Independence and protection

If any of these items have been missed out, explain them briefly, and ask parents to show you where on their line/pyramid they think these needs go.

Activity Two: Children's Human Rights

Group Discussion – What are Human Rights?

Discuss and record parent's ideas

Ask 'Do children have the same rights as parents?'

Discuss and record any ideas

Read out The list of UN Rights of the child sheet. Provide a bundle of photocopies so that any parent that wants to take one can do so.

Ask participants to break into small groups and discuss these rights. Ask them to decide

- a) what parents can do to protect these rights for children, and
- b) what the government could do

Take feedback and make a note of all key points

Evaluation/wrap-up

What idea are you taking home with you today?

The UN Rights of the Child

Every child has the right to a happy childhood. Every child should have all the rights in this list, for the good of the child and the good of everyone in society. All parents, all men and women, all voluntary organizations and governments must see that these rights are protected

Principle 1 Every child has the same rights. There will be no discrimination because of religion, or the child's colour, sex, the language they speak, what country they come from or any other reason

Principle 2 The best interests of the child are most important. Opportunities need to be available for children to grow and develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner, with freedom and dignity

Principle 3 The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

Principle 4 Children's health is important. Special care needs to be given to mothers and babies. Children have the right to food, housing, play facilities and medical treatment to keep them healthy

Principle 5 If a child has special needs because they are handicapped or because they are from a disadvantaged community they will get extra education and other supports

Principle 6 Children need love. If at all possible, children have the right to live with their own parents and family. Even if this isn't possible, all children need affection, love, and security, wherever they live. If a child doesn't have a family society and the government must pay particular attention to the needs of that child. The state should help out large families with money and other supports to help keep families together

Principle 7 All children have the right to a free education. Children also have the right to play.

Principle 8 Children come first. If there is a disaster or if people are in need children get help before others, as they need it most.

Principle 9 Children must not be neglected, or treated with cruelty, or exploited. Children cannot be bought or sold. Children can't work under a reasonable age, and children of any age should never work many hours, as their rights to play, and to an education come first. Children should never work in any place that could damage their health

Principle 10 The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

Child development

Session appropriate for parents or family sessions including older children, as a stand alone session or as part of a programme

To explore the different stages of child development

Warm up exercise/energiser – my unique child

All parents stand in a line at the back of the room. The facilitator calls out descriptions of children from the list 'my impressions of my child' in the resources. Each parent takes one step forward if their child has this quality, one step back if they do not. If older children are present they can think either of themselves, or another loved one in the family.

For parents with large families ask them to think of one specific child for this exercise. They may discuss afterwards how it would have been different for a different child

Activity one – 'How old am I?' game

Facilitator talks quietly to each participant and gives them a particular behaviour to act out, name.

Possible behaviours are included on the facilitator's sheet. These are clustered into particular age groups. Use the age groups most appropriate to your participants. If possible, you can also use props for this activity, such as rattles, balls and so forth

Facilitator tells parents to walk around the room telling other participants about their behaviour or acting it out and finding out what they are doing.

Then the facilitator asks the parents to put themselves in line in order of the age of the children they are acting. Tell them that children of lots of ages may do some of these things, they should think when children START to do them.

Discuss any interesting points that may arise, or if parents are disagreeing or debating different stages. You may choose to talk about how some of the behaviours may happen more than once – both toddlers and teenagers can throw tantrums, for instance.

Activity Two. Group discussion: Culture and development

Different cultures often have different ideas of child development. For example, some cultures may think that a 16 or 17 year old is old enough to get married, other groups don't. Middle class parents often don't like their babies and toddlers to have soothers/dummies after about 1 year old, working class parents sometimes don't mind.

Ask the group if they think that there are any differences between their culture and other cultures. Take feedback and discuss all answers.

Discuss BOTH the following points of view:

1. Different practices may not be the same as different stages of development – if a 17 year old is getting married this does not mean they are really more mature, only that they are allowed by their parents to get married
2. Different cultures place different demands on children growing up, so children may mature at different rates in some areas depending on their environment.

Ask participants to debate these ideas and come up with their own opinions. Ask them to identify what areas of development they think will be different across different cultures, and what areas of development will always be the same no matter where a child grows up.

Activity Three children's development and children's needs

Ask the participants to break into small groups and discuss the different needs of one particular stage of development. Ask them to pick the stage that their children are at. (ie. Babies, toddlers, school age children or teenagers)

Ask them to discuss – what is the most important at this stage of development
What skills is a child learning at this age?

What can a parent do to help children at this stage of development?

Wrap up

Facilitator suggests to parents:

Lots of things that children do can be difficult but they are actually normal for that stage of development. During the week you and watch your child to see what stage of development they are at, and maybe see ways you can help them through this stage.

Ask for key idea that each parent is taking away and close session

My impressions of my child – facilitators sheet

Friendly	Busy	Polite	Generous	Messy
Quiet	Is a leader	Obedient	Respectful	Likes to read
Calm	Gets on well with others	Does well in school	Shy	Loud
Easily bored	Rude	selfish	neat	Is a follower
Rebellious	Cheeky	Likes to watch TV	Gets angry easily	Has problems making friends
Hates school	Brave	Lots of energy	careful	graceful
sensitive	helpful	Stubborn	funny	loving
Likes to sing	thoughtful	fearful	lazy	careless
clumsy	Gives up easily	serious	withdrawn	demanding

Add any others you can think of – ask parents to suggest more.

'How old am I?' game – facilitator's sheet

Birth to one year

'I know my mother by smell, I turn my head when I hear a sound' – newborn
'I cry when I need something – birth to one year
I can copy your facial expression – from 2 days old
I need lots of holding and hugging – birth to one year
I've just learned how to hold a rattle – 2-3 months
I can make cooing sounds when people talk to me 2-3 months
I can reach for things and pick them up – 4-6 months
I've just learned to crawl – 7-9 months
I get very clingy and cry if mammy or daddy is going away 7-9 months
I can drink from a cup – 10-12 months
I can say my first real words 10-12 months
I like to play peek-a-boo 10-12 months

1-5 years old

I can walk, run, climb steps and explore everywhere – 1 year
I need lots of supervision because I don't understand when things are not safe – one year
I can name animals and people in pictures – one year
I play beside other children but I don't ever share – one year
I like to try to dress myself – 2 years
I say 'No' all the time – 2 years
I have tantrums when I can't do something – 2 years
I can ride a tricycle – three years
I can say a nursery rhyme – three years
I can do up my buttons – three years
I like being with other children and have just learned how to take turns – three years
I can dress myself now but still can't tie my shoes – 4 years
I'm always asking 'why' – 4 years
I talk all the time – 4 years
I can play group games with other children – 4 years
I can hop, skip and jump properly – 5 years
I can tell long stories – 5 years
I can count to 10 and know all my colours – 5 years
I like doing little jobs for mammy – 5 years
I have a 'best friend' – 5 years

6-10 years

I love to cut out and colour in – 6 years
I can be a little bossy-boots – 6 years
I like to learn how to use tools and help out properly – 7 -8years
I like secrets, and making up secret codes or secret words – 7 -8years
I play really well with other children now 7-8 years
I'm concerned with right and wrong. I will be cheeky if my parents tell me not to do something they do 7-8 years
I like crafts and making things with my hands – 9-10 years
I like to collect things 9-10
I like to learn about far off places and different people 9-10 years
I like group sports and play properly by the rules 9-10 years
I want a bit to privacy at home 9-10 years

11-13 years

I'm showing a real talent for sport, art or music – 11-13
I have strong beliefs and want to be heard 11-13
I can appear very self-centred and moody 11-13
I want to be the same as all my friends 11-13
I am a girl and I am starting to be obsessed with boys 11-13

Teens

I need a lot of rest because I'm growing so fast. I sleep more than I did when I was a baby – 14-16
I want to be popular 14-16
I want to look good, and worry about my weight and appearance 14-16
I can think about things like love, justice and fairness 14-16
I pretend I don't care about my parents or family 14-16
I like to rebel against rules 14-16
I would just die if my mother hugged me in public 14-16
I might experiment with drinking or drugs 14-16
I am a boy and I have finished growing 17-19
I can think in complex ways and see both sides of an argument for the first time 17-19
I want to find my place in the world, and understand where I fit in my family, my culture, my community 17-19
I can wait for something important and am not so impatient any more 17-19
My emotions are getting more stable and I am less moody 17-19
I have more concern for people in the world around me outside my own family 17-19
I don't need to rebel against my parents so much any more. I get on better with them 17-19

The importance of play

Session appropriate for parents or family sessions including older children, as a stand alone session or as part of a programme

To explore the importance of play for children and the different types of play. To help participants see the value of play, and have fun with their children

Warm up/ introductions

Cornflakes for breakfast

Everyone sits in a chair in a circle. The facilitator stands in the middle can call out something that many of the group may have in common such as 'everyone who had cornflakes for breakfast, move' or 'everyone wearing something yellow, move'. Everyone this applies to has to jump up and sit back down in a different chair. The facilitator grabs a chair, and the person left standing is 'on' they have to call out a feature and try to get a seat

Activity one

Design a playground/play centre/toy room

In 2 or three small groups ask the participants to design an ideal playground or play area for children. Provide a wide range of empty boxes, paints, stiff card, glue, etc. Allow plenty of time for this activity

Allow the small groups to feed back to the main group and show their playground. As they do so, highlight the main areas of play they have incorporated, and write the key words on the flip chart.

Activity two: Learning through play

Ask participants to close their eyes and try to remember something they learned as a child when playing. After a few minutes ask each participant to tell the group about what they learned, and what they were playing at the time.

Activity three: Playing with our children

Ask participants to split into small groups and discuss when they play with their children, and ask them to come up with any new ideas for when they could play, and what games they could use.

Wrap-up/close

Communication skills

Session appropriate for parents or family sessions including older children, as a stand alone session or as part of a programme

To explore the idea of communication skills, to promote active listening

Warm up/ introductions

Game: Chinese whispers

Facilitator or a participant whispers a message into the ear of the person sitting next to them. That person has to whisper the same message to the next person and so on around the circle. When the message comes to the last person they say out loud what they hear. Then the first person says what they actually said.

Activity one – listening exercise

Ask the participants to break up into pairs. Decide who is going to be person A and who will be person B. Ask all the A people to group together and all the B people to group together. Tell group A that they must talk about their favourite activity, and after the facilitator calls out 'change subject' they must talk about something they hate doing. Tell them this is a listening exercise, and that it is to see how much person B hears them say.

Call all the group B people together, and tell them that at the start they are to listen carefully to what person A tells them. After the facilitator calls out 'change subject' they are to stop listening, look bored, fiddle with their fingernails, etc.

Ask for feedback when the exercise is over. Ask all the talkers what it felt like to be listened to, or not to be listened to. Ask the listeners what it felt like to be in the different roles.

Ask the participants to discuss if there are times that they find they don't have time to listen to what their children are saying. What does this feel like? Is it the same? Is it different? Are there ways we can show our children that what they say is important, even when we are really busy?

Activity two – Talking about Feelings

Children and teenagers often find it hard to understand their feelings, and find it hard to use the right words to talk about them. We can help our children with their feelings if we help them to talk about feelings. We do this by listening carefully.

We listen to what the child is saying

We hear what they are feeling, even if they don't use the 'right' words

We say what we think we have heard.

Demonstrate this skill with the group. Ask one person to tell you about a time they had a strong feeling. Listen, hear the feeling, and repeat what you have heard.

Ask the group to split back up into pairs and practice this. Both people in the pair should take a turn to discuss a time they had a strong feeling, and to actively listen.

Take feedback. How did this feel? Was it better than the last time when you weren't listened to?

Activity Three – I messages

Explain – we can help our children listen to us by the way we talk to them

Ask group to discuss what makes it easy for children to listen, what makes it hard. Note all main ideas.

Introduce idea of 'I' messages. When we need to say something important there is a simple way we can make sure that we are heard. We use three magic words... When...I feel...because

When you drop your toys on the floor *I* feel annoyed *because* someone will trip over them

Give an example of not using a 'when...I feel...because' statement.

'You have thrown your toys on the floor again, you bold boy, wait till I tell your father. You really are so naughty'

Ask group what the child is hearing with the 'when...I feel...because' statement, and what they are hearing with the 'you' statement.

Ask the group to discuss this idea in pairs. Ask each participant to come up with their own 'when...I...because' sentences they could use with their children at home, and if they would ever use a 'you' statement instead.

Wrap-up/close

Positive discipline part one – Parenting styles

Session appropriate for parents or family sessions including older children, as a stand alone session or as part of a programme

To explore the idea of different parenting styles, to promote democratic, authoritative parenting

Warm up/ introductions

Class review – in a circle, parents take turns to say how they have been getting on since last week, if they have tried anything new with their children, and if it has worked

Shake out – Participants stand in a circle, and one participant at a time demonstrates a movement – jump, shake, dance, etc. Everyone else copies them. Each person in group takes turn to demonstrate a movement

Activity one - Tower block exercise

Materials – vast quantities of matchsticks

Facilitator asks for three volunteers. The rest of the group split up into three or more small groups. The facilitator takes volunteers outside the door or out of ear-shot of the main group. Each volunteer is asked to act out one parenting style – authoritative/democratic (giving choices), permissive (giving in) or authoritarian (giving orders). Use the resource sheet and show it to the volunteers or read it out to them and discuss the concept until they are clear on the style they are to imitate.

Back in the larger group each team is told to build a high tower out of their match sticks. They are told that the volunteers are now experts in this task, as they have been given special training. The volunteers will be going around assisting each group in turn. Continue exercise until all teams have been assisted by all three volunteers, and have therefore experienced all three parenting styles

Return to main group for feedback and discussion. Emphasise that the volunteers were playing roles, and it is safe to talk about what it felt like to be helped by each person, as they won't take any criticism personally, it was all part of the game. Encourage group to discuss what it felt like to be assisted by each of the parenting styles demonstrated by the exercise. Was it easier to work when helped by one particular person? Who was that? Did some of the volunteers actually hinder more than they helped?

Finish by explaining and naming the specific parenting styles.

Activity two – Group discussion

Recap on the three parenting styles. In the full group discuss the parenting styles in more detail. Ask participants to split into small groups and discuss

- a) when they might have used any of the three different styles
- b) How they could practice using the democratic style – would it work with their children?
- c) What do children learn from each parenting style

Take feedback and discussion from the teams.

Wrap-up/close

An idea I'm taking away this week is...

Resource sheet parenting styles and the Tower Block exercise

Parenting style one: Authoritarian – giving orders

Strict parents – they set the rules, and the children obey them. Use rewards and punishments a lot.

What do children learn? –

Too many rewards lead children to expect ‘payment’ for being good.

Too many punishments teach children not to get caught, rather than not to do wrong. The children may learn to resent and fear parents rather than respecting them.

In the Tower block exercise, the volunteer will act this role by giving lots of orders to the team building the tower. They will insist that whatever way the team are building the tower is the ‘wrong’ way, and that their way is the ‘right’ way. They will openly criticise the work of the team and tell them that the tower isn’t good enough because it hasn’t been done to their rules. May knock down the tower and tell group to start again.

Parenting style two: giving in - permissive

Parents set no limits, allow children to do as they please. They ‘spoil’ their children.

What do children learn?

Children do not learn to control their own behaviour, and don’t learn about limits. Getting on in school and society is hard, because these children are used to being allowed to do exactly what they want, and can’t fit in where there are rules, or limits on their behaviour. They expect to do exactly as they please so they don’t learn to respect the rights of others.

In the tower block exercise the volunteer acting this role will tell the team that their tower is fine, no matter what it looks like (even if it has just been knocked over by the strict volunteer). They don’t offer any constructive advice. If the team plead for help they may take over and build the tower block for them, not giving the team a chance to take part.

Continues on next page...

Resource sheet parenting styles and the Tower Block exercise continued

Parenting style three – giving choices – democratic

Democratic parents set limits and boundaries, but they also respect their child's ability to make choices. They allow their children to take part in decisions that affect them. Democratic parents use consequences when children overstep the limits.

What do children learn?

Children learn how to make positive choices, and they learn that their opinion counts, and they have responsibility, including responsibility for poor choices they may make.

In the tower block exercise the volunteer offers constructive suggestions to the group if they are having difficulty making their tower. They are encouraging of the efforts of the team, and respect the way that the team has chosen to build the tower. They may make suggestions that will help finish the task, but they do not take over or do the work themselves.

Positive discipline part two – building self-esteem and problem solving

Session appropriate for parents or family sessions including older children, as a stand alone session or as part of a programme

Aim: To encourage problem solving strategies in parents and to increase awareness of children's self-esteem

Warm up/ introductions - Frozen T-shirt game

Note – this game will only work if you have a freezer in the centre you are running the group in, and if the weather is reasonably mild. You can switch for a problem-solving energiser of your choice if this is not the case

Materials – 3 or 4 old big baggy t-shirts, zip lock freezer bags big enough to fit the t-shirts in.

Instructions: Seal the t-shirts in the freezer bags with a mug full of water, and freeze them solid. Keep them frozen until you start the game. Spilt the group into teams. Give each team a frozen t-shirt and tell them that each team is to have one member wearing the tea-shirt. Game is over when each team has succeeded.

Teams must therefore figure out how to solve the problem that the t-shirts are frozen. They can sit on t-shirts, microwave them (if facility is available), pound on them to make them more flexible and beat the ice off, place them on a radiator or run them under water. Try not to give any hints. Let each team solve the problem on their own. In feedback you can show how many different ways there could be to solve this problem if the teams did not use a wide variety of methods. Give positive feedback on all the strategies that the teams came up with.

Activity one – Group discussion

Ask the group to think about a time that they had a problem they had to solve. Were they able to think up any unusual or creative ways of solving the problem? Ask the group to share any positive problem solving experiences they can think of.

Focus on:

What does it feel like to successfully solve a problem?

Is it easier to solve a problem on your own, or with other people?

What does it feel like if a teacher, parent or other person gets impatient and comes along and solves the problem for you?

What opportunities can we give our children to develop their problem-solving skills?

Activity two – Self-esteem building

Self-esteem is the word we use to describe how we see ourselves. Every person comes into the world as a unique and valuable person, with all the same rights and worth as everyone else. When we have good self-esteem we know that we are valuable people. When we have poor self-esteem we start thinking badly of ourselves, or thinking that we are not worth very much.

Tip for building self esteem 1– you have the right to feel good about yourself. Tell yourself that you are an important person. Say ‘I am special, I am unique, I am valuable, I deserve to feel good about myself’

Tip for building self-esteem 2 - don't talk you yourself they way you wouldn't allow someone else to talk to you.

If someone walked in to the room and told you that you are worthless, a stupid fool, a loser or that you never do anything right you would feel angry with them. People should not talk to you this way. Often we talk to ourselves this way. Ask yourself, have you ever thought

No one would ever like me

I never do anything right

I am a loser

Encourage participants to think quietly to themselves for a minute about any negative things they say to themselves that they wouldn't allow others to say to them. Give each persona lump of clay or playdough to fold in their hands while they think. Ask them to fold the clay into an ugly shape like the ugly thoughts. After 2 minutes encourage them to open their eyes, look at the clay, and say ‘you are not allowed to talk to me like that’. Let them flatten the clay.

Activity three – self esteem in children

If you are doing this session after a session on active listening, remind parents of the difference between labelling ‘you’ statements ‘you are a bold boy, you didn't pick up your toys’ and positive ‘I’ statements. ‘When you don't pick up your toys, I feel sad, because someone could trip on them and hurt themselves’

Ask the group to split into teams. Give each team a large sheet of paper with an outline of a child. Ask them to create a collage or drawing of the positive things that can build self esteem in a child.

Wrap-up/close

An idea I got from this week is...

Positive discipline part three – dealing with challenging behaviour, using rewards and punishments.

Session appropriate for parents or family sessions including older children, as a stand alone session or as part of a programme

To explore the appropriate place for use of rewards and punishments as part of positive discipline

Warm up/ introductions

In the introduction round parents are asked to give an example of an annoying behaviour that their child does, for example kicking, shouting, using bad language, etc.

Activity one –group discussion on positive discipline

Group discussion on what they have tried, what works and what doesn't. The facilitator takes note of main points and reflects these back to the group. (Can write key words on flip chart if this works)

Activity two – five methods of positive discipline

Facilitator then introduced the 5 golden rules of positive discipline – and has hand-out ready for any parent that wants to take one. With each of the five methods the facilitator can encourage discussion in small groups, or if the group are willing to do role play, each one can be experimented with in this manner instead.

Wrap-up/close

An idea I got from this week is...

Handout on positive discipline 1

Allow children to be good – do rather than don't

If you are told 'Don't think of a big purple dinosaur' what's the first thing you are going to think of? I bet that big purple dinosaur you thought of had green spots, too!

'Don't' is a powerful word. We can help children to be good by saying 'do' more than 'don't'.

When we say 'don't run on the road' we are giving the child a negative command. This has several drawbacks. It gives them an idea they may not even have thought of – running on the road, and suggests a way they can get attention from you (by running on the road). It is telling them what is wrong, but not what is right. It does nothing to raise their self-esteem.

When we say 'please walk beside me', 'please hold my hand', 'you are a good boy/girl for holding my hand on a busy street' or even using I messages and saying 'when you hold my hand on the busy street it makes me happy, because I know you are safe'. All of these are positive messages. They tell the child how to be good, not how not to be bad, and are better at raising their self-esteem and helping them be good.

Think of some 'don't' sentences you say to your child, and try to think of a 'do' message or an 'I feel' message you can say instead.

Handout on positive discipline 2

Offer choices

By respecting our children and offering them some choices we can help them grow and develop. They feel more in control of their lives when they get to make choices themselves about it. Choices need to be age appropriate. There is no point saying to a 2 year old 'what do you want to wear today' because they are too young to pick from all the clothes in the wardrobe, and will probably end up having a tantrum. If we always choose what they wear we are not letting them learn or develop their own ideas. We can offer two outfits and say 'which one do you want to wear. This way we are offering age appropriate choices. This can be done for children of all ages. It encourages them to learn to make choices and be responsible for the choices they make.

Children can also learn about making choices from seeing the consequences of their behaviour. We can give children a choice by showing them what will happen if they behave a certain way.

'If you do not eat your dinner you will get hungry' is a choice for a child. They know what the consequence will be, and they choose for themselves how they will behave.

Consequences do not just happen. Parents have to make them happen. The child who doesn't eat their dinner will learn nothing if they are allowed to fill up on sweets and crisps. The parent must respect the child's choice, but also follow through on the consequences.

When children have to be punished, using consequences helps children remember what happened and why. If a child goes outside on their bike without permission and are punished by not having a treat, being scolded or some other way, they will quickly forget what the punishment is for. They are learning 'Mum or dad is mean', not 'I shouldn't have done that'.

By using consequences we can 'make the punishment fit the crime'. The child who went out on their bike when they shouldn't have can have their bike locked up on the shed for the next day. This is a clear consequence of their behaviour and they won't forget why it happened.

Occasionally there is no choice for a child. The grown-up is in charge and has to set the limits. A child has to go to school, for example. When there is no choice for a child a parent can help by being very clear. They explain: There is no choice this time. Why there is no choice. What will happen.

Discuss in your group a time when you used choices and consequences with your child

How you think you might use them in future and When they can't be used

Handout on positive discipline 3

The power of attention – including ignoring and time out

Often when children misbehave it is because they want attention from their parents. Getting scolded or punished seems better than being ignored to many children.

Use your attention to encourage children to be good, not naughty. This can be done by giving them plenty of attention when they are good, and less attention when they are naughty.

Steps for using positive attention –

1. Catch them being good!

When the kids are being good it is sometimes easy for a very tired and overworked Mum or dad to use those five minutes to switch off. This doesn't tell the children how happy it makes you when they are good. Look for something that they have done well each day, or for a few moments when they are behaving themselves. 'Catch them being good'. Tell them they are good, and give them an extra hug and kiss. When children know they will get good attention from you for being good, they have less reason to look for bad attention by being bad.

2. Ignore minor bad behaviour

If a child is demanding attention in a negative way, such as whining, 'telling tales' sulking, constantly nagging for treats, this is a negative way of looking for your attention. Even scolding them for this behaviour is still giving them the attention they are looking for. It can be better to totally ignore the child when they are misbehaving, and then catch them being good as soon as they start behaving themselves again.

You don't have to be talking to your child to give them a reaction. Children are very good at reading body language. Sometimes walking out of the room is the only way to totally ignore a naughty child.

Some behaviour can't be ignored, if it is the wrong kind of bold behaviour, or if the child is in danger. Discuss in your group what kind of behaviour you can use ignoring for, and what kind of behaviour you can't.

3. Using time out

Time out is useful for toddlers or young children. It helps them regain control when they have lost the run of themselves with tantrums, whining, etc. Small children often do not have much emotional control. They have not been alive long enough to learn how to deal with frustration, sadness, etc. You can help them learn this control by using time-out.

Choose a safe place with few distractions (a room full of toys is not a good idea!). Give the child a warning – if you do this, you will get a time out. Be clear about what the child has done, and what will happen. Be clear about how long – never more than 10 minutes. When its over it is forgiven and forgotten. Don't go into a nag about why they went into time out in the first

place. Just give them a hug and kiss and offer them a chance to be good. You can suggest going to play, or telling stories together.

4. Give yourself time out.

when things get on top of you and you feel you are losing control (which happens to all parents from time to time) give yourself a time out.

Separate yourself from the children so you can't snap and do something you will regret. Make sure they are safe and well first. Ring a friend, or have a bath or just sit quietly in a room. Take care of yourself for a little while. Return to the children when you are calm and give them lots of positive attention

Think of times you have already tried any of these methods, or might like to try them. Talk about them in your group.

Evaluation session and Graduation ceremony

Introductions and welcomes

Thank everyone for coming and welcome them

Activity one: Evaluation

Show the participants the aims and objectives for the group from the first session. Ask they do discuss each one, and say of these have been met. Take careful note of these answers.

Use any other evaluation methods you decided on. Useful questions may be 'Have you any advice on what we should change before we run this programme again?'

Allow room for free discussion on what they have gained, based on their own hopes and expectations

Activity two: Graduation

Each participant is thanked for taking part. Facilitator gives special feedback to each participant and reinforces what learning by telling them what special skill or ability they showed during the programme – i.e. always listens attentively to others, showed leadership, very open to new ideas, etc.

Every participant walks up to the facilitator and receives their certificate or token for attendance.

The facilitator's resource includes a sample certificate that can be used, or you can draw up your own.

Groups with low literacy may not be impressed or motivated by a 'piece of paper'. Small, wallet photo sized 'super-parent' statements can be printed off and inserted into blank key rings or fridge magnet photo frames, if these are available. Alternatively they can be laminated and have small magnets (available in any craft shop) glued to the back so they have an attractive fridge magnet as a memento of their participation in the course. Facilitators can use their own skills and imagination to devise the most appropriate memento for each group

*I am a
Super-Parent*

*I am a
Super-Parent*

*I am a
Super-Parent*

*I am a
Super-Parent*

*I am a
Super-Parent*

*I am a
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Super-Parent*

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Super-Parent*