

# SECD

SCIENCE OF EARLY  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT



## SECD Resource Kit

# SECD Resource Kit



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## Background

The **Science of Early Child Development (SECD)** is a knowledge mobilization initiative designed to make current research accessible to anyone interested in learning more about the profound impact of the early years on lifelong health and well-being. Beginning as a tool to help share the emerging science about early brain development and its implications for practice across sectors, SECD has grown and developed into three *online living textbooks*, as well as other educational resources.

SECD has been developed at Red River College (RRC) in Canada, in partnership with the University of Toronto and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Since 2009, RRC has been working with AKDN to create SECD resources that have been contextualized for the majority world. In addition to the International edition of the online textbook and the International course, offline resources have been created to meet the needs of those communities where internet access may be limited.

The development of this SECD Resource Kit was first sparked by feedback from participants of the online International course who wanted a way to share what they had learned.

With this in mind, the Kit contains ready-made offline presentations and supporting materials that can be adapted for specific audiences such as:

- parents/caregivers
- community members
- ECE educators
- health professionals
- program staff or volunteers
- anyone directly engaged with young children or families

Based on the *SECD - International edition* online living textbook, five topic areas are covered in the Kit:

- brain development
- nurturing care
- play
- language and literacy
- positive guidance

The SECD Resource Kit further enables the sharing of important information about the early years with communities across the globe.

For information on accessing the Science of Early Child Development (SECD), visit [www.scienceofecd.com](http://www.scienceofecd.com).



## What is in the Resource Kit?

Designed for use with front-line workers and parents/caregivers, the SECD Resource Kit includes a variety of materials to help you organize workshops, meetings or discussions around the topics. The materials include:

- ready-to-use slide workshops
- links to information and resources
- workshop activity ideas
- discussion questions
- video clips
- photographs
- scenarios
- quotes
- ideas for homemade materials
- workshop handouts
- other interactive resources

**Ready-to-use slide presentations** for workshops have been developed for each topic using the resources in the Kit as listed above. Each individual slide presentation is designed for a workshop and facilitators can choose between a 1-hour or 3-hour workshop. Notes with background detail and instructions for each slide in the presentations are included for workshop facilitators.

There are eight ready-to-use workshops:

- **Brain development**
  1. Early brain development: The amazing brain
- **Nurturing care**
  2. Understanding nurturing care
- **Play**
  3. Why play?
  4. Play in the early years
- **Language and literacy**
  5. Early language learning (0 – 3 years)
  6. Using language to learn (3 – 6 years)
- **Positive guidance**
  7. A positive guidance approach
  8. Strategies for positive guidance

**Links to information and resources** lists a variety of website resources that facilitators can access for further background information about the selected topics in the Kit.

**Workshop activity ideas** are designed for reflection, action and fun! Activities are described, needed materials are listed and suggestions for the facilitator in leading reflections about the activity are included.

**Scenarios** are short scenes or short stories designed to promote discussion and understanding on a variety of issues in each topic. Although scenarios are included in each of the specific topics, many of them are applicable across topics. Review the scenarios included in the various topics when developing your own workshops.

**Video clips** are of children as well as children and their caregivers. The clips are short scenes and are from a variety of regions around the world. The videos are available in two different formats: .wmv and .mP4 versions. Choose the format that works on your computer. However, if both work, choose .mP4 as the quality will be better.

**Discussion questions** are listed in each topic that can be used for small or large group discussions.

**Other interactive resources** are short slide resources that are used in a ready-to-use workshop and are included separately in the Kit.

**Photographs** of children from various regions around the world are included for each topic.

**Quotes** related to the topic are included in “Play”, “Nurturing care” and “Positive guidance”.

**Ideas for homemade materials** are offered for the topics of “Play” and “Language and literacy” focusing on low-cost, no-cost items to create play items and opportunities.

**Workshop handouts** are prepared for each ready-to-use workshop that summarize the key points and provide practical ideas for workshop participants.

**All of the resource materials as well as a copy of this guide are included on the flash drive that accompanies the Kit. The materials are organized by topic subjects that are included in the Kit.**

## How to use the Resource Kit

The SECD Resource Kit has been developed with flexibility in mind, that is, any of the materials in each of the topics can be used in a variety of ways.

### Ready-to-use workshops can be:

- used as is and participants can be given the handout at the end of the session
- the spark to create your own tailor-made workshop by selecting individual resources in the kit for example, discussion questions, activities, photographs and/or videos
- enhanced, depending on the audience, by incorporating more material and/or research; for example, from the “links to further information and resources”

### Workshop activity ideas can be:

- used to plan your own workshop or training sessions
- adapted to better reflect the needs and interests of the workshop participants
- used as interesting experiences in various programs, staff meetings and other gatherings

### Scenarios can be used as:

- handouts for group discussions
- stories read by the facilitator in the language of the participants
- templates to adapt to the context of the workshop (for example, changing names and settings)

### Video clips, photographs, other interactive resources and quotes can be used:

- in workshops, in staff meetings, in parent programmes, and in many other sessions to spark discussion and reflection on a variety of issues

### Discussion questions:

- offer a sample of questions that can be used for small or large group discussions during a workshop, staff meetings or other discussion venues
- can be used as a basis for participants to write out their thoughts and share

### Workshop handouts can be:

- given to participants at the end of a workshop
- used as a basis for creating a workshop
- posted in public areas where a variety of people may benefit from reading the key messages
- translated

What is key is that facilitators can select and combine materials and ideas that are most appropriate for the topic and to best meet the needs of their particular audience.

If you have any specific questions regarding the SECD Resource Kit, please email [secd@rrc.ca](mailto:secd@rrc.ca).



# Workshop Tips

## PLANNING FOR THE WORKSHOP

**Choosing the topic or focus.** The Kit provides you with clearly designed topics and resources. Think about the needs of the audience and community. Select a topic that meets those needs. If you are planning for more than one topic think about how best to order the sessions. Once you have chosen your topic, review the slides, slide notes, videos, activities and other resources. Read some or all of the background readings particularly if you are presenting the topic for the first time using the ready-to-use workshop. Reviewing the materials may take some time, so start well in advance of the workshop.

**Preparing for your audience.** Think about your potential audience. What are their interests? What do they already know? What do they need to know? What are the contexts in which they live and/or work? Use this information as you plan your workshop. The materials in the Kit are flexible and can be used in a variety of ways, for example, adapting the discussion questions and/or activities and adding examples that come from your own experience or that of the audience. Making the workshop ‘your own’ will help you to be more comfortable with the session.

**Decide on when, where and how long.** Decide on the key arrangements such as the length of the workshop, the time of day or evening, the location and the number of people that can be accommodated. Consider travel time and distances, safety and facilities at or near the venue. When selecting the venue, be sure to think about the need for some extra space for small group work.

**Inviting the participants.** Think about how you will inform or invite people to the workshop. Where can you post the information? Who or what agency can help advertise? Is there a community or agency newsletter or local radio program able to promote the workshop?

## PREPARING THE WORKSHOP

**Be well-prepared ahead of time.** Thoroughly review the materials you will use for your workshop, including videos and activities, so that you are comfortable with the materials and the delivery. Identify the key messages and information you want participants to receive. Think about how you can highlight the learning gained from activities and videos.

**Prepare the materials.** Make a list of all the materials you need for the workshop including participant handouts and materials for activities and any additional things you may need. Make sure you have them conveniently available for yourself and participants.

**Plan for technology needs.** Find out what technology you will need, if it is available and be sure you know how to use it. Test out all materials in advance. Remember that the Kit is flexible and can still be used without a computer and projector, but you will need to plan ahead.

**Consider time management.** Make a schedule for the workshop ahead of time and try to stick to it fairly closely. Anticipate and plan in advance how you might accommodate if you are running short on time. For example, what activities might be shortened or omitted? How might you ensure efficient use of time?

## PRESENTING THE WORKSHOP

**Make sure the technology works.** Arrive earlier than participants – and, if possible, set it up the day before so you do not have any surprises. Make sure those at the back of the room can hear and see the screen well and that you know how to manage the equipment yourself. If you do not, make sure you have an assistant present who does.

**Make the space as comfortable as you can.** Set up the room so it works for both large group and small group activities – usually tables with four to five chairs each work well. If you can, it’s great to have visuals of children, plenty of water and comfortable seating.

**Encouraging and supporting participation.** Keep the session relaxed and enjoyable. People want learning experiences to be both fun and inspirational – they want to leave invigorated and with a sense of time well spent. Participants are there because they are interested and want to learn, but they also like to share their experiences and knowledge about the topic. As the facilitator, think of yourself as a guide leading the participants through a “journey of learning”. Make sure everyone feels welcome and included. Talk to everyone during group times and breaks. Do your best to sensitively manage discussion so it is not monopolized by a few people.

**Keep the workshop interesting.** Mix it up. Plan strategies to have participants work with different people throughout the session. This helps avoid having people who know each other stay together the whole session. Be ready with some short, fun energizers such as quick songs, games and movement activities. Search “icebreakers and energizers for presentations” on the Internet for practical advice and ideas.

**Pace the session.** Keep it fast moving but not too fast. People need time to think, discuss and absorb new ideas. Make a schedule ahead of time and try to stick fairly close to it. Try to have a balance of watching, listening, talking and doing throughout the session. Plan for an active session especially if the session is in the evening. Make time to sum up at the end and check for understanding.

**Check for understanding.** Think carefully about what some of the challenges might be for the participants. Will anyone have difficulty understanding the terminology? Make sure you speak clearly and simply. Plan for many stops to check understanding, and try to think of different ways you might explain information.

**Think about how to handle the workshop if it is not going as planned.** Be flexible and ready to make adjustments. For example, participants may have become very engaged in the beginning of a session and taken longer than expected with an activity and discussion; you then realize you will not have enough time to cover everything. Consider what you might leave out if you must. Avoid going over the scheduled end time of the session.

# NOTES



## BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- Introduction
- Links to information and resources
- Ready-to-use workshops
- Activity ideas
- Scenarios
- Videos
- Discussion questions
- Other slide resources
- Photographs
- Workshop handout

# INTRODUCTION

While the brain and its functioning cannot be seen with our eyes, our brains are amazing as they control all areas of our development. Our personalities, emotions, language, attention, memory and thinking are all based in the brain. Our brains govern how we learn, how we interpret information and how we behave. Our brains make us who we are.

The explosion of new research about early human brain development has increased our understanding of the importance of everyday experiences for nurturing brains. We now understand that the early years are critical to the formation of healthy brains. Everyday nurturing and other stimulating experiences fuel the development of the brain. Much of what parents, family members and caregivers naturally do when they lovingly interact with babies supports healthy brain development. With an understanding about early brain development, adults can make a big difference in children's growth, learning and development.

Review the resources listed on the next page for background information on early brain development.



# RESOURCES

## Links to information and resources

The following Zero to Three website offers links to a variety of information and resources on early brain development.

[www.zerotothree.org/child-development/brain-development/](http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/brain-development/)

Early Childhood in Focus 7: Developing brains, a publication of The Bernard van Leer Foundation includes current information and research on the structure and development of the brain, as well as how environmental factors influence brain development.

Oates, J., Karmiloff-Smith, A., & Johnson, M.H. (Eds.). (2012).  
Early Childhood in Focus 7: Developing Brains. London, UK: The Open University.  
[www.bernardvanleer.org/Developing-Brains?pubnr=1531&download=1](http://www.bernardvanleer.org/Developing-Brains?pubnr=1531&download=1)

The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University brings together the latest scientific research on a variety of topics related to early human development. The following two papers are specific to early brain development:

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007). The Timing and Quality of Early Experiences Combine to Shape Brain Architecture: Working Paper No. 5.  
Retrieved from: [http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/download\\_file/-/view/74/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/download_file/-/view/74/)

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2006). Early Exposure to Toxic Substances Damages Brain Architecture: Working Paper No. 4.  
Retrieved from: [http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/download\\_file/-/view/71/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/download_file/-/view/71/)

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Early brain development - The amazing brain

Long workshop (2-3 hours) 🕒🕒🕒

This session introduces early brain development and factors that support its healthy development.

Participants will explore:

- when brain development begins
- factors fostering healthy brain development in the early years
- the importance of the early years for brain development
- interactions and activities that support early brain development

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- Early brain development: what do you think?
- The mystery bag
- Serve and return
- Building brains
- Play, learning and brain development

#### Scenarios:

- Samina, Rose and Nafisa
- Saroj and his grandfather
- Pune and Dankumari
- Malik at the ECD Centre (*optional handout*)

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Brain Development folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Early brain development - The amazing brain

Short workshop (1 hour) 🕒

This session introduces early brain development and factors that support its healthy development.

Participants will be introduced to:

- factors fostering healthy brain development in the early years
- the importance of the early years for brain development

### What you will use:

#### Activity:

- Early brain development: what do you think?

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Brain Development folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Early brain development: What do you think?

These days there is a lot of discussion about early brain development so participants may come with some ideas. This activity will help participants to think about what they might already know or think they know about brain development.

**Materials:** None required

**What to do:** Let participants know that you will read out five different statements about brain development and they will have a chance to indicate if they believe it is true or false.

Ask all participants to stand. Read the first question aloud and ask participants to sit down if they think it is false and to stay standing if they think it is true. (Alternatively, participants could remain sitting and just put up their hands). Repeat for each of the questions.

Keep this activity fun. It is not a test or competition. The activity is simply to get the participants thinking about early brain development. Be prepared to answer some questions and to indicate what participants will learn during discussions in the session. For example, with regard to the first statement below, you may want to comment that we now know that before the baby is born the brain is developing and the baby is responsive to stimulation from the environment. For the last statement, for example, you may want to comment that when we cuddle, talk and play with baby, we are helping the brain to grow.

### True or False?

- Brain development does not begin until after birth. **FALSE**
- A baby can learn even before birth. **TRUE**
- Early life experiences do not impact brain development. **FALSE**
- The brain uses all the senses to learn and grow. **TRUE**
- Nurturing interactions with caring adults stimulates brain development. **TRUE**

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## The mystery bag: Exploring with our senses

When children are young we can sometimes see them watching, listening and using their other senses to take in information and learn. As adults, we still use our senses, but we have become so used to learning this way that we may no longer think about it. In this activity, participants will explore different materials to increase their awareness of how much we learn through our senses.

**Materials:** You will need four cloth, plastic or paper bags – one with something to explore through touch, one with something to explore through smell, one with something to explore through taste, and one with something to explore through listening. It will be helpful to label the bags as touch, smell, taste or hear.

The materials for the activity can be simple no-cost, low-cost items such as:

- **touch** – natural materials such as leaves, flowers or stones
- **smell** – leaf, spice, grass, piece of soap (perhaps in small containers)
- **taste** – plain cracker, bread, piece of fruit
- **hear** – homemade rattles with different materials or small container with sand, beans or rice

**What to do:** Set up four stations where participants will explore objects using different senses. Put the item(s) in a bag, (or under a piece of paper or cloth) so participants do not see the item(s). In pairs or small groups, have members explore the item(s) and describe (not identify) what they feel, hear, smell and taste. Ask the participants to be sure to keep their eyes closed as they explore using the sense identified on the bag. Have the participants really focus on what they notice through their senses and try to describe the sensations. Groups can rotate from one station to another so all members have a chance to explore and describe the item(s). Depending on the size of the group, it may be necessary to create a second set of bags.

Discuss that our senses are sending information to the brain. This information is remembered and used next time we interact with the same or similar materials. This is how the brain increases its knowledge. For example, ask participants, “how many were able to identify the item(s) with little difficulty? How do you think you knew this?”

This activity is a fun way to make participants more aware that the brain is constantly gathering information through the senses to increase knowledge. Conclude the activity by asking participants to consider how everyday interactions and simple materials provide important opportunities for learning.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Serve and return

When children reach out to adults in natural ways, whether through vocalizations or actions, an important opportunity to develop the relationship and stimulate the brain is created. This activity will allow the participants to learn about the back and forth of *serve and return* (as in a game of tennis) concept through a hands-on activity.

**Materials:** One soft ball

**What to do:** Ask for a volunteer. Hand the ball to the volunteer. Have the participant throw the ball to you. Ignore the ball. Ask the participant to try again. This time catch the ball but do not throw it back. Rather set the ball down on the floor or table. Ask the participant(s) how they feel about trying to play while being ignored.

Now ask another participant to throw the ball and this time catch it, smile, talk and throw the ball gently back. Ask how this feels?

Discuss the concept of *serve and return* and ask participants to identify the benefits of this type of interaction for the development of the child.

If time permits you may consider having other participants repeat the activity to provide more opportunity for participants to think about and experience this concept.

Conclude this activity by emphasizing the importance of *serve and return* in relationships for brain development. You may ask participants to offer examples of *serve and return* interactions they have had with babies or young children. Check with participants to be sure they are comfortable with the concept. Engaging in these types of interactions with babies and young children can significantly impact both relationships and learning.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Building brains

Experiences and interactions are always affecting the connections in the brain. That is, brain cells are being stimulated and connections and pathways are being formed. These connections are key to learning. However, sometimes it is hard to imagine how they are formed because we can't see into the brain. This activity will provide participants with the opportunity to learn how experience plays a role in building pathways of learning in the brain.

**Materials:** Three long pieces of string

**What to do:** Ask for four volunteers from the group. Have the volunteers come to the front and form a line. Explain that each participant is like a single brain cell (or neuron) in the brain. Explain how they are going to have an experience that will demonstrate, in a very simple way, building a pathway in the brain as the neurons connect. Focus the demonstration on a picture of a caregiver reading to a young child, preferably with the child sitting on the caregiver's lap or sitting very closely.

Hand one end of the first piece of string to the first person in the line. Read the first statement (see below) and as you do, have that participant keep hold one end of string and pass the string onto the next participant; have the second participant hold on to one section of the string and pass the next portion of the string to the next participant. Continue this until all four participants are joined by holding the string. Explain that the neurons or brain cells have communicated with one another and have started to form a pathway of learning.

Now read the second statement. Take the second string and hand it to the first participant and ask them to once again pass the string down the line.

Finally, read the last statement for each participant and have participants pass the last piece of the string along the line. Explain that we could add more statements and that each time the pathway that relates to the interaction with the caregiver would be strengthened. At the same time, the child's language and learning would be enhanced.

The statements are:

1. Father (or other caregiver) is holding me and I feel safe.
2. Father (or other caregiver) points to the pictures in the book and asks me what I see.
3. I show father (or other caregiver) the pictures I like and tell him about them.

Conclude this demonstration by commenting that each interaction and each experience plays a role in building pathways of learning in the brain and that pathways are strengthened through many experiences over time. Hundreds of trillions of connections will be made!

If time permits, you may consider asking for four different volunteers and repeating the activity to provide an extended opportunity for participants to think about and experience this concept. A different picture could be used or scene described.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Play, learning and brain development

More and more, play is understood as an integral part of a child's development. Play is a great chance for the child to explore materials, try out different ways of doing things and build flexibility in their thinking. This activity will provide participants with the opportunity to experience and explore a number of play materials and activities that support children's learning and development.

**Materials:** Chart paper, markers and see notes for each station below. Ensure materials and activities are safe and appropriate for children under six years. Try to keep the materials simple and low-cost or no-cost.

**What to do:** Set up three to six stations around the room. Provide blank chart paper and markers at each station for groups to record responses and ideas.

**Station 1:** Set out three to six children's books appropriate for children from ages 6-months to 6-years-old. Include homemade books if possible.

**Station 2:** On poster paper, list three or four common songs or poems that adults sing with children. Include the words to the song if needed. Allow participants to add to the list as they interact at the station.

**Stations 3-5:** Set out different types of materials to play with such as small wooden blocks, plastic bowls or other safe household items, natural items such as leaves or flowers, stones, homemade materials such as rattles, balls or dolls.

Divide participants into groups of four to five (according to the number of stations set up). Allow the participants to spend time at each station. Ask each group to discuss the following questions posted at each station (See "Activities" in the Brain Development folder for a copy of the questions to photocopy for this activity):

- Which senses are used?
- How do these materials or activities contribute to brain development?
- Identify how you would engage with children and the materials or activities using *serve and return*.
- What do you think the children are learning?

Stop to discuss the questions before the groups move to another station. Depending on time, participants may not visit each station, but will still benefit from the discussion of each station.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Learning through our senses

This is another activity that could be used for participants to reflect on the role our senses play in learning.

**Materials:** A small piece of fruit, cracker or bread for each participant (or other food items that would have various sensory properties.)

**What to do:** Give each participant a piece of the food item.

Ask the participants to explore the food item in a variety of ways:

- **SEE** its colour
- **FEEL** its texture
- **SMELL** its fragrance
- **TASTE** its compositions
- **HEAR** the sound while eating it

Ask participants to share with a partner how they would describe it based on its colour, texture, fragrance, taste and sound when eating. Ask participants what they learned from this activity. Ask them to think about how much more they learned experiencing the food versus just looking at the items.

In concluding this activity, explain that while experiencing and enjoying the food, we are fully involved in it. We learn so much through exploration and we use all of our senses. This is how young children learn too.

# SCENARIOS

Consider...

## Samina, Rose and Nafisa

After reading each brief scenario below, consider the following questions:

- Do you think this is good for the baby?
- Is there anything that is not good?

**Samina** is eight months pregnant. She likes to sing throughout the day and when singing children's songs she often keeps her hands on her belly. When reciting prayers she also keeps her hands on her belly. Samina's husband likes to sing to the baby when they are sitting together.

**Rose** is three months pregnant. She lives in a small house with her in-laws and other extended family members. Daily she and her husband go for a walk in a nearby park. When they return home, her husband will join the other men to drink tea and smoke cigarettes. Soon the rooms are filled with cigarette smoke.

**Nafisa** is seven months pregnant. Every day she is up early and heads to the market to work. She relies on being able to buy a soft drink (or more) for herself each day. When she arrives home, she is often too tired to cook and so will skip dinner or eat a small piece of bread before going to bed.



# SCENARIOS

Consider...

## Saroj and his Grandfather

In a kamaiya family in Jahbahi, Nepal, one-and-a-half year old Saroj laughs and hides behind his mother when his grandfather Bhuduram comes to pick him up. Bhuduram puts Saroj on his lap and shakes his legs in the air to make the bells on his ankles ring. Both of them start laughing. Saroj gets down, and his grandfather shows him how to kick each leg up in the air to make the bells ring on his own. Saroj runs down the mud slope from the verandah and turns to look at the old man. His grandfather again kicks his legs in the air, and Saroj copies him, laughing. Then he runs towards his grandfather and hugs him.

Consider the following questions:

- Saroj is having a rich physical and emotional experience. What did you notice?
- How do you think this kind of spontaneous everyday experience is influencing Saroj's developing brain?

*Arnold, C., Bartlett, S., Hill, J., Khatiwada, C., & Sapkota, P. (2000). Bringing up children in a changing world: Who's right? Whose rights? Save the Children (Norway, US & UK), UNICEF. p. 60.*



# SCENARIOS

Consider...

## Pune and Dankumari

### *Pune spends the day in his cradle*

Nayan Singh's grandson, Pune, is 2-years-old. His mother, who is deaf, goes out for fodder collection every day and leaves Pune in the cradle, tied between two posts on the verandah, with his great grandmother. The great grandmother is very old and cannot move about much. When Pune cries, she rocks the cradle, while doing something else with her other hand and says nothing. Pune cannot see out of the cradle.

One morning, from 6:00 AM until 11:00 AM he stayed in the cradle – sometimes sleeping, sometimes crying. During this time, he was given nothing to eat. The researcher asked the great grandmother, when she had eaten her food, “When is it time for his food?” The great grandmother said, “When he is hungry, he cries. Then I will give him food, otherwise there is no need to feed him.” Later on, Pune cried, and she fed him plain rice. Researchers observed that Pune's language appears to be delayed (p. 78).



# SCENARIOS

### *Dankumari's morning in Koldanda*

Early in the morning 9-month-old Dankumari is being breastfed by her mother out on the porch. There are numerous breaks in the feeding, as her mother talks and smiles at her, getting a laugh from the baby and laughing, talking in return. After the feeding, she ties the baby to her back while she tends the animals. Dankumari is tied on quite loosely, so that she is able to pull herself over to the side and peer under her mother's arm, watching as she feeds the goats. Then when her mother squats to scrub a large copper pot, the baby's legs are able to reach the ground, and she flexes them up and down as she reaches for stones on the ground, and watches what her mother is doing.

Later, while her mother is away washing clothes, Dankumari sits on the porch on some rags, playing with a set of keys. Nearby in the yard, her father is weaving shayagu, with 4-year-old Som by his side. When Dankumari is bored with the keys, he passes her some colored rags to play with. Various children, her own siblings and neighbours, take turns holding and amusing her. Indra, her 8-year-old brother, back from cutting fodder, and two neighbour children, put her in a hammock and play with her there, bouncing her while she laughs loudly.

Her mother, passing by from fetching water, reminds them not to over excite her. When the boys go back to work again, a small girl from next door takes over, standing the baby in the doorway where she can hold on to the threshold, about 12 inches off the ground, and move herself around. After a while, her mother picks her up and takes her into the house to clean her up, and then she sits on her father's lap while he takes a break from weaving.

Through some simple interactions Dankumari has the chance to learn a lot – about human relations and mutual exchange, and about language. In her activities she practices her physical skills, explores with her feet, hands and eyes, manipulates objects, learning in the process about colour, shape and texture (p. 60).

### Consider the following questions:

- Keeping in mind that Pune is 2-years-old and Dankamuri is 9-months-old, can you list some of the differences between Dankumari's and Pune's experiences on this day in terms of how their development is supported or not supported?
- How might this difference in everyday experiences impact their brain development?

Arnold, C., Bartlett, S., Hill, J., Khatiwada, C., & Sapkota, P. (2000). *Bringing up children in a changing world: Who's right? Whose rights? Save the Children (Norway, US & UK), UNICEF.*

# SCENARIOS

Consider...

## Malik at the ECD Centre

When 5-year-old Malik arrives at the ECD Centre, he finds a spot and sits next to his friends on the mat. The teacher greets everyone and the children sing together. Once the group singing activity is over, Malik chooses to go to the area with crayons and paper. He practices printing out the letters of his name on a paper. The teacher soon lets the children know that it is time for outdoor play. Malik puts the crayon back in the box and his paper on the shelf. He lines up by the door with his friends. Once outdoors, he runs to the swing with other boys and he takes turns pushing and swinging. When the teacher tells them that it is snack time, Malik lines up to wash his hands, walks into the room and sits on the mat with his small group.

Consider the following questions:

- What examples show that Malik is able to stay focused and pay attention?
- What examples show Malik's ability to make plans and control his actions?
- What examples show Malik's ability to settle into the school routine?
- How might Malik behave differently if he was having difficulty staying focused and paying attention?



# SCENARIOS

Consider...

## Ameena and Salima

Ameena and Salima are both 2-year-old cousins. Ameena is growing up in a busy household in Karachi of grandparents, parents and siblings – where Urdu, Sindhi and English are used. Her grandparents and parents make a point of using Sindhi as the primary language at home. But her three siblings tend to speak English and Urdu to her, and she spends time with her mother visiting neighbours who speak English.

Salima lives in a similar household in Toronto, Canada but, aside from her grandmother, her family only speaks mainly English. In the first few months, both Ameena and Salima could make all the language sounds associated with Urdu, Sindhi and English. After six months, Salimah gradually stop making sounds other than those associated with the English language.

At age two, Salimah is beginning to speak in English only, while Ameena has quite a few words in all three languages. Both children's brains have already been 'sculpted' by experience.

Consider the following questions:

- Why do you think Salima can only make English language sounds at age two, while Ameena can use words in three languages?
- How does this example illustrate the role of early experiences on brain development?



## VIDEOS

The following videos can also be used individually to support discussions, other workshops and meetings. Several sample questions for each video are offered for your consideration. To access the individual videos refer to “Ready-to-use workshops” in the Brain Development folder.



### LUCY AND HER MOTHER

- What does this scene tell you about Lucy's daily experience of being fed by her mother?
- What senses do you think are being stimulated?
- What is Lucy learning?



### HIBA AND HER FATHER

- How do you think this kind of spontaneous everyday experience is influencing Hiba's developing brain?
- What are the physical and emotional aspects of this interaction between father and daughter?
- What is Hiba learning?



### PEEK-A-BOO

- How does the mother respond to her son's playful interaction? What messages is she giving her son?
- How might this interaction have an effect on the child's developing brain?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When does brain development begin?

What do you think helps build healthy brains before a baby is born?

What might be bad for brain development before a baby is born?

What do you think helps build healthy brains during the first few years of life?

What might be bad for brain development in the first few years of life?

What can caregivers do to support healthy brain development?

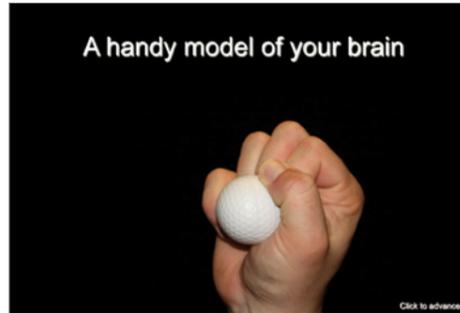
What can families do to support healthy brain development (*for example, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles*)?

What can communities do to support healthy brain development?



# OTHER SLIDE RESOURCES

To access these resources, see “Ready-to-use workshops” in the Brain Development folder.



## A HANDY MODEL OF A BRAIN

- Build awareness of the parts of the brain and their function through an easy demonstration using hands and a small ball.



## HEALTHY ROOTS

- Emphasize how important a good foundation is for healthy early brain development. How the brain develops can be compared to how a tree grows and develops as it responds to the environment around it. Just as a tree responds to the sunlight, water and earth, so do our brains respond to the physical and social environments around us.

# PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photographs could be used to stimulate discussion on early brain development. To access the photos refer to “Photographs” in the Brain Development folder.



ultrasound.jpg



breastfeeding.jpg



feeding\_baby.jpg



grandpa\_toddler.jpg



water\_sand.jpg



mom\_and\_newborn.jpg



father\_reads.jpg



showing.jpg



grandmother.jpg



tire.jpg



bead\_shapes.jpg



pregnancy.jpg

# WORKSHOP HANDOUT

## Supporting healthy brain development

### Key messages:

- The early years of life are ones of dramatic growth and development of the brain
- Loving and nurturing relationships with caregivers are key for healthy brain development
- Everyday routines and experiences provide opportunities to nurture and support brain development

### What you can do:

#### Focus on good nutrition and nurturance for mother and child prenatally

Nutritious meals, exercise and visits to the doctor support the healthy growth of baby before birth. Avoid things that can harm baby before they are born such as stress, exposure to chemicals, drugs, smoking and drinking alcohol. Talk and sing to baby before birth to help develop a strong and nurturing bond.

#### Watch and listen to children and follow their lead

Whether babies or young children are smiling or restless, ask yourself, 'what are they telling me? Are they happy and interested? Are they tired, hungry or uncomfortable? Be aware and sensitive to how children may be feeling or what they need so you respond appropriately and build trust.

#### Make the most of everyday activities and experiences

Feeding, dressing or going for a walk are wonderful opportunities for interactions that nurture and stimulate the brain. Take advantage of everyday activities to talk with children. Play simple games such as peek-a-boo or catch to build a positive relationship. Reading a book together supports language learning and creates quiet nurturing time.

#### Provide opportunities for children to explore the world through their senses

Children are learning when they manipulate everyday materials. An old pot and wooden spoon allow children to explore sound. Flowers, leaves, sand and stones allow children to touch a variety of textures and see different colours, shapes and sizes. Talk about what children see and ask them to express their ideas to stimulate the senses and support early brain development.



# NOTES



## NURTURING CARE

- Introduction
- Links to information and resources
- Ready-to-use workshops
- Activity ideas
- Scenarios
- Videos
- Discussion questions
- Photographs
- Quotes
- Workshop handout

# INTRODUCTION

To nurture is to attend to and encourage growth. Before birth, the growing infant is sensitive to, and entirely dependent on, the uterine environment. After birth, infants remain dependent on adults for sustenance, physical care and love. Early caring relationships are important. It is the emotional bonds, the attachment, between a child and their key caregivers that are a critical driving force for the development of the brain and their longterm health and well-being.

Caregivers who are sensitive and responsive in their interactions with young children positively influence children's development. These interactions and relationships in the early years are key to a child's survival, growth and long-term health and well-being. In fact, without love and nurturance, babies sometimes fail to thrive despite adequate nutrition and physical care.

Review the various resources listed on the next page for background information on nurturing and attachment and why they are important.

# RESOURCES

## Links to information and resources:

Attachment relationships is one of the topics in the Bernard van Leer series, Early Childhood Matters:

Oates, J. (Ed.) (2007). Attachment relationships: Quality of care for young children. Early Childhood Matters No. 1. UK: The Open University.  
Retrieved from: <http://www.bernardvanleer.org/AttachmentRelationshipsQualityofCareforYoungChildren>

The following publication of the World Health Organization provides information and research on why the caregiver-child relationship matters for children's survival, development and well-being.

Richter, L. (2004). The importance of caregiver-child interactions for the survival and healthy development of young children. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.  
<http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2004/924159134X.pdf>

The Zero to Three website offers free brochures for parents on a variety of topics. One of the topics is "Healthy Minds: Nurturing Your Child's Healthy Development" which offers age-based handouts.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/areas-of-expertise/free-parent-brochures-and-guides/>



# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Understanding nurturing care

Long workshop (2-3 hours) 🕒🕒🕒

In this session participants will explore the concept of nurture and why nurturing care is so critical in the early years for children's healthy growth and development.

Participants will explore:

- what nurturing care means
- attachment and why attachment relationships are important for child health and well-being
- how to support children's development through nurturing relationships and everyday interactions that help build secure attachment

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- What do you already know about nurturing care?
- Responsive caregiving
- Children learn what they live

#### Scenarios:

- Najma and Idil
- Eyad

See "Ready-to-use workshop" in the Nurturing Care folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Understanding nurturing care

Short workshop (1 hour) 🕒

In this session participants will explore the concept of nurture and why nurturing care is so critical in the early years for children's healthy growth and development.

Participants will be introduced to:

- what nurturing care means
- attachment and why attachment relationships are important for child health and well-being

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- Children learn what they live

#### Scenario:

- Najma and Idil

See "Ready-to-use workshop" in the Nurturing Care folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## What do you know about nurturing care?

Whether to begin the ready-to-use workshop or when using this activity as an independent exercise, it is helpful to find out what participants already understand. This activity provides an opportunity for the participants to share their understanding of nurturing care. This information is very valuable in proceeding with the session or in designing further sessions. The responses to this activity can also be used in subsequent discussions on nurturing care.

**Materials:** Chart paper, marker(s)

**What to do:** This activity can be done as a large or small group activity. Say or write on a board or chart paper the words “nurturing care”. Ask participants what comes to mind when they think of nurturing care. Record responses on chart paper. Be sure to welcome and record all responses so participants feel free to share. You might hear responses such as loving, protecting or helping the child to grow and learn. With some groups you may need to prompt the conversation by offering some of these ideas or providing an example.

As this activity is suggested as an initial one to discussions on nurturing care, you may wish to highlight the points that will be discussed further. For example, what it means to be nurturing, sensitive and responsive care as well as how to create positive and interactive relationships with children and support their sense of trust and attachment.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Responsive caregiving

This activity will provide an opportunity for the participants to understand and identify the wants or needs of children and how to apply that information in responsive caregiving.

**Materials:** Copies of the sample scenarios for small groups. See “Activities” in the Nurturing Care folder for copies of the scenarios for this activity.

**What to do:** Form small groups (two to four people depending on size of audience) and give each group one scenario. This activity can also be done as role plays. Members from the groups can act out the scenario (two different ways if there is time). The scenarios here are suggestions; as the facilitator, feel free to create other examples depending on the audience and context.

- the child is 1-year-old, a new person enters the room, the child sits on your knee and the child will not let you put him/her down
- the child is 2-years-old, hears dogs fighting loudly outside the door and runs to you crying
- the child is 2-years-old, wants the ball that an older child is using and pulls on your arm
- the child is 3-years-old, wants to go down the slide but seems wary of climbing up the steps
- the child is 4-years-old, wants to show you a picture in a magazine, but you are busy preparing the meal
- the child is 5-years-old, wants to make a necklace but is becoming frustrated trying to thread beads

Included for each scenario are the following questions for groups to discuss:

- What did the child want or need?
- What would you say and do (verbally and non-verbally) in this situation?
- What do you think the child would be feeling based on the response?

Ask the smaller groups to report on their discussions and, as the facilitator, highlight the actions reported that show responsive caregiving. If time permits, you may ask participants to offer additional ideas since there can be many responsive caregiving actions for each scenario. In closing the activity, emphasize that when working to nurture and support children and be a responsive caregiver, it is helpful to understand children’s wants, needs and abilities at different ages.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Children learn what they live

The poem in this activity is a powerful way to get participants thinking about how we individually and as a community respond to children. This activity will allow participants to reflect on what children need in their early lives for healthy development and how early experiences set a foundation of learning that can influence them for the rest of their lives.

**Materials:** Copy of the sample lines from the poem “Children Learn What They Live” by Dorothy Law Nolte (1972). See “Activities” in the Nurturing Care folder for copies of the sample lines for this activity.

As an option, copies of the entire poem for the group can be provided for all participants following the activity. This is also included in “Activities” in the Nurturing Care folder.

The sample lines from the poem are:

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.

BUT

If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

**What to do:** In small groups, ask participants to read the sample lines from the poem “Children learn what they live” and have them add to the poem. Remind participants to think about the good qualities they would like to see in their children and what they would need from their caregivers to support those qualities. Also, have them think about some of the negative ways caregivers may treat children and how that might shape their development.

Have groups share their responses. After hearing from the groups, read the entire poem or, as an option, provide copies for all of the participants.

## Children Learn What They Live

*by Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D.*

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.

If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.

If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.

If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.

If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.

If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.

If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.

If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

Copyright © 1972 by Dorothy Law Nolte

## SCENARIOS

### Consider... Najma and Idil

15-month-old Najma is with her mother visiting at their neighbour's house. The neighbours are an elderly couple, Mr. Kone and his wife Saira. Najma's mother has brought some fresh bread for them. Najma sits on her mother's knee as they talk. She looks around the room and seems interested in the new environment. Najma's mother asks her if she would like to get down. Najma smiles and begins to wiggle off her mother's knee and sits by her mother's feet for a few minutes. She then begins to crawl towards the table with the bread and tea. As she comes closer to the table, Mr. Kone reaches out with a small piece of the bread for Najma. She stops, sits down and looks back at her mother. Her mother smiles and asks Najma, "Would you like some bread?" Najma turns back to Mr. Kone, crawls toward him and takes the bread. She sits, takes a bite of the bread, before crawling back to her mother. Her mother picks her up and Najma continues to chew her bread.



15-month-old Idil is with her mother visiting at their neighbour's house. The neighbours are an elderly couple, Mr. Kone and his wife Saira; Idil's mother has brought some fresh bread for them. Idil sits on her knee as they talk. Idil keeps her head down and avoids eye-contact with Mr. Kone and his wife. Mr. Kone looks over at Idil, smiles and reaches his hand out to her. Idil turns away and then buries her head in her mother's shoulder and begins to cry. Idil's mother, a bit embarrassed about her daughter's reaction, puts Idil on the floor beside her feet and tells Idil to take Mr. Kone's hand. Idil begins to cry while pulling herself up on her mother's leg. She reaches up to her mother and "calls" to her, but her mother does not look at her or lift her up. Idil sits down and cries even harder. When Mr. Kone stretches out his hand with a small piece of bread for Idil, she turns away and continues to cry loudly. Idil's mother becomes frustrated, takes the bread and puts it in Idil's hand.



#### Consider the following questions:

- How would you describe the difference in Najma's and Idil's reaction when visiting the neighbours?
- How do the mothers support, or not support, their child's reaction?
- What are both girls learning about themselves, their mothers and neighbours?

## SCENARIOS

### Consider... Eyad

8-month-old Eyad wakes from his nap. He sits in his cradle and sees his mother and grandmother just outside the door preparing food for the evening meal. He makes noises, trying to call to them. They do not acknowledge hearing Eyad, so he calls louder and louder. They still do not turn to Eyad. He begins to cry, then scream and kick the cradle and still his mother and grandmother do not come to him. They need to prepare the food and feel Eyad will eventually stop and entertain himself. Finally, Eyad lays back down, exhausted but still crying quietly.



*What if his mother and grandmother demonstrated sensitivity toward Eyad and responded to him? What might that look like?*

*Read the variation of the scene below.*

8-month-old Eyad wakes from his nap. He sits in his cradle and sees his mother and grandmother just outside the door preparing food for the evening meal. He makes noises, trying to call to them. They do not acknowledge hearing Eyad, so he calls louder and louder. His mother turns, smiles and comes to Eyad. His mother picks him up and kisses Eyad as she takes him outdoors. The grandmother puts her arms up and Eyad's mother gently places him in his grandmother's arms. His grandmother also kisses him and talks to him. Then she sits Eyad on her legs and gives him a small piece of the bread that mother and grandmother are preparing.

#### Consider the following questions:

- In each of these scenarios, what do you think Eyad is learning about his world?
- What do you think he is learning about himself? His mother and grandmother?

# VIDEOS

The following videos can be used individually to support discussions, workshops and meetings. Several sample questions for each video are offered for your consideration. To access the individual videos refer to “Ready-to-use workshops” in the Nurturing Care folder.



## SOOTHING BABY

- How does this clip demonstrate sensitive and responsive care?
- What signals does the baby send to her mother?
- How does the mother respond to her baby’s cues?



## PEEK-A-BOO

- How does the mother respond to her son’s playful interaction?
- What kind of physical and emotional experience is he having?
- What messages is the mother giving her son?



## MAYBE LATER

- In this video, how does Lucy communicate she is not that interested in playing right now?
- How do you think most adults would respond when a baby avoids eye contact and arches away?
- What other ways do children show us they are not interested in playing or need a break?

# VIDEOS



## ABC

- How does Lucy communicate what she wants?
- How does her father show he is attuned to her signals?
- Who is controlling the play in the ABC scene?



## COMFORTING BABY

- Why is the baby upset?
- How long does it take the baby to quiet after the mother picks her up?
- How would you describe the relationship between this mother and child?

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to nurture children? When does one begin nurturing children?
- As a child, when did you feel nurtured? How did it make you feel about yourself and about the person or people providing the nurturing?
- Agree or disagree? The most significant impact on children’s development is the quality of the nurturing environments that surround them.
- What role does being sensitive and responsive have in nurturing?
- What is meant by attachment relationship?
- Why is attachment important for children’s development?
- What might the impact on the child be if a caregiver is neither sensitive nor responsive in their interactions with a young child?
- What is meant by “serve and return” in interactions? Why is this important?
- What do you think? Are children born with natural temperamental patterns?
- How can caregivers foster babies’ development of trust in the early years?
- How can you tell if a baby is attached to a caregiver? What behaviours would you see?



# PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photographs could be used to stimulate discussion on nurturing care. To access the photos refer to “Photographs” in the Nurturing Care folder.



newborn.jpg



talking.jpg



father\_son.jpg



dinner.jpg



with\_father.jpg



book.jpg



giving.jpg



helping.jpg



doctor.jpg



laughter.jpg



singing.jpg



mother\_daughter.jpg

# QUOTES

A young child who receives loving care feels that he is a loved person and expects other people to respond to him as someone deserving of care and attention. In contrast, a child whose needs have been neglected does not usually expect others to be kind and considerate, and frequently behaves aggressively and defensively.

~ *Linda Richter*

Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible – the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.

~ *Virginia Satir*

Children are great imitators. So give them something great to imitate.

~ *Anonymous*

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

~ *Nelson Mandela*

The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread.

~ *Mother Theresa*

Relationship is the essence of education.

~ *Loris Malaguzzi*

The nurturant qualities of the environments where children grow up, live and learn – parents, caregivers, family and community – will have the most significant impact on their development.

~ *Lori Irwin, Arjumand Siddiqi and Clyde Hertzman*

Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.

~ *Mother Teresa*

# WORKSHOP HANDOUT

## Nurturing Care

### Key messages:

- Every child needs to be loved in order to thrive
- Children develop a sense of trust in the world when their needs are met positively and consistently
- Being sensitive and responsive to children strengthens relationships and positively influences development

### What you can do:

#### Develop a caring relationship with the child

Babies need to become emotionally attached to the important people in their lives. Care for their physical health and safety; spend time and show affection to babies and young children. Cuddle, talk, play, sing and read to them. Everyday nurturing interactions strengthen attachment and stimulate brain development.

#### Be a safe base for babies to explore their world

As babies venture out into their world, remain present and be a 'safe base'. Encourage them to trust you will be there and will support and protect them. Allow children to take time and feel comfortable, especially in new environments and activities.

#### Create safe spaces and offer materials to explore

Provide simple low-cost, no-cost items such as coconut shells, bamboo, homemade rattles or small plastic bowls and containers for children to explore. Be there to assist, encourage and delight as they learn through exploration and discovery.

#### Focus on sensitivity and responsiveness

Learn how children communicate or signal what they need and want. When they are hungry, tired or excited, ask yourself, "how do they let me know?" Respond to those needs promptly and with care. Learning and responding to a baby's signals is like learning to dance with a new partner. The baby leads with expressions, movements and sounds. The parent or caregiver watches and responds. Together, a loving and caring bond is created.

# NOTES



## PLAY

- Introduction
- Links to information and resources
- Ready-to-use workshops
- Activity ideas
- Scenarios
- Videos
- Discussion questions
- Photographs
- Quotes
- Play material ideas
- Workshop handouts

# INTRODUCTION

All people play. Play and playfulness is important throughout our lifespan, yet recognizing the significance of childhood play is often misunderstood. Many adults have lost sight of the spontaneous, open-ended, free-flowing aspect of childhood play and its role in healthy development. Some say children are ‘really doing nothing’ or ‘wasting time’ when playing, implying there is no benefit to play for children. More importantly, such statements also imply children are not learning while playing. Yet, when asked about favourite play activities when young, most adults delight in recalling the joy and fun of their childhood play and can identify what they were learning through their play.

Play is essential for children’s healthy development. Children learn about themselves, others and the world through play. When we learn how to support children’s play and promote children’s learning through play we promote health, well-being and development in all areas.

Review the resources listed on the next page for background information on play and its importance.



# RESOURCES

## Links to information and resources:

The following Working Paper from the Bernard van Leer Foundation draws on contemporary research and focuses on play, children’s right to play and its role in children’s health and well-being.

Lester, S. & Russell, W. (2010). Children’s right to play: An examination of the importance of play in the lives of children worldwide. Working Papers in Early Childhood Development. Bernard van Leer Foundation.

<http://www.bernardvanleer.org/Childrens-right-to-play-An-examination-of-the-importance-of-play-in-the-lives-of-children-worldwide?pubnr=1274&download=1>

The Zero to Three website offers a variety of information and resources about play during infancy and toddlerhood.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/play/>

The following article highlights the importance of play and reviews research that looks at how play helps children advance socially and academically.

Hirsh-Pasek, K. & Golinkoff, RM. (2008). Why play=learning. Tremblay RE, Barr RG, Peters RDeV, Boivin M, (Eds). Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development [online]. Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development; 1-7.

<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/pages/PDF/Hirsh-Pasek-GolinkoffANGxp.pdf>

Although primarily written for a North American audience, the following article provides a good overview of play and learning in early childhood.

Canadian Council on Learning. (2006).

Lessons in learning: Let the children play: Nature’s answer to early learning.

<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/LessonsInLearning/Nov-08-06-Let-theChildren-Play.pdf>

The Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada) has created a series of brochures on play for parents and caregivers that focus on particular age groups: 0 – 6 months, 6 – 12 months, 1 – 2 years, 2 – 3 years, 3 – 4 years and 4 – 5 years. Why Play? is available in 11 different languages.

<http://www.frp.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=791>

In Canada, the Department of Education in the province of Newfoundland & Labrador has developed a page dedicated to play, – The Power of Play, – on their website. Along with a literature review of the research on the importance of play, articles, posters, videos and other resources are included.

<http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/earlychildhood/power.html#tpopp>

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Why play?

Long workshop (2-3 hours) 🕒🕒🕒

In this session, participants will explore what play means and the importance of play in the lives of young children for their healthy development and well-being.

Participants will explore:

- what play is
- the importance of play
- ways to support play in the lives of children

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- Remembering play
- What is play?
- Low-cost, no-cost play stations (time permitting)

#### Scenarios:

- Tatjana and the acorns
- Saroj and his grandfather (see this scenario in Brain development section)

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Play folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Why play?

Short workshop (1 hour) 🕒

In this session, participants will explore what play means and the importance of play in the lives of young children for their healthy development and well-being.

Participants will be introduced to:

- what play is
- the importance of play in the lives of young children

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- Remembering play

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Play folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Play in the early years

Long workshop (2-3 hours) 🕒🕒🕒

In this session the characteristics of play during infancy and toddlerhood (0 – 3 years) and during the later preschool years (3 – 6 years) will be explored to set the stage in understanding how to support children’s play.

Participants will explore:

- what play is like for children aged 0 – 3 years
- what play is like for children 3 – 6 years; and
- ways to support the play of children 0 – 6 years of age

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- What is play?
- The first three years of life
- Children 3 – 6 years of age
- Play materials stations

#### Scenario:

- Hassan playing with sand

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Play folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Play in the early years

Short workshop (1 hour) 🕒

This session will review what play is, how it changes during the first six years of life and how caregivers can support play during the early years.

Participants will be introduced to:

- what play is like for children aged 0 – 6 years
- ways to support the play of children 0 – 6 years of age

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- The first three years of life
- Children 3 – 6 years of age

#### Scenario:

- Hassan playing with sand

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Play folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Remembering play

We all have a connection to play as we were all children and played when we were young. Some of us continue to play in a way as adults; however, many feel play is only an activity children engage in and is not very important. This activity will prompt participants to remember their own play experiences and recognize how their play contributed to their own growth and development.

**Materials:** Chart paper, marker(s)

**What to do:** Divide the participants into small groups. In their groups, ask each member to introduce himself or herself and share their favourite play activity as a child. Ask the groups to discuss what they thought was being learned in each of the activities. Each group will select one or two of the activities they discussed and share with the larger group.

Highlight the group's comments related to development in the different domains – cognitive/language, social, emotional and physical.

For example:

If participants talk about climbing trees, comments could include:

- Physical domain: what they learned could include being physically challenged, using many muscles, increasing body awareness and coordination
- Emotional domain: what they learned could include self-satisfaction and pride in reaching new heights

If participants talk about playing tag or another active group game, comments could include:

- Physical domain: what they learned could include running and moving body in ways to avoid being tagged; what is appropriate 'tagging' for example learning not to be too rough (regulating behaviour)
- Cognitive domain: what they learned could include remembering and following rules (regulating behaviour) and communicating with others
- Social domain: what they learned could include cooperating with others and taking turns
- Emotional domain: what they learned could include coping with 'being tagged' and following the rules of the game (regulating emotion)

Emphasize that with play activities not just one area of development is influenced. Close this activity by discussing it can be helpful to recall our own experiences as we seek to understand the importance of play and how to support the needs of children.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## What is play?

As we talk about play and its importance in the lives of children, it is critical to understand what play is. Yet, based on their own learning and experiences, individuals may have different ideas about play. This activity will give participants the opportunity to think and talk about their ideas of what they would consider as play.

**Materials:** Chart paper, marker(s)

**What to do:** Ask participants to define "play" in their own words. Ask participants to share their definition with a partner. Then, have the partners share with another set of partners. As participants share their definitions, ask them to identify common words used and common themes. Have participants share what they found with the larger group.

Use the following points to add to the discussion:

- a natural, universal experience
- fun, interesting
- spontaneous, free-flowing, flexible
- free from expectations and failure
- with groups or alone
- imaginative, has a 'what if...' quality
- a self-expression of an understanding about the world
- a "process", there is no end product
- loud or quiet, serious or silly
- something that can occur anywhere and everywhere
- to participate, to express and to imagine
- an expression of cultural practice for example, children enacting caregiving roles
- different from games that have rules and are organized
- where children can have some control over their experiences

As adults we try to define play and describe the purpose of play, but we're looking at it through the lens of our adult eyes. There is no one definition of play. However, there is some agreed upon characteristics and, most importantly, there is widespread agreement that play is a critical ingredient for healthy development.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Low-cost, no-cost play materials

We sometimes think children need store-bought toys in order to play. But children do not need toys to play. Children play with the materials and resources around them. There are many great materials in homes and communities that support children's play interests. Indeed, many child development experts today are advocating for the use of natural materials instead of expensive manufactured toys. In this activity, participants will have the opportunity to explore low-cost, no-cost local materials and discuss how children might use these materials in their play as well as how to use the materials to create other play items.

**Materials:** Consider what low-cost, no-cost materials can be gathered in your community for a variety of stations. Depending on the size of the group, you may duplicate the suggested stations and/or create some additional stations according to your ideas and context. See "Activities" in the Play folder for a copy of the questions to photocopy for this activity.

Ideas for play stations include:

- stones, shells, seeds or leaves of various sizes, shapes and colours
- sanded wood pieces of various sizes and shapes
- bamboo pieces cut horizontally in various lengths and/or twigs of various sizes and lengths
- small household containers (plastic)
- small and medium-sized cardboard boxes
- bottlecaps
- sand

**What to do:** Set up three to five 'play stations' of local low-cost, no-cost materials in the room. Assign one station to each group, or time permitting, have small groups take turns visiting the different stations. Place chart paper and marker or pen at each station and have groups record their comments to the questions.

The questions are:

- How might children play with the materials?
- What might children learn from playing with the materials?
- How does playing with these materials support children's development (for example, their language, thinking, social and physical skill)?
- What other things could be added to the materials to increase play potential?
- How could you use the materials to make other play items?

If groups take turns visiting more than one station, each subsequent group can add to the comments on the chart paper. Ask each group to summarize the comments about one station.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## The first three years of life

This activity will provide an opportunity for participants to consider the development of children between 0 – 3 years of age and what play at this stage might look like.

**Materials:** Chart paper, markers and copies of the questions for groups. See "Activities" in the Play folder for a copy of the questions to photocopy for this activity.

**What to do:** Divide participants into small groups of four to five people. Assign each group one of the following ages:

- 0 – 1 years of age
- 1 – 2 years of age
- 2 – 3 years of age

Ask participants to discuss the questions for their age group.

The questions are:

- What do you think children at this age can do?
- What do you think they like?
- What do you think they need?
- What does the play of children look like?

Ask groups to summarize their comments with the larger group. If addressing the same age, ask that they only contribute points that have not already been shared by a previous group.

To conclude this activity, discuss with the participants that play for children at this stage is physical, sensory and explorative and the caregiver is an important partner in play.

Be sure to highlight the following points:

- observe what interests the children
- engage in playful interactions with children
- provide safe materials to explore and manipulate
- follow their lead

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Children 3 – 6 years of age

This activity will provide an opportunity for participants to consider the development of children between the 3 – 6 years of age and what play at this stage might look like.

**Materials:** Chart paper, markers, and copies of the questions for groups. See “Activities” in the Play folder for a copy of the questions to photocopy for this activity.

**What to do:** Divide participants into small groups. Assign each group to one of the following age groupings:

- 3 and 4 years of age
- 5 and 6 years of age

Ask each group to discuss the questions:

- What do you think children can do?
- What do you think they like?
- What do you think they need?
- What does the play of children look like?

Ask groups to summarize and share their comments with the larger group and to only contribute points not already shared by a previous group.

To conclude this activity, discuss with the participants that children between 3 and 6 years of age are even more capable in their fine and large motor skills, as well as eye-hand coordination. They want to challenge themselves and continue to explore and experiment. They want to play with friends, and their imaginative play becomes more complex.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Has play changed?

This activity will challenge participants to consider if the world of play is different for children today than when they were children.

**Materials:** Copies of the questions for groups. See “Activities” in the Play folder for a copy of the questions to photocopy for this activity.

**What to do:** In small groups, ask participants to discuss the questions and be prepared to share with larger group.

The questions are:

- Do you think a child’s world of play is different today than when you were children? If so, in what ways?
- Do today’s children have more or less freedom than you did as a child? If so, in what ways?
- Has the need to protect children in modern society limited the freedom children have to play? Do children today have more or less time to play?
- How has television, computers and video games affected play?

To summarize this activity, ask participants to comment on how this discussion has contributed to their understanding of children’s play today.



# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Play materials stations

There are many great play and learning materials that can be made with items readily available locally at low or no cost. This activity will provide participants the opportunity to create a variety of materials to support children's play and learning.

Consider how much time you will have for this activity. It can be organized so groups spend a short amount of time at each station to get ideas and/or to possibly start making an item to take home. Another option is to allow groups to spend a longer period of time at one station to complete their item. Participants may also take materials home to finish the project.

**Materials:** As suggested below for each station. The facilitator could provide a model(s) or photo of model(s) at each station to help guide participants, but each station should encourage participants to be creative in their work.

**What to do:** There are five stations suggested. Depending on the size of the group, you may duplicate the suggested stations and/or create additional stations according to your ideas and context. Consider the maximum number of people each station can accommodate, and indicate that at each station. Ask participants to choose a station, ensuring the maximum number of people at the station is not exceeded.

### Station 1 – Making books

At this station participants will create a picture book or a book with pictures and text.

**Materials:** Heavier weight paper, cardboard, magazines, newspapers, pictures, markers, crayons, scissors, glue, tape, string, hole punch, and other local or natural materials. Materials should be in sufficient quantity for the entire group.

### Station 2 – Puppets and dolls

At this station participants will create a puppet or doll. Consider providing some books, rhymes or songs to inspire the creation of puppets.

**Materials:** Socks, cloth, felt, paper bags, scissors, thread and needles, heavier weight paper, cardboard, flat sticks, bamboo, magazines, pictures, markers, crayons, glue, tape, string, and other local or natural materials. Materials should be in sufficient quantity for the entire group.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

### Station 3 – Matching game

At this station participants will create cards for a matching game.

Participants can use pictures, colours, draw letters, numbers, shapes, and any idea to create two cards that match. Participants would create at least five sets of matching cards. When using the cards with children, the cards can be placed upside down and children can take turns turning over two cards at a time to see if they can find a match.

**Materials:** Heavier weight paper, cardboard, magazines, pictures, markers, crayons, glue, tape, and other local and natural materials. Materials should be in sufficient quantity for the entire group.

### Station 4 – Making drums

At this station participants will use a container or box to create a drum that may be used when singing, rhyming or playing in other ways.

**Materials:** Small to medium sized boxes or plastic containers (with the lid secured). Supplies to decorate the outside of the drum, including markers, paper and pictures, scissors, glue and other local and natural materials. Materials should be in sufficient quantity for the entire group.

### Station 5 – Making shakers\*

At this station participants will create a hand held rattle or shaker.

**Materials:** Recycled water bottles or other containers of similar size, small stones, sand, (small materials that will make sound when the container is shaken) glue, tape and other markers.

In closing this activity, discuss each station with the large group. Review the materials that have been made and how the materials can be used to support children's play and learning. Throughout the discussion link to the developmental outcomes and/or the style of play that is supported.

**\*Please note:** For safe use with young children, the lid of the bottle or container must be securely closed with glue and tape to prevent the small materials inside the shaker from spilling out. Shakers must also be checked regularly to be sure the lid is still securely in place.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Supporting play of children 3 – 6 years

As children get older they still need to play, but as they become increasingly independent, parents, teachers and caregivers may need to examine their role. The activity will provide the opportunity for participants to consider how they can support children's play through their interactions and with the materials and environment surrounding children.

**Materials:** Chart paper, markers and copies of the question for groups. See "Activities" in the Play folder for a copy of the question to photocopy for this activity.

**What to do:** Prepare a piece of chart paper with one of the following titles: motor/physical play, social play, constructive play, fantasy play, games with rules. Place the chart paper around the room. Divide the participants into five groups and ask each group to go to one of the chart papers to discuss the topic and answer the questions. If time permits, have participants rotate to other chart papers and review what the previous group recorded and add to it.

The question is:

What is the caregiver's role in supporting the play of 3 – 6 year olds? Think about:

- the caregiver's interactions with the child(ren)
- the environment for play
- what materials could be provided
- how this play will benefit children in their future

To conclude this activity, discuss each poster with the larger group. As the facilitator, challenge the participants to think about how supporting 3 – 6 year olds may be different from supporting younger children, for example with regard to making decisions, playing more independently and playing with friends.



## SCENARIOS

Consider...

### Tatjana and the acorns

3-year-old Tatjana approaches a table where a box of acorns is placed. She puts her hand in, picks up a handful of the nuts and drops them back into the box. She notices some of the tops of the acorns have come off. She sits down and begins to take out acorns one at a time. She takes a top of an acorn and puts it on and takes it off of one of the nuts several times.

A child sitting at the other end of the table is playing with clay. Tatjana walks over and takes a small piece of clay and then puts it on top of an acorn. She tells the caregiver that she is making a little bug.

Consider the following questions:

- How is Tatjana playing?
- What do you think she is learning?
- What are some benefits to providing natural materials for play?
- What could a caregiver say or do to further encourage Tatjana's imagination?



## SCENARIOS

Consider...

### Hassan playing with sand

Hassan squats down in the sand just outside his pre-primary classroom. He begins by pushing his hand deep into the sand, lifts his hand up, opens his fist slightly and watches as the sand slips through his fingers. He feels its rough texture and watches as it forms a small pile. He then takes two small plastic cups that are lying beside the basin and pours the sand from one cup to the other. He listens carefully to the sound of the pouring sand. He looks around and spots a jug of water over by the door of the classroom. He takes one of the cups, goes to the jug, pours water into the cup and returns to the sand. With his hand, he digs a small hole in the sand and pours the water in. He watches and the water slowly disappears as it seeps through the sand. He goes back to the jug and once again fills the cup with water. Again he pours the water into the hole and again within a short time the water has disappeared. Just then his friend Ruma comes over. Hassan calls out to Ruma, "Look, the water disappeared!" Hassan picks up the wet sand and rubs it between his fingers to feel its fine grains. He then presses the wet sand together in his hand to form a ball and lays the ball of sand down. Unlike the dry sand that slipped through his fingers, the ball of sand stays. Hassan tells Ruma, "Now it sticks together." He makes several balls of sand and puts them side-by-side. Pretending to be selling food at a market, Hassan asks Ruma, "Do you want to buy my food?"

Consider the following questions:

- How does Hassan explore and experiment in his play?
- What is Hassan learning as he plays with the sand and water?
- What different senses is Hassan using when playing with the sand and water?



# VIDEOS

The following videos can be used individually to support discussions, workshops and meetings. Several sample questions for each video are offered for your consideration. To access the individual videos refer to “Ready-to-use workshops” in the Play folder.



## ABDALLA MJAKA - LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

- What have you seen in children’s play that might be ‘innovative’ as Mr. Mjaka describes?
- What else have you seen in play that might show you that children are learning?



## PLAYING WITH MY MOTHER

- How is this little boy playing?
- What did his mother do to support his play?



## PEEK-A-BOO

- How is this boy playing?
- What did his mother do to support the play?
- Who is leading the play?

# VIDEOS



## PRETEND PLAY

- How are children pretending in this scene?
- What materials were available for the children, and how does this support their play?
- What other ways can caregivers support pretend play?



## WATER AND SAND

- How are children playing with the water and sand?
- Why do you think sand and water are so engaging for children?
- What are they learning?
- What other materials could support children’s play with water and sand?



## OUTDOOR PLAY

- How are children playing in this scene?
- What do you think they are learning?
- Do you see children in your communities active in their play? What are they doing? How are they learning?



## BLOCKS

- How are the children playing in this scene?
- What do you think they are learning?
- Why do you think blocks make such interesting play materials?

## VIDEOS



### PLAYING FOOTBALL

- How are the children getting along in this spontaneous game?
- How can you tell they have an understanding of the rules of the game?



### PLAYING IN THE COURTYARD

- How are the children playing together in this scene?
- What stands out for you the most in how they are playing together?



### BOTTLECAPS

- How is this young boy playing with the bottle caps?
- What do you think he is learning?
- What other ways might children use bottle caps?



### COME FRIENDS AND SWING

- What do you find interesting in this scene?
- What are the children learning through this play?
- Why is this kind of independent play with peers important to their development?

## VIDEOS



### ON THE SLIDE

- How is this girl challenging herself on the slide?
- What is she learning?



### PLAYING WITH NATURAL MATERIALS

- What stood out for you when watching the children play with the natural materials?
- What other natural materials can be used in play?

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*True or false?* “It is just play; it is not that important.”

What was your favourite play activity as a child? Favourite play space? Favourite play item?

What do you think you were learning when you were playing?

Do you think play should be a part of children’s education? Why or why not?

Can play and learning be separated?

Do children have a right to play? Why or why not?

How would you define play?

How do you know when children are playing?

What does play look like for infants (0 – 1 year)? Toddlers (1 – 2 years)? Preschoolers (3 – 6 years)?

What can adults do to support play in the early years?

Besides providing time and materials, how can adults interact with children to support their play?

Do you think there is a difference in the play of boys and girls? Are there any similar themes in the play of boys versus girls?

Do you think a child’s world of play is different today than when you were a child? If so, in what ways?

Do today’s children have more or less freedom to play than you did as a child? If so, in what ways?

Has the need to protect children in modern society limited the freedom children have to play?

How have television, computers and video games affected play?

Do adults play? In what ways? Do adults play as much as children do?

# PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photographs could be used for discussion in presentations related to Play. To access the photos refer to “Photographs” in the Play folder.



towers.jpg



blocks.jpg



chess.jpg



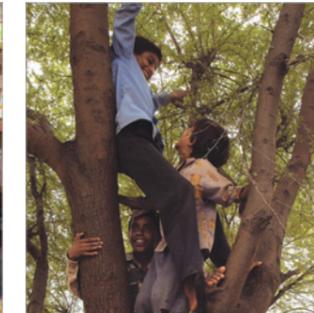
painting.jpg



doctors.jpg



pretend.jpg



climbing.jpg



cooking.jpg



balance.jpg



sand\_play.jpg



pinecones.jpg



playground.jpg

# QUOTES

The most effective kind of education is that a child should play amongst lovely things.

~ *Plato*

Play is the highest form of research.

~ *Albert Einstein*

It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them.

~ *Leo F. Buscaglia*

Whoever wants to understand much must play much.

~ *Gottfried Benn*

A man is getting old when he walks around a puddle instead of through it.

~ *R.C. Ferguson*

One of the virtues of being very young is that you don't let the facts get in the way of your imagination.

~ *Sam Levenson*

Men do not quit playing because they grow old; they grow old because they quit playing.

~ *Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.*

Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn.

~ *O. Fred Donaldson*

There is for many a poverty of play.

~ *D.W. Winnicott*

The very existence of youth is due in part to the necessity for play; the animal does not play because he is young, he has a period of youth because he must play.

~ *Karl Groos*

Play, while it cannot change the external realities of children's lives, can be a vehicle for children to explore and enjoy their differences and similarities and to create, even for a brief time, a more just world where everyone is an equal and valued participant.

~ *Patricia G. Ramsey*

Play is the highest expression of human development in children, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul.

~ *Friedrich Froebel*

# PLAY MATERIAL IDEAS

## Natural materials

- small stones / pebbles
- seeds
- leaves
- long grasses
- sea shells
- coconut shells
- feathers
- bamboo or wooden sticks
- pine cones
- wood pieces
- dried corn cobs

## Collectibles/recycled materials

- cardboard and cardboard boxes
- egg cartons
- plastic bottles
- bottle caps
- canned drink containers
- pieces of fabric, ribbon, wool
- buttons
- straws



# WORKSHOP HANDOUT

## Why play?

### Key messages:

- Play is fundamental to the health and well-being of children
- Play nurtures all areas of development and stimulates brain development
- Low-cost, no-cost local materials provide ample opportunity for play

### What you can do:

#### Let children play

Some people see play as just something children do and think that it doesn't have any special value. Yet, play comes from a deep seated universal need to explore, interact and understand. Play is a vehicle for learning. It fosters creativity and flexibility and encourages children to imagine. Allow time for children to spontaneously play on their own and with others. Take note of children's activities when playing and think of ways to support their play. For example, provide small containers when playing with water. Show interest in their play and encourage their creativity and imagination.

#### Be playful yourself

Being playful is also important in adulthood – it can be stimulating, joyful and relieve stress. Add humour and playfulness in interactions with children to foster connection and strengthen the relationship. For example, when dressing a young child, ask “where are your toes?”; being surprised to “find them” can make an everyday routine fun. When playing with young children, let them take the lead. For example, in how to build with the blocks or what role to take on when pretending. Be prepared to go along with their favourite activities, games or imaginative play themes a few times. Children learn through repetition.

#### Provide low-cost, no-cost, local materials for play

Look around your environment for everyday low-cost, no-cost materials. Collect natural materials such as coconut shells, bamboo, seeds, sticks, leaves and stones, and recyclable items such as plastic bottles and cardboard boxes for children to explore and incorporate into their play. Dolls, toy animals, cradles, blankets, pots and pans allow children to play roles they see in everyday life. Make books and games using pictures, cardboard and boxes.

# WORKSHOP HANDOUT

## Play in the early years

### Key messages:

- Play is key for children's health, well-being and learning
- Understanding children's growth and development helps caregivers to support children's play
- There are different types of play and play changes as children develop

### What you can do:

#### Allow time for play

Children need time to play. It is a powerful vehicle for learning and establishes knowledge and understanding of the world that is a foundation for life-long health and well-being.

#### Think about how children change in the first three years of life

Babies use their senses to explore and need lots of opportunity to use their skills. They enjoy repeating actions over and over again and love playful interactions such as peek-a-boo. Between the ages of 1 – 3 years, children engage in simple pretend play and begin to interact with others. During this period keep children safe and guide them as they learn to share and take turns.

#### Think about child development and supporting the play of children ages 3 – 6

Children aged 3 – 6 years experience increased physical coordination and need lots of opportunity to move, run and play with simple equipment such as balls. They enjoy greater independence and are motivated to discover how things work. Pretend play increases and they use their imaginations to create more complex play themes. They also begin to play simple games with rules, and learn to negotiate and cooperate with others within the structure of the rules.

#### Encourage and provide for different types of play

Different play materials support and encourage different types of play. Playing with sand, water, mud and other natural materials can be soothing and gives children the chance to learn through the senses. Rolling clay or stacking flat stones offers children the opportunity to create and engage in constructive play. With simple props such as pots, pans and wooden spoons, children imitate what they see in their environment. Reading and telling of stories increases children's knowledge of the world and supports more complex sociodramatic play with others.

# NOTES



## LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- Introduction
- Links to information and resources
- Ready-to-use workshops
- Activity ideas
- Scenarios
- Videos
- Discussion questions
- Other slide resources
- Photographs
- Ideas for homemade play materials
- Workshop handouts

# INTRODUCTION

Language is one of our great and wonderful abilities as humans. Humans are prepared to communicate from the moment they are born using sounds and then gestures. Oral language greatly expands the way in which children can express their needs and feelings, exchange ideas and connect with others. The language or languages an infant hears shapes their ability to recognize familiar speech sounds and rhythms. Their brain is being shaped to understand and use their native language(s).

Research indicates one factor that seems to make a big difference in children's language capacity is how often adults talk with them. Apparently, quantity counts. That is, children who hear more and richer language develop greater vocabularies and, in turn, have a better foundation for literacy. Children who hear less language and fewer words still learn to speak normally but have a more restricted vocabulary and are more likely to have more difficulty learning to read and write.

Every day provides a multitude of opportunities to talk with children. More active times such as daily routines, chores and walks as well as quieter times sharing books, poems or rhymes can be wonderful times to engage with children. Parents and other caregivers are their children's first teachers and can set a strong foundation for learning by fostering their children's language and early literacy.

Review the various resources listed on the next page for background information on early language and literacy.



# RESOURCES

## Links to information and resources:

The Aga Khan Foundation's Reading for Children programme was launched in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2007. Since that time thousands of children have benefited from the programme in over 10 countries. On the following link, further information and several resources about Reading for Children are available.

<http://www.akdn.org/akf-readingforchildren.asp>

The Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development provides links to articles focusing on and summarizing current research on early language and literacy.

Language development and literacy: How important is it?  
<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/en-ca/language-development-literacy/how-important-is-it.html>

Your baby's first steps toward learning to speak  
<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/en-ca/language-development-literacy/key-messages.html?GCId=40>

First steps toward reading and writing  
<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/en-ca/language-development-literacy/key-messages.html?GCId=40>

The following Zero to Three website offers links to a variety of information and resources on language development and early literacy.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/early-language-literacy/tips-tools-early-lit-and-lang.html>

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Early language learning 0 – 3 years

Long workshop (2-3 hours) 🕒🕒🕒

This session will introduce participants to language development in the early years. Babies are born 'language ready' and communicate from the moment of birth. Caregivers can foster and support language development very easily throughout everyday interactions and activities.

Participants will explore:

- how language is acquired in the early years
- ways to support early language development
- the importance of early language development as a foundation for later development.

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- Learning languages - easy or challenging?
- Reflecting on communication
- Everyday interactions
- Language learning stations

See "Ready-to-use workshop" in the Language and Literacy folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Early language learning 0 – 3 years

Short workshop (1 hour) 🕒

This session will introduce participants to language development in the early years and ways caregivers can support and foster children's language.

Participants will be introduced to:

- how language is acquired in the early years
- ways to support early language development

### What you will use:

#### Activity:

- Everyday interactions

See "Ready-to-use workshop" in the Language and Literacy folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Using language to learn: 3 – 6 years

Long workshop (2-3 hours) 🕒🕒🕒

This session continues the journey of exploring language learning, focusing on early literacy skills. The role of caregivers in fostering language and literacy is highlighted.

Participants will explore:

- how language learning supports children’s social, emotional and cognitive growth
- ways to support early literacy

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- Communicating with others
- Everyday language learning
- Picture books
- Creating language and literacy materials

#### Scenarios:

- Building a road
- Violet and Diana

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Language and Literacy folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Using language to learn: 3 – 6 years

Short workshop (1 hour) 🕒

The session continues the journey of exploring language learning, focusing on early literacy skills. The role of caregivers in fostering language and literacy is highlighted.

Participants will be introduced to:

- how language learning supports children’s social, emotional and cognitive growth
- ways to support early literacy

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- Everyday language learning

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Language and Literacy folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Reflecting on communication

Often when we think about communication we think about the things people say or write to one another. But there is another very powerful way of communicating we must consider. Through this activity, participants will learn the importance of non-verbal communication when interacting with others.

**Materials:** Copies of the scenario instructions for small groups. See “Activities” in the Language and Literacy folder for copies of the instructions to photocopy for groups.

**What to do:** Have the participants find a partner. Ask that they choose someone other than those who might have come to the session with them. For each of the four scenarios below, each participant will be given specific directions. After each scene, the partners will discuss how they felt and why. Have participants share their thoughts with the larger group after each scenario.

The scenes are:

### Scene 1:

Participant 1: Face your partner and talk about your favourite meal.

Participant 2: While your partner is talking, keep looking away.

Focus – eye contact is important.

### Scene 2:

Participant 1: While your partner is talking, fold your arms and frown.

Participant 2: Face your partner and talk about today’s weather.

Focus – our body language gives messages.

### Scene 3:

Participant 1: Face your partner and talk about your favourite animal.

Participant 2: While your partner is talking, slowly turn your whole body away from your partner.

Focus – body positioning showing attention is important.

### Scene 4:

Participant 1: After your partner begins talking, sit down on the floor.

Participant 2: Face your partner and talk about your favourite play memory. Remain standing during the scene.

Focus – it is easier to communicate when the participants are physically at the same level.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

After the pairs have worked through these scenes, ask the participants to summarize what they learned about non-verbal communication through this activity.

Discuss with the participants that we can learn so much about our children – who they are, what interests them, and what they need by observing their behaviour and their non-verbal communication. Learning is a two way process: children are learning about us, their world and about communicating from us.

Emphasize that it is important to look at the child, smile and think about what your eyes say when you look at them, show interest, orient your body toward them and respond. Sometimes the best conversations with young children are when no one says any words!

In closing this activity, ask participants how they think this activity might change the way they interact with children.



# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Learning languages - easy or challenging

This activity can be used to introduce the topic of language development. It can help participants recognize how challenging it is to learn language even though children at a young age learn language quickly and easily.

**Materials:** Chart paper or board

**What to do:** Ask participants how many learned more than one language as a child? Ask them if they can recall the experience. Have the participants share experiences and difficulties.

Ask participants how many have ever tried to learn a second or maybe third language as adults. Have the participants share experiences and difficulties. Record and compare responses on chart paper.

In closing this activity, discuss briefly how we are born “language ready”. This means babies are very receptive to learn language and are thus able to learn a great deal very quickly and easily. For young children, unlike adults, it may not be so much of a challenge to learn a second or even third language. It is an amazing journey.



# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Everyday Interactions

There are many times during the day caregivers can play an important role in supporting a child’s language and literacy, and it need not be expensive or time consuming. But we may not always be sure on how to get the conversation going, especially with younger children. This activity will give participants the opportunity to think about and practice talking with children during everyday activities.

**Materials:** Copies of a scenario for each small group. See “Activities” in the Language and Literacy folder for copies of the scenarios for this activity to photocopy.

**What to do:** Divide the participants into small groups of three or four. Give each group one of the following scenarios and ask them to discuss possible conversations they might have with the child. Add to or replace the suggested scenarios to fit your context. This activity can also be done as role-plays.

The scenarios are:

- You are outdoors washing clothes and a 2-year-old child is with you
- You are walking to the market with a 3-year-old
- You are sitting under a tree weaving with an 18-month-old playing beside you; there are leaves, grasses, sand and sticks scattered around
- You are preparing food for a 10-month-old child who is sitting beside you
- You are dressing a 2-year-old

After the groups have worked through the scenarios, ask the participants to share their experience. Was it difficult to think about what you might say to the child in the scenario? Did you feel comfortable or awkward about the conversation they might have?

Remind the participants that parents, caregivers and other adults play a very important role in supporting early language development. Talk about how more is better because the more we talk and interact verbally, the more vocabulary and communication skills are enhanced. To bring the activity to a close, ask participants to share one way or time they could enhance their communication with young children during everyday interactions.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Supporting language learning

As parents and caregivers, while we may be keen to support language and literacy, we may not know how to start. This activity will provide participants with the opportunity to experience and explore a number of materials and activities to support language and literacy in young children. Review the different stations below for ideas on what materials to gather for the activity.

**Materials:** See “Activities” in the Language & Literacy folder for a copy of the questions to photocopy for this each station.

**What to do:** Divide participants into small groups (according to the number of stations set up). Allow the participants to spend some time at each station. Ask each group to discuss the questions posted at each station. Additional questions could be included at each station. Groups will share key points from their discussions with the larger group.

The questions are:

### Station 1 – Picture Books

- What are some things you could point out in the book?
- What are some questions you could ask the child?
- Does it matter if you don’t finish the book?

### Station 2 – Materials around the home

*Safe materials could include: items as small bowls, spoons, stacking cups, cardboard boxes and scarves*

- How might the child use these materials?
- How can adults support early language learning as the child interacts with the materials?
- What possible new words and ideas could the child learn?

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

### Station 3 – Picture cards of items familiar to the child

*Pictures could include: things in the home, community, outdoor environment, animals and people in the child’s life*

- What are some questions you could ask the child?
- What are some different ways you could use the cards?
- What possible new worlds and ideas could a child learn?

### Station 4 – Natural materials in baskets

*Materials could include: items such as stones, leaves, branches, shells and other local materials*

- How might the child use these materials?
- How many different ways can these materials be used? For example, think about counting, comparing same-different and constructing.
- What possible new words and ideas could a child learn?

After the participants have had a chance to explore all or some of the stations, ask the groups to share key points from the discussions with the larger group. As the facilitator, guide the discussion so that as this activity is completed a range of ideas to support language and literacy have been presented. Be sure to emphasize that many ideas are low-cost, no-cost.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Communicating with others

Even when you are good at expressing yourself through words either spoken or written, you may not always be successful in conveying your message. Sometimes our words may say one thing but our body language and gestures may say something different, resulting in a confused or ineffective message. This activity will help participants understand the importance of language, both verbal and non-verbal, when communicating with others.

**Materials:** None needed

**What to do:** Ask the participants to find a partner (preferably who did not attend the session with them). Following each activity listed below, ask participants how it felt for them. Consider recording responses on chart paper.

- Have each partner take a turn telling something about their family without using words
- Have the partners stand back to back and talk about a happy experience they had
- Have partners take turns to sit on the floor and tell each other about their favourite food
- Ask the partners to sit facing each other and have one of the partners tell the other about their day. However, inform the other partner only to frown and cross their arms while listening.

After the activities have been completed, ask the participants how easy or hard it was to communicate in the different situations. Ask them to express how helpful gestures, facial expressions, body language and being eye-to-eye are in communicating.

In closing, using some of the examples from the above discussion, highlight the importance of language – both non-verbal and verbal – to sharing experiences, understanding needs and overall learning.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Everyday language learning

Daily routines such as mealtimes or dressing provide ideal situations when parents, caregivers or other adults can support a child's growing language and literacy. By talking to children about what is happening around them we also build our relationship with them. This activity will allow participants to explore ways to support language learning through daily routines and everyday experiences.

**Materials:** None needed

**What to do:** Divide the participants into groups of three or four. Ask the groups to share and record examples of when they talk with their young children during the day. Specifically have them identify daily routines and everyday experiences that are or could be used as learning experiences (such as feeding, washing hands, or cleaning up play materials). From their discussion, ask the participants to choose one or two routines or daily experiences and think of ways to foster language and learning.

Have each group share one example with the larger group. As the groups present their ideas, emphasize that these activities don't need special materials or extra time. You just need to make use of everyday opportunities for learning.



# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Creating language and literacy materials

This activity will provide participants the opportunity to create a variety of materials to support language learning for children.

Consider how much time you will have for this activity. It can be organized so groups spend a short amount of time at one or two stations to get ideas and possibly start to make an item to take home. Another option could be to allow groups to spend a longer time at one station in order to complete making one item. Likewise, participants may take materials home to complete the project.

You may provide a model(s) or photo of model(s) at each station to help guide participants, but each station should also encourage participants to be creative in their work. See “Homemade material ideas” (p. 110) for examples of possible items for the stations.

**Materials:** See the information for each station listed below.

**What to do:** Divide participants into small groups according to the number of stations. There are four stations suggested. Depending on the size of the group, the suggested stations may be duplicated and/or additional stations may be created according to the context.

### Station 1 – Making Books

At this station participants will create a picture book or a book with pictures and text.

**Materials:** Heavier weight paper, cardboard, magazines, newspapers, pictures, markers, crayons, scissors, glue, tape, string, hole punch, and other local materials. Materials should be in sufficient quantity for the entire group.

### Station 2 – Puppets

At this station participants will create a puppet or puppets. Facilitator may have some books, rhymes or songs available to inspire the creation of puppets.

**Materials:** Socks, cloth, felt, scissors, thread and needles, heavier weight paper, cardboard, flat sticks, bamboo, magazines, pictures, markers, crayons, glue, tape and string are just some of the materials that can be used to create puppets. Materials should be in sufficient quantity for the entire group.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

### Station 3 – Matching Cards

At this station participants will create cards for a matching game.

Participants can use pictures, colours, draw letters, numbers and/or shapes to create two cards that match. One example of a matching game is to place the cards upside down and take turns turning over two cards at a time to try and find a match.

**Materials:** Heavier weight paper, cardboard, magazines, pictures, markers, crayons, glue and tape. Materials should be in sufficient quantity for the entire group.

### Station 4 – Connecting sounds with print symbols

At this station participants will create materials to allow the child to manipulate and read three-letter words. The example for this station is based on English letters and words, but may be adapted to other languages. In some cases, more than 3 letters may be necessary.

**Example:** Write the letter “b” on one card and another card with “at” so the word “bat” can be spelled out. Add other single letter cards with “r”, “h”, “m” and “s” for children to learn and practice the sounds of the different letters and meanings of the words when combined with the “at” card.

**Materials:** Cardboard or heavy weight paper, scissors, markers. Materials should be in sufficient quantity for the entire group.

Leave some time at the end of this activity to discuss how and when the materials made could be used. If time permits encourage participants to share their own ideas for constructing materials.

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

### Picture books

Picture books are ideal resources to support early literacy. They are readily available in many communities, inexpensive to make and can be used in a variety of ways with children of different ages. This activity provides participants with the opportunity to explore picture books and brainstorm ideas for their use.

**Materials:** A variety of homemade and/or store bought picture books (with or without some print).

**What to do:** Divide the participants into small groups. Ask the participants to explore the books and discuss how they would use these books when reading to a child to expand language and learning as well as foster children's awareness of print. For example, what questions could they ask about the pictures or story? What new words might they introduce? Also encourage participants to think of activities and games they could initiate using the themes introduced in the books.

Ask participants to share their ideas with the larger group. As participants share their ideas, encourage discussion of the benefits for the child and the relationship with the adult. In closing, ask participants to identify some of the ideas they would like to use in their home, classroom or community.

## SCENARIOS

Consider...

### Nahlah and the bean

3-year-old Nahlah is out in the garden helping her mother and grandmother pick beans. She is told and shown how to carefully "pinch the beans off the plants" and then put them in her cloth bag. Nahlah is busy picking beans when she hears noises from the yard. As she looks up, she pulls hard on a bean and it breaks in half. She looks at the pod in her hand and can see the beans inside. Her grandmother sees Nahlah looking at the pod and asks, "What do you see?" Nahlah lifts up her hand and shows her grandmother and mother and says, "Look!" Her mother asks, "What is it?" Nahlah shrugs her shoulders and walks over to her grandmother. Her grandmother takes the bean pod and carefully opens it up and gives it back to Nahlah. Nahlah touches the beans inside. Her grandmother tells her the beans grow inside the pod. Later at dinner, Nahlah tells her Dad, "Beans are inside!" He smiles, opens one up for her and encourages Nahlah to count along as he counts the beans inside.

**Reflect:**

- What might be new vocabulary that Nahlah hears?
- How do Nahlah's grandmother, mother and father stimulate Nahlah's language and learning?



# SCENARIOS

Consider...

## Building a road

Ismael, Peter and Julia are playing in the sand area. Ismael says, "Let's make a road". They start to work with great enthusiasm, digging a track in the sand. Julia pours water along the track and Peter yells, "It's not a river!" The boys try and dig the water out and continue making the road. Peter says to Ismael, "The road turns here. It's going this way," as he makes a change in the direction of the track. Ismael states, "It's going to the beach," and Julia adds, "Ya, to get more sand." Ismael says, "It is a big truck." Peter says, "and then the truck gets stuck!" They all play for quite a while, digging the road as well as filling and dumping containers of sand.

Consider the following questions:

- How are children using language in this scenario?
- What do you think is the role of language in supporting children's creativity and imagination?



# SCENARIOS

Consider...

## Violet and Diana

6-year-old Violet was swinging when she noticed 4-year-old Diana (a new child to the community) come and stand by the side of the swing. Violet slowed down her own swing and asked, "Do you want to swing?" Diana looked up at Violet and nodded. Violet jumped off the swing and motioned to Diana to get on the swing. Violet started to give her a push, but she noticed that Diana looked worried. "What's wrong?" Violet asked. Diana said, "Not too fast." Violet approached the swing and climbed onto the seat beside Diana. Violet says, "OK, I'll swing with you." Violet and Diana, both with big smiles on their faces, swing together for a while. Violet then hopped off and said, "Now I will give you just a small push." Diana smiled as she enjoyed the ride.

Consider the following questions:

- How are children using language in this scenario?
- How is language supporting social emotional growth in this scenario?



# VIDEOS

The following videos can be used individually to support discussions, workshops, and meetings. Sample questions for each video are offered for your consideration. To access the individual videos refer to “Ready-to-use workshops” in the Language and Literacy folder.



## ABC

- What non-verbal cues does Lucy use to communicate with her father?
- What “messages” is Lucy sending during this game with her father?



## NEWBORN AND HER MOTHER

- Notice how the mother and Jersey look at each other. Why is this important?
- In what ways is the mother’s language to her 8-week-old like motherese?



## SHARING A BANANA

- How does Jakyri’s father support his efforts to communicate?
- What does this scene tell you about their relationship?

# VIDEOS



## STORYTELLING

- How can you tell the children are listening and understanding?
- Why do you think storytelling is so powerful for language and learning?



## MARIAM AND HER MOTHER

Note: This video is a good example for low literacy parents as the use of pictures is the focus to support language, conversation and learning.

- How did Mariam’s mother foster her language and her learning?
- How does this scene confirm Mariam’s mother as one of her child’s first teachers?



## LEARNING SOUNDS AND WORDS

- How is this child empowered in her own learning?
- What other activities might reinforce or support the language learning in this activity?

## VIDEOS



### I CAN READ

- What activities might you suggest to build on the language learning in this activity?
- How do you think the pictures helped the boy read the words?



### HOMEWORK AND FOOTBALL

- How does the mother support her children's reading skills and their understanding of what they have read?
- How do the mother's actions set a strong foundation for ongoing language learning in the home?



### TALKING WITH MY MOTHER

- What stood out for you about this scene?
- What does Deepak's mother do to keep him interested in talking?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When do you think human beings begin to communicate?

*Agree or disagree?* It is wise to talk to your baby even before she or he is born?

How can you tell if an infant or toddler understands what you are saying?

Do we speak in a different way to babies? If so, how?

What is non-verbal communication? How important would you say non-verbal communication is when interacting with others?

What can parents and caregivers do to support early language development in the first three years?

How do storytelling, poems and rhymes support early language development?

How would you describe the language abilities of 3 – 6 year olds?

How do you think language supports children's learning?

How do you think language supports children's social/emotional skills?

What is the role of caregivers in fostering young children's language and literacy? What are some ways to do so?

When are opportune times during the day for children and caregivers to have conversations?

What does literacy mean?

Where in your environment, home and community are there opportunities to foster literacy?

# OTHER SLIDE RESOURCES

To access this resource, see “Ready-to-use workshops” in the Language and Literacy folder.



## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT CAROUSEL: 0 TO 6 YEARS

- This interactive slide presents key aspects of early language development for babies (0 – 12 months), toddlers (12 – 24) months, and children up to six years of age.



# PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photographs could be used for discussion in presentations related to early language learning and literacy. To access the photos refer to “Photographs” in the Language and Literacy folder.



group\_reading.jpg



chalkboard.jpg



reading\_together.jpg



big\_book.jpg



writing.jpg



explaining.jpg



sharing\_book.jpg



picture\_book.jpg



reading\_family.jpg



puppet\_show.jpg



matching.jpg



literacy\_materials.jpg

# HOMEMADE MATERIAL IDEAS

There are many creative ideas for making homemade materials that help foster young children's language and literacy and several examples are included here.

## Homemade books:

Books can be made using paper, cardboard or fabric. Pictures from magazines, photographs, stickers, ribbon, string and drawings (child or adult) are a few items that can be used to create a book. The books can be strictly picture books, alphabet books, number books, or books with pictures and simple text. Books can be about the child's family, house, neighbourhood, traditions or ceremonies. Traditional stories, poems, songs or rhymes can be made into a book with pictures. Books can be held together by punching a hole in the pages and tying them together with string. Pages can be fastened together or stapled. Pages for fabric books can be sewn together. Use other books for inspiration and be creative!

## Book bag:

Choose a book and create a small collection of items from the story to help tell the story. For example, a small puppet, paper or cardboard cutout representing a child, adult or animal, a small piece of fabric for the blanket in the story, or a small twig and string for a fishing rod. Keep the book and the items together either in a bag, envelope or small box. As children become familiar with the story, they can use the items to tell the story themselves. They may have ideas to add items to tell the story or even ways to change the story.

## Create posters:

Using pictures, photographs or drawings, create posters for children that can lead to discussions and learning new vocabulary. For example, pictures of animals, birds, transportation vehicles, food, familiar objects, people or places.

## Picture box:

Using a small square box, glue pictures, photographs or draw items on all four sides, top and bottom. For older children, numbers, words and shapes could be used.

## Going fishing:

Tie a piece of string to one end of a small stick and at the other end of the string use a paper clip to create a hook. Alternatively, tape can be wound around the end and bent to create a hook. On each card, tape a loop of string or paper on one end so the hook can 'catch it'. If available, small magnets can be glued to the cards for use with the paper clip. Children can go fishing for fish-shaped cards that can reflect colours, numbers or letters. Cards can also reflect different shapes or animals.

# HOMEMADE MATERIAL IDEAS

## Picture cards:

There are a variety of ways that homemade cards can be used for children of all ages that support language and early literacy.

- For infants, simple picture cards of familiar items can be tied together with a string or kept as separate items to look at and talk about. Pictures can be of familiar items such as a cup, blanket, ball or chicken and can be drawn or glued onto the cards.
- For toddlers, simple cards with pictures of colours, foods, shapes, animals and vehicles can be used for conversations.
- Concepts can be presented on picture cards; for example, up and down, happy and sad, in and out, big and little.
- Letters and numbers can be introduced by writing one letter or number on each card.
- Cards with pictures of items that rhyme can make learning fun. For example in English: chair and stair, mouse and house, or cat and rat. The words can also be included on the cards.
- Two of the same picture cards can be made for a memory game. Put all the cards upside down and players take turns flipping over two cards at a time trying to find a match.
- Children can choose a card and then have to find an item(s) around their environment that reflects the item on the card; for example the shape or colour.
- Cards with single letters on them can be used for older children; the children can identify the letter and then find items around their environment that start with that letter.
- Cards can be used for children beginning to learn the sounds of letters and learning to combine sounds to create words. For example (using simple three-letter words in English), write the letter "b" on one card and another card with "at" so the word "bat" can be spelled out. Add other single letter cards with "r", "h", "m" and "s" for children to learn and practice the sounds of the different letters and meanings of the words when combined with the "at" card. Although the example is based on English letters and words, this idea can be adapted to other languages. In some cases, more than three letters may be necessary.
- For beginning readers, simple action words can be printed on cards; for example, jump, run, skip, sit and roll. The child can choose a card, read the action and then do it.

## Puppets:

Puppets can be made in many different ways such as with socks, cloth, felt, heavy weight paper, cardboard, flat sticks, bamboo and paper bags. Other materials such as string, markers, magazine pictures or photographs can be used to create the puppets. Stories in books, traditional stories, rhymes and songs can be inspiration for creating puppets.

# WORKSHOP HANDOUT

## Supporting language and literacy 0 – 3 years

### Key messages:

- Babies are born with an amazing ability to take in and learn language
- Language development is best supported by talking with children
- Early language experiences set a foundation for later language development and literacy

### What you can do:

#### Talk to your child even before they can talk back to you

Talk and sing to your baby while they are still in the womb. They will get used to your voice and the rhythm of your speech and recognize it once they are born. Newborns communicate right from birth through facial expressions, gestures and early vocalizations. Respond to their communication with language and nurturance to help babies learn the back and forth of conversation and to stimulate their language development.

#### Use opportunities throughout the day to talk with children

Talk with children during every day routines. For example, at mealtimes or when dressing them. Help them develop their vocabulary by naming people and pointing out features of different objects. For example, say 'You are drinking from the red cup'. Ask questions related to what children are doing or seeing. For example, ask 'Do you see the bird? Where do you think the bird is going?' Describe what you see or are doing. For example, say 'I see the bus coming'. Label feelings and encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings. For example, ask 'You look sad. What happened?'

#### Read books, tell stories and sing songs with children

Use books as opportunities to enjoy time together. Look at the pictures in books (or magazines, posters and brochures) and encourage children to name and talk about what they see. Make your own books using pictures from magazines and brochures, children's or your own drawings. Pass on traditional stories or make up your own. You can even use the day's activities to create a story and describe what was seen and heard. Think about songs, rhymes and dances from your own childhood and share them.

# WORKSHOP HANDOUT

## Using language to learn 3 – 6 years

### Key messages:

- Talking with children fosters the development of language, which supports the child's social, emotional and cognitive growth
- Experiences and interactions that promote early literacy benefit children's later ability to read and write
- Reading opens an expansive world that supports academic and lifelong learning

### What you can do:

#### Engage children in conversation

Pay attention to children's need to use and practice language. Take advantage of times during the day to talk with children during routine times such as mealtimes, doing chores, going for walks or sitting together. Listen to children and encourage them to ask questions, express ideas and what they see. Expand on children's sentences by adding more information to increase their vocabulary. For example, when a child remarks 'look at the bird', respond by adding more information and vocabulary – 'yes, the bird flew up and sat in the tree'. Enhance children's thinking with questions such as 'what do you think?' or 'what would happen if...?' Encourage children to identify and express their feelings.

#### Promote early literacy through varied experiences

Read to children, taking time to discuss pictures, make predictions and ask questions along the way. Identify letters on print items around the house, classroom or community. Help children to learn how to spell their own name, verbally and in writing. Tell stories and encourage children to create and share their own stories. Play word games, use rhymes and songs, and keep language learning fun.

#### Create materials that support language and literacy

Use local, low-cost, no-cost resources to create fun materials to foster language and literacy, and encourage children to be involved in making their own materials. Books can be made using photographs, pictures from magazines or simple drawings. Create puppets with fabric, sticks and paper and use them to tell stories. Draw or glue pictures on cards to create games. For example, matching colours or animals. Print letters on cards to encourage learning and spelling of simple words.

# NOTES



## POSITIVE GUIDANCE

- Introduction
- Links to information and resources
- Ready-to-use workshops
- Activity ideas
- Scenarios
- Videos
- Discussion questions
- Photographs
- Quotes
- Workshop handouts

# INTRODUCTION

Many parents and other caregivers find guiding children's behaviour (some use the word discipline) to be one of their more challenging responsibilities. There is a lot of information and opinion available, and we are influenced not only by what we read and hear but also by what we have experienced as young children ourselves.

Young children's relationships with the important people in their lives have long-lasting influence on their emerging capacities to cope and be competent. Understanding young children's feelings and behaviours increases the capacity of caregivers to be responsive rather than reactive, helping children to build control of their own behavior and learn ways to handle challenging situations. In positive guidance, parents and caregivers focus on the immediate need while being mindful they are helping to build children's understanding and ability to get along with others in the longer term.

Review the following listing of resources for background information on the positive guidance approach.



# RESOURCES

## Links to information and resources:

Durrant, Joan E. (2013) Positive discipline in everyday parenting. Save the Children Sweden.

<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/positive-discipline-everyday-parenting-third-edition>\*

*\*An earlier edition "Positive discipline: What it is and how to do it" is also available on this site in Arabic, Thai, Bosnian, Russian and French.*

Save the Children also has many other resources related to the topic of positive discipline, corporal punishment and children's rights.

<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/search/library/discipline>

The Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development provides a wealth of current research and information related to child development on its website including the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development.

<http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/home.asp?lang=EN>  
<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/en-ca/home.html>

Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (2010)  
 Eyes on discipline: How much is too much?

<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/pages/PDF/DisciplineANGmcP.pdf>

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## A positive guidance approach

Long workshop (2-3 hours) 🕒🕒🕒

In this session participants will explore the concept of positive guidance, recognize the difference of this approach compared to others based on punishment and learn why positive guidance is beneficial for children's development and their relationships with their caregivers.

Participants will explore:

- the positive guidance approach
- the benefits of this approach
- why understanding child development is key to positive guidance
- using the positive guidance approach

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- New to the area
- What expectations do you have for children 0 – 6 years of age?
- Putting positive guidance into action
- Reflection on learning

#### Scenarios:

- Abdul and the blocks
- Putting positive guidance into action

See "Ready-to-use workshop" in the Positive Guidance folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## A positive guidance approach

Short workshop (1 hour) 🕒

This session will introduce participants to the positive guidance approach and its benefits to children's development.

Participants will be introduced to:

- the positive guidance approach
- using the positive guidance approach

### What you will use:

#### Scenario:

- Abdul and the blocks

See "Ready-to-use workshop" in the Positive Guidance folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Strategies for positive guidance

Long workshop (2-3 hours) 🕒🕒🕒

In this session participants will continue to explore key concepts related to this approach. Participants will have opportunities to put positive guidance in practice through group discussions and role-plays.

Participants will explore:

- the positive guidance approach and its benefits
- the importance of understanding child development to positively guide children
- ways to positively guide young children that support their development and competence

### What you will use:

#### Activities:

- Being a guide and teacher
- Goals of positive guidance
- Turning “don’t” into “do”

#### Scenarios:

- Kiana and Tisha

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Positive Guidance folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# READY-TO-USE-WORKSHOP



## Strategies for positive guidance

Short workshop (1 hour) 🕒

In this session participants will continue to explore key concepts related to this approach. Participants will have opportunities to put positive guidance in practice through group discussions and role-plays.

Participants will be introduced to:

- the positive guidance approach and its benefits
- ways to positively guide young children that support their development and competence

### What you will use:

#### Scenarios:

- Kiana and Tisha

See “Ready-to-use workshop” in the Positive Guidance folder to access the slide presentation and slide notes as you prepare for the workshop. The notes are also included on the individual slides.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## New to the area

Sometimes we find ourselves in unfamiliar surroundings. Perhaps we visit a new village or attend a new school or program. We may not know what to expect and what is expected of us. We may feel frightened or confused. Often we must look to others for guidance and direction whether we ask for help directly or learn by observing their behaviour. This activity allows participants to think about the role of other people when guiding us in situations that are new or unfamiliar.

**Materials:** Poster paper and markers

**What to do:** Depending on the audience, you can adapt the scenario for urban or rural contexts. The example presented is for an urban setting. See the “Activities” in the Positive Guidance folder for a copy of the scenario to photocopy.

**The scenario:**

*You are moving to a new city. You have made arrangements to hire a guide to help you as you don't know the language, where to go, where to stay, or how to get around. You are unfamiliar with the local foods, customs and laws.*

*What would you want from your guide?*

Encourage participants to share their thoughts. You may choose to record comments on chart paper. As facilitator, look for and promote ideas such as telling you how to get around the city, telling you some of the best places to see, telling you the rules and regulations of the place, telling you how to ask for something and get along with others, introducing you to local foods and customs, and telling you what to avoid.

Ask the participants to also express some of the personal qualities they would appreciate in the guide. Facilitators should look for and promote ideas such as respectfulness, kindness, understanding, clear communication, willingness to inform and positive attitude.

Ask participants:

*How does this relate to our role as caregivers to children?*

As participants respond to the question, look for and draw out ideas that relate to the role of parents and caregivers as guides who need to support children's learning about the world around them. As this activity draws to a close, support the understanding that, when children are born, for them, it is like coming into a new place. Parents, caregivers and the community are instrumental in helping children understand the rules and expectations of the environment.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Expectations of children 0 – 6 years

So much growth and development occurs in the first six years and we can observe many of the changes. For example, the physical changes of being able to sit up, crawl, learn to walk and eventually run, skip and jump. This activity allows participants to think about development and what is expected of children in the first six years.

**Materials:** Copies of the worksheet for groups (see “Activities” in the Positive Guidance folder for a copy of the worksheet to photocopy for this activity). Pictures of children of different ages (optional).

**What to do:** In small groups, have participants complete the worksheet and be prepared to share their comments with the large group. Have each group share their ideas for one of the age groupings on the worksheet. Other groups can contribute to the discussion if they have different points to add for that specific age grouping.

*Note: You can refer to the ready-to-use workshop Positive Guidance Part 1: A positive guidance approach (the long version) for broad overviews of development during the different age groupings discussed in this activity.*

Based on the activity and a discussion of the overview of development, ask participants to reflect on the question, “How does having an understanding of child development help caregivers?”

Having a basic understanding of child development helps us understand children's needs and abilities and, in turn, helps us to better support their growth and development. In the first six years of life, there is incredible growth and development.

As caregivers, we are tasked to keep our children safe, foster their healthy growth and development, and support their learning about the world. We are better able to support, guide and teach them when we understand their development. For example, if a caregiver is aware that a child is now able to pull himself or herself up to stand, they can ensure any items that can break or are unsafe for the child are put away from where they may be pulling themselves up. Or, as a child becomes more interested in playing games with other children, they may need help in taking turns and learning that this is part of the game.

In closing, discuss that children are not born with the knowledge of the rules or expectations for their behaviour. It is our role to help them with this.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Putting positive guidance into action

This activity gives participants the opportunity to explore ways of responding to common situations with children that demonstrate positive approaches to guiding and teaching. There are six scenarios and each one represents a child of a different age. Depending on time available, as facilitator, you can choose to have groups prepare a brief role play of a caregiver's reaction – one demonstrating a negative response and one positive – to share with the larger group. Alternatively, you can have small groups discuss and share their thoughts with the larger group. Again, depending on time, you may choose to have groups focus on a positive response only in the scenario.

It will be important as the facilitator to be familiar with the scenarios and slide notes to ensure a full and rich discussion of each scenario. If you are using this activity outside of the ready-to-use workshop and participants have not been exposed to the information in the workshop, you may need to actively facilitate the participants' understanding of positive strategies when discussing each scenario.

**Materials:** See "Activities" in the Positive Guidance folder for a copy of the activity, which also lists possible strategies for the facilitator to share. As well, the scenarios and questions for photocopying are included in the folder.

**What to do:** Divide the participants into small groups and ask them to role-play (or discuss) both a negative and positive response to their assigned scenario and discuss the questions. Groups will be asked to share with the larger group.

The questions are:

1. For the negative response, how might the response make the child feel? What might the child learn? How might this influence the relationship between caregiver and child?
2. For the positive response, how might the response make the child feel? What might the child learn? How might this influence the relationship between caregiver and child?
3. Is there anything the caregiver could have done prior to responding that might have minimized or prevented the situation?

To conclude this activity, based on the work with the scenarios, ask the participants to brainstorm some common strategies for positive behaviour guidance. For example, stay calm and positive, consider the situation from the child's point of view, approach with understanding and care, and acknowledge the child's feelings.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Reflection on learning

This activity is versatile and provides an opportunity to reflect upon key ideas and new understanding gained from exploring the topic of positive guidance.

**Materials:** One piece of paper or small card for each participant, a basket or small bag.

**What to do:** Give one paper (or card) to each participant and take one for yourself. Ask participants to write down one word or a short phrase that describes what key idea or new understanding about positive guidance they will take away from this session. As the participants finish, ask them to fold the paper and place it in the basket or bag. As facilitator, you will also complete one paper. Ask the participants to sit or stand in a circle. Mix up the papers in the basket/bag and then pass it around the circle. Ask each participant to take one paper and keep it closed. One by one, ask the participants to open the paper and read out the word or phrase. Continue until everyone has shared. As facilitator, you may choose to comment on the important learning that has happened in the session before participants leave.



# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Being a guide and teacher

When talking about positive guidance it is important participants consider their role as guides and teachers and how best to carry out that role. This activity will provide an opportunity to experience being guided in a supportive way and a non-supportive way and to examine the difference between these experiences.

**Materials:** Small pieces of material to use as blind folds (optional)

**What to do:** Ask each participant to find a partner. Provide each pair of participants with a blindfold (or ask one partner to close their eyes during the activity). Have one participant put the blindfold on securely (or agree to keep their eyes closed); ask the other participant to take the blindfolded participant on a walk *without providing any verbal guidance or information*. After a few minutes, ask the pair to come back to the room. Ask those who were blindfolded (or had their eyes closed) to describe their feelings about the walk.

As facilitator, focus on comments related to trust, insecurity and discomfort.

Next, have the pair switch so that the other person in the pair now wears the blindfold (or agrees to keep eyes closed during the activity). This time, have the person leading guide the blindfolded participant by verbally describing the journey. For example, if going through a door, say, "We are going through the door now and then will turn right." After a few minutes, ask those who were blindfolded to describe their feelings about the information and guidance they received from their partner in completing the walk.

As facilitator, focus on comments related to knowing what to do, having an idea of where they were going, clear instructions and patience.

To conclude, ask participants how this activity relates to their role in providing guidance for children as they learn to navigate their world. Specifically ask them to talk about the difference between the supportive and non-supportive experiences and how this activity may influence them in their role as guides and teachers.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Goals of positive guidance

When guiding young children, parents and caregivers must sometimes, in the short term, stop behaviours that are unsafe or are hurtful to the child or others. But parents and caregivers may also have longer term goals. For example, helping the child to understand expectations, how to accomplish them and to become self-sufficient and independent. Participants will explore goals of the positive guidance approach both in the short and long-term.

**Materials:** Poster paper and markers

**What to do:** Divide the participants into small groups and have them discuss the question:

- What might be some goals, both short and long-term, of a positive guidance approach?

To help guide the participants, explain that short-term goals are related to the immediate situation. For example, if a child hits another child, what would be the immediate goal(s) when dealing with the child or children?

For long-term goals have participants think about what they would want children to learn or understand about themselves and how to get along with others.

After the groups have had a chance to discuss, have each group share their thoughts. Consider recording comments on chart paper.

Emphasize the difference between short-term goals (for example, stopping the behaviour) and long-term goals (for example, self-control and problem-solving.) Be prepared to provide a relevant example for the participants. One example could be about two children disagreeing over who should be able to play with a toy or other materials. The short-term goal may be to stop any behaviour that might cause harm and to help the children find a way to share or take turns with the toy. In the long-term, as a caregiver, the goal may be to help children develop the ability to solve issues on their own using words, to understand the needs of others, and how to share and take turns.

In concluding this activity, emphasize that in guiding children it is important to think about both short and long-term goals. Both are important.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Turning “don’t” into “do”

Many have grown up hearing “don’t” statements and it can be hard to break old habits. But letting children know what to do rather than what not to do is important in a positive guidance approach. This activity provides an opportunity to practice this simple strategy.

**Materials:** Small cards or pieces of paper with written statements. See “Activities” in the Positive Guidance folder for example statements that can be photocopied for the activity.

**What to do:** Divide the participants into small groups. Give each group a card or paper with several “don’t” statements (here are some):

- “Don’t spill the water”
- “Don’t throw the stones”
- “Don’t jump on the furniture”
- “Don’t kick the ball toward the street”
- “Don’t push your friend”

Ask the groups to focus on developing positive statements that would tell a child what he or she can do. That is, change each “don’t” statement into a “do” statement. For example, “pour the water into the tub” instead of “don’t pour the water out!” Ask the groups to consider a brief explanation for the child as to the “why” of the statement.

Once the groups have had a chance to discuss, ask them to take turns sharing with the larger group.

Ask participants how they feel about incorporating this strategy into their daily interactions with children. What might be the challenges?

In closing this activity, indicate that we may be accustomed to using “don’t” statements. The goal is to begin hearing when you use “don’t” and to think about how to change the statement into a “do” statement next time. It takes time to change.

# SCENARIOS

Consider...

## Abdul and the blocks

2-year-old Abdul is playing with small wooden blocks. When he has several stacked, he looks up with a smile and seems proud of his accomplishment. He knocks them down and further scatters the blocks with his feet. He then picks up a block and throws it against the wall near the glass window. His infant brother Asha is sleeping nearby. Abdul picks up more blocks with both hands.

**Response A:** Abdul’s caregiver quickly approaches him and yells, “What are you doing? Stop that right now!” She lifts Abdul up to his feet, pushes him forward and says, “Go find something else to do”. The blocks are put away as Abdul watches.

**Response B:** Abdul’s caregiver quickly approaches him and firmly says, “Put the blocks down Abdul.” Abdul looks at his caregiver and hesitates before throwing the blocks to the floor. She tells him that the blocks are hard and can hurt. She picks up a block and takes Abdul’s hand to touch the block, “See the block is hard, it is not soft.” His caregiver explains that when throwing the blocks, one might accidentally hit his brother and he would be hurt. Or, the block could break the window and the broken glass might hurt him and his brother. His caregiver asks him, “Do you still want to build with the blocks, or do you want to find something soft that you can throw?” Abdul chooses to find something to throw. The caregiver finds a soft ball and together they find a spot where he can throw the ball safely. Abdul’s caregiver joins him in a game of catch for a few minutes and then Abdul decides to go back to the blocks and begins building again.



**Consider the following questions:**

- How do you think Abdul would feel in both of these responses?
- What is Abdul learning?
- What might Abdul’s caregiver be learning about him?
- How might she be feeling?
- How might this interaction influence the relationship between Abdul and his caregiver?

# SCENARIOS

## Consider... Kiana and Tisha

Kiana and Tisha, both 3-years-old, enjoy playing together at the local ECD Centre. One afternoon the two girls are playing outside with water in a tub. There are several small bottles but only one large bottle. Kiana reaches over, takes the large bottle and uses a small bottle to fill it with water. Tisha watches Kiana and then grabs the large bottle and begins to dump it out. Kiana looks at Tisha and says, "That's mine!" and grabs the large bottle. They both hold onto the large bottle and pull it back and forth.

Consider the following questions:

- What is Kiana feeling? What is Tisha feeling?
- What would you do or say first so Kiana and Tisha stop pulling on the bottle?
- What could you do and/or say next that would help them deal with the situation?
- Is there any way to prevent this situation in the future?



# VIDEOS

The following video can be used individually to support discussions, workshops and meetings. Several sample questions for the video are offered for your consideration. To access the video refer to "Ready-to-use workshops" in the Positive Guidance folder.



## CHANGING OUR APPROACH

- What did the mother learn about her son?
- How do you think this new approach might influence the relationship between mother and son?



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How do young children learn about “the rules” of getting along with others? What about learning rules for their home or community?

What does it mean to guide someone? How does that relate to our role as caregivers?

What is the difference between positive guidance and punishment?

How does our approach influence our relationship with children?

What are our expectations for young children? Are they realistic for their ages?

Why is having an understanding of development important to positively guide young children?

How does positive guidance foster nurturing and learning?

What do children learn from their caregiver’s behaviours?

What kinds of situations with children can challenge caregivers?

Are there any ways to prevent possible challenging behaviours or situations with children?

Why are boundaries or limits important for children?

# PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photographs could be used for discussion in presentations related to positive guidance. To access the photos refer to “Photographs” in the Positive Guidance folder.



slide.jpg



want\_to\_play.jpg



creating.jpg



making\_bread.jpg



skipping\_rope.jpg



washing\_hands.jpg



teaching.jpg



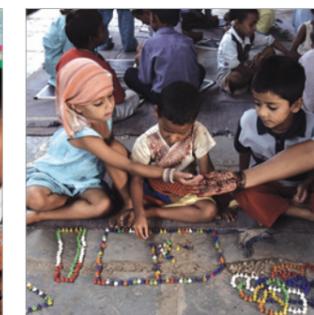
exploring.jpg



building.jpg



reading.jpg



assisting.jpg



big\_steps.jpg

# QUOTES

Life affords no greater responsibility, no greater privilege, than the raising of the next generation.

~ C. Everett Koop

There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots, the other, wings.

~ Hodding Carter

Children are the living messages to a time we will never see.

~ Neil Postman

To be in your children's memories tomorrow, you have to be in their lives today.

~ Anonymous

Children will not remember you for the material things you provided, but for the feeling that you cherished them.

~ unknown

Listen more to your kids and talk less.

~ unknown

Soft is the heart of a child – take care not to harden it.

~ unknown

Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you.

~ H. Jackson Brown

Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you.

~ Robert Fulghum

Stop trying to perfect your child, but keep trying to perfect your relationship with him.

~ Dr. Henker

The best inheritance a parent can give his children is a few minutes of his time each day.

~ O. A. Battista

# QUOTES

## Quranic verses

Source: <http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/home/> Children as a gift from the divine

“To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills (and plans). He bestows (children) male or female according to His Will (and Plan)

~ Quran: Chapter 42, Verse 49 –  
Translation by Yusufali

## Ahadith (Sayings of Prophet Muhammad)

Each one of you is a caretaker and is responsible for those under your care.

~ Hadith from al- Bukhari and Muslim

Allah will ask every care taker about the people under his care, and the man will be asked concerning the people in his household.

~ Hadith from Ahmad,  
al- Nisai, and Abu Daoud



# WORKSHOP HANDOUT

## A positive approach to guiding

### Key messages:

- Parents and caregivers are children's first guides and teachers
- Understanding growth and development helps caregivers guide children in positive ways
- A positive guidance approach provides opportunities for nurturing and for children to learn and develop important life skills

### What you can do:

#### Help children to understand what is expected of them and what they can do

Children are not born with the knowledge of the rules or expectations for their behaviour. Take time to explain what they can do and suggest alternate activities if needed. For example, if a child is throwing sand say, "Keep the sand in the container." Explain that it hurts to get sand in your eyes. Tell them what they can do, instead of just telling them what they can't do. For example, you can try filling the cups with sand. This approach will help them learn for the next time.

#### Watch what children are able to do and what choices they make to better understand their needs and abilities

Children are born with different temperaments, and their ability to understand and follow direction changes as they grow. In the first year babies are not skilled at recognizing unsafe activities and conditions. Remove items that are not safe and direct children to safe activities.

Between 1-3 years of age children are interested in playing with other children and are learning how to express themselves to others using their words. Help children by giving the words they need to express themselves to others.

Children between the ages of 3 - 6 years want more independence and are increasingly capable. Encourage them to do things on their own and to explore new activities and challenge their abilities. Talk with them about how to solve problems when they happen. Act as a resource discussing possible actions and solutions with children.

#### Recognize that children observe and learn from the adults around them.

Children imitate and learn from what they see. Ask yourself "what am I teaching in my actions and words?" "What do children see me doing?" "Is this how I would want children to behave in the same circumstance?" Focus on being a model not only in everyday actions or when responding to children's behaviour but also when dealing with your own frustrations, from missing the bus, breaking a plate, to a conflict with another adult. Keep in mind that little ones are watching us and taking note.

# WORKSHOP HANDOUT

## Strategies for positive guidance

### Key messages:

- Children observe and learn from the important people in their lives
- Trusting relationships with children provide a foundation for positive guidance
- Positively guiding children when they are young builds important skills that will last a lifetime

### What you can do:

#### Be a model

Children are watching what we do and learning from us. Modeling is a powerful force. Help children to learn to be kind and respectful toward others through your everyday behaviour. Talk with children about how you are choosing to interact with others.

#### Notice the positive

Pay attention to children when they are doing good things. For example, note when a child helps someone and describe what they did. For example, say "That was nice to help your friend get up the steps". This highlights the value of those behaviours and encourages children to repeat and build on them.

#### Provide encouragement

Encouragement focuses children on their efforts and how they are feeling. It helps children think for themselves and evaluate their own actions. For example, when a child holds up their drawing for you to see, rather than just saying 'good job' or 'I like your picture', express what you see in the picture. For example, say, 'What a colourful picture! You used a lot of colours.' Ask the child to tell you about their work comment on how the child might be feeling (proud, excited, satisfied).

#### Offer choices when possible

Offer children choices - even if only with limited options. For example, offer the child a choice of which book to read. Choice allows children to have some control and provides experience in making decisions as they grow older.

#### Be patient as children come to understand expectations

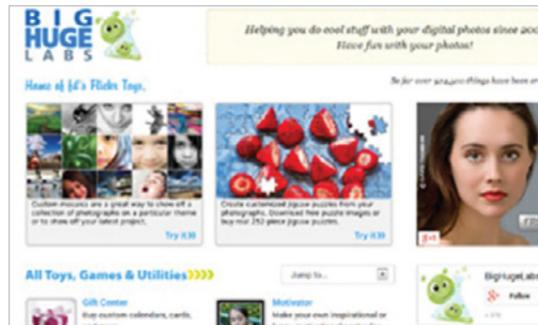
Be sure that limits are fair and appropriate for the age and abilities of children. Be sure limits are reasonable and easy to understand. Use limits consistently to avoid confusion. Expect that children will need time and many reminders.

# NOTES

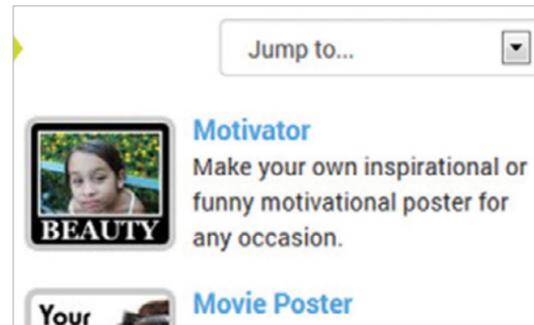


# APPENDIX

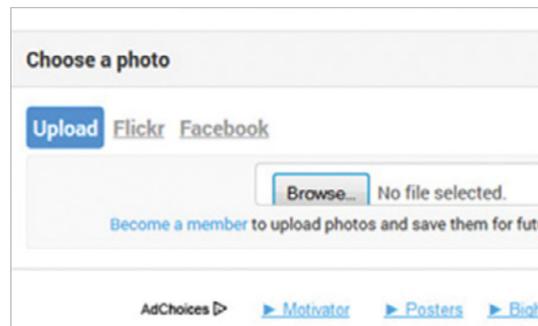
## Creating motivational posters using bighugelabs.com:



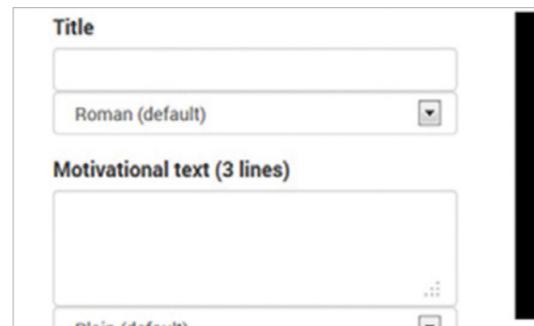
1. Go to <http://bighugelabs.com/>



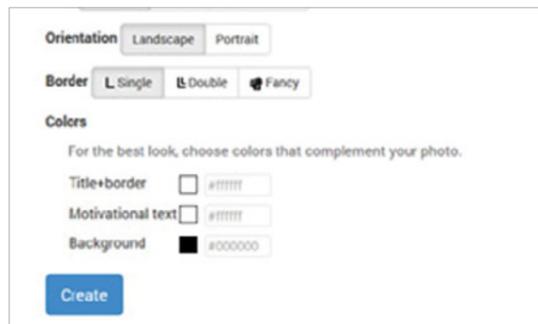
2. Click on the 'Motivator' link.



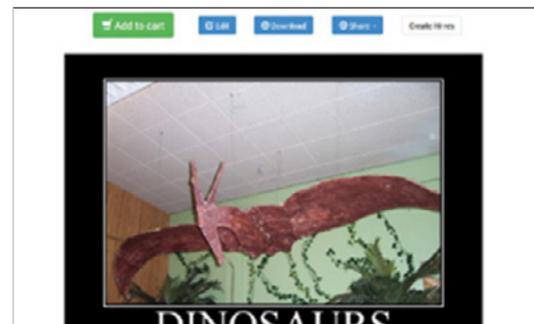
3. Click 'Browse' to find the picture you want on your computer.



4. Enter your title and text.



5. You may make adjustment to the options or click 'Create.'



6. Click the Edit button to make changes or the Download button to save to your computer.



**The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)** is part of the Aga Khan Development Network ([www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)), a group of non-denominational development agencies whose mandates range from the fields of health and education to architecture, culture, rural development and the promotion of private-sector enterprise and civil society. Its agencies and institutions, working together in some of the poorest parts of South and Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East, seek sustainable solutions to long-term development problems. Such solutions develop and draw upon the capacity of people to shape and improve their own lives. As such, attention to early childhood development provides a critical foundation for AKDN's undertakings. It is integral to the well-being of individuals, communities and nations.

**Red River College (RRC)** located in Canada has nine campuses in the province of Manitoba and over 30,000 enrolments. RRC offers a full spectrum of credentials, including apprenticeship training, certificates, diplomas, and select degrees ([www.rrc.ca](http://www.rrc.ca)). The Science of Early Child Development (SECD), a knowledge mobilization initiative, has been developed at Red River College (RRC) in Canada, in partnership with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and the University of Toronto.

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The Science of Early Child Development (SECD) Resource Kit is a joint project of the Aga Khan Foundation and Red River College (Canada). The Aga Khan Foundation is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network.

The SECD Resource Kit is designed to support activities that increase awareness and understanding of the importance of the early years. It was developed to support workshops or trainings for parents/caregivers, community members, ECE educators, health professionals, program staff or volunteers, or anyone directly engaged with young children or families.

The Kit is intentionally developed as a flexible resource to enable facilitators to develop workshops appropriate for their local context. The SECD Resource Kit includes the following topics:

- Brain development
- Nurturing care
- Play
- Language and literacy
- Positive guidance

[scienceofecd.com](http://scienceofecd.com)