



Help a  
CHILD

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# Parenting

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**THE BASICS**



Help a Child (HAC) is a Christian, child-focused development organization working with local Partners in Asia and Africa. The Head-office is based in the Netherlands where the organization is known under the name Red een Kind (REK). Help a Child wants every child to have a loving and dignified existence and a promising future.

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# Information for the Facilitator

## *Goal of the Parenting Manual*

Improving parenting skills for mothers and fathers and other caretakers through practical parenting group sessions, so that they can provide adequate and relevant support to their children.

## *The set-up of the Parenting Manual*

This Parenting Manual is meant for groups of parents who would like to work on their parenting skills. It contains different modules about several topics parents need to know about when raising children. Each module has a few sessions about subtopics. The sessions have very participatory activities. There is also good information for the facilitator to know before he/she starts facilitating the sessions.

## *The Modules*

There are several Modules, each containing a number of sessions, normally between 1 to 4 sessions. The themes of the Modules are around aspects of Parenting, important for parents raise their children.

- The Module called The Basics, is meant for new parenting groups. These modules are obligated. It contains exercises to raise awareness about the importance of Parenting and explore the mindset of the parents.
  - The basics 1: How to start a Parenting Group?
  - The basics 2: Who is a parent?
  - The basics 3: Child Development
  - The basics 4: Assessing the needs
- The other Modules are around topics of the development of children and what they need in terms of support of their parents. The themes can be chosen, by the group and the facilitator, depending on the situation, the context and the need of the parents.
  - Module: Protecting Children
  - Module: Supporting children in their Education
  - Module: Nutrition
  - Module: Basic Health Care
  - Module: Social Emotional Support
  - Module: Cultural norms and values
  - Module: Spiritual & Moral Development of a child
  - Etc.

Groups of parents might need different information at different points in time, so the program is flexible in terms of number of Modules to follow, and order of Modules. It all depends on the level of the group.

## *The sessions*

There are several sessions, each of about 2 hours. There is a sequence in the sessions, so it is best to follow this order, but it is possible to shorten or 'glue' sessions together. Just make sure the parents do understand the topics and have time to share and internalize, so that they really learn and are able to support the children in a sustainable way.

Each session has the same set up:

- Welcome of the group members for this session and recap of what they have done, in terms of homework or maybe they have other things to share to the group.
- Exercises whereby the parents themselves talk and share and think.
- Feedback to the group where the facilitator asks parents feedback on the exercise and also explains what he/she noticed. At the same time this is the link to the next exercise, so that the line of the topics discussed is clear.
- Homework and closure is winding up the session and asking parents to do a certain task at home. This is not a must; it is more an encouragement to be more conscious, more aware of what is happening in their home. The closure of the session can be done in different ways: a song, a dance, a prayer... It depends on the group.

Each session takes about 2 hours. If this is too long, sessions can be split. It is better **NOT TO RUSH** and **NOT SKIP** exercises! **The process is important, and the built up of exercises is meant to take the people through that process. It will help to make a sustainable change in the lives of people.**

## *Location, Time and Frequency*

The location should be a place where all people can fit and be seated, on the floor or on chairs, depending on the setting. They should sit preferably in a circle, so that they can see each other. This contributes to the sharing and discussing with each other. The location should be convenient, safe and out of ear-sight of others.

The best time is when parents have time to come. This should be discussed within the team and within the group of parents.

The frequency also depends on the group. Best would be at least 1x per week. More frequent is possible too, but it is important for people to have time to reflect and time to practice at home.

## *Materials needed*

At the beginning of each session it is indicated what materials are needed for the session.

Materials include:

- A small ball (tennis ball or small football);
- Flipchart paper and markers;
- A4 or A3 paper and colour pencils.

In some exercises it is helpful if people write down their answers on flipcharts, as not to forget what is being shared. In most groups there will be at least somebody who can write. If writing however is a problem, it is better to leave the writing and just focus on the discussion during group work! People who cannot read and write normally are good in remembering

information, so presenting in the groups will be done out of their heads. The facilitators can make some notes, for their own memory of the session.

### ***Facilitation***

Facilitation is not easy. It means you facilitate the group to talk, to share, to think and to discuss.

Facilitation is NOT the same as teaching!

### ***Ground rules of the group and the facilitator***

In the first session together with the group, the facilitator will set the ground rules. The most important rules are:

- Presence: people should not miss a session, UNLESS it is really not possible, like sickness.
- Come on time.
- Come while being sober (in some cultures/locations this might be a problem).
- Respect each other's views and opinions.
- Do keep information from within the group confidential.

### ***Culture, beliefs and behavior***

Culture and beliefs can be strong and do influence behaviour. Although we might think culture and tradition are fixed, not changing, it also does change over the years, like the whole society does change... And that is important to realize and to look at.

It is important not to condemn cultural views and beliefs, but discuss about it: How was the culture in the old days? What was the meaning of it? And how is it now? Did it transform? Is it still valuable? Or should it be adapted a bit?

In parenting there might also be some traditions, some cultural values, which are forming the framework of parenting. This is fine, but it is important to be open about that and discuss.

### ***Important to know***

It is important to set a climate of trust and understanding, since we believe that sharing and learning from each other, is very important for parents. So take your time setting ground rules together!

### **Module build up**

The Parenting Module contains 4 parts that contains a several sessions. See the schedule below which subjects will be discussed at the sessions.

#### **PART 1:** How to start a parenting group?

**Goal:** Getting to know each other and explaining the goal.

<b>Session Title</b>	<b>Content of the session</b>
1. Starting a Parenting Group	Understanding the goal of the group, getting to know each other, and set the groups environment

#### **PART 2:** Who is a parent?

**Goal:** Ensuring parents understand the importance of Parenting and know the basics of Parenting.

<b>Session Title</b>	<b>Content of the session</b>
2. Our own Childhood	Looking at your own childhood, the nice things and the challenges of those days; looking at how your parents were doing
3. Our children's Childhood	How is are our children doing? In what situation do they grow up, how is their childhood? If you compare theirs and our childhood, what is similar and what is different?
4. We as parents	What is our role, as a father, as a mother? Who is doing what?

#### **PART 3:** Child development

**Goal:** Ensuring Parents knowing the basics of Child Development.

<b>Session Title</b>	<b>Content of the session</b>
5. What does a child need to develop?	Getting a clear picture of child development. What stages are there and what are the areas of development?

#### **PART 4:** Assessing the needs

**Goal:** Parents reflect on their own problems and strength and decide how to continue learning

<b>Session Title</b>	<b>Content of the session</b>
6. The Parental Balance	Getting a clear picture of problems and strength of parents. Making choices for further learning



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## **The Basics 1:** How to start a Parenting Group?

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# Session 1: Starting a Parenting Group

- Goal:** Getting to know each other and explaining the goal
- Materials:** Flipchart, Markers, A4 paper, Sentence for exercise: The whispering line
- Duration:** 2 – 2,5 hours



## | Introduction for the Facilitator

### *Introduction to the theme*

It is the first time you and the group of parents meet. Maybe some of them know each other, maybe not. You as facilitator probably do not know them yet. So it is important to take time for that. In the sessions the participants might share personal information, about their children or themselves. It is important that this will happen, but that means the group 'climate' needs to be one of trusting each other. It also means personal things being shared in the group, are not allowed to be shared outside of the group!

Setting some rules in the group are wise to do. It is their group, so let the participants decide which rules are important in the group.

The parents will meet for several weeks sharing and talking and learning about raising children in a good way, about parenting.

We will look at who is a parent and what a parent in fact needs to do. Of course this is different in each culture, but that is fine. In this manual we will look at your situation: what is the situation in your context? Who is doing what in a family? What are the roles and responsibilities of the father and the mother? What kind of skills does a good parent need? There is a lot you have to be able to do as a parent...

The extended family is also important, but we will look at that in a later stage of the training.

### *Important to know*

These first few sessions look easy, but in fact this is where you lay the foundation for the group.

## | Exercises

Welcome to this first meeting in the Parents group. Great to see all of you here! Do you know each other already? Maybe some of you know each other, but at least I do not know you. So let's start with this, in a small exercise.



### **Exercise 1: Name Game**

Time: 10 – 15 minutes

1. Make pairs. Look for somebody you do not know yet so well.
2. Now in your pair take 3 minutes to get to know the other person. One starts, later we swap roles. What would you like to know? The name, but maybe also his or her situation: married, children, what does he or she like best and what not, his or her favourite song or game etc.
3. After 3 minutes swap. Now the person who had to answer all the questions will be the interviewer.
4. When done, get back in the group. Ask now each pair to introduce the person he/she interviewed.

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#### **Feedback to the group**

Now we know each other, at least some information of each other. I am sure in the rest of the sessions we will get to know each other more.

What is the GOAL of this group?

In this group we will focus on parenting. We all have children, our own or children we look after. And that is not an easy job to do! Sometimes it is a struggle to do it all well! We have many roles to play: being a father or mother, being a wife or husband, being a friend, being an employer or worker... All these roles can be demanding! And it all can influence how we behave, how we act at home, towards the children.

In the coming weeks we will look at how we can support our children in a good way, how we can raise them well, so they become responsible young adults.

First thing is: you cannot do it alone! You do need others!

One of the important things to do, in a group, in your home, and to your child is...?

Communication! In another session we will look at this in more detail. Here I do want to mention it, since in this group I think we do have to communicate well, and listen well... How communication works (or not works) we will see in the next exercise.



### **Exercise 2: The Group and the rules**

Time: 10 minutes

1. Let the group-members make pairs, by turning to their neighbor
2. Let the pairs discuss together: what is important for this group to function well? What kind of rules do we need for this group?
3. When people are done, ask each pair to mention a rule and list them down on the flipchart.

4. When everybody is done and all rules are set, repeat them one by one and see if all members agree. The rules should be reasonable and fair.

*Note: Rules might include:*

- *Come every session, unless really not able to come.*
- *Come on time.*
- *Respect what others say.*
- *No talking outside of this group (so what is shared, remains within the group).*
- *Active participation*

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### ***Feedback to the group***

Thanks for this, I think it will work well with this group. Now we might need a name. What is a good name of this group? It should be a name so that all of you feel you belong to this group. (discuss options and see if people can agree. If not, let them think about and decide it next time you meet)

One of the most difficult things in a group is good Communication. Let us see what it means in the following exercise.

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### ***Exercise 3: The whispering line***

Time: 15 – 20 minutes

1. Make 2 or 3 groups, each of about 6 to 10 people, depending on the number of participants.
2. Each group has to stand in a line, behind each other, some space in between.
3. The first persons of each group read a sentence from a paper. For instance: 'The teacher of the school of my youngest son is good in explaining maths to all children'. You also can come up with another sentence, as long as it is a bit long. And each group can have another sentence if you like.
4. Remove the paper and now the first person has to whisper the whole sentence to the second person. He/she can repeat, but only 2 times.
5. Now the second person has to whisper the sentence he heard to the third person.
6. Continue till it reaches the last person.
7. The last person has to say out loud what he heard from his team member. Is the sentence the same as it is written on the paper? Probably not!
8. Repeat with 1 or 2 more sentences, if there is time. Does the same happen?

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### ***Feedback to the group***

As you can see Communication is a difficult thing!!! Words can easily change when communicating to different people. Messages from hear-say normally are not fully correct. That might give a very different meaning to a message! It means that communication should be clear, and if you hear something via others, it is good to check if it is correct.

Also within this group we should try our best to communicate well, and ask if you do not understand something. Can we agree on that? So if you do not understand something, please ask.

Let us look now at our role as a parent. What are we supposed to do, as a father, as a mother? Are we all in the right place, since this is a group for parents 😊.

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### **Exercise 3: Who is a parent?**

Time: 10 – 15 minutes

1. Make pairs.
  2. Discuss in your pair: who is a parent?
  3. After 5 minutes, come back to the group.
  4. Let some of the pairs mention what they came up with.
- 

#### **Feedback to the group**

Thanks for all this information. It is interesting that some of you in fact were talking already about: who is a GOOD parent? That is normal, that is what we are thinking of. Yet in the dictionary it says:

So everybody who is the biological father or mother of the child is the biological parent.

But also anybody who is taking care of the child, as if it was his/her own, is the parent. Even if the child is not your own biological child.

A **parent** is a caretaker of the offspring in their own species. In humans, a **parent** is the caretaker of a child (where "child" refers to offspring, not necessarily age).

A biological **parent** consists of a person whose gamete resulted in a child, a male through the sperm, and a female through the ovum.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parent>

Do you know what law says in your own country? And what does your culture say?

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## **| Homework**

For next time, I would like you to do the following at home: think about your own childhood. What do you remember? Was it nice? What challenges did you face? Next time we will talk about that.

#### **Closure**

Let's close this with a children's song. What songs do you know?



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## **The Basics 2:** Who is a parent?

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## Session 2: Our own Childhood



**Goal:** Understanding our children's situation

**Materials:** Flipchart, Markers, A4 paper

**Duration:** 2 - 2,5 hours

### | Introduction for the Facilitator

#### *Introduction to the theme*

We will look at who is a parent and what a parent in fact needs to do. Of course this is different in each culture, but that is fine. In this manual we will look at your situation: what is the situation in your context? Who is doing what in a family? What are the roles and responsibilities of the father and the mother? What kind of skills does a good parent need? There is a lot you have to be able to do as a parent...

The extended family is also important, but we will look at that in a later stage of the training.

In this first session we will look at our own childhood and the childhood of our children today. As adults we tend to think that children these days are more difficult, more annoying and not easy to handle. "The children these days...!" But is that really true? How are we having difficult kids? Were we as adults such better kids when we were young?

In this session we will look at that. Participants will discuss their own childhood: how were they behaving and feeling when they were children? We will also look at our parents. What did we learn from them? Things we would love to do too? Or things we did not like, so we prefer not to do them?

Then we will look at our 'internal balance'. It is like a weighing scale, balancing between difficulties/problems somebody is facing at one side and things that keep us strong and ways of dealing with these problems at the other side. Every person is facing difficulties in life, some more than others. So the weighing scale might be heavy loaded, the balance will tend to go to one side, meaning you are 'Out of Balance'. Now what to do? You can do 2 things:

- Make sure you add enough 'strength' at the other side to keep the scales in balance. This is very personal. Think of: playing sport, talking/sharing with family or friends, prayer, singing etc.
- Remove a problem from the problem scale. Some problems cannot be solved, for instance of somebody passed on. But other problems can be solved, for instance argument with your spouse.

#### *Important to know*

The scale is a metaphor, a visual means to help people understand this balancing between problems and strength. You also can use another visual means, like 2 baskets representing the

problem basket and the strength basket, with using stones, or anything else, to represent the issues you have in those baskets.

## | Exercises

Welcome to this session. This time we will look at who we are as parents, and what we have to do. Let's first do an exercise



### **Exercise 1: Singing a song**

Time: 5 minutes

1. Do you still remember a song from your childhood?
2. Let us sing it together

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#### **Feedback to the group**

Good you have remembered that old song! In this session we will look our own childhood. After that we will look the childhood of our children now.



### **Exercise 2: Our own Childhood**

Time: 40 - 50 minutes

1. Make small groups of about 5 to 7 people. You can decide to put women and men in separate groups, but it also can be mixed.
2. Each group gets a flipchart and markers. If people cannot read or write, it can be done without writing down.
3. In the group ask the participants to think of their own childhood. Let them discuss: how was your childhood? What was nice in those days? What was difficult? How was your relation with your mother and father? Take around 20 to 30 minutes for this.
4. When done, come back in the group and ask a few people to share what was discussed in their group.

Note: if you feel like parents want to continue, leave them in the groups while telling them about exercise 2. So you skip the feedback session

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#### **Feedback to the group**

How was it to look at your own childhood? We have all been children, so we know what it is to be a child. In fact, we are the experts in this since we have experienced childhood ourselves. But now, let's look at the childhood of the children nowadays, of our own children.

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### **Exercise 3: Your own parents**

Time: 20 – 30 minutes

1. Again in the same group.
2. Now think of your parents: what kind of parents were they? What did you like? What did you not like so much? And do you know how they must have felt, as a parent, raising their children?
3. Now let us get back in the group

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#### ***Feedback to the group***

How was this? It might have been difficult, but it is good we do that, because in fact you might have learned a lot from your parents, more than you might think you have. These might be things you liked and you are now doing with your children. Or things you did not like at all, that is also possible...

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## **| Homework**

Take your time and tell your children about the past. Share a story of your own childhood, what happened in those days.

#### ***Closure***

So, that was not easy, so let us close with nice song/dance to cheer us all up.



## Session 3: Our children's childhood



**Goal:** Understanding our children's situation

**Materials:** Flipchart, Markers, A4 paper

**Duration:** 2 - 2,5 hours

### | Introduction for the Facilitator

#### *Introduction to the theme*

In this session we will look at how their children are doing. How were the circumstances in our childhood and how is that now? Probably they will see a lot of similarities in behavior. Circumstances might be different, but behavior and feelings might be quite the same.

#### *Important to know*

Take your time here. It is important that people have the chance to talk, at least in their small group.

### | Exercises

Welcome to this session. This time we will look at who we are as parents, and what we have to do. Let's first do an exercise.



#### *Exercise 1: Song of your children*

Time: 5 minutes

1. Who knows a song your children sing these days?
2. Let us sing it

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#### *Feedback to the group*

Did you manage to do your assignment of last time? Did you manage to sit with your children to tell them about the past? How was this?

Maybe you thought: ahhh, they will never like it! But I hope you have seen they do!

Now, let us look at our children and their childhood nowadays.

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#### *Exercise 2: Childhood of our children*

Time: 40 - 50 minutes

1. Go back in your small group.
2. Now we will look at our children's childhood, the current generation. How is it for them to grow up in this time? What is nice for them? What is difficult? (about 30 min)

3. Back in the group a few people can present the views of their small group.
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### ***Feedback to the group***

So that is for our children now. It seems they also do face some challenges, but also have opportunities.

Now let us compare: if you look at your own childhood and the childhood of your children, what do you see? What was is similar? What is different? Let's go back to our groups

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### ***Exercise 3: Compare childhood in the past and childhood now***

Time: 30- 40 minutes

1. Go back in your groups
  2. Think about your own childhood and the childhood of your children
  3. What are the similarities? What are the differences?
  4. Write it down (if possible or otherwise try to remember for the presentation)
  5. When done, get back in the group and present
- 

### ***Feedback to the group***

How was that? It seems there were quite some differences, but also quite some similarities. That is important to realize: children do face the same issues when growing up. The time might be different, and the context, but generally they have to go through the same steps of developing

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## **| Homework**

Think of your role as a mother or father: what is your role? What do you all do for your children? We will talk about that in the next session.

### ***Closure***

So, that was not easy, so let us close with nice song/dance to cheer us all up.

## Session 4: We as parents



**Goal:** Understanding the roles and responsibilities as a parent

**Materials:** Flipchart, Markers, A4 paper

**Duration:** 2 – 2,5 hours

### | Introduction for the Facilitator

#### *Introduction to the theme*

In this session we will look at our roles and responsibilities as parents. What do we have to do as mothers, as fathers? What are the tasks? And is it for everybody the same? Or are there differences? There might be individual differences of course, for example if a parent is a single parent.

This session is to explore the roles. In another module we will focus more on what you can do now as parent to fulfill your role well.

#### *Important to know*

In this session it might be good to have uni-sex groups, so the men together and the women together. However, it is still important to bring them together at the end.

### | Exercises

Welcome to this session. We will look at our roles and responsibilities as parents, as mothers and as fathers. What are we supposed to do?

But let us first do an exercise.



#### *Exercise 1: Follow the leader*

Time: 5 – 10 minutes

1. Stand in a circle, one person is the leader.
2. The leader is making a movement; the rest of the group has to follow what he/she does.

For instance:      Walk around... Everybody walks around  
                             Clap your hands... everybody claps their hands  
                             Etc.

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### ***Feedback to the group***

That was just a warming up, following somebody. And in fact that is a nice introduction to the topic of today, since we as parents are there to lead our children... How was the assignment of last week? Did you manage?

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### ***Exercise 2: 24 hours of your life***

Time: 25 - 35 minutes

1. Divide the group in small groups based on gender, so the men together and the women together.
  2. Each group gets a flipchart and markers.
  3. Think of a regular, average day.
  4. Describe all steps you take, all tasks you have to do in a day. Start with the time you get up. What are the things you are doing during the whole day?
  5. When you have done this, discuss if there are differences in different seasons/times of the year and add that information.
  6. When done, present to the other groups.
- 

### ***Feedback to the group***

If you compare the 24 hours of men and the 24 hours of women, what do you see? It seems you are all very busy during the day, with different things.

So let's look at that a bit more. What does this mean now for you as a father or mother?

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### ***Exercise 3: Roles and responsibilities***

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

1. Go back in your groups.
  2. The male groups discuss: what roles and responsibilities do we have as a father? And what do we expect from our wives to do?
  3. The female groups discuss: what roles and responsibilities do we have as a mother? And what do we expect from our husbands to do?
  4. When done, come back to the group and present.
  5. Compare what the men say about their roles and what their wives expect from them to do. Is it a bit similar or different?
  6. Same with the women: what do they say about their roles as mothers? And is it similar to what their husbands expect from them?
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### ***Feedback to the group***

Interesting to see what we feel we do need to do as a parent. And it seems we are all busy and trying hard. Well done.

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## | Homework

For next time, think about your roles again and about your challenges. What would you like to learn?

### *Closure*

Let's close this with a children's song. What songs do you know?



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## **The Basics 3:** Child Development

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## Session 5: What does a child need to develop?

**Goal:** Knowing the different stages and areas of development of children

**Materials:** Print Annex A, Markers

**Duration:** 1,5 - 2 hours



### | Introduction for the Facilitator

#### *Introduction to the theme*

Children do not grow up by themselves just like that. They will need many things, right from when they are born. In fact even from when they are still in the womb. How do parents know all that? Some of it they just know, as an instinct. Other things they may have heard from their parents or family or friends. Others they may just learn by trial and error... The growing up of a child is in fact so complicated, that it is not strange that parents do need some support in this!

In this session we will look at the basics of what children need at the different stages. Some of it will be familiar, other things maybe not. You as facilitator do not need to have all knowledge yourself! But you do need to know where to get it ☺. Do you know what services are around? What is already happening by others, by specialized services in the area? Who for example helps women with pre- and post-natal care? Where do parents have to go for vaccinating their child?

The session is written in such a way that while talking and sharing, the parents will get the basic knowledge they need. But if there is an issue parents really want to know and it is not possible within the time frame of this session, you might want to add a session, specifically on that topic. This can be done by yourself, but you also can think of getting a nurse for instance from the clinic to come and talk about all health aspects. Or if people want to know more about the early childhood centre, get the head teacher of that school... In other words: be creative and inspiring.

#### *Important to know*

##### **Holistic development**

In order for a child to grow into a mature and responsible individual, the development of different domains is important:

- Physical development: Child growth, development of the body, development of motor skills, balancing, skills like crawling, walking, running etc.
- Cognitive/intellectual development: Capacity to learn, remember, to symbolize information and problem-solving skills.
- Social and emotional development: Learning to relate to others, dealing with different feelings and behavioural skills.
- Spiritual development: Learning morals and values, good and bad, ethical development, beliefs and faith development.

## Development stages

There are different stages in child development. In each of these stages children learn different skills and competences. The number of stages differs in different cultures. However, the four elementary stages are considered to be:

- Early childhood: From conception to 7 years, when children form their foundation for further development. Since there are so many developments going on, we have split this stage in 3: baby phase (0-1), toddler (2 -3) and young child (4 - 7)
- Middle childhood: This is the period of life between ages 8 - 12 years when children attend school, make friends outside the immediate family, master new physical and mental skills and start to become individuals.
- Adolescents/teenagers: Youngsters in the age range of 13-18 are being prepared.
- Youth: Young adults in the age range of 18 till 25 are to be future citizens with the rights and responsibilities attached to this role.<sup>1</sup>

All stages are important for the development of children. In each stage, they learn skills and competences needed in their lives. In the following table provides a general overview of these skills. However, in different countries and contexts the different stages could be different in terms of behaviour and age groups.

### Skills and Competences of Children in each Stage<sup>2</sup>

	Baby (0-2)	Toddler (2-4)	Young child (5-7)	Middle Childhood (8 - 12)	Teenager (13 - 18)
Physical development	Sucking, sitting, crawling, standing, walking	Running, jumping Bowel control: potty training, Eating solid food	Balancing, jumping, running, exploring	More complex movements Eye-hand coordination, First signs of developing body, growing	Growing fast. Body changes: pubic hair, facial hair and lower voice (boys), menstruation, breast development and widening hips (girls)
Cognitive development	Sounds and first words, Recognizing voice and faces	Short words, basic sentences. colors, counting to 10, memory. Like songs	More words, better sentences. Ready for holding pencil is right way,	More words. Interested in learning, want to get more knowledge, understanding	Problem solving, thinking.

<sup>1</sup> In this manual we focus on supporting those till 18 years, so we will leave this group of youth out

<sup>2</sup> This is a summary of skills and competences. Not everything is mentioned!



		with movements	basic counting	of things. Own thoughts	
<b>Social and emotional development</b>	Focussed on mother/ caretaker, Safety and comfort	Interested in other children, but not so much playing together. Basic emotions: happy, sad, scared, angry	Playing together, alongside, not so much together as a team.	Peers are more important, playing together and working together. Understanding emotions better	Peers more important than parents. interest in opposite sex. Emotions can be high and swinging (mood swings)
<b>Moral and spiritual development</b>	Learns action /reaction: I cry, mummy comes	learns by trials: I touch hot stove, it pains = do not touch the stove	Learns about good and wrong, Fantasy /imagination is important	Continues learning good and wrong Fantasy is replaced by reasoning. Faith is important	Questioning what others say. Forming own opinion about Faith and morals

**Important note**

Some characteristics of child development are based on the universal child, for instance in the stages in physical development. There are, however, differences per culture in what is considered important in terms of development, for instance in social, emotional and spiritual development. Additionally, the division of the stages in terms of age can differ per culture. It is therefore important to be culturally sensitive in child-centred programming.

## | Exercises

### *Welcome and Recap*

Welcome. In this session we will look at what children need to develop. How do they grow up? Does it happen by itself? Or do we need to do something to help them with this?

I think we all know the answer: children do need help in growing up! And really, it is hard work for a parent. Today we will look at the different areas of development of children, and then we will look at what it means for us as parents, what do we need to do?

Let us start with a small exercise.



### *Exercise 1: Follow the Instructions*

Time: 10 – 15 minutes

1. Get up and walk around, just as you wish to walk.
2. I will give you instructions of what to do, you will do and when I say 'walk' you will just continue walking, ok?
3. There we go, walk around.
4. Stop and stand on one leg.
5. Walk again.
6. Make pairs... Walk.
7. Turn around... Walk.
8. Do as if you won the first place with football... Walk.
9. Comfort your neighbour... Walk.
10. Do as if you pray... Walk.
11. Make a circle.
12. Stop.

---

### *Feedback to the group*

How was it? Easy? Difficult? Now of course this was just a game, but in fact you did exercises which have to do with the different elements children have to learn... Did you see them? *Let the group answer and see if they see the physical elements, walking and standing on 1 leg; the cognitive elements (listening to the instructions); the social elements (make a pair); emotional (happy, comforting) and spiritual (pray).*

In fact those are the 4 elements of development we are looking at: physical development, cognitive development, social and emotional development, and spiritual development. In the following exercise we will look more into detail what it all involves.

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## Exercise 2: Development of Children

Time: 45 - 60 minutes

1. Use the posters from Annex A and put them at different corners
2. Make 5 small groups. Group 1 starts at poster 1 with the baby, group 2 at poster 2 with the toddler etc.
3. Give each group a marker.
4. Now look at the poster. You will see a drawing of a child of a certain age. There are also 4 symbols in each corner. Children need to learn different things:
  - physical things like growing and moving;
  - things of the head, like talking, counting, thinking;
  - Things of the heart, like friendships and feelings
  - Things of the soul/spirit, like having faith, what is good and not good
5. List down at the different corners, all the things a child of that age, needs to learn.
6. After 10 minutes: group 1 moves to poster 2, group 2 to poster 3 etc.
7. Check what the group before you wrote down and add if they have forgotten something. Also if you do not agree with something, you can add that.
8. After 10 minutes: move again
9. (You can move 5 time, since there are 5 posters, but towards the end the groups have not much to add anymore)
10. When you are all done, let's come together and look at each poster.
11. Go through each poster and see what the parents have written.
12. Check if all corners, all 4 types of development, are filled. Probably physical development is filled well, and for instance the development of the soul is not so well filled.
13. As facilitator you can add, using your own knowledge and the table in the Introduction of this Module. You can do this by giving suggestions: what about learning not to fight? Where would you put that?

---

### Feedback to the Group

Well done, that was hard work I think! What do you think of this? Are there things you have learned, things which were new to you? I think there are many things we somehow know, but if you have to think of them yourself it is hard. When you sit with others it will turn out you do know already many things, and you do get ideas from others.

By the way, why is it important to know what a child learns during a certain age? *Some of the participants can answer.* Right, it is important since then you know if a child is in-line with its development. If a child of 6 years cannot talk you know there is something wrong. It also manages your expectations: you cannot expect a child of 5 to carry something heavy, since physically it is not yet developed for that. And it helps you to think of how you can support your child best in its development.

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### ***Homework***

When you are home look at the children. How are they developed? Check all 4 areas: the physical, the heart, the brain, the soul... how are they doing you think?

### ***Closure***

When children are still small they like to hear songs. Do you know a nice children's song, a song you do sing for your children or your parents sang for you? Let's sing it together.



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## **The Basics 4:** Assessing the needs

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## Session 6: The Parental Balance



**Goal:** Parents reflect on their own problems and strength and decide how to continue learning

**Materials:** flipcharts and markers or 2 baskets and small stones

**Duration:** 1,5 - 2 hours

### | Introduction for the Facilitator

#### *Introduction to the theme*

Every person, anywhere in the world, encounters problems in life. Some minor problems, some face major and even life threatening problems. Problems people can deal with, and sometimes problems which are overwhelming. The fact that somebody in his/her life does face problems somehow, is in fact universal. There is in fact nobody in this world who does not have any single problem at all. But the exact circumstances of these issues and how a person deals with it, are very personal and depend on personality and context. And this means we cannot tell somebody what to do in case of a problem, and we cannot judge if somebody fails to deal with it. Yet it does NOT mean, people cannot learn from each other. In contrary, although your problems are 'unique', it does happen often that somebody else experienced something similar. And he or she might have a good example of how to deal with it. you can learn from this, pick what you feel like will work in your situation and try it out. Next to problems, everybody also has strength, ways of dealing with problems. Some people when they face an issue, have to talk about it with somebody. This makes them able to deal with it. Others prefer being quiet and think. Some will go for a run or play sports, in order to free their mind to see things more clear. And others pray to their God.

Although people have their own issues, it is important to share in a group about it. It helps people to unravel their problems which first look like a whole knot. By listing down issues, it becomes more clear and that is needed before somebody can solve his/her problems. When people share their problems, it is important to make sure this confidential information will stay in the group only and is not meant to share with people outside the group. People should feel safe to share their life.

The metaphor of a pair of scales is being used. One side of the scale represents all the problems a person faces. The other side represents the strength.



If there are a lot of problems, the scale is out of balance. You need a lot of issues in the 'strength' scale to get back the balance.

Some issues may be solved (e.g. conflict with your spouse); others may not be solved (e.g. the death of a person).

There are 2 ways to make the balance again balancing well:

- Solve problems, so they can be removed from the problem scale, making the scale lighter
- Add 'strength' at the other side, in order to give 'weight' to the other side, dealing with the problems.

A scale which is not in balance is not 'healthy'. If it takes long, this being unbalanced, it can cause even more problems.

### ***Important to know***

People have their individual pair of scales. However, when doing this together in the session, people can contribute and share. They will realize there are similar problems among the other participants. And they might learn /get ideas about possible strength from the other members.

If people have difficulties thinking about their strength, about the way they like to solve problems, ask them the following: think of the time you were a young child. What did you do if you had a problem? Some would say: I would run to my mum. Ok, so that means you like to share your problem with somebody. Maybe not your mum anymore, but somebody else. Some other people might say: I would go and play with my friends. Ok, so that means you like to do something, to put your mind on something else (sports, play music, sing, walk, etc).

We use here the metaphor of a pair of scales. Try to make it fit to your context, so draw on the flipcharts a pair of scales which is being used in your location.

If you think people cannot relate to that, you also can think of 2 baskets which can be filled with small stones or other available items.

Problems can be around parenting, but also around other roles people have. For instance about being a husband or wife, or in work (or being jobless) or in the family or community or... It is important to note these down too, since if for instance a wife has problems with the husband, this might influence her behaviour to the children. Or if I have a fight with my boss about something, this will influence my mood at home...

## | Exercises

### *Welcome and Recap*

Welcome.

Let us start with a small exercise.



#### *Exercise 1: The human knot*

Time: 10 – 15 minutes

1. Tell the group: We are going to make a human knot, and we need one person to solve the knot. Select one person who has to leave the group briefly.
2. The others stand in a circle, holding each other's hands.
3. Make a knot by going under other arms or stepping over arms, turning around etc.
4. Note: it is NOT allowed to let go of hands!!!
5. When in a knot, the person can come back.
6. He/she has to give directions for how to unravel the knot.
7. If it works well people are in a circle again!
8. Try another time with somebody else, or with 2 volunteers

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### *Feedback to the group*

How was this? Was it difficult to unravel the knot? Some knots are really difficult to untie. Sometimes it helps to stand back a bit and look at it from different angles.

In fact it is also like that with problems in our lives. Sometimes they are so tied, they feel like a knot. And unravelling them is not easy. But with some help and little by little it might work. We will look at that in the following exercise.

---



#### *Exercise 2: The Balance of Problems and Strength*

Time: 45 – 60 minutes

1. Make small groups of about 6 to 8 people. Best would be to make uni-sex groups: so men together and women together.
2. Each group gets a flipchart with a pair of scales drawn on it, and markers
3. Let the groups brainstorm about what kind of problems they face, as parents, as adults, as wives or husbands.... They can write it down at the problem side of the pair of scales.
4. After about 20 minutes let them look at the other side, the Strength scale. What kind of strength do they have? How do they deal with these problems?
5. Let the group look at how their scales look like: is it balancing? Or is it going to one side?
6. Probably the problem side is heavier than the other side. What can they do to make it lighter? Think of solving problems (how?) and if problems cannot be solved, what can be added at the strength side?



## 7. When done, come back to the main group

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### ***Feedback to the Group***

Well done, you did a good job! Not easy to face all the problems you have to deal with, but it is good to bring them to the open, to share. That is the first step to deal with them: to be aware of the issues, to unravel the whole knot of issues. And I can see you are already thinking of solutions. That is great. Now let us try in the following exercise, to decide what we, as Parents group, can do in this training. What do we want to learn? How can we improve together our strength, so we can face the daily problems? We will do that in following exercise.

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### ***Exercise 3: Choosing the next steps***

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

1. Look at all the problems all the groups wrote down. Ask the participants to make a top 10 together of the issues the most important issues they are facing as parents and adults.
2. Look at the list: are these issues we can do something about?  
Note: if it says for instance: stop the war.... That might be important to discuss, how to deal with conflict, how to prevent conflict even, but it might be difficult to stop the whole war, as this small group.
3. Go through the list and see what the group would like to learn. If possible try to connect it to the next themes since there are modules available on the know-how to portal:
  - Nutrition & Health
  - Education
  - Protecting children
  - Cultural values
  - Social and emotional support, etc.If it does not fit here, that is fine too. Please share with us at [childdevelopment@redeenkind.nl](mailto:childdevelopment@redeenkind.nl) so we can see if we can help in any way.
4. There also might be things which the group not so much can learn, but what they still would like to look at. For instance: the borehole is dirty and causes problems for our children in terms of diarrhoea. The group still can discuss: what can we do about this? they can make an action plan now or keep it in mind and work on that later.

### ***Homework***

Think about your own 'pair of scale'. How does it look like? What are your own problems and what is your way of dealing with them? What is your strength? In the group you will work on some issues, but you too, together maybe with your family, can make your own plan of bringing back the balance....

### ***Closure***

Let us close with a nice dance or song

# Annex 1

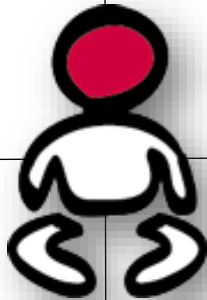
**BABY**



**PHYSICAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**COGNITIVE  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SPIRITUAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

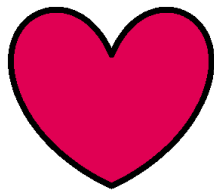
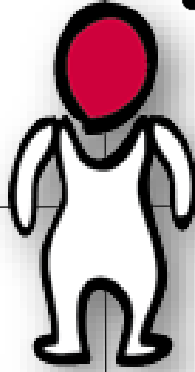
# TODDLER



**PHYSICAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**COGNITIVE  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SPIRITUAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

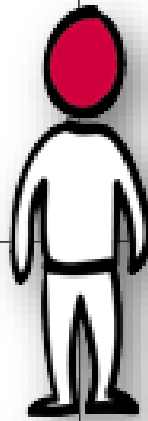
**YOUNG CHILD**



**PHYSICAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**COGNITIVE  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SPIRITUAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

**SCHOOL CHILD**



**PHYSICAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**COGNITIVE  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SPIRITUAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

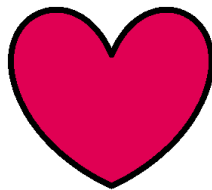
# TEENAGER



**PHYSICAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



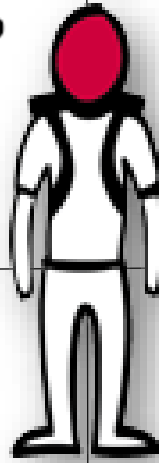
**COGNITIVE  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**SPIRITUAL  
DEVELOPMENT**





## Group Evaluation

*At the end of the module, evaluate the module together with the parents. Discuss these questions below and write down the answers that come forward.*

1. What have you learned from this module?
2. Did you miss anything? What else would you have liked to learn about this theme?
3. Do you already use something you have learned in this module in your daily life? If so, how and what were the results? If not, what is keeping you from using it?



4. What can you do after this module as parents in your family?

5. Question for all parents: what can you do after this module as a group?

Other comments:

**Please share this document with the Child Development Desk: [childdevelopment@redeekind.nl](mailto:childdevelopment@redeekind.nl). We want to hear about your experiences so we can optimize the Parenting Modules.**

