

## LEARNER OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Meet each other and learn about our families.
- ✓ Establish goals and ground rules we might have for our group.
- ✓ Discuss the purpose of the group and the importance of social-emotional development for young children.
- ✓ Learn how a child's brain development is dependent on relationships and language
- ✓ Learn how your own life experiences and culture can "power" your child's life and development.

## HANDOUTS

### Handouts in Class

#### 1 – Family Goals Worksheet

#### 2 - Remember a Relationship

#### 3 - Family Treasures Worksheet

#### 4 - Filling Your Treasure Chests (this is both in-class and take-home)

### "Try it at Home" Activities and Handouts

#### 5 –Observe Your Child at Play -"Try-it-at-Home" Activity

#### 6 –Spending Time with Your Child – Take Home Tips

#### 7 --What is So Important about Play? – Take Home Tips

#### 8 – Reading & Early Literacy Tips for Parents – Take Home Tips



## MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Session 1 PowerPoint (on flash drive or saved to computer)
- ☐ Session 1 script (this document; review closely before session)
- ☐ Copies of Session 1 In-Class Handouts & At-Home Activities & Handouts (stapled together)
- ☐ Sign-in sheet
- ☐ Copies of Session 1 evaluation form
- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Speakers for laptop
- ☐ Projector
- ☐ Projector screen
- ☐ Name tags
- ☐ Chart paper
- ☐ Chart paper stand
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Box of Tissues
- ☐ Incentives/rewards for parent participation (e.g., stickers, healthy snacks, etc.)
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Parenting Pyramid poster
- ☐ Refreshments
- ☐ Plates/Napkins/Cups/Utensils needed for refreshments

### Unique to this session:

- ☐ Unique to this session:
- ☐ Ball of Yarn
- ☐ Kit for New Parents (enough for each participant)
- ☐ Children's book (use book that comes with Kit or give parents another book)

## FACILITATOR OUTLINE

1. Introductions and Logistics
  - a. Welcome participants
  - b. Introduce yourself and the program
  - c. Review Slide 1 – Introduce yourself
  - d. Address Housekeeping issues such as childcare, parking, etc.
  - e. Introduce Kit for New Parents
  - f. Review Slide 2 – Kit for New Parents
  - g. Show Slide 3 – Session Topics
  - h. Show Slide 4 – What’s Happening
  - i. Optional Warm-up Activity – Talk about your Day
  - j. Activity - Participant Introductions and **Handout 1 - Family Goals Worksheet**
  - k. Activity - Group Agreements
2. You are the Most Important Person
  - a. Show Slide 5 – Relationship Activity
  - b. Show Slide 6 – Every child needs one person who is crazy about him
  - c. Activity – **Handout 2 – Remember a Relationship Worksheet**
  - d. Show Slide 7 - Children Learn and Grow through Relationship and Play
  - e. Show Slide 8 – The Brain Develops in Response to the Environment
  - f. Activity – Brain/yarn
3. Culture and Family Treasures
  - a. Activity – Family Treasures
  - b. Show Slide 9 – Handing Down Family Treasures
  - c. Activity – **Handout 3 – Family Treasures Worksheet**
  - d. Read Aloud Role Play Activity
  - e. Show Slide 10 - Activity – Filling Your Treasure Chests
  - f. Activity – **Handout 4- Filling Your Treasure Chests Worksheet**
  - g. Activity – Benefits and Barriers Brainstorm
  - h. Review **Handout 6 – Spending Time with Your Child**
  - i. Optional Activity – Brainstorm Ways to Spend Time with Your Child
4. Wrap-Up and Things to Try at Home
  - a. Show Slide 11 – Things to Try at Home
  - b. Review **Handout 4- Filling Your Treasure Chests Worksheet**
  - c. Review **Handout 5- Observe Your Child at Play**
  - d. Review **Handout 6- Spending Time with Your Child**
  - e. Review **Handout 7- What is So Important about Play?**
  - f. Review **Handout 8- Reading & Early Literacy Tips for Parents**



## SUGGESTED AGENDA

1. Introductions and Family Goals
2. Ground Rules
3. You are the Most Fascinating Person in the World
4. Culture and Family Treasures
5. Things to Try at Home

## INTRODUCTION AND LOGISTICS

## Building a Foundation: You Are the Most Fascinating Person in the World. A Kit for New Parents Workshop



**Show Slide 1 – Introduce yourself and talk a little bit about the program.**

Tell the group about child care arrangements, and encourage them to help themselves to refreshments.

**Hand out Kits to parents.**

**Narration:** *These sessions were designed to enrich and supplement the First 5 Kit for New Parents. This program is for parents who want to deepen their knowledge of **child development, learn communication and discipline strategies, enjoy their children more and help them get ready for school.** The Kit for New Parents helps parents do all of these things by providing easy-to-use information on parenting topics, and is designed for the entire family to use. Our workshops provide an opportunity for us to focus on some of the parenting issues discussed in the Kit, but in a deeper way and in a way that can help you problem-solve specific parenting challenges you may be facing.*



**Show Slide 2 – Kit for New Parents and explain Kit items:**

The Kit includes:

- **Advice for New Parents DVD** -- Experts and celebrities talk about newborn care, oral health, child care, safety and discipline. The DVD prepares parents for their child's early years.
- **Advice for New Parents Companion booklet** – information on all topics of child and health well-being organized by child's age for quick reference.
- **What to do When Your Child Gets Sick book** – easy-to-read advice for common childhood health questions.
- **Happy Baby children's book** (puppy and friends/touch, feel and say) – an interactive board book.
- Brochures and information on child health and other topics.
- **Poison Action Line & First 5 brochures** – information about First 5 California and what to do if you suspect your child has been exposed to something harmful.
- **Dental pouch**, including: 4 Spiffy Infant Dental Wipes, 1 child size toothbrush, and 1 timer (San Mateo County customized item).
- **Book pouch**, including: Children's Health Insurance Flyer, Community Information Guide for 2011, Potter the Otter Book, Activity Pamphlets, and 211 cards (San Mateo County customized item)



**Narration:** *These Kits are yours to keep. **Take them home with you and explore them** over the next few weeks. While some of the Kit items are focused more on newborns and toddlers, there is also information about preschool-age issues. **We will have a chance over the next several weeks to focus on some of these common challenges that parents of toddlers and preschoolers face,** and to dig into the issues that are most pressing for you. **Each of you brings to the group your own strengths, as well as parenting questions.** Each of you has children with different needs and temperaments. These meetings **offer all of us an opportunity to learn more about children and parenting from each other.** Generally, you will find that **the first few sessions build your children's social competence and cooperative behaviors,** while the second half is designed to decrease the behaviors you would like to see less of.*

(Point to the Parenting Pyramid here)

***Your discussions** will be a valuable part of the program to be sure we are talking about things that interest you. Most weeks, we will also **show some videos** of common parenting challenges and discuss them. We will also give you some ideas for things to try at home.*

Ask the group if they have any questions about the program.



**Show Slide 3 – Session Topics. Talk a little bit about the sessions and how they fit together.**

- 1. Building a Foundation -- You are the Most Fascinating Person in the World**
2. Play to Grow – Following Your Child's Lead
3. Avoiding Power Struggles – Promoting Positive Behavior
4. Positive Discipline – Managing Challenging Behavior with Love
5. Healthy Children, Healthy Families – Caring for Your Child and Yourself

**Narration:** *We will talk about the **importance of family and how it influences child development.** We will discuss **communication, play, discipline, and health and safety practices.** We will also talk about **you as a caregiver** – the strengths you have to pass down and how to take care of yourself so that you can take care of your children. **The topics we will discuss are flexible,** and will depend in part on the issues that you are struggling with as parents. We want to spend time discussing the issues that matter the most to you.*

*These workshops are for you, and we hope to meet your needs and answer your questions. **You will make the rules** so that you are comfortable. **You will share only as much as you wish** to share about your family, and everything is confidential.*



### Review Slide 4 – What’s Happening Today?

- Meet each other
- Goals and ground rules
- Learn a little about brain development and your role in children’s brain development
- Discuss family traditions and culture
- Home activities

***Narration: Today we will get to know each other and also talk about the importance of family and family culture. We are going to talk a little bit about how a young child learns and grows, and how their growth and development is intimately tied to their families and their home environment. We will discuss some of the many treasures you have to offer your children and why it is so essential to their growth and development. At the end of the session, we have some suggestions for things to try at home during this next week.***



### Optional Dyad Activity – Warm-Up -Talk about your day.

5 minutes - Dyads or Triads

It is important to acknowledge that adults have many concerns and pressures on their time. They might be coming to the sessions in the evening after work. They might have engaged a babysitter or coordinated with their partner to be there. In other words, they most likely have made some sacrifices or moved around other commitments in order to be present at the session.

The parents and caregivers present in the room will feel that their needs are respected if you use the following activity. This activity also sets the stage for participants to feel comfortable expressing themselves and be active participants in the session. Another goal of this activity is to illustrate how communicating with other humans relieves stress.

***Narration: As parents of young children, I know that you are all very busy. You might have come from work; you might have had trouble getting a babysitter. Perhaps one of your children was crying and didn’t want you to go. Maybe you feel tired, hungry, stressed or angry. Maybe you are nervous about what is going to be required of you in these sessions. Maybe you are just happy to be out of the house. In any case, let’s just take a minute to turn to your neighbor. Introduce yourself. Tell them one thing about your day. It can be something stressful that happened, a worry or concern, or maybe a story about something lovely that happened.***

(Give participants some time to tell each other their stories, walking around the room to give them access to you, helping them pair up.)

*Okay, thank you everyone! So how do you feel now? Different than when you walked in? Would anyone like to share their story?*

After allowing some time for sharing, bring the group back to the session topics. Explain that sometimes just talking to someone can relieve stress.



### Group Activity – Introductions and Family Goals

**Narration:** *Let's go around the room and introduce ourselves. Tell us a little bit about your family and why you are here. That way we can tailor the session to your needs as much as possible. If you don't wish to share, that's alright too, you always have the option to pass.*



#### Materials Needed:

- ☐ **Handout 1 – Family Goals Worksheet**
- ☐ Chart paper and pens

Using chart paper, the co-facilitator should write the participants' names, children's names and ages and a goal that they have for their family – the reason that they are here. Tape the sheets on the wall and keep these sheets for reference in future sessions. This takes some time, but it is worth it. Participants will feel part of the group if they have a chance to share a little about their family situation. Hearing family goals also helps set the direction of the group and aides you as a facilitator in tailoring the workshops to their particular needs.



### Group Activity – Group Agreements

**Narration:** *Now, for the comfort of the group, we will take a few moments to **come up with some group agreements**. The purpose of this is to create an environment in which everyone is comfortable, feels respected and knows what to expect. We will keep these agreements and post them at each session to remind ourselves about them. It is also possible to amend or add to the agreements in future sessions.*



#### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Chart paper and pens

If the group wants some suggestions for group rules, mention a few examples such as starting on time, putting cell phones on vibrate, creating a safe place to share thoughts, not judging one another, and ending on time.

Using markers and paper, the co-facilitator should write down the group agreements. Keep it as simple and short as possible, combining similar statements.

## YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON



## Reflective Activity – Remember a Relationship



## Show Slide 5 – Relationship Activity

1. Think of someone who was really special to you when you were growing up.
2. What made you think of this person?
3. What did they do that made them important or special to you?  
Think of some specific memories.
4. Share.



## Materials Needed:

- ☐ **Handout 2 – Remember a Relationship Worksheet**

This activity is both reflective and expressive. First the participants individually think and write. Afterwards, they can share with a partner or with the whole group, depending on the size of the group.

***Narration: Think about someone who was really important to you when you were growing up. Examples might include your mom, dad, a friend, grandmother, teacher, or maybe even a sister or brother, aunt or uncle.***

*Write this person's name on your worksheet. What made you think of this person? What did this person "do" that made you feel special? (If you don't have someone like this from your childhood, think of someone who plays this role for you right now).*

(If group needs examples, you can mention some of the following: always took the time to listen to me, always loved me regardless of what I had done, took me on special outings, always made me feel like I was really important and special, etc.)



## Dyad Activity - Remember a Relationship

## Share with a partner

- *How you felt*
- *How old you were*
- *Where you were*

Sometimes this exercise causes participants to feel a little emotional. Allow time for processing if needed – pass out tissues if needed! After participants have share about their special person with a partner, ask for volunteers to share out to the group.

**Narration:** You can see, by what this special person meant to you and how they have impacted your life to this day, **how important adult relationships are to young children.** Can you also see why **you are the most fascinating person** in the world to your child?



Show Slide 6 “Every child needs one person who is crazy about him.”

**Narration:** We can see **how important it is for every child to have someone who is crazy about him/her!** Children need a person to always count on, just like the special person in your life that we just talked about.

With this in mind, let’s examine why relationships and feeling loved are so important to your child’s development.



Show slide 7- Children learn and grow through relationship and play

The more responsive, loving attention children receive from caregivers ....

...the more kind and compassionate they will be

...the more they will enjoy their lives, and the better they will do at work and school.

**Narration:** In the first few years of life, children’s brains are developing and building connections more quickly than at any other time. Since young children’s brains are developing so quickly, they are more sensitive to their environment and to experiences. In addition to developing quickly, the brain also develops in a particular sequence, starting with the more primitive areas and moving toward more complex areas. The brains of preschool children are working hard on the emotional and social structures of the brain – this is why relationships and their “emotional environment” are so crucial and influential. **Experience and environment literally builds the framework of a young child’s brain- influencing their intelligence, compassion and social skills.**

**Children’s brains grow in response to their environment. And their environment is YOU.** For children, **actions speak louder than words.** Getting down on the ground and spending time with your children tells them that you are crazy about them, in a way that words can’t.





### Show slide 8 – The Brain Develops in Response to the Environment

***What happens on the outside builds children’s brain structures on the inside.*** To illustrate this, let’s look at something severe – neglect. Some of what science knows about brain development in young children comes, unfortunately, from stories of neglect. These pictures on top show the brain of a child who had been placed in an orphanage right after birth and was severely neglected. The pictures on the bottom show the brain of a child who has not been neglected. The red areas show brain activity. You can see that in the case of the neglected child, the brain is significantly less active than the brain of a child who has not been neglected. ***The amount of positive, quality time we spend with our children helps their brains grow.*** By the same token, relationships that are mostly negative, harsh, neglectful or punitive actually hinder the brain’s growth and development.

After the first few years, the brain begins a pruning process to gain efficiency. The connections and pathways that are not used as much as others are eliminated. ***We have a choice. We can literally choose how to wire our children’s brains. Which connections do we want to strengthen?***

Let’s look at how we can build our children’s brains through a fun activity. Let’s build a brain.



### Group Activity – Make a Brain

This activity helps demonstrate the connection between early brain development and relationships.

#### Part 1 – Building a Brain

Gather participants in a circle, up to 15 or so people.

As you hold the ball of yarn, explain that we are going to demonstrate a growing brain through the use of a ball of yarn.

Start by telling participants “We are each going to describe something we like to do with our young children.” Start the web by describing an activity you would do with a child, e.g. “I like to pick berries with my child”, hold a piece of the yarn and throw the ball to someone across from you after calling the person’s name. Participants repeat this until everyone has had a chance and the ball comes back to you.



#### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Ball of Yarn or String

**What to say:**

Explain how the string represents pathways in the brain.

*By doing these activities with our children, we are actually helping to build pathways and develop their brains.*

*“Connections on the outside build structures on the inside.” It is by building connections between your child and other adults, and by engaging in interactive activities with your child that you are building your child’s brain.*

Now ask participants to think about supportive relationships they have with other people. Have them think of special relationships with friends, sibling, parents, etc. They should throw the ball again, this time mentioning a special relationship that they have. Explain how when their “web” is strengthened, their child’s is as well.

**Part 2 - Repetition**

Now you are going to demonstrate how repeating an activity thickens and strengthens the connections you have made.

Pick out one of the participants who is a reasonable distance away. Ask him/her what she likes doing with her child. She may say, for example “play catch.” Ask her how often she plays catch. *“Did you play yesterday; will you play today?”* Throw the ball of yarn back and forth, while holding on to the string, showing how repeating the activity builds the connections thicker and stronger

**Part 3 - Losing Pathways**

Now ask the group what they think happens when they stop doing a particular activity with their child, or a particularly nurturing activity with another adult.

Demonstrate, through your volunteer, and then with the whole group, what happens when you stop an activity. As we drop our pieces of yarn, the whole structure comes apart. This shows how brain pathways disintegrate or lose strength over time.

End the activity by saying, *“When we start doing those activities again, we build up and strengthen pathways. We can continue to build the brain.”* Pick up the yarn again, and end with a strong web!

Ask the group what they thought of this experience.

## CULTURE AND FAMILY TREASURES



## Group Activity – Family Treasures

The goal of this activity is for participants to realize how much cultural knowledge or “family treasure” they *already* have. We want them to get excited about *who* they are and the uniqueness of their role. We want participants to feel that they are important, that where they came from is important, and that what they have to give is important. We go through our lives, and everything seems ordinary, but if we think for a moment about the lives our grandmothers and grandfathers had, we begin to realize how fast culture and society changes, and how unique this moment in history is.



## Show Slide 9 – Handing Down Family Treasures

What did your grandparents do that you want your child to know about?

What are the most important cultural traditions of your family?



## Materials Needed:

- ☐ **Handout 3 -- Family Treasures Worksheet**

***Narration:*** As parents, ***you have many treasures to offer your children.*** Sometimes we think we have to use outside resources (e.g., the best school, the best toys, the nicest house) to give our children the best learning opportunities, but ***we already have so much to offer them through our own family histories and cultures.*** These treasures are the foundation of your relationship with them, and help strengthen their brain pathways and development. When you think of treasure, what do you think of?

(Allow time for responses.)

*A treasure is a prized possession. A treasure may or may not be valuable to anyone else. Treasure also means something else: it means to hold dear or to value, much like you value your own children.*

*I would like you to take a moment to **think about your own rich family history and culture.** Let's brainstorm some ideas of **things we can pass on from our family and friends** to the children we care for.*

Record responses on chart paper. Here are some prompts and examples if you need them:

**Family History** - Family tree, photos, memoirs, stories, letters, diary, bible, prayer cards

**Cooking** - Recipes, plates, old pots, dishware

**Music** - Sheet music, records, tapes, musical instruments, songs

**Weddings and special events**- memorabilia, pressed flowers, veil, invitation

**Military** - uniforms, awards, medals, records, letters

**Sports** - favorite sports, active sports, favorite teams, team memorabilia

**Cars** – photos, keys, car repair tools

**Travel** – favorite places, photos, stories

**Collections** - coins, stamps, buttons, rocks, ribbons

**Gardening** - plants, seeds, gardening tools, flower pots, vases

**Handcrafts and skills**- Yarn, knitting needles, crochet hooks, sewing kit, thread, fabric scraps, pocket knife, compass, slide rule, scissors, and tools



### Reflective Activity

**Narration:** Now, using the worksheet provided, list three items, activities or stories you have that represent your family history or interests that you would like to share with your children.



### Dyad Activity

**Narration:** Tell your neighbor a story about one of these items or activities that were passed down to you.

After participants have had time to share with each other, **ask for volunteers to share out with the group.**

This activity helps participants focus on the skills, abilities and knowledge that they ALREADY have to share with their children. Sometimes it can take a bit of encouragement for a caregiver to recognize that they have many treasures to offer their children.

**Narration:** I hope you can already see from this workshop how important you are to your children. **In your back and forth conversations with your children, you are shaping their brains, their thinking, their capacity to love, their abilities, and ultimately, culture itself.** Through conversation, children learn to pay attention, think, and imagine. **Rich back and forth conversations with your children help them to think and organize their thoughts.** Organized thoughts lead later to good writing.

Home language and culture is very important. **Embrace cultural traditions and talk to your child about what you are doing. Learning lots of words (vocabulary) in their home language helps them to more easily learn a second language.** It also helps them understand what they read later on in school. You can teach your child a lot about language and culture **just by talking about what you are doing as you go through your day.**

Language shapes thinking, language shapes culture, and language shapes brains. Language creates a world view.

**Children need to talk as well as listen.** Talking helps a child think and organize their thoughts. Organized thoughts lead later to good writing. Through conversation, children learn to pay attention, think, and imagine.

**Too much television hurts children's ability to learn.** Television also reduces the amount of household conversations. In general, more overall household noise leads to less conversation between children and their caregivers. Try to limit TV to an hour or less a day, and never more than 2 hours a day.

**Reading to your child is one way to share interactive language experiences and to promote their interest and desire to become lifelong readers.** Children who are read to have a much easier time focusing in school, regulating their emotions, and learning to read.



### Role Play Activity - Read Aloud

Sharing books with pictures is a very effective way to help parents understand that they can enjoy books, even if they don't know how to read in the language of that particular book.

**Narrative.** I want to show you how easy it is to share books with your children. Some of you may share books every day with your children. Some of you may find that it is a difficult task, and that your child won't listen or sit still. You may be concerned about this. Or maybe you're concerned that you don't read well or that you don't read well in English. **The following activity will show you how easy it is to share books with your children.** Your children need to be close to you and hear your voice; they don't care about much else.



#### Materials Needed:

- ☐ The Happy Baby/Puppy and Friends touch and feel book from the Kit for New Parent or some other children's picture book
- ☐ **Handout 8 – Reading & Early Literacy Tips for Parents – Take Home Tips** (for reference)
- ☐ **Handout 3 -- Family Treasures Worksheet**

**Read Aloud Role Play Activity Directions**

Model how to share a wordless book with a group of parents. You, as a facilitator, can take on the role of “parent” and you can assign some of the parent participants to play the “children.” Instruct the ‘children’ that they should become frustrated and uninterested in the book as you are reading.

1. **First model reading non-interactively, or didactically.** Do not introduce yourself to your “children”. Read through the book with little expression and do not linger on the pictures. This will mimic how some teachers and parents really do share books with children and should amuse the participants and the observers. Watch the “children” misbehave and become frustrated.
2. **Then model interactive reading. Be as interactive as possible.** Warm up the “children” by talking to them and asking them their names. Show them the cover of the book and ask them what they see. Encourage personal stories and anecdotes. If a child wants to tell a story, let her. Do not be in a hurry to finish the book, or even try to finish. It is fine to just talk about the cover. The point is to just share the book, focusing on the pictures. See additional tips below.
3. **Ask the volunteers and the group for feedback after each modeling exercise.** The “children” are usually better behaved and happier when read to interactively. The point you are trying to make with this exercise is that there is no one right way to read a book and that parents can relax and have fun with sharing books, rather than worrying too much about getting through the entire book or making sure every word is read.
4. **Now have participants get into pairs and make sure each pair has a book. Instruct the pairs to role play a parent and child.** The “parent” practices telling the story by “reading” the pictures to the “child.” They can either switch roles after a few minutes, or take turns reading to each other on every other page.
5. **Get feedback from the group and discuss the benefits of building children’s vocabularies, of bonding, etc.** Find out if they remember reading with their parents as children. This is a great opportunity for you to learn more about the parents with whom you work.

**Tips for Interactive Book Sharing**

- **Predict Events** – Ask children what they think will happen next (This stimulates problem solving and generates conversations).
- **Extend vocabulary** – Explain the meanings of words.
- **Clarify concepts** – Explore the context behind the words, how things work, etc.
- **Praise children** – Establish comfort, encourage children to respond.
- **Develop story structure** – Talk about what is happening in the story. Don’t assume they understand everything that is going on.
- **Expand ideas** – Ask “why” questions or “what is happening here?”
- **Share experiences** – Encourage children to share their own related experiences.
- **Point out text features** – “Boom, Boom” (the capital letters emphasize the sound, etc.)
- **Connect print to the story** – “We still have words to read on this page.”



### Reflective Activity – Filling your treasure chests



### Show Slide 10 – Activity – Filling Your Treasure Chests



#### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Handout 4 – Filling Your Treasure Chests Worksheet

**Narration:** *It is hard to give children everything they need if your own treasure chest is empty. **How can you use your own skills, interests, passions, and your family's rich traditions to fill your children's treasure chest this week?** What can you share together? Some examples might be showing them family pictures, reading a favorite book of yours from childhood, teaching a song that you learned. You can use some of the examples you wrote for yourself in our earlier exercise.*

Using **Handout 4: Filling Your Treasure Chests Worksheet**, list answers to this question –

**What are the simple things you can do this week to fill your child's treasure chest?**

*It is hard to give a child everything he needs if your own treasure chests are empty. **What is one thing that fulfills you and makes you happy?** It can be as simple as knitting, playing soccer, reading a book, working in a picture album, talking to a friend, or listening to music. Focus on activities that do not cost money. **List one thing you can do to fill your own treasure chests this week.***



### Brainstorm Activity – Benefits & Barriers – Spending Time with your Child

**Narration:** *We've talked about **how our relationships** and the environment we create for our children **impact their brain development**. We have also seen how we can draw from our rich family backgrounds, traditions and values to enrich these relationships and by extension our children's development. **Let's take a moment to talk about the reality of spending time with our children. Sometimes we want to spend time with our children and sometimes we don't. Sometimes we don't know how to spend positive time with our children because of behavior challenges. Let's think together about the barriers we face and then take a look at the benefits of spending time with our children.***



#### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Chart paper, pens
- ☐ Handout 6 – Spending Time with Your Child

Ask the group to brainstorm what they think the benefits and barriers to spending time with their children might be. Use chart paper – mark **Benefits** on one side and **Barriers** on the other. Write parents' responses underneath.

The co-facilitator should chart parent comments, highlighting key principles that emerge. If a parent comes up with a particularly salient point, turn that point into a principle (for example, "Mary's Principle of XX") and reward that parent with a sticker or some other form of concrete validation (this is also modeling rewards systems, which we will talk about how to use with young children in a subsequent workshop) (for more information on how to facilitate Benefits & Barriers activities, and how to use participant ideas as the basis for generating parenting principles, see the Facilitators' Guide).

**Benefits might include (examples):**

- Child enjoys it, makes him happy
- Increases creativity
- Builds positive relationships
- Teaches new skills
- Shows child how to use social skills and interact with others
- Child learns how to problem solve

- Caregivers enjoy it

**Barriers might include (examples):**

- Not enough time
- More than one child, sibling gets jealous
- Caregiver is too tired after work to play
- Too many chores
- Spending time with their child has been more of a struggle than fun

Show compassion for and understanding of the real barriers that participants face. Caring for young children is stressful. Explain to participants that while these obstacles are very real, we can problem solve together and figure out how to make playing with children a priority. The benefits of spending time with children far outweigh the barriers!

**Discuss the list. Ask parents – What insights do you think this list reveals?**

***Narration:*** Research tells us that **children develop best by spending time with their caregivers, especially when this time involves rich conversations.** The conversations children have while they spend time with you help shape and organize their thinking and world view. And the best part is that you can do this anytime, anywhere, as part of your everyday life. Their fondest memories will be simple, uninterrupted, one-on-one time with you.

***Sometimes it is hard to know how to spend time with children, or what to do.*** Children are naturally busy people who are interested in everything around them. As mentioned previously, it is important to **limit time with TV, computers and smartphones; turn them off when possible, and let children's natural curiosity run wild.** Children don't need fancy toys to have fascinating play. **Children who have ample opportunities for free, unstructured play will have vivid imaginations and will turn ordinary household objects into props for their pretend play experiences.**



Refer to **Handout 6 – Spending Time with Your Child**. Review the handout by discussing the points below and elaborating on key ideas:

### Tips for things to do with your children

If you're wondering what to do with your child, here are some easy ideas:

- Read a book
- Play with your child using her favorite toys
- Involve your child in cooking your next meal
- Play a game (hide and seek, cards, tag, I spy, etc.)
- Ask your child to help you with a household chore (washing dishes, folding laundry, setting the table)

### Tips for spending time with your children

- Establish a routine. Pick a time every day where you can spend 10 minutes or so with your child
- Turn TVs, cell phones, computers, etc. off
- Follow your child's lead – notice what she is interested in
- Listen carefully to your child and give her time to reply
- "Narrate" your child's activities. Mention what you notice. For example: "I see you are putting the red block on top of the blue block. Now our tower is taller". Don't ask too many questions.
- Praise your children. Be specific about what you like about what they are doing. Avoid competitive games.

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

If you have a participant or participants who are sincerely distressed over a perceived obstacle to spending time with their children, consider taking the time to brainstorm with the group ways in which to overcome the obstacle. Encourage participants to find ways to get together with other caregivers for group play times to ease stress and increase fun.

## WRAP-UP AND THINGS TO TRY AT HOME



### Try it at Home Activities



### Show Slide 11- Things to Try at Home

- Spend time with your child (use the Filling Your Treasure Chest Worksheet)
- Read "Tips for Spending Time with Your Child"
- Read "What is So Important about Play?"



### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Handout 4 --Filling Your Treasure Chests
- ☐ Handout 5 -- Observe Your Child at Play
- ☐ Handout 6 – Spending Time with Your Child
- ☐ Handout 7 – What is So Important about Play?
- ☐ Handout 8 – Reading & Early Literacy Tips for Parents

**Narration:** *It takes time and practice to learn new skills. We have talked about some of the challenges in our busy and stressful lives to spending time with our children. But we have also seen how children thrive on this attention, and how it actually builds and strengthens their development as compassionate and intelligent young people. **At home this coming week, let's try to spend time with our children every day – somewhere between 5 and 15 minutes or whatever time allows. Turn off the phone, the television and computer and just sit with your children.** Listen, talk and share some of the activities that you wrote down earlier. The goal is to build a solid foundation with our kids. Over the course of our time together, we will see that **creating this foundation will make it easier to deal with other challenges down the line**, such as behavior problems.*

Look at **Handout 4 – Filling Your Treasure Chests**. You already completed some information on the left-hand columns. **Use the right hand column to record what you try and how it goes.** We also want you to do something for yourselves this week and record how it goes. This worksheet will give you an opportunity to reflect each day on how your children responded to special time with you and how the experience felt. If you would like more copies of this worksheet, let us know.

Ask participants to look at the **Handout 5 – Observe Your Child at Play** and suggest that they set aside 10-15 minutes to simply watch their child(ren) and take notes.

*This is an opportunity to be a detective and really notice what your child does. You can notice your child's strengths and areas of challenge. We will talk more about play next week and behavior challenges over the coming weeks.*

Go over the following three handouts without reading them outright, as time allows. Tell parents that **they might want to post these on their refrigerator** or some other place for easy viewing. These handouts give parents some **concrete tips** on spending time with their children and some background information on the importance of play.

**Handout 6 – Spending Time with Your Child (Take Home Tips)**

**Handout 7 – What is So Important about Play? (Take Home Tips)**

**Handout 8 – Reading & Early Literacy Tips for Parents (Take Home Tips)**

*Before you leave, please take a minute or two to complete our **Evaluation Form** for this session. Please give us honest feedback – the good and the bad! We want to make sure to make adjustments if something is not working.*

*Next week, we will discuss the home activities and how your week went, and will talk more about communication as we explore fun ways to play with your children. **Please bring today's handouts back the next session**, so we can review them. Have a great week, and we look forward to seeing you next week!*

When packing up materials for the day, please remember to save chart paper recordings to bring back to the next session. You should keep chart paper recordings of important activities, such as group agreements, family goals, and brainstorms that led to important parenting principles. You will refer back to these recordings in subsequent sessions.

**OPTIONAL**

**Buddy Calls.** Assign buddies for buddy calls. Participants can choose their own buddy if they've developed a friendship during the first session, or the facilitator can try to determine which parents would be good partners. Ask them to exchange phone numbers and give each other a call during the week to check-in about the "Try it at Home" activities.

**Facilitator Check-in Calls.** Tell participants that one of the facilitators will give them a call to check in during the week and to see how they are doing in general, and with the "Try it at Home" activities

(For more information on Buddy Calls and Facilitator Check-in Calls, please see the Facilitators' Guide)