

# Positive Discipline Manual



Vuli Taumada Shishak Project



Save the Children  
Fiji



NEW ZEALAND  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
Aid Programme



Save the Children  
New Zealand

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Positive Discipline Manual was adapted by child rights experts with extensive experience in healthy discipline methods along with support from teachers, communities, government and children. The inclusion of contributions from community level, government, teachers and parents ensures it has been developed for effective use at community level. This manual builds on the already extensive work Save the Children Fiji has done across Positive Discipline in Fiji and provides easy-to-understand tools for communities into the future.

We would like to thank everyone that has been involved in this evidence-based process for their technical advice, analysis and expertise that really ensures the validity of these materials at community level.

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**We deliver  
immediate and  
lasting change  
in the lives of  
children in Fiji.**



**Save the Children**  
Fiji

# FOREWORD

The experiences of children in their early years shape their thinking, capacity to learn and socialise, and their response to daily challenges and stresses. It sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health habits. This Vuli Taumada Shishak Educational Toolkit is a complimentary resource that is designed to empower teachers, parents, communities and children to raise the standards of safety, health, nutrition, healthy discipline and childhood education for young children living in underserved communities.

**This toolkit is made up of an overarching teacher's guideline, *Safe and Healthy Start, Grow Smart* that is supported by manuals and innovative educational resources that compliments the national curriculum for Early Childhood Education the *Na Noda Mataniciva (NNM)*, but addresses indicators and outcomes that are indispensable for the holistic development in young children. These manuals and guideline are the result of a culmination of activities in the Vuli Taumada Shishak (VTS) project, which focuses on enhancing the quality of early childhood education programmes in community-managed centres.**

The guidelines and manual outline early childhood development and its implications for teachers, parents, communities and children whilst outlining success stories and challenges that many communities are able to achieve success from in regards to Early Childhood Education. This toolkit takes a rights-based approach to supporting young children's educational outcome no matter their living situation or community whilst drawing on the Fiji Islands National Curriculum Frameworks and Global Perspectives of the Child.

Save the Children Fiji would like to acknowledge the contribution and participation of all stakeholders, including the Ministries of Education and Health and communities that have been integral in making this toolkit a reality. These resources encapsulate the basic building blocks that are essential for holistic learning, growth and development of young children with a dedicated focus to understanding and applying our own rich and diverse culture and environment within this.

So, it is with great pleasure that Save the Children Fiji present ***the Early Childhood Educational Toolkit*** for a quality and holistic approach to children's education.

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**Raijeli Nicole**

Chief Executive Officer, Save the Children Fiji



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# VISION

**Our Vision** is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

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# MISSION

**Our Mission** is to stimulate breakthroughs in the way the world values children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

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# GOAL

**Our Goal** is to achieve these by strengthening key partnerships so all children, especially those from marginalised and disadvantaged communities, benefit from greater public commitment and better use of society's resources.

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# VALUES

Accountability ● Ambition ● Collaboration  
● Creativity ● Integrity



**Save the Children**  
Fiji

# HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual was designed as part of a Save the Children Fiji Educational Toolkit for communities, teachers, children and parents at kindergarten level. It can be used on its own or in conjunction with the broader toolkit designed as part of the Vuli Taumada Shishak Project.

The Toolkit consists of the below manuals and materials and can be accessed online or directly through Save the Children Fiji.

1. ***Safe and Healthy Start, Grow Smart Guideline*** – this guideline is designed to be a supporting document to the curriculum for early childhood education in Fiji. It gives support by helping teachers create indicators of success markers for children along with relevant tips from community teachers across the country.
2. ***Teachers Manual*** – a supportive manual for teachers or aspiring teachers in community settings with step-by-step instructions how what needs to be done to become a registered teacher in Fiji along with tips on best practice teaching methods from Fiji.
3. ***Operation Guideline*** – support manual for Community Education Committees that are interested in understanding best practice examples of how to manage a community kindergarten or establish a new one.
4. ***Community Manual*** - best practice examples and an understanding of the challenges and success that communities face when they make kindergarten education a priority. This tool can be used for learning and understanding the best way to approach community kindergartens.
5. ***Positive Discipline Manual*** – detailed, easy to understand explanation of why positive discipline methods are beneficial both in the classroom and at home with tools to implement this in communities.
6. ***Supporting materials*** – games, stickers, information posters for communities, teachers, parents and children to engage with the best practice learnings and important messages from the Vuli Taumada Shishak project.

## Where to access these manuals

If you only have one or some of the manuals you can access all of the materials on Save the Children Fiji's website.

Visit [www.savethechildren.org.fj](http://www.savethechildren.org.fj) and find them under EDUCATION RESOURCES.

For more information email [info@savethechildren.org.fj](mailto:info@savethechildren.org.fj) or call 3313178.

Vuli Taumada Shishak Project

# Positive Discipline Manual



# WHO IS THIS MANUAL FOR?

This manual assists parents to respond to children's behavior and feelings in a positive, kind and loving way by providing information and tools to positively teach our children while respecting the child.

## Objective of the manual

- To guide parents, teachers, school managements and community in managing the best way to discipline children in a healthy manner
- To outline some strategies to assist teachers, parents and the community in disciplining children

Parenting can be an exhausting journey and one of the most challenging jobs but it brings a lot of joy at the same time. The challenge of guiding a child into adulthood and ensuring they are equipped with the skills needed for a happy and successful life lies heavily on the parents and the way they choose to raise their children.

It can be both joyful and frustrating. The challenge is big in terms of taking a new human being and guiding her or him towards adulthood and teaching skills needed to have a happy, successful life.

We learn about parenting from our parents – the good and the bad. Sometimes we make decisions to do our parenting differently, and sometimes we follow what our parents did. Most of us are not taught different ways to parent our children and we make lots of mistakes along the way. This manual provides you with an opportunity to learn different skills to those your parents may have used.

Can you think of two "good" and two "bad" parenting strategies that your parents used when you were a child? The "good" would have made you feel happy and loved and safe. The "bad" would have left you feeling hurt, ashamed, or fearful. Write them below.

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Children are vulnerable and are special individuals who can sometimes suffer from poverty, homelessness, abuse, neglect, preventable diseases and unequal access to education. Because children are small and vulnerable they depend on adults to protect them and keep them safe from harm. It is the parent's job to make sure their children are safe and protected. As the child grows and develops their own skills we as parents hand over more and more responsibility to the growing child.

# UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

## ACTIVITY

This is an international law agreed upon and adopted by the United Nations in 1989 that states the basic human rights for children around the world. There are 54 rights referred to as “articles”. Nearly every country in the world has agreed to these rights and pledged to make sure they are met through the law.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children should be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse (Article 19).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that government and everyone in society must do all it can to protect children from unfair, unjust and harmful treatment. The Fiji Government has signed this Convention (an agreement between countries which is then put into the law of that country).

**?** Can you think of any laws in Fiji that might have been put into legislation because of the UNCRC?

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# Report on Violence against Children

The 2006 World Report on Violence Against Children (United Nations, 2006) led to the first creation of a positive discipline manual which has since been translated into many languages and applied in different cultural contexts.

The study found that maltreatment in various forms of violence occurs in some children's homes in every country around the world and is often based in long held beliefs about how children learn, as well as a lack of awareness of children's rights. These rights afforded to children within the UNCRC and as human beings in society outlines what children need to survive, thrive, develop and grow into healthy and happy adults.

## Background

Save the Children Fiji (SCF) is a non-government organisation which has been in Fiji since 1972. It's the only rights-based non-government organization solely focused on children in the country. SCF is a member of the Save the Children International (SCI) which has 29 member organisations working in over 120 countries around the world. SCI's primary role is to create a better world for children, to stimulate breakthroughs in the way the world values children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. It is the parent's job to make sure their children are safe and protected. As the child grows and develops their own skills, we as parents hand over more and more responsibility to children.

Who is a child?  
Any person  
below the age  
of eighteen  
years of age.



# WHAT ARE CHILD RIGHTS?

## ACTIVITY

Child rights are human rights with particular focus placed on protection and care of anyone under the age of 18. The rights of children can be summarised into four categories:

- Right to survive
- Right to development
- Right to participate
- Right to be protected

**Let's think about these four "rights" – things children need?**



**What children need to survive?**

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**What do children need to develop, to grow strong and healthy?**

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**What should children be allowed to participate/ take part in?**

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**How should parents (and other adults) keep children protected and safe from harm?**

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# Punishment is not discipline.

Punishment is the negative hurtful things we do or say to children. Punishment can discourage children, make them fearful, erode their self confidence. Using punishment as a form of disciplining children can be harmful and cause children to dislike or hate learning. It can leave children feeling unsafe and unprotected.

Physical punishment and humiliation can leave lasting scars on children and impact on their development into adulthood. Punishment can also lead to children acting violently and carrying the violence through to the next generation of children.

We need to think about what we want to teach our children in the long term. If we want to teach them how to be non-violent then we must show them how to be non-violent. Hitting, slapping, pinching, pulling hair is not the way to teach non-violence.

Discipline is the positive way we encourage and teach children what is expected of them. Discipline requires parents and teachers to model the behaviour they want their children to learn. If we want children to behave then we must behave ourselves. If we want children to speak respectfully then we must also speak respectfully.

Discipline comes from the word "disciple". A disciple is a follower and that is what we want our children to do – to follow our good behaviour.

## **Positive Discipline is NOT**

- letting children do whatever they want
- having no rules
- quick reactions to situations
- punishment including hitting and shouting

## **Positive Discipline is**

- helping children develop self-control over time
- communicating clearly
- respecting children and earning their respect
- teaching children how to make good decisions
- building children's skills and confidence
- teaching children respect for other people's feelings

We need to think about what we want to teach our children in the long term. If we want to teach them how to be non-violent then we must show them how to be non-violent.

# CHILDREN ARE RIGHTS HOLDERS

The United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides children with the right to life, health, education, participation and a meaningfully engaged life.

- The UNCRC establishes that adults have a duty to provide for and protect children
- Children can claim their own rights
- Rights come with responsibilities and as a child develops, the more responsible they should become with their decisions and choices.



The Convention recognises that parents have the primary role in bringing up their children. Parents are children's most important teachers, role models and guides.

But parents are not their children's owners. Human rights principles guarantee that no person may be the property of another.

The Convention states that all children have the right to survival and full development of their potential. This means:

- adequate food, shelter and clean water
- education
- health care
- leisure and recreation
- cultural activities
- information about their rights
- dignity



It doesn't matter how old the child is these rights should be met.



**Let's think about a two year old. How would a parent meet the first five rights?**

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**And how would a parent meet all of these rights for a six year old?**

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**Teenagers have different needs. How would a parent meet these needs/ rights?**

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# What is Violence against Children?



## Definition

*Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.*

## 5 types of common abuse against children:

- **Physical** – actual or potential physical harm
- **Sexual** – involvement of child in sexual activity
- **Emotional** – failure to provide supportive environment and/or actions that harm development
- **Neglect** - chronic inattention to a child's needs/ rights
- **Exploitation** - trafficking, sex trade, child labour, drug smuggling, child soldiers, sex for food

**ACTIVITY**



**Can you think of one example for each of these five categories?**

*(You may have read something in the paper or watched it on TV.)*

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## What is Child Protection?

- A broad term to describe activities, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.
- In this manual it applies particularly to the duty of parents, communities and individuals associated with those communities, towards children in their care.

Child Protection  
is everyone's  
responsibility



# WHAT IS POSITIVE DISCIPLINE?

**Positive discipline is non-violent and is respectful of the child. It is an approach to teaching that helps children succeed, gives them information, and supports their growth.**

Positive discipline is based on children's rights to healthy development, protection from violence and participation in their learning and environment.

Positive discipline is a tool for parents, caregivers, teachers and community members to use to assist them in managing children's behavior without abusing them emotionally, physically, socially, mentally or spiritually. The way children learn and develop differs, because no two children are the same. Children grow and develop patterns but at their own individual pace. There are set ages and stages for child development.

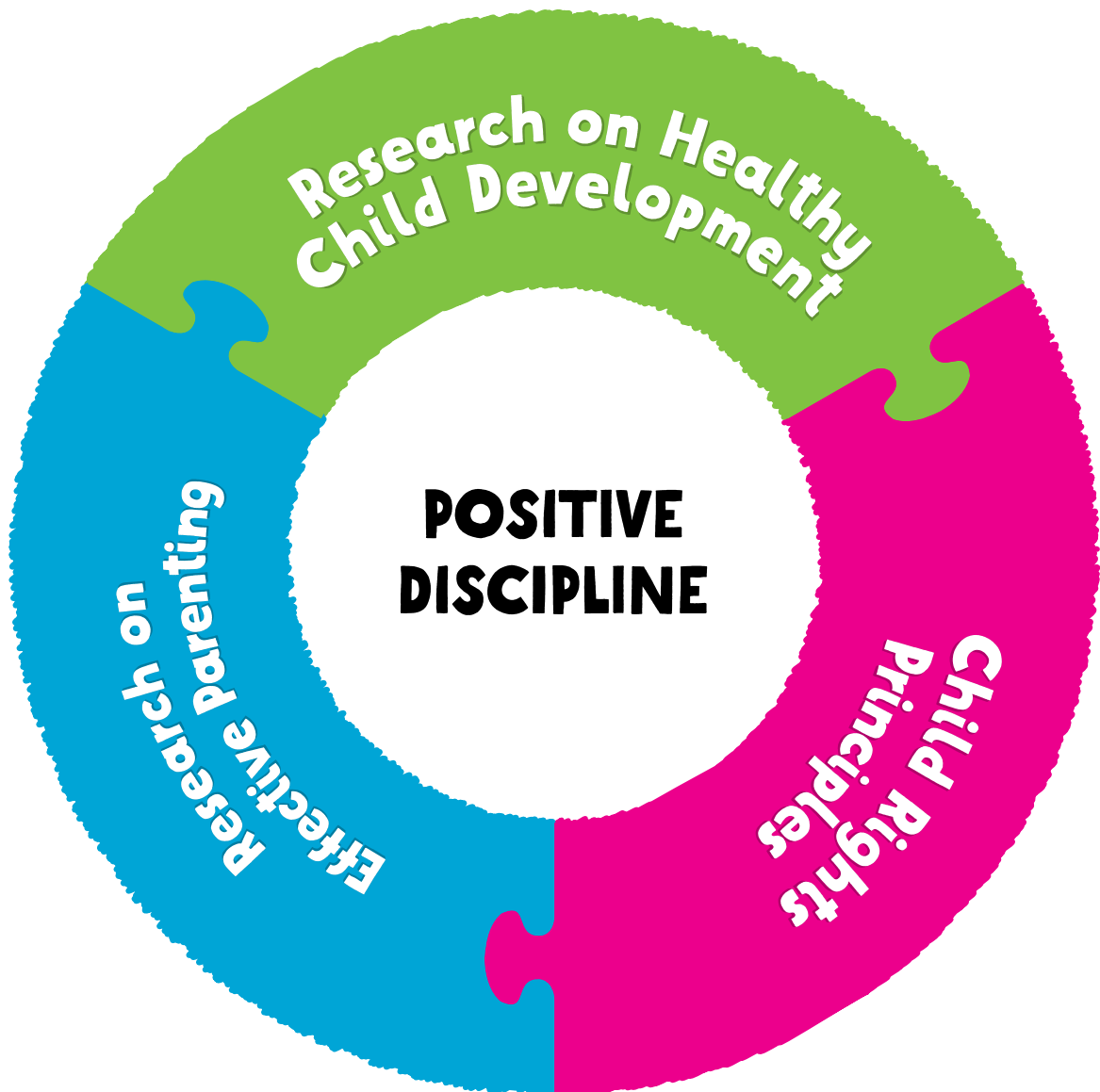
Recent research tells us that children are "hardwired" from birth to connect with others, and that children who feel a sense of connection to their community, family, and school are less likely to misbehave. The first connection is with their parents and this is called "attachment." Through this first connection children learn about their environment. To be successful, contributing members of their community, children must learn necessary social and life skills. Positive discipline is based on the understanding that discipline must be taught and that discipline teaches.

Positive discipline is about long-term solutions that develop a child's own self discipline

- Children grow and develop at their own pace in line with indicators at particular ages for different stages of life
- Building a mutually respectful relationship with your child
- Teaching your child life-long skills
- Increasing your child's competency and confidence to handle challenging situations
- Teaching courtesy, non violence, empathy, self respect, human rights and respect for others

Positive discipline brings together:

1. What we know about children's healthy development
2. Findings of research on effective parenting and teaching
3. Child Rights Principles



Parenting is not a destination, but a journey.  
For any journey, we need to be prepared.

# How the manual is organised?

The manual is organised according to a sequence of steps and each step builds on the ones before it.

## Step 1: What are the building blocks of Positive Discipline?

### Building Blocks of Positive Discipline

1. Think of your child in the years to come and how you would like them to be in the long-term. What values, beliefs, morals would you like them to have?
2. Look at them now (short-term)

## Step 2: How do we use these long-term goals?

### To achieve our long-term goal we take “little steps”

1. We provide warmth (support) and structure (information)
2. We need to understand how our child thinks and feels
3. We need to assist our child to problem solve



### Small Steps

**Break tasks down to allow children to experience success.  
Children develop the belief that they are capable when they  
achieve small steps.**



## Goals of positive discipline

Goals are small steps that you work towards to help see positive change. These can be small steps such as your child helping more around the home or they can be long-term goals helping your child become the person you want them to be in the future.

- Positive discipline as a method can help you identify long-term goals for your child or children.
- It helps create structure for discipline and warmth
- It helps parents understand what children are thinking and feeling
- It also helps children become better at problem solving in a healthier way



## Identifying Long-Term Goals

Raising a child from birth to adulthood is one of the most important things we will ever do. But many of us begin this journey without thinking about where we want our children to end up. We will start by thinking about our parenting goals. Those goals will be the foundation on which you will build your positive discipline skills.



**Imagine your child is now an adult, aged twenty. What kind of an adult do you want them to be? What values and behaviours are you imagining? List as many as you can.**



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**Did you include good qualities such as honesty, kindness, empathy, loyalty, independent, responsible, good problem solver, loving?**

**And now think about what you, as a parent, are going to do NOW to achieve these long-term goals. Write a few notes to yourself.**

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# Let's imagine this scenario.

## ACTIVITY

**It's a typical morning in your home. Your child is getting ready for school and it's getting late.**

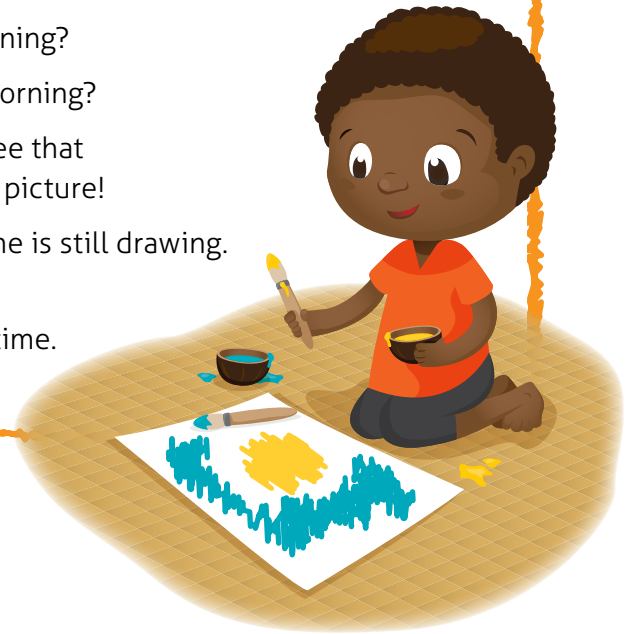
What do you want your child to accomplish on this morning?

In other words what are your parenting goals for this morning?

Now imagine that when you check on your child, you see that he or she is not getting ready for school, but drawing a picture!

You tell your child to hurry, but 5 minutes later, he or she is still drawing.

Time is now very short. If you don't leave in 5 minutes, your child will be late for school and you like to be on time.



? What is happening to your **body**?

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? What is happening to your **voice**?

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? What are you **feeling** emotionally?

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When our needs as a parent are not met, such as the need to be on time, we tend to get stressed. Typical stress responses to our children's undesirable behaviour and our needs not being met can be things like feeling embarrassed in public, feeling angry, yelling, crying or lashing out.

Think of your answers on the previous page. Were there any of these types of stress scenarios in your answers?

The way you try to meet this short-term goal of getting somewhere on time will more than likely impact on the long-term goal of who you want your child to be. The way you react to everyday situations determines how they will react in the future. For example, if you yell, you are teaching yelling. If you hit, you are teaching to solve problems through violence and by hurting someone. Instead, if you talk about the issue, you are teaching your child to have open conversations.

## How to make this long-term?

As a parent it is important we recognise that these short term challenges (getting to work on time) can be opportunities to work toward your long-term goals. These can happen by changing your everyday behaviour and making this a routine.

Have a look at the blocks, which are about how we want our child to develop into an adult. To achieve our long term goals we provide warmth and structure.



## What is Warmth?





**Think about some of the things you do as a parent to show warmth. Write them down to remind yourself that you do this very important part of parenting.**

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**Did you write down some of these things?**

- Showing them love no matter what
- Reading to them
- Hugging them
- Comforting them when they are sick, hurt or afraid
- Listening to them
- Supporting them when they face challenges
- Encouraging them when they have to do something difficult
- Showing you believe in them
- Creating a trusting relationship
- Talking with them
- Playing, laughing and having fun together
- Providing a warm caring environment

Remember children want to cooperate with their caregivers. Sometimes they just don't know how or why.

Warmth encourages short-term cooperation and teaches long-term values.

# What is Structure?

Giving clear  
guidelines  
for behavior

Clearly  
explaining  
your reasons

Supporting  
and helping  
the child to  
succeed

Being a  
positive  
role model

Problem  
solving  
together

**?** Think about some of the things you do as a parent to create structure – which is all about predictability, consistency, emotional safety and developing self esteem. Write them down to remind yourself that you do this very important part of parenting.

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## Structure helps children solve problems

- Structure is not punishment, control or coercion. Punishment creates fear and anxiety NOT motivation. Control and coercion leave the child feeling powerless and not part of the decision or solution.
- Structure is information, guidance and teaching (information creates security, interest, and motivation).
- Structure is most effective when it is accompanied with warmth.
- Problem solving is a learned skill. When children are little we do the problem solving for them, as they grow we do the problem solving with them and eventually in the late teenage years your child should have the skills to problem solve on their own – just checking in with parents to get the final “ok”. When we model and teach problem solving while children are small, they learn to use it as they get older.



## Practice problem solving **WITH** your children



Teaching this to your child allows them to continue to build on who they are as they grow. As another level is added like a scaffold structure, the builder can climb a bit higher. This is how learning occurs; a child is at a certain level but with education and information they can progress further. If we, as parents, provide the information we can ensure our children move to the next level while supporting their education.

# How can we provide structure to our children?

## Step 1

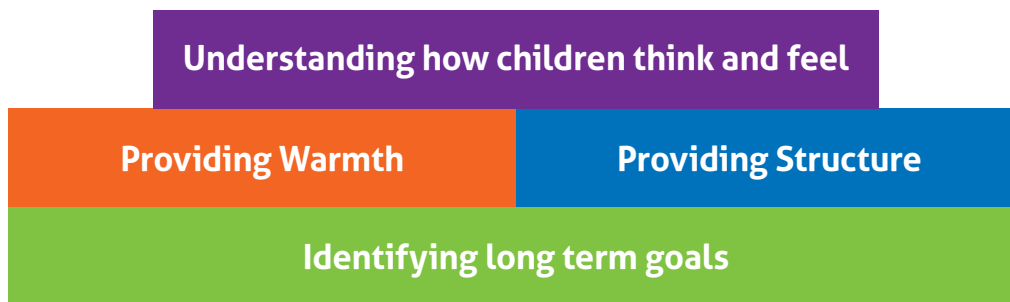
Prepare children for difficult situations by explaining what you need in very easy steps before you need to achieve them. For example, to get on a bus in time, make sure the child knows ahead of time and is able to prepare and explain why this is so important in a calm voice. Routine also helps, so it is beneficial if they know they catch a bus at the same time each day.

## Step 2

- Help children understand and be involved in making the rules.
- Setting rules together helps parents and children understand each other.
- Setting rules in this way helps find ways to fix mistakes together.
- Fairness and flexibility is important for each child.
- Controlling anger helps children learn to solve problems without using anger.
- Teaching children about the impact of their actions on other people helps them understand why certain behaviours are wrong.
- This helps them make better decisions avoiding threats of hitting, smacking or taking away love reduces fear and ensures children have the ability to problem solve in a healthy way.



# AGE-SPECIFIC LEARNING FOR CHILDREN



## SNAPSHOT – Zero to five years old How the brain is growing



### 1. The brain is primed for learning

The neurons are highly excitable, reflected in the child's high level of physical activity and desire to learn as much as possible.

- Connections among neurons are forming at an amazing rate.
- Information and love are the brain's food.
- Strong, loving relationships relax the emotional centres so that the thinking centres can develop.
- Creating these building blocks helps develop neural connections at a physical level.

### 2. Pathway

Young children's brains are primed to build networks. This is why they ask so many questions. This is why they touch everything. They are building their understanding as they connect new information, sensations and emotions.

Just as they build new networks when they have positive learning opportunities, they also build new networks when they have unpleasant or painful experiences. When a parent hurts a child, this creates a pathway that connects the sight of the parent to the sensation of pain and the emotion of fear. The more that pathway is activated, the stronger it becomes and the easier it is to activate.

Each time we learn something a new pathway is made in the brain.

Example: learning the word "cup"

The brain makes new connections among what the cup looks like, what the cup feels like, and what the word “cup” sounds like.

The preschool aged child is “primed” to make pathways so the more often a brain pathway is used, the stronger it becomes. Pathways make it easier to learn and to remember, the more pathways a child has, the faster their learning will become.

### 3. Respect for children

This is why respect for the child’s search for information and learning is so important to their brain development and their emotional development – and to the development of the parent-child relationship. Remember your long-term goals!

## One year old

- A 1-year-old has about 100 billion brain cells
- Each brain cell can connect with at least 1,000 other neurons
- While the child explores, touches, tastes, drops, throws, jumps . . . these connections are forming
- If a child can explore safely, the brain will form many connections. Learning will be connected to a feeling of happiness and security
- If a child is hit, scolded, or yelled at for exploring, the brain will form fewer connections. Learning will be connected to pain, stress, fear and aggression



## Two years old

- Want to explore and be independent
- Get frustrated at times as they are learning
- Say 'NO' to a lot of things
- Emotions and critical thinking is developing more in their brain

The emotional and thinking centres are not well-connected at birth. The connections that are formed depend on the child’s experiences.

We can start the process of “emotion regulation” first by helping the child to recognise and name their emotions. This is a long process, as the feeling brain has to become physically interconnected with the thinking brain.

Young children don’t yet understand what “fear” or “anger” are. They are simply overwhelming feelings that come out of nowhere. Punishing these emotional reactions doesn’t help the child understand; instead it builds pathways between natural emotions and shame.

If we talk with the child, we can build pathways between emotions and understanding – which is the seed of empathy.



## Three to five years old

3-5  
years

Children in this age group build on what they have learnt in the first two years of life. They start to explore why things are certain ways but are also learning how to control their emotions. This is where they start to reason and are able to think independently. This is a time when parents can explain things about discipline in a way children will start to understand. As they begin to understand emotions and pain, you will be able to explain to them when their behaviour is hurtful.

- Growing confidence
- Still experimenting
- Learning to control emotions
- Lots of questions
- Imagination (play, fears)
- Loves to help

## Five to nine years old

5-9  
years

As the child enters school, the complexity of their world increases tremendously. The ways in which parents and teachers respond has a powerful impact on their sense of competence.

The more competent they feel, the more motivated they become. We build competence with warmth and structure.

### Key milestones and learnings

- Starting school
- Temperament (activity, attention)
- Dealing with conflicts
- Friendships

## Ten to thirteen years old (Early teen years)

10-13  
years

As children move into their early teen years, they start to understand their rights and become more independent. Conflict can arise when there are differences between parents' and children's experiences. For example, social media is something children can be very comfortable with, but parents may find very unfamiliar. This gap in understanding may create conflict or tension.

### 5 reasons for family conflict

1. Children want more independence. Parents might worry they are not ready to make their own decisions.
2. Hormones can lead to moodiness.
3. Children are spending more time with their friends. Parents might not approve.
4. Children are forming their own beliefs. They might start to disagree with their parents.
5. Parents worry about their children's safety.



# How to build trust with children

## 1. Building a safety net with warmth

- Spend time together and do things together as a family
- Talk with your child and listen to them
- Try to understand the feelings behind their behaviours
- Tell them about the challenges they will face
- Let them know you'll be there to help
- Be honest and be affectionate

## 2. Build their self-esteem

- Help them to like who they are
- Encourage them to believe in their own abilities
- Help them to see their strengths and special characteristics

## 3. Be involved with the school

- Go to school events
- Get to know their teachers
- Talk about homework and offer your support
- Take an interest in what they're reading and discuss it with them

## 4. Get to know their friends

- Invite them into your home
- Attend events that they and their friends are involved in

## 5. Stay close – but not too close

- Know where they are and who they're with but respect their growing independence and privacy
- Show them that you trust them

# How to help them develop

## 1. Help them develop their own sense of right and wrong

- Talk about risky activities and explain why they should avoid them
- Help them to plan ahead so that they feel prepared to face peer pressure
- Talk with them about your values and listen to theirs
- Talk with them about the physical and emotional changes they will experience at puberty

## 2. Help them develop a sense of responsibility and competence

- Involve them in developing rules and expectations for the family

## 3. Help them develop empathy and respect for others

- Encourage them to help people in need
- Talk with them about what to do when others are unkind
- Be a positive role model

# Fourteen to eighteen years old



Children at this age are starting to form an understanding of their own identity. This means they are more likely to take risks and seek independence. They will also explore their sexuality and question their beliefs.

At this age children will push the boundaries but if they have been given an understanding of how to make healthy decisions and solve problems without anger and violence they will usually make the right choice.

- Identity
- Risk-taking
- Independence
- Sexuality

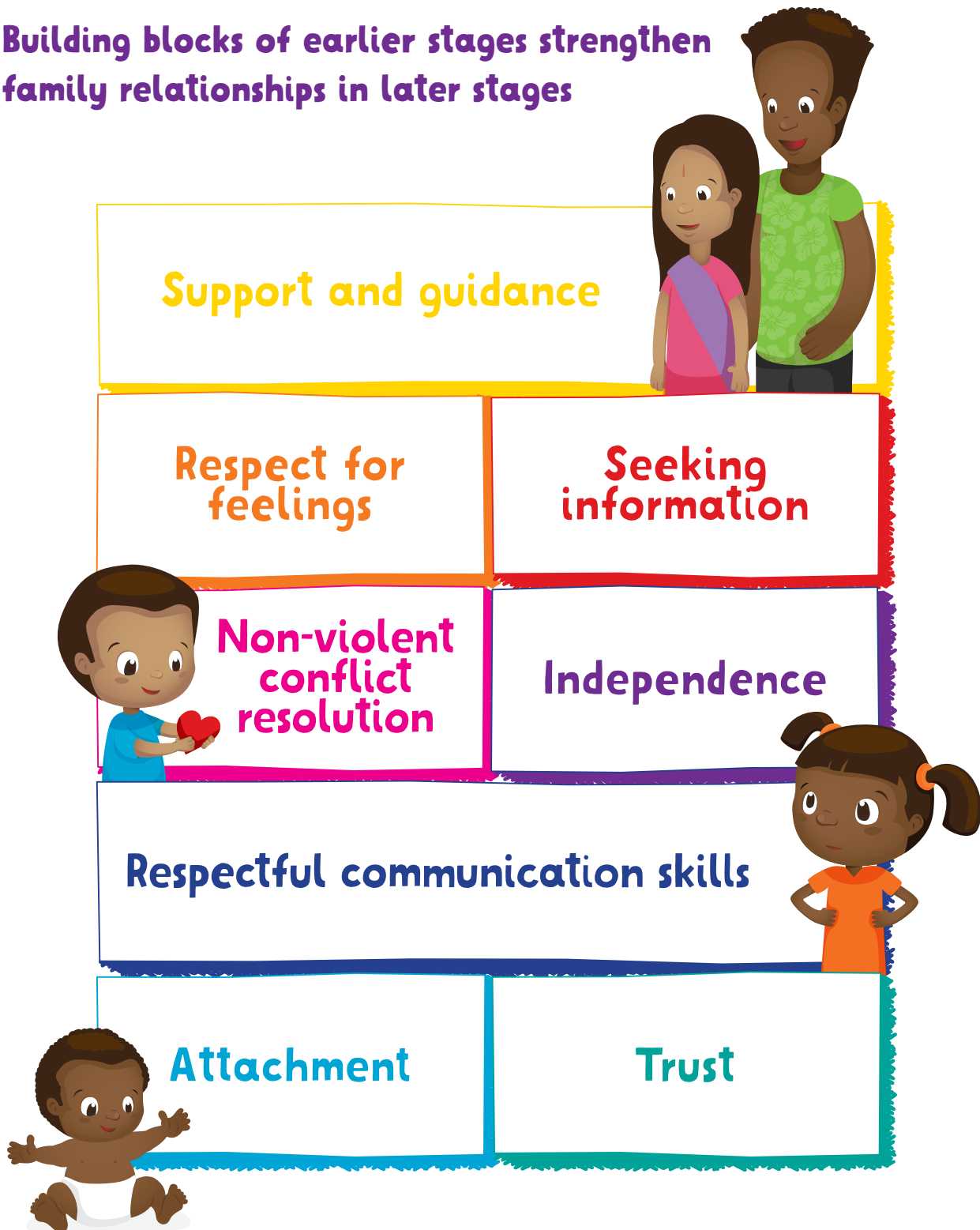
# Adolescence

This is an important stage in the development of the brain. During the previous years, networks were developing as the child experienced all kinds of things. Now, the brain is becoming more efficient. Unused pathways are being pruned away, just like we prune dead branches from a tree to make the other branches stronger. This means that if the pathways aren't being stimulated, they are lost. This is why it is much more difficult to learn a new language after adolescence. The connections that would have made this easier were lost when that language wasn't practiced in childhood.

Children at different stages of development need different types of support from their parents and the wider community. Understanding what a child needs helps build a stronger relationship with them as they grow.

Children in their middle years need parents to respect how they are feeling and explore these emotions with them. They need to be supported in their teenage years but not necessarily controlled. This enables them to use their own judgment when making important decisions along with the guidance of parents. This prepares them for making healthy decisions when they are adults.

## Building blocks of earlier stages strengthen family relationships in later stages



## Conflicts

- Need for peer acceptance
- Need for independence
- Difficulty understanding risks

### **Above all children are:**

- Reaching sexual maturity
- Experiencing intense sexual feelings
- Vulnerable to embarrassment, confusion, humiliation

## Respectful monitoring

Respectful monitoring means knowing what teenagers are doing in a way that respects their privacy and independence.

### **Parents can monitor their teens by:**

- Talking with them often about their lives
- Finding activities they both enjoy doing together
- Knowing who their friends are
- Knowing what they are doing in their free time

## When monitoring is respectful, children are more likely to:

- Talk with their parents and listen to their advice
- View their parents as caring
- Want to maintain a positive relationship with their parents
- Spend more time with their parents

Children have stronger attachments and the desire to be with parents, when there is clear and open communication, respect and emotional support.

## Parents can provide structure by:

- Genuinely respecting their children's ideas, even when they are different from their own
- Encouraging their children to decide what their values are
- Discussing issues with their children as equals
- Showing confidence in their children's abilities to make decisions
- Supporting them when they make mistakes and encouraging them to try again
- Considering their children's point of view when they feel unfairly treated and negotiating solutions

## **Teens are more likely to go through adolescence successfully if their connections with their parents are:**

- Warm, kind and loving
- Stable, consistent and predictable

## **Teenagers with strong connections to their parents are more likely to:**

- Have positive relationships
- Respond to others with respect and empathy
- Have self-confidence and higher self-esteem
- Have better mental health
- Feel trusted by their parents and want to maintain that trust
- Listen to and act on their parents' advice



# CONCLUSION

Positive discipline is an effective tool for parenting children who are confident, respectful and healthy. Parents who treat their children with respect and kindness are more likely to be treated in the same way in return.

Child protection is everyone's responsibility, as parents, teachers or guardians. Society should uphold the rights of a child to protection in order to ensure the healthy development of a child into adulthood.

Parents, caregivers and teachers need to be well prepared to overcome the challenges that occur when raising children. Identifying long-term goals for children, providing warmth and structure, understanding how children think and feel and solving problems with children gives them the opportunities to develop their full potential, build their self worth and respect their peers, parents and others.

We must remember that children who encounter violence and abuse while growing up, tend to behave in the same way when they become adults.

Instead of telling children  
what NOT to do, teach  
them what they CAN do.

# NOTES

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