

Template No. 4

Early Childhood Counts

Parent (Mother & Father) Support Programs

QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION

FAMILIES TO BE SERVED

What families should be invited to participate?

Families included in a parent/caregiver support group should have similar issues and you should be striving to accomplish more or less the same things with each family.

Should the project work with parents/caregivers through existing groups or create a new one?

Sometimes it is possible to introduce the appropriate health/nutrition/stimulation messages in current activities (e.g., a literacy class) rather than creating a new class. This may be preferable if it is difficult for parents to find time to come together.

To get fathers involved, create a father-only group or find specific things for fathers to do to support group activities (e.g., help make furniture, toys, games)

LOGISTICS

Where will the meetings be held?

Space should be found that it is easy for parents to reach. There should be good light and ventilation. There should be an appropriate seating area.

When will the meetings be held?

You should be aware of the demands on people's time before setting times for the meetings. Have parents suggest the time.

How often will the group meet?

Once a month, at a minimum; once a week at a maximum.

Over what period of time shall the group meet?

Six months as a minimum; two years at the maximum. It is important to take enough time to know that the concepts are understood, but not so long that people find the meetings boring and repetitious.

CURRICULUM

What are the messages we want to get across?

Begin with current childrearing practices; build on these.

It should be remembered that the curriculum should address the holistic needs of the child—including nutrition, health, and stimulation ideas, rather than presenting these as separate aspects of a child's development.

CURRICULUM (continued)

One way to develop the curriculum is to have parents suggest the topics they would like to cover in the course and design the sessions around these topics.

METHODOLOGY

How will the material be presented?

People learn best when the material is built on or related to things they already know. Most people learn best by doing. So there should be many opportunities for people to try out what they are learning.

Parents should be provided with an overview of the course on the first night and they should be clear on what is expected of them.

What kind of support materials are required?

Print material should be available for people to review on their own time (depending on their level of literacy).

If there are audio-visuals then the place where the meetings are held should have the appropriate equipment.

What kind of assignments will parents have between meetings?

'Homework' assignments that engage the parent with the child will help reinforce the messages from the meeting. Homework should be fun!

TEACHER/FACILITATOR

Who will teach the class?

The teacher/facilitator could be from the community and should have the trust and respect of the parents.

What kind of training will be provided?

Training needs to be provided both in terms of the content and in terms of the methodology of teaching adults.

Who will provide supervision?

This can be someone who has led a parent group before or a professional working with the project.

EVALUATION

How will we know when the objectives have been achieved?

Through observations of parents with their children.

Through differences in children's levels of development (e.g., in terms of malnutrition).

Children can be assessed in terms of their development. Parents can be asked what they learned and how they have applied the information.

Early Childhood Counts: Programming Resources for Early Childhood Care and Development. CD-ROM. The Consultative Group on ECCD. Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1999.