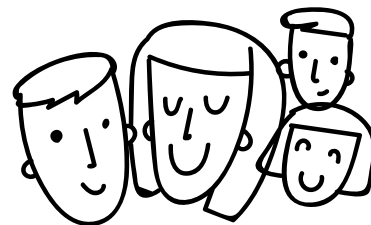
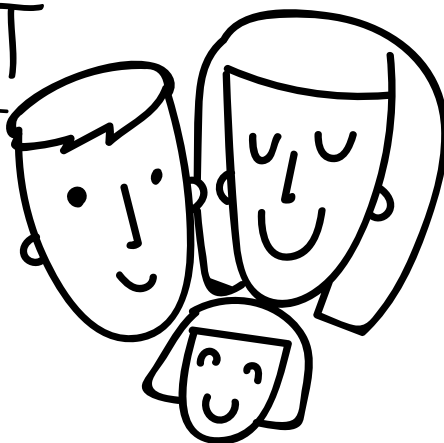
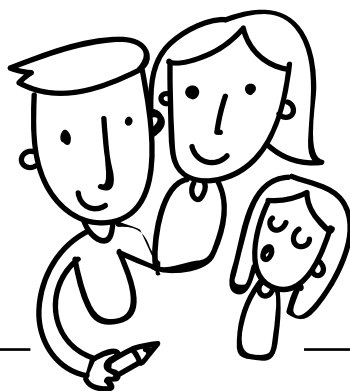


HANDBOOK
ON POSITIVE
PARENTING



FAIR

PARENT



FAIR

CHILD



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Center for integral rehabilitation
VIGOTSKI - MACEDONIA



ФЕР родител - ФЕР дете

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INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, family has undergone the most substantial and deepest changes in all its spheres of functioning. Still, its significance hasn't decreased, and neither has its role for children, which is highest on the scale of importance and priorities.

The modern family of today is in a specific position of abandoning the traditional boundaries within which it felt safe and protected by the authority of parents, and is facing the challenges of the democratic developments present in all areas, including family life. In such a vacuum where the traditional parenting model is being abandoned, but there is still a lack of clear directions about how to be a competent and responsible parent under circumstances of social change and pressures, parenting has become extremely difficult and confusing.



1

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE HANDBOOK



1.1 WHY LEARN PARENTING

Parenthood can be planned or unplanned, accepted or condemned, independent or in a partnership, supported or not, biological or by means of adoption, but whatever its form, the center of parenthood is always a child that has to be the ultimate priority of the adult taking care of him. In raising their children, most parents rely on their instincts and the personal experience from their childhood and family life. Sometimes, this information and knowledge may be helpful for parents, but in other cases, it can be misleading. Parents make mistakes in raising their children not because they lack affection, but rather because they are unfamiliar with some more effective forms of raising a child. Sometimes, punishment of children, especially physical punishment, is accepted in the family as a part of traditional rearing and is used as a means to discipline children.

If we look at parenting as a life-long journey, which starts the moment a child is born and continues throughout time and space, parents need to get to know their fellow “travelers”, i.e. their children. The journey may be pleasant and free from problems, but it is often accompanied by obstacles, storms and dilemmas about what to do next. Therefore, signs are needed along the way to provide better and proper guidance and to make the journey safe and

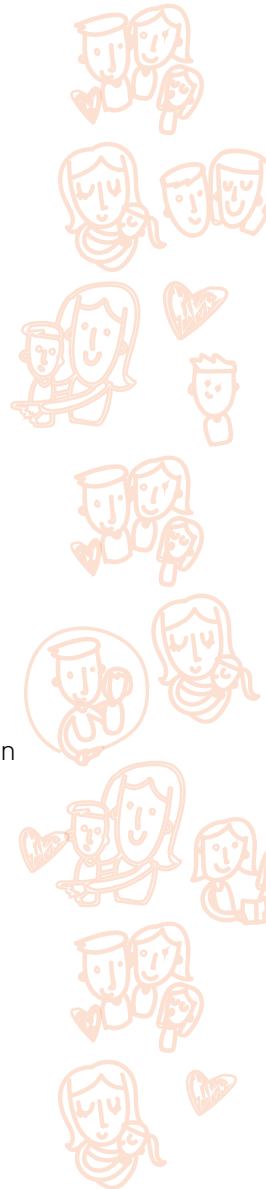
pleasant for both parent and child.

Positive parenting, as a means of raising a child, promotes a new, positive, nonviolent approach to parenting. The positive parenting idea makes a distinction between the strict and the permissive parenting approach to raising children, and promotes nonviolent parenting by respecting the child's rights and taking positive action in the development of his potentials, in the child's best interest.

1.2 NEW APPROACH TO PARENTING – POSITIVE PARENTING

We can't talk about positive parenting if parents are too lenient and let their children do whatever they want, or if parents hit their children, yell at them or use other similar measures which contain elements of neglect and abuse. These measures have a short-term effect and do not teach good behavior.

In contrast, positive parenthood means parents' guidance with lots of affection, empathy and respect for the child's personality by means of established rules and limits which provide long-term solutions. With the application of the new methods and skills, which surround the child with attention, care, support and encouragement,



children of all ages become more cooperative, they react positively to non-punishment and show greater flexibility and adaptability.

Observing the best interests of the child is a precondition for positive parenting and is derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The fundamental rights of the child include:

- the right to life, survival and development
- the right to non-discrimination
- the right to participation and
- the right to care and protection.



The Convention on the Rights of the Child also lists the obligations of parents, i.e. care givers, especially the obligations of the society to ensure the basic conditions for achievement of the highest priority, i.e. the well-being of the child.

1.3 WHO IS THE HANDBOOK “FAIR PARENT – FAIR CHILD” INTENDED FOR

This handbook is intended for adults who take care of children and work with children. It is intended for all parents, guardians, foster parents, those

who are planning on becoming parents, but also for those who wish to learn more about parenting. The content of the handbook is adapted to parents and guardians of children of all ages, regardless whether they share parenting with a partner or are single parents.

Positive parenting is applicable to young children, school children or adolescents, but also to children with impairments or developmental difficulties which are atypical to their calendar age, children with chronic or rare diseases, as well as children who were neglected or abused.

Also, it is intended for professionals who work with children and provide support to parents, such as the staff in preschool institutions, educators, psychologists, defectologists and school teachers, social workers, health workers and everyone involved in family support.

Note: For simplification purposes, the term parent will hereinafter be used to mean the guardian, foster parent and everyone who takes care of the child and who assumes the parenting role.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK “FAIR PARENT – FAIR CHILD”

The handbook “Fair Parent – Fair Child” is designed to help adults better understand the importance and role of parenting in the modern world. It addresses the quality of the growing-up and development process and the conditions for realization of children`s rights, which contributes to protection of the child from neglect and abuse. The objective of the handbook is: for parents to acquire knowledge about the possibilities, needs and specifics of the child throughout the development phases of the growing-up and development process;



to acquire knowledge and develop skills for positive parenting through the concept and the principles of positive parenting;



to improve the skills and competencies of the professionals who work with parents or guardians who need help and support in the process of raising children.

The handbook is divided into several sections and combines psychological and educational theory and concepts, also including parenting practice and experiences from everyday interaction with children.

The content is easily applicable, with specific examples that address directly parents and help them acquire parenting skills. The parent may be flexible in the application of the content and may adjust his behavior to the situation and the individual characteristics of each child. However, it is important to follow the principles and guidelines for positive parenting.

The handbook is intended to assist individuals and groups in addressing certain issues or to encourage discussion about family and parenting.

The handbook for positive parenting provides examples of a new approach to parenting, which may be used in similar or different situations from the ones described here. However, users of the handbook have to bear in mind that the solutions offered herein cannot be expected to have the same effect on every child, every time and in every situation.


Solving the problem is a responsibility of the parent, and the process may demand patience, dedication and creativity of the parent, but may also depend on the individual characteristic of each child.

The handbook contains illustrative materials, including three picture-books and two cartoons for children, as well as a short guide for positive parenting intended for parents.

2

THE CHALLENGE OF PARENTING





Parenting means daily interaction of the parent with the child which includes care, love, guidance and dedication. There are a number of expectations that go hand in hand with the role of the parent, many of which have changed throughout history. Different societies had different standards for what constituted a good parent, different raising methods were used and the definitions of families and family life have changed. But, the one thing they all had in common is the realization parents that children were helpless, so they lived with them and took care of them. Of course, there have been and will be exceptions. What is certain is that the parenting style affects the well-being, health and development of children.

2.1 WHY CAN'T TRADITIONAL PARENTING MODELS BE USED TODAY AND WHY ARE THEY MORE DAMAGING THAN BENEFICIAL?



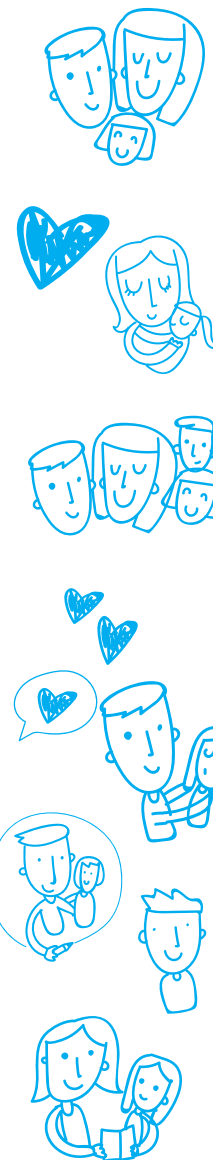
This is a very complex issue and cannot be answered without understanding the significant changes of the social context in which today's children are growing-up. If we attempt to compare the children of today with children from previous generations and build parenting on that basis, we may fall into a huge trap. Previous generations of parents hardly read any parenting books,

did not attend counseling and did not learn how to be parents. In big families, children were raised by the mother, grandmother and other female members of the family. Children were simply growing up, and their parents did not think much about parenting and the role of the parent. Raising children was a daily, spontaneous and regular activity, learnt from previous generations, with a clear hierarchy of authority and respect for the older. Media influence was limited and modest, with TV shows and movies with messages of perfect families and punishments for any deviations from the rules, and the society was supportive of such messages.

Today's society has abandoned the concept/model of mediocracy, submission and inferiority of the child, as well as the position of children with regard to the respect of their rights. Parents have changed too. The traditional model of a patriarchal family has been completely redefined.

The access to the Internet, the influence of the media and the changed system of moral values demand a completely different approach to parenting.

It is therefore impossible to compare the children of today with their parents' generations, and even less so with their grandparents, although it is sometimes nice to hear about their experiences.



“Professionals can provide assistance to parents in raising their children, but they cannot replace them. Regardless of what they know about children and their development, they know almost nothing about each individual child. The parent knows his child best.”

—
Penelope Leach,
British psychologist.

2.2 WHAT NEXT?

The modern parent wants to know how to raise his child efficiently, without raising his tone, and without hitting or arguing with the child. The modern parent wants to raise his child into a happy, fulfilled and independent person.

Parenting style refers to the manner in which the parents respond to their children, and to

their parenting efforts to raise, educate and socialize their children.

Parenting styles have changed and have been redefined through time, and they are affected by a number of different factors and influences. From what is known today based on the experience so far about building the parent-child relationship and the behavior of the parent, the following parenting styles have been distinguished:

1 PERMISSIVE PARENT



2 UNINVOLVED PARENT



3 AUTHORITARIAN PARENT



4 AUTHORITATIVE PARENT



2.3 WHAT ELSE IS IMPORTANT ABOUT PARENTING STYLES?

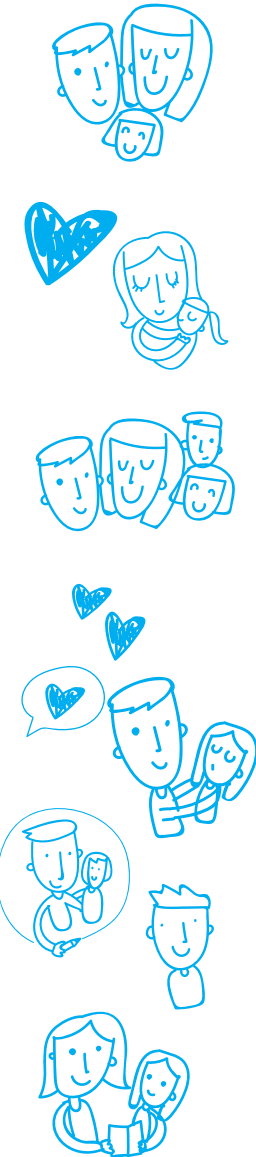
In a two-parent family, parents may practice same, similar or different parenting styles. It is preferable that both parents agree on the basic values which they want to pass onto their children and that they do not diminish the authority of the other parent who thinks and acts differently, especially in front of the child. Thus, harmonization of the raising styles of the parents towards the child will be achieved, because it is very important that parents send identical messages to the child about the agreed family rules and boundaries.

In multi-child families, parents sometimes practice the same parenting approach to raising their children. It is preferable that parents apply the same parenting style to all of their children, but at the same time respect the individual needs arising from the different development phase of the child.

The negative, strict, authoritarian parenting style may have a negative, and sometime permanent, effect on the child's development. However, the extremely permissive parenting style may also mean that the child may not function well as an adult. The uninvolved

parenting style may cause the feeling of rejection in the child, so the child does not connect to the parent and has no sense of belonging to the family.

Sometimes, the parent's behavior towards the child goes beyond the limits of one style and may be a combination of more parenting styles. However, the most dominant and most applicable parenting behavior indicates inclination towards a certain parenting style, which the parent accepts and gives priority to. Each parenting style develops certain characteristics and traits in the child.



CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUAL PARENTING STYLES

PERMISSIVE PARENT



- has the attitude that "the child knows best what he needs"
- is affirmative and gentle, loves and protects the child
- is accepting and mild towards the child's impulses and behavior
- does not use punishments and prohibitions
- accepts the child's wishes and is not too demanding
- has no control over the child's behavior and allows the child to independently manage his own activities
- does not reveal his expectations to the child
- has no mechanisms for positive discipline
- does not set clear boundaries between what is permitted and what is prohibited, between the good and the bad, both within the family and in the wider social environment
- does not see himself as the sole responsible factor in the development and raising of the child

UNINVOLVED PARENT



- has the attitude "I have my own life, and the child has his own"
- unconscientious parent, neglectful, careless, both in showing affection and in disciplining the child
- focused on his own comfort
- is not included in the parenting
- is not capable of understand the child's basic needs for care, love and attachment
- it is possible that he was himself neglected as a child or had problems with substance abuse

AUTHORITARIAN PARENT

3

- this parent is the opposite of the permissive parent
- he has the attitude that "I know best what is good for my child"
- the relation with the child is one-way, full of demands and little warmth
- insists on shaping, controlling and assessing the child's behavior and opinions, but in accordance with his personal standard, which is dependent on his current mood and needs
- values and favors blind obedience
- may use punishment and coercion to control the child's behavior
- does not respect the child's personality, corrects his every mistake through the in-built fear in the child
- does not negotiate with the child, he has the last word as the relationship is based on power
- prefers punishment and force to love and communication

AUTHORITATIVE PARENT

4

- the most desirable parenting style
- has the attitude "we are building a good relationship"
- takes responsibility for caring for and guiding the child
- respects his child, gives him the possibility to express his own needs and opinions
- stimulates communication, possesses listening skills and has empathy
- communication is as important as the child's needs and wishes
- capable to set firm boundaries, proportional to the child's needs
- is always consistent in his actions
- encourages creativity, curiosity and independence in the child, while at the same time taking care of his emotions.

A SUGGESTION FOR THE PARENT

If, as a parent you, are interested to determine what your parenting style is, we suggest you read Annex 1 at the end of this Handbook. If you are not parent yet, assess your attitudes regarding parenting.



TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS WHICH EACH PARENTING STYLE DEVELOPS IN CHILDREN

PERMISSIVE PARENT

- ☐ a child that doesn't take NO for an answer
- ☐ defiant and rebellious child when confronted or when he can't have it his way
- ☐ lack of control of emotions and the temperament, easily frustrated
- ☐ lack of attention and concentration
- ☐ poor performance in school
- ☐ may show antisocial behavior due to the lack of adopted rules and the poor moral development; may be rejected by his peers, etc.

UNINVOLVED PARENT

- poor understanding of the boundaries
- anxious
- lack of trust in adults
- low self-respect and low self-esteem

AUTHORITARIAN PARENT

3

- anxious, withdrawn, scared and unhappy by nature child
- lack of reaction to frustration
- good student due to fear of punishment
- failure is accompanied by anxiety
- has difficulties in making friends and maintaining friendships
- may become rebellious in adolescence and identify himself with the violent parent.

AUTHORITATIVE PARENT

4

- ♥ happy child with a sense of security
- ♥ contactable child, uses arguments to prove his point
- ♥ loves justice and honor, makes own decisions
- ♥ developed ability for overcoming challenging tasks
- ♥ good student
- ♥ able to control his emotions
- ♥ well-developed social skills
- ♥ able to make and maintain friendships
- ♥ reacts well to adults' authority, if accompanied by respect and a possibility for self-proving.

2.4 PARENTS' NEEDS AND SUPPORT

PARENTS SELF-CARE!!

Parenthood is a dynamic life role with long-term goals. Once a parent, always a parent. This symbiotic link cannot be severed and does not stop, it only develops, enhances and changes. When the baby is constantly by the parent's side, but also when the child becomes an adult and leaves the family home, the child is always on the parent's mind. The parenthood exists, lives and becomes a timeless value for the parent.

That is why parents have to apply self-care. The first few days of the child's life are very dynamic and require great effort and physical involvement of the parent, long sleepless nights, adjustment of family life to the new member, etc. Parents often feel that they have no strength left, that they are exhausted and agitated, but it is important to recognize that and make a short break, a day or weekend away if possible. Sometimes all the parent needs is a short coffee break, with a friend or alone, outside the home or in a different room.

Resources like grandparents, relatives, friends, neighbors, playrooms, kindergartens, etc. should occasionally be used. It is therefore very important that parents take care of their physical and mental health, visit the doctor regularly, eat healthy, have time for exercising and social life.

Certainly, parenthood doesn't mean neglecting the relationship with the partner. On the contrary, quality

partner relationship means a motive, will and a need for even more successful parenting. Although parenthood is one of the best experiences, it can sometimes become highly frustrating for parents. And that is normal. Children grow, their needs and possibilities change, they often tempt the parents' patience and move the set boundaries. Therefore, parents are entitled to receiving support in parenting, time for literature on child development, attending courses on parenting and counseling, support from the extended family, but also from the society.

PARENTING IN AN EXTENDED FAMILY AND THE INFLUENCE OF GRANDPARENTS

Living together with members of the extended family may make parenting specific. Living together has its advantages, but can also be a source of many conflicts, both in terms of house rules and the care and raising of children.

Many young families today depend on the older members, who invest time and finances, and provide care, emotional support and security to children while parents are at work. Grandparent - grandchild relationship depends on the living environment, the cultural and ethnic features, customs, values and previous family relations. With their support, children overcome



critical events in the family such as divorce, loss, new baby, moving, etc. more easily. Grandparents are irreplaceable figures for the child, and the unconditional love they provide is an important emotional resource.

However, despite their significant role in the lives of both parents and children, raising children is primarily parents' task. Older members of the family often want to impose their way of raising and taking care of children, demeaning the new parenting trends adopted by parents. Thus, grandparents may deprive parents of their authority, "defend" the child from the parents and fulfill his every wish. These oscillations are good, but should be moderate, so the child could understand the difference between people and their attitudes toward him. However, when the basic parenting principles embraced by the parents are in question, the parents should be insistent that they are respected by the grandparents as well.

In order to avoid unpleasant situations, it is important that the family clearly defines the place of each family member in the child's life. Parents must show respect for the older family members and their experience and knowledge about child care, but they also must insist on them supporting the chosen parenting model. They must explain to grandparents, kindly and politely, what they should pay attention to in their care for the children and why, and should be consistent in their demands. This is not an easy process and requires lots of patience

and reminding. It is ok to express disagreement about parenting, but it is not ok to show disrespect. It is therefore good to sometimes give more freedom to grandparents and allow them to indulge children more, but care must be taken not to break the boundaries and the basic parenting principles. In such a case, it should be emphasized to the child that some of the things they are allowed to do at their grandparents' are not allowed at home. Also, it is important that the child does not use the grandparents against the parent. However, it is in the best interest of the child when everyone involved in taking care of him adheres to the universal, permanent values such as honesty, fairness, respect for oneself and others, development of empathy and self-discipline.

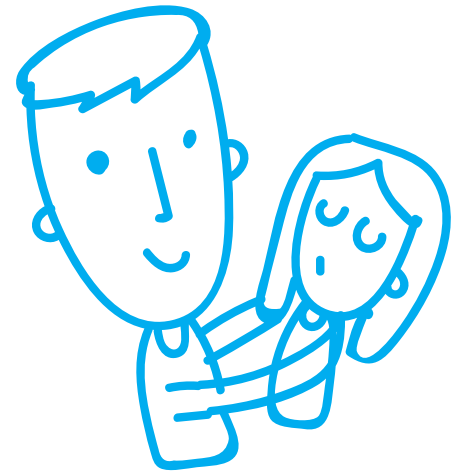


CHECKLIST:

- The parent is the most important person in the child's life
- That is why the parent must apply self-care
- Regardless of the time the child spends with his grandparents, caregivers, teachers or other persons taking care of him, the parent has the responsibility to care for and raise the child.

3

WHAT IS POSITIVE PARENTING



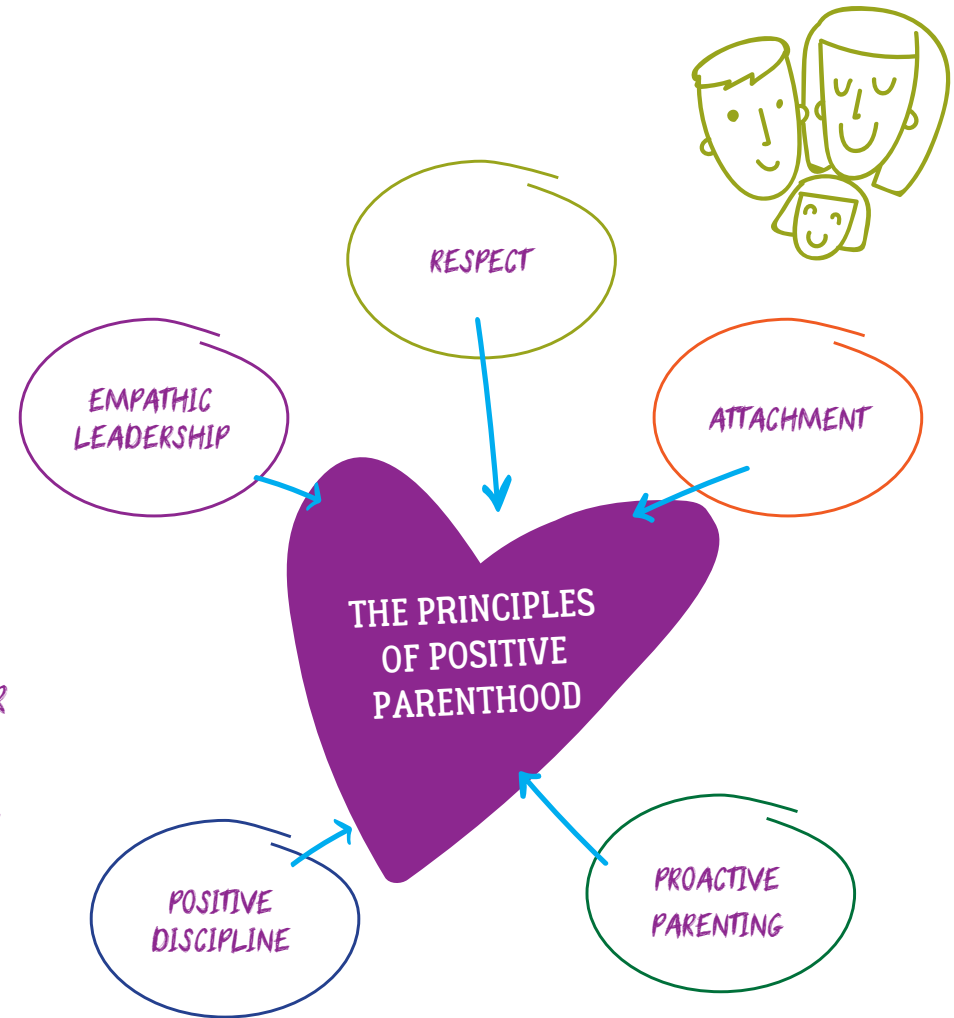
3.1 PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE PARENTING

Positive parenting is based on five principles, mutually entwined, which build a good basis and strong child-parent relationship, and position the parent as a successful leader in the child's development.¹

The principles of positive parenthood are:

1. Attachment
2. Respect
3. Proactive parenting
4. Empathic leadership
5. Positive discipline²

POSITIVE PARENTING IS WHEN PARENTS' BEHAVIOR
STEMS FROM THE CHILD'S INTERESTS, WHEN
THEY DON'T USE VIOLENCE TOWARDS THE CHILD,
RECOGNIZE AND RESPECT THE CHILD'S RIGHTS,
SHOW PLENTY OF AFFECTION, BUT ALSO SET
BOUNDARIES IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE CHILD'S
FULL DEVELOPMENT.



THE PRINCIPLE OF ATTACHMENT

Emotional attachment is the primary need that develops with the child's birth. The connection formed between the child and the first adult (usually the parent) determines how children build their future relations with the environment. Moreover, this connection has a significant impact on how children develop their ability for personal feelings and on the development of their ability to avoid and deal with mishaps.

First, children connect with their immediate family. Later, this connection extends to the wider family unit. This happens because the parent is the first contact of the child with the environment who reacts to their crying, picks him up, hugs him, comforts him. As the child grows, it is the parent who is most present in the child's life, playing with, guiding and teaching the child.

Both the behavior of parents towards their children and their mutual relationship influence the children's emotional attachment to their parents. When secure attachment is built, children feel safe, seek comfort in their parents when scared, and seeing their parents again after a period of absence causes positive emotions in children.

Parents need to connect with their child first, and then build positive parenting and boundaries. If this connection is not made on a primary level, children who fail to develop

a connection at an early age often have problems with their behavior and social contacts later in life.

THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPECT

When the parent respects his child, he sends a message to the child that he is important to his parents. That doesn't mean allowing the child to do whatever he wants, but rather that the parent respects his child's opinion, pays attention to him, satisfies his childhood needs and desires, which need to be reasonable and acceptable.

Children learn best by the personal example set by their parents, so they need to show them that others, the opinions of others and differences need to be respected. Showing affection, attention, care, talking to the child without belittling his personality, without yelling and calling him bad names, are all signs of the parent's respect for the child. This will make the child react in a positive way, respect his parents and other people and, most important of all, respect himself and build self-confidence. Children who have developed a connection with their parents are emotionally stable and susceptible to positive disciplining. Where there is rejection, manipulation, instead of love, disciplining itself becomes complicated and very complex. Self-confidence, particularly, is directly conditioned by the respect of parents for their children. Children can live without many things, like toys and other material things, but

they cannot be happy without the love and respect of their parents.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PROACTIVE PARENTING

Parents, often carried away by everyday duties and dealing with short-term goals with their children, often forget to deal with the long-term goals; they think reactively, i.e. deal with problems as they appear. Thus, parents deal with everyday problems or goals with their children, such as how to tie their shoe laces or how to clean their teeth, without stopping to think about and anticipate other possible problems that need to be dealt with, such as distinguishing the good from the bad, respecting themselves and the others, assuming responsibility for their actions, acting non-violently, etc. But when such problems emerge, they are more difficult to solve and require lots of time and effort, which makes the outcome uncertain. Positive parents are proactive and don't allow for problems to happen, but do their best to anticipate, intercept and prevent them from the start, before they become a source of conflict or crisis. They address problems before they escalate and get out of control.

A good example of the difference between reactive and proactive parents is the comparison with the captain of a ship. A captain who is a reactive person will navigate the ship following the currents. If the currents are favorable, the captain will be happy,

if not, he will be under stress and will not study the currents to anticipate where they will take the ship. On the other hand, a proactive captain will navigate the ship in whatever direction he wants. He will study the currents, sometimes he will follow them and sometimes he will defy them, but the current won't have the power to determine his final destination – that will be the captain's choice.

An example of proactive language is: I want..., I prefer..., I choose..., let's look at other options..., I can choose a different approach..., etc.

Proactive parents give priority to learning parenting and building positive relations with their children. That is achieved by greater involvement of parents into their children's lives though time spent together talking, playing, giving children an opportunity to express their emotions. Thus, parents get to know their children, which is a precondition for positive disciplining. The parent needs to know what makes his children happy, sad, what scares him and what calms him down. And that is not only important in the first years of the child's life, but throughout the childhood. Parents should use every opportunity to spend quality time with their children and get to know them ... in the car, in front of the TV, while they are taking with their friends or other adults.

It is important that parents are open to receiving and recognizing the information they get from their children, regardless whether they are verbal or non-verbal. That way, parents learn about their children's behavior, how they deal with obstacles and how they make choices. That enables them to take a proactive position of anticipating possible problems, planning and dealing with the specific behavior of their children successfully and in a controlled manner.

THE PRINCIPLE OF EMPATHIC LEADERSHIP

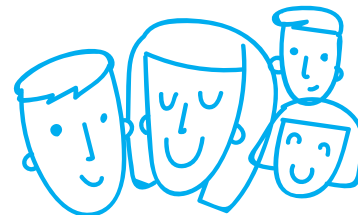
Parents need to be leaders in their children's lives who will show affection, warmth and empathy. Children need unconditional parental love, emotional stability, physical and verbal affection and empathy. That is shown through verbalization of emotions, i.e. giving names to emotions, parents telling children that they love them, using positive words, hugging and kissing them, joking with them, comforting them when they are hurt or scared, playing with them, reading to them, helping them with their homework, actively listening to them, praising and encouraging them. Love is not implied, love is shown and named. A positive parent's approach is that filled with warmth, ensures cooperation and achievement of the parent's role as leaders, as well as achievement of long-term goals.

Empathic parents understand their children's needs and treat their children in a way that makes them feel heard and understood.

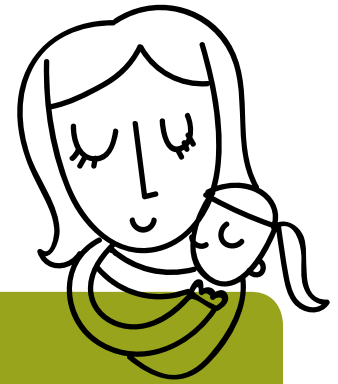
THE PRINCIPLE OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Discipline is often confused with punishment and prohibition, or is understood as a synonym of raising. But punishment and discipline are two completely different concepts and imply different parents' behavior.

In positive discipline there is no room for punishment, especially physical punishment of children, for which there is zero tolerance. Positive parenting means more than disciplining, so positive discipline is one of the principles of positive parenting.



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PUNISHMENT AND DISCIPLINE



PUNISHMENT

- punishment hurts the child both physically and psychologically
- it denies his right to be understood and perceived as a person
- it may lead to serious negative consequence to the child's health
- punishment doesn't change the behavior model of the child, it rather leads to temporary change of behavior that is soon repressed
- punishment is counterproductive
- punishment is based on fear
- children become rebellious and give resistance
- the child learns the model of the aggressor
- punishment gives little information, it lacks content; it generally sends a message of what the child mustn't do, without offering an alternative
- by punishing the child, the parent alienates him from the family and the home.

DISCIPLINE

- ♥ discipline doesn't hurt the child or his personality
- ♥ discipline is teaching or supporting the learning process of acceptable behavior
- ♥ discipline has content
- ♥ discipline involves setting clear boundaries and rules in the family and for the child
- ♥ requires consistency in the actions of the parent
- ♥ the parent has realistic expectations from their child
- ♥ discipline helps the parent build a solid relationship based on equality with the child
- ♥ the child changes the behavior model spontaneously and in cooperation with his parent
- ♥ discipline is not based on fear or threats.

3.2 PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE PARENTING

The principles of positive parenting are applicable in the everyday parent - child interaction. They are tools that provide guidance on how to achieve positive discipline through good communication. Parents need to learn these skills and apply them with empathy and patience.

The following example about twelve-year old Marco explains the practical application of the principles of positive parenting.

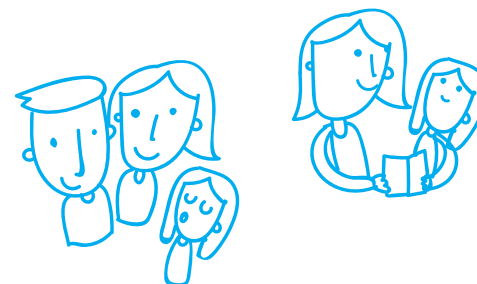
EXAMPLE:

Twelve-year old Marco has a problem in school. He doesn't do his homework and is behind in his studying.

How can his parents motivate him to do his homework by applying the principles of positive parenting?

The following suggestions are offered as possible solutions to parents dealing with the same or similar problems.

- In order to be effective, you need to plan in advance all habits you want to establish in your child. In this way, you will prevent any future problems **(that is a proactive parent)**:
- Establish a routine which will allow your child to have a period in the day when he can study in peace. **Consult your child** about when and where he will study, in what atmosphere, etc.
- Monitor your child's behavior during that period. Then, tell him what you have noticed, what you want and what you will do to help him. For example: "I have noticed that in the past week you haven't been studying in the agreed period, but rather late before bed time. I would like you to start studying earlier, as we have agreed. If you want, I can be in the room with you, I will read something or work on the computer. I can help you only for an hour, from 6 to 7 pm, because later in the day I will be too tired to concentrate" **(setting boundaries and empathic leadership)**;



— Tell him that you will no longer “preach” about studying and that you won’t be reminding him that he needs to study. By doing so, you show respect for his personality and his choices. That means that your child has understood what you have agreed.

Affectionately, but decisively, turn your words into actions (consistency in setting boundaries);

— Tell him that you are willing to help him, to have him ask you if there’s something he doesn’t understand, but only in the agreed time period;

— Don’t compare him to other children in school **(positive communication)**;

— Allow different styles of studying. Some children like to study with music or with the TV on. If they are struggling with a certain subject and fail to show results despite their effort, you might consider alternative solutions: private teaching lessons, a friend who could help, etc. **(creating a safe and stimulating environment and giving the child a choice and letting him decide)**;

— Some children, despite their personal and their parents’ efforts, cannot achieve good results in school. Every child has a different pace. Some children start learning later, while others see school as a problem and decide not to continue to higher education. Children should be made aware that they are not

any less worthy if they don’t excel in school and that maybe later they will find the motivation to succeed in life **(respecting the personality and individuality of the child)**;

— When the child postpones doing his homework till the last minute, listen to him carefully and with warmth **(empathy)**, but don’t save him. Leave him to feel the consequences of his choices.

— You may try and solve the problem together with your child. Listen to him and show empathy. Ask him to suggest a solution, and then intervene **(empathic leadership)**;

— Be emotionally honest and tell your child what you think, feel and want, but don’t make it look like you are imposing your standard (showing warmth and affection, but with leadership). For example: “Education is very important to me and I am afraid that you don’t see it that way. I hope that you will soon understand the value of education and the good habits that come of it.”;

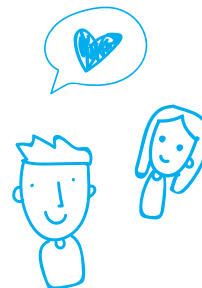
— The more you see homework as your job, the less your child will see it as his. When children see that homework is more important to their parents than it is to them, they will never assume responsibility;

CHECKLIST: PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE PARENTING

- ♥ The parent needs to connect to the child first, and only then build positive parenting and set boundaries;
- ♥ By respecting the child's personality, the parent acknowledges the child's uniqueness, value and ingenuity;
- ♥ The positive parent is proactive and solves the problems while they are still minor and while he has control over them;
- ♥ The parent should be a leader in the child's life who will show love, warmth and empathy to the child;
- ♥ There is no room for punishment in positive discipline.



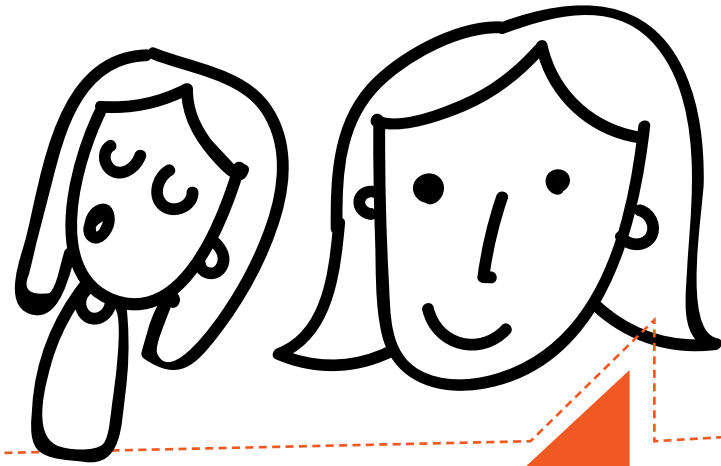
- It is easy to assume responsibility for your child's job, but then they won't grow into responsible adults;
- Believe in your child;
- There are some things that children can learn only by facing uncomfortable consequences and failure. Never insult, punish or humiliate your child when he fails;
- Have in mind that children have no interest in a certain activity and therefore refuse to do it, maybe because they have been discouraged or have lost hope. The same child can do another activity he is interested in meticulously. For example: they can't memorize a lesson, but are perfectly capable of memorizing the lyrics of their favorite song.



The following example refers to a younger child:

EXAMPLE:

In the evening, after play time, five-year old Kaya needs to get ready for bed.



The mother: *That was a nice game. I enjoyed playing with you.*

Kaya: *Let`s play a little longer, please.*

The mother: *You really like this game (**connecting with the child**). It is very fun. We can play it again tomorrow if you like, but it`s eight o`clock now and it`s time for bed (**setting boundaries**).*

Kaya: *That`s not fair. I want to play some more. I will throw the toy in the bin.*

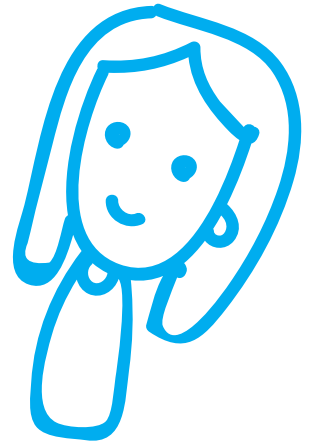
The mother: *I see you are upset (**calm, without accusing her or raising her voice**). Time really went by fast, I believe you still want to play (**empathy**). But you can`t throw the toy in the bin (**setting boundaries**).*

Kaya: *Please, just one more time.*

The mother: *It`s eight o`clock, it`s time for bed (**consistent in setting the boundaries**). We can sing in the bathroom while we are getting ready (**redirecting the child`s attention and reconnecting with the child**).*

4

HOW CHILDREN GROW AND DEVELOP – CHILD DEVELOPMENT STAGES



WHAT IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Child development refers to the entire process and all changes that happen throughout, which ensure balance, stability and efficiency of the environment in which the child grows.

Growth and development of children are reflected through the changes that occur on biological, psychological and social level.

WHICH FACTORS INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT?

Changes are caused by internal and external factors.

The internal factors are related to the genetic code, i.e. what the child inherits genetically from his parents.

The external factors are related to the characteristics and specifics of the primary (parents, family) and the extended community (group, community and society in which the family belongs).

The characteristics and specifics of the primary and the extended social environment are predetermined by the culture, religion and tradition to which they belong, but also by the current level of development, the moral values system and the organization of the society as a whole.

Growth and development are continuous, but due to the factors listed above they are specific and different for each individual child.

Notwithstanding the individuality, however, child development is divided in several stages common for all children.

CHANGES DURING CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

The changes noticed throughout these development stages may be quantitative and qualitative. They are gradual and steady in all areas and in all aspects of the child's being.


The quantitative changes are gradual and easily measurable. As the child is growing, these changes are easily noticeable and measurable, for example: body weight, height, vocabulary, number of social connections, etc.

The qualitative changes are more complex to follow because they are not gradual and occur in leaps. Actually, they occur daily, but are not that visible. They are hidden and related to the increase in the life experience and the physiological maturity of the child. These changes can be seen, for example, in the differences between the speech of a small child and the speech of an adolescent, i.e. adult. At the age of 2-3, the child talks about what he can see and touch. He talks about his personal experiences from the point of view of the present and has difficulties determining the past and the future. It is therefore said that at this age the child thinks on a concrete level. At the age of 13-14, the child can talk about many things that he hasn't directly experienced, i.e.

that are not related to his personal experience, and he can determine the past and has a concept of the future. It is therefore said that at this age the child thinks on an abstract level.

4.1 CHILD DEVELOPMENT STAGES BASED ON THEIR CALENDAR AGE

There are several divisions in the child's growth and development according to their calendar age. The chronological classification of the child development stages according to their calendar age is:

 Infant (1-18 months)

 Early childhood (18 months – 3 years)

 Preschool age (3-5 years)

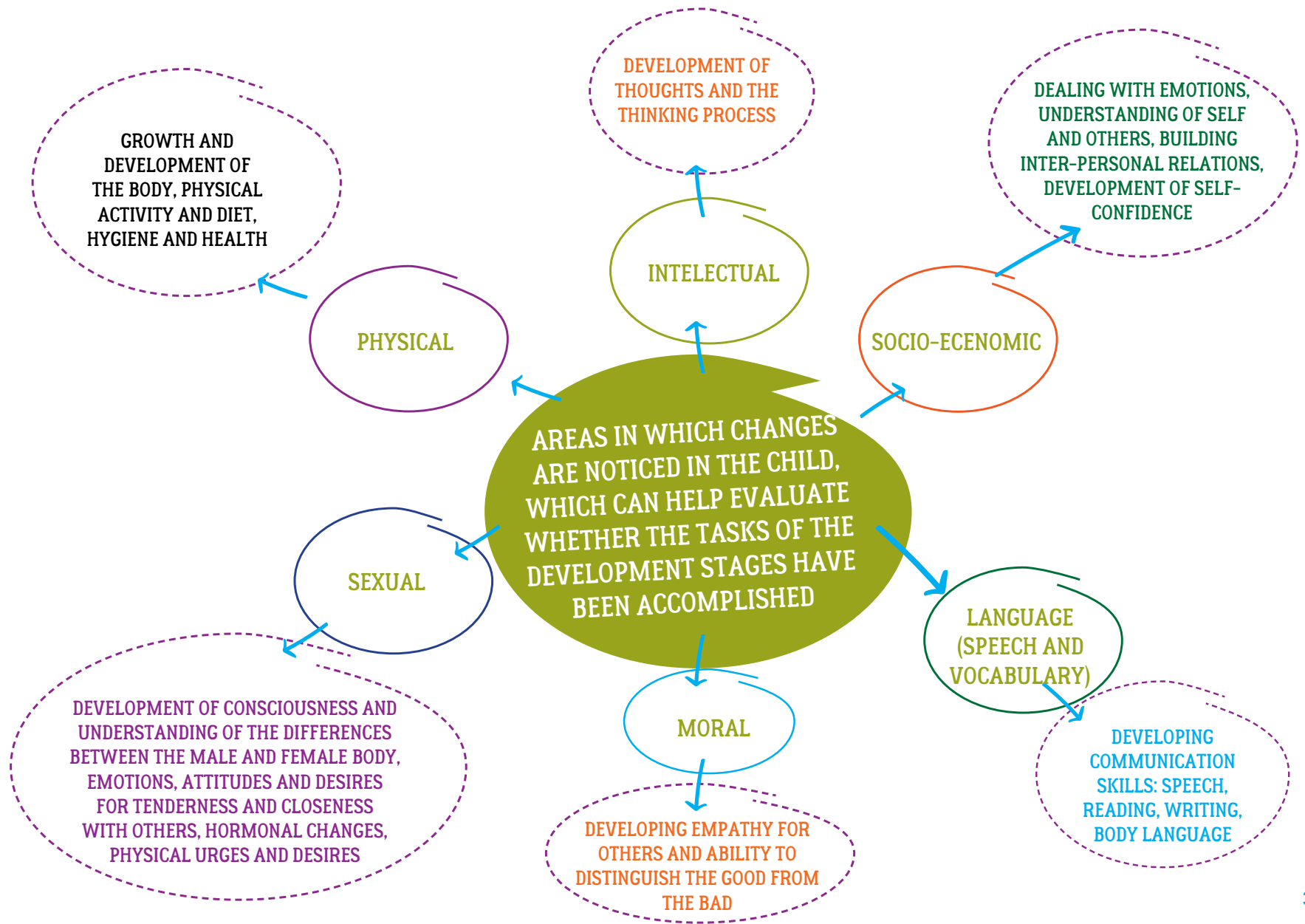
 School age (5-12 years)

 Adolescence (13-18 years).

This division encompasses each development stage according to the calendar age of the child, which describes the specific needs and changes on biological, psychological and social level.

4.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE, ROLES AND TASKS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT STAGES

Each development stage has a specific task. It is determined by what the child is expected to develop by a certain age in different areas. The accomplishment of the tasks will ensure gradual growth, development and transition of the child into a healthy and mature person.



WHAT IS “PSYCHOSOCIAL CRISIS” AND HOW IS IT OVERCOME?

The influence and support of both the immediate and extended social environment are important for the child`s growth and development.

Throughout his development stages, the child always satisfies his different needs through contact, communication and interaction with the social environment. Therefore, the specific characteristics and features of the family and the extended community determine the psychological development of the child.

The manner in which needs are satisfied, or not satisfied, leads to occurrence of a “**psychosocial crisis**”. The resolution of this “crisis” may be positive or negative.

Positive resolution of the “crisis” means that the child has already learnt something new or has developed a skill in a certain area which will support his development and will help him more forward and develop further.

All that is missed and not achieved in the lower development stages won`t enable the child a complete and mature transition to the next development stage. That means that the child will continue to grow and develop physically, but he won`t achieve the necessary psychological and social maturity appropriate for his calendar age.

If what has been missed is recognized, there is always a possibility to correct and supplement it, through new experiences and cooperation with the environment, which will require organized leadership of the adult and some extra effort.

TRANSITION

Specific transitions i.e. **a transition** from one stage to another, from a lower to a higher development stage, are especially important. The transition requires greater attention, patience, knowledge and skills of parents, adults and care givers. They are the ones most responsible in ensuring conditions for successful and painless transition, both for the child and the parent.

4.3 INFANT (0-18 MONTHS)

This development stage refers to the first eighteen months of the child`s life which are most dedicated to the **physical and motoric** skills, which indirectly form the basis for the child`s intellectual, emotional and social growth and development.

Important factors that influence this development stage are:

- Nutrition
- Health
- Learning about body hygiene
- Senso-motoric intelligence – it is developed through stimuli which stimulate the senses for vision, hearing, taste and touch, as well as through use of different groups of muscles activated by moving the arms and legs, and which represents the beginning of the intellectual development;
- The social system in which the child grows (relations with the parent or the care giver).

The parent is responsible to provide adequate and balanced food to the child and to feed him in the appropriate manner and at the appropriate time. The parent is also responsible for creating conditions for clean, healthy and safe environment which would also stimulate the child's senses. Stimulation and play will develop his senso-motoric intelligence.

At this stage, it is important to establish the sleep and rest rhythm, as well as to properly maintain and teach hygiene.

WHEN AND WHY DOES THE BABY CRY?

Baby's crying is a natural and normal phenomenon in this development period. Baby's **crying** is the first form of communication with the parent.

He doesn't know a single word, but with his crying he is sending a message to the parent. He wants to tell the parent that he needs something, i.e. that his need is not satisfied. In this development period, the child may easily be scared by different stimuli from the environment. The only inherent fear is the fear of loud noise or shifting the ground on which the child lays/stands; all other fears are learnt.

As parents react to their children's crying, children start to learn what they can expect from the person that takes care of them. They learn whether they'll be heard and whether their need will be satisfied.

How the parent responds will determine what the child will learn about their communication. In other words, the child learns whether the communication he is creating with the adult is close and nurturing, or distanced and neglectful.

When the baby is upset for whatever reason, he needs for the parent to pick him up and hold him, to cuddle him and give him warmth. That will calm him down, and the parent will make him feel secure and safe. In this way, the baby loses the feeling of

discomfort and starts to feel safe, accepted and secure, and the parent starts preparing him not to fear learning new things in the future.

ATTACHMENT

Reactions are the basis of the socio-emotional connections between the child and the parent, as a result of which **attachment** occurs.

Attachment comes from the child's inherent instinct to signal to his parent to be nearby, due to the feeling of security and protection. Attachment develops daily through the satisfaction of the child's basic needs for food, water, sleep, touch, tenderness, or the so called "cycle of anxiety and relaxation".

Every unsatisfied need makes the baby feel anxious, upset and tense. He tries to draw his parent's attention in different ways to show his dissatisfaction. When the parent satisfies the baby's need, the anxiety and dissatisfaction disappear and the baby relaxes. In this way, the parent builds a permanent connection with the child, which makes the child feel safe and secure, even in situations when the figure of attachment is not nearby.

Daily repetition of satisfying the needs in this way is a form of learning. The child learns how to handle tension and stress, to trust his surrounding and to express his needs. This is a confirmation to the child that he is safe, protected and free to explore

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

Your **baby** occasionally wakes up during the night, cries and doesn't settle for a while.

You are tired, you want to have at least one night of uninterrupted sleep. Stay calm and start checking which of the baby's needs is not satisfied. Check if maybe he is: thirsty, hungry, sick, wet, scared, etc. by satisfying his need, the baby will stop crying.

REMEMBER:

- ☞ The baby doesn't cry intentionally, to upset you or to unsettle you.
- ☞ He has an unsatisfied need and reacts instinctively in the only way he knows how.
- ☞ To show your baby that he needs to stop crying at night, never shake or hit him. Shaking and hitting might

momentarily postpone the crying, but it won't satisfy its need and he will soon start crying again. Shaking and hitting may cause permanent injuries to the baby's body and brain.

- ☞ If you are exhausted or stressed, ask for help from your partner, a member of your family, a friend, etc., to replace you in situations like this.

the world. This attachment is the basis for building future relations of the child with the parent and other adults.

The type and quality of attachment and the extent to which the child feels safe and protected will determine how resistant the child will become to separation, fear of the unknown, etc.

THE CHILD STARTS LEARNING AND EXPLORING

At this age, the child starts learning how to use his muscles, learns to chew, and exercises the muscles which he will need to start developing speech, gripping, crawling, making steps and walking.

At this age, the child wants to touch the things around him, and often puts in his mouth whatever he holds. When the child puts things in his mouth, even when they are dangerous for his health, he doesn't have an intention to be "bad", "naughty" and to upset the parent. As he doesn't know danger, he has no concept of what is harmful.





Simply by touching and putting things in his mouth, the child satisfies his instinct and his need to learn about the world that surrounds him.

Therefore, the parent needs to provide a safe living environment for the child, by organizing the space where the child lives.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*Your **child** suddenly reaches the pen and puts it in his mouth. As a **parent**, you need to take the pen from his hand slowly and calmly. Distract the child by offering him his favorite toy. Remove the pen from the child's eyesight, put it in a safe and unreachable place.*

REMEMBER:

-  *The child doesn't do this intentionally to upset you or unsettle you;*
-  *It is how the child explores and learns about his surroundings, stipulates and develops his brain;*
-  *Never yell at him, hit him or punish him in any way just because he has taken something "that is not for children". He doesn't know danger;*
-  *It is you who need to protect him and provide a safe environment where he can freely move and explore.*



4.4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

COMMUNICATION – WORDS AND SENTENCES

At this development stage, the communication between the child and the parent keeps becoming richer.

When the child starts to develop speech, he learns by repetition, imitation and guidance from the adult.

The vocabulary expands on daily basis, and by the age of three the child will have learnt to make simple sentences.

THE CHILD STARTS LEARNING ABOUT INDEPENDENCE

When the child learns to control his movement, he actually learns and improves different new mobility skills. At this age, the child learns to jump, run, push, paddle, catch and throw. All this makes the child more independent in doing different things.

He learns to dress, undress, eat and drink **independently**, which encourages him to be more independent and makes him want to do many activities on his own.

Mobile, independent and encouraged in this way, the child is more open to communication with the wider social environment. The social world extends beyond the boundaries of the family, to the neighbors, and social connections intensify. Through these new social contacts and relations, the child checks and builds on

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*Every morning, your **child** wants to put his shoes on his own. And on this particular morning, when your car is broken and you are late for work, the child wants to dress himself again. Being late makes you stressed, but the child is persistent and won't let you help him.*

*As a **parent**, you need to distract the child, calmly and without yelling, with another activity or his favorite toy. In future, in order to avoid this type of situations, but still allow your child to practice his independence, plan your time more efficiently.*

REMEMBER:

- *The child doesn't intentionally behave in this way, even in specific situations, in order to upset you or unsettle you;*
- *He is only trying to satisfy his need for independence and still doesn't understand how it affects other people;*
- *Never yell at the child or punish him for this behavior. You, as an adult, are responsible to efficiently plan the time for all daily activities, in accordance with the child's development need for independence.*

the previous image he had built of himself. By exploring the environment, the child begins to get to know and become aware of his own body.

THE FIRST “NO” AND WHAT WITH IT?

The first “no” appears in the communication as an expression and test of the child’s independence to the person taking care of him. This “no” is completely different from what the child says in “protest”, due to the unstable and badly built relation with his parent.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*Every day, regardless of what you offer or ask your **child** to do, he immediately says “NO”. You, as a **parent**, need to stay calm and avoid using prohibition or force to let your child know who is “in charge” in the family. It would be more efficient to offer your child a choice, something he can’t respond to with a “yes” or a “no” (for example: “Do you want to wear the white or the yellow t-shirt?”) or to distract him with something he finds interesting. If you need to do something, do it without using words (for example: if the child is holding a lighter in his hand and is trying to light it, approach him and silently take it from him. Once you take the lighter, explain what it is used for, how dangerous it is and who in the family knows how to use it and is allowed to use it).*

REMEMBER:

- *The child doesn’t not intend to upset you or unsettle you;*
- *He sometimes uses the word “no” as an interesting word for communication, for fun, even if he doesn’t mean it;*
- *Therefore, every time your child says “no”, don’t turn your relation with him into a conflict of power;*
- *With this magic word, the child is making the first steps of separation from you, or maybe he is exercising forming a different, personal opinion;*
- *Never yell at him or punish him, because he will always respond to your good will and intention with a “no”. Understand and accept the child’s need for independence, which is part of the process of his successful growing up and maturing;*
- *Respect the individual and the special within the child. Help him, offer him possibilities and provide him with a safe environment where he can practice his own “self”.*

CHILDREN AND FEAR

At this age, the child develops fear of specific things, like fear of separation or darkness. This may worry the parent, but fear is actually an indicator of greater maturity. The child starts to understand better the world around him and becomes aware of danger.

The child starts recognizing and understanding his own feelings. However, he is not mature enough to understand the feelings of others. Therefore, the child constantly needs encouragement and support by the parent, which will be a confirmation to him that he is understood and protected and that his feelings are respected.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*Almost every night, your **child** wakes up crying, complaining that there is a monster in the room and insisting that you sleep with him.*

*As a **parent**, don't mock him, judge him or try to provide a reasonable explanation to reduce his fear. Due to your age, experience and maturity, you know that there are no monsters. But, your child has no life experience and knowledge; to him, the products of his fantasy and imagination are simply real. That is why you need to listen to him, let him explain how he feels, what he is afraid of, so you can help him find a way to deal with situations when he is frightened again.*




PLAY AND ITS POWER

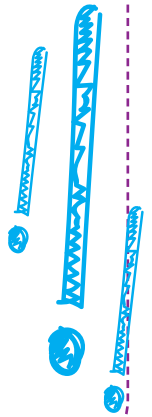
Although the attention span is still short, it gradually increases. The main activity and preoccupation of the child is play.

Through everyday play and activities, the child learns about causal relations, which teaches him about the concepts of right and wrong, good or bad.

Through play, the child increasingly gets to know the world around him, tests the family safety and security and the boundaries set by the caregiver.

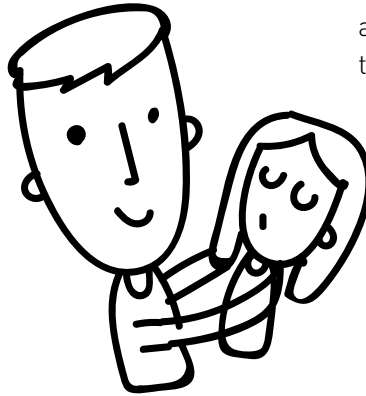
REMEMBER:

-  *The child doesn't behave in this way intentionally in order to unsettle you and/or upset you; Don't yell at him and don't punish him;*
-  *You need to reassure him, protect him, help him understand his own fear, show him how to overcome it and how to protect himself from situations that might upset him.*
-  *If you are tired and sleep deprived due to the frequent interruption of your sleep because of your child's fear, ask for help from your partner, a family member, a friend, etc.*



Through play and by gaining understanding of the causal relations, the child is ready and starts developing personal hygiene habits, i.e. starts gaining control over urination and defecation, which will help him stop using diapers.

The parent may use play to teach the child many different things.



Due to the child's alertness and curiosity, the strategies used by the parent to teach the child about respecting rules and boundaries become clearer. Parenting and the parenting style, which depend on the child's temperament, are being defined. More specifically, they depend on the parent's sensitivity to respond appropriately to the child's temperament, as well as on the similarities of their temperaments.




GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*Every night, your **child** refuses to brush his teeth. You, as a **parent**, have explained on numerous occasions why not brushing teeth is bad, but you are out of patience. You are agitated, you want to yell at him, to threaten him with punishment or to scare him that his teeth will become all black and his friends will make fun of him.*

On the contrary, be calm and through play help your child develop the habit of brushing teeth. During the day or before going to bed, offer your child to play a game where he gets his favorite toy ready for bed – from putting on pajamas, going to the toilet, washing its hands and face, to brushing its teeth. Pay special attention to the teeth brushing, mentioning why teeth need to be brushed.

Then ask your child to do the same for him, just like he did for the toy. And if sometimes he skips or forgets to brush his teeth, remind him of the game you've played.

REMEMBER:

-  The child doesn't behave in this way intentionally in order to unsettle you and/or upset you;
-  The child is simply developing new habits that require time and patience by the parent;
Never yell at him or punish him.
-  You need to show understanding for his mistakes and slips, as well as patience and persistence while your child is developing new habits.

4.5 PRE-SCHOOL AGE

WHY IS THE CHILD CONSTANTLY ASKING QUESTIONS?

At this age, the child gets to know the world around him through curiosity. He wants to know everything, constantly asks questions and realizes that he can learn everything.

When the child **constantly asks questions** or repeats the same question over and over, he doesn't do it intentionally in order to upset or unsettle the parent. He simply learns about the world and repeats, i.e. rehearses what he's learnt.

The parent sometimes gets tired of these questions or doesn't know how to answer them, but he still needs to answer the child with respect. In this way, the parent shows respect for the child's curiosity, approves of his need to learn, encourages learning and shows that he respects his opinion.

LEARNING ABOUT RULES

Sometimes, the child wants to learn about things that are dangerous for him, like handling a lighter, jumping from a high slide, etc. In these situations, the parent needs to take control, and these are the first steps when the child **learns about rules**.

When the parent teaches the child about rules, he needs to explain the reasons for the boundary, i.e. the rule. In this

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*The kindergarten teacher informs you that your **child** refuses to share toys when playing with other children, and often argues with them and hits them if he doesn't have it his way.*

*You, as a **parent**, constantly teach your child at home that he shouldn't argue with his friends or hit them when he disagrees with them. You teach him that he needs to talk things through. However, the child continues to act in this way.*

In a situation like this, think whether you or someone in your child's immediate environment solves conflicts/misunderstandings in this way. Do you or someone else raise their tone and start yelling in situations of disagreement?

Have you or someone else yelled at or punished your child when he acted inappropriately or undesirably?

In order to change your child's behavior, it would be more effective if, besides explaining, you practice the desired behavior yourself always and in every situation.

REMEMBER:

- ❶ *If insults and/or physical punishment is used in the family communication, the child adopts this model of communication and applies it outside the family environment;*
- ❷ *Don't ever yell at or hit your child when he displays a trait you don't like. Ask yourself whether you or someone in his surrounding possesses it. Your behavior is more important than what you verbally teach your child.*
- ❸ *Praise your child whenever he displays desired behavior or a desired personal trait but, most importantly, set a personal example.*

way, the child will understand the reasons for the rule, and he is more likely to respect it.

It must be emphasized that the parent does not only give information and set boundaries and rules, but he is also the child's role model. The parent will be more successful in teaching his child how to behave if he sets a personal example.

PLAY IS STILL DOMINANT AND IMPORTANT TO THE CHILD

The child continues to be mainly preoccupied with play. Though play, the child tests many situations and plays different roles he sees in adults.

The parent may use roleplaying to teach the child various life skills. Through play, the parent enables the child to test and develop his abilities, and gives him "permission" to become independent.

Through play, the child develops his imagination, experiments, discovers how things work, solves problems and seeks new answers. Play helps the development of the child's brain, so the parent must provide the child with time and place for play.

It is expected that the child makes mistakes while learning, but those are unintentional and a result of his inexperience and immaturity.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*Your **child** wants to help you to set the table at meal times, and you allow him and teach him.*

*During a family celebration, you want to serve the cake on a special plate. You are particularly fond of the plate because it is a present from your late mother. You allow you child to help you during the celebration, but you don't let him touch the plate. Unnoticed, the child takes the plate, which slips from his hands and breaks on the floor. You become very upset, especially since you have repeated to him numerous times that he mustn't touch the plate. As a **parent**, you need to stay calm and pick up the pieces of the broken plate. Then, explain to the child that when some things fall, they get damaged, and you don't want that. Show him what he can help with at meal times. Your favorite things need to be put away, out of the child's reach.*

- *The child wants to be part of every family activity because he needs to satisfy his need for developing different skills, abilities and independent behavior;*
- *The mistakes the child makes are not intentional, in order to upset or unsettle you, but are rather a result of his inexperience and lack of knowledge;*
- *Never yell at or punish your child for the mistake;*
- *The parent is responsible to provide a safe environment where the child will develop skills through different activities;*
- *The parent sets the rules and boundaries and assists and helps the child in his process of becoming independent.*

THE CHILD IMPROVES HIS COMMUNICATION AND THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL CONTACTS INCREASES

It is not enough that the child is fed and healthy, he also needs increased contacts with the wider social environment. An important factor in the early child development are the experiences the child gains in the family and the wider social environment. These experiences help the development of the child's intelligence, personality and his social contacts with the environment. Inclusion of the child in a pre-school institution or other organized form, such as the **Center for Early Child Development**³ is very important. This will give the child an opportunity to grow and develop according to his individual needs and possibilities.

The number of social **contacts** and relations outside the family increases through play. The level of socializing increases because play involves other actors, other children. In the group, the child learns about rules, functioning and problem solving, i.e. he becomes aware of the emotions of others, develops empathy and learns to share. Due to the increased number of social contacts, the child's communication skills improve and his vocabulary expands.

By exploring, the child becomes increasingly aware of his own body, of the differences between the sexes, and that arouses his curiosity.



GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

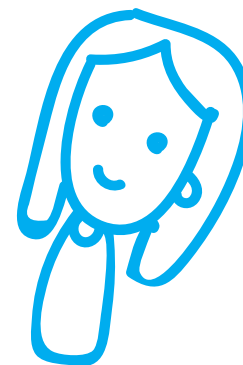
*When he is coloring in his coloring-book, your **child** doesn't want to share his crayons. When his brother takes a crayon, he starts screaming and snaps it from his hand.*

*As a **parent**, you need to calmly approach the child and firmly take the "problem" crayon. Suggest putting the crayon in a safe place and give your child a limited time to discuss with his brother how they will share it. After the time for discussion has passed, ask the child to inform you about the sharing rule.*

If the child fails to come to an agreement with his brother in the given time, help him by offering several solutions from which he and his brother will choose.

REMEMBER:

-  *The undesired behavior of your child is not intentional in order to upset or unsettle you; The child has no experience; he is just starting to learn new rules in new social relations, about sharing and empathy;*
-  *To learn these new skills, the child needs time and leadership from the parent.*



4.6 SCHOOL AGE (6-12 YEARS)

SCHOOL AND ITS ROLE

In this period, the child starts going to school, which is a huge change in the lives of both child and parent. The content and organization of everyday life change. School and peers start having a dominant and emphasized role in the child's development, and his world changes.

- ☞ When starting school, the child will need to learn to:
 - manage alone, without the parent;
- ☞ establish contacts and relations with other unknown children/ persons;
- ☞ establish new habits;
- ☞ respect new rules and boundaries.

The child's first school experience will determine his future attitude towards school.

THE CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT AND NEW CHALLENGES IN SCHOOL

The child's adjustment to new challenges brought by school and school life is hugely influenced by the child's temperament, and the readiness of the parent to respond to it.

The differences in temperament is what makes children adjust differently to the novelties brought by school.

Temperament is inherent. It cannot be changed and it hugely determines what the child will be like. There is no good or bad temperament; there are only different temperaments with their own advantages and disadvantages.

If the parent is aware what his child is like in terms of the nine dimensions of temperament, he will have greater insight into his child's capabilities. Thus, the parent will easily know which areas his child will need help with. This will help the child develop healthy relations with others and live a productive life within the boundaries of his temperament.

The child's temperament traits influence his readiness to start going to school. It is therefore important for the parent to take the child's temperament into account and to respect, value and nurture his individuality and uniqueness.

The child's behavior is also influenced by the parent's temperament, and by the compatibility of their individual temperaments. If the parent sees the difference in temperaments, he will easily understand the reasons for many disagreements. This means that the child alone is a person, just like the parent. Temperaments cannot be changed, so it is important to accept them and respect the differences between the child and the parent.

NINE TEMPERAMENT TRAITS THAT MAKE THE CHILD UNIQUE, SPECIAL AND DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS

1

ACTIVITY LEVEL

- the child is mobile, always active and moving, jumping, running or climbing
- the child is less active, slower, more static, likes looking at picture-books, drawing, coloring, etc.
- the child is somewhere between the above described children.

2

REGULARITY

- the child tends to wake up, eat or rest at regular times
- the child has no regular everyday routine and every day is different
- the child is somewhere between the above described children

3

APPROACH/WITHDRAWAL

- the child is open and ready to socialize with animals and people even upon first encounter
- the child withdraws and prefers to observe from a distance or to withdraw from contact completely
- the child is somewhere between the above described children

4

ADAPTIBILITY

- the child easily adapts to change, sleeps comfortably, plays joyfully and feels good in a new environment
- the child needs more time to adapt to change, doesn't like change of any kind and has difficulties in the transition period (for example, when he comes home from or goes to school).
- the child is somewhere between the above described children

5

INTENSITY

- the child's reacts strongly and loudly, even to minor events. It is difficult to guess how he feels and what he thinks
- the child is calmer and reacts less intensively, even when upset. It is possible that he is withdrawn to such an extent that it can't be determined whether he is upset
- the child is somewhere between the above described children

6

SENSITIVITY

- the child is focused on himself, disregarding and paying no attention to what is happening around him
- the child reacts to everything that is happening around him
- the child is somewhere between the above described children

7

MOOD

- the child was born with a tendency to be more joyful than other children
- the child is by nature sadder and more pessimistic
- the child is somewhere between the above described children

8

DISTRACTIBILITY

- from an early age, the child will disassemble a toy and then spend hours assembling it. He has a big attention scope and great concentration ability
- the child may easily leave what he was doing and start doing something else
- the child is somewhere between the above described children

9

INTERACTION

- the child likes to boss around and keep things under control
- the child prefers to follow the leader
- the child is somewhere between the above described children

INTERACTION WITH PEERS AND INDEPENDENCE

By starting school, the child becomes more autonomous and independent. He leaves the house alone and becomes responsible for his conduct and behavior. He spends more time outside the family home and has constant interaction with his peers. He shows greater interest in socializing and making friends. The child's conduct and behavior is a reaction to, but also the cause of, the behavior of others.

The child creates connections with others, which may be accompanied by positive or negative feelings. These feelings tell the child how others look at the same things. The child learns how others react, how they behave; learns about differences. Due to these new influences, the parent becomes increasingly fearful and worried that he is losing control over the child.

The child starts becoming aware of the group rules, and this is when the first forms of prosocial behavior⁴, such as **altruism**⁵ and **conformity**⁶ occur.

In this period, the child is facing numerous challenges:

- how to communicate with others when he disagrees with them;
- to fight for his opinions and himself; how to defend himself from attacks and how to resolve conflicts;
- how to be good, when others are not; how to stay loyal, even in challenging situations, and how to stand up for others, etc.

By trying and making mistakes, succeeding and failing, backed up by previously developed skills and the level of self-confidence, the child will learn a lot about himself and others. The child will learn about empathy and will understand, check and test his own attitudes and values.

Social contacts of the child with his peers, especially with those from the same sex, intensify. The family is replaced by the peer group. Friendship becomes the most important thing to the child and a new source of support and emotional pleasure. The social group brings novelties, encourages the child to develop new interests and teaches him new skills.

The child's need to belong and be part of the group increases proportionately with the pressure on the child caused by new rules and norms.

Sometimes, the child has to choose between doing something suggested by the group which he knows his parents would disapprove of, or refusing to do it; to choose between being accepted by the group or disappointing his parents, or risk being rejected by the group that is important to him.






GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

You notice that when your child is with his friends from school, he uses bad language and swear words. But, when he is alone or with his cousins, he doesn't use such words.

As a parent, you are upset by this. You don't use such words in your everyday communication, and you don't want your child to use them. When he uses such words, you reprimand him.

Instead of constantly reprimanding or punishing him, stay calm, and when you are alone with your child, let him know that you don't want to hear bad language. Talk to your child and tell him you have noticed that he uses such words only when he is with his school friends. Ask him whether he knows what those words mean and ask him to suggest other, not so impolite, words that he might use in the communication with his peers.

REMEMBER:

-  *Understand that your child needs to do certain things in order to be liked and accepted by his peers;*
-  *He doesn't do these things to upset you, but simply to satisfy his need for belonging and acceptance by the social environment. Don't ever yell at him or punish him;*
-  *Show understanding, patience and persistence, and help him find a way to deal with the challenges imposed by his peers, friends, and the wider social environment.*

PROTECTION AND INDEPENDENCE

The child's need for belonging and acceptance by the group often confuses and scares the parent. He is worried about the "pressure" of environment on the child.

It is therefore necessary that the parent protects his child from danger, at the same time respecting his even stronger need for independence.

ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS TO PROTECT THE CHILD FROM THE PRESSURE OF ENVIRONMENT

SPENDING TIME TOGETHER

- family activities
- conversations about the child's friends
- honest and open conversation about upcoming challenges
- encouragement that the parent is always there for the child

BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING THE CHILD'S SELF-CONFIDENCE



help the child discover and believe in his capabilities



INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHILD'S EDUCATION

- attend school events and performances
- meet the child's teachers
- talk about school assignments and offer help

MEETING THE CHILD'S FRIENDS

- allow the child to invite his friends home
- meet their families

BUILDING CLOSENESS, BUT FROM A SAFE DISTANCE

- be informed where the child is and who with, but still respect his need for privacy
- show him that he trusts him

The parent may assist the child's **independence** by helping him develop a sense of:

♥ **good and bad** (to talk about dangerous activities and explain why he should avoid smoking, drinking or taking drugs; to talk about his own and the child's values; to talk about puberty changes; to talk about pressure of the environment, making choices and the consequences of those choices; to talk about how the child should protect himself from pressure of the environment, etc.);

♥ **responsibility** (to include the child in household chores; to talk about money and teach him about reasonable spending; to include him in the process of making family decisions and rules, etc.);

♥ **empathy** and respect for others (to entice his child to help those in trouble and to teach him how to react when others are mean to him, etc.);

♥ **to think about his own future** (to help the child set personal goals; to help him achieve those goals; to encourage him in pursuing his dreams, etc.).

In this period, the child applies everything that he has learned and practiced so far:

- to respect himself and others;
- to resolve conflicts and problems;
- to express his feelings appropriately and constructively.

The child constantly practices and perfects these skills away from his parents, which makes him more independent.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*As your **child** is leaving his room, you ask him what he wants to have for dinner but he doesn't respond. You ask him one more time, but he snaps at you that he doesn't want to talk to you.*

*As a **parent**, you may be confused or angered by this reaction, because your child doesn't appreciate your good intentions. Instead of becoming angry, stay calm and tell him that you see that he is upset and that you are willing to talk to him when he is ready. When you do talk to him, listen carefully and offer to help him with whatever is bothering him.*

Also talk about your feelings caused by his reaction. Explain to him that mutual respect is very important in interpersonal relations, even when someone is upset. Offer to help him find a way, acceptable to him, to communicate with others even when he is upset or irritated.

REMEMBER:

- *The child doesn't react in this way in order to upset or insult you. He has no experience and knowledge how to control his feelings;*
- *Puberty and hormonal changes influence the child's frequent emotional and mood swings;*
- *Never yell at or punish your child. Be patient, show him that you understand him, and that he is loved and protected by you. The best time to talk is after the "storm" has passed. Your reaction after the "storm" is the personal example that your child will always follow.*

PUBERTY

Puberty is the beginning of adolescence. It is an intensive period of significant, dramatic and substantial changes in the child. The child grows fast and undergoes drastic physical and physiological changes. He suddenly grows taller, and as the bones grow faster than the muscles, the child often looks disproportional and clumsy.

Hormonal changes lead to sexual maturity of the child's reproductive organs. At this age, the lack of knowledge about sexuality causes children to reject any affinity towards the opposite sex. As the child grows and learns more about sexuality, his relations with the opposite sex become more and more important.

These changes also affect the emotional stability of the child. Mood swings and dramatic shifts in emotions are a regular occurrence.

The parent's most important task in this period is to support and guide the child.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*As your **child** is leaving his room, you ask him what he wants to have for dinner but he doesn't respond. You ask him one more time, but he snaps at you that he doesn't want to talk to you.*

*As a **parent**, you may be confused or angered by this reaction, because your child doesn't appreciate your good intentions. Instead of becoming angry, stay calm and tell him that you see that he is upset and that you are willing to talk to him when he is ready. When you do talk to him, listen carefully and offer to help him with whatever is bothering him.*

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4.7 ADOLESCENCE (13-18 YEARS)

In this period, the child becomes increasingly independent and uses whatever he has learnt and adopted in the previous stages. Socialization and the social contacts he builds with his peers and other people become richer, deeper, more intense and very important to him.

The child has self-awareness and considers himself the center of the world. He is obsessed with his physical appearance, popularity, sexual attraction and self-acceptance.

INDIVIDUALITY AND UNIQUENESS – IDENTITY

The child deepens his communication and interaction with the environment, which enables him to discover himself, i.e. his identity. When building his identity, the child experiments, trying different traits of different persons, in order to find out what suits him best.

Forming of the child's identity is accompanied by his strong desire to emphasize his uniqueness and individuality to his parents and other people. The child often expresses his uniqueness and individuality from what others expect of him through:

- the choice of music;
- affinity to a certain type of food;
- choice of clothes and hairstyle;
- choice of leisure activities and hobbies;
- choice of friends and beliefs;
- plans for the future, etc.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*Your **child** frequently wants to listen to loud music, not paying attention if anyone in the family likes that music or is maybe resting. He often listens to music late at night when everyone is asleep.*

*As a **parent**, you need to know that your child's desire to listen to loud music is not intentional in order to upset you. He just gets carried away and forgets about the surrounding.*

If your choice of music is different from your child's, don't mock or judge him. Talk about why he likes that music and how he feels when he is listening to it.

Ask him how he would feel if someone around him did something that he didn't like and that would upset him.

Remind him that by listening to loud music he is disregarding the needs of the others in his surroundings.

Remind him of the family rules regarding rest times during the day and propose setting a time together when he will be able to listen to loud music without disturbing anyone.

REMEMBER:

- ❶ *The child doesn't do this to upset you or anger you. Never yell at him or punish him.*
- ❷ *You need to understand his need to express himself through music, which is a part of the process of building his own identity and uniqueness.*
- ❸ *Always include your child in solving mutual problems or setting new family rules, because they concern him too.*

EXPERIMENTING:

This experimenting is very similar to the one happening during the first years of the child's life, when he experiments with different objects in order to explore and get to know the world.

In this period, there is a dominant sense of power, strength, and even a sense of immortality in the child, which makes him uncritical in his experiments. That is simply motivated by the need to discover his true self, which is special and different from that of his parent.

As a result, the child often experiments with things that may be prohibited or different to what his parent does. The child makes new, unusual and strange choices in the way he dresses, does his hair, communicates, etc. These choices scare the parent, who often asks himself where all the things he taught his child have gone.

In his choices, the child will make mistakes. But, it is very important for him to know that he can always ask his parent for help without fear of being mocked or criticized.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

*This year for the first time, your **child** will celebrate the New Year's eve away from home, in a café with friend. He tells you that he has heard his friends say that some of them may be drinking alcohol. He states that he approves of that and, since he is old enough, he might have a glass or two.*

*As a **parent**, you are upset and scared. You don't want your child to drink alcohol and fear that he might get drunk. You want to protect him, and you even think about forbidding him to hang out with his friends who are planning on drinking alcohol and even forbidding him to celebrate out.*

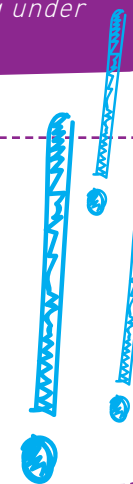
By using prohibition or punishment, you won't discourage your child from drinking alcohol, maybe only postpone or increase his curiosity.

Refrain from criticizing and stress to your child that you are always here to help him if he finds himself in an uncomfortable situation; that you appreciate his honesty and that you love him and you will always support him.

It would be good to talk about your personal experience with alcohol. If you talk about your personal experiences, you won't encourage him to drink alcohol; on the contrary, you will show him that you yourself have been in the same or similar situation. Offer to help him deal with the challenge he is facing under peer pressure.

REMEMBER:

- The child doesn't do this to anger you, hurt you or upset you;
- Never yell at him or punish him;
- You need to understand his need for autonomy, for experimenting in the search of his own self, which is special and different from that of the parent;
- He needs your affirmation that you understand him and that you are always here to support and help him.



CONTROL AND INDEPENDENCE

The child doesn't want to be controlled, but mutual trust with his parent is very important to him.

Independence spurs the child to question his parent's beliefs and opinions, and at the same time strengthens his moral values and norms. In this way, the individualization deepens, and the child continues to build on the image of himself, which depends on self-acceptance and self-respect, with the help of his parent.

The most important things the parent can do at this development stage are:

- to strengthen the parent-child relation;
- to monitor and observe his child's activities;
- to encourage independence.

The parent-child relation is created and developed from the very birth of the child, and continues to define and form itself throughout the development stages. If it is warm, gentle, stable, strong and full of love, it is likely that the child will have a smooth transition through this tempestuous period without trying to avoid contacts with his parent.

When the parent-child connection is burdened with excessive control and punishment, it is likely that the child:

- will be afraid and will avoid his parents;
- will lie more frequently;
- will become anxious, depressive, or wayward and aggressive;
- will become rebellious, etc.

The child's increased need for independence is in conflict with the parent's need to offer order and structure. It is best when the parent is able to monitor and observe what the child is doing, but in a way that respects the child's need and right to privacy and independence.

Observing and monitoring are more successful if the parent is in constant interaction with the child, but in a fun way. This could be achieved if the parent:

- ≡ knows his child's friends;
- ≡ often talks to the child;
- ≡ shows interest for the child's routine and free time activities;
- ≡ does things with the child that they both enjoy.

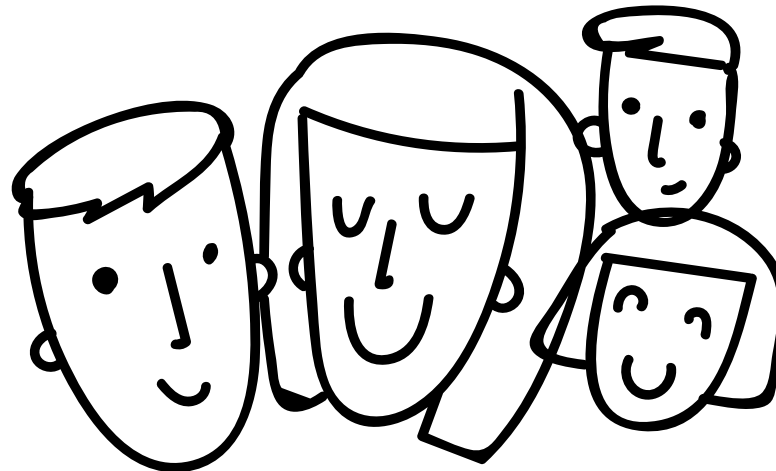
INDEPENDENCE AND MAKING DECISIONS

This period is a huge opportunity for the parent to show and teach the child, in a safe environment, how to make independent and appropriate decisions.

- The parent may encourage and strengthen independence through:
- supporting the child, even when he is wrong;
- encouraging the child to try again when he fails;
- expressing unconditional love;
- respecting the child's ideas and different opinions;
- talking to the child on the same level.

Supporting and strengthening the child for independence is achieved through daily communication, which the parent may improve if he:

- actively listens;
- avoids humiliating and ridiculing the child;
- understand the child and his behavior even when he disapproves;
- includes the child in family conversation and in making family decisions;
- respects the child's thinking and opinion;
- understands that in this phase the child is building his identity and independence.

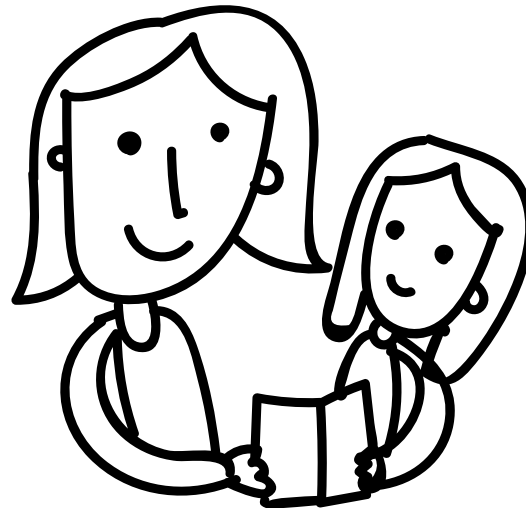


4.8 “PSYCHOSOCIAL CRISIS” THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT STAGES AND INADEQUATE PARENTS` BEHAVIOR

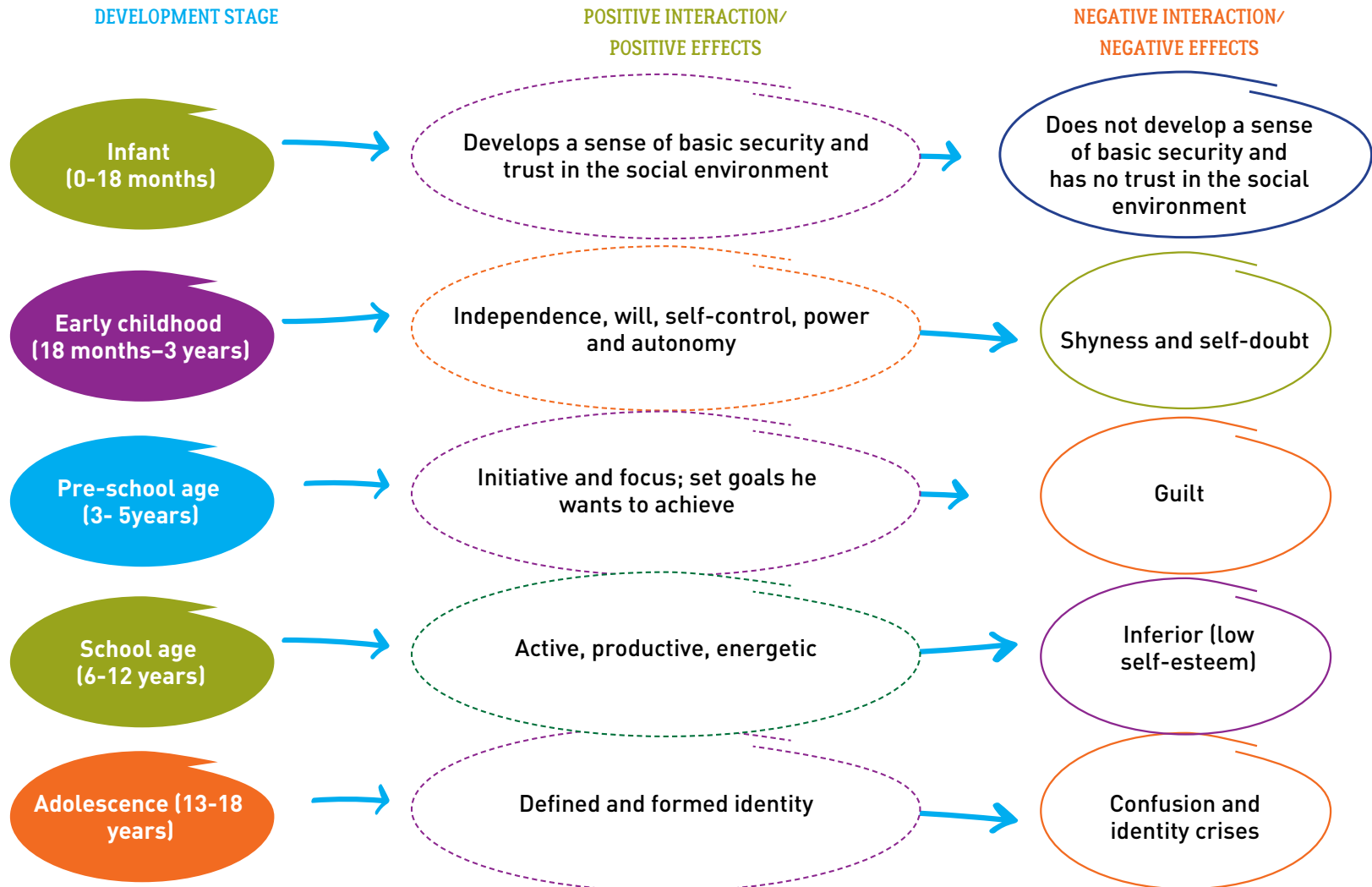
Proper growth and development of the child, through all development stages, is conditioned by the way his needs are satisfied. Many different actors are involved in the satisfaction of the child`s needs: parents, family and relatives, peers, friends, and everyone directly or indirectly involved in the care, raising and rearing of the child. The child satisfies his needs through communication and interaction with all of these actors. That communication and interaction may be positive and filled with respect, proactivity, empathic leadership and positive discipline.

However, it may also be negative and filled with disrespect, imposing rules, stiffness, prohibitions, punishments, ridicule, criticism, etc.

The type of communication and interaction between the child and the social environment will determine the outcome of the “psychosocial crisis”, which may be positive or negative. The positive outcome will ensure upward development and growth of the child, leading to a mature, independent, competent and autonomous person. The negative outcome will slow down the growth and development, may cause stagnation or regression, and the child won`t be able to develop into a complete and mature person.



TYPE OF INTERACTION AND THE EFFECTS OF THE POSSITIVE AN NEGATIVE OUTCOME OF THE “PSYCHOSOCIAL” CRISES ON THE CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT





5

IMPROVING PARENTS'
COMMUNICATION
SKILLS IN RELATION
TO THE CHILD

Everything the parent does with the child is a form of communication. By communicating, the parent sends messages to the child in an attempt to convey what he thinks, feels or wants. It does not only include spoken words, but also the parent's tone of voice, facial expressions and body language. The way in which the parent communicates with the child can send a message of respect, empathy and care, but can also send an opposite, negative message. Positive communication with the child causes desire and motive for cooperation with the parent, based on closeness, love and mutual respect, rather than distance, control, fear and domination. It reduces the child's resistance. The way in which the parent communicates with the child becomes a model which teaches the child how to communicate with other people, how to solve problems, be aware of himself and the others, respect himself and the others.

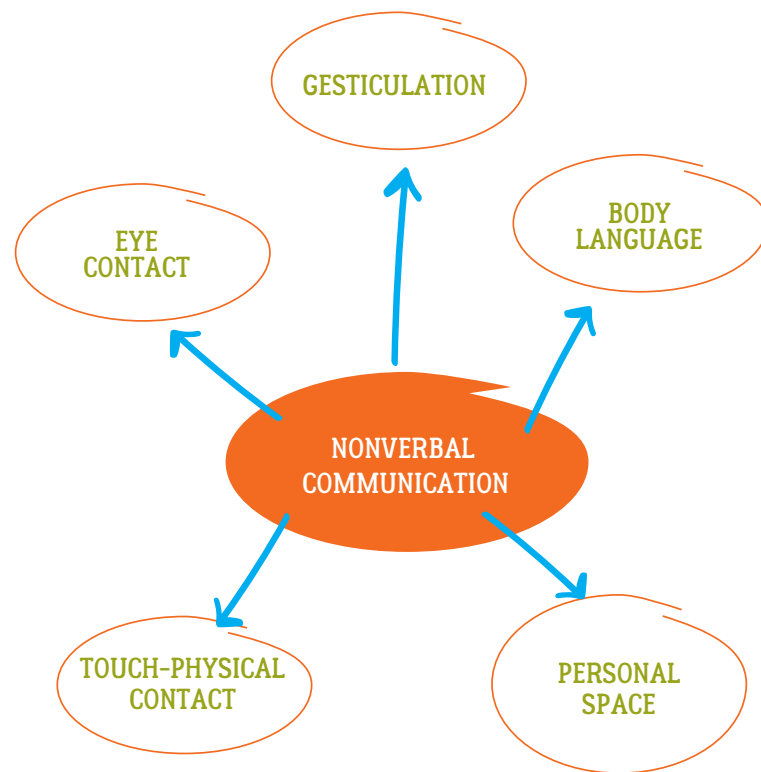


Communication in people can be intentional and unintentional. When information received from the other person has emotional content, it causes reaction and the communication becomes more intimate and more significant.

Children communicate in many different ways. They express themselves not only through words, but also through their behavior, play, modelling, music, singing, dancing and writing. The parent-child interaction is a combination of verbal and nonverbal communication. Only 8% of the messages received by the child come from verbal communication with the parent, while 92% come from nonverbal communication.

5.1 NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Nonverbal communication refers to the intentional or unintentional communication through body language. It is communication without words which is recognized by signs, such as:



When communicating, the parent uses these signs independently or in combination with words when he wants to send a message or to emphasize the meaning of the spoken word.

EYE CONTACT

Eye contact is very important and critical for a good parent-child relation. Eye contact may be a means of expressing paternal love to the child, especially if accompanied by gentle words and pleasant facial expressions. Babies start focusing things very early, at 2-4 weeks after birth, and at two months their eyes meet the eyes of the adults and the emotional feeding begins. Then the child feels loved.

However, through eye contact, the parent can also reprimand the child, give him an order, criticize him or control him. This method may be efficient at an early age (2-3 years), when the child is obedient and afraid. But, as the child grows, fear is replaced by anger. This does not constitute positive parent-child communication. Sometimes, depriving the child from eye contact is punishment enough for him.

The parent needs to know that eye contact is the basic source of the emotional raising of the child and it is preferable that the parent uses direct eye contact without hesitation. The parent shouldn't talk to the child while he has his back turned to him. If necessary, the parent needs to kneel down to the

child's level, take him by the hand and turn him towards himself. He shouldn't get in his face, as this may be scary for the child.

Eye contact strengthens the parent-child relation, i.e. attachment.

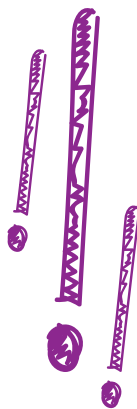
EXAMPLE:

The father kneels down to his six-year old son Ramadan's level, looks him in the eyes and says gently: "You pushed your brother because he was too close to you. Instead of pushing him, you can ask him nicely to step away. It hurts him when you push him away", or, the father maintains direct eye contact with his son and says: "I can see you are very upset".

GESTICULATION

Gesticulation means using different body parts (hands, legs) in communication. Gesticulation may be conscious or unconscious, conventional or general and culture-specific. Gesticulation sends a message of: openness, understanding, confirmation, frustration, acceptance, trust, doubt, etc.

Besides their culture-specific nature, some gesticulations are universally recognized, for



example: smiling is a positive sign; showing a fist means anger; nodding means understanding, etc.

BODY LANGUAGE

Body language refers to certain information that the parent wants to communicate to the child. Leaning forward and coming closer to the other person sends a message of closeness, respect, welcome, etc. Standing with legs apart and arms open wide may indicate dominance and decisiveness. Also, muscle tonus is part of body language. Keeping the body straight and tight may indicate alertness, while a slacked body may indicate disinterest and lack of attention.

PERSONAL SPACE

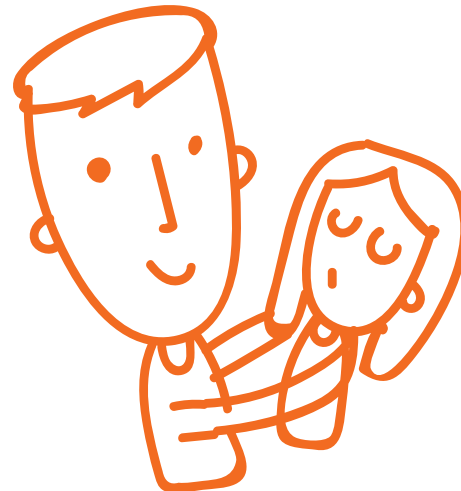
This part of the nonverbal communication refers to the space immediately surrounding the child or the parent that is considered life space or a safe zone where they feel comfortable. This space is different for everyone, and it should be respected and not invaded without permission.

In certain family rituals, like celebrations of birthdays, the place where someone sits or stands and the size of the personal space may indicate the family structure, relations and dynamics.

TOUCH – PHYSICAL CONTACT

Touch and physical contact are also used in communication as a direct or indirect channel for communicating certain thoughts, feelings and opinions, regardless whether they are positive or negative.

Every adult has a different need for touch and contact. In small children, i.e. babies, this need is basic and needs to be satisfied by the parent. The physical contact needs to be spontaneous, pleasant and natural, and the content changes as the child grows.



5.2 VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication is the basis of language. The communication with words comprises the following elements:

PITCH AND TONE OF VOICE

If the parent wants to emphasize the meaning of the spoken words, it can be accomplished through pitch and tone of voice.

ACCENT AND DIALECT

The parent-child communication may be improved if the parent uses a dialect or word accenting that is understandable for the child.

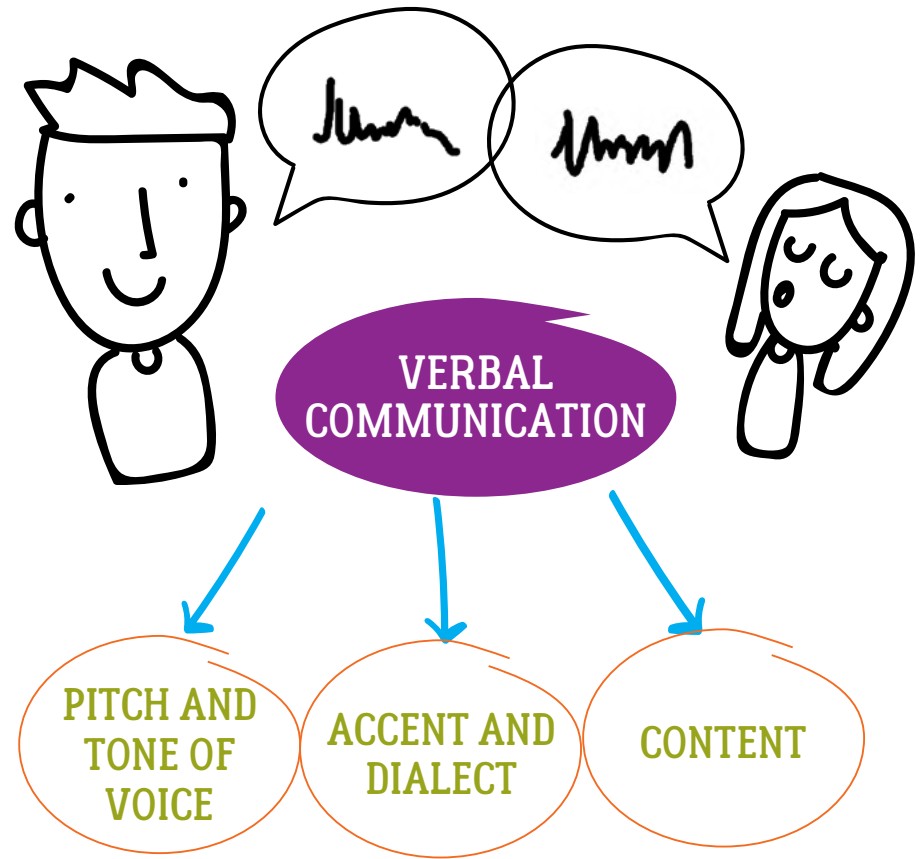
CONTENT

The content (words) of the verbal communication is determined by the words used in terms of expressing feelings, opinions, sending messages, etc.

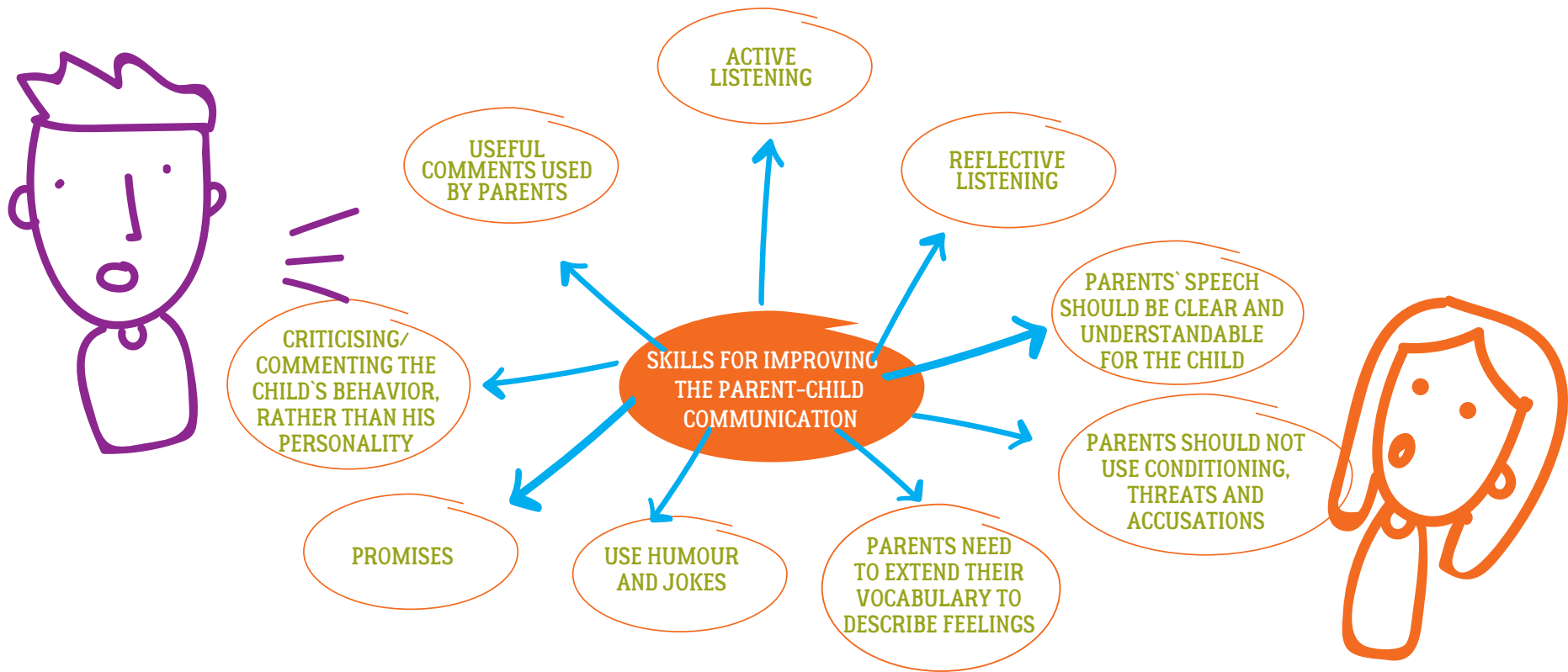
5.3. SKILLS FOR IMPROVING THE PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION

ACTIVE LISTENING

Parents often want to verbalize and retell the experiences they've shared with their children. In doing so, parents often focus on their own impressions and thoughts, not letting the child talk about his.



That is very risky in the society in which children grow today, as the child may easily succumb to the pressure of the group that instructs his behavior. If the child learns to reason, he will use critical thinking and will be able to make his own decisions. Instead of immediately jumping in and taking things into his own hands, the



parent needs to leave the child say what he thinks, how he feels, and offer a solution.

Active listening is one of the communications skills that is most difficult to learn. It is important that the parent listens when the child talks, because in that way he will teach him to think.

The parent needs to ask interested questions, like: What...? How...? Why...? and to give the child enough time to say what he thinks and how he feels. If the parent doesn't have enough time to listen to the child's answers, then he better not ask questions.

USEFUL QUESTIONS:

- What are you thinking?
- How do you feel?
- How can this information be useful to you in future?



EXAMPLE:

Ten-year old child Phillip: My bike is gone, someone has stolen it... (he is upset, screaming and crying).

The father: I am very sorry. You are very upset. Calm down and tell me what happened?

Phillip: I left it there... someone stole it. I am sad. I am so sorry. The bike was new. Why do people steal?

The father: We can't control other people, but you can do something to protect your things.

Phillip: I won't leave my things out any more. I will lock my bike...

The father: You've obviously learnt a lot from this. Later we will talk about what you need to change in order to be more careful with your things.

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Another way the parent may show his child that he is listening is by acting like a "mirror", i.e. by repeating what he has just heard. It is best to use different words, but the content should be the same.

EXAMPLE:

Eight-year old Omer: I am not playing with Goran anymore!

The mother: You are not playing with your best friend?

Omer: No, because he doesn't want to go out and play, but he is playing a computer game with Marco.

The mother: He chose to play with Marco instead of you?

Omer: Yes. I am angry at him. I will never be friends with him again.

The mother: It is good that you told me how you feel.

Omer: And I will tell the others...

The mother: Mhm, aha...mmm.

It is more efficient when the parent leaves room to the child to express his emotions without judging, instead of lecturing him. In this way, the parent will enable the child to learn.

It is sometimes more efficient for the parent to be silent and don't say a word. He will be surprised how much the child has to say. The parent may also communicate with the child nonverbally, through his face expressions, body language, or by adding simple words like: aham, mhm, hmm, etc., but with obvious interest.

PARENTS' SPEECH SHOULD BE CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE FOR THE CHILD

It is very important that the parent uses a language that is understandable for the child and appropriate to his age. The language must be clear and specific, without derogatory words, and the conversation must make the child feel respected and loved.

PARENTS SHOULD NOT USE CONDITIONING, THREATS AND ACCUSATIONS

Using conditioning, threats and blackmail is manipulation with the child, and that may potentially lead to the child developing the same skill. With their use, the parent achieves quick but short-term control over the child. It doesn't



enable him to set boundaries and establish control in the long run, which may make the child less cooperative.

This is an example of a parent using **wrong strategies** for solving the child's problem.

EXAMPLE:

Fourteen-year old Bojan has been playing on the computer for five hours. His mother is trying to motivate him to stop this activity which has a negative influence on him, makes him irritable, upset, and may damage his health.

The mother: I am worried about you and your health. Your eyes get tired, you have been sitting on that chair for five hours, you get upset and you yell. End the game and get off the computer. I don't trust you any more, you don't respect our agreement. You are a spoilt brat (**accusation**).

Bojan: In a minute.

The mother: I told you to stop right now. I will tell your father, and he will show you (**threat**).

Bojan: I said in a minute. Don't tell dad.

The mother: I will switch off the computer now and no more playing (**threat**).

Bojan: OK, I`m almost done. Five more minutes.

The mother: OK, you can play for five more minutes if you take the lunch to your grandmother **(conditioning)**.

Bojan: OK, I am finishing and I am taking the lunch to grandma. But you will make dad buy me the latest computer game, I need to install it soon **(developing the same skill and conditioning by the child)**.

An example of a parent using **positive strategies** for solving the problem with the child:

EXAMPLE:

The mother: Bojan, dear, I am worried about your health. You spend too much time on the computer, your eyes and back get tired, you get upset.

Bojan: No mom, I don`t.

The mother: Of course you do.
Convince me that I needn`t worry.

Bojan: I`ll finish in five minutes and I`ll prove you.

The mother: OK, I`m waiting. But we`ll need to talk and set some rules and boundaries, so you can satisfy



your need for socializing over the computer and I wouldn`t worry so much. (The mother patiently waits for Bojan to finish without pressuring him. She is avoiding threats, blackmail and conditioning. Five minutes more or less don`t mean much, but mean a lot in the creation of a more relaxed atmosphere for conversation and agreement).

PARENTS NEED TO EXTEND THEIR VOCABULARY TO DESCRIBE FEELINGS

If the parent wants the child to develop emotional intelligence, to learn about feelings, he must learn to listen to the child when he wants to talk about how he feels, without trying to explain or correct him. If the child expresses his feeling nonverbally, starts crying or has a tantrum, the parent may help him verbalize his feeling. That way the child may recognize the same feeling in a different situation. Feelings may be described with a single word: happy, sad, relaxed, hurt, scared, hungry, proud, sleepy, angry, helpless, irritated, embarrassed, joyful.

The parent needs to be an empathic leader, to show empathy to the child and his feelings, rather than devalue them, considering that they are very real to the child.

EXAMPLE:

Seven-year old Daniela is angry because she can't make a house of cards. She goes into a tantrum, throws the cards around the room and starts screaming and crying.

The father: *Are you upset because you can't make a house of cards? You don't like it that you can't do it, do you?*

When the parent names the feeling, he teaches the child to words and what they mean. Thus, the child learns to name, rather than only express the feeling he is experiencing.

EXAMPLE:

The mother: *I am afraid that if you keep squeezing the parrot like that you may hurt it, or it may cluck you on the hands or the face. Be gentler with it.*

If this intervention doesn't help the parent, he can take the parrot from the child. In doing that, he needs to explain to the child that he doesn't like how he is playing with it or show him a gentler way of doing that.

USE STATEMENTS LIKE – I'VE NOTICED, I'VE REALIZED, I'VE SEEN

The parent often needs to ask the child questions he already knows the answers to, only to check if he is telling the truth.

EXAMPLE:

Have you brushed your teeth? Have you done your homework? Instead of these questions, it is better to use different formulations.

The mother: *I've noticed that you haven't brushed your teeth. Let's do it now.*

The child: *Yes, I brushed my teeth.*

The mother: *Excellent. Let me see. I must be wrong.*

USE HUMOUR AND JOKES

As children grow, parenting may become a very serious task. When children are young, at pre-school age, they are cute and everything they do that is typical for their age is seen by the parent as cute, adorable... their gooing, smiling, walking, singing. As children grow into adolescence, everything they do that is typical for their age is seen by the parent as frightening, difficult to accept, so the parent forgets

to mention how cute it is that the child dresses according to fashion trends and his age, rather than by the parents' standards. When, at the age of three, children dress as Spiderman, they are cute and interesting. But, when at the age of 16, they dress in baggy slacked pants, parents see them as dressed in rags. Parents find it difficult to accept everything that is new and modern, and which is not in line with their standards, such as tattoos, piercing, earrings in unusual places, dreadlocks, etc. In situations like this, in order to overcome the parent-child tension, humor is recommended.

It is good for the parent to pretend that he is reading the horoscope for the child's sign and say something positive that is important to him, or to say that the horoscope for the parent's sign says that it is good to hug the child five times a day. He may use nicknames – children like it when parents joke on their account about their individuality and uniqueness, but in a positive connotation. It is good when parents laugh with the child, but not at the child.

PROMISES

Parents shouldn't make promises that they can't keep or haven't previously discussed with their partner. Only when they are sure that they can keep the promise, parents may communicate it.

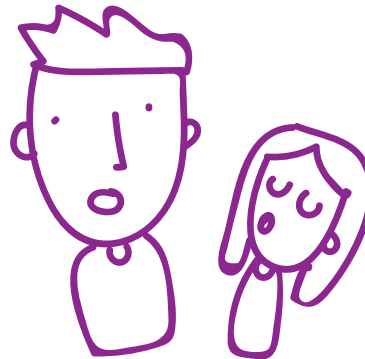
EXAMPLE:

The father: *It is time to go clothes shopping. Do you want us to go today, or some other day?*

Also, it is not recommended that the parent asks the child to make promises.

CRITICISING/COMMENTING THE CHILD'S BEHAVIOR, RATHER THAN HIS PERSONALITY

Criticism and comments should be directed at the child's behavior, rather than his personality. Criticism should be adapted to the child's age and the reason for it.





I-MESSAGE

EXAMPLE:

The mother of four-year old Bisera comments the mess in the girl's room.

***The mother:** I don't like it when your clothes are all over the room.*

These messages are simplest, as they indicate the child's behavior while simultaneously show the parent's feelings. Very small children won't react to this message, because to them their own feelings are most important and they disregard the feelings of others. Also, reaction will lack from a child to whom parents' feeling are not a priority, for example, adolescents in a rebellious stage.

POWERFUL MESSAGE -

It bothers me, it makes me angry ... (the parent expresses his own feelings) ... when you ... (correct description of the child's behavior) ... because... (explaining or stating the reason) ... so please... (direction to improved behavior).

EXAMPLE:

***The mother:** It bothers me and it makes me angry when you leave your shoes in front of the door, because someone may trip. So please leave them in the shoe cabinet. This is a house rule and we all need to follow it – including your father, your brother and me.*

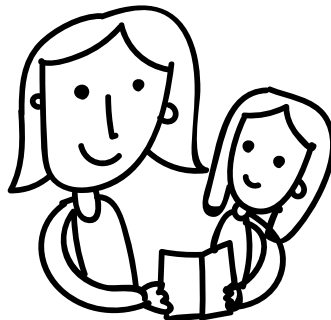
YOU-MESSAGE

When you behave like that (exact description of the behavior) ... you ... (possible consequence of such behavior for the child) ... so it`s better that you ... (redirection to acceptable behavior).

EXAMPLE:

The father: *Today, you went to school again without having done your math homework. If you do that again, on Friday, instead of going out with your friends, you will stay home and practice math. So, it`s better that you regularly write your math homework for the rest of the week.*

The you-message is different from the other two in the way that the parent states the consequences of such behavior to the child. The parent can do this only if rules and boundaries have previously been set, so the child makes his own choice as to what is more important to him. However, the parent needs to follow up on what he had said. The parent needs to keep his word and to be consistent with regard to both the positive promises and the negative consequences.



COMMENT/CRITICISM OF BEHAVIOR+PRAISE OF THE CHILD'S PERSONALITY

EXAMPLE:

The mother: *I am really surprised that you have missed your English class today, knowing that you are a very hardworking child.*

The father: *What do you mean you won`t return the book to the library. You are a responsible person.*

This rule is best used with school-children, as the parent sends a clear message that he respects the child`s personality, but he doesn`t like the specific behavior. The child will better hear and understand such a comment.

PRAISE OF PERSONALITY+ COMMENT/CRITICISM OF BEHAVIOR+PRAISE OF PERSONALITY

EXAMPLE:

The father: *It`s good that you went to gym class today. But, I`m surprised that you haven`t apologized to the teacher for your absence from previous classes, as you are very responsible and it doesn`t look like you.*

This rule is applied to very sensitive children, especially in the puberty stage.

**PRAISE OF PERSONALITY+ COMMENT/CRITICISM
OF BEHAVIOR+PRAISE OF PERSONALITY**

EXAMPLE:

The mother: *You think it`s ok not to make your bad, while we all do it?*

The father: *Tell me, please, what is wrong with this behavior?*

This way of communication is suitable for school-children, as we will make them think about their behavior and make their own conclusions. After the child accepts the comment/criticism, the parent may briefly explain further or ask the child to think his behavior through.

REDIRECTING:

EXAMPLE:

The father: *Please go back to the library and take the book you need for tomorrow.*

This is pure criticism, structured as an order. It is applied in extreme circumstances, when all previous attempts have failed. We repeat that all of the above said may be used if the parent has already set clear house rules and boundaries. Still, if the parent has been put in a situation to say this, he should do it in a positive way, with a calm rather than an ordering tone. The manner in which the parent says his opinion is often more effective than what he is saying.

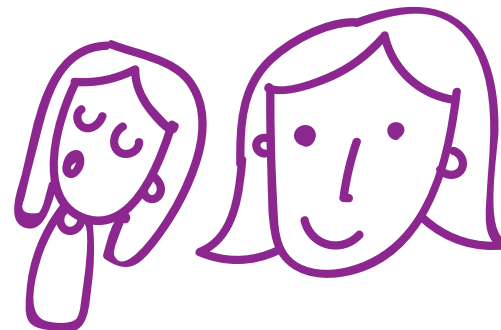
CALL FOR SELF-CRITICISM

EXAMPLE:

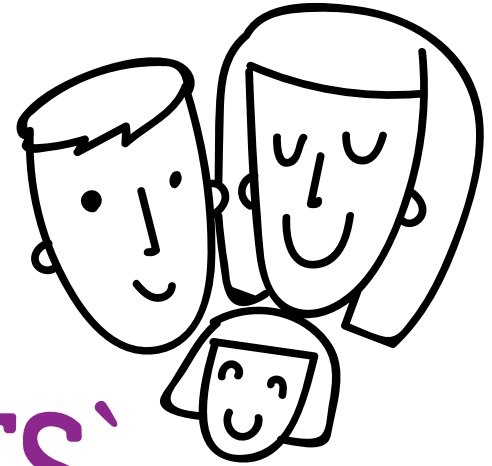
The mother: What do you think you can do after your conflict with the chemistry teacher?

The mother: *If you could turn back time, what would you do differently?*

In this way, the parent calls on the child to come to the desired, useful and acceptable behavior himself. It causes conflict, fight, but in the child himself, rather than with the parent.



6



**IMPROVING PARENTS'
SKILLS FOR BETTER
COOPERATION WITH AND
MOTIVATION OF THE CHILD**



LOWERING THE CHILD'S RESISTANCE BY UNDERSTANDING HIS EMOTIONS

When the child shows resistance, it means that he disagrees with the parent's demands or that he wants something that his parent doesn't allow. The child may get the impression that the parent doesn't understand him, doesn't listen to him, and even that he doesn't love him.

When the child shows resistance, the parent should calmly show that he understands his request, but that he can't allow that for certain reasons. The child should get the message that the parent understands his need and his feelings, but that the rules and boundaries need to be respected. It is important that this is done in a way that is appropriate to the age of the child and with lots of patience. The child's resistance hides many emotions, like sadness, fear, anger, which the parent needs to amortize.

EXAMPLE:

Five-years old Ivan: *I want ice-cream.*

The father: *We are having lunch soon, then we'll have ice-cream for dessert.*

Ivan: I want ice-cream now, I'll take it myself ... (starts screaming, opens the fridge but can't reach the ice-cream and starts crying).

After a short while...

The father: *I know you want ice-cream. You are really angry, you are hungry, but you won't have ice-cream now. First lunch, then ice-cream.*

The child stops crying for a second and listens to his father. Then, he starts crying again and makes a mess.

The father: *You still have to wait for the lunch to be ready.*

The child doesn't cry any more, but he is sad and angry, saying that he is never allowed ice-cream. However, resistance is lowering.

The father: *I understand that you are sad. You want ice-cream, but you have to wait. You really need to wait a little longer. But, be sure you'll get it. Let me hug you. Let's wipe the tears, you know how much I love you.*

The father shows that he understands and loves the child, and that a hug is all he needs. In a proactive child, more patience is needed and the process may last longer. The more sensitive the child, the more time the parent will need to enter his oversensitivity and to show him that he understands him.

AVOID LABELLING AND COMPARISON

There is a noticeable trend nowadays to label and diagnose every deviation in the child's behavior, regardless how small. More temperamental children become hyperactive, opinionated, defiant and rebellious, strong willed and antisocial, etc. But, this is normal behavior that can be turned to positive experience by positive parenting. The child doesn't want to be compared to other children, especially in a negative connotation, and especially if he is compared to a child who has all A's at school or a child who is best at sports. The child wants to be his own and respected as he is.

PARENTS' "YES" AS OPPOSED TO PARENTS' "NO"

The eternal parents' dilemma – when to show approval and support and say "yes", and when to say "no". This is one of the most complex answers. Parents' "yes" doesn't need further elaboration, but parents' "no" produces many other questions by the child...why, how, where from, etc. Therefore, the parent's "no" should be the gentles answer that demands courage, engagement, honesty and care by parents. Parents' "no" should mean leadership, proper guidance, but it shouldn't mean losing the child as a partner, so he becomes distanced from the parent and the home.

The parent must never say "no" to the basic child needs for care, home, clothes, security, attachment, closeness, sleep. For everything else, parents' dilemma may turn into a "no", if that is important for the safety, life and

proper raising of the child. But the "no" must not be decisive in the sense that nothing can be done to turn it into a "yes". Each "no" should leave room for dialogue, conversation, arguments and discussion. If the parent says "no", it doesn't mean that he doesn't love the child. Using "no" is related to setting boundaries. The parent must sound convincing and decisive.

RULES AND BOUNDARIES

The existence of house rules, routine and setting boundaries will help organize family life. Some parents find it difficult to handle the desires of a child that won't stop crying or goes into a tantrum until he gets what he wants. This child has learnt that he is the one who makes the decisions, has set the rules and boundaries and is more powerful than the parent.

How to set and keep boundaries without hurting the child? While the child is learning how the world functions, it is normal that he would try to move the boundaries. Boundaries aren't fixed and static, they should shift depending on the age, maturity and the level of development of the child. However, such shifts shouldn't bring into question the parent's love for the child. Boundaries are only lines which denote which behavior is acceptable, and which is not.

The aim of the boundaries is to help the child achieve self-control, create an inner moral compass and ability for an independent life. Setting boundaries helps avoid

problems, because they are intercepted before they can occur. They are a trait of a proactive parent. Boundaries have to be clear and understandable for the child and need to be established together with the child (if age allows it).

EXAMPLE:

Before going to the store, six-years old Amar`s father sits next to him, kneels down to his level and with a calm and warm tone reminds him of the set boundaries.

The father: *In the store, we`ll buy only the things on the shopping list, including your favorite chocolate milk. Deal?*

Amar: *Yes.*

This helps prevent additional requests to buy things that the child randomly sees in the store. But, what if the boundary is pushed (in the store) and the child demands buying things that aren`t on the list.

The father: *“No” (He tells him in a calm, but serious tone). We talked about this at home. Come and chose the chocolate milk (changes the subject and distracts the child).*

Another important thing is consistency. The parent mustn`t avoid and ignore the boundaries he has set

when the circumstances change (weekend, guests, etc.) That doesn`t mean that he can`t be flexible, but only when the child has arguments for it, negotiates, and the parent accepts his opinion.

Good boundaries must take into account the needs of both parents and children. Otherwise, if the parent, under the pressure of the child, often moves the boundaries, he lets the child know that he doesn`t mean what he says and encourages him to continue with that behavior. Well set boundaries are directed at good results, rather than at coercion and negative emotions. Boundaries establish a routine in the child`s life, comfort and safety about what, when and how to expect.

Boundaries are set based on established rules. Rules serve to remind the child what is needed/ preferable to do, so the parent won`t need to repeat it and go back to it. Rules can help create a pleasant atmosphere in the home, teach about family values, establish roles and positions of the members and equal approach for everyone in the family.

It is preferable that rules apply to all family members, not only to children, but there may be different rules for children of different ages and with different needs and interests. They are especially effective when the parent is proactive and has thought them through.

CONTROL OF PARENTS' ANGER

Despite his parental role, the parent is just a human being. He may be angry because he is scared, sick, tired, depressed, dissatisfied with his work, with marital and financial problems.

Anger is like fire, it starts with a spark and may develop into a full-blown fire. It is very important that the parent controls his anger, especially at his children, who are not the source of his anger but witnesses to its consequences. It may happen that the parent is sometimes irritated, but it is important that he talks to the child, in a way suitable to his age, and explain why he is irritated. If the parent is too upset, he shouldn't talk to the child until he has calmed down.

OFFER CHOICE

Whenever possible, the parent should offer the child a choice between two or more acceptable options. In many situations, the parent won't be able to offer a choice, especially when children are very young to make a choice or when the situation is life-threatening (so choices are not available).

The options given by the parent should be viable. For example, the parent can't let the child choose whether he wants to go to school or not, whether he'll take his medicine or not, whether to do something dangerous,

CRITERIA FOR SETTING GOOD RULES:

- They are predetermined regarding certain risky behaviors and habits (hitting, screaming, rude behavior);
- Each rule should be aimed at what the parent wants to establish in the child (for example: going to bed at 10 p.m., doing homework after school, time spent on the computer, etc.);
- They need to be visibly displayed and serve as a reminder;
- A small number of rules that are easy to apply, but important and effective, and the consequences of which are not too severe.
 - they need to be simple, clear, general and contain limited number of words;
 - the consequences of not following the rules, which should be hierarchical, need to be determined in advance. For example, there should be different consequences for lying and not going to bed on time, respectively.
 - each family has its own rules and they shouldn't be changed under the influence of external "advisors" like grandparents, aunts, parents of other children.

MOTIVATIONAL FAMILY RULES AND CONSEQUENCES



FAMILY RULES

INSULTS ARE FORBIDDEN



CONSEQUENCES OF DEFYING THE RULES

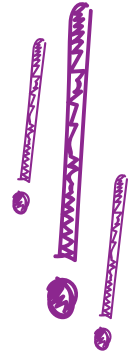
APPOLOGIZE



FIVE MINUTES TIME-OUT



WON'T GO OUT WITH HIS FRIENDS NEXT TIME



etc. Viable means the parent is ready to accept any choice made by the child, provided that it doesn't endanger the child's health and safety.

EXAMPLE:

Five-year old Suad doesn't want to drink milk. He is disgruntled, pushes the glass and vomits. The father is aware of the benefits of dairy to Suad's health and offers him alternatives.

The father: Son, choose what you want to have for

breakfast today. Would you like yoghurt, cheese cream, ayran or cheese?

But, before offering the choice, the parent needs to be aware that the child may decide on another product, which means that they must have it in the house so he can accept the child's decision. In this way, they are both learning about the participation of the child in the decision-making. Two options are not a choice, five or six options are a genuine choice. However, it must be taken into account that not all families have the option

to offer more alternatives, so even two options offered under limited conditions or in the interest of the child's safety may also consist a choice. Young children react better when fewer options are offered.

EXAMPLE:

The mother and three-year old Raphaëlle are crossing a busy street, at the zebra crossing. For safety reasons, and due to the girl's age and level of maturity, the mother must hold her hand.

***The mother:** When we are crossing the street, would you like to hold my left or right hand?*

This is a good option because whatever the child decides, both options are acceptable to the parent. At the same time, the child feels powerful, because he is given an opportunity to participate and decide, and each option is safe for him.

Older children, such as adolescents, develop rebelliousness if parents impose, for example, when they should be back home.

The parent needs to talk to the child and then offer at least three options. If the child disagrees, the parent should give the child an opportunity to suggest an option. If the parent's options are drastically different to those of the child, the parent should suggest that the child's option is respected one day a week or only for

weekends. Or the parent may go on discussing it with the child until they come to a mutual agreement.

PRIVILEGES

It is good for the child to enjoy privileges for acceptable behavior and to be explained what is unacceptable behavior before he loses a privilege. Losing a privilege must never entail deprivation of parental love, or neglecting the child's development and emotional needs.

Privileges are similar to rewards, which in time get a different meaning, i.e. the parent starts seeing rewards only through the prism of the material (expensive toys, mobile phones, computers, etc.) and as a compensation for their absence. Privileges refer to the presence of parents in the child's life, spending quality time together, which gives the parent an insight into the child's behavior. Therefore, privilege may mean going to bed later, watching the favorite show, longer curfews, something that is not material compensation.

PRAISE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Praise and words of affection will make the child more cooperative and more willing to communicate with his parent. Praise feeds the child's self-confidence and encourages him. The child's good behavior should be rewarded by the parent with praise, kind words, love and warmth. The child's negative behavior should be received by the parent with a serious expression, decisiveness in giving comments and directions, but

without punishment (especially physical punishment and verbal insults).

The positive words of the parent will influence the child even in later years.

It is good to use words such as: good, well done, great idea, wonderful, that`s a good boy/girl, I`m so happy that you are my child, etc. With praise, the parent actually encourages the child to be strong, persistent; he motivates and encourages him. Parents are more prone to criticizing negative behavior than to praise the positive one. Sometimes parents take positive behavior for granted and don`t pay much attention to it.

It is therefore good to praise the child more often, as that will motivate him for other activities as well.

TIME-IN VS. TIME-OUT

In parenting children, the time-out is a form of isolation of the child, giving him time to think, distancing him from the source of anger.

EXAMPLE:

The parent: *Go to your room and think about what you have done.*

The adult would say that this measure is mild, not strict enough, as it involves no yelling or hitting but gives the child an opportunity to cool and calm down.

From the child`s perspective, this is punishment, similar to standing alone in the corner (isolation). In a situation like this, the child thinks that he is bad, and that is how he feels. The time-out does not always solve the problem and makes the child feel bad. He may feel the need for revenge and getting back at the parent.

The child might calm down, but he won`t learn to deal with his emotions when he finds himself in a similar situation in future. On the contrary, he learns that although uncomfortable and confusing situations are a part of life, they are, nevertheless, unacceptable and undesirable. In this way, the parent pushes the child away from him when he is upset and needs the parent the most. To more sensitive children, this may feel like rejection. This is not a good practice for young children between the ages of 3 to 4.

WHAT INSTEAD OF A TIME-OUT

When the child is upset, the parent may use a time-in, i.e. connect with the child, thus showing him that he understands him, knows how he feels and that he is here for him. When an incident happens and the child starts screaming, crying and having a tantrum, trying to talk about the reasons for such behavior is useless.

The parent needs to stay close to the child, to let him know that he is here for him, that he is safe and

loved, that it is ok to be upset and that it happens to everyone. It is very important that the parent stays calm. The parent may hug the child until his tantrum subsides, if that is appropriate. Some children, in situations like this, don't like any physical contact and would avoid being hugged or touched. The parent should respect this decision and let the child find a safe place in the home. The parent should best stay close, with an expression on his face that shows that he is giving the child emotional support and that he is there for him, without using any words.

The parent must believe that the child will finally overcome his emotions. Whenever the parent tries to save the child from himself, he deprives him of the possibility to develop self-confidence in his own strength and abilities. When the child calms down and the emotions subside, parent and child may talk about past events and try to find new solutions.

Sometimes, the parent may be the reason for such reactions from the child. For example, in younger children aged 2-3, the parent may have missed some hidden child's need, like thirst, hunger, tiredness. In school-children and adolescents, such a reaction may be a consequence of a prolonged arguing with the parent, proving, controlling, ordering, threatening, blackmailing – and the child becomes desperate to a point when he starts crying and goes into a tantrum.

NATURAL FLOW OF THINGS AND NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Life experience is an excellent lesson. Life situations may teach the child, directly and objectively, what is allowed and what is not. For example: if he goes out in the rain barefooted, he will get wet; if he is rude with his friends, he may be rejected by the group, etc.

Sometimes children learn from their own actions; things happen spontaneously and follow a natural flow. In order to protect his child from failure, the parent won't allow him to gain negative experiences and impedes the natural flow. In some situations, the parent needs to be an observer, and, in case of a negative outcome, give support, hugs, kisses and conversation. If the parent anticipated the negative outcome, he shouldn't get angry and scold the child that he had

CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS: HELP THE CHILD BUILD SELF-CONFIDENCE

Show him love, care and attention, but have understanding for his emotions

Praise him and give him privileges

Stimulate positive communication, use humor and jokes, select your words

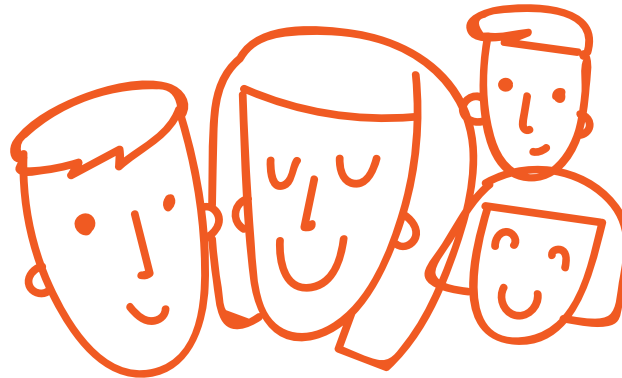
Set rules and boundaries

Give him an opportunity to choose and make decisions

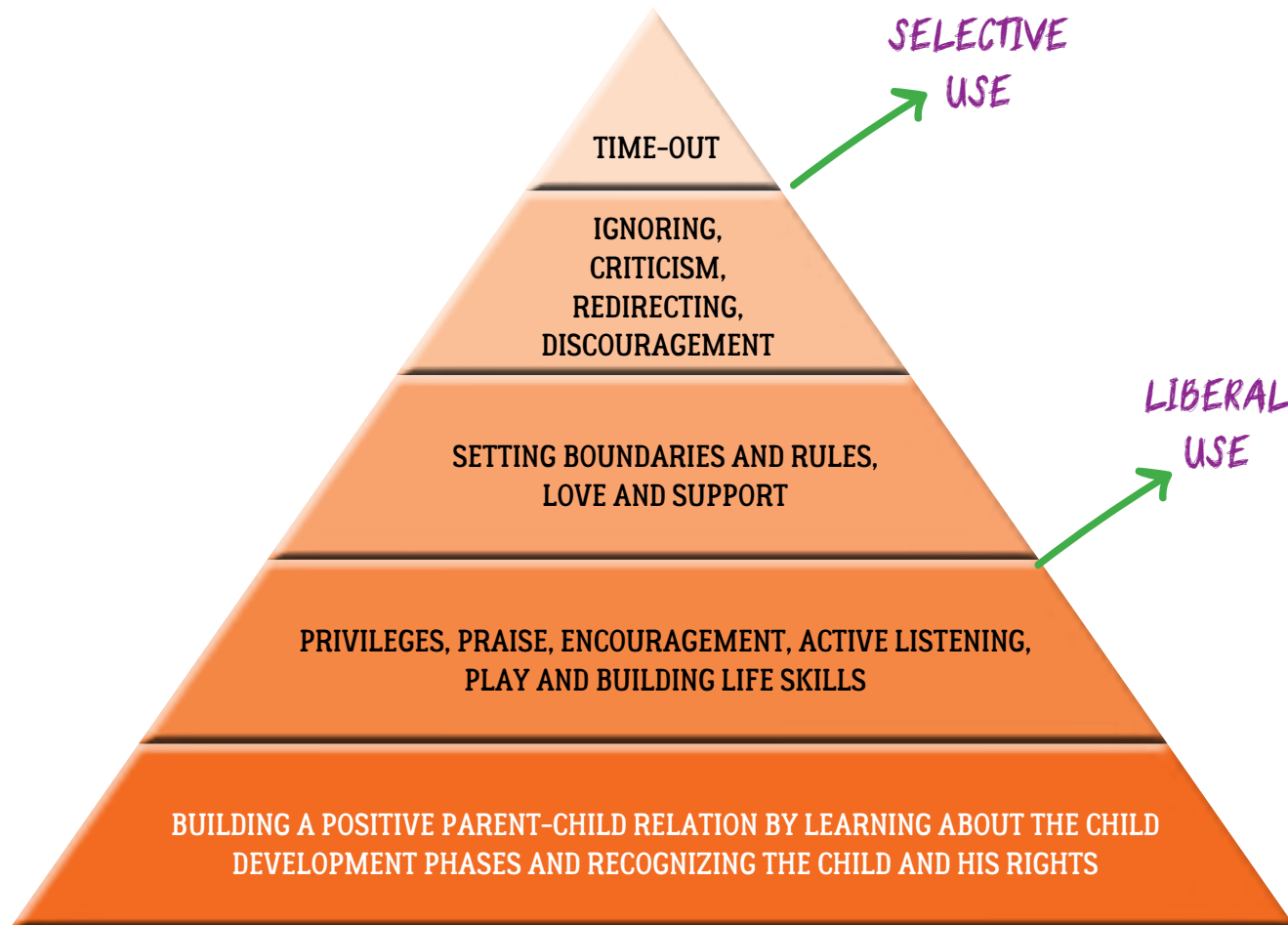
been warned (for example: “I told you so...”). In this way, the child is deprived of the opportunity to participate in the learning process, as he will have to deal with his parent`s anger. Some things cannot be left to their natural flow, as consequences may be too expensive, i.e. dangerous to the child`s health and safety. Also,

some actions don`t have natural consequences. Frances Gardner promotes the parenting pyramid recommending the following interventions in the parent-child relation in order to build positive parenting.⁷ According to the author, positive parenting is important for children, parents and the community. She underscores the following advantages of positive parenting to children:

- good health and well-being of children;
- reducing violence in children – in and out of the home
- reducing the risk of problematic behavior and negative lifestyle in children;
- strengthening children`s resilience, especially in case of stress and crisis;
- cooperative children;
- happy and lively children.



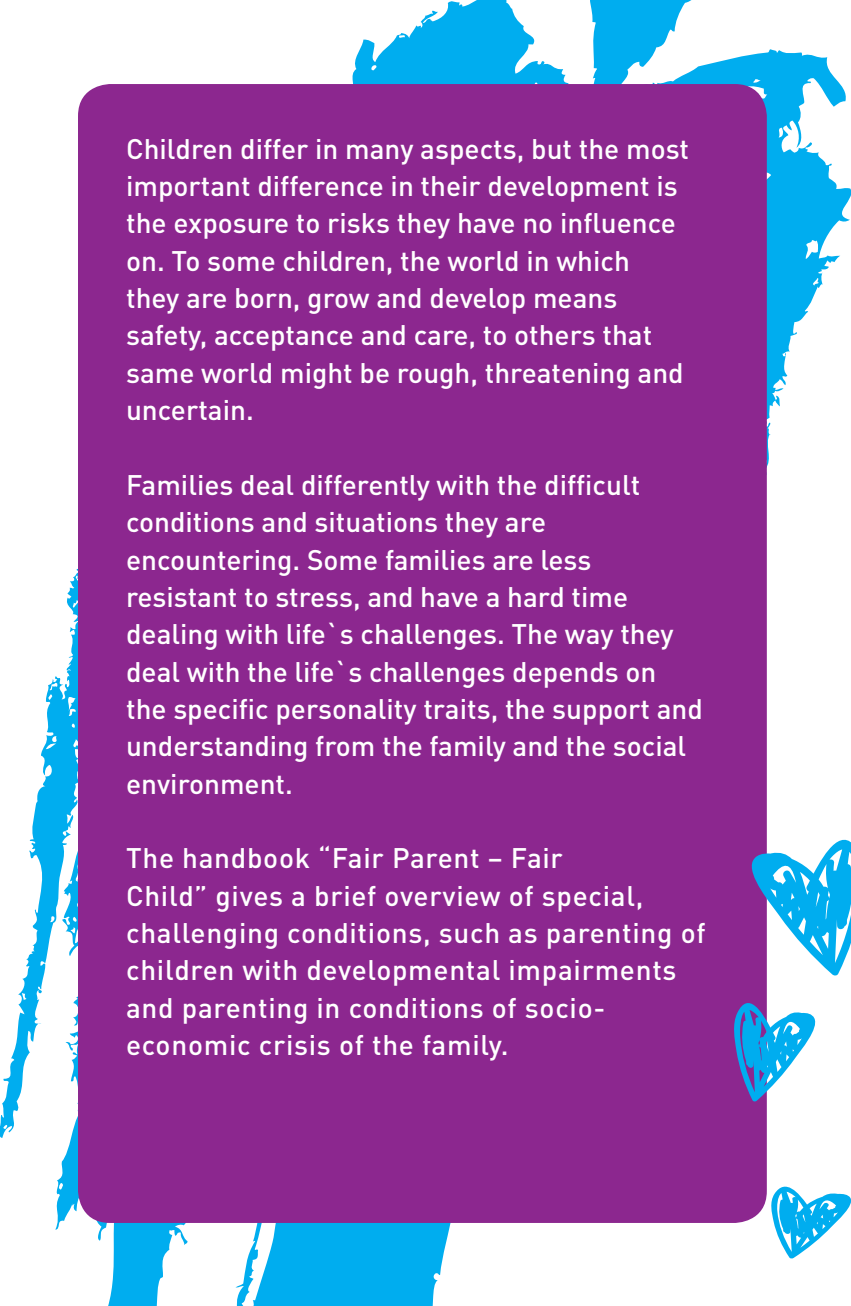
PARENTING PIRAMID



7



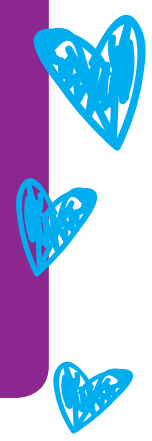
POSITIVE PARENTING UNDER CHALLENGING CONDITIONS



Children differ in many aspects, but the most important difference in their development is the exposure to risks they have no influence on. To some children, the world in which they are born, grow and develop means safety, acceptance and care, to others that same world might be rough, threatening and uncertain.

Families deal differently with the difficult conditions and situations they are encountering. Some families are less resistant to stress, and have a hard time dealing with life's challenges. The way they deal with the life's challenges depends on the specific personality traits, the support and understanding from the family and the social environment.

The handbook "Fair Parent – Fair Child" gives a brief overview of special, challenging conditions, such as parenting of children with developmental impairments and parenting in conditions of socio-economic crisis of the family.



7.1 POSITIVE PARENTING UNDER CONDITIONS OF FAMILY CRISIS AND TRAUMA

Whether the parent manages to deal with the serious threats imposed by the socio-economic crisis, depends on his personality, as well as on the family elasticity and flexibility. Different families deal differently with similar situations of socio-economic crisis; some retain the positive attitude towards the children as their base for growth and development, while other families in a similar situation don't manage to adapt to the crisis.

For families to deal efficiently with risk, in terms of retaining the positive relations between the family members and strengthening the positive parenting strategy, the following should be considered as most efficient.

FAMILY COHESION (ATTACHMENT AMONG FAMILY MEMBERS)

Emotional attachment among family members is crucial for the functioning of the family. Families with good emotional attachment among its members are more capable to rise above the challenges to their well-being and deal with stress, while simultaneously having as a precondition the first principle of positive parenthood, i.e. the attachment of the child to the parents.

On the other hand, the excessive level of family cohesion can also be dysfunctional, because the emotional relations among family members should be balanced to their needs for individual autonomy.

The level of family's cohesion may change in time. A family with an adolescent has the tendency to have a lower level of cohesion compared to a family with a young child. This is not related to family dysfunction, but it's a process of natural evolution within the family, where older children need greater individualization and autonomy.

PARENTS' BELIEF SYSTEM

Parents' belief system includes values, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, presumptions, etc. that cause emotional reactions, decisions and actions. Parents' dominant set of values determines how the family deals with crisis and trauma.

Resistant families are characterized by active resilience, perseverance, keeping faith and optimism that problems can be overcome. Parents from such families accept and apply the positive parenting strategies more easily. They provide children with emotional stability, someone to rely on and ability to build a positive outlook for the future.


In contrast, non-resistant families are characterized by quitting, resignation, lack of faith and pessimism

and have no hope for overcoming the problems. They treat children either with utmost disinterest, or with increased control and imposition of their own beliefs and opinions. Every departure from their system of values by the child is seen as a personal failure. Verbal and physical aggression are a common occurrence, as well as abandonment and lack of care.


STRATEGIES FOR HANDLING CRISIS AND STRESS

Handling crisis and stress is a conscious, intended response to the new situation. Whether and to what extent the person will handle crisis and the resulting stress, and whether that will mean facing the problem or withdrawal, depends on its competence, elasticity and adaptability.

There are two successful strategies for handling stress and crisis:



active handling (which includes active support and looking for solutions) and internal handling (which includes internal reflection of possible solutions).






Withdrawal and resignation with the unfavorable family situation represent non-functional handling that leads to family dysfunction.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key aspect of the functioning of the family. Parent-child communication is very significant in the process of joint decision-making and handling crisis and stress with regard to their mutual relations and the relations with the outside world, in the sense of the challenges they are facing. Efficient communication is important for developing the sense of involvement in the decision-making process, which is accomplished through negotiations, compromise and reciprocity. The effective communication processes within the family are transferred to the business relations, for example, in the agreements with service providers. Communication affects how family members inform each other about things that need to be done, the way in which they show love and support, etc.

Three main components of effective communication may be identified:

-  clarity of expression;
-  emotionally open expression;
-  cooperation in handling the problem.

Clarity refers to sending clear messages, with words and actions, as well as being aware of the need to clarify ambiguous signals.

Emotionally open expression refers to the exchange of emotions in the relations among family members, mutual understanding and tolerance for differences.

Cooperation in handling the problem refers to the identification of problems and the possibilities for their handling, as well as the joint efforts of all family members in resolving the problem.

ELASTICITY IN POVERTY – PARENTING AS A PROTECTION FACTOR

Appropriate parenting under conditions of poverty of the family is especially important, as the parenting style has an impact on the subsequent child growth and development, including his future academic achievements and social competence in maturity.

Parents are facing economic pressure due to limited income. The income amount is important, but what is more important is the ability of the family to manage the limited resources, what they do to increase their income, and the attitude, openness and inclusion of the family in the social support programs.

In this case, also, the most important segment affecting the child development is the parenting style. Authoritative parenting is considered optimal for child development. It is compared to the other less effective parenting styles – authoritarian (low

level of warmth and high level of control), permissive (high level of warmth and low level of control) and uninvolved (low level of warmth and control). These parenting styles are related to a number of different problems that might occur later in child development.

Under conditions of severe material crisis, it is very difficult for the parent to practice responsible and competent parenting. However, even in such conditions, the parent should assume responsibility and work on positive discipline with the child, a strategy which has been elaborated in this handbook.

EXAMPLE:

When your child shows unwanted behavior, don't ever blame yourself as parent – "it's my fault, I have no money to give him; he is rude to his grandparents because I can't teach him good manners; it's my fault that his grades are bad; I should work with him in the evenings; it's my fault that he is staying out late, because I have to work and I've allowed him a lot; I feel guilty for the poverty in the family, etc."

By assuming responsibility for the child's behavior, the parent prevents the child from developing a sense of responsibility for the consequences of his undesired actions. It is therefore more appropriate for the parent to start applying the principles of positive parenthood.

Although there is no single "right way" to be a parent, there are more efficient ways for the parent to deal with the child's behavior. Responsible parenting is a skill that can be learnt just like any other skill. It is never too late for the parent to get involved in the child's life, to become dedicated to him, to raise him. Regardless of the circumstances, what matters is that he assumes responsibility for his own actions and behavior.

The child needs to understand the real situation in which the family is in. Possibilities and limitations need to be openly discussed, and hardships shouldn't be concealed.

In this way, the child will become aware of its surrounding. The parent should spend more time with his child and show him positive emotions. Also, even when the family is facing hardship, it is important that the child is encouraged to study and participate in social activities, to show him possibilities and to optimistically discuss the future.



7.2 POSITIVE PARENTING IN THE CARE OF CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL IMPAIRMENTS

When the parent finds out that his child has an impairment, a new life journey begins, often filled with strong emotions, difficult choices, cooperation with different professionals and specialists and constant need of information and services. For the parent, life can become a real challenge. He is often faced with the question how to keep the balance between everyday worrying for the child and the “normal family life”. Questions related to the child’s diagnosis of the impairment (for example: to what extent does the impairment impact everyday adapting and functioning of the child, etc.) are a source of huge stress. Support can often be provided by other parents.⁸

The parent must, before all, be aware of the individual needs and functional traits of his child. This is important in order to create conditions for establishing a normal balanced living for both parent and child.

Every child is special, and before finding the best solution, the parent must try different methods. The parent knows his child best, better than anybody else, and he needs to follow his previous positive experiences in the communication with him. The



child will change in time, so it is important that the parent-child relation is flexible.

The approach to raising an impaired child requires additional effort by the parent. Before all, the child needs to be observed in order to determine his need, and then to proceed to handling his behavior. Empathy plays a key role in the establishment of discipline, as that helps the child feel understood and encourages him to recognize his feelings.

The parent should get informed about the specificities in the development of his child, to observe his potential and limitations in behavior and activities; to know that even a child an impairment must be held responsible for his actions.

It is necessary to adapt the environment and assess accurately the ability of the child to face everyday situations and demands and, based on that, for the parent to give the child responsibilities which are adequate to his development stage. The parent should set rules and limits so the child can understand the consequences of his behavior. If the parent doesn’t set rules and boundaries, the child will lose the sense of self-control and self-confidence.

The content of this handbook on positive parenting is also applicable to children with developmental impairments. It must be taken into account that each impairment has specific traits and requires an appropriate approach by the parent.

When an impaired child manifests inappropriate behavior, the parent may offer a different choice to the negative commands like “no” and “stop”.

EXAMPLE:

The child throwing toys around the room may be told:
“Throwing toys is not good, but we can throw other things that are safe and can’t be broken. Would you like us to stay here and throw pillows, or go out and throw a ball?”

The parent should always encourage the child to positive behavior. Smiling, hugging or stroking his back are sufficient to show approval and encourage the child to positive actions.

EXAMPLE:

“I can see that you are angry because Sara takes your toys, but it’s still not ok to hit her. Hands are not for hitting.”

Children learn best by example. They don’t understand the sentence: “Do as I say, not as I do.” Children will imitate what they see. It is therefore important for the

parent to pay attention to his tone of voice, which must be pleasant and calm.

EXAMPLE:

“5 more minutes before lunchtime... 2 more minutes ... 10 more seconds...”

EXAMPLE:

“You can play until the timer stops”

EXAMPLE:

“When the red light turns on, we are having a bath.”

If problems occur, the parent should offer the child a choice. If the parent tells the child what to do, the child must do it. But, the parent may give the child choice as to how to do certain activity. For example, if it’s time for putting the toys away and putting on the pajamas, the child may choose, for example, where the dolls may sleep during the night and which pajamas he would like to put on. This is an excellent strategy to give the child an opportunity for choice and control over his own actions and needs.

The parent’s reaction in a given situation must be related to the child’s behavior. The parent should be clear and precise in showing the child that his reaction is a result of the child’s inappropriate behavior.

EXAMPLE:

If the child throws a toy, he must stop doing that and fetch the toy (with the parent's help, if necessary). Consistency is very important in the demands and relations with the child. If learning new things is gradual, in small steps, in accordance with the realistic abilities of the child, success is likely.

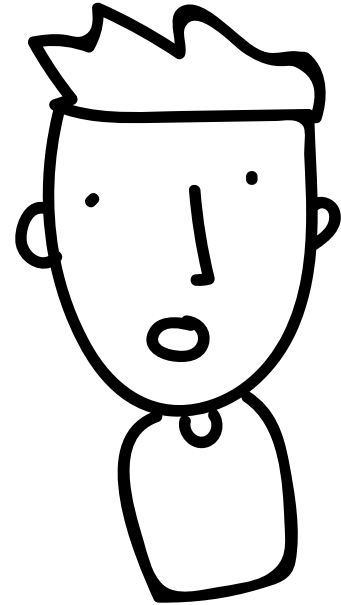
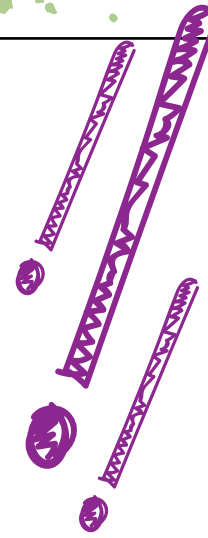
Positive parenting as an approach to raising and taking care of children with impairments is briefly presented in this handbook. The principles and

guidelines previously elaborated by development stages apply, of course adapted to the individuality and the needs of each child. The positive parenting strategies are adapted in accordance with the individual psychophysical development and functional traits of the child. Family is a dynamic unit which develops through several life cycles, faces expected and unexpected event and adjusts to the internal and external changes. The most challenging stage in the development of the family is raising children.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

- There are several techniques of positive discipline which apply to all children.
- Praise good behavior, ignore bad behavior (to the extent possible). Cause and consequence are the earliest concepts a child learns. It would be useful for the parent to teach the child that good behavior will result in attention, praise and privileges.
- If possible, the parent will determine the reasons for the inappropriate behavior. This is often frustrating for the parent due to the difficulties in the communication with the child in order to discover the child's needs and desires. Before he reacts, the parent needs to assess the situation and help the child establish communication with him. It is very important that the parent controls his emotions and sends the child a message.

CONCLUSION



Family environment is like an arena in which the first psychophysical potentials of the child are born, and where positive tendencies which come to light during the development are reinforced and directed. It is where the child`s needs, as a constant source of his development capabilities, are being met.

As stated at the beginning of this handbook, parenting is a life-long journey, which starts the moment a child is born and continues through time and space. But for the journey to be pleasant and successful, it is important that the parent knows his fellow-traveler, i.e. his child, well.

This handbook contains many guidelines and proposals to help parents recognize the signs that lead to safe roads, examples that give parents ideas how to deal with unexpected obstacles, but also advice how to make this journey comfortable, useful and successful for parents as well.

Parenthood last a life-time. It develops, builds and changes, but it doesn`t stop.

However, parenthood becomes the most important timeless value for the parent and child and the community.

It is therefore necessary for parenting to be supported, learnt and practiced in its best and positive forms.

MESSAGES FOR THE PARENT



- Accept and respect the child!
- Talk to the child, don`t yell at him!
- Lead your child with love and support!
- Participate in activities with your child!
- Create a stimulating environment for play, learning and development of the child!
- Encourage the child!
- Learn more about child development.
- Children need help and support, not punishment.
- Respect the child`s rights and his personality.
- Children learn from you, set a good example.
- Children use boundaries when we are honest, fair and consistent.

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- 26) www.varnaparents.com

FOOTNOTES:

Recommendation Rec (2006) 19 of the Council of Europe.

<http://www.kars4kids.org/blog/positive-parenting-defined/>

<http://www.prvite5.mk/vaznosta-na-raniot-detski-razvoj.nspix>

Positive, useful, friendly and socially acceptable behavior.

Selfless care for the well-being of others.

Renouncing personal beliefs and principles in order to be accepted by the group.

<http://www.incredibleyears.com/>

<http://resursencentar.mk>

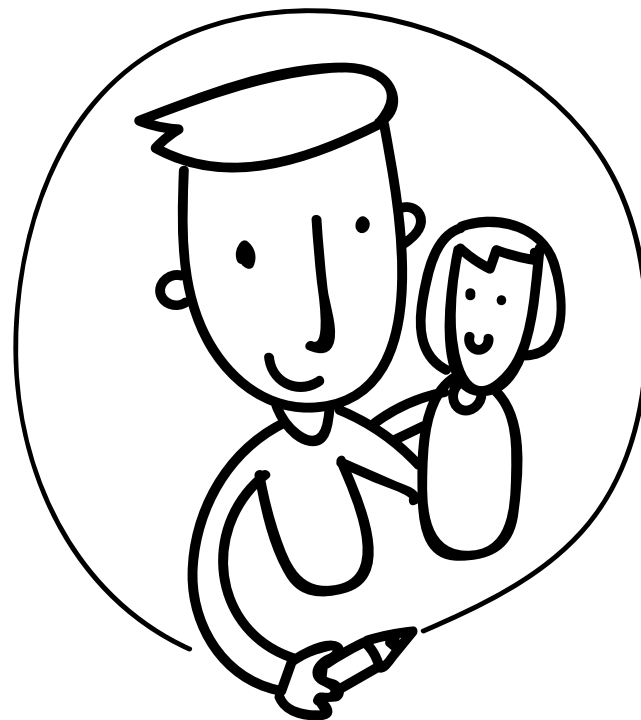
ANNEX 1

Test 1 – Parenting Styles

The following test will help you find out which parenting style your parenting methods belong to:

1. *In your opinion, which of the following has the biggest influence on the development of a person`s personality?*
 - A) Upbringing
 - B) Combination of inherent characteristics and the environment
 - C) Inherent characteristics
 - D) None of the above. Life experience is the most important.
2. *What do you think about the opinion that children raise their parents too?*
 - A) It`s only word play and has nothing to do with raising
 - B) I agree
 - C) I am willing to agree provided the traditional role of the parents as educators is not underestimated
 - D) I haven`t thought about it
3. *In your opinion, which of the following quotes is most realistic?*
 - A) "If you have nothing else to say to the child, tell him to go and wash himself"
 - B) "The goal of parenting is to teach our children to function without us parents"
 - C) "Children don`t need lessons, but examples"
 - D) "If you have taught your child to obey you, you have taught him everything"
4. *Do you think parents should talk to children about sexuality and sex?*
 - A) I was never taught these things
 - B) The parent should find a way to explain these things to the child, if the child shows interest
 - C) These things should be discussed with children when they are older
 - D) It is better that the child first learns about these things from the parent

5. *Should the parent give the child allowance regularly?*
 - A) If the child asks, yes
 - B) It is better to give him money for something specific and to control the spending
 - C) It is good to give allowance for a certain period of time (a week or a month) so the child can learn to plan his spending
 - D) He can be given a certain allowance occasionally
6. *What will you do if you find out that your child has insulted another child?*
 - A) I will be disappointed and I will try and talk to the other child
 - B) I will try and resolve the issue with the other child's parents
 - C) The children will handle it themselves, they quickly forget insults
 - D) I will talk to the child how to better handle similar situations
7. *How do you handle using "dirty words"?*
 - A) I will try to explain that we don't use such words in our family and that honest people don't approve of that
 - B) He should stop hanging out with children who use "dirty words"
 - C) It is not a big deal – we all use such words occasionally
 - D) The child should be allowed to express his feelings, regardless whether we like how he does it
8. *Your child entering puberty is begging you to let him go to his friend's summer house. The other child's parent won't be there. Will you let him go?*
 - A) No way. If children want to have fun, parents must be present.
 - B) Maybe, if I am sure that the children are no problematic.
 - C) My child is reasonable and he'll make the right decisions, but I will be worried
 - D) I don't see why I shouldn't let him
9. *How would you react if you find out that your child lied?*
 - A) I'll try to make him feel sorry for it
 - B) If it's not serious, I won't be bothered
 - C) I will be upset
 - D) I will try and find out why he lied.
10. *Do you believe you set a good example for your child?*
 - A) No doubt
 - B) I try
 - C) I hope
 - D) I don't know



Compare your answers to the answers in the table below and find out which parenting style your methods and opinions belong to.

Parenting style	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Permissive	C	B	B	B	A	A	G	C	C	C
Authoritarian	A	A	G	C	B	B	B	A	A	A
Uninvolved	G	G	A	A	G	C	C	Г	B	G
Авторитативен	B	C	C	G	C	G	A	B	G	B

TEST RESULTS:

Permissive parenting style:

You value your child`s abilities highly and forgive him all his weaknesses. You talk to him easily, trust him, you are not prone to prohibitions and limitations. You should consider whether the child needs so much freedom for everything and always.

Authoritarian parenting style:

You know clearly what you want from the child and you make maximum efforts to achieve that. In your requirements and conditions for the child, you are probably very strict and consistent. The child may not be always comfortable around you, because of your high expectations and limitations.

Uninvolved parenting style:

Parenting problems are not your primary concern. You support the thesis that the child needs to handle things on his own. But, maybe he needs your support and attention.

Authoritative parenting style:

You understand the important role you have in building your child`s personality and character, but you also recognize his right to self-development. You are realistic as to which of your needs can be fulfilled by the child, and which cannot. You are ready to reconsider your positions regarding parenting and change them.

ANNEX 2

Characteristics of the parenting style and traits developed in the child

Parenting style	Characteristics of the parenting style	Traits and characteristic developed in the child
Permissive parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• has the attitude that “the child knows best what he needs”;• is affirmative and gentle, loves and protects the child;• is accepting and mild towards the child`s impulses and behavior;• does not use punishments and prohibitions;• accepts the child`s wishes and is not too demanding;• has no control over the child`s behavior and allows the child to independently manage his own activities;• does not reveal his expectations to the child;• has no mechanisms for positive discipline;• does not set clear boundaries between what is permitted and what is prohibited, between the good and the bad, both within the family and in the wider social environment;• does not see himself as the sole responsible factor in the development and raising of the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a child that doesn`t take NO for an answer;• defiant and rebellious child when confronted or when he can`t have it his way;• lack of control of emotions and the temperament, easily frustrated;• lack of attention and concentration• poor performance in school;• may show antisocial behavior due to the lack of adopted rules and the poor moral development; may be rejected by his peers, etc.

Authoritarian parent

- this parent is the opposite of the permissive parent;
- he has the attitude that "I know best what is good for my child";
- the relation with the child is one-way, full of demands and little warmth;
- insists on shaping, controlling and assessing the child`s behavior and opinions, but in accordance with his personal standard, which is dependent on his current mood and needs;
- values and favors blind obedience;
- may use punishment and coercion to control the child`s behavior;
- does not respect the child`s personality, corrects his every mistake through the in-built fear in the child;
- does not negotiate with the child, he has the last word as the relationship is based on power;
- prefers punishment and force to love and communication.

- anxious, withdrawn, scared and unhappy by nature child;
- lack or reaction to frustration;
- good student due to fear of punishment;
- failure is accompanied by anxiety;
- has difficulties in making friends and maintaining friendships;
- may become rebellious in adolescence and identify himself with the violent parent.

Uninvolved parent

- has the attitude "I have my own life, and the child has his own";
- unconscientious parent, neglectful, careless, both in showing affection and in disciplining the child;
- focused on his own comfort;
- is not included in the parenting;
- is not capable of understand the child`s basic needs for care, love and attachment;
- it is possible that he was himself neglected as a child or had problems with substance abuse.

- poor understanding of the boundaries;
- anxious;
- lack of trust in adults;
- low self-respect and low self-esteem.

Authoritative parent

- the most desirable parenting style;
 - has the attitude “we are building a good relationship”;
 - takes responsibility for caring for and guiding the child;
 - respects his child, gives him the possibility to express his own needs and opinions;
 - stimulates communication, possesses listening skills and has empathy;
 - communication is as important as the child`s needs and wishes;
 - capable to set firm boundaries, proportional to the child`s needs;
 - is always consistent in his actions.
 - encourages creativity, curiosity and independence in the child, while at the same time taking care of his emotions.
- happy child with a sense of security
 - contactable child, uses arguments to prove his point;
 - loves justice and honor, makes own decisions;
 - developed ability for overcoming challenging tasks;
 - good student;
 - able to control his emotions;
 - well-developed social skills;
 - able to make and maintain friendships;
 - reacts well to adults` authority, if accompanied by respect and a possibility for self-proving.

FAIR

PARENT

FAIR

CHILD
