THE VALUE OF THE PERSON
AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

TRAINING MANUAL FOR EDUCATORS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Psychosocial Support Training Manual is the result of teamwork with a number of individuals and agencies in Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and other countries. The manual was developed by Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education (LGIHE) starting from the long experience of AVSI Foundation in the field of Psychosocial Support in emergency contexts and considering also the first Training Manual for Teachers developed by Lucia Castelli, Anne Devreux, Giovanni Galli and Elena Locatelli whose work has been internationally recognized and appreciated. The following individuals are acknowledged for their technical support towards the production of the manual in many ways: Clara Broggi, Veronika Haag, and Giacomazzi Mauro, LGIHE with beneficial comments and reviews from John Mary Vianney Mitana and John Muhangyi, LGIHE.

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## TRAINING MANUAL FOR EDUCATORS

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AVSI, an International NGO founded in Italy in 1972, has been present in Uganda since 1984, implementing programmes in education, health and humanitarian relief. One of the central points of AVSI’s approach is working with people and not for people, encountering and sharing our life with them in their communities and environment. This approach has been fundamental for the implementation of the psychosocial programme since 1997 in Northern Uganda. Concerned about the welfare of the people, AVSI started implementing the programme by staying with them, with the aim of helping them to discover that despite the hardships and tragedies they were going through, their value as human beings was inimitable and irreducible - an important starting point for any intervention without which educational support (constructing classrooms, paying school fees, providing scholastic material, etc.) and relief aid (food, clothing, medication, etc.) become ineffective.

AVSI put emphasis on building individual and community resilience in facing the realities of everyday life. And since 2003 AVSI has been proposing a training module for teachers on Psychosocial support. This module was born as the result of AVSI commitment in Northern Uganda during the civil war. Between 1997 and 2000, in Uganda, the main focus was on the reintegration of the children abducted by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) rebels who had returned from the bush either volun-
tarily or upon rescue by the Uganda People’s Defence Forces. However, the escalation of violence in the 2000s prompted AVSI to increase the emergency response in order to meet the increasing needs of the vulnerable members of the whole community. This led to the expansion of the psychosocial programme achieved through the creation of a network of Community Volunteer Counsellors (CVCs) who worked hand in hand with primary and secondary school teachers. Two training manuals were developed, one for CVCs, another for teachers. These manuals became available to psychosocial practitioners all over the world when they were published on the University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre website (www.rsc.ox.ac.uk) and included in the INEE’s technical kit, a digital library for teachers in emergency contexts (www.ineesite.org) and have been used in many other countries that were and are facing emergency situations.

This present module stems from this long experience of AVSI and has been developed to equip people working in the psychosocial field (for instance teachers, social workers, medical personnel, parents, and civil society) with an updated proposal that will help them in dealing with people who are going through challenging times. The module is not meant to be an exhaustive and comprehensive document on psychosocial support, its major aim is to underline the most essential elements that can be communicated in an easy and immediate way to educators who are not specialists but who are to be in a position of recognizing the signs of trauma in a child. Special attention has been given to the context of the Democratic Republic of Congo.
INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE

This module is entitled *The Value of the Person and Psychosocial Support*. In preparing it, AVSI Foundation and Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education (LGIHE) were guided by the conviction that since the centre and subject of any psychosocial support is the person, it is important to reflect on who this person is – what constitutes him/her (the desires of the heart and the use of reason), his/her value, and how this value is discovered and re-discovered and thereafter nurtured and sustained within an educative relationship.

This proposal is not just for people who are vulnerable, war-affected or HIV-AIDS-infected: it is for every person. This is because psychosocial support is a proposal to the person on how to stay in front of the reality as it is (war, disease, poverty, daily life challenges etc.) in a reasonable way that pays tribute to the greatness of the human being. Many times, people are overwhelmed by what happens to them to the extent of doubting their worth, as if their value depends on circumstances of scarcity or abundance, prosperity or vulnerability, disease or good health. This module vividly explains the fact that the value of the person is given, it is a gift and its meaning cannot be reduced by any circumstances (of disease, poverty, war or any other form of vulnerability).

How to use the manual

This manual is designed mainly to accompany the work of facilitators who are called to encounter and help educators like social workers, teachers, community leaders or facilitators, medical personnel but also parents.

Every session has a theoretical introduction to the topic. It gives general background information for facilitators. The presentation of the topics is not meant to be exhaustive but mostly an orientation that offers a good basis of facilitation and it suggests a simple but organized way of presenting the most important information linked to the section. This first part is always followed by some practical indications for the facilitator on how to present the topic and suggests exercises or activities that could be presented to the trainees and that can help in the communication of the content.
The participatory approach also means that each participant is involved in thinking about his or her own experience of life and giving feedback on all the topics as they relate to his/her own thinking, problems, personal solutions, strengths and weaknesses. Although the tendency of people is to speak and think about others rather than themselves, it is the responsibility and art of the facilitator to help the participants focus on their own experience throughout the course and help them become more aware of their own reality of life. The manners in which the facilitators deal with the participants – listening to them, giving them an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings, etc. – is the same respectful way we hope the education will function when they return to work with people in their communities, such as the children in their classes.

The role of the facilitator in this approach is:
• To encourage full participation by those in attendance, through asking questions and listening rather than talking
• To ask questions that or so as to encourage participants to consider all factors of the reality they are facing and to develop their own solutions to problems or issues
• To listen and include participants, but to keep the focus on the main points
• To process group input
• To keep participants focused on their own experience
• To use the facilitators’ own experience to share with others, and to better understand the experience of others
• To work with a team
• To reinforce learning by preparing, maintaining and following up on written material displayed during training.

Evaluation
At the end of each day and at the end of the training, the facilitators evaluate and review the training together. Because it is so important to encourage participation. Daily feedback is requested from participants through the following questions:

1. Which topic did you like most? Why?
2. What was most difficult to understand about today’s topic? Why?

After the evaluation, the facilitators meet to review the participants’ responses to evaluate the status of the training and prepare the sessions for the next day. The following morning at the beginning of the training, the teams address the participant concerns. If there are points that some report not to have understood, the facilitators review the topics by asking willing participants to explain. This serves as a way of checking the understanding of the group, and of reinforcing the learning and knowledge of the participants.
At the end of the training, the team self-evaluates by discussing the following questions: How did we do? What should we change? Where can we improve? How do we perceive the relationships among us?

Methods used in training

During the training, the facilitators use different methods to help the participants understand the important points and concepts.

Plenary discussion

Facilitators discuss with the entire group in which everyone is allowed to express him/herself. It is preferable for groups to meet in a circle all together at the same level (either all on mats or all on chairs). This reinforces the collaborative nature of the workshop. The rules are that only one person talks at a time, everyone listens and respects what others say and everyone is welcome to speak. The group may need to be reminded about the need of acceptance, respect for one another and the right to be heard. This method is useful to bring the group together and to promote unity. Through this method of plenary discussion, the facilitators can learn the general ideas of the group and their responses to the topics. Agreements and disagreements about an issue can be expressed openly, even if one person or group goes against the others, because it is a good way to learn together, to respect and listen to different points of view. The entire training is a learning process and it is interesting for the facilitators to observe the dynamics that unfold. A disadvantage of this method is that people who are more shy or afraid of expressing themselves do not speak up. It is important to give time to participants to answer questions even if there are some moments of silence and in any case to facilitate an environment of trust and familiarity as much as possible.

Brainstorming

This method can be used during plenary discussions to encourage participation and to discover the views and ideas of the participants. In this method the facilitator asks the group to come up with as many ideas as they can about something, or anything that comes to mind when they think of a certain topic, for example the facilitator may ask the participants to think of as many reactions to a traumatic event as they can. The participants give examples while the facilitator writes all responses without evaluating them. When the group has finished, the facilitator looks over the whole list and together with the participants s/he shall try to put emphasis on the most important or useful points.

Teaching

This is the rather traditional method of sharing new information with participants in which the facilitator presents. The facilitator usually employs diagrams or educational materials. Any of such sessions used in the participatory approach are very brief and are immediately linked with the experience and the knowledge of the participants.

Group work

Small group work helps to stimulate participants and increases the participation of some who find it difficult to express themselves in large groups. It also gives more time for thorough discussions by covering a range of issues in one sense. Facilitators divide the large group (anywhere between 25-45 people) into 3-5 small groups (between 6-12 people in each group), depending upon the topic and the purpose of the group work. The results of the group work have to come from the participation and expression of all the members. It is very important for the facilitators to follow the first 5-10 minutes of each group to make sure the groups understand their tasks. There are two ways for these small groups to present to the large group:

1. The facilitator gives each group a large sheet of paper on which they can write the result of their discussion. One by one the leader of each small group presents their results to the large group in a plenary session (the leader can be chosen by the group or by the facilitator on spot, the latter method has the advantage to help everybody feel responsible for the group’s findings).

2. Each group writes the results of their discussion on a regular paper. The facilitator asks the first small group to share 3 answers from their list and these are written by the facilitator on a large sheet of paper in front of the class. The second group is asked for 3 answers from their list that were not already mentioned by the first group and the facilitator adds these to the list. This process is continued until all have contributed. Then the first group is asked if they have anything else on their list that has not yet been mentioned, and so on with the other group until all have had this second chance to add items from their work (this method works when all groups discuss the same topics).

A disadvantage of the first presentation method is that it can take a long time, depending on the ability of the small group leaders to be brief. There tends to be a lot of repetitions, especially if the topic has been the same for all the groups. However, an advantage of the first presentation method is that the participants feel very proud to present to the large group. The advantage of the presentation method is that it is faster and uses less training time.
Individual work
Another way to be sure that all the participants share and give their contribution is through individual work. The facilitator gives the participants a few minutes to write or draw about one topic. For example: “the most difficult situation in my life”. In silence, everyone draws the topic individually. Then the facilitator asks everyone to share in a small group what they have drawn. This is the way to share information of the entire group and also to participants to their own experience.

Think pair share
This is where participants think individually about a given question then pair up and share what they thought about the question. Then the facilitator will pick at random in plenary to find out what the members shared about the question. The facilitator highlights the missing key issues.

The Jigsaw method
This method allows participants to learn from their group members. Participants are divided into groups called ‘Home Groups’. In every home group, each member has a different task, meaning that s/he must become an expert of a specific topic e.g. prenatal stage, postnatal stage, adolescence and adulthood. This means that if the topics are 4, in every home group there should be ideally 4 members. The facilitator shall distribute to each expert group member a one or two paged material to allow him/her to become an expert in that specific topic. The members of each Home Group shall meet first on all to get to know each other and decide the topic each member shall become expert of. After this, all the experts of a specific topic (e.g. adolescence) gather together in a group to discuss and deepen together the assigned topic. By discussing together, they become experts in it. After the discussion, the experts return to Home Groups where each member shall present the findings in his/her area of expertise to the other members. After the presentation of findings in Home Groups, the facilitator calls all members to the plenary session as he/she picks at random a participant (for instance one who was not an expert in the task ‘prenatal stage’) to present findings about that specific topic. The facilitator shall ask questions such as ‘From what you learnt from the expert of the prenatal stage, what skills does a child acquire while in the mother’s womb?’ This shall give an opportunity to the facilitator to summarize the topics and cross-check the acquired knowledge of the participants.

Role play
The aim of the training is not only to increase knowledge, but to change attitudes and behaviours. If a facilitator asks participant to show their view through a little drama or role play, the way a person uses her/his body language in the drama can effectively demonstrate the understanding. However, sometimes there is inconsistency between what a person expresses verbally (knowledge) and what a person shows with his/her body (behaviour). Role play is a good way to work on understanding the inconsistency and getting the mind and body to work together.

Energizers
These are short activities that encourage playfulness, laughter, and usually involve physical movement. They can be used at the beginning of the session to illustrate a focus point, or to encourage unity by involving everyone. They are also very helpful when used for a break in the sessions to “energize” participants who may be tired, uncomfortable from sitting too long, or tense from the discussion of difficult topics related to trauma. You may also ask the participants for suggestions on energizers and they can take turns leading the group.

Song or dance from the culture
Engaging the large group in a song or dance from their culture which relates to the topic just discussed can be an effective way to reinforce the resource that one’s culture is to the community. It can also be an effective release of emotions after discussing some of the more difficult topics related to trauma. This is a good way to end a session in a more positive and re-assuring mood.

Choice of instruments
Selected works of great writers, visual artists and educators have been suggested to help trainees reflect deeply on the proposal made and to help them understand better the different aspects of its content. Even the instruments are a proposal in themselves, in the sense that we are sure there may be several other works that can explain what has been said perhaps in a better way than the ones we have suggested. This means that no instrument should be taken as an absolute tool, but rather, as a suggestion open to improvement.

Aim of the training
Psychosocial training aims at helping people and educators in particular, to rediscover his/her dignity and that of the other person in order to face every situation with positivity. Special attention shall be given to the difficulties faced by the victims of war or abrupt displacement.
OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the nature of the human being and his/her infinite dignity
2. To understand the nature of trauma and its effects on the individual
3. To identify coping mechanisms of the individual and the community and the way of strengthening the positive ones
4. To appreciate the roles that educators play in helping children to cope with the problems and promote their development
5. To understand the importance of expression and identify various means to promote children’s expression
6. To acquire ways of promoting cooperation, conflict resolution and acceptance of diversity among students.
7. To acquire means of promoting cooperation, conflict resolution and embracing diversity among pupils.

The characteristics of the human being

The aim of this session is to identify the most important characteristics of each and every human being. What is important is to re-discover together that we all have the same kind of needs that we may express in different ways but that all lead to the same fundamental desires. The challenges of life can make us feel useless, insecure, unwanted, unworthy, but we cannot stop desiring to belong to someone or to be loved by someone.

METHOD

You can start tackling this session with a brainstorming discussion. Participants can be asked to write on small pieces of manila papers their needs (each needs a piece of paper, max 3 pieces per person). Participants shall come forward and stick the ‘needs’ on a board with some masking tape. This helps participants to ‘break the ice’ at the beginning of the training course. The facilitator shall make them notice the similarities.

The desires

When facing the reality, I realize that my needs, whims and wants all point at some fundamental, recurrent desires (from Latin de sidus = about the stars) yearning to be fulfilled – the desire for beauty, love, truth, justice and happiness.

These desires are traditionally called ‘the heart’. In most cultures the heart is considered as the centre of humanity, not just from the point of view of biology but also from the point of view of experience.

It is important to notice that these desires are common to each and every human being and they are infinite, meaning that we cannot stop desiring, even when one of our needs or wants has been fulfilled.

METHOD

This second part should be discussed in plenary session by provoking the discussion with simple questions like: What do you desire now? What is the greatest desire you would like to fulfill? Some may answer they would like to have a good job, or a wife or children or money… collect all these answers, write them on the blackboard. It is important first to give room to a variety of answers; they are all very useful for the purpose of the exercise.

- Next you start by picking one of the answers and asking them why? E.g. Why do you want a good job? Usually people answer that they need money for their family (feeding,
school fees, security). Next, and why do you what this? You will see that all answers lead to one of the fundamental desires like happiness, love, justice, belonging, etc.

- Underscore the findings of the discussion and especially the fact that despite the way you may fulfil them, (which may differ) the aim of our actions is pointing to these desires (notwithstanding the conditions we are in).

Reason in psychosocial support

What do you understand by the term ‘reason’?
Reason is the capacity to comprehend, to understand the meaning of what exists (starting from what surrounds us).

○ EXAMPLE
Think about placing a mobile phone in the hands of a person who has been living the whole of his life deep in the forest. He has never seen any electronic device before. What will the person do? He will may be open it, break it into pieces, display all the pieces on the ground. At the end, he can describe each and every part of the mobile phone. But does he know what a mobile phone is? Does he understand the use of the mobile? He is still missing the meaning of it. And one understands reality only once s/he reaches the point of discovering the meaning of things.

Where the value of the human being lies

A. Every human being is a gift
- One of the most important questions of the life of every human being is related to his/her origin. A human being is alive, s/he exists but s/he wonders where s/he comes from’ since s/he is not giving her/himself life: if I look at my own experience, I cannot deny that the greatest and most profound evidence is that I do not make myself. I am “made”, I am “given”.
- Since I am “made”, there is a source, an origin of my being, a spring from which I gush.
- The fact that I am a gift, means that I am precious to somebody, I am wanted; therefore I have a value.

B. The value of a human being is given, so it cannot be reduced
- The life of a person is given; the value of the person is given. It does not depend on any kind of circumstance.
- The gift of life I have received makes me unique; nothing in the entire universe can be compared with the value of the person from the first instant of his conception to

the last step of his life.
- I am not defined by my personal abilities or limitations, opinions of other people and circumstances (social, political, economic, etc.).
- The value of the person is not lessened by traumatic or difficult situations he/she has gone through.
- Even other people have the same irreducible value.

How the Human being can discover his value

The rediscovery has three steps – an encounter, a belonging and education

A. The encounter
- The discovery of my value happens always through an encounter unforeseen, surprising, and gratuitous (I cannot determine when and how it happens).
- Usually it is an encounter with a person that looks at me in such an extraordinary way that moves me. This encounter gives me strength and certainty to look at myself in a positive way, however reduced or limited my horizon may be.
- It puts in play all the characteristics of my humanity: my heart, my reason and my freedom.

B. The belonging
- The discovery of my value, made possible by an encounter, does not happen just once: it is a continuous process of more discovery and rediscovery that is sustained through a belonging.
- To keep the discovery of my value as a human being alive, I need to remain in relationship with people who continue to enable me recognize my value.

C. Education
- The discovery of my value is not a final step but something that should become part and parcel of every step I make as I walk the path of life.
- Education is the condition to sustain the awareness of my value.
• Education is the process of introducing the person to the meaning of reality. The educator, therefore, accompanies the person to discover and perceive the infinite dimension of oneself and everything.

As an educator, I can offer a companionship in facing reality
• I should accept/embrace at the person for what he/she is (not for his/her social situation, needs, weaknesses etc.)
• My gaze towards the person can help him/her the person to discover the true desires of his/her heart.
• My closeness to the person can help the person to be constantly reminded about himself/herself’s infinite value.
• I should communicate certainly first of all with my presence and friendship or closeness

N.B: An educative intervention is truly useful only if it leads to a greater awareness of who the person is.

TO GO DEEPER

Greater, Defeating AIDS – a documentary by Emmanuel Exitu, 2008
(A real life battle against AIDS based on an encounter, a belonging, an education)
Vicky: "She talked to me... I developed a hard heart; I only had an open heart to die. I knew nobody; even Rose, would ever love me; if the man I had come into union with had rejected me, nobody would ever love me. She told me: ‘Vicky, don’t you know that the value in you is greater than the value of sickness?’ That kept me moving" (an extract)

(This documentary is extremely useful to show the importance of the work of a social worker or more in general a caring person that looks at you for the infinite value that you are and not for your sickness, your mistakes or the traumatic situations you went through... it is a simple gaze, simple because it is human.

AFTER WATCHING the documentary we propose a brainstorming session about the lessons learnt, and the facilitator shall underline the most important scenes of the documentary that help with deepening:
- What is the value of the person
- What a person truly desires
- How can a person discover his/her value

AKINFA’S STORY - BY MARIJA JUDINA
During an outing for students, in my very group, there was a nuisance, a boy 8 – 9 years old. He had no family and was living with relatives whom he did not like and who did not love him. He was called Akinfa. He was irritating, teasing everyone, the Jewish children in a particular way, squabbling with everyone.

All of us, especially myself who was responsible for the child, urged him with words and by example.

But once Akinfa passed all the limits: he beat up one of his companions, insulted the adults and committed a little theft. So his expulsion was decreed.

When the time came to execute the sentence, at the time of separation, I don’t know how, I burst into tears.

And here was the second birth of Akinfa: he too burst into tears, he asked for forgiveness from all, gave back what he had stolen and, since then, followed me all over the field.

And he explained to everyone that in his life he had never seen a teacher who was crying for his child, who was crying, to quote his own words, about the soul and the life of a brat.

Precisely this was the sense of his wonder and of his desire to get back on the track.

The aim of reading this experience is to underline the way through which a person can discover his value through a companionship, through the gaze of an educator. This conclusion is also drawn out of the brainstorming session.

AMANI'S STORY
As she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of the school, she told the children an untruth. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said she loved them equally. However, that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in the seat, was a little boy named Amani Kasereka.

Mme Mapendo had watched Amani the year before and noticed that he did not play well with the other children, that his clothes were messy, and that he constantly needed a bath. In addition, Amani could be unpleasant.

It got to the point where Mme Mapendo would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, marking bold Xs and then putting a big “F” at the top of his papers. At the school where Mme Mapendo taught, she was required to review each student’s past records and she put Amani’s off until the last. However, when she reviewed his file, she was in for a surprise.

Amani’s first grade teacher wrote, “Amani is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners. He is a joy to be around.” His second grade teacher
The story does not end here. There was yet another letter that spring. Amani said that he met this girl who he was going to marry. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Mme Mapendo would agree to sit at the wedding in the place that is usually reserved for the mother of the groom.

Of course, Mme Mapendo did. And she wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. Moreover, she also remembered to wear the perfume that Amani’s mother wore on the last Christmas they spent together.

They hugged each other, and Dr. Kasereka whispered in Mme Mapendo’s ear, “Thank you, Mme Mapendo, for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference.”

Mme Mapendo, with tears in her eyes, whispered back, “Amani, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. I didn’t know how to teach till I met you.’

You could have an Amani standing in front of you and yet not realize it.

BY NOW Mme Mapendo realized the problem and she was ashamed of herself. She felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents, wrapped beautifully in bright ribbons and papers, except for Amani’s, whose present was clumsy and wrapped in heavy brown paper. Mme Mapendo took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found the rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing and a bottle of perfume that was only one quarter full. But she stifled the children’s laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist. Amani Kasereka stayed on after school that day just long enough to say, “Mme Mapendo, today you smelled just like my mom used to.” After the children left, she cried for a long time.

On that very day, she quit teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Instead, she began to teach children. Mme Mapendo paid particular attention to Amani. As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Amani had become one of the smartest children in class. And, despite her lie that she loved all the children the same, Amani became one of her “pets”.

A year later, she found a note under her door, from Amani, telling her that she was still the best teacher he had ever had in his life.

Six years went by before she got another letter from Amani. He then wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still the best teacher he had ever had in his whole life.

Four years after that, she received another note saying that while things had been tough at times, he still stayed in school, had stuck with it and would soon graduate with the highest honours. He assured Mme Mapendo that she was still the best and most favourite teacher he had ever had in his whole life.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor’s degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and most favourite teacher he had ever had in his whole life. But now the name was a little longer... The letter was signed, Amani A. Kasereka, MD.

The point of emphasis should be on the importance of the attention to each and every person that can help us recognize difficulties s/he is going through, and to underscore how important it is not to stop at the first impression. The educator can change the life of the person for good.
PART II > CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Before starting, take some time to remember the time when you were 4-6 years old. What was your life like? How was the relationship with your parents/ your siblings/ your teachers? What bothered you? What did you like most? What did you wish for?

By travelling back in time like this, you can notice, that even when you were only five years old, you were already a person, i.e. you had your own desires and thoughts, your own inner world. It is easy to undervalue the astonishing richness of the inner world of a small child – and therefore we sometimes tend to treat children not with the seriousness that a person deserves. This is similar to Jean Piaget’s conclusion that ‘children are not less intelligent than adults, they simply think differently’. Or from Romano Guardini: “A true child is not less a man than a real adult.” Each one of the children you encounter in or outside school has an inner world of thoughts and desires as rich as your own at that age. This is why your profession as teachers is one of the most challenging but also fascinating jobs. Each child has her/his own hopes, a unique history of relationships and a unique character. It is important to remember this every day when you look into their faces.

So many times we talk about “the child” forgetting that “the child” in general does not exist. There is “this” child that definitely walks the paths of evolutionary stage, but covers them in “her” or “his” own way, which is derived from its natural endowment, from its being the son of..., from its living in a certain place, from having met some friends...

As we needed esteem for our inner world, for our person when we were five years old, every child needs that esteem for the whole child, her/his ability, her/his personality, the totality of her/his person. But you will be able to have esteem for the children you teach, when you are conscious of your own need for esteem – now and in the past.

> SELF-REFLECTION

Description: Reflecting on our personal experience as children
Objective: The activity is intended to enable participants understand that children, though young and small, are persons like us.
Method: Think Pair Share
Training materials: Note books and Pens
How can a child discover his/her personal identity?
What has helped you most in developing your own identity?

Probably, faces now come to your mind, faces of people who have been important for you. Or maybe also activities, that you liked to do, like dancing, reading or singing. But, probably, when you think about these activities you will notice, that an important aspect was the fact that you were doing them together with someone else (or showing proudly a drawing to someone).

The personal identity develops in the significant relationships of a child. Only through these relationships, a child can discover who he or she is.

This means that the development of an individual affects not only her/him, but also those who take care of her/him and accompany him. Again, we can see, that your job is really challenging – but also fascinating. You have the chance to be one of the significant people who helps a child discover who he or she is.

To have some theoretical and scientific background, we wanted to outline the significance of early relationships for child development.

What is most important for a baby to develop well is a stable, empathetic relationship! We die if there is nobody who takes care – even if there is plenty of food!

All children first stopped growing, became very slim and apathetic and finally all ten died! So, what a human being needs to live is not first of all food, but a stable, empathetic relationship! We die if there is nobody who takes care – even if there is plenty of food!
Objective: To enable participants discover the skills the child develops from conception to birth

Delivery instrument: Documentary: Human life: the first wonder

STEPS
Step 1. Previewing question; the facilitator proposes some questions to reflect upon while watching the documentary
Step 2. Viewing
Step 3. Discussion of the documentary in relation to child development
Step 4. The facilitator highlights the key aspects of the documentary.

Basic principles of development

From conception to the age of three
Children’s developmental needs should be the foundation for every choice teachers and school leaders make in their classrooms or schools. They need to remain at the centre of the decisions about school organization, policies, scheduling, and every day practices. Too often, the choices affect children negatively, interfering with growth and learning rather than encouraging it. As teachers, if we understand the children’s developmental needs more fully, we may change and improve our schools.

Children, in their growing up, pass through different stages of development, which they overtake at very different speeds: it is fundamental not to rush but pay attention to the needs of every single child. Child development refers to the natural stages of growth and skills that children acquire which start at conception.

The first two years of our life have a very strong influence on the development. And also, by looking at these early stages of development, you can easily grasp the basic principles that characterize child development even at later stages.

We have already seen that the most fundamental need of a child is a stable relationship with a caring person. Try to imagine the world from the perspective of a newborn baby: everything is new and unknown and you are totally dependent on someone; being abandoned means a threat to life. Thus, an important principle of education is to have a balance between a secure base and exploration. A child can only explore the world surrounding her/him with curiosity if there is a stable base (i.e. a stable relationship) to which the child can return. If you observe mothers with children between one and two years, you will notice, that the child will oscillate between the mothers’ laps and the exploration of the environment – and while the child explores or plays, the child will look to the mother from time to time, assuring her/him, that she is there. As a consequence, without a stable base of a caring relationship, there is no exploration, that is, no curiosity, no learning.

Infants (0-1 year of age)²
Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving “bye-bye” are called developmental milestones. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, behave, and move (like crawling, walking, or jumping).

In the first year, babies learn to focus their vision, reach out, explore, and learn about the things that are around them. Cognitive or brain development means the learning process of memory, language, thinking, and reasoning. Learning language is more than making sounds (“babble”), or saying “ma-ma” and “da-da”. Listening, understanding, and knowing the names of people and things are all a part of language development. During this stage, babies also are developing bonds of love and trust with their parents and others as part of social and emotional development. The way parents cuddle, hold, and play with their baby sets the basis for how they will interact with them and others.

The two months old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can hold head up and begins</td>
<td>Coos, makes gurgling sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to push up when lying on tummy</td>
<td>Turns head toward sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes smoother movements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with arms and legs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begins to smile at people</td>
<td>Pays attention to faces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can briefly calm himself (may</td>
<td>Begins to follow things with eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring hands to mouth and suck on</td>
<td>and recognize people at a distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hand)</td>
<td>Begins to act bored (cries, fussy) if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tries to look at parent</td>
<td>activity doesn’t change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

². www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html
### The four months old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can hold head up and begins to push up when lying on tummy</td>
<td>Begins to babble</td>
<td>Lets you know if she is happy or sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes smoother movements with arms and legs</td>
<td>Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears</td>
<td>Responds to affection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain, or being tired</td>
<td>Reaches for toy with one hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follows moving things with eyes from side to side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Watches faces closely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognizes familiar people and things at a distance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Social | | |
|--------| | |
| Holds head steady, unsupported | | |
| Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface | | |
| May be able to roll over from tummy to back | | |
| Can hold a toy and shake it and swing at dangling toys | | |
| Brings hands to mouth | | |
| When lying on stomach, pushes up to elbows | | |

### The six months old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)</td>
<td>Responds to sounds by making sounds</td>
<td>Looks around at things nearby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begins to sit without support</td>
<td>Strings vowels together when babbling (“ah,” “eh,” “oh”) and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds</td>
<td>Brings things to mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce</td>
<td>Responds to own name</td>
<td>Shows curiosity about things and tries to get things that are out of reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward</td>
<td>Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure</td>
<td>Begins to pass things from one hand to the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with “m,” “b”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Social | | |
|--------| | |
| Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger | | |
| Likes to play with others, especially parents | | |
| Responds to other people’s emotions and often seems happy | | |
| Likes to look at self in a mirror | | |

### The nine months old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stands, holding on</td>
<td>Responds to simple spoken requests</td>
<td>Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can get into sitting position</td>
<td>Uses simple gestures, like shaking head “no” or waving “bye-bye”</td>
<td>Finds hidden things easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sits without support</td>
<td>Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)</td>
<td>Looks at the right picture or thing when it’s named</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulls to stand</td>
<td>Says “mama” and “dada” and exclamations like “uh-oh!”</td>
<td>Copies gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawls</td>
<td>Tries to say words you say</td>
<td>Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Social | | |
|--------| | |
| May be afraid of strangers | | |
| May be clingy with familiar adults | | |
| Has favourite toys | | |

| Cognitive | | |
|-----------| | |
| Watches the path of something as it falls | | |
| Looks for things he sees you hide | | |
| Plays peek-a-boo | | |
| Puts things in her mouth | | |
| Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other | | |
| Picks up things like cereal between thumb and index finger | | |

### The one year old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gets to a sitting position without help</td>
<td>Responds to simple spoken requests</td>
<td>Explorers things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture (“cruising”)</td>
<td>Uses simple gestures, like shaking head “no” or waving “bye-bye”</td>
<td>Finds hidden things easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May take a few steps without holding on</td>
<td>Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)</td>
<td>Looks at the right picture or thing when it’s named</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May stand alone</td>
<td>Says “mama” and “dada” and exclamations like “uh-oh!”</td>
<td>Copies gestures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Social | | |
|--------| | |
| Is shy or nervous with strangers | | |
| Cries when mom or dad leaves | | |
| Has favorite things and people | | |
| Shows fear in some situations | | |
| Hands you a book when he wants to hear a story | | |
| Repeats sounds or actions to get attention | | |
| Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing | | |
| Plays games such as “peek-a-boo” and “pat-a-cake” | | |

| Cognitive | | |
|-----------| | |
| Looks at the right picture or thing when it’s named | | |
| Copies gestures | | |
| Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair | | |
| Bangs two things together | | |
| Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container | | |
| Lets things go without help | | |
| Pokes with index (pointer) finger | | |
| Follows simple directions like “pick up the toy” | | |
Positive parenting tips
Following are some things you, as a parent, can do to help your baby during this time:
• Talk to your baby. She will find your voice calming.
• Answer when your baby makes sounds by repeating the sounds and adding words. This will help him learn to use language.
• Read to your baby. This will help her develop and understand language and sounds.
• Sing to your baby and play music. This will help your baby develop a love for music and will help his brain development.
• Praise your baby and give her/him lots of loving attention.
• Spend time cuddling and holding your baby. This will help him/him feel cared for and secure.
• Play with your baby when she’s alert and relaxed. Watch your baby closely for signs of being tired or fussy so that she can take a break from playing.
• Engage your baby with toys and move him to safe areas when he starts moving and touching things that he shouldn’t touch.
• Take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. Parenting can be hard work! It is easier to enjoy your new baby and be a positive, loving parent when you are feeling good yourself.

Toddlers (1-2 years of age)
During the second year, toddlers are moving around more, and are aware of themselves and their surroundings. Their desire to explore new objects and people also is increasing. During this stage, toddlers will show greater independence; begin to show defiant behaviour; recognize themselves in pictures or a mirror; and imitate the behaviour of others, especially adults and older children. Toddlers also should be able to recognize the names of familiar people and objects, form simple phrases and sentences, and follow simple instructions and directions.

The one and a half year old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Still walks alone</td>
<td>Say several single words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May walk up steps and run</td>
<td>Says and shakes head “no”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulls toys while walking</td>
<td>Points to show someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can help undress herself</td>
<td>what he wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks from a cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eats with a spoon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likes to hand things to others as</td>
<td>Finds things even when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>play</td>
<td>hidden under two or three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>covers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Two Year Old: Growth Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stands on tiptoe</td>
<td>Points to things or pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicks a ball</td>
<td>when they are named</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begins to run</td>
<td>Knows names of familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbs onto and down from</td>
<td>people and body parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furniture without help</td>
<td>Says sentences with 2 to 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walks up and down stairs</td>
<td>Follows simple instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>holding on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throws ball overhand</td>
<td>Repeats words overheard in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes or copies straight lines</td>
<td>Points to things in a book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and circles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copies others, especially adults and older children</td>
<td>Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets excited when with other children</td>
<td>Begins to sort shapes and colours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows more and more independence</td>
<td>Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows defiant behaviour (doing what he has been told not to)</td>
<td>Plays simple make-believe games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games</td>
<td>Builds towers of 4 or more blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Might use one hand more than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follows two-step instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>such as “Pick up your shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and put them in the closet.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Positive parenting tips
The following are some things you, as a parent, can do to help your toddler during this time:
• Read to your toddler daily.
• Ask her to find objects for you or name body parts and objects.
• Play matching games with your toddler, like shape sorting and simple puzzles.
• Encourage him to explore and try new things.
• Help to develop your toddler’s language by talking with her and adding to words she starts. For example, if your toddler says “baba”, you can respond, “Yes, you are right—that is a bottle.”
• Encourage your child’s growing independence by letting him help with dressing himself and feeding himself.
• Respond to wanted behaviours more than you punish unwanted behaviours (use only very brief time outs). Always tell or show your child what she should do instead.
• Encourage your toddler’s curiosity and ability to recognize common objects by taking field trips together to the park or going on a bus ride.

> TO GO DEEPER

Description: Identifying child development patterns of children between 0-2 years
Objective: 1. To identify the development patterns of these children
2. To develop the understanding on the important parenting styles for these children

Materials needed: Hand-out of each age category
Method: Plenary

STEPS

Step 1. Facilitator asks participants to reflect on their own children or those they take care of at the age between 0-2 years old.

Step 2. Facilitator asks the following questions and listens to the answers of 3-4 participants, every question:
- What do you like in working with children of this age?
- What don’t you like in working with children of this age?
- What at this age do children like most?
- What helps the most at this age in boosting their learning?

Step 3. Participants receive the handouts with the information (stated above) concerning the children of the age between 0-2 years. Participants shall confront this information with their personal experiences.

Three year olds

Because of children’s growing desire to be independent, this stage is often called the “terrible twos.” However, this can be an exciting time for parents and toddlers. Toddlers will experience huge thinking, learning, social, and emotional changes that will help them to explore their new world, and make sense of it. During this stage, toddlers should be able to follow two- or three-step directions, sort objects by shape and colour, imitate the actions of adults and playmates, and express a wide range of emotions.

Physical
- Climbs well
- Runs easily
- Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike)
- Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step

Language
- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Can name most familiar things
- Understands words like “in,” “on,” and “under”
- Says first name, age, and sex
- Names a friend
- Says words like “I,” “me,” “we,” and “you” and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

Social
- Copies adults and friends
- Shows affection for friends without prompting
- Takes turns in games
- Shows concern for a crying friend
- Understands the idea of “mine” and “his” or “hers”
- Shows a wide range of emotions
- Separates easily from mom and dad
- May get upset with major changes in routine
- Dresses and undresses self

Cognitive
- Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- Understands what “two” means
- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon
- Turns book pages one at a time
- Builds towers of more than 6 blocks
- Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle

Positive parenting tips

Following are some things you, as a parent or caretaker, can do to help your toddler during this time:
- Set up a special time to read books with your toddler.
- Encourage your child to take part in pretend play.
- Play parade or follow the leader with your toddler.
- Help your child to explore things around her by taking her on a walk or wagon ride.
- Encourage your child to tell you his name and age.
- Teach your child simple songs, or other cultural childhood rhymes.
- Give your child attention and praise when she follows instructions and shows positive behaviour and limit attention for defiant behaviour like tantrums. Teach your child acceptable ways to show that she’s upset.

Four year olds

Fours are ready for everything. They are explorers and adventurers and are soaking

3. These stages are developed starting from the book Yardsticks, Children in the Classroom, Ages 4-12 by Chip Wood, Northeast Foundation for Children.
up the world of knowledge with incredible speed. They are capable of almost nonstop mental and physical gymnastics. Activity centres (or areas of the room) are generally arranged so fours can move from centre to centre or area across the room without traffic congestion. Fours’ vision looks towards the horizon, and these traffic patterns minimize accidents and knock-overs. Paper and pencil tasks should be kept to a minimum for four year olds in preschool and in kindergarten. They learn best through their own play, by being read to, by acting out stories and fairy tales, by manipulating clay, paint brushes, finger paints, building blocks, mathematical materials. Outdoor play is also essential for fours; this is an age where much learning is transmitted through the large muscles. Learning goes from hand to the head, not the other way around. Teachers in four year classrooms need to focus on observing and redirecting behaviour, and asking questions that lead children towards the next level of cognitive exploration and understanding.

The four year old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision in the far field, on the horizon</td>
<td>Expansive; enjoy using big words, trying out language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes appear clumsy, awkward; spills and accidents common</td>
<td>Bathroom language often evident, as well as other “swears”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand and fingers are an extension of whole arm i.e. fine motor skills not dominant</td>
<td>Very talkative, likes to explain “…and you know what, teacher?” …”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisted pencil grasp typical</td>
<td>Loves being read to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy much physical activity-running, jumping, climbing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can sit still for only brief periods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social

| Friendly, gregarious, chatty, “bubbly” age | Learn best through play and exploration |
| Love working with their friends but still much parallel play | Like to imitate adult roles through imaginative play; dress up, dramatic play |
| Move quickly from one thing to the next, short attention span | Music and rhythm, repeating patterns-simple learning strategies |
| Can make decision based on interest; not overly dependent on adults, though obviously requiring their guidance | Learn more through large muscles than small, i.e. hauling blocks, easel painting rather than paper/pencil task |
| Like responsibility of a “big person” job (setting table, folding clothes, putting out the snack) |                               |
| Older fours are sometimes fearful, worried; night mares |                                               |

Cognitive

| Learn best through play and exploration | Learning through large muscle activity and play |
| Like to imitate adult roles through imaginative play; dress up, dramatic play | Easel and finger painting excellent for prewriting; stand-up easel important for vision |
| Music and rhythm, repeating patterns-simple learning strategies | Need climbing apparatus on the playground |
| Learn more through large muscles than small, i.e. hauling blocks, easel painting rather than paper/pencil task | Big blocks, “hollow” blocks allow for construction using large muscles |
| Tumbling is usually successful in physical education | Tumbling is usually successful in physical education |

Social behaviour

| Learn from modeling; need chances to practice new or appropriate behaviour | Easily redirected from inappropriate behaviour; teacher language all important to help children to use language instead of physical reaction—use words! “Tell her what you want,” “ask if he is through,” etc. small dramas and role plays help teach social skills |
| Love to learn to work together, although parallel play may continue for younger fours, “who’s the boss?” often the major developmental issue; can learn basic meditation skills, but “it’s the rule” works wonders | Rough house play on the playground needs teacher redirection and modelling of appropriate behaviour |

| Close visual activity (reading, writing) kept to a minimum and for short periods | Love being read to-individually, small groups, whole class; love to do their own “reading” in picture books |
| Use whole hand to write, printing usually large | Constantly reading the environment-label objects frequently seen or used (not all objects randomly) |
| Never have children copy from board |  |

The four year old in the classroom

Vision and fine motor ability

Cognitive growth

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES IN CLASS

A teacher cannot play with all the children at the same time, but when the whole group of children is occasionally involved. Playing with all the children of a class can be wonderful, but it can’t take all the time. Then, what can be done? Create different areas in the class that have these different activities taking place:
THE little house

The little house is a piece of the room marked by 2 benches. On the ground you stretch a tablecloth. The toys to begin with are: dolls, dishes, glasses and bottles, spoons, pans, (when it’s possible also: forks, knife, a cooking stove and some grass for cooking, an iron and rags). Four or five children can play in this place. The imitation of grown-ups is the content of the game: this content allows children to pretend to live a reality in their own way in imitation of the housework. When children play “mother” and “father” both feelings and intelligence come into play: It doesn’t matter much if a spoon is used on a table in play or in earnest, that buttons are unfastened on one’s dress or on a doll’s. The game teaches children a real gesture; as a matter of fact, it is the same gesture. They can learn also many English words concerning these activities.

Playing with building blocks

At the beginning, a child uses wooden blocks by putting them in a row, and then a block on top of the other...He becomes proud of his tower that he throws it to the ground by a blow with his fist. The children’s gestures develop quickly. In his mind, remarkable sets of ideas are born: here we can see a house, an enclosure for animals, there is a boat on the sea...

You have to place the blocks: opposite, behind, on top...

In playing children, talk a lot, either playing alone or with others, practicing and concentrating. Talking and expressing themselves is their most important work, depending on an environment of exchanges, affection, and a desire to communicate desire, of a wish for communication with friends and the teacher.

The toys are: tins, branches, boxes, wooden blocks, animals...

The number of children must correspond to the quantity of materials.

Paper, scissors and glue

Children enjoy playing with more and more difficult things because they feel more like adults. There is a pleasure in acting which is like a personal mark. There is a moral pleasure which makes the child feel he is growing. Obviously a child plays because he enjoys it, but his games are also helpful. Through imitating, his games grow little by little. At first, children tear paper to make balls; they may enjoy sticking all of them on a newspaper sheet. Little by little, they improve, they don’t tear at random, they think of same shapes and the shapes to combine. At this point, they may want to use scissors to cut, but they must be careful and must be patiently taught the technique. Cutting is an engaging activity but also a satisfactory one.

Material newspaper, sheets, glue, scissors for each child, buttons, ribbons, rags...
**Drawing**

In this case, drawing means painting or else a guided activity. A teacher can help them remember an experience, speaking about a picture, but he/she shouldn’t interfere to modify the picture made, nor to give anything to copy. Children are fond of drawing on the floor using white chalk: the floor becomes a wide “blackboard” where you can draw and wipe out at leisure. They can also draw on the class blackboard. Drawing on a sheet of paper helps them to learn to make use of a small space with its top and bottom and the front line. Little by little, the lines get more refined and precise and the expression more detailed.

Material: white chalk, pencil, crayons, sheets of paper.

**Five year olds**

Learning is at its best for the five-year old when it is both structured and exploratory: structured through a clear predictable schedule; exploratory through carefully constructed interest areas where children can initiate their own activity. The best teachers observe learning activities and create children’s teacher-directed instruction and meet the learning expectations for the age.

Although many children have now been in social settings with peers outside the home for several years, kindergarten remains at a time of immense social interest.

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**Summary of the activities and division of the space**

One needs to divide the room into different areas. This can be done in different ways: we can use benches, the piece of furniture or a simple tablecloth. It is necessary for the children to learn the rules of the game and what is possible to do in each area. The time required for teaching how to play and how to tidy up depends on the teacher, as well as the number of children to be allowed to play in that area. At first, the teacher is going to play with each child to show the rules till he learns.
The five year old: growth patterns

Children's vision is most easily focused on objects near to them. They become engrossed in details of a block construction or a complicated painting. Because they lack the ability to sweep their eyes laterally, left-to-right and right-to-left, across a printed page with ease, most five year olds are not ready for formal reading instruction.

The young five years old seems to be in a period of consolidation, resting from the exuberant, somewhat wild behaviour of four. They are a little calmer, more literal and exact. Oneword answers – "good" and "fine" – replace elaborate explanations.

Typical behaviour changes as children move through their fifth year. Visual and auditory contusions commonly show up in reversals of letters and numbers. The child is not sure which way things go and says so. "Yes and no" replaces "yes!" an emphatic "NO" may remind us of the "terrible two's". Children are testing the limits they were so comfortable with a few months ago. As children move towards six, their language becomes more differentiated and complex. They like to explain things and like things to be explained to them. Their behaviour also becomes more complex. It is especially important to remember that five year olds do not think the same way as adults do. Cause and effect are not explained through logic, but rather through intuition. Thought, which appears illogical, can be considered pre-logical (e.g. I go to sleep because it's night). Bound by the senses, restricted to what they can see, children must act on one thing at a time. The best kindergarten teachers consider pre-logical (e.g. I go to sleep because it's night). Bound by the senses, restricted to what they can see, children must act on one thing at a time. The best kindergarten teachers consider the "terrible two's". Children are testing the limits they were so comfortable with a few months ago. As children move towards six, their language becomes more differentiated and complex. They like to explain things and like things to be explained to them. Their behaviour also becomes more complex. It is especially important to remember that five year olds do not think the same way as adults do. Cause and effect are not explained through logic, but rather through intuition. Thought, which appears illogical, can be considered pre-logical (e.g. I go to sleep because it's night). Bound by the senses, restricted to what they can see, children must act on one thing at a time. The best kindergarten teachers consider pre-logical (e.g. I go to sleep because it's night). Bound by the senses, restricted to what they can see, children must act on one thing at a time. The best kindergarten teachers know that, they too, must focus on one thing at a time, keeping expectations clear and simple.

The five year old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Vision focused on objects close at hand</td>
<td>• Literal, succinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Centred on task</td>
<td>• “Play” and “good” favourite words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gross motor control improving</td>
<td>• Needs release from an adult, “Can I…?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 fingered pincer grasp with pencil</td>
<td>• Fantasy is more active, less verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls out of chair sideways</td>
<td>• Often does not communicate about school at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paces self well</td>
<td>• Thinks out loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active but can control physical behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Like to help, co-operative, wants to be good</td>
<td>• Likes to copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Likes rules and routines</td>
<td>• Literal behaviour; often only one way to do things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Needs to approved</td>
<td>• Bound cognitively by sight and senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dependent on authority; wants to be told what to do but also finds it difficult to see things from another’s viewpoint</td>
<td>• Animistic (inanimate objects have life, movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learns best through play and own action</td>
<td>• Does not yet think logically</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changes as children move towards six: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Visual and auditory confusion</td>
<td>• Equivocates – sometimes yes, sometimes no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reversals common</td>
<td>• Elaborates and differentiates in answer to questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physically restless</td>
<td>• Verbal answers may not equal to cognitive understanding; more words than ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Awkward fine motor skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Variable pencil grasp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tilts head to non-dominant side</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The older five year old in the classroom
Many of the characteristics of five, of course, carry over as children move towards six. Increasingly unsettled behaviours, however, is evidence of growth and change.

Physical
- Printing tends to be less neat than at five and with more reversals
- ’Pencil grips’ sometimes help children with overly firm grasp
- Reversals of letters and numbers are at their peak; reading and writing tasks can be extremely difficult and frustrating

Cognitive growth
- Language still initiates actions; begin to explain in more detail
- Need many avenues for children to express what they know – blocks, paint, arts and crafts, etc.
- Allow children time to try out their own ways of doing things, even when sometimes get wrong answers; constantly validate children’s initiative

Social
- Oppositional; not sure whether to be good or naughty
- Insecure with feelings
- Testing authority limits
- Tentative
- Complaints
- Temper tantrums; striking out
- Wonderful at home, terrible at school; or vice-versa

Six year olds
Six is an age of dramatic physical, cognitive and social change. Tooth eruption is continuous; teachers find chewed pencils, papers and workbook corners in the first grade. Visual development is maturing allowing for easy introduction of beginning reading tasks. Rapid physical growth is mirrored in rapid activity. Children are constantly in a hurry, rushing to finish. They love to do their assignments, but are decidedly more interested in the process than in the product. Schoolwork tends to be sloppy or erratic. There is great interest in being first, in doing the most work, or in the opposite extreme. The importance of friends now rivals the importance of parents and the teachers in the child’s social development. A classroom full of six year olds is always full noise and busy. Talking, humming, whistling, bustling are the order of the day. “Industrious” describes the overall behaviour of the child at six. He or she is now as interested in the school work as spontaneous play. Children delight in co-operative projects, activities and tasks. It is at six that most children begin a major transition in their intellectual growth. The child now begins to approach the world logically. Concepts begin to be reorganized in a symbolic manner through understandable systems and approaches.

The six year old: growth patterns
### The six year old in the classroom

**Vision and fine motor ability**
- Should do little copy of work from the blackboard; will comply if asked, but a difficult task
- Spacing and ability to stay on the line
- Tracking ability now makes reading instruction manageable

**Cognitive growth**
- Games of all sorts are popular and useful; teaching through games produces stronger learning patterns than workbook learning
- Artistic explosion – clay paint, dancing, colouring, book marking, weaving, singing tried out seriously for first time; children need to feel their attempts are valued, that there is no right and wrong way to approach an art medium; risk taking now enhances the later artistic expression and competence
- Encourage an important release for children to move on to next task
- Some become stuck in the repetitive behaviour; infinite rainbow and flower for fear of making mistake when trying something
- Expect high volume of products but low quality of completion – children are proud of how much they get done, but not concerned with looks
- Pay attention to the children’s delight in the doing (especially for themselves) – includes academics, clean up or snack; ready for experiment for individual and group responsibility
- Social studies content must be connected to here and now; fields trips immensely popular, productive when followed by representational activities such as experience stories, work in blocks; children can only understand past events (history) when closely associated with present

**Gross motor ability**
- Allow a busy level of noise and activity; children often work standing
- Encourage a slower pace or limit work to enhance quality

**Social behaviour**
- Extreme behaviours need to be understood but tolerated; tantrums, teasing, bossing, complaining, tattling are ways sixes try out relationship with authority
- Take the competitive edge off games when used for learning; sixes are highly competitive and can overdo the need to win and be first
- Extremely sensitive – an ounce of encouragement maybe all a child needs to get over a difficult situation, severe events can truly injure

**Physical**
- Visually myopic
- Works with the head down on desk
- Pincer grasp at pencil point
- Written work tidy, neat
- Sometimes tense
- Like confined space
- Many hurts, real and imagined

**Language**
- Good listener
- Precise talker
- Likes one to one conversation
- Vocabulary development expands quickly
- Interested in all sorts of codes
- Interested in meaning of words

**Cognitive**
- Introvert, withdrawn
- Likes to review learning

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**Seven year olds**

Sevens can be extremely moody, sulking and sometimes depressed. They are often content to spend long periods in their rooms, alone by choice, reading or listening to records or playing with animals or dolls. At school, too, they like to work by themselves and appreciate quiet corners for reading or working. They also like to be with best friends, although relationships may be on one day and off the next.

This is an inward, consolidating period of growth, visually, children exhibit myopic tendencies and concentrate on the details in their visual field. Their tiny printing is anchored to baseline of the paper, their finger grip down on the lead of the pencil, their heads down on their arms or desk as they write sometimes with one eye closed. Because of their visual concentration, sevens have great difficulty copying from the board and this task should be minimized. They do have a good working concept of right and left and general directionality.

Sevens are hard workers and often perfectionists. They want to be correct and they want their work look good, too. Because of this tendency, they take a long time with everything they do and get very upset when they are not given enough time to do their work. Timed tests can be extremely upsetting.

In the classroom, sevens are good listeners and still enjoy being read a story. They show great interest in new words, number relationships and codes. They like working and talking with one other person (in board and card games, on puzzles) but don’t always do well on group projects.

Sevens’ feeling need to be protected. Teasing, joking and especially sarcasm is painful to the seven year old. Being laughed at for a wrong answer or a silly idea can produce anger and tears.

Sevens are beginning to deal with concepts of time, space and quantity with increased sophistication. Science and social studies take on new meaning as sevens show increasing interest in the world around them.

The child’s increasing ability to do math without manipulatives, to infer, predict and estimate makes mathematical concepts particularly accessible at this age.
**Vision and fine motor ability**
- Printing, drawing, number work tend to be small, if not microscopic; work with head down on desk, often hiding or closing one eye.
- Copying from the board can be harmful.
- Not the time to introduce cursive handwriting.
- Printing and drawing anchored to bottom line; difficult to fill up space.
- Often work with three-fingered grasp at pencil and finds it difficult to relax grip.

**Cognitive growth**
- Pay special attention to understand children’s need for closure — want to finish work they begin, need a warning to prepare for transitions; time tests can be especially troublesome.
- Like to work by themselves or in twos; memorization popular along with codes, puzzles and others.
- Want their work to be perfect; classroom attention to products, proper display of work is entirely appropriate.
- Children enjoy repeating tasks, reviewing assignments verbally with teacher; like to touch base frequently with teacher.
- “Discovery” centres or projects often successful; like to collect and sort.

**Gross motor ability**
- Plan for quieter room, sustained, quiet work periods with overflow behaviour.
- Prefer a great deal of active outdoor and indoor physical activity and want to become more popular in the group.

**Social behaviour**
- Frequent friendship shifts; children work best in pairs or alone; accept teacher sitting assignments.
- Schedule changes upsetting; plan well for substitutes.
- Moderate seriousness of classroom with humour and games.
- Communication with parents often critical during this changeable age.
- Anxiety about tests assignments, recess can produce physical complaints.

**The seven year old in the classroom**

**Eight year olds**
It’s all a blur of enthusiasm tempered by only a vague of understanding of how things get done. The job of the second or the third teacher is to harness that energy and give it some direction and focus. Teachers need to help children cut work down to bite-size pieces throughout the year. This includes homework assignments, which should never be longer than an half-hour in duration and should be limited in scope and expectations. Children at this age need to experience “incremental success” in their work — success in gradually increasing quantities and levels of complexity — so they will continue to be motivated and excited.

Eight year olds tend to gravitate towards their own gender when making choices about working and playing with others.

Patience is not common in eight year olds. Again, assignments in handwriting or spelling, for instance, need to be short and to the point. Drafts of children’s work as well as beautiful, finished work should be liberally displayed in the classroom so that children can see the range of effort required to make progress toward mastery in a certain area. The eight year old is actually exploring his potential; he is struggling with feelings of inferiority as he tries out one new area in an expanding awareness of the broader world. This uncertainty will hit a peak at nine.

**The eight year old: growth patterns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speedy, works in hurry</td>
<td>Talkative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full of energy</td>
<td>Listens, but so full of ideas, cannot always recall what has been said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need physical release, outdoor time</td>
<td>Exaggerates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat awkward</td>
<td>Likes to explain ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention span limited</td>
<td>Vocabulary expands rapidly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likes to work cooperatively</td>
<td>Engrossed in activities at hand; loves to socialize at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often “bites off more than can chew,” overestimates abilities</td>
<td>Likes groups and group activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilient; bounces back quickly from mistakes</td>
<td>Very industrious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers same gender activities</td>
<td>Often works quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship groups often include more children than at seven</td>
<td>Concrete operations solidifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble with limits and boundaries</td>
<td>Basics skills begin to be mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregarious, humorous</td>
<td>Begins to feel a sense of competence with skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The eight year old in the classroom

Vision and fine motor ability
- Acuity and control come together; proper time to focus on cursive handwriting – children love to practice, but product often sloppy
- Pencil grasp should now be “adult”; if not, a “pencil grip” may still be needed to help correct habits
- Can copy from board and handle increasingly complex (but not lengthy) assignments

Cognitive growth
- Very industrious, but often exaggerate ability; have trouble knowing limits; teachers can shorten (rather than lengthen) assignments; success in small doses builds confidence
- Loves to work cooperatively; most productive in groups; enjoys responsibility – though not always successful
- Interest in process and product of schoolwork; peers’ assessment of work as important as teacher’s
- Work usually well organized, though tends to be sloppy; needs teacher assistance with organizational strategies; especially on tasks such as math, papers copied from text books
- Growing interest in rules, logic; keep interest in how things are put together, how they work; interest in natural world and classification
- Tires easily, may give up temporarily on hard assignments, but bounces back quickly

Gross motor ability
- Often a “growth spurt” – restless and needs lot of physical activity; short exercise breaks (even in the classroom) help concentration
- Loves group games on the playground; gravitates toward same gender activity, so teacher should lead outdoor games for all class (tag games, etc…)
- Plays hard and often exhaust themselves in short time; several short play breaks more productive than one long one

Social behaviour
- Classroom organization should feature desks in groups, all groups at tables; teachers should change groupings frequently through the year
- Responds to class projects and traditions which build a sense of unity and cohesion
- Gender issues become more important
- Fairness issues, growing sense of moral responsibility beyond self, arguing
- Responds to studies of other cultures; stories that concern fairness, justice

Nine year olds
The enthusiasm of eight often turns into dark brooding and worry at nine – worrying about world events, about the health of parents, about moving away, about losing best friends about changing schools. Teachers engaged in “the writing process” note these thinly veiled themes again and again in fiction writing.

Teachers at this level see children finish their tests early simply because they put down any answer, rather than think through what they know. Others get only half way through because they get stuck trying to figure out the right answer, refusing to be wrong. Nines need many opportunities to practice test taking before the real thing – modelling and role playing can defuse the anxiety created by tests.

Compared to the younger and the older schoolmates, nines tend to learn better on their own as they gain mastery of basic skills. They are gaining a more solid understanding of key cognitive concepts such as multiplication, spelling patterns, and scientific process. Younger children enjoy experimenting with these processes, but nines now take care with the final product. They will work hard on a science report on butterflies, study for weekly spelling tests or a chapter test in math.

Teachers of nine year olds in the third and fourth grade need a sense of humour and a determined lightness to challenge the sometimes deadly seriousness of the age.

The nine year old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased coordination</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushes self to physical limits</td>
<td>Loves vocabulary and language play and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigues easily</td>
<td>Use of hyperboles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerous injuries</td>
<td>Age of negatives; “I hate it!”, “I cannot”, “boring”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatic complaints</td>
<td>“Dirty” jokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension outlet such as nail biting, hair twisting, lip-pursing</td>
<td>Graffiti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly competitive</td>
<td>Industrious and self-critical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-aware</td>
<td>Dawn of “bigger world”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impatient</td>
<td>Intellectual curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrier anxious</td>
<td>Less imaginative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloof</td>
<td>Ability to deal with multiple variables emerges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complainer; fairness issues</td>
<td>Trouble with abstraction – large numbers, periods of time or space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees adult inconsistencies and imperfections</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The nine year old in the classroom

**Vision and fine motor ability**
- Increased coordination leads to greater control, interest in detail; cursive handwriting can be fully mastered; watch for overly tight pencil grip
- Practice with a variety of fine motor tools and tasks useful (weaving, knitting, carving, drawing)
- Can copy from the board, recopy assignments, produce beautiful “final drafts”

**Cognitive growth**
- Can work in groups; arguing, disputes about facts, rules, directions may take longer than actual activities
- Homework should be reasonable, related specifically to next day work; asks, “Why do we have to do this?”
- Looking hard (often anxious) asks for explanation of facts; how things work why things happen as they do; good age for scientific exploration
- Reading to learn instead of learning to read
- Takes pride in finished work, attention to detail; enjoys the product, but may jump quickly between interests

**Gross motor ability**
- Push to the limit – love to challenge themselves individually; race against each other or against clock
- Physical control is an issue; knowing boundaries and staying within them, a physical and social issue
- Boys love to rough house – “puppy stage”
- Age of physical complaints; frequent injuries – some real, some exaggerated
- Gym class a challenge – can’t sit still

**Social behaviour**
- Likes to work with partner of choice – usually same gender; cliques may begin
- Fairness issue increases; can be deadly serious about competitiveness – competition in the curricula, gym classes, etc. should be presented with a sense of fun, lightness, humour
- Likes to negotiate – age of “let’s make a deal”
- Worries (school work, the world) need teacher patience and understanding; clear language when giving directions, setting expectations very important; avoid sarcasm and humour; children are their own worst critics
- Second chances important; tendency to give up; encourage and build up fragile sense of ability to accomplish tasks
- Exasperation by teacher or whining voice leads to more complaints, moodiness; laughing with nines is the best medicine

**Ten year olds**
At ten, children find comfort in themselves, their teachers, their parents and even their siblings! They relax in childhood, gathering strength for the impending storm of adolescence and consolidating their gains from early childhood. You can see this clearly in cognitive choices that children make in school. Tens concentrate, even relish, working on tangible products that display their competence – book reports, theme reports, beginning research writing, scientific documentation.

These industrious children are also able to easily share their knowledge with their classmates and work well on group projects. This is the ideal age for the class play or trip, and tens can often help elevens and even twelves in cooperative pursuits because of their relative calm and instinct for cooperation.

At ten, children seem to be the most “actively receptive” as learners of factual information. This is usually a good time to master a multiplication table that have been such a struggle until now. Education about the human body, sex, childbirth and child rearing can be more effective now than a year or two later when the children are more self-conscious about their bodies. The “facts” are more easily taught and remembered and boys and girls work well together.

Breaks are accepted especially important to these industrious ten year olds and allow them to bounce back and do even more school work. Five minutes of jumping jacks, around the school building, “head and shoulders”, “knees and toes”, elevates the blood and oxygen level in the body and brain.

Tens especially love outdoor group games and can be taught and enjoy cooperative and non-competitive activities as well as more traditional and competitive games like kickball, tag and dodge ball. Boys and girls play well together in either kind of activity. Group initiatives and challenges have great success at this age, so it is a good time for formal outdoor education like a “rope course”, challenge or overnight camping. Ordering their world is central to the ten year old. Enjoy the clean bedroom, the orderly classroom and relative absence of arguments. Observe and capitalize on children’s interest in classification and seriation; rock collection, baseball and superhero cards, doll and teddy bear and unicorn collections, jewellery boxes, secret compartments. The world is theirs to organize.

The ten year old: growth patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large muscle development</td>
<td>Good listeners, actively receptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desperately need outdoor time and physical challenge</td>
<td>Voracious readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwriting often sloppier than at nine</td>
<td>Expressive, talkative, like to explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks and rest periods helpful for growing bodies</td>
<td>Cooperative and competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friendly, generally happy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fairness issues peak and can be solved!</td>
<td>Memorization productive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The ten year old in the classroom

**Vision and fine motor ability**
- Often truthful; developing more mature sense of right and wrong, good at solving social issues
- Quick to anger – quick to forgive
- Like club activities, sports
- Work very well in groups
- Enjoy family and peers
- Like club activities, sports
- Generally content
- Use of tools (compass, protractor, and rulers)
- Particularly enjoy tracing and copying as fine motor skills come into play at once
- Able to focus well, concentrate on tasks at hand; integrate spelling, dictation, penmanship well, but precision may be lacking as many need plenty of practice time.

**Cognitive growth**
- Most productive with the school work; highly conscientious with home work; pay close attention to form, structure, directions, organization
- Actively receptive learners, memorization a key teaching strategy; love geography, world book of records, facts about sports and TV, spelling, math, computer and electronic games
- Classification, seriation, exactness are strengths, collections, science and math projects highly productive; height of concrete organizational skills
- Increased ability to abstract
- Like rules and logic
- Classification and collection of interest; likes to organize
- Able to concentrate for extended periods

**Gross motor ability**
- Need a great deal of physical activity, large muscle development; upper body strength generally undeveloped, extra recess, play time a must or will spill over into acting-out behavior
- Fairness issues peak and can be solved!
- Always cooperative nature, encourages group activity, whole class cohesion, cooperative learning, good age to introduce and train for peer mediation, conflict resolution
- Friendship and fairness issues constantly being played out; use terms, groups, games, competition to allow for practice in social interaction
- Love group games, relays, group initiatives, class outings, team sports, other organized activities
- More illness; colds, flu, ear infections
- Appreciates humor
- Argumentative; debater
- Can be cruel
- Impulsive – talks before thinking

**Social behaviour**
- Basically cooperative nature, encourages group activity, whole class cohesion, cooperative learning, good age to introduce and train for peer mediation, conflict resolution
- Friendship and fairness issues constantly being played out; use terms, groups, games, competition to allow for practice in social interaction
- Generally satisfied with own ability, happy and flexible; can be challenged by teachers to reach out to others, good age to start cross age tutoring – love serving in role of teacher of younger children, also enjoy community service projects
- Enjoy being noticed and rewarded for efforts, "noticing" language and important teacher tool
- Dislike and need to be dissuaded from “sensitive” issues
- Quick tempers may lead to physical outbursts and tears, but usually quickly and easily solved
- Warm, understanding, supportive, appreciative
- Discovery of the telephone
- Can be cruel
- Argumentative debater
- Appreciates humour

The eleven year olds

As children move from ten to eleven, major changes begin to take place. Eleven, of course, marks the beginning of adolescence, especially for girls whose physical growth is generally way ahead of the boys. The onset of menstruation is common at eleven, an average age being at twelve. As their bodies change, emotional sensitivity and volatility increase. The clear physical differences between boys and girls lead to natural separation between boys and girls in the classroom and on the playground.

Their awkwardness and sometimes apparent “rudeness” commonly causes conflict between parents and children as well as teachers and children if the developmental issues are not understood. “Saving face” is very important for the easily embarrassed eleven year old, even in seemingly innocuous situations. It is especially important to try not to correct the eleven year old in front of his or her peers, but to find a time and a place away from the group when possible, finding a time that is removed from the incident itself is also helpful. The growing cognitive strength of the eleven year old is fed by learning new and demanding skills in research, such as footnoting, bibliography and scientific notation. It is also a good age for learning on the computer. They are especially turned off by traditional workbooks, ditto sheets, and other packaged programs that claim to teach “real life skills”. Instead, they need the opportunity to interview the fire chief, take notes at a local meeting, or write a letter to a map company or local corporation.

While their new skills in these more adult realms may be crude and tentative at first, elevens are motivated by the opportunity to try out brand new areas of knowledge. Foreign language, music and new forms of artistic expression are also attractive. Sports and outdoor activity are important to elevens, but often include arguments about team effort and the interpretation of rules. Elevens also focus on their own personal skill development in a sport and are constantly comparing themselves to the best athletes. The awkwardness of adolescence is just beginning, both physically and emotionally. Eleven signifies even more difficult, as well as joyous years ahead. It is a time when both teachers and the parents need to sharpen their skills in translating language, facial expression, moods and intentions. Mothers, for instance, often report that daughters are exceptionally critical and mean – “I can’t seem to do anything right”. Feelings and relationships are seldom clear and simple.

### The eleven year old: growth patterns

**Physical**
- Vast appetite for food and physical activity and talking
- Growth spurt of early adolescence for some girls, reduced motion, restless
- More illness; colds, flu, ear infections

**Language**
- Discovery of the telephone
- Impulsive – talks before thinking
- Can be cruel
- Argumentative debater
- Appreciates humour
The Value of the Person and Psychosocial Support

Social
- Moody, sensitive
- Oppositional; tests limits
- Loves to argue
- Often does best away from home
- Impulsive; rude; unaware
- Difficulty with decisions
- Self-absorbed
- Extremes of emotion
- Inclusion/exclusion; height of cliques; seeks to belong

Cognitive
- Prefers new tasks and experiences for reflection or revision of previous work
- Able to abstract
- Deductive reasoning advances
- Can establish and modify rules, develop hypothesis
- Increased ability to de centre and see world from various perspectives
- Loves to argue

Vision and fine motor ability
- Highly improved, more confident of skills; can explore delicate work; art an important vehicle to greater focus in reading math
- May complain of headaches, only read for short periods of time; music may aid concentration
- Handwork (weaving, braiding, sewing) often a favourite; this may aid concentration and serve as emotional outlet for stress

Cognitive growth
- Scientific studies, mathematical problem solving, invention, debate accentuates new abilities in deductive reasoning; hands on learning still critical for most
- Focus on self, imagining adult roles makes history, biography, current events exciting
- Interests in rules (and challenging rules) makes board games, intellectual puzzles, brain teasers, even tests enjoyable, productive
- Reasonably hard work usually challenges rather than defeats; need help with time management skills, homework
- Learns well in cooperative groups
- Likes work that feels grown up – research bibliography, interviews, footnotes, math skills
- May show interest in languages, music, mechanics; time to explore these areas is important
- Intellectual interest in older and very young people

Gross motor ability
- Loves challenging competition; prefers team sports, improving ability to play as a team

Social behaviour
- Desire to test limits, rules, and important developmental milestones, no personal attack on teachers; class meetings, peer mediation, student councils, cross age tutoring highly effective

Twelve year olds
Teachers and educators have yet to come up with the perfect environment and program for the beginning of adolescence. Twelves' greatest need is to be with their friends. The primary developmental struggle is the confusing struggle for the identity; the child begins the search for fidelity in relationships; this is an all-consuming quest beginning at twelve. Twelves can also become deeply invested with their peers in purposeful schoolwork. Research projects, current events, environmental issues and causes, scientific experiments, major art projects, dramatic productions can attract and engage the twelve year old. Twelves can be offered a large dose of responsibility in the school environment and most will respond with pride and accomplishment. Twelves make excellent one-on-one tutors for younger ones.

Twelve will have reasonable and unreasonable ideas for changing the classroom and school operation. A dress code, chewing gum or having school dance can become major issues. Fairness and the process of making rules become more important. It is important to give twelves an opportunity to discuss and modify rules, but is essential to keep rules consistent and maintain ultimate adult authority clearly and calmly. Teachers must be fair and firm.

At home, children may seem more introverted and moody, communicate in monosyllables and grunts, and withdraw as they sort out their feelings. Teachers can help by providing a view for the parents of their children’s competence. Sharing children’s work with the parents is just as important at this age as in kindergarten. Team sports provide some of the rites of passage twelve need as they enter teen years.

Rituals and ceremony can be deeply meaningful to twelve olds as part of their rites of passage. Confirmation and initiation have profound meaning and children prepare for these events seriously, with a sense of importance and purpose. Schools can provide similar ceremonial experience through graduations, honour assemblies, service and athletic awards. Twelves and young teens need to see and feel the recognition from adults and their peers that they are changing and growing into responsible members of the adult community.
### The twelve year old: growth patterns

#### Physical
- High energy
- Much rest needed
- Growth spurt; sign of puberty
- Menstruation for majority of the girls
- Physical education and sports valued
- Food important especially mid-morning in school

#### Language
- Sarcasm emerges
- Double meanings, word play, jokes of intellectual interest
- Enjoys conversation with adult and peers
- Peer “vocabulary” (slang) important

#### Social
- Adult personality begins to emerge
- More reasonable, tolerant than at eleven
- Enthusiastic, uninhibited
- Appear secure
- Empathetic
- Peers more important than the teachers
- Will initiate own activity
- Self-aware, insightful
- Can set realistic goals in the short terms

#### Cognitive
- Increased ability to abstract in intellectual pursuits
- May show emerging ability in a particular skill or content area
- Can and will see both sides to an argument
- High interest in current events, politics, social justice; also pop culture, materialism
- Research and study skills advances with increase of organizational discipline

#### Vision and fine motor ability
- Increased fine motor ability, patience for practice, self-confidence, makes all fine motor tasks more pleasurable
- Hard work still popular; interest in more complicated visual-motor tasks (carpentry, mechanical repair, clothes design...)
- Sustains reading for long period of time; visual concentration better

#### Gross motor ability
- Begin the idea of training, regular exercise, as means to improve physical ability
- Enjoy teaching younger children physical skills
- Team sports satisfying for; also individual work in dance, drama, martial art

#### Cognitive growth
- Can help peers significantly with subject matter; allow time for peer conferencing, partner projects, lab partners in science...
- Both playful and serious – love to play class games, but can have a serious discussion a moment later
- Isolated subject matter, distinct class periods tend to fragment rather than integrate learning; pursue joint teaching projects, self-contained classrooms where possible

#### Social behaviour
- Leadership qualities abound – provide many opportunities for cross age tutoring, jobs at school, hosting visitors, child care for parent meetings
- Teacher should listen, respond to suggestions for changes in routines (as realistic)

### The twelve year old in the classroom

#### Vision and fine motor ability
- Increased fine motor ability, patience for practice, self-confidence, makes all fine motor tasks more pleasurable
- Hard work still popular; interest in more complicated visual-motor tasks (carpentry, mechanical repair, clothes design...)
- Sustains reading for long period of time; visual concentration better

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#### Social behaviour
- Leadership qualities abound – provide many opportunities for cross age tutoring, jobs at school, hosting visitors, child care for parent meetings
- Teacher should listen, respond to suggestions for changes in routines (as realistic)
Step 6. Participants return to their Home Groups and share the major points of the information learnt about the age bracket of their expertise.

Step 7. In plenary, the facilitator picks at random any participant to present the findings about a given question. It doesn’t matter whether the person was an expert on that question or not. It will be important to highlight the differences among the different steps of development.

> PREPARING TO EDUCATE

Description: After discovering the characteristics of the children in different stages of development, it is important to help participants in planning for activities to be done with children of the different ages.

Objective: To create learning activities for children according to their age with specific attention to the competences educators aim at developing.

Method: Group work

STEPS

Step 1. Participants assemble in 3 groups (more if participants are more than 15-20). Every group shall have to concentrate on a specific age bracket:
- 3-5 years old
- 6-8 years old
- 9-12 years old

Step 2. Every group shall decide the specific age (e.g. 4 years or 8 years) they want to develop the activity for.

Step 3. Participants shall plan thoroughly the activity highlighting:
- Aim of the activity
- Materials to be developed
- Specific abilities educators aim at developing in the children with the proposed activity and how each part of the activity has an impact on the child

Step 4. Groups propose the planned activity to the colleagues in plenary.

PART III: THE TRAUMA

What is a traumatic experience?
A traumatic event is an event that happened to a person (while s/he was present), where life or physical integrity was threatened (e.g.: torturing, killing, sexual abuse, grave accidents...) In such situations s/he felt: extreme fear, complete helplessness and most of the times also guilt (because s/he did not help/prevent or s/he was forced to harm or kill).

• THINK OF YOUR OWN HISTORY

Did something like that happen to you? If not, do you have relatives, friends or children to whom something like that happened? Describe the event (by writing it down or drawing it). How did you feel during the event? If it is not your own story – do you know (because you have been told) or can you imagine how the person felt?

How can you recognize a traumatized child?

Typical symptoms
Generally, the symptoms are the expression of the fact that a traumatized person perceives a PRESENT threat: s/he is convinced that the world is evil and dangerous and thus s/he is always prepared to run or defend himself.

Typically, the following symptoms (not necessarily all of them) are present:

• Arousal/nervousness: expecting always a threat; being always prepared to run or defend oneself e.g.
  Playing ‘war’ in recreation time; aggressiveness; being startled/alarmed although there is no evident reason; controlling-behaviour (e.g. always keeping watch of the door, looking around...)

• Avoidance and numbness: avoiding everything (in thoughts and behaviour/actions) which recalls parts of the traumatic event; feelings of estrangement from the world (nobody will believe and understand me).
  Lack of interest in school, inability to concentrate, being absent (staring out of the window), withdrawal from former friends/caring persons.

• Intrusions: as a consequence of the avoidance, the trauma cannot be worked through and integrated into the biography of the traumatized child or adult. Thus, he typically suffers from the so-called “Intrusions”: sudden recalling of pieces of the happenings which overwhelm the person. Often, the recalling is triggered by something in the present situation which resembles aspects of the traumatizing environment. This can also happen during class. The Intrusions are experienced as totally
When something dreadful happens, the person doesn't have enough time to order the events again. Sometimes, these Intrusions occur at night as very vivid dreams; in children the dreams might lack a concrete content and just be very frightening.

Sudden alteration in the behaviour of the child (s/he might hide under the table, embrace her/himself in a gesture of sheltering her/himself, become totally absent so that he cannot hear you any more, tense up all his muscles).

**Mistrust:** In most cases, the trauma has been caused by willing human actions. A trauma causes thus above all a deep crack in trust: in human beings, in the world and in God. The child might not want to play with others (even if s/he used to be a very social child), s/he might avoid being touched (even by familiar persons), s/he might believe, that God has forsaken him (usually: as a punishment -> consider that most victims cause thus above all a deep crack in trust: in human beings, in the world and in God. The child might not want to play with others (even if s/he used to be a very social child), s/he might avoid being touched (even by familiar persons), s/he might believe, that God has forsaken him (usually: as a punishment -> consider that most victims cause thus above all a deep crack in trust: in human beings, in the world and in God. 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• Moreover, this attitude of relatives strengthens the feeling of isolation: the victims believe that no one could understand them (and they expect that no one would believe their stories, because they sound too terrible to be true).

• The silence of the others increases the sense of guilt; if no one wants to talk about it, it means that what happened is really too bad and something the victims should be ashamed of.

D) The emotional error: believing in one’s emotions
During the traumatic events and afterwards, people can experience deep feelings of guilt, because they were forced to harm others, because they didn’t help (because they were terrified) or were unable to help (even if they tried). They often think that they could have prevented the events. Or they sometimes feel guilty simply because they survived while other members of their families or friends were killed.

Emotional fallacy: human beings tend to think, that their emotions tell the truth: if we feel fear, we think we are in danger (this is why traumatized persons don’t feel safe at home, because the intrusions make them feel afraid), and if we feel guilty, we are convinced to be in fact guilty.

E) Generalizing the experience you made
Human beings, especially children, tend to generalize the life-experience they make. If a child has lived the whole childhood in a safe environment, cared for by loving parents and without contact with violence, s/he will be convinced, that human beings are good and that s/he is loved. But the same happens on the contrary; a child, who has made the experience that the loved ones are taken away or that s/he is not safe at home, s/he is likely to believe that the world is a dangerous place, that you always have to fear for your life, you cannot trust anybody and God wants to punish you or has forsaken you.

What can I do as an educator?
A) Understanding and respect
• If one of the children calls my attention, because s/he is showing symptoms, I should first ask her/him, how s/he feels (if s/he feels frightened or unsafe), if something bad happened to her/him and if s/he wants to tell me.
• Show interest and understanding, but don’t investigate or urge.
• The trauma shouldn’t be a taboo; tell the child that there is no need to censor/negate anything. But, most importantly, don’t urge the child to tell anything: the children know how much they can bear without being re-traumatized. When you urge a child, you risk making things worse. But s/he should know that if s/he is ready, s/he can tell you or draw a picture and show you.

Psycho-Education: it is extremely important for the child to understand that her/his symptoms are normal reactions – and that s/he can improve: “What you are experiencing is the normal reaction to an abnormal situation: you are not strange. You are not going crazy. These symptoms will become less; you will not stay like that your whole life.”

B) \( \text{EXERCISE} \)

Can you remember an event (positive or negative) in your own life, which had such a great impact, that it “coloured” all your feelings and thoughts [the birth of a child; the sickness of a child; the death of a loved person; your marriage; ...]? How did it influence the way you felt, thought and the way you acted? In case it was a negative event – what helped you to overcome it? Talk about it in the plenum/in groups.

[It is especially time, which helps people. But why? Because time teaches you that what you have experienced is not the whole truth about life. The more horrible an experience is, the more time you need to realize that. The children need a lot of time to learn: that it was horrible, cruel and unjust, yes, but not every person is evil, there are places, where you truly are safe, and there are people who love you.]

This is what happens to you: when you don’t expect it, pieces of memories come back and overwhelm you. You need time to open the cupboard, take out all the stuff, and put it back orderly. This needs time and talking/telling others.

• Treat the topic with discretion; the child should not be declared as a “problematic case” in front of the class; most important is that a bond of trust can grow between you and the child and s/he knows that s/he can trust you (and you won’t tell everybody). Just if the others threaten her/him badly (and say e.g. that he is one of the rebels and a bad person), you should protect her/him by explaining that s/he has experienced bad things (avoiding unnecessary details or gossiping).
dreadful, that the children themselves are unsure if it really happened; they generally expect not to be believed, let alone understood and that they remain alone with what they have seen. It is important not to doubt even unbelieving-sounding stories: sometimes, they are so dreadful, that they sound false – and sometimes the children invent stories to test your trust.

B) Create safety
- Environment: Ask the child if s/he feels safe at school; if not, what is causing the feeling of insecurity? If possible, respect the wishes of the child (e.g. be able to watch the door, change his seat, and remove a picture from the wall...). Lead the attention to the HERE and NOW: here and now, the child is safe. If changes in the classroom/school are impossible and in the present situation the child is reminded of the trauma, it is very helpful to ask the child to describe the actual environment in detail (in order to see the differences to the environment in which the trauma took place).
- Physical contact: especially smaller children may seek physical contact. Depending on the type of trauma, they might also be afraid to be touched (because it recalls the trauma). In both cases, their needs should be respected.
- Structure:
  > Daily routine which can be foreseen by the child. Changes should be announced before and explained.
  > Rules in classroom should be clear and understandable; consequences should be consistent and fair. This creates a clear and calm environment which is understandable and controllable (Being clear does not mean demanding harsh discipline. To have clear routine and clear rules does not mean to create a fear).
  > Classroom should be clean/there should be silence.
- Safety at home: Ask the child if s/he feels safe at home. It is important to know, if the family is part of the traumatizing environment; in this case, the child should (at least temporarily) be taken away from home, or the problem should be addressed properly with parents.

C) Build a trusting relationship with the child
Most important are stable relationships. In everything you do, it is most important to gain the trust of the child: the child has to understand through the experience with you, that s/he can trust you. This means:
- to act consistently with what you say (e.g. if you tell the child that s/he can stand if this makes her/him feel more secure, you cannot shout at her/him when s/he is standing apparently without a reason).
- to trust the child: believe what the child tells you. The traumatizing events are so
A girl who succeeded to run from the rebels with her mother and a younger brother is very uninterested and distracted in class. When you ask her, she tells you that she doesn’t like her seat, because she cannot watch the door. How should you react?

- Tell her, that this is no problem and that she can change her seat so that she can keep watching the door. Ask her, if there are other things in the classroom that make her feel unsafe. [this is the right answer]
- Tell her, that there is no need to keep watch of the door, because nobody will come in. [of course, the child has to learn that on the long run. But in the beginning, it is most important to feel safe; then, you can change your controlling-behaviour].

**D) Getting to know and informing the parents**

Do the caring persons know about the trauma? How do they interpret the symptoms?

Psycho-education of the parents according to their knowledge:

> Say, what you know about the trauma and describe the symptoms you observe
> The caring persons should know: the toughest child or adolescent cannot deal alone with such events: the child is reacting in a normal way and is not going crazy
> Explain the importance of clear rules/daily routine/consistent behaviour
> Take the child seriously: listen to him, when s/he wants to tell you something; act warm and understandingly when s/he shows signs of distress and fear; it is very important that the caring persons don’t ridicule or attenuate the traumatizing events (“it was not that bad…”)
> No conspiracy of silence:
  - Forgetting is not the solution (and it is impossible). Telling the child to forget, makes things worse, because it prevents the child from dealing with the events. As a consequence, the trauma cannot be integrated into the biography and the intrusions will occur more frequently (maybe use the cupboard-metaphor)
  - Don’t say “I cannot hear that”: the child needs the space to talk about the events repeatedly IF S/HE WANTS TO. The refusal of the caring person strengthens the conviction of the child that s/he is not understood and that s/he is alone with what happened. The stories of the child sometimes sound unbelievable, but it is important that you trust your child.

**E) Aid to begin again**

- Integrate plays and songs into your teaching
above their head and says “ahhhhh”.
- If the child feels comfortable and safe, encourage her/him to interact and play with the others or propose activities that the child used to enjoy (drumming/singing/dancing).

> METHOD
Participants are divided into four main groups which are then clustered into 2 (A and B) each sharing the same question. They discuss the possible options to help the child and then underline the best option. During the plenary presentations, the facilitator reads the group’s question as the first group gives its response. After one group has presented, the second group highlights only what hasn’t been mentioned by the first group. So will it be to the 3rd and 4th groups. The facilitator will emphasise the best option.

> YISSA, a boy from North Kivu
is new in your class. He is very silent and shy and seems to be absent. When you ask him something, he is startled and evidently has not listened. When you yell at him for being absent, he seems to drift away; it doesn’t seem to have any effect. Moreover, he appears tired and pale, as if he didn’t sleep enough. You have also observed that he reacted aggressively when other children tried to interact with him; now, the others don’t even try and Yissa stays alone. He seems to be in the world of his own.
- Describe (together in a group) the symptoms you recognize (if not already done before).
- How would you behave? What can you do?
In this case, you can focus:
- on the safety at school: when they say that they would ask if he feels safe at school, you can give additional information:
Yissa tells you, that he doesn’t like the building, because it reminds him of the one where they were kept by the rebels and that he hates his seat, because it is next to the window and he doesn’t like windows, because you never know, what can come through a window).

> THE SOLUTION is: let Yissa change his seat; let him describe the building in detail: what is similar to the building of the rebels (this can be e.g. the material on the floor or the distribution of the windows or the smell)? And in what does it differ (e.g. the material is similar, but in what is it different? is it may be a bit darker? or the windows: are they smaller, bigger? is the smell a bit stronger, a bit more like smog …)? The aim is, that the child can analyse and detect the differences and so realize, that it is a different building.
- And on the interpretation of the parents:
talking to the parents (or relatives where he lives) is important; because Yissa is a strong boy and the tribes of the north are very proud, his parents or relatives are likely to think, that he

> FURAHARA has always been a good and attentive child and a joyful girl, who had no problems in playing with the others. But after Christmas-break, she is changed. She has become silent and seems to have lost all her interest. Her way of interacting is different, too: She avoids looking into your eyes and has lost her interest in playing with the others. When this behaviour doesn’t change after some weeks, you ask her, but she just answers that she is okay. One day after school, you meet her in the village and ask her, why she is not at home, and Furaha answers that she doesn’t want to go home.
- Describe the symptoms you recognize
- How would you behave?
In this case, you can focus especially on the relationship with the caring persons: Furaha should be asked why she doesn’t feel safe at home; again give additional information: Furaha tells you that she doesn’t like her uncle who has come from the village.

> THE SOLUTION is: you ask Furaha, if you can accompany her to her house. There, you talk to the caring person and you ask, if they also have noticed a change in Furaha and if they have an explanation for it. If they say no, you ask them, if you can tell you theory (even if you are not sure). If they allow you to do so, ask if Furaha has been alone with the uncle; you can also ask Furaha, but she is likely not to answer. You tell the mother how harmful it is for a child to be touched erotically by an adult and that it is their responsibility to protect Furaha. You ask, if they can guarantee that Furaha will not be left alone with the uncle ever – and that the uncle should go back to the village.
Of course, such cases in which the family is involved are most difficult, but also most harming: Not to be protected by his/her own parents (or even being violated by his/her own parents) is the most terrible experience a child can have. If the family doesn’t cooperate, the best option would be to let the child live – at least for some weeks – in a different family (of course if this is possible and agreeable with the culture, law or family), and see, if the symptoms get better. Usually, if a child is directly asked, if s/he wants to leave home, s/he will not consent because of the strong bonds with the family (even if it is a traumatizing environment). To agree with the parents a period away (even using different reasons to explain it) can give the family the occasion to settle things (in this case, to send the uncle back to the village).
"Resilience" is the capacity of a person to overcome and endure difficult and potentially traumatizing events without being traumatized.

To understand this, it is crucial to keep in mind that every experience is an encounter between external events and the person. Thus, a person reacts to a situation according to her/his personal history and characteristics. Since every human being is unique, the way we react to the situations is also unique. For example, a child who has been badly scratched by a hen as he approached its chicks will react with fear and great caution when s/he encounters a hen—even if it seems friendly. And a child who is used to play with hens and has never had bad experiences will react very naturally and calmly if he meets one on the street.

**IMAGINE...**

these two children's experience

the following situation: Both meet a hen on the street that they don't know and that seems friendly. But suddenly, when the children approach, it cackles. How will the children react?

(Both will startle and withdraw from the hen. The child with the positive experiences with hens will think that the hen is nervous and that maybe next time he should approach it more slowly. For the other child with the bad experience, this situation will confirm his past experience: all hens scratch and are uncontrollable and evil; they scratch even when they appear friendly. Next time, the child will avoid hens more carefully and can react only with signs of fear at the sight of a hen)

The same dynamism (and much more strongly) happens with human relationships. For a child to develop soundly, it is crucial to have at least one sure relationship, most importantly during the first 5 years (even if we all would need someone during our lifetime). A sure relationship can be developed, when a person is always present and responds immediately and adequately to the needs of the child. For example, when the child cries, the mother or the caring person immediately gives food (if the child is hungry) or consolation (if the child is tense or has stomachache). In this way, the child learns that s/he can express her/his needs and that someone responds to these needs. This will be the expectation with which the child will approach every relationship. S/he will always start with the hypothesis, that s/he can express her/his needs and that they are responded to; this child will be a resilient child. Of course, such needs are not only physical needs (see above).
METHOD

This part flows well and fast because it is a continuation of the previous topics. Accordingly frontal facilitation methods will dominate the session but participants can be led to dramatize a violent hen before two persons; one who had a safe experience and the other with who didn’t.

NOW IMAGINE

a child with such a secure relationship (Kasoki) and a child who hasn’t experienced a secure relationship (Muhindo) face the same situation: the children are abducted during an ambush of rebels. Without any warning, the rebels attack the village very early in the morning, kill many people and take the children. The children are brought to a building and kept there in a very tiny room for two days without food and water. If a child starts crying, the rebels just react by beating the child until he stops crying. After two days, the children are freed. How will Muhindo and Kasoki possibly react?

THE SOLUTION

Kasoki was very frightened when the rebels took them and when they are freed, she can hardly believe it. She comes back to her family where everybody is very glad to have her back. Kasoki is very relieved to be back. The first days, she cries a lot and during the night, she has bad dreams. But these dreams and her fearfulness slowly disappear and after a month, she is the old Kasoki and she can talk about the events without starting to shiver or cry. Kasoki knows, that there are bad people, but normally, people are good and don’t want to harm her.

Muhindo was very frightened, when the rebels came, but he didn’t show any signs of fear. Showing signs of fear is bad for you. When they are freed, he cannot really be happy about that. He thinks that this is a trick and they will catch them again. But he really can go back home. He is glad to come back home, but he doesn’t want to say anything. He is not sure that they would believe him anyway. He is afraid of his father who used to beat him when he was drunk and now he doesn’t even want to talk to his mother (she has so much work that she is never at home). Muhindo has very bad dreams and keeps completely to himself since the rebels came. The experience with the rebels has taught him something he already suspected: that you are not safe even in your own house and that you cannot trust people.

Resilience determines how easy a person gets traumatized. But this depends greatly on the history of the individual and special characteristics of a child. Giving security and understanding before and right after a potentially traumatizing event can prevent a trauma.