

Theme 2: Strong families – Parent's conversation

Before you start – Remember:

- Remind yourself of the safeguarding code of conduct
- Check with the parent that this is a good time for the call, and remember to ask both the child and parent if they are still happy to take part in the project
- Take notes so that you are able to complete the call log accurately after the call

There are options in red for children with special needs. Always begin with the instructions for typically developing children. Move to option 1 for a modified version of instructions for children with mild difficulties. For children with severe difficulties move to option 2 or 3. Visuals will be attached to this document to be shared with the children and parents. A video call is preferred over a regular telephone call with the child.

Beginning the time together

- Ask about what have been the best parts and most difficult parts of the last week
- Follow up on last week's commitment: did they manage to put it into practice?
- Reminder of the process: What to expect from these calls and how long they will last

If the parent was shy or hesitant, share your experience of the past week (e.g., I had a long week at work, but I rested well during the weekend).

Introduce the theme: Strong relationships in our family

Today's topic is building strong relationships in the family – by the end of our call we will have talked about:

- Positive communication within your family
- How to spend quality time with children

Topic 1: Positive communication at home

Ask: What has been a time this week you were pleased with the way you spoke to your children? Was there a time you were less happy?

Option: Parents can be provided with the option of using play as a communicative means if their children are less reliant on verbal communication.

Affirm: When we're under pressure, it can be hard to keep our communication positive – but when we do it has a big impact for children. How we talk and behave in front of and with our children influences how they behave too.

Share:

- Poor communication between adults in the household can have a negative impact on children
- Practising peaceful, loving relationships helps children feel secure and loved

Ask: What do you think positive communication looks like in practice?

Affirm: It could include:

- Try to talk kindly to everyone in the family – both adults and children
- Tell others what you want them to do instead of what you don't want them to do: Instead of "Stop shouting", try "Please speak more quietly"
- Be a good listener – be open and show them that you hear what they are saying
- Saying thank you, even for small or routine things, can make a big difference

Ask: Is there something we've talked about that you want to try to put into practice this week?

Topic 2: One-on-one time with children

Ask: Can you think of an activity you have enjoyed doing with your child(ren) in the last 3 days? [yes/no]

Ask: Is it easy or hard to spend time individually with each of your children? What helps or hinders you in this? How could spending quality time with your children help you or them?

Share: One-on-one time is free and fun and it makes children feel loved and secure, and shows them that they are important. You can do this by:

- Setting aside time to spend with each child. It can be for just 20 minutes, or longer – it's up to you. It can be at the same time each day so children can look forward to it.
- Asking your child what they would like to do. Choosing builds their self-confidence. If they want to do something that isn't ok with physical distancing, then this is a chance to talk with them about it.

If the family has many children, make this practical by suggesting group activities as a family, and one-on-one time more rarely.

Ideas for different age groups of children:

Baby/toddler:

- Copy their facial expression and sounds
- Sing songs, make music with pots and spoons
- Stack cups or blocks
- Tell a story, read a book, or share pictures

Ideas with your younger child:

- Read a book, tell stories, or look at pictures, play games
- Go for a walk if possible
- Dance to music or sing
- Do a chore together – make cleaning and cooking a game!
- Help with school work

Ideas with your teenager:

- Talk about something they like: sports, music, movies
- Go for a walk if possible
- Garden together
- Watch a movie together
- Run or play sports together

You can do anything together! Good one on one time means that you listen to your child, look at them, give them your full attention, and have fun!

Putting it into practice this week

An activity to do with your child this week: Can you plan to have quality one-on-one time with your child this week? What might you do together? Could you find out what they would enjoy?

Explain: The game and poster you will send over WhatsApp or in print – if possible

Confirm: What do they plan to put into practice with their child this week? [Will use a new positive communication strategy/ Will have one-on-one child with my child this week/ other]

When will you meet again?

Ask: the parent if they are happy for you to speak to the child now and ask them to hand over the phone.

Theme 2: Me and my family – Child's conversation

Before you start – Remember:

- Remind yourself of the safeguarding code of conduct
- Remember to ask the child if they are still happy to take part
- Take notes so that you are able to complete the call log accurately after the call

Inform the child that they are allowed to take breaks. Agree with the child on a sign or word that represents wanting to take a break when they need one (e.g., raiding hand, crossing arms, or saying "break"). Prompt them to take a short break to stretch when you feel necessary.

Beginning the time together

- Begin with your regular check-in questions, such as:
 - What was the best thing that happened this week?
 - What was something funny that happened this week?
 - What was hard about this week?

Share some personal experiences from your week (e.g., the best thing about this week was meeting my best friend. A funny thing about this week was learning a magic trick. A hard thing about this week is not being able to go to the beach).

Option 1: How are you feeling today? What did you do today? Tell me about a game that you played.

Option 2: Ask the child "how are you feeling today" and provide a diagram of emotions to choose from (Picture 2.1). You can prompt them by reading the emotions out loud (e.g., are you happy or sad or angry)

- Reminder that these calls are about: checking on how you are doing, giving you a chance to talk and share how you are feeling, and sharing ideas together which can help you and your family

Ask: Are you still happy to be part of this project?

Inform the child that we have many interesting activities and topics to discuss together and make sure that he is happy to continue.

Remember to provide brief breaks when needed (for stretching, toilet break, walking around, or having a

Introduce the theme: Me and my family

Ask: Who lives in your home with you at the moment?

Option 1: Can you draw a picture of your family? Ask them to send the picture via WhatsApp or Email. Ask for the parents' assistance in this.

Option 2: From a visual containing members of a family sent to the parents via WhatsApp or Email, ask the child to point to the people that live with them (Picture 2.1). Ask for the parents' assistance with this activity.

Explain: You will say something and the child should say the name of the person in the house who is the most like what you've said. The child should answer as quickly as they can! And the answer can be "me".

Option 1: The child can take the time that they need to answer

Option 2: Allow the child to choose from the visuals of the family members sent to them via WhatsApp or Email (Picture 2.2). Ask for the parents' assistance in this activity.

E.g. "Makes the most noise" – "My dad!"

Which person in the house...

- Is the tallest?
- Makes the most noise?
- Is the youngest?
- Is the best cook?
- Is kind to others?
- Makes you laugh?

Explain that today we'll be looking at how you can be yourself and be the part of your family that only you can be.

Topic 1: Who am I?

Ask: Have you ever wished you could be more like your brother or sister, or your friend at school? (Be ready to share your own answer first if the child finds it difficult to answer.)

Sometimes it can be good to try to be like someone else – like wanting to learn to play football like your sister, or to be a good listener like your brother. But it's really important that we realise that we are also special just for who we already are!

Ask: What is one thing that you think is really great about you? It might be something you are good at or something about who you are. (Again, share your own answer too if you need to).

Share: There's no one quite like you and there are things that only you can do! It might be things like:

- Being kind
- Making people laugh
- Helping your younger sibling or your parent(s)

Ask: What do you think is special about being you?

Option 1: Elaborate more (E.g. do you think you are kind? How? Do you help pick up your toys after playing? Do you use good words?)

Option 2: Use questions that are less abstract (E.g., what is your favorite color? What is your favorite game? What is your favorite food? What is your hobby?)

Option 3: Use less abstract questions with visual options already sent to parents (E.g., What is your favorite color? Child points to the visual (Pictures 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6))

Topic 2: My family

Before moving to Topic 2, ask the child again if they are willing to proceed with the call (see previous guideline). If the child seems tired, please to do not force them to continue.

Ask: What is your favourite thing to do with your parent(s)? (Share your own experience of your own childhood if you can!)

Option 1: Be more specific and use less open ended questions (E.g., Do you like playing hide-and-seek with Jane? (sister) Do you like cooking with daddy?)

Affirm and ask: That does sound fun! Are you still managing to spend time together doing things like this at the moment? What has changed in your family and is it easier or harder to have fun together?

Share: When things change, our parents might have a lot on their mind or have many responsibilities – but they still love us and want to spend time with us.

Ask: What might be some ways that you could spend time with your parents?

Share: Here are some ideas (if you need them):

Option 1: We can use the activities that the child is interested in (gathered from parents in introductory call)

- Ask them if you can read a book or sing songs together
- Do some exercise together to your favourite music
- Ask if you can help with cooking or preparing a meal, or another household task

Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

Ask: What is one thing you will ask your parent(s) if you can do together this week?

Ask: Remember what you said is special about you – what can you do this week to share this with your family? e.g.

Summarize what you spoke about today in a few points. Ask them which activity they will try this week from the ones discussed throughout the call.

Option 1: Focus on the most practical thing, mostly their hobby (E.g., Cooking: Plan to get the ingredients together, cook it and share the meal)

- “I am kind” – tell each person in your family something you love about them, or help someone
- “I’m good at making people laugh” – gather your family together and tell them some jokes!
- “I’m good at cooking” – ask your parents if you can help to prepare one of the meals this week
- “I’m good at writing” – write a story or a poem and share it with your family one evening

[will ask to do something together with parent/ will do something to share own skills with family/ other]

Ask the child to point to the visual signifying the activity they will do to learn together with their parents throughout the week (Pictures 2.7 and 2.8). Request that the parents assist their child in doing so.

Close the call by thanking the child for talking with you, and explain when you will meet again.

Don't forget to praise the child for the effort. Encourage the parent and child to pin the date of the next meeting on a calendar and ask them to check the shared date on WhatsApp.

After the call

- Share the poster or image over WhatsApp or as a printout if you are able to: ‘One-on-one time’
- Share the game over WhatsApp or as a printout if you are able to: ‘We can love and practise reading’
- Complete the Call Log now
- Contact your supervisor if any safeguarding issues have been raised or if you have any concerns

NB – images to share (your supervisor will share these with you)



2.1

2.2



2.3



2.4



2.5

2.6



2.7



2.8

1 COVID-19 PARENTING
One-on-One Time

Can't go to work? Schools closed? Worked from home? It's important to be intentional and over-communicate. Before you leave, let your children know what to expect when you return. Set aside time to spend with each child. It can be 10-15 minutes, or longer. Try to do this at least once a day. It's important that your children feel secure and know what to expect when you return.

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Ideas with your baby/toddler

- Open an activity book and read
- Sing songs, make music with instruments
- Pack bags or books
- Tell a story, read a book, or share poems

Ask your child what they would like to do

Giving your child a choice makes them feel good. Ask them what they would like to do. Plan a child's day. Give them time to talk with their adult about what they would like to do.

Switch off the TV and phone. This is screen-free time

Ideas with your teenager

- Pick about one activity they like doing, music, reading, friends
- Set time aside - make time to connect with them
- Listen to them, let them express their feelings

Ideas with your young child

- Read a book - choose a book from the home
- Listen to music or a podcast
- Use story books - there are lots of free ones online
- Make an activity book

Listen to them, look at them. Give them your full attention. Have fun!

For more information visit www.covid19parenting.com

UNICEF | UNDP | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | USAID | CDC

Let's Play with Our Family!

RIGHT TO PLAY

We can love and practice reading

You need: A story book

1. One person will read the story slowly.
2. Act out the story as you listen.
3. Take turns reading different parts.



Which part was the most fun to act out?
When can we read more stories?

You can read books for free on:

- www.africanstorybook.org
- bookdash.org/books
- storyweaver.org.in
- digilibrary.io



Go to www.covid19parenting.com for more tips for parents!

This game is based on Beren, P. (2013). Practical ideas, games and activities for the primary classroom (2nd ed.)