

Supplementary File 1. Focus Group Guide

Opening comments :

Hello, thank you for taking the time to talk to us today. We are interested in learning more about the types of interactions you have with your young child. All of the information you share today is totally confidential and your personal identification will be protected. There are no right or wrong answers, so please speak honestly.

We would like to audio record this session. Only our small research team will listen to it so that we can ensure that we understood your responses and opinions.

Is everyone ok with us recording our discussion?

[Go through consent process with participants]

I'd like to remind you that you are not obligated to respond to a question if you do not want to.

Do you have any questions up to now?

Now we will go around the circle; can you say your name, age, the number of children you have and the age of your youngest child? Thank you!

[After socio-dem info is collected, begin recording]

1. Introductory questions:

- a. In general, who is responsible for caring for children between 0-2 years old in your home?
- b. Why is/are this/these people responsible for taking care of children 0-2 years?
- c. Does responsibility for the child change as the child grows older?

2. Role of the father :

- a. What is the role of the father in the life of a baby who is less than 1 year old?
- b. Does the role of the father change as the baby gets older, up to two years old?

For a group of fathers :

- c. In general in your community, with whom does a baby 0-2 years old have the most contact, the father or the mother?
- d. Why do you think it is like that?

- e. As a father, how do you feel about your involvement in the care of your baby ? Do you think you have enough contact with your baby / that you spend enough time with your baby less than two years old?
- f. Would you like to change the amount of time you spend with your child ? (more? Less?)
- g. If yes, what activities would you like to do more with your child?

If the father expresses that he would like more time with his child :

- h. What are the reasons that you do not have enough time / contact with your child? What are the barriers / challenges that keep you from spending more time with your child?
- i. If you would spend more time with your child – for example, playing a game with him or her – would other members of the community or your family have anything to say?
- j. Would they think that it is good or bad for a father to spend more time with a young child playing or speaking with him?

INTERACTIVE PART:

3. General ECD principles :

Facilitateur read aloud:

Now we would like to do an interactive activity with you. We would like to play a recording about activities that you can do with your children. After we would like to read a few statements.

We want to know what you think of these ideas and if you would like to do these with your children or not.

I reassure you there is not a 'good' response or a 'bad' response ; we are only looking for your opinions and perspectives, so we encourage you to be honest.

First, we would like to read a statement and after discuss your thoughts / reactions.

"Your child is ready to learn from the beginning of his life. Everything you do and everything you say can help stimulate your child's brain. Children are curious from the moment they are born.

"The first five years of life are the period during which children's brains develop most rapidly. Learning in the early years can have significant consequences later in life."

Questions for participants :

- a. What do you think of these ideas?
- b. Do you think children can understand even before they can walk or communicate with words?
- c. Do you think that learning during the first two years of life, even before a child can walk or communicate with words, can have an influence later in his life (later in childhood and even when the child becomes an adult)?
- d. If yes, what type of influence ? Small? Large?
- e. Why this/these reactions? What information and/or experiences motivated your responses?

4. Play radio spot

- a. What are the people in the radio sketch doing with their baby?

Facilitator – probe for three activities

- b. What do you think of these suggested activities?

5. Talk to your baby

(Facilitator reads statement to group):

Now I would like to read you another statement that describes one of the activities that the people on the radio described.

“Your baby or child likes it when people talk with him; it also helps his development even if he hasn’t yet learned how to speak. Talk about everything you do and what you see during the day; describe what you hear, see and feel at home such as animals, cooking, other people or things at home.

“All this will help babies to learn.

“The more you and other people around your baby use words, the more words the baby will learn.”

Questions for the group:

- a. What do you think of this suggestion, to talk to a baby, even if he has not yet learned to talk? Why this/these reactions? What information or experiences motivated your responses?
- b. Do you talk to your children like this statement is saying? If so, how often do you speak to them?
- c. If you do not talk to your child like this, why not?
- d. Do you think you could talk more to them? Do you think you could describe things you hear, see, and smell around the house? Why or why not? Do you feel like you could incorporate these activities every day?
- e. Would anyone in your household or community think this was strange or bad to talk to a baby who cannot yet talk? Why would they have these reaction(s), (positive or negative)? What information or experiences inform your response?

For a focus group of MOTHERS :

- f. Do you know if your husband talks to your child in this way even if she or he cannot talk? If yes, when? What does he say?
- g. If not, why not? Would your husband talk to your child in this way if you asked him to and told him it was good for your child's development and intelligence?

6. Play with your baby

Facilitator reads statement to the group :

"Play is how your baby learns about the world around him. Give your baby your sole attention for at least 15 minutes each day. You can also play peek-a-boo, sing or dance together.

"As your baby gets older, find toys that your baby can hold in his hand and shake or roll (for example a lemon, an orange, or other round objects at home). Games made at home are just as good as toys bought at the store."

Questions of opinion:

- a. What do you think of the suggested activities?

- b. Do you play with your children like this statement is saying? If so, how often do you play with them?
- c. If not, why not?
- d. Do you think you could play with them more? Do you think you could find objects around the house to make into toys? Why or why not?
- e. Do you feel like you could incorporate these activities every day? Why or why not?

For a focus group of MOTHERS :

- f. Do you think your husband would help you make toys for your child if you asked him? Why or why not?

7. Praise your baby

(Facilitator reads statement to group)

“To praise your baby is to tell him that you are happy that he did well or tried to do something. Your child wants to see that you are happy because of what he is doing. So babies will learn faster when you praise them for the things they try to do.

“Praise and encourage your baby more than you use the words like ‘no’ and ‘bad’

“Praising your baby is not going to spoil him; in fact, praise will help him to behave well because he will want to do the things that you like more often. “

- a. In your opinion what did this text suggest to do with your baby?
- b. What do you think of these suggested activities?
- c. Do you praise your children like this statement is saying? If so, what do you say to your baby? Why do you praise your baby? Could you give examples? If you don't praise your baby, why?
- d. Do you think you could praise them more? Why or why not? Do you feel like you could incorporate these activities every day? If yes, what are some examples of things you could do or say to praise your baby?

8. Put suggestions into practice

Facilitator :

We have given you the following three suggestions for how to help your child grow and develop with some tips on how to do the suggestions:

Talk to your baby all of the time ;

Play with your baby at least 15 minutes a day using, for example, games that you make at home.

Praise your baby and take him often in your arms; when he does something that you like or he learns something new, you can say 'well done!', 'excellent!' or 'very good!'

- a. Of these three suggestions, what seems the easiest: talk, play or praise?
- b. Do you think that there are certain activities that will be hard or strange?
- c. Do you think that someone in your family or the community would think that to talk to your baby, to play with your baby and/or to praise your baby is strange or a negative thing for your baby?
- d. Why or why not? What experiences or information inform your answer?

9. Instructions for the week :

What we would like you to do is choose at least one of the suggestions – whatever feels the easiest to practice, and try it for this next week. We will meet in one week from today to discuss how the week went. Do you think you could do that? Will you choose one or more? If so, what will you choose?

Facilitator:

Next week we are going to meet here again and discuss how it went practicing these suggestions with your baby/child. If possible we would like you to bring your baby/child to the meeting and we can see what kinds of activities you and your child did together.

Even if you did not have the chance to practice the suggested activities we would like for you to come to the meeting.

Thank you very much for your time and the ideas you shared with us. Do you have any questions?