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SUPPORTING FAMILIES FOR YOUNG CHILD WELLBEING:

RESOURCE MODULES FOR HOME VISITORS





Disclaimer

The resource modules were authored by the individuals listed under the guidance of the UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and the International Step by Step Association.

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FOREWORD

Global commitment to promoting comprehensive young child health and development has increased exponentially over the recent years. Findings of research in neuroscience, developmental psychology, adverse childhood experiences and parenting, provide converging evidence on the remarkable life long benefits of investing in the earliest years. At the same time, compelling research findings have demonstrated that home visiting programs can increase parental well-being and parenting efficacy, as well as child outcomes. This has led to a number of middle and high-income countries (e.g. in the Americas, Europe and Asia) to establish and strengthen home visiting services. Additionally, recent global and regional reports of the World Health Organization on child maltreatment have identified home visiting services as a promising strategy to address child maltreatment, which is a recognized as a major public health problem.

In Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS), the health care system reaches the vast majority of pregnant women and families of young children with such services as antenatal care, delivery by trained health care providers, well-child care, immunization, growth monitoring and management of common childhood illnesses. Home visiting services to pregnant women and families of newborns and young children are in place in most countries in the CEE/CIS. However, in many cases, the content of the services provided is not yet informed by the global evidence on what is important for child development during the early years of life, including the critical first one thousand days.

UNICEF assessments in ten countries of the region have shown that home visits to pregnant women and families of young children are narrowly focused on physical health. The critical issues that affect child health, wellbeing and achievement over the lifespan, viz. the parent-child relationship, responsive and nurturing care, a stimulating and safe home environment, prevention of child maltreatment, and early detection of risk and vulnerability – that could be supported so well in the context of the home environment – are not yet addressed adequately. Since health care providers reach almost all families and are viewed as trusted and authoritative, home visiting services constitute a largely untapped opportunity and an excellent entry point to support parents and families in providing their young children with the best start in life.

The resource modules available in this package draw on the most recent scientific evidence as well as good practices observed in other countries. The modules were designed to upgrade and enhance the role of home visitors and to provide them with essential knowledge and tools in order to support and engage the families of young children. They address many key aspects of young child development and wellbeing that in most countries are not covered in the basic pre- and in-service training. The content of the modules is based on the premise that parents want to give their best to support their child's development. Well-trained, respectful, sensitive and family centred home visitors can build on this motivation and contribute to strengthening parenting competencies and family resilience.

The modules were prepared through a consultative process involving international and regional experts, national trainers and home visiting professionals. Because parenting is mediated by cultural values and beliefs, these generic modules can be adapted to specific country contexts and enriched with local examples and tools. While the modules have been prepared keeping in mind the health home visitor, they can be easily adapted for the training of other service providers that come into contact with the families of young children e.g. child welfare workers or early educators.

The modules encourage the home visitor to take a strengths based approach, to promote robust caregiver-child relationships and contribute to reducing risk by supporting and referring families to other services as needed. We trust that training based on these modules will enable home visitors to develop positive, respectful and sensitive relationships with families; help them to assess regularly the strengths and needs of individual children and their caregivers; and assist them to support and empower parents for informed actions and decisions with regard to their young children's health, wellbeing and development.



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2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The UNICEF Regional Office Young Child Wellbeing Team and ISSA would like to acknowledge the contributions of the many individuals who have reviewed and commented on the modules, including,

- The UNICEF Country Office Focal Points for Young Child Health and Wellbeing
- The members of the International Technical Advisory Group for Home Visiting in CEE/CIS
- National trainers and professionals who have participated in the piloting of these resource modules

Without their valuable comments and innovative ideas, the modules would not have reached their current level of comprehensiveness and richness in content and approach.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE RESOURCE MODULES

At the request of UNICEF Country Offices and partners, the UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS, in partnership with the International Step by Step Association has developed a set of resource modules for home visiting personnel that cover topics that are not routinely a part of pre-service or in-service nursing and medical education in the region. The purpose of the resource modules available to-date, as well as those planned, is to share global evidence on the critical importance of the early years, as well as the new and expanded role of the home visitor in promoting comprehensive young child health, development and wellbeing in the natural environment of the home.

Every parent parent wants to give their best to support their child's development. Well-trained, respectful, sensitive and family centred home visitors can build on this motivation and contribute to strengthening parenting competencies and family resilience. By reaching out and including the most vulnerable populations in their services, home visitors can also contribute to making disadvantaged families more visible, facilitate the access to services, and reduce thereby equity gaps.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The resource modules were developed to specifically address professionals that are being trained for or already engaged in home visiting activities. In most countries in the CEE/CIS region these are nurses, but doctors, midwives, feldsher and non-health professionals also visit pregnant women and families with young children. The content of the modules are informed by the latest scientific evidence and aim to provide practical advice, materials to share with parents, as well as case studies and exercises for individual and/or group reflection. The modules can be used for in-service training sessions or they can be integrated into the pre-service curricula for training of nursing professionals. A number of modules can also be adapted for pediatricians, family physicians, or general practitioners who routinely interact with young children and their families in their practice or at times in families' homes.

HOW TO USE THE RESOURCE MODULES

The resource modules do not constitute a “stand-alone” course for home visitors, but complement existing education and training materials that are already provided in the medical and nursing schools or are available in other well-tested training formats, including for this cadre of professionals Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI), Babyfriendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), and Care for Child Development (CCD). This training resource, Supporting Families for Young Child Wellbeing: Resource Modules for Home Visitors are informed by the global evidence on what contributes to young child wellbeing, going beyond health and nutrition. The development of the modules was informed by adult learning principles and therefore provide ample opportunities for the learner to be actively engaged in reflection and guidance on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices that home visitors need in their “new” role of working in partnership with families to support parents and caregivers and empower them to provide the best possible environment for their young child.

The format used for the modules takes into account that the modules may be taught in traditional training courses, placed on-line for individual learned, be integrated into a professional training curriculum, or be made available in various blended formats. Both, on-line and in-person training approaches have been used successfully in piloting the modules with trainers and home visitors from the CEE/CIS region.

Because these modules speak to home visitors across a range of countries, cultures and health systems, they cannot address country-specific issues and problems. It will be necessary to adapt individual modules, i.e., take into account such factors as the education level and professional experiences of home visitors, national standards of practice, formal and informal working agreements with other sectors, typical cases encountered by home visitors on their caseload, etc., as well as to different training settings (pre-service, in-service, in-person, web-based) and duration of training (i.e., training course with several modules, periodic training days, etc.). The last part of the Facilitator Guide which accompanies these Resource Modules describes how the modules could be adapted, what parts would benefit most from local adaptation, and what can be added to enrich this package further.

As described, adaptation of the modules should be undertaken by professional educators or trainers who are familiar with the content of the modules, the teaching context, as well as the professional training system (pre-service and/or in-service) for the home visiting professionals or students. The adaptation process should be systematic and follow a situational assessment of the existing services, workforce capacities, and the needs of local families.

Module	Key Contents	Tools
Module 1: Early Childhood – A Time of Endless Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the critical importance of the early years for child development and lifelong wellbeing, health, and achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 2: The New Role of the Home Visitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the vision for new and more comprehensive role for the home visitors Explains the skills and support needed for this new role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information cards on new practices, self-reflection Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 3: Infant and Young Child Health and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Already existing training materials (IMCI, IYCF, Care for Child Development) 	
Module 4: Falling in Love – Promoting Parent-Child Attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes the importance of attachment for development Provides information on how home visitors can support the development of secure attachments Information cards on promotional interviewing with families and ways of building secure attachments at different stages of development Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information cards on promotional interviewing with families and ways of building secure attachments at different stages of development Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 5: Engaging Fathers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence for the impact of positive father involvement on child development Shares tested approaches that home visitors can use to engage fathers more effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information cards on ways to reaching fathers and involving them in child development Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 6: The Art of Parenting: Love, Talk, Play, Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains how loving, talking to, playing with, and reading to infants and young children affect their development Provides basic information and tips on how to help parents in using these positive parenting skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information cards on ways to reaching fathers and involving them in child development Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials

Module	Key Contents	Tools
Module 7: Parental Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the impact of perinatal mental illness on child development. Gives the home visitors information and tools to identify, support, and refer parents with perinatal mental health concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides screening tools and approaches Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 8: Common Parenting Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses common parenting concerns related to sleeping, crying, toileting and the use of positive discipline that the home visitor will encounter in daily visits. Provides practical advice the home visitor can share with the caregivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information sheets of special topics with concrete suggestions the home visitor can discuss with caregivers on various parenting concerns. Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 9: Home Environment and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information about the most common unintentional injuries during the early years. Provides practical advice for education families on reducing unintentional injuries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides practical information about the prevention of common injuries and the correct first response. Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 10: Caring and Empowering – Enhancing Communication Skills for Home Visiting Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an introduction to good communication practices. Gives concrete examples how home visitors can improve communications skills to engage families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides tools for home visitor to assess and improve communication skills. Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 11: Working Against Stigma and Discrimination – Promoting Equity, Inclusion, and Respect for Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows how stereotypes, stigma and discrimination make the home visitor less effective when working with caregivers and families, particularly those that are often marginalized by society. Helps home visitors to reflect on their own biases and stereotypes in the context of life-long learning and self-improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes exercises for the home visitor to reflect on personal biases, stereotypes and stigma that can affect work with vulnerable groups. Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials

Module	Key Contents	Tools
Module 12: Children who Develop Differently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains why some children develop differently. Emphasizes the importance of the family and family relationships when supporting children with developmental difficulties. Explains about new approaches, i.e., “teaming around the child” and the “routines-based approach” to more effectively support this group of children and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lists additional websites that provide information on supporting children with developmental difficulties and their families.
Module 13: Developmental Monitoring and Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the concepts of developmental monitoring, screening, and assessment. Provides information about basic monitoring tools that can be used in the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides access to additional websites, print and audiovisual materials
Module 14: Keeping Young Children Safe from Violence, Abuse and Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence on the impact of abuse, neglect and abandonment on child outcomes. Explains the role of the home visitor with respect to prevention, identification of risk, referral and collaboration with other sectors to support vulnerable families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides visual aids and decision-making tools, as well as indicators of abuse and neglect Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 15: Working with Other Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the rationale for collaborating with other sectors for the wellbeing of vulnerable young children and their families. Supports the development of interdisciplinary collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides practical tools for inter-disciplinary and cross-sector collaboration for vulnerable families. Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials



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