

# PuP Program

Promoting a stable environment for children



# Parents under Pressure

## Group Program

# Session 1

STARTING THE PUP JOURNEY:  
FOCUS ON FLOURISHING CHILDREN

# Welcome & Introductions

So we can get to know each other, can you tell us:

- Your name
- A little about your family (name and ages ages of your children)
- Something about what you hope to get out of coming along

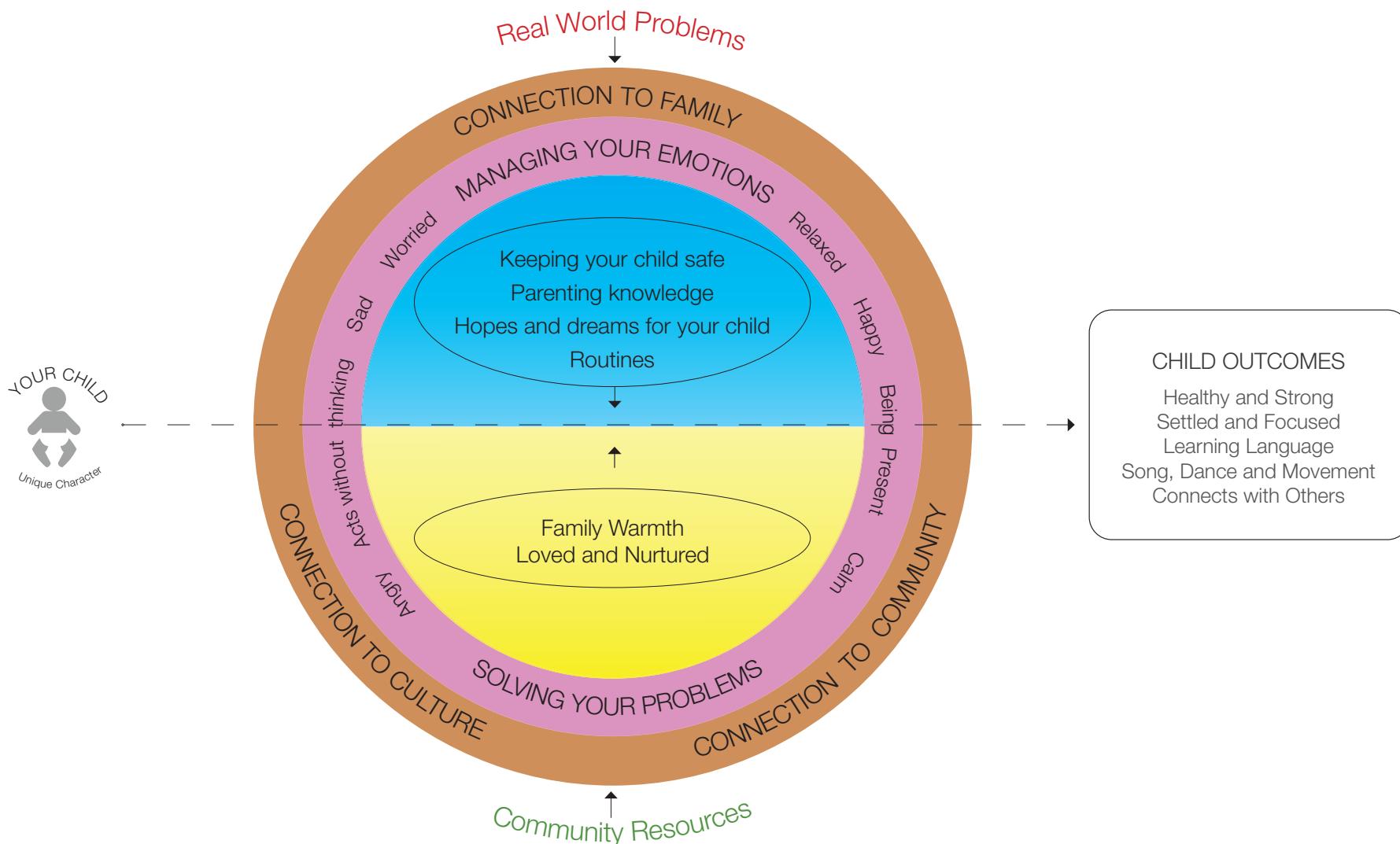
# Program Overview

- The group program is an 8 week course.
- Each session will run for approximately 1.5 - 2 hours with a 10-15 minute break in the middle.
- The general aims of the program are to provide parents/carers with:
  - A framework for thinking about family life
  - An opportunity to reflect on your current family functioning and set goals and work towards making positive changes in the family
  - An opportunity to meet and share their experiences as a parent with other parents who they may stay in contact with

# Group Rules

- Respect privacy of others
- What is said in the group is confidential
- Everyone will have an opportunity to talk
- This program respects differences in parenting styles (we don't advocate a correct way of bringing up children)
- Mobile phones should be on silent and only take emergency calls
- What else would you like included in our rules?

# The PuP Family Framework



# The different challenges parents face

- Sometimes life can feel overwhelming and it is difficult to know where to start to make things better. This is why we have come up with the PuP Family Framework.
- It is a way of looking at each part of your family life to identify what is going well, and where the challenges are.
- This will be different for each family.

There are a lots of reasons parenting can feel hard:

**Children:** All children are different, and some have behaviours that are more difficult to manage than others. Some babies sleep longer than others or seem easier to settle. This can make early parenthood tough at times.

**Ourselves:** At times strong emotions such as depression, anxiety or anger can be hard to control. Children need to have parents who can manage their emotions. At times this is difficult for parents and therefore extra help in learning how to manage emotions can make this task easier.

**Supports:** It is very difficult to be a good parent on your own. Without supportive friends or family to turn to, the job is harder and at times lonely.

**Stress/hassles:** Coping with the big problems (money, legal problems), as well as every day hassles, is emotionally draining. If these are left unsolved and build up over time, small problems can become crises.

# Flourishing Children

A flourishing child is a child that is developing to their full potential



CHILD OUTCOMES  
Healthy and Strong  
Settled and Focused  
Learning Language  
Song, Dance and Movement  
Connects with Others

*What would indicate a child is flourishing in these aspects of development:*

Healthy and Strong (Physical development)

Settled and happy (Emotional and Behavioural development)

Learning and Language (Cognitive development)

Connection with others (Social development)

Song/dance/movement (Cultural/spiritual pride and connectedness)

*At 2 years, 5 years, 10 years?*

# Parenting Values

A flourishing child is a child that is developing to their full potential



CHILD OUTCOMES  
Healthy and Strong  
Settled and Focused  
Learning Language  
Song, Dance and Movement  
Connects with Others

What is particularly important to you?

- The physical health of my child (e.g., keeping my child well fed and healthy)
- The emotional health of my child (e.g., that they are happy and feel good about themselves)
- That I have a good relationship with my child (e.g., you enjoy doing things together)
- That my child is socially skilled (e.g., has friends and is respectful and kind to others)
- That my child likes to learn (e.g., likes to learn, wants to do well at school)
- My child has strong connection to culture/faith
- Other

# Strengths & Challenges

A flourishing child is a child that is developing to their full potential



CHILD OUTCOMES  
Healthy and Strong  
Settled and Focused  
Learning Language  
Song, Dance and Movement  
Connects with Others

*What aspects of development are a strength or challenge for your child?*

Healthy and Strong (Physical development)

Settled and happy (Emotional and Behavioural development)

Learning and Language (Cognitive development)

Connection with others (Social development)

Song/dance/movement (Cultural/spiritual pride and connectedness)

# Setting a goal

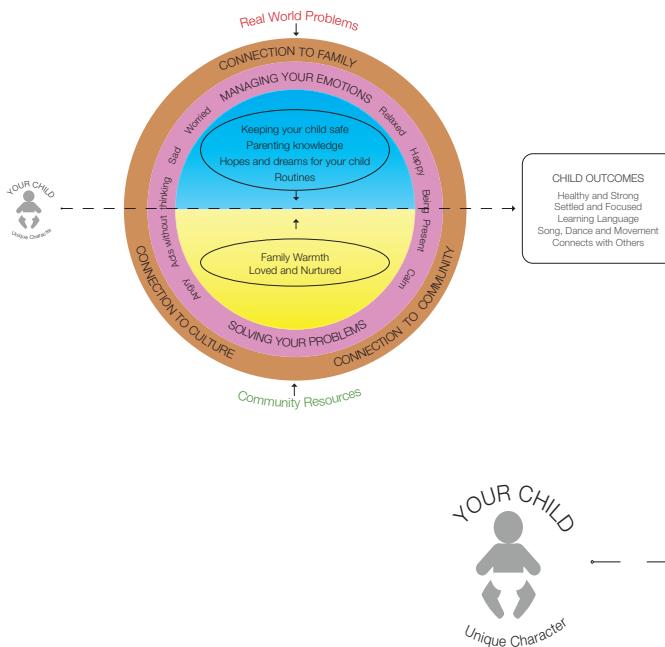
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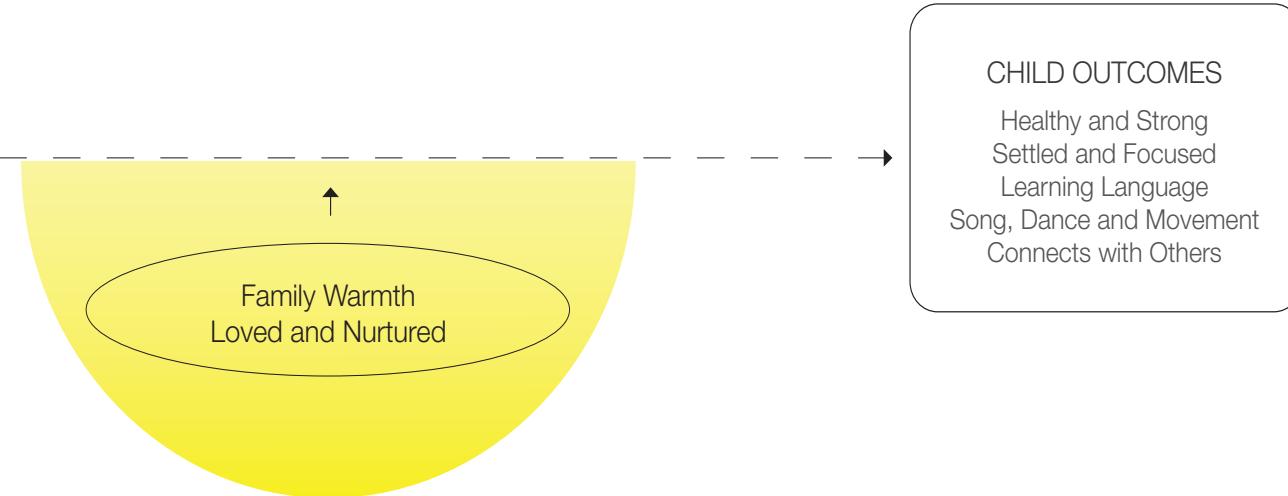
CHILD OUTCOMES  
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Connects with Others

Think of something you could do in the coming week with your child that is related to the developmental outcome you see as particularly important, or is a particular challenge for your child.

What is it you could do?



# Session 2

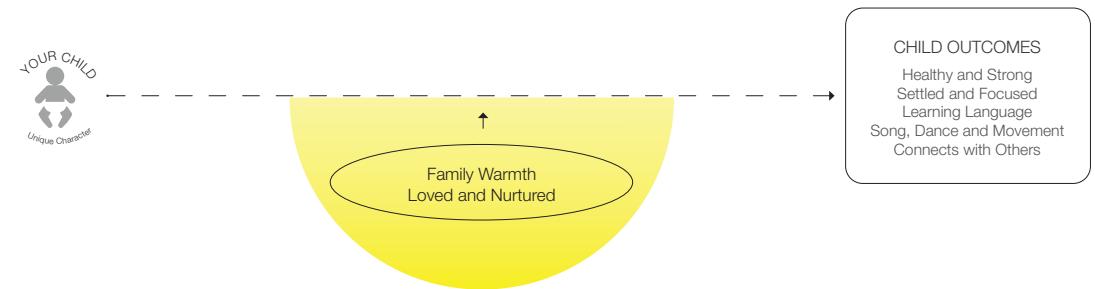


## CONNECTING WITH YOUR CHILD TO HELP THEM FEEL LOVED AND NURTURED

# The nature of parent-child relationship

Some important concepts:

- Emotional refuelling
- Parents as a 'secure base'
- Children explore when they feel safe
- Children need their secure base for emotional refuelling when they feel unsafe, are tired, getting unwell



# Video presentation

Exercise: watch the following videos, and after each one discuss what you see

# Emotional availability

## Parental Sensitivity

Do you tune into your children's feelings, comments and physical state much of the time?

## Parental Structuring

Do you help your children move to their next developmental level?  
Physical, emotional and thinking?

## Non-hostility

Can you parent much of the time without feeling angry or annoyed with your children?

# Video presentation 2

Exercise: watch the following videos again, this time thinking about the concepts of emotional availability.

After each one discuss what you see .

## Activity Option 2

Activity: Think about this morning

Describe the emotional tone: rushed, calm, worried, hassled?

Think about the ideas above and talk in pairs about

(i) Tuned into your children: did you notice their feelings? Had they slept well? Were they rushed? Worried?

(ii) Think about age appropriate structuring?

What did you do that helped structure the morning routine rather than take over

(iii) Was there a moment when you were angry or hostile? What happened?

Bring this back to the group and share

# Being child centred in play and other activities

Being child centred means:

- Letting your child be in charge of the activity (within reason).
- Encouraging children to use their imagination.
- Tolerate and ignore minor misbehaviour and annoying or silly behaviour (when it is normal for the child's age).

# A procedure to practice child-centred play

## Observing

- Watching and really notice what your child is doing.
- Try to get inside their head and wonder what they are thinking
- Why did s/he chose this activity?

## Describing

- Describe out loud what the child is doing.
- Label it. For example, “you are building the blocks up high, one on top of the other”.
- This lets the child know you are there, attending to them.

## Participating

- Participate in your child’s activity
- Ask your child ‘What would you like me to do?’  
or
- ‘Is there anything I can do to help?’

# Discussion within group around child-centred play

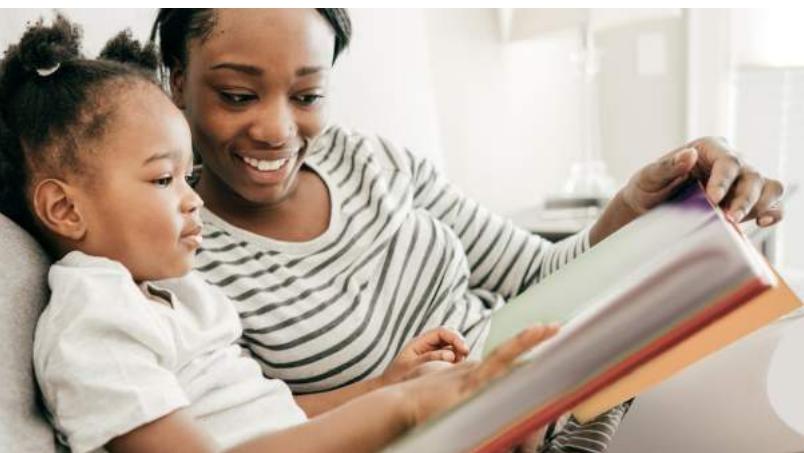
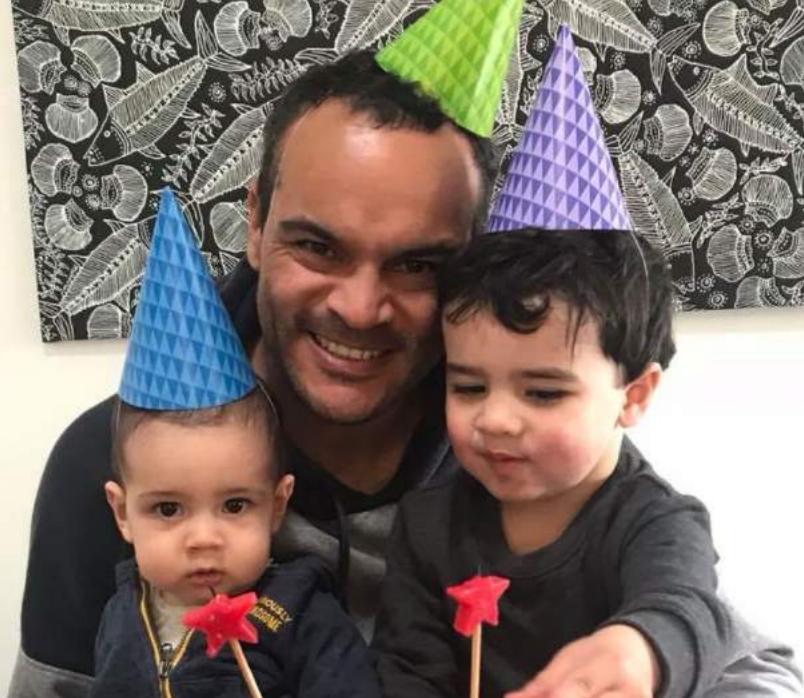
Work in pairs:

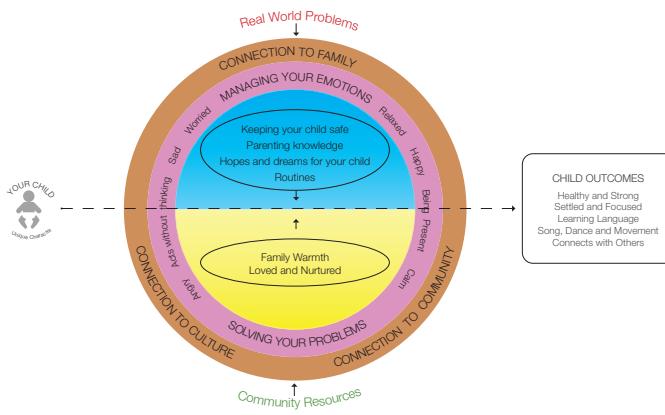
Identify a time in the last few days when to you have played with your child.

Observe and Describe: Describe the situation—where were you both—think about a film, what you have seen.

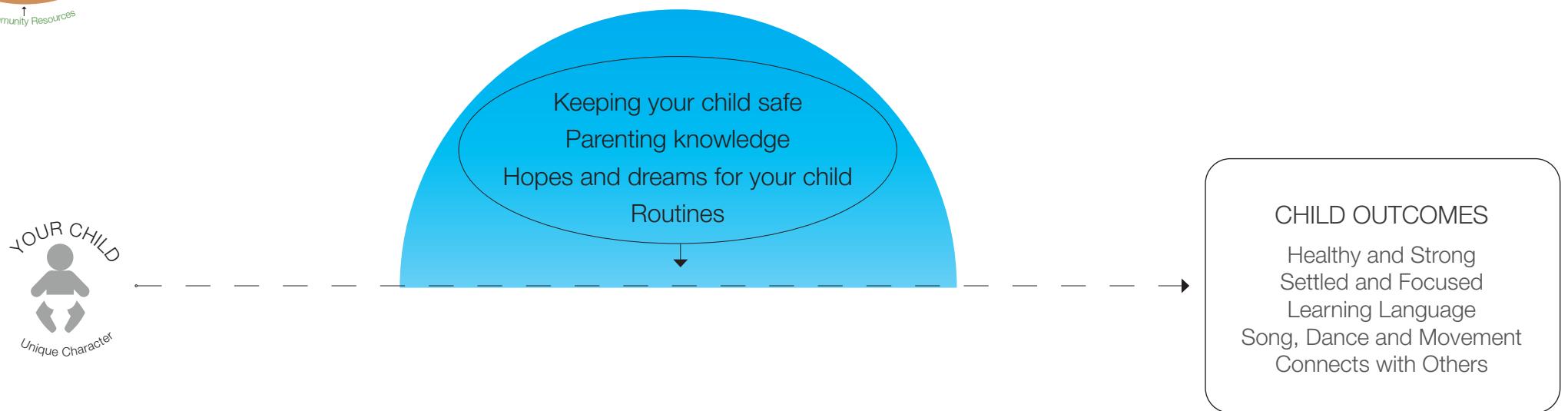
How did you Participate?

# Creating Special Moments





# Session 3



## FAMILY WEATHER AND CLIMATE

# Family Climate

Family climate as a metaphor:

- Family climate relates to your family's general state of functioning.
- Your family climate may be similar to that of a tropical climate, where temperatures are high and there are severe thunderstorms which may seem to come out of nowhere.
- Or, it may be a colder climate – where there is little warmth and not much sunshine.
- The best climate for children to grow up in is a more temperate one, that is warm and sunny with lots of rainfall/love that ensures that the grass stays green and the flowers colourful.

# Improving Family Climate

- No matter what the family climate is, weather can change on a day-to-day basis.
- One stormy or very hot or cold day does not need to be followed by another.
- These storms and hot or cold days are normal and usually doesn't do any long-term damage.
- If you feel your family climate is a bit hot, cold or stormy, it might take a while to change. But a short-term goal is to improve the family weather—day-by-day.
- This will eventually lead to a positive family climate change.

# Family Weather Forecast – are there days when the weather is better than other days?

				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

# Improving Family Weather

- Plan special time with your children
- Connect with your children during special time
- Attend to the good things your child does
- Provide routine and structure



# Family routines

- Do you have family routines?
- Does your child know what these are? Can you describe them?
- Is there a set time to have meals, does the family eat together?
- Is there a bedtime routine, what times are the children expected to be in bed?

**There are no right or wrong answers to these questions**

# Family rules

Your family rules should be about things you value. Often, they are about:

- Safety - making sure people don't get hurt.
- Being kind and respecting each other.
- Respecting the physical environment (not breaking things or making a mess).
- Routines - like eating at the table for meals, and having a bedtime.
- A morning routine.

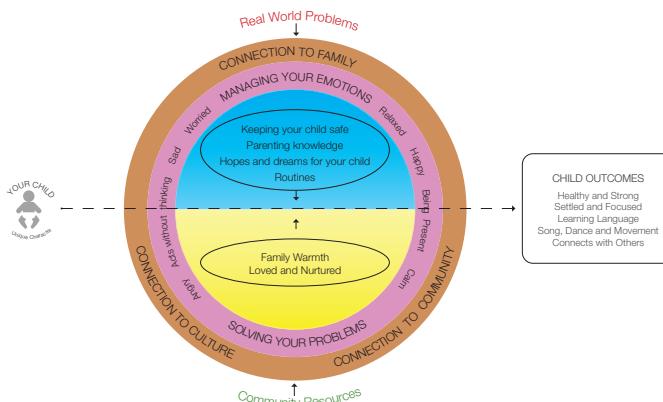
Do you have family rules?

Does your child know what these are?

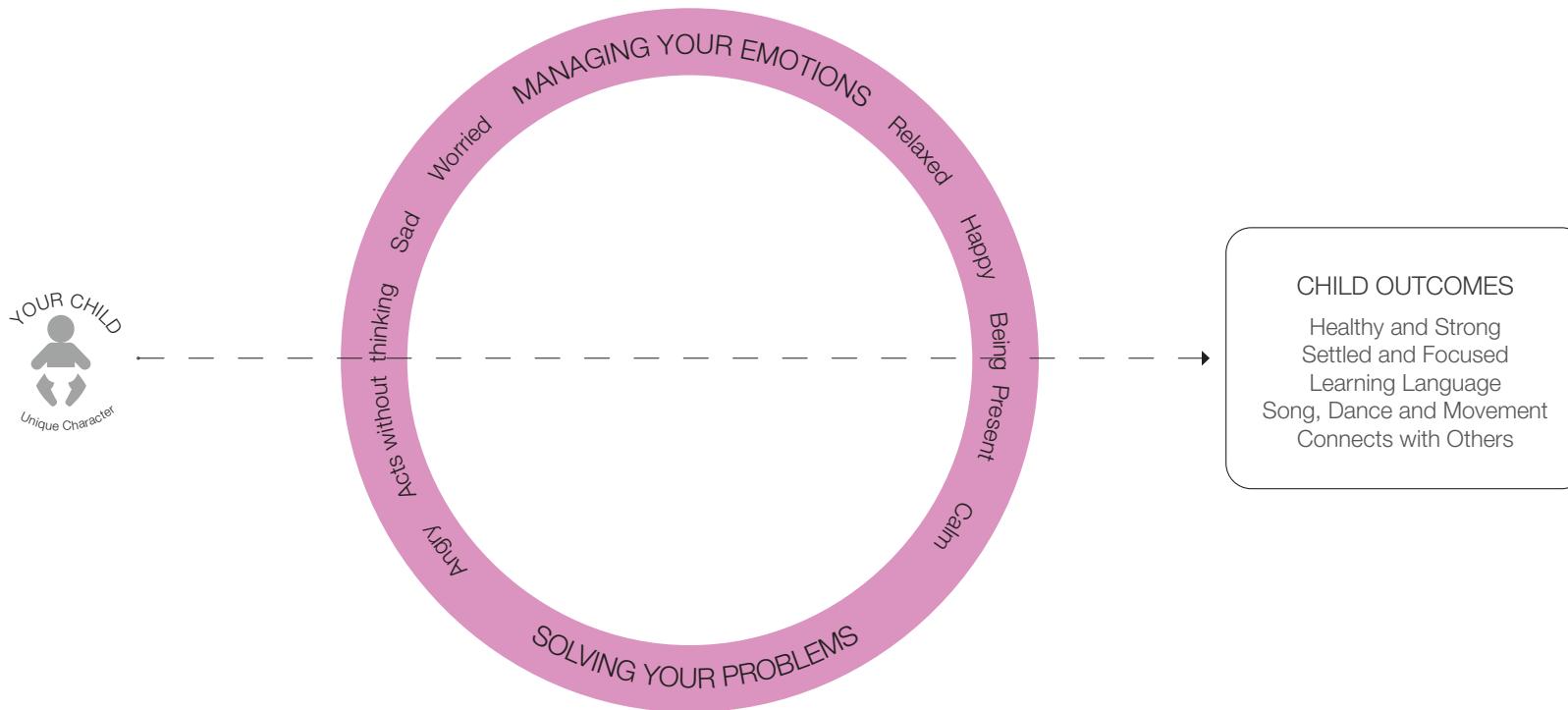
Are they written down?

Would it be useful to write them down and have them on a wall?





# Session 4



# BALANCED PARENTING

# What is a good enough parent?

Trying to be a perfect parent can lead to stress, disappointment, frustration, guilt and anger.

Wanting your child to be perfect will also result in many of these emotions.

Rather than striving to be perfect we suggest being 'balanced' is a realistic goal.

This means being constant, loving and fully present much of the time.

**Can you identify when you are fully present?**

# Balanced parenting

- Balancing yourself as a person and yourself as a parent
- Emotional balance
- Balanced expectations
- Balanced family relationships
- Balance in culture/community/spiritual activities

Thinking about your situation as a parent,  
how balanced or unbalanced do you feel.

Do you feel more balanced in some areas than others?

# My Strengths as a Parent

How would your child finish this sentence: "My Mum or Dad is great because..."

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# My Child's Strengths

My child is good at:

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# Changeable and unchangeable problems

## Changeable problems

- Can be resolved by problems solving.
- Often put off resulting in ongoing stress.
- Solution is to solve the problem using problem solving techniques.

## Unchangeable problems

- No solution, won't go away
- Requires learning ways of managing or tolerating the stress associated with the problem as best you can.

# Problem solving strategy to reduce stress

**Step one:** Identify the problem.

**Step two:** Give the problem a name.

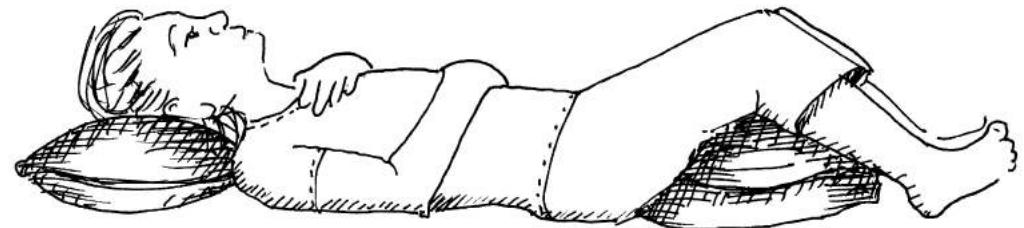
**Step three:** Develop an action plan. This involves brainstorming what steps you will need to take, the tasks you will need to do, to achieve the outcome you want.

**Step four:** Set a timeline. Give yourself deadlines for each task.

# Learning to manage stress that won't go away

## Diaphragmatic breathing

- Control of the breath is a key to managing emotions



## Muscular relaxation

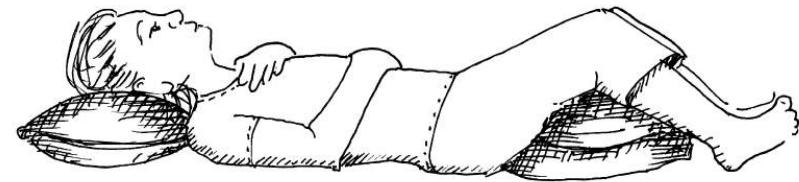
- Muscular relaxation aims to reduce tension in muscle groups and increase awareness of when muscle groups are becoming tense.

# Diaphragmatic breathing

To breathe diaphragmatically you should focus your attention on using the muscles in your tummy to draw in a deep, low breath. Expanding the muscles in the diaphragm will help draw the breath in. Slowly relaxing the muscles will allow the breath to flow out.

It is useful to see a breath as having four phases:

- i) Inhalation of air into your lungs through your nose
- ii) A slight pause before exhaling
- iii) Exhalation of air out of your lungs through your nose
- iv) A slight pause before inhaling



What you are aiming to do is slow your breathing rate down by making the in-breaths and the out-breaths longer than usual. Both the in-breath and the out-breath should take about 5 seconds. Although this will be a bit different for each person, but aim for that to start with. Try to keep the pauses between the in- and out-breaths short (a second). This will mean the whole cycle of a breath will be around 10-12 seconds, which is about 5 or 6 breaths per minute (for an adult – children breath more quickly).

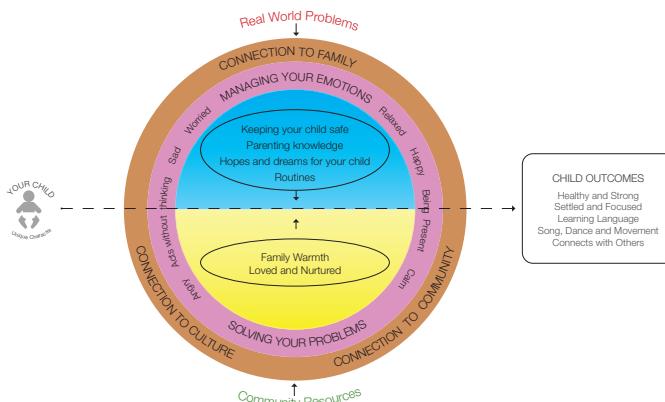
When you practice your diaphragmatic breathing, place one hand on your upper chest and the other on your abdomen (tummy). Notice if the hand on your upper chest or the hand on your abdomen moves the most when you breathe. If you are chest breathing, consciously try to breath into the hand place on your abdomen. This means using the muscles in your diaphragm to move your tummy in and out.

# Muscular relaxation procedure

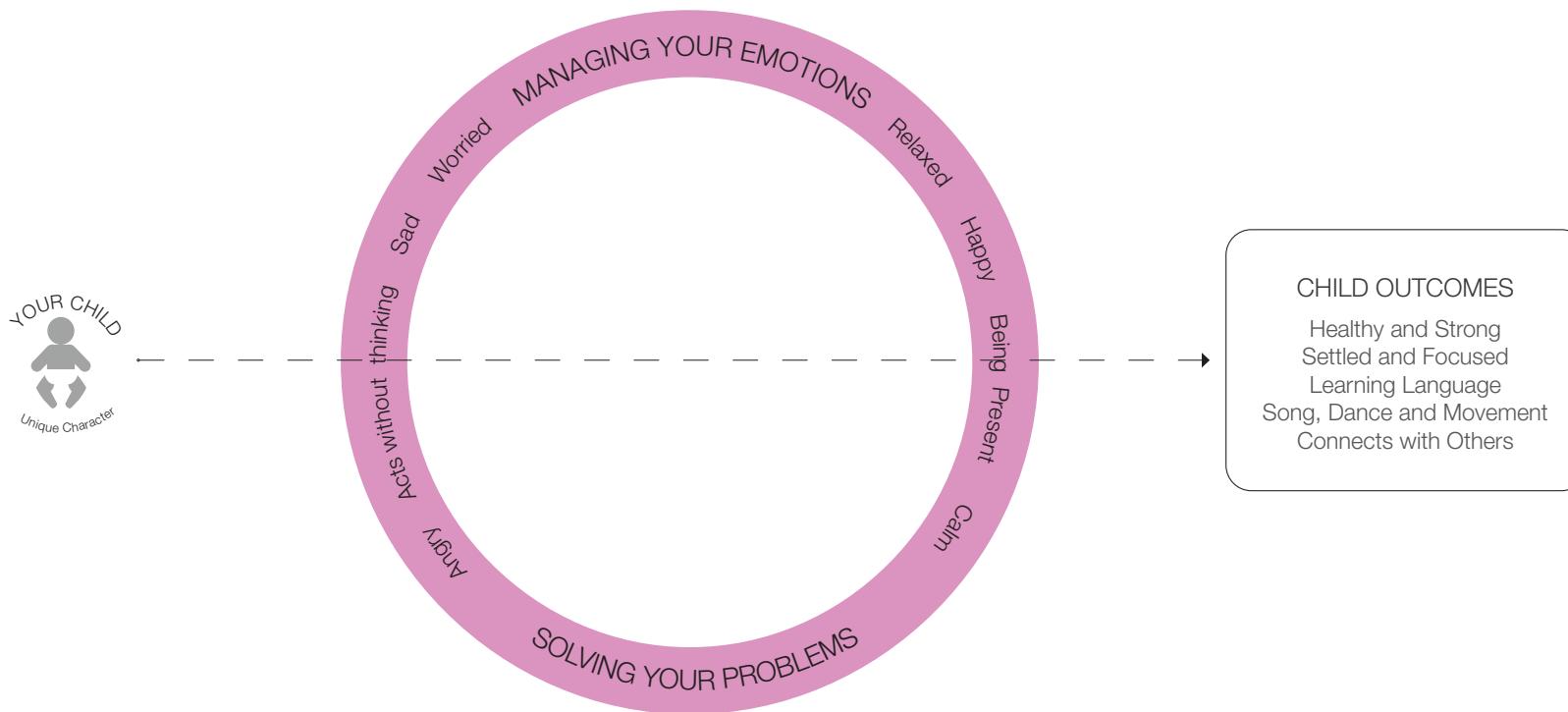
- For each muscle group, tense the muscle for about 5-7 seconds, or longer if you can.
- Repeat 2 or 3 times for each muscle group.
- Focus attention on how the muscle feel differently when they are tense from when they are relaxed.

1. Make a fist with the right hand to tense the right hand and forearm.
2. Raise the right shoulder upwards towards your ear to tighten the right shoulder.
3. Make a fist with the left hand to tense the left hand and forearm.
4. Raise the left shoulder upwards towards your ear to tighten the left shoulder.
5. Raise both eyebrows as high as they can go, stretching out the muscles in your forehead.
6. Close your eyes as tight as you can make them to tighten the muscles around your eyes.

7. Clench your teeth and bite down to tighten the muscles around your mouth.
8. Pull the chin down towards your chest to tense the back of the neck.
9. Draw both shoulders backwards (not upwards).
10. Tighten the abdominal muscles (making the stomach hard).
11. Tense the thigh of the right leg.
12. Straighten your right leg and pint your toes down to tighten the muscles around your right foot.
11. Tense the thigh of the left leg.
12. Straighten your left leg and point your toes down to tighten the muscles around your left foot.



# Session 5



# Caring for yourself

# What is Mindfulness and what are the benefits of mindfulness for parents?

- Mindfulness is awareness of the sensations, thoughts and feelings that are occurring moment to moment.
- Our senses - sight, sound, touch, smell, taste – are constantly sending messages, but we are often not fully aware of these sensations even though they are present.
- Mindfulness is also being aware of our thoughts, which might be an internal dialogue of words, images, or a song playing in our mind.
- Mindfulness is also being aware of our emotions that change over the course of the day.
- An important aspect of mindfulness is non-judgmental acceptance of what is happening in the present moment.
- This means acknowledging the emotion you are feeling or the thoughts you are having for what they are, feelings and thoughts.
- This awareness means you have a choice as to how you react to those thoughts and feelings.
- You may know you react more harshly to your children when you are stressed and angry, but if you aren't aware that you are stressed and angry, knowing that doesn't help.
- Learning to be mindful we can deal with situations more skilfully, with more control.

# Mindful walking

- Mindful walking is not about getting from A to B, it is about paying full attention to the process of walking itself.
- At the beginning mindful walking is practised at a very slow pace, focusing your attention on all the bodily processes involved in taking a step.
- As you get more comfortable with doing this practise you can try doing mindful walking at different speeds.

1. Start by standing with your feet about shoulder width apart. Focus your attention on the sensations in your feet and legs.
2. Move your weight onto the right foot. Notice the sensations that you feel in your legs, the lightness, heaviness tension of each leg.
3. Shift your weight onto the left foot. Notice the sensations that you feel in your legs, the lightness, heaviness tension of each leg.
4. Rebalance, and slowly lift your right foot and place it on the floor in front of you, shifting all of your weight onto it and feeling the changing sensations of the shifting muscles as they come in contact with the floor.
5. Rebalance, and take a step by slowly lifting your left foot and placing it on the floor in front of you, shifting all of your weight onto it and feeling the changing sensations of the shifting muscles as they come in contact with the floor.
6. Slowly and gently repeat this process, taking several steps.
7. As you come to the end of your walking path or need to change your direction, direct your attention to the process of turning as you change direction.
8. Try to stay focused on the experience of walking and the sensations in your legs and feet. When your mind wanders, bring your attention back to the sensations of movement.
9. Try walking at different speeds that help you to stay mindful. If your mind is upset or racing try to walk at a faster pace for a while. As your mind becomes more settled you can slow down. By experimenting with walking at different speeds you can find the speed that best allows you to walk naturally with mindful awareness.

# Informal mindfulness practice

## 1. Mindfulness in your morning routine

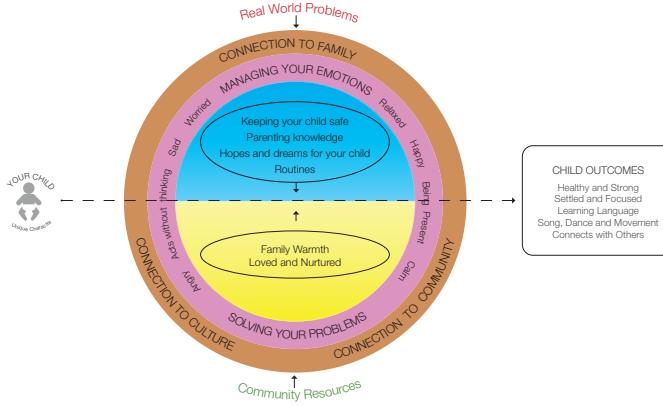
- Pick an activity such as brushing your teeth, having a shower, drying your hair.
- Totally focus on what you are doing: the body movements, the taste, the touch, the smell, the sight, the sound.

For example, when you're in the shower, notice the sounds of the water, the temperature of the water. Feel it in your head and shoulders and running down our legs. Notice the smell of the soap and shampoo, and the feel of them against your skin. Notice the sight of the water droplets on the walls or shower screen. Notice the movements of your arms as you wash or scrub or shampoo. When thoughts arise, acknowledge them, let them be, and bring your attention back to the shower.

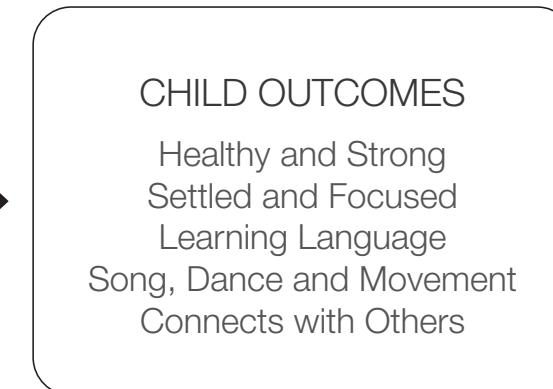
## 2. Mindfulness of daily tasks

- Pick a task that you normally try to rush through, or distract yourself from (e.g., ironing, washing dishes, vacuuming, making the kids' lunches).
- Aim to do this chore as a mindfulness practice.

E.g., when ironing clothes: notice the color and shape of the clothing, and the pattern made by the creases, and the new pattern as the creases disappear. Notice the sound of the steam, the creak of the ironing board. Notice the grip of your hand on the iron, and the movement of your arm and your shoulder. If boredom or frustration arises, try to identify what the boredom feels like, where it is coming from. simply acknowledge it, and bring your attention back to the task at hand. When thoughts arise, acknowledge them, let them be, and bring your attention back to what you are doing. Again and again, your attention will wander. As soon as you realize this has happened, gently acknowledge it, note what distracted you, and bring your attention back to your current activity.



# Session 6



## Promoting child self-regulation

# What is self-regulation?

## 1. Emotional control (bottom-up control)

Emotional control refers to a child's ability to be aware of and change their emotional state.

Emotional control is regulated by the Sympathetic and Parasympathetic Nervous Systems that are located in the body.

## 2. Cognitive control (top-down control)

- The ability to focus attention
- The ability to shift attention when needed
- Being able to remember things:
- Psychological flexibility (problem solving)

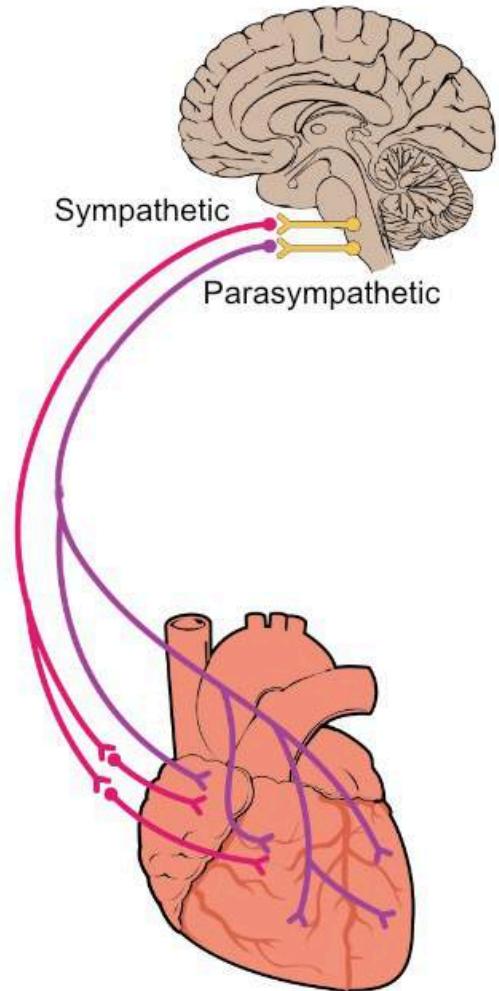
## 3. Behavioural control

The ability of a child to *not* do something they want to do.



## Self-regulation

Top  
↓  
Down  
Control



# Teaching Children Emotion Words

Here are some pictures of different emotions.

Ask your child to pretend they are doing these different emotions and take a picture of them.

This will help them learn the names of the different emotions.

HAPPY		Take a picture of your child's happy face
SCARED		Take a picture of your child's scared face
SAD		Take a picture of your child's sad face
SUPRISED		Take a picture of your child's surprised face
ANGRY		Take a picture of your child's angry face

# Teaching Children Breath Control

- Lay on your back with your child lying next to you.
- Place a teddy (or other soft animal) on your child's tummy and say we are going to help teddy go to sleep.
- Place a hand on your tummy and say, I'm going to make my hand move up by breathing in.
- Breathe along with me so Teddy moves up.
- Now lets breath out so Teddy moves down again.
- If we keep breathing slowly in and out, Teddy will move up and down and start getting sleepy.
- Start by counting to 4 for the inbreath, pause for a second or two, count to 4 for the out breath, pause and repeat this cycle. You may need to adjust the number you count to to suit your child.
- If your child is breathing into his or her chest, it is helpful to put your hand on their tummy and say 'breath into your tummy here').
- Continue breathing like this for 2 - 5 minutes, and say, I think Teddy has gone to sleep!).

## Blowing bubbles

- Make or buy a bubble wand and bubble solution
- Get them to slowly draw in a deep breath and then blow into the bubble constant through pursed lips.
- Set the challenge of making the bubble as big as it can get without bursting.
- Say they need to blow slowly and gently to make the bubble big.

## Bubble Solution Recipe

2 cups warm water  
1/3 cup dish washing liquid  
1/4 cup glucose syrup

## Bubble Wand

Make out of pipe cleaner



## Bending a candle flame

- For older children, light a candle in a place where there is no breeze.
- Ask the child to blow on the flame in a way that will make the flame bend, but not blow out.



# Teaching children to focus attention through reading

Think about what your child needs to do when they listen to a story.

- They need to sit still and focus long enough to listen to the story.
- They also need to be able to remember what is happening in the story.
- Children will form pictures in their minds and as the story goes along.

So, telling children stories or reading to them helps them learn how to focus their attention, concentrate for a period of time, remember things and use their imagination.

They will also learn to enjoy and value books.

And you can turn it into a special time between you and your child.

# Teaching children to focus attention through song and dance

Singing songs and dancing help children develop many important skills.

Like reading they need to remember the words of the song.

But they also need to learn the rhythm and melody of the song.

Many children's songs have actions, like clapping hands. This helps with coordination.

Every culture has some form of dance.

Dancing involves learning a sequence of movements and coordinating them with music.

Children need to watch, then repeat the movement as they remember the steps.

Hard work for little brains but lots of fun.

Singing and dancing can also make us feel happy and it's a social activity that you can do as a family.

What song and dance could you teach your child and that you could sing together?

# Teaching children to focus attention by playing team games and doing marital arts

The important features of team games is having to remember and follow the rules.

But team games also require children to follow the game – where is the ball going?

In soccer and netball, what is the best strategy for getting the ball down to their goal? This involves problem solving.

Team game require cooperation with teammates to win the game. So teaches social skills.

Playing a team sport should be fun – so children get to practise all of their attention and concentration skills while also feeling happy.

Martial arts are great as well – and as these often include the practice of breathing and self-control, so this is ticking a couple of important boxes:

- attention and focus
- self-control
- practising controlled breathing



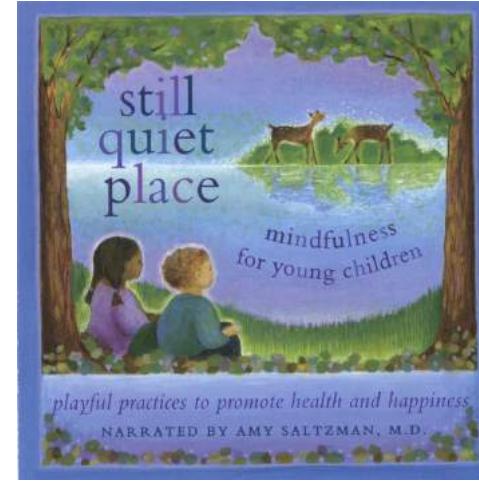
# Mindfulness for children

Still Quiet Place

<http://www.stillquietplace.com/practice-videos/>

Sitting Still Like a frog

<https://vimeo.com/134992008>



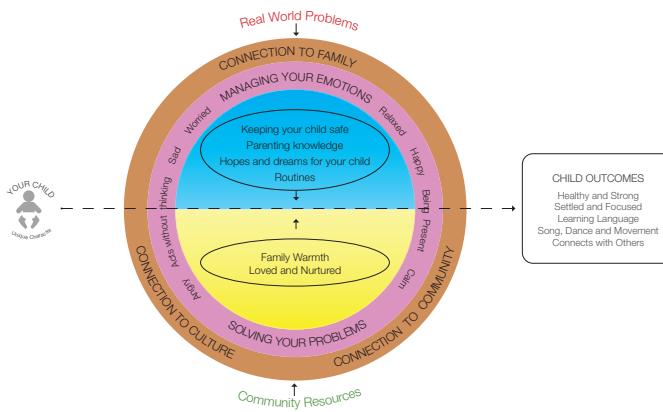
## Sitting Still Like a Frog

Mindfulness Exercises for Kids  
(and Their Parents)

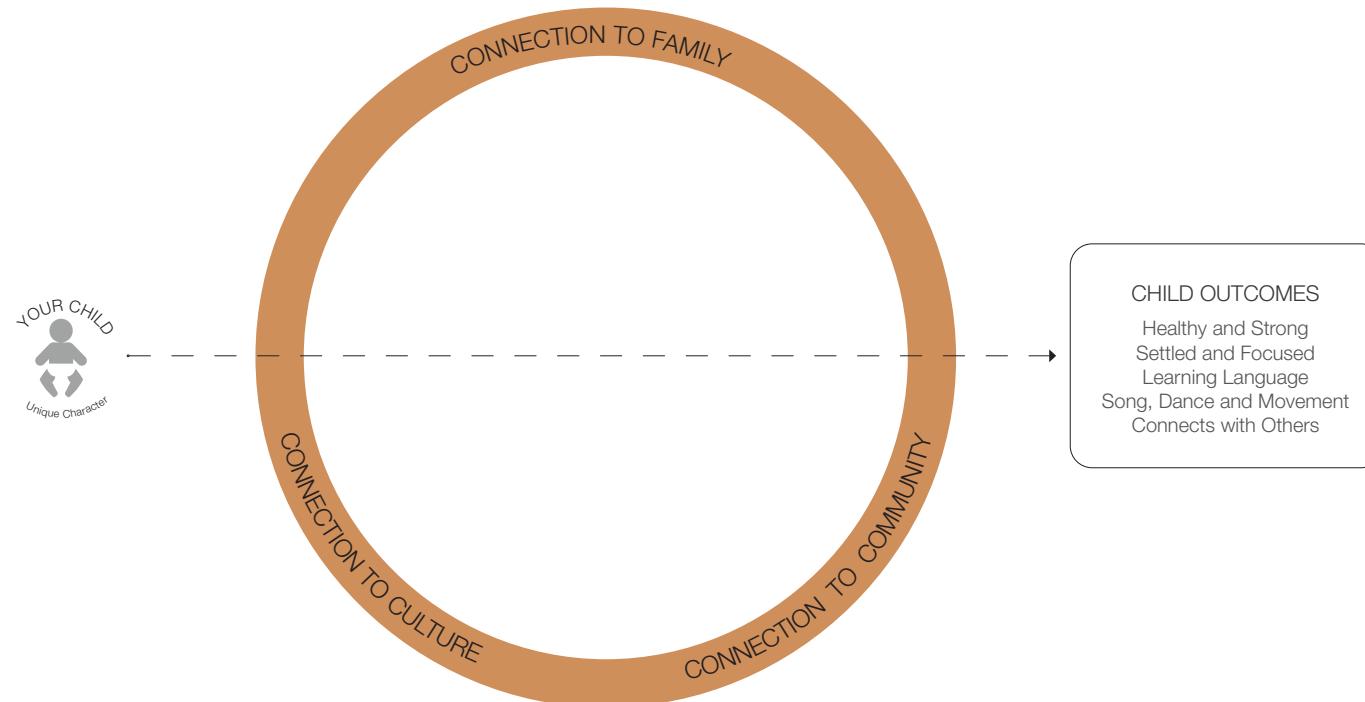


Simple mindfulness practices to help your child deal with anxiety, improve concentration, and handle difficult emotions

■ Eline Snel ■



# Session 7



Connecting with family, community and culture

# Support

## The importance of support

- Improves mental and physical health and wellbeing.

## Difficulties in asking for support

- What are some reasons people give for why they don't ask for help?"

## Altruism

- Helping others helps us to connect with others and makes us feel good.
- Asking for support provides someone the opportunity to be altruistic!.

# Strengthening relationships with family

	<b>Passive</b>	<b>Active</b>
<b>Destructive</b>	Ignores the news and shows no interest	Demeaning, undermining response and expressed lack of interest
<b>Constructive</b>	Understated, minimal interest	Enthusiastic support and interested in details

# Active constructive responding

- Watch video and discuss.

# Strengthening relationships with family

	<b>Passive</b>	<b>Active</b>
<b>Destructive</b>	Ignores the news and shows no interest	Demeaning, undermining response and expressed lack of interest
<i>Example</i>		
<b>Constructive</b>	Understated, minimal interest	Enthusiastic support and interested in details
<i>Example</i>		

# Gratitude

Discuss the following:



- Gratitude involves explicitly acknowledging something you are grateful for.
- This might be the help and support people offer, or an object.
- Many families have started to take time at dinner for each member of the family to say what they are grateful for.
- When telling others what you are grateful for, more benefit comes from being specific.

# Connection with community/neighbourhood

Discuss the following:

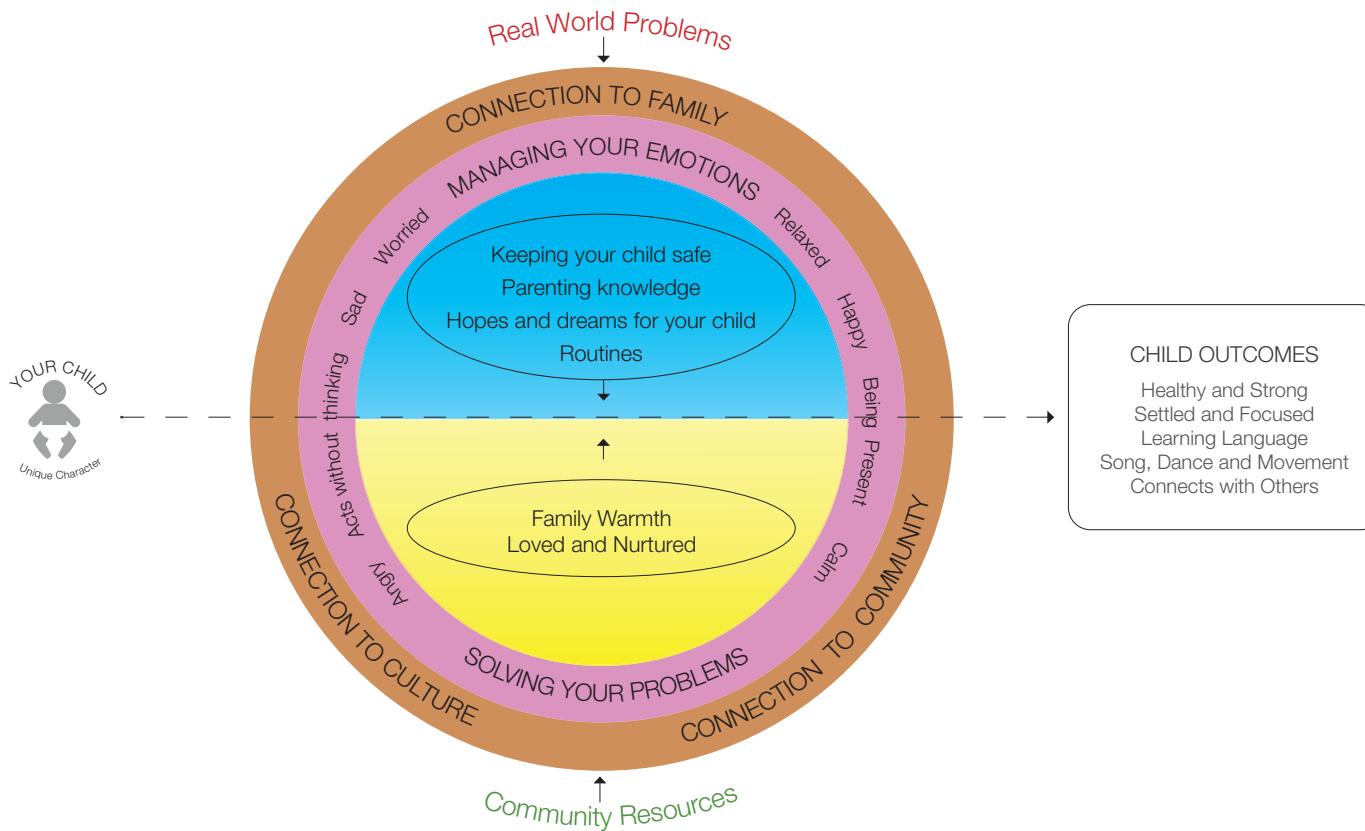
- Do you feel connected with your community/neighbourhood?
- What community/neighbourhood events you could access that perhaps you aren't?
- How is involvement in community important for children?

# Setting a goal to engage support or connect with community

Discuss the following:

- What support could you seek out?
- How could you get more involved in your community/neighborhood?
- How could you go about doing these?

# Session 8



## Closure

# The PuP Family Framework

