Family Links 10-week Nurturing Programme: Theory of Change

**Root causes**

Parents - cognitive & emotional
- Low sense of self-efficacy & confidence in parenting
- Low self-awareness and self-knowledge / mindfulness
- High levels of parenting stress and poor strategies for self-nurture & self-care
- Low empathy for child
- Low insight, knowledge or understanding of child's needs
- Inappropriate expectations of child
- Parents feel isolated in their own problems

Parents - behaviours
- Children's behaviour is not positively or consistently managed
- Poor ability to manage/resolve conflict with child

Children - emotional and behavioural
- Children stressed, unhappy or uncooperative

Parent-child relationship
- Parent-child relationship is conflicted & stressful
- Home life not enjoyable and home climate is 'hot' (angry, emotionally volatile) or 'cold' (distant, detached)

**Needs**

Prior parenting experiences cause absence of internal models of positive parenting

Parents feel isolated from sources of guidance & support

**Resources/inputs**

Provided by FL (Purveyor) Training
- Mandatory:
  - 4 day training course led by experienced trainers
- Expected but not mandatory:
  - Annual refresher course
  - Network Meetings

Provided by FL (Purveyor) Materials
- Manuals:
  - PGLs and Trainers Handbooks
  - Parenting Puzzle Handbook
  - Games, toys, aids & ‘kit’
- Implementation support
  - Telephone support; Monitoring support

Provided by purchasing agency:
- Skilled PGLs/facilitators (two per group) with:
  - Facilitation skills
  - Knowledge of parenting work: theory & practice
  - Life experience & credibility

Dosage
- 10 week course; 2-hour sessions (20 hrs/ person)

**Activities**

**The four constructs**

(philosophy of optimal parenting)

Parents feel increased empathy with child

Parents have more developmentally appropriate expectations

Parents understand value of positive discipline

Parents have increased self-awareness, self-knowledge, & self-worth

**Mechanisms of change**

(cognitive & relational changes for parents)

Managing and communicating feelings
- Managing feelings
- Communicating clearly

Solving problems
- Problem-solving and negotiating
- Choices & Consequences
- Rewards and penalties

Managing & reducing conflict
- Boundaries & limits
- Behaviour to ignore
- Praise

Managing & reducing stress
- Time to Calm Down
- Personal power & self-agency
- Self-nurture for stress management

**The Four Strategies**

(pulling the constructs into practice)

Facilitative not didactic; non-judgemental
- Group-based & interactive
- Experiential

Cater to different ways of learning
- Mix of serious and fun/humour
- Use of role-play & acting out

Use of ‘take home & try out’
- Use of group feedback
- Pacing and variety (movement, games)

Nurturing style & environment
- Ongoing review & reflection
- Planned & communicated

**Outcomes**

**Immediate post course**

Parent outcomes
- Listening, understanding and expressing feelings clearly
- Using problem-solving and negotiation strategies
- Using conflict management and reduction strategies
- Using self-regulation and self-nurture strategies

Child outcomes
- Experiencing better and more communication with parent
- Experiencing less conflict and fewer escalated conflicts with parent

**3 months**

Parent outcomes
- Better communication and understanding of child
- Increased repertoire of positive discipline
- Reduced use of coercive & punitive control
- Reduced frequency of escalated conflict
- Increased parenting self-efficacy
- Increased well-being (calmer, less stressed)

Child outcomes
- Experiencing parent as more consistent, clear, calmer
- Experiencing improved relationship with parent
- Experiencing more frequent positive and enjoyable interactions with parent

**Long term +**

Parent outcomes
- Improved coping with parenting
- More enjoyment of parenting and family time
- Child more co-operative with parent

Child outcomes
- Feel happier at home
- Calmer, less stressed and anxious
- Improved mood and behaviour at home

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