

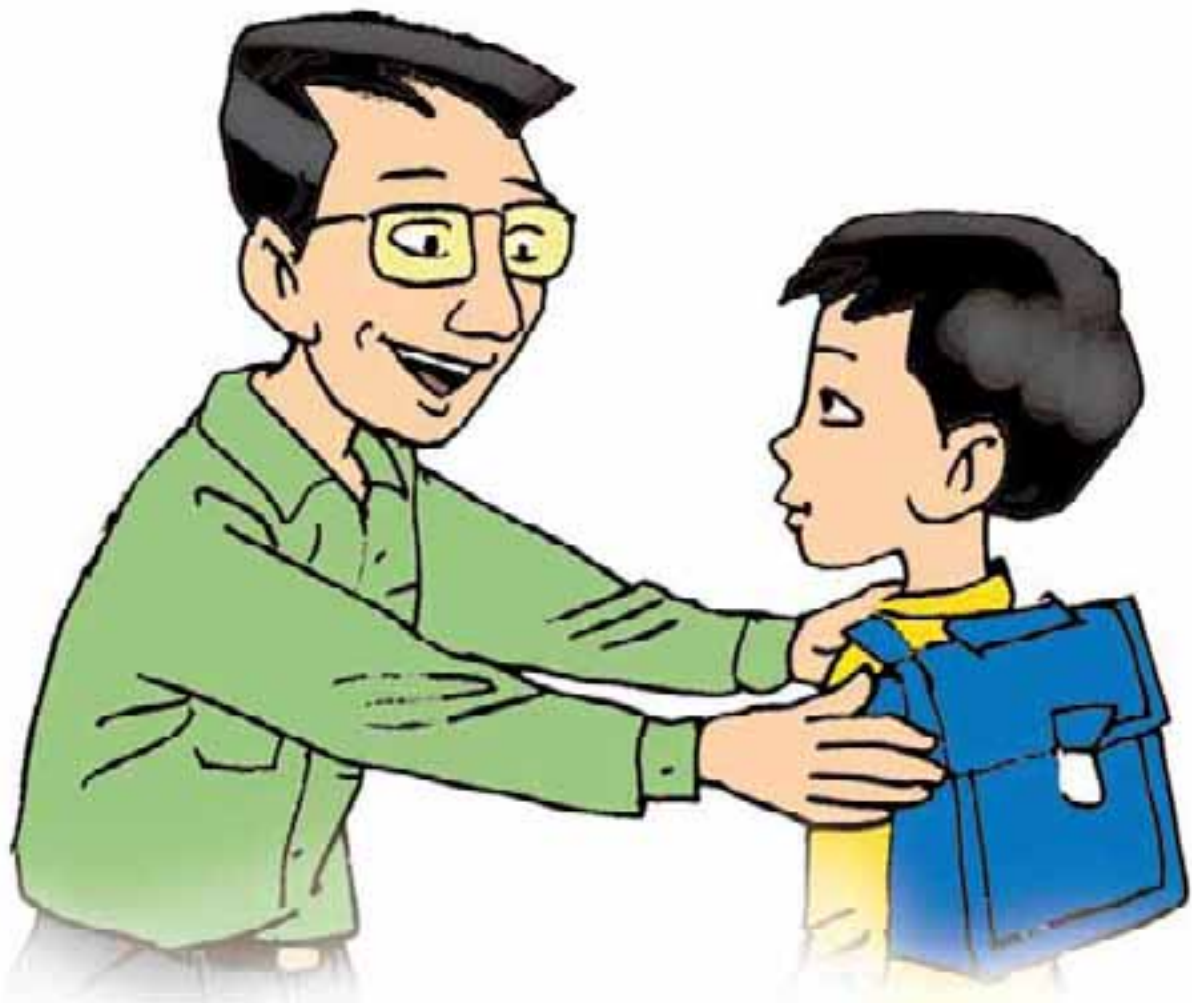
## Chapter 6

### *Encouragement: strengthening self-esteem, confidence and motivation for children*

**Objectives:** This chapter aims to help trainees understand

1. The concept of positive and negative reinforcement in childhood development
2. Five principles for reinforcement of positive behaviour (encouragement, praise)
3. The difference between praise and encouragement
4. Practise encouragement skills







Suggested  
knowledge

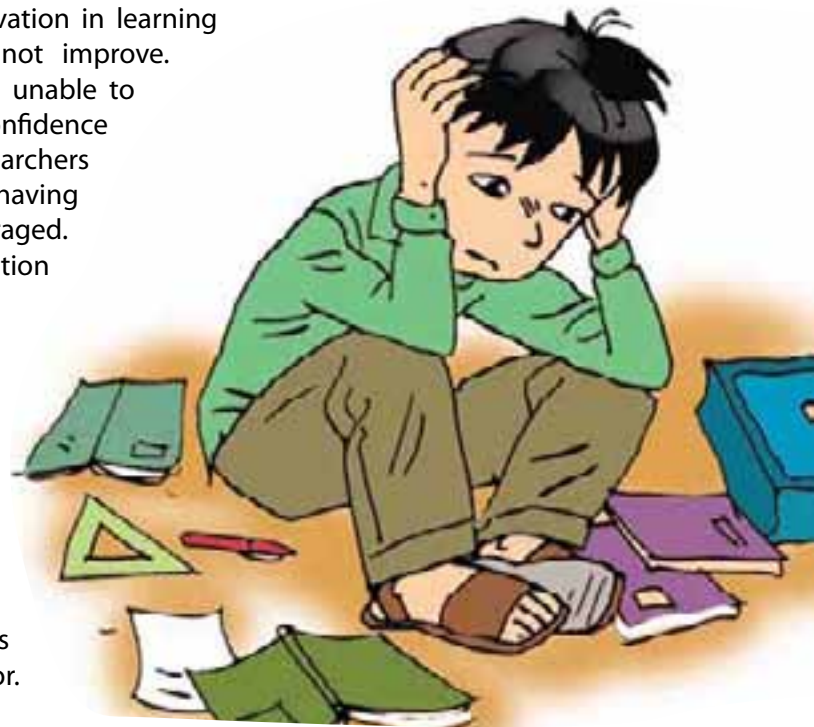
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# Positive and negative reinforcement

## *Discouragement and lack of motivation*

Many children of different ages have potential but feel discouraged about their abilities, losing interest and motivation in learning and activating. They believe that they cannot improve. They underestimate themselves and are then unable to overcome difficulties, finding it easy to lose confidence and discontinue their work. Educational researchers have shown that most naughty or misbehaving children are those that have become discouraged. They no longer have any interest in or motivation for activities.

Discouragement is the main reason for most 'failures' in school, especially for teenagers. Some children feel that they cannot satisfy their teacher's or parent's expectations. Others feel that teachers and parents do not assess them correctly. In these cases, children may decide not to even try to satisfy the adult's expectation and standards. They gradually lose interest and effort, not understanding that life is a non-stop learning process, full of trial and error.



## *Positive reinforcement*

When children are small, most of them are eager to listen to, love and admire their teachers. We all see our children's efforts and, they are rewarded with smiles and attention from people around them. For example, when children get good marks, their efforts are acknowledged and appreciated by adults and their friends. If treated positively by adults, children tend to increase their cooperation and efforts. The positive feelings of being loved and respected reinforce other positive feelings inside the children that, in turn, lead to the development of good habits and practices. This process is a spiral development, not a straight line: a good habit may be abandoned if it is not regularly reinforced.



## Negative reinforcement

Many adults have a tendency to consider misbehaving children as worse than they really are, treating them in a negative, dismissive manner. When devalued or humiliated by adults, children may feel angry, discouraged, powerless and sometimes depressed. Children may feel less interested in schooling and gradually become afraid of studying and may cease to make any effort, losing all motivation. When an adult's behaviour at home and in school make children feel powerless, hurt, scared, ashamed and insecure, they will be unable to develop naturally.

Children at school come from a variety of different circumstances. Some of them are not yet fully prepared in terms of development of language, emotion or behaviour. If a pupil who already feels powerless experiences further failures, he or she will feel even more powerless. If a friend then teases this child, he or she will feel even more discouraged. His or her motivation decreases and the child makes less and less effort. The less effort the child makes, the more failure he or she will get, such as getting bad marks, being criticised, scolded, insulted, having to repeat a class or dropping out of school. This sets up a vicious cycle, with the spiral heading down.

Some discouraged pupils appear to refuse to study. They may feel powerless and sad. Other discouraged children may feel hurt, scared, angry, embarrassed or irritated and may even become violent.

Some factors that may contribute to a downwards spiral:

- A poor home environment
- Being insulted, criticised, disregarded, scolded, beaten or punished
- Poor language development
- Being helpless when needed
- Bad comments from friends
- Being blamed for something or isolated by friends
- Poor nutrition

Teachers and parents can feel stressed and powerless when there are some badly behaved children in their classes or at home. To try to feel that they are in control, they may think they need to punish the children. This treatment, however, is not only ineffective but also harmful to children, making children feel anxious and tense, slowing the progress of their development and interfering with their study. If adults try to instigate change by making children scared through punishments such as beating or scolding, children can feel rejected and pushed away by adults, leading them to oppose rather than cooperate with adults. A behavioural change may occur but it will be through force rather than joint understanding and effort. To change children's behaviour effectively, adults should have their cooperation. Children need encouragement to become confident and motivated.

Child educational expert, R. Dreikurs, an advocate for positive education methods for children, stressed that encouragement is the most important skill that an adult can use to help children. He insists:

***Each child needs continuous encouragement just as a plant needs water. He/She cannot exist and grow up without encouragement.***



## Activity: *Discouragement and lack of motivation*



### Objective

To understand the consequences of children becoming discouraged in play and study



### Target audience

Parents, teachers, caregivers and people who are working with children



### Time

20 minutes



### Method

Discussion, sharing



### Materials

Handout "Discouragement and lack of motivation"

## Process

### Step 1 (10 minutes)

Divide participants into small groups. Distribute Handout "*Discouragement and lack of motivation*" to each group. Groups discuss the three questions and write their results on the blank section of the handout.

### Step 2 (7 minutes)

Ask groups to share their results. The trainer can add suggestions if necessary.

### Conclusion (3 minutes)

Discouragement is the main reason for most "failures" in school, especially for teenagers. Children need encouragement like plants need water. Children cannot survive and develop without encouragement.



# Activity: *Positive or Negative Reinforcement?*



## Objective

To understand negative reinforcement and its consequences through a certain situation



## Target audience

Parents, teachers, caregivers and people who are working with children



## Time

10 minutes



## Method

Discussion, sharing



## Materials

Handout "Adults' reinforcement behaviours"

## Process

### Step 1 (5 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups. Distribute Handout "*Adults' reinforcement behaviours*" to each group. Groups discuss the two questions and write their results on the blank of the handout.

### Step 2 (3 minutes)

Ask groups to share their results. The trainer can supplement if necessary.

### Conclusion (2 minutes)

The mother is the main reason for the repeat behaviour. She reinforces the negative behaviour instead of the positive behaviour of her child.





## Activity: *Encouragement or criticism*



### Objective

To understand negative reinforcement and the consequences in a certain situation



### Target audience

Parents, teachers, caregivers and people who are working with children



### Time

10 minutes



### Method

Discussion, sharing



### Materials

A picture made by a child

## Process

### Step 1 (7 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups. Distribute a photocopy of a drawing made by a child (for example, a house or an animal, which is drawn by a child in grade 1 or 2) to each group. The picture is meaningful but contains wrong, inappropriate or 'ugly' details. Ask the groups to discuss what they think and what they would say to a child if he or she child showed them this picture.

### Step 2 (5 minutes)

Ask participants to list suggestions when looking at the picture and write them on the board. Everyone can then decide which of the sentences contain praise and encouragement and which contain criticism? Ask participants how they would feel if they were the child in question.

### Conclusion (3 minutes)

Even poor pictures and poor performances can earn words of encouragement.







# Five principles for reinforcement of positive behaviour

## 1. Praise a real and specific achievement

Many adults pay less attention to positive behaviour but only focus on children's mistakes and misbehaviour. It is important to identify children's good and positive behaviours for reinforcement. For example, if a six or seven year old child writes badly, you can encourage him or her by finding one or two well-written words and show the child that you like these words because they are clearly written and easy to read. For example, you could gently say, "this word is written very clearly and on the right line" or "you have combined sentences very well". The child will look at the word, feel happy and confident, encouraged and learn how to write more clearly, following the sample words. The adult's attitude and tone of voice is very important in conveying a positive message. Encouragement is critically important for children in difficulty and for those with less success in studying. Children with better study results usually get plenty of positive reinforcement for getting good marks, from their parents, teachers and their classmates.

## 2. Specific encouragement and naming virtues

Example: "I like the way you helped your younger sister. You have shown your sense of solidarity and your helpfulness". "You were very good not to hit back when you were teased and ridiculed. You are strong and patient".

Children will remember the virtues that you have said they showed. This is very important. It can help the children to change their natural reaction from a negative response, such as hitting back the friend in the previous example, to something more positive, boosting their self-esteem and patience.





### 3. Be sincere

In praise and encouragement, your sincerity is the most important factor in making children feel they are respected, enabling them to properly value their efforts and improvement. The eyes and tone of voice are invaluable signs of sincerity that can be easily interpreted by human beings of all ages.

A three year old girl who has just finished a drawing will be very happy and excited if someone looks at her kindly, smiles and says "Oh, look at all the colours you used – red, green, purple - and circles and straight lines, too!" Such a literal description may not seem like praise or encouragement but it provides the child with positive reinforcement as she feels your appreciation and encouragement.

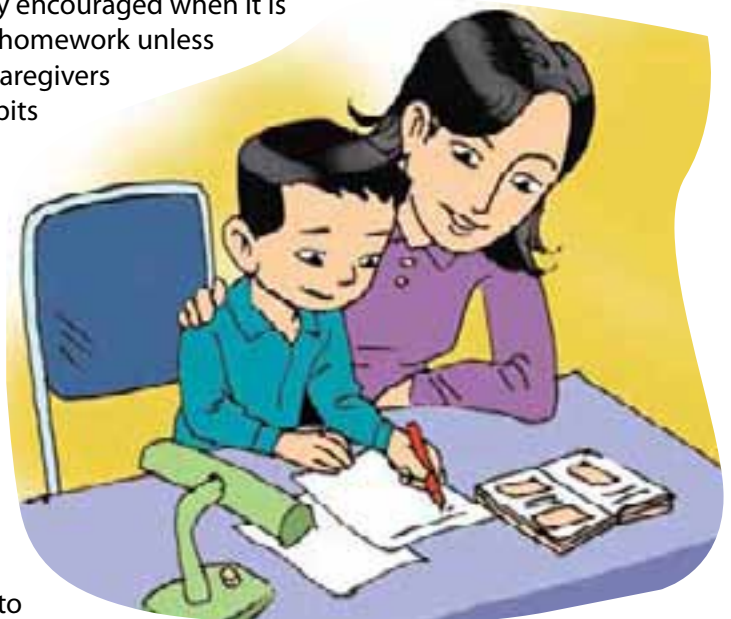
### 4. With sincerity and positive emotion

Sometimes praise or encouragement starts out with a positive statement but finishes on a negative note. For example, after a husband has prepared dinner for his wife she might say something like "You cooked very well today. If only you could always cook like this!" Or when a child has done well on his or her exercises, the parent or teacher might say "Well done! You did very well on your exercises today. Why don't you do well everyday?" The first comment is very encouraging but the positive feeling quickly dissipates with the final criticism or negative comment.

### 5. Respond immediately

A new positive behaviour needs to be immediately encouraged when it is being established. Some children do not do their homework unless someone is sitting next to him. If their parents or caregivers do not have time to sit with them, their study habits deteriorate. Try to encourage the child to establish a new behaviour with your help. For example, "Well done, you know how to do now. When you have completed these three exercises, bring them to me and I'll take a look." Make sure you make time to look at the exercises when your child brings them to you and give them a mark. Extend this practice by giving them an increasing number of exercises to do before they show them to you. After a short time, the child will do his or her exercises more independently and study more effectively.

Regular encouragement is needed in order to establish a new behaviour but the encouragement should be reduced once this behaviour becomes habit.





# Differences between praise and encouragement

Praise and encouragement are often viewed as synonymous. Most people agree that praise is an effective tool for behaviour change. Many educators, however, suggest differentiating between praise and encouragement.

Praise differs from encouragement in terms of timeliness and effectiveness as shown in below table:

## ***Differences between praise and encouragement***

<b><i>Praise</i></b>	<b><i>Encouragement</i></b>
1. Conducted after obtaining an achievement and when the child is <u>successful</u> (praise only those who achieve success).	1. Conducted <u>before and during</u> any action taking place, not only when the child is successful but also when he or she faces <u>difficulty or failure</u> (encourage children's efforts, progress and contribution)
2. Given to children who obtained achievement; may be a material reward such as money or a trophy. Only few children and a few behaviours are praised, for example, a small number of excellent pupils who get top marks. These rewards can only be achieved after lengthy efforts.	2. Any child can receive encouragement. You can encourage many children for anything they have tried and anything they have done that shows progress. After enough encouragement, children may have made a praiseworthy achievement.
3. Adults assess the children's achievements and set the standard with little or no mutual participation. (Parents and teachers feel satisfied with the achievements but do not consider whether or not the child is also satisfied.)	3. Self-assessment by children: children decide whether or not they are satisfied with their achievements. They set their own standards with participation from their parents or teachers. (How to parents or teacher who are interested in seeing what the children think of their efforts and achievements.)
4. Show adult's expectations and reliance on ranking (you are only a success if you get full marks).	4. Assess and respect children's own capacity (success can be measured against the child's personal improvements rather than against the achievements of others).
5. Children obey and follow parents' or teachers' instructions but have no intrinsic understanding of why they need to do so. (What you have done is good - but no explanation of why it is good.)	5. Adults empathise with children, showing high levels of mutual interaction. (I see that you are really excited to do this exercise, it's fun to learn new things, isn't it?)
6. Praise and rewards may be seen as a type of bribe. For example: "if you get full marks, I will give you some money". Next time, the child might ask "I will only try to get full marks if you give me some more money" (bargaining). Gradually, children will learn that they should never do anything if they don't receive something in return.	6. Encouragement makes children proud of their achievements, efforts and contributions, giving them internal motivation to act. Children can say "I will try hard at this subject even though I am not getting great marks because I like it."



# Activity: *Differences between praise and encouragement*

**Objective**

To understand the differences between praise and encouragement

**Target audience**

Parents, teachers, caregivers and people who are working with children

**Time**

20 minutes

**Method**

Discussion, sharing

**Material**

Handout "Differences between praise and encouragement"

## Process

**Step 1**  
**(5 minutes)**

Divide participants into small groups. Distribute Handout "*Differences between praise and encouragement*" to each group. The groups should discuss the situation and write their answers on the handout.

**Step2**  
**(5 minutes)**

Groups share in plenary

**Conclusion**  
**(10 minutes)**

We want children to exhibit good behaviours because of an intrinsic motivation – because it feels good to act that way, or they feel a sense of achievement and so on - not because of an external pressure or extrinsic motivation, such as praise and reward received from adults. Summarise and systematise the differences between praise and encouragement based on *Suggested Knowledge 3*.



Encouragement may be expressed through a smile, tone of voice, nodding, patting a child on the shoulder, expressing appreciation of the child's efforts and improvements and in many more ways. Like any behaviour, effective encouragement can be learned and improved upon. Some skills to help develop effective encouragement are outlined below:

### **1. Skills of showing understanding, sympathy and accepting the children**

#### **Situation:**

*Thao, a nine-year-old student, studied hard but received a very low mark in the mid-term exams.*

#### **Discouraging (1) and encouraging (2) responses could be:**

1. *Don't give up; you need to study more otherwise you will get low marks again.*
2. *I know that you tried hard; I believe that you can do better next time.*

In other cases, adults can express their understanding and sympathy through statements such as: "I know it was a very difficult exam; I am happy because you studied hard and tried your best; I believe that you can do it."

To encourage a child, parents and teachers should avoid comparing the child with other brothers, sisters or peers. If the child is not an outstanding student, this comparison may make him or her feel discouraged. This comparison also reduces the child's confidence because it devaluates their own efforts and progress. Adults who encourage children usually recognise and value the individual child's progress and accept the individuality of children. Children should be encouraged so that they feel valued and capable. Teenagers should also be encouraged to overcome difficulties, challenges, pressures received from their peers, and to develop their sense of responsibility. Encouragement helps to build self-esteem and confidence in children. Parents' excessively high or low expectations can make children frustrated. High expectations can make children feel that they are incapable of meeting their parents' or teacher's expectations, causing them to lose the motivation to try whilst low expectations make children wait for other people's help and lose the motivation to strive to do better.



## 2. Skills of focusing on strength and contributions

### **Situation:**

*Hung, a 12-year-old boy, admits that he opened the book during the examination. He was criticised in front of the class and he amended his mistake.*

### **Discouraging (1) and encouraging (2) responses could be:**

1. You never think first! You should be ashamed of yourself, shouldn't you?
2. I am happy that you have realised your mistake and have taken responsibility for it.

In life, we often only pay attention to and emphasise mistakes, even though we know that everyone makes mistakes at sometime through life. Instead, parents and teachers should try to pay more attention to children's strength and virtues, focusing on their positive abilities and behaviours. We should encourage children's positive behaviours and attributes in order to help them to become responsible adults.



## 3. Skills for exploring positive points and developing alternative solutions to the same situation

### **Situation:**

*Binh, a 16-year-old boy, smokes and drinks alcohol with close friends, then causes trouble. The community leader has called him in.*

### **Discouraging (1) and encouraging (2) responses can be:**

1. Open your eyes! Can't you see what you are doing? This is the reason I don't allow you to make friends with them.
2. I think that you have learned some lessons from going out with these friends.

## 4. Skills for focusing on efforts and improvement

### **Situation:**

*Huong, a 14-year-old, has tried to improve his results this semester but the results are not as good as she had hoped.*



### *Discouraging (1) and encouraging (2) response could be:*

1. I thought you said that you would study harder but when I look at your average mark in Mathematics and English I see they are so low. Why?
2. You have improved in Literature and History. It looks like you are getting closer to your goal. Keep up the good work!

Adults can focus on and recognise the efforts and achievements made by the children through statements such as:

I see that you have been trying very hard; I see that you have improved in this subject; I think you can do this exercise,

Before or after taking examinations, children often feel nervous or discouraged. Adults should express their encouragement without any pressure, for example, "the important thing is that you have tried your best in this examination; Do you think you could have tried harder?"

It is easy to recognise and praise achievements such as winning a competition or passing the entrance exam for university. Yet these achievements are not the work of a single day. If the parents and teachers only encourage children whenever they win something, children will be waiting a long time and may never or seldom receive it. Children's efforts, progress and improvements need to be encouraged regularly so they can realise their achievements.



## **5. Compare punishment, permissiveness and encouragement**

### *Situation:*

*A child comes home with a wide and bloody wound on his or her hand.*

### *His parents might have different reactions:*

#### **1. Punishment**

*The parents don't care about the child's wound*

They say something like, "stop whimpering or I will really give you something to cry about." The parents shout at the child and shake him or her to show their anger.

*The child interprets the parents' reaction as, "my needs are not important. They hate me. I don't deserve their love".*

*The child feels* pain in the wounded hand and also in his or her heart and mind. He or she may feel scared, isolated, disappointed or ashamed.

#### **2. Permissiveness or over-protection**

*The mother rushes to the child.* Perhaps the father and grandparents also come running. The mother cries: "Oh my goodness, you must be in so much pain. Come in, I will bandage up your wound. Come in, lie on the chair and watch TV. I will do all housework".



*The child might interpret his or her parents' reaction as:* there is no need to do anything now. I don't need to learn how to take care of myself; it's my parent's duty.

*The child feels* the pain in the wounded hand but he or she is uncertain what else to feel. While children may enjoy being the centre of attention, cared for and pampered, they may start to feel confused and disappointed when their parents are unable to be with them. They may even grow to resent their parents when they are not there to fulfil their "duty". They may be also become defensive, panicked and ashamed that other children can take care of themselves but they cannot.

### **3. Encouragement, support**

*Parents show the child how to clean the wound and bandage it.* The child's mother says calmly, softly and caringly, "I see you have a wound in your hand. Is it painful? Do you want me to help you to clean the wound and bandage it or can you do it yourself?" Then she holds the child's shoulder to comfort him or her.

*The child interprets his or her mother's reaction as,* "my mother loves me. But I know what I should do and how to do it. I am capable of doing it. I'm not alone, if I need her my mother is willing to help me. I will decide if I need to ask for my mother's help (dependant) or do it myself (independent)".

*The child feels* pain in the wounded hand but confident, comforted, cared for and secure. The accident has become a learning opportunity, allowing the child to mature and develop his or her own responses.

Three different reactions lead to three different impacts. The final one – encouragement and support is the most useful for childhood development.





# Activity: Practising encouragement skills 1

**Objective**

To practise showing understanding, empathy, acceptance

**Target audience**

Parents, teachers, caregivers and people who are working with children

**Time**

15 minutes

**Method**

Discussion, sharing

**Materials**

Handout "Encouragement skill 1"

## Process

**Step 1  
(5 minutes)**

Divide participants into small groups. Distribute "*Encouragement skill 1*" to each group. Groups discuss and write their answers in the blank space on the handout or on a blank piece of paper.

(If the trainees are quite knowledgeable, you may divide them into 5 groups and ask each of groups to work on a separate skill handout (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) to save time.)

**Step 2  
(5 minutes)**

When finished, ask each group to present their work. Other participants and the trainer can provide questions, comments and add to the suggested solutions where necessary.

**Conclusion  
(5 minutes)**

Adults who are skilled at encouragement usually recognise and assess the individual efforts and achievements of the child, accepting that different children have different abilities (based on *Suggested Knowledge 4*, point 1).



## Activity: *Practising encouragement skills 2*

**Objective**

To practise focusing on strengths and contributions

**Target audience**

Parents, teachers, caregivers and people who are working with children

**Time**

15 minutes

**Method**

Discussion, sharing

**Material s**

Handout “Encouragement skill 2”

### Process

**Step 1**  
**(5 minutes)**

Divide participants into small groups. Distribute Handout “*Encouragement skill 2*” to each group. Groups discuss and write their answers on the blank space below the situation.

**Step 2**  
**(5 minutes)**

When finished, ask each group to present their work. Other participants and the trainer can provide questions, comments and add to the suggested solutions where necessary.

**Conclusion**  
**(5 minutes)**

Instead of trying to find children’s mistakes, parents and teachers should focus on the strengths and individual value of each child, exploring the capacity and positive behaviour of the child (based on *Suggested Knowledge 4*, point 2).



## Activity: Practising encouragement skills 3



### Objective

To practise finding positive points and developing alternatives of the same situation



### Target audience

Parents, teachers, caregivers and people who are working with children



### Time

15 minutes



### Method

Discussion, sharing



### Materials

Handout "Encouragement skill 3"

## Process

### Step 1 (5 minutes)

Divide participants into small groups. Distribute each group a Handout "*Encouragement skill 3*". Groups discuss and write their answers in the blank space below each situation.

### Step 2 (5 minutes)

When finished, ask each group to present their work. Other participants and the trainer can provide questions, comments and add to the suggested solutions where necessary.

### Conclusion (5 minutes)

When children make mistakes, adults can stress the positive points and assess their mistakes as an opportunity for learning and change (based on *Suggested knowledge 4*, point 3).



## Activity: *Practising encouragement skills 4*

**Objective**

To practice focusing on improvement and progress

**Target audience**

Parents, teachers, caregivers and people who are working with children

**Time**

15 minutes

**Method**

Discussion, sharing

**Materials**

Handout “Encouragement skill 4”

### Process

**Step1**  
**(5 minutes)**

Divide participants into small groups. Distribute Handout “*Encouragement skill 4*” to each group. Groups discuss and write their answers in the blank space below the situation.

**Bước 2**  
**(5 minutes)**

When finished, ask each group to present their work. Other participants and the trainer can provide questions, comments and add to the suggested solutions where necessary.

**Conclusion**  
**(5 minutes)**

Children’s gradual improvements and efforts should be regularly encouraged in order to achieve the final objective (based on *Suggested Knowledge 4*, point 4).



## Activity: Practising encouragement skills 5



### Objective

To understand and practise three styles of parenting (punishment, pampering/permissiveness and encouragement)



### Target audience

Parents, teachers, caregivers and people who are working with children



### Time

20 minutes



### Method

Discussion, presentation/sharing



### Materials

Handout "Comparing punishment with permissiveness and encouragement"

## Process

### Step 1 (8 minutes)

Divide participants into small groups. Distribute Handout "*Comparing punishment with permissiveness and encouragement*" to each group. Groups discuss and write their answers in the blank space below the situation.

### Step 2 (7 minutes)

When finished, ask each group to present their work. Other participants and the trainer can provide questions, comments and add to the suggested solutions where necessary.

### Conclusion (5 minutes)

Three different reactions lead to three different impacts. The final one – encouragement and support - is the most useful for childhood development. (Based on *Suggested Knowledge 4*, point 5).







# Handouts

## Discouragement and lack of motivation

### **Situation**

***Tuan, a 13-year-old boy, is often the reserve player in the school football team and has been allowed few opportunities to actually play. Last semester's school report shows Tuan to have three subjects where he sits below average. His remaining subjects sit just five or six points above average. Tuan feels very depressed both on the football ground and in classroom. The gym coach thinks that Tuan is unenthusiastic and does not try hard enough, and most of his teachers have given up on him altogether. His parents also feel frustrated, sad and wonder if there is any way to help him.***

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. Are there many children like Tuan? Boys or girls? In what age group?

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2. Why does Tuan feel so depressed?

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3. What differentiates a confident, motivated child from an unconfident, unmotivated child?

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# Adults' reinforcement behaviours

## Situation

**Huong, a 5-year-old girl, was playing alone while her mother was taking rest and reading some newspapers in the next room. After a while, Huong felt bored and started crying and trying to attract her mother's attention, so her mother brought Huong some comics and read with her. When Huong stopped crying, her mother went back to her room to relax. Huong then cried again and her mother brought her a biscuit to stop her crying. The mother had a decreasing amount of time to relax as Huong repeatedly asked for her mother's care and attention.**



## Questions for discussion:

1. What behaviour was strengthened by Huong's mother?

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2. What has Huong learnt from her mother's behaviour?

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## Adults' reinforcement behaviours (full version)

### **Situation**

**Huong, a 5-year-old girl, was playing alone while her mother was taking rest and reading some newspapers in the next room. After a while, Huong felt bored and started crying and trying to attract her mother's attention, so her mother brought Huong some comics and read with her. When Huong stopped crying, her mother went back to her room to relax. Huong then cried again and her mother brought her a biscuit to stop her crying. The mother had a decreasing amount of time to relax as Huong repeatedly asked for her mother's care and attention.**

### **Note**

**The mother is the main reason that Huong continues to cry and misbehave. When Huong played obediently alone, she didn't do anything. Instead, she rewarded her with comics, biscuits and her attention when Huong did not play alone. An alternative is that the mother should give Huong some rewards such as comics or biscuits when she plays alone. Gradually, the mother will have to entertain Huong less and she will learn how to entertain herself and the mother will have more time to relax.**



# Differences between encouragement and praise

## **Situation**

***Vinh is a 5-year-old boy in preschool. Each week, when Vinh receives a card from his school for being good, his grandfather shows that he is very pleased and gives Vinh 5,000 dong***

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. According to you, what is good about the grandfather's behaviour? What is bad? Why?

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2. One Friday, Vinh received four cards for being good. If you were his grandfather, how would you feel and what would you do?

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# Encouragement skill 1

## **Situation**

***Tuan, a nine-year-old boy, studies hard but received a very low mark in the mid-term examination.***

***Pretend you are Tuan's parent or teacher.***

1. Give some reactions that are discouraging:

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2. Give some reactions that are encouraging (showing understanding, empathy, acceptance).

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## Encouragement skill 2

### **Situation**

***Hung, a 12-year-old boy, acknowledges his mistake at school (he opened his book during an examination and was criticised in front of the class) and has amended his behaviour.***



***Pretending you were Hung's parent or teacher:***

1. Give some reactions that are discouraging:

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2. Give some reactions that are encouraging (focusing on strengths, improvement and effort):

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## Encouragement skill 3

### **Situation**

***Binh, a 16-year-old boy, smokes and drinks alcohol with close friends, then causes trouble. The community leader has called him in.***

***Pretend you are Binh's parent or teacher:***

1. Give some reactions that are discouraging:

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2. Give some reactions that are encouraging (finding positive points and recognising the different ways of looking at the situation:

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## Encouragement skill 4

### **Situation**

***Huong, a 14-year-old girl, has tried to improve her school result this semester but the results are not good as she hoped.***

***Pretend you are Huong's parent or teacher:***

1. Give some reactions that are discouraging:

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2. Give some reactions that are encouraging (focusing on her improvement and effort):

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# Comparing punishment, permissiveness and encouragement

## **Situation card**

***A child comes home with a wide and bloody wound on his or her hand.***

1. According to you, what might his or her parents say and do? (Try to give as many suggestions as possible)

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2. If you were his or her parents, what would you do? Why?

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3. How does the child interpret the reactions of his or her parents and what does he or she feel?

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# Comparing punishment, permissiveness and encouragement (for reference)

## 1. Punishment

### *Parents don't care about the child's wound*

They say something like, "stop whimpering or I will really give you something to cry about." The parents shout at the child and shake him or her to show their anger.

### *The child interprets the parents' reaction as,*

"my needs are not important. They hate me. I don't deserve their love".

### *The child feels*

Pain in the wounded hand and also in his or her heart and mind. He or she may feel scared, isolated, disappointed or ashamed.

## 2. Permissiveness/over-protection

### *The mother rushes to the child. Perhaps the father and grandparents also come running.*

The mother cries: "Oh my goodness, you must be in so much pain. Come in, I will bandage up your wound. Come in, lie on the chair and watch TV. I will do all housework".

### *The child might interpret his or her parents' reaction as:*

There is no need to do anything now. I don't need to learn how to take care of myself, it's my parent's duty.

### *The child feels*

the pain in the wounded hand, but he or she is uncertain what else to feel. While children may enjoy being the centre of attention, cared for and pampered, they may start to feel confused and disappointed when their parents are unable to be with them. They may even grow to resent their parents when they are not there to fulfil their "duty". They may also become defensive, panicked and ashamed that other children can take care of themselves but they cannot.



### ***3. Encouragement, support***

Parents show the child how to clean the wound and bandage it.

The child's mother says calmly, softly and caringly, "I see you have a wound in your hand. Is it painful? Do you want me to help you to clean the wound and bandage it or can you do it yourself?" Then she holds the child's shoulder to comfort him or her.

***The child interprets his or her mother's reaction as,***

"My mother loves me. But I know what I should do and how to do it. I am capable of doing it. I'm not alone; if I need her my mother is willing to help me. I will decide if I need to ask for my mother's help (dependant) or do it myself (independent)".

***The child feels***

Pain in the wounded hand but confident, comforted, cared for and secure. The accident has become a learning opportunity, allowing the child to mature and develop his or her own responses.