

**DUDLEY GRANT FAMILY LIFE SUPPORT AND LIFE SKILLS
JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND – JAVA PROJECT**

Evaluation Report on the Parenting Programme

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Background:

The project is prevention at the early childhood level and intervention at the parenting level. It seeks to decrease the youth involvement in crime and violence through the parenting and skills training programme. Children are getting involved in crime and violence from as early as 7 years as they are on the streets from this young age. Abuse and neglect from parents and caregivers are two major contributors of this. By working with the parents we seek to decrease the abuse and be one step closer to lowering the crime and violence statistics because our youths will be able to make better decisions. The project also seeks to reach the adolescents - age 15 to 18 years, as well, as it targeted parents who have children at this age. The project gave parents new ways of communicating with their child/children and helped them to understand their role in the development of their child/children.

The project worked with approximately 900 parents (600 mothers and 300 fathers) in five (5) communities - Olympic Gardens in St. Andrew, Paisley Settlement and Juno Crescent in Clarendon, and Gordon Pen and Irish Pen in St. Catherine. The project also worked with teachers in the ECIs in the communities. They were trained as 'Trainers' and therefore continue to work with new parents after the project is completed. The project targeted parents who are (1) unemployed, (2) abusive or neglect their children, (3) have children with behaviour problems, (4) have children enrolled in the basic schools and have adolescents between the age 13 to 18 years (4) are themselves or their children involved/victims in crime and violence.

Objective:

The objective of the evaluation was to determine the impact of the parenting training on the parents.

Methodology:

The evaluation process was as follows:

- Instruments were developed to capture the information from the parents, teachers and trainers (attached)
- Parents who attended the training sessions were randomly selected from each community and invited to attend a focus group session. A total of two (2) to three (3) focus groups were held in each community.
- A sample of teachers was selected in each community to complete a questionnaire on what they have observed differently with the parents and children after training.
- The trainers were given a questionnaire to complete based on their observation during training.

Data Analysis:

Narrative:

The evaluators visited all five communities in which the parenting workshops were held and facilitated a total of eight (8) focus groups with parents. The parents were very willing to share what they had learnt and how it has improved their understanding of child development and the relationship they have with their children and others in the community. The parents who attended the focus groups received the training from September to December 2010 so they had been using the information learnt over a period of four (4) months. There were a total of 141 parents in attendance - 133 mothers and 8 fathers. Questionnaires were given to the three (3) trainers to record their observations of the parents during and after training and the impact the training had them. Questionnaires were also given to thirteen (13) teachers for them to record their observations of children of parents who were trained, noting differences in the children's behaviour in the classroom.

Parent Focus Groups:

Question 1 What have you learned from the parenting program?

Things Parents Learned
How to handle tantrums
How to love their child/children
Not to be aggressive towards children – punish, not hit
Communicate with the baby from it is in the womb by reading etc.
Allow child/children to sing as they are expressing what they learnt at school
How child/children develop their motor skills
How to make toys instead of buying expensive ones
How to be a better parent – how to communicate and understand my child better
Playing is a child's work – allow children to play it is their job
How to handle my stress and anger
It is important for fathers to be involved in the child's life
The developmental stages and the importance of proper nutrition.
When a child is born they have over a billion brain cells and as they grow up we lose most of them
Not to tell the child any bad words
How to communicate by listening to the children
How to have patience with your child
How to help child resolve conflicts by talking to them and showing this is the right way and this is the wrong way
How parents should be good role models and set the example because children are watching what you are doing and repeating what you are doing without you even recognizing it
Beating is a form of punishment that should not be done in anger and should be a last resort.
Parents need to be one step ahead of the child and learn their behaviours because children have distinct personalities by age two and sometimes try to outsmart parents
Spend time listening to them because it is important – take 15 minutes out of day reading to children
Learnt to allow child to help fix breakfast - giving him responsibility
Do things with children – monitor their behavior as child is adapting different behavior

Basic needs of children to be provided – food, clothing and shelter
The brain development – billion brain cells and how synapses take place
To care for other people’s children
Learnt the different types of crying and to know when to take action e.g. took grandchild to doctor after noticing certain cries – baby had belly pains
Learnt how to have fun with children
Not every time children misbehave they are rude, they want attention
Parents should not argue in front of children
Children who grow up in a stable home are more likely to go to college and less likely to go to jail or get pregnant early
How to resolve a conflict – role play was very effective
Playing games show the parents that children learn while they are playing
Playing helps to develop children’s muscles
How to talk to children with respect
Parents should teach children to express themselves – e.g. I am upset, I am happy
Parents must show love to both boys and girls the same
Children learn differently and how to deal with each child
Learnt that even if children are unable to speak, we can observe their body language and be more attentive
Learnt to teach the children to make good choices
Learnt to wait until calm before punishing children and alternate ways of discipline
Learnt that the children can also have anger problems and anger management can help them
Recognize when the child is undergoing stress
Learnt that children learn by asking questions
It is never too early to start stimulating the brain – should start stimulating early
The brain is not fully develop until age 8
Learnt that if we take up the children when crying we are not spoiling them
Learnt that children can be disciplined without roughing them
Parents must always try to have bond with child and try to make child feel safe
Parents should try to have family time together and share how each is doing – how the day went

Question 2 What difference has this training made in your child/children’s life?

Differences noted in child/children
Children are communicating more freely with parent
Children now spend more time with parent because parent is patient and listening.
Parents try not to get angry as often with children anymore and children realize and they themselves act more calmly
Children want to play more with the parents
Parent and child talk to each other rather than shout at each other
Children requesting parent to read book to them more frequently. The child uses books as comfort zone
The children’s self esteem is being developed because parent is rewarding good behaviour
Children learnt how to share with peers by parents modeling it at home
Children more confident to talk to parent about relationships because they are not afraid that the

parent is going to beat them
Children are doing better with following instructions given by parents and teachers
Child is more talkative and asking more questions – opened communication
Children are sharing what they learnt at school
Child is more open at school and doing better in school – less shy
Children share more with parents
Children come around parents more as they are calmer
Child gives more love, kisses and hugs, because mother shows him more love
Child is giving mother more attention – e.g. he would ask ‘What is wrong?’
Child is writing a lot more, reading a lot of books and teaching her dolls
Young children go for books for mother to read to them since training
Child is learning more now that parents spend more time with him
Older child had anger management problems and parent share information from the training now sees positive changes in the older child’s behaviour
By using songs, child is learning letters/words
Child now shares more readily with mother
Child is more disciplined
Child is sharing with other children – what his parents explained to him ‘is not good to say’

Question 3 What difference has the training made in your life?

Differences noted in their behaviour
Now listen to their children no matter how long the conversation is because what they have to say is important
Trying to handle built up anger by not allowing it to build up – talk about things
Trying not to get angry and walk away
Balances time better – sets time to spend with children – they are close now as a family
Used to get upset a lot after talking with baby father and would take it out on child – now tries not to get angry with father in front of child
Mother accepting of her estranged partner to be a part of his daughter’s life
Now more patient with child even when he is slow with activities
Calmer and can deal with situations better
More communicative with children
Tell children that they love them more often
Now beginning to listen to husband
Responds more positively to mother-in-law and tries to avoid her – before training she would be upset with her
Listen to child more even if it is at bed time
Self confident increased– parent was not confident that she could deal with child and issues so she usually pushed them away – now she spend the time to listen
Keep a journal to relieve stress
Because Mom is now listening, child does not have to repeat what she was saying so she is now less annoying
Child needs Mom to do homework with her then she will play
Parent beginning to understand child better
Parent don’t beat so readily

Parent take time to listen to child who stutters – even though it takes long
Parent more attentive to children usually tell them to go and sit down but now allows them to talk
Self esteem has increased
Improved on time management since training
Improve on giving love and affection
Started making charts and word cards for child
Talks with child more and doesn't get angry so easily - does not snap at child anymore. Beats less
Spends more leisure time with children
Parent now buys DVDs with cartoons for child instead of DVDs for adults
Parent conducted “Your Issues Live” sessions at home and discussed issues with children
Parent now better understands what the child is thinking

Question 4 What difference has the training made in your family's life?

Differences noted in their family
Parent now talks freely with family members shares information with family
The shouting matches between family members are limited
Parent shares information learnt with others in and out of the family and support each other
Parent now shares information with baby father and he is getting involved in the decision making
Parent has not seen any change in her grandmother after her training – too old to change
Parent now thinks before acting
Children are more obedient
Parent show more love in the family
Husband reminds her to be calm as he is the one who got the training – they work together
She and her sister usually quarrel so now she is trying to be kind to her sister even though it is hard
Family doing things together more and compromising more on issues and activities. This helped to build the relationship
Parent usually quarrels with husband because he is not working. Now she does not curse about it, she has more peace of mind and learnt how to handle the situation
Family members who had the training now cares for each others' children since the training
Family is more involved in child's home work
Father starts helping with child more because mother shares training information with father
Parent is spending more time with children therefore they make less noise and staying in the yard more
Bigger children were too attached to parent. Parent show them how to be independent and they are making more decisions on their own
Sharing information from training with co-workers who are using the information
Parent helping to take care of nieces and nephews after training.
Now sharing information at PTA
Shared with parents in the community about importance of school and now child goes to school while before the training child did not to go to school
Shares information with baby mother and decide on who to do what and when with child – now working together better to raise child
Relationships within the family is more stable

Suggestions from Parents:

1. More training be provided
2. During the workshops parents got to know each other better and now support each other
3. Role play was very good and effective
4. Other parents should be included from the community
5. Workshop was too short.

Trainers Response:

The trainers were asked to answer six (6) questions on their observation of the parents during training. Below is a summary of the answers.

1. What are the parents understanding of child development?

The understanding are: “Development of skills and attitudes and how to deal with a child”; “The physical and mental growth of the child”; “The way in which you care, attend to and support a child”; “Stages in which the child takes to develop body and mind”; “Development from the womb, stage by stage and step by step”.

2. What is the relationship between parents and children?

Parents are on the whole more caring, willing to listen and encourage their children. Children approach parents more, asking more questions and telling them ‘stuff’ much more than before.

3. What is the parenting role?

Parents are now more adult like in their behavior in terms of supervision, giving advice and being more responsible and responsive.

4. What changes are observed in the children?

As parents respond more to them in positive ways there appears to be a reduction in their inappropriate behaviours. They seem to be a little bit more obedient to their parents.

5. What changes are observed in the parents?

Parents appear to be more considerate, shout less at the children, listen more and generally tend to be less stressed as a result.

6. Do you see an enhanced status of the mothers/women? If yes, explain.

Yes, mothers/women now have a better understanding of their role as parents, especially as single mothers. They now realize the responsibility that they have in terms of nurturing, caring for, encouraging and socializing/educating their children in a positive way.

Teachers Response:

Some teachers of the Early Childhood Institutions whose parents attended the workshops were asked to comment on their observation of any changes in behaviour in both the children and parents since the training. Below is a summary of the responses.

1. What are the parents understanding of child development?

Parents stated that:

- a) They are better able to deal with their children.
- b) They now understand the different stages of development.
- c) They understood that how they interact with their children have an impact on their children's behaviour.
- d) Spending more time and being patient help with the children's growth and development.
- e) Children must get adequate sleep, physical activities, nourishment to enhance growth.
- f) Children develop not only physically but mentally and emotionally.
- g) Child development is the enhancement of the child's ability in areas of communication, growth, socialization and wellness.

2. What is the relationship between parents and children?

Parents are:

- a) More responsive to the needs of their children.
- b) Experiencing improved relationship with their children.
- c) More open with expression of love, they hug they children more at school.
- d) Communicating more with their children.
- e) Understanding children better and do not get upset with behaviour that use to upset them before training.
- f) More tolerant of their children.
- g) Listening more to their children.

3. What changes are observed in the children?

Children are:

- a) Given more nutritious snacks/food.
- b) Are taking a hot meal for lunch more regularly.
- c) Attending school more regularly.
- d) Much calmer and more responsive in class.
- e) More dedicated to their school work and eager to learn.
- f) More open and easier to work with.
- g) More confident.
- h) Doing better in their classwork.

4. What changes are observed in the parents?

Parents are:

- a) More knowledgeable about the importance of play in their children's life and therefore complain less about children playing too much at school.
- b) Dressed more appropriately
- c) Turning out for P.T.A. meetings more.
- d) Showing more interest in their children's welfare and school activities.
- e) More involved in their children's life.
- f) Taken a different approach in the development of their children.

5. Do you see an enhanced status of the mothers/women? If yes, explain.

Mothers are:

- a) Trying to seek employment.
- b) More interested in trying to upgrade their education.
- c) Trying to equip themselves with gaining a skill.
- d) More reliable and focus
- e) Moving towards being a better parent and to play a more active role in their children's life. A holistic approach.

Limitations:

In order to conduct the focus group discussions for the evaluation of the project, a sample of parents, both mothers and fathers, were invited to attend. It proved challenging to attract the fathers. Two reasons for this are firstly, the time of the discussion clashed with work hours and secondly, some were not interested. However, the few fathers who attended were very vocal and participated fully demonstrating that they were happy for the training and took their parenting roles seriously.

Conclusion:

The results of the evaluation exercise indicated that transfer of knowledge and understanding of the material presented at the workshops took place with the parents who attended the workshops. The parents stated that they were using the information that was presented at the workshops and this was evident in the classroom as the teachers were able to observe the results in the children's behaviour. There has been overall improvement in the relationship that the parents have with their children (from birth to adolescent). There has been an improvement in communication between the parents and their children and the parents are less aggressive towards their children when disciplining them. As a result of this the children are learning to be less aggressive and they are learning alternative ways of handling conflict. It is believed that this behaviour pattern will result in these children choosing to deal with conflicts in a positive way as they get older rather than getting involved in crime and violence.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

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Evaluation of Impact – Parenting Training Program

Focus Groups Questions –

- a) What have you learned from the parenting program?
- b) Name three (3) things you have learnt from the parenting program.
- c) What difference has this training made in your child/children's life? Has anything changed?
- d) What difference has the training made in your life? Has anything changed?
- e) What difference has the training made in your family's life? Has anything changed?

Appendix 2

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Evaluation of Impact – Parenting Training Program

Impact Questions for Teachers

Please answer these questions based on your knowledge of what the parents said and/or what you observed as a result of the training.

1. What are the parents understanding of child development?

2. What is the relationship between parents and children?

3. What changes are observed in the children?

4. What changes are observed in the parents?

5. Do you see an enhanced status of the mothers/women? If yes, explain.

Appendix 3

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Evaluation of Impact – Parenting Training Program

Impact Questions for Trainers

Please answer these questions based on your knowledge of what the parents said and/or the community members observed as a result of the training.

1. What are the parents understanding of child development?

2. What is the relationship between parents and children?

3. What is the parenting role?

4. What changes are observed in the children?

5. What changes are observed in the parents?

6. Do you see an enhanced status of the mothers/women? If yes, explain.
