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STEP by STEP
ASSOCIATION



SUPPORTING FAMILIES FOR NURTURING CARE

RESOURCE MODULES FOR HOME VISITORS





The resource modules were authored by the individuals listed below under the guidance of the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the International Step by Step Association.

The text presented is expected to be adapted and contextualized for use by interested countries. For this reason the material has not been edited to official publication standards. UNICEF and ISSA accept no responsibility for errors.

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Overall leadership and direction:

- Deepa Grover, Senior Advisor, Early Childhood Development, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
- Liana Ghent, Executive Director International Step by Step Association (ISSA)

Coordination and Editing:

- Bettina Schwethelm, Young Child Health and Development Specialist, Director, MCH-ECD
- Zorica Trikic, Senior Program Manager, ISSA

Lead Authors:

Trainer guide for home visitors:

- Dawn Tankersley, Program Specialist, ISSA
- Zorica Trikic, Senior Program Manager, ISSA

Module 1 – The early childhood years – a time of endless opportunities

- Alessandra Schneider, CONASS – Conselho Nacional de Secretários de Saúde, Brazil
- Deepa Grover, Senior Advisor – ECD, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Module 2 – The new role of the home visitor

- Karen Whittaker, Senior Lecturer, University of Central Lancashire, Fellow of the Institute of Health Visiting

Module 3 – IMCI, IYCF, AND CARE FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT existing WHO and UNICEF material

Module 4 – Falling in love – promoting parent-child attachment

- Cecilia Breinbauer, Child and Adolescent Developmental Psychiatrist and Public Health Expert, RISE Institute, U.S.

Module 5 -Engaging fathers

- Adrienne Burgess, Joint Chief Executive & Head of Research, Fatherhood Institute UK

Module 6 – The art of parenting – Love, talk, play, read

- Dawn Tankersley, Program Specialist, ISSA
- Zorica Trikic, Senior Program Manager, ISSA

Module 7 – Parental wellbeing

- Bettina Schwethelm, Young Child Health and Development Specialist, Director, MCH-ECD

Module 8 – Common parenting concerns

- Dawn Tankersley, Program Specialist, ISSA

Module 9 – Home environment and safety

- Joanne Vincenten, Past Director, European Child Safety Alliance
- Zorica Trikic, Senior Program Manager, ISSA

Module 10 – Caring and Empowering – Enhancing Communication Skills for Home Visitors

- Priti Desai, Assistant Professor Child Development and Family Relations, East Carolina University, U.S.

Module 11 – Working Against Stigma and Discrimination – Promoting Equity, Inclusion and Respect for Diversity

- Zorica Trikic, Senior Program Manager, ISSA
- Dawn Tankersley, Program Specialist, ISSA

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- Module 12 – Children who Develop Differently – Children with Disabilities or Developmental Difficulties
- Marta Ljubescic, Department of Speech and Language Pathology, University of Zagreb, Croatia
 - Bettina Schwethelm, Young Child Health and Development Specialist, Director, MCH-ECD
- Module 13 – Developmental Monitoring and Screening
- Bettina Schwethelm, Young Child Health and Development Specialist, Director, MCH-ECD
 - Marta Ljubescic, Department of Speech and Language Pathology, University of Zagreb, Croatia
- Module 14 – Keeping Young Children Free from Violence, Abuse and Neglect
- Andrea Goddard, Honorary Senior Lecturer, Department of Medicine, Imperial College, UK
 - Zorica Trikic, Senior Program Manager, ISSA
- Module 15 – Working with Other Services
- Svetlana Mladenovic Jankovic, Assistant Director of the Institute of Public Health of Belgrade, Serbia
 - Emily Vargas Baron, Director, the RISE Institute, U.S.
- Module 16 – Responsive Feeding
- Dr. Genevieve Becker, PhD., IBCLC, MINDI, Registered Dietitian and International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant
- Module 17 – Supervision – Supporting Professionals and Enhancing Service Quality
- Karen Whittaker, Senior Lecturer, University of Central Lancashire, Fellow of the Institute of Health Visiting
 - Catherine Anne Coucill, Lecturer: Family, Community and Public Health, School of Community Health and Midwifery, University of Central Lancashire
- Module 18 – Gender Socialisation and Gender Dynamics in Families – the Role of the Home Visitor
- Elizabeth Doggett, M.A., public health professional, consultant in the area of gender equality, and technical officer in the research utilization team at FHI 360
 - Ivana Mihic, PhD, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad and supervisor of the Center for Support for Early Development and Family Relations “Harmony”, Novi Sad
 - Jelena Brankovic, Family therapist, Coordinator of the Center for Support for Early Development and Family Relations “Harmony”, Novi Sad
- Module 19 – Early Childhood Education
- Zorica Trikic, Senior Program Manager, ISSA
 - Dawn Tankersley, Program Specialist, ISSA
- Module 20 – Healthy weight physical activity and sedentary time
- Bettina Schwethelm, Young Child Health and Development Specialist, Director, MCH-ECD
- Module 21 – The Care of Small and Sick Newborns
- Bettina Schwethelm, Young Child Health and Development Specialist, Director, MCH-ECD
- Module 22 – Protecting young children from vaccine preventable diseases
- Bettina Schwethelm, Young Child Health and Development Specialist, Director, MCH-ECD

Contributors:

- Deepa Grover, Senior Advisor – ECD, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
- Ilgi Ertem, Professor, Head, Developmental Pediatrics Unit, Ankara Medical School, Turkey
- Roopa Srinivasan, Developmental Pediatrician UNMEED Child Development Center, Mumbai, India Cheryll Adams, Founding Director of the Institute of Health Visiting, UK
- Maha Muna, Regional Gender Advisor, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECARO)
- Jane Fisher, Professor, Monash School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Melbourne, Australia
- Kevin Browne, Professor, Centre for Forensic and Family Psychology, University of Nottingham Medical School, UK

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- Maia Kherkheulidze, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Tbilisi State Medical University, Director, Child Development Center, Georgia
- Morag MacKay, Past Programme Manager, European Child Safety Alliance
- Obi Amadi, Lead Professional Officer, UNITE/CPHVA Health Sector, UK
- Olivera Aleksic-Hil, Child Psychiatry Specialist, Institute for Mental Health, Serbia
- Pauline Watts, Lead Nurse for Quality, Public Health England, UK
- Aleksei Sergeevic Pockailo, Department of Ambulatory Pediatrics, Belarusian Medical Academy of Post Diploma Education

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INTRODUCTION

Global commitment to promoting comprehensive young child health and development has increased exponentially over the recent years.

Over the past decades, neuro-science and child development research have identified what newborns and young children need to survive, thrive, and lead healthy and productive lives. In May 2018, this critical body of scientific knowledge was brought together and used to develop the *Nurturing Care Framework* by WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank and other partners. Compelling and robust scientific evidence was translated into 5 easily understandable and mutually supporting components that are essential for children to thrive:

- Good health
- Adequate nutrition
- Opportunities for early learning
- Responsive caregiving, and
- Security and safety

To survive, thrive and reach their developmental potential, infants and young children need all 5 components of the Nurturing Care wheel. The components are not additive, but indivisible and synergistic, supporting and enhancing each other.

See more at: <https://nurturing-care.org/>

At the same time, compelling research findings have demonstrated that home visiting programs can increase parental well-being and parenting efficacy, as well as child outcomes. This has led to a number of middle and high-income countries (e.g. in the Americas, Europe and Asia) to establish and strengthen home visiting services. Additionally, recent global and regional reports of the World Health Organization on child maltreatment have identified home visiting services as a promising strategy to address child maltreatment, which is recognized as a major public health problem.

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

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

The resource package for home visitors “Supporting Families for Nurturing Care” constitutes a growing set of training modules. Its purpose is to improve home visitors’ and other professionals’ **knowledge** of the key components of Nurturing Care and strengthen their **skills** to work with families to enable and empower them to provide the best start to their children. Each of the modules responds to one or more components of Nurturing Care and builds capacity and skills needed by the home visitor to provide supportive home visits. In addition, each module aims to help home visitors reflect on professional attitudes and strengthen practices to engage inclusively and respectfully with diverse families with different needs and challenges.

INTRO

The modules have been developed by UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) and International Step by Step Association (ISSA) in partnership by well-known experts through a consultative process. The modules can be translated and adapted to different country contexts and used to support a variety of professionals working with families and children. In some countries, the modules have already become a mainstay of lifelong learning and continuing professional development for health care workers and social service providers engaged in promoting the comprehensive wellbeing of young children and their families.

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



Deepa Grover

Senior Advisor, Early Childhood Development
UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia



Liana Ghent

Executive Director
International Step by Step Association (ISSA)

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE RESOURCE MODULES

UNICEF/ISSA “Supporting Families for Nurturing Care” resource modules training package support different components of Nurturing Care and cover topics that are not routinely a part of pre-service or in-service nursing and medical education in the region.



Knowledge	Skills
<p>Module 1. The Early Childhood Years – A Time of Endless Opportunities</p> <p>Module 7. Parental Wellbeing</p> <p>Module 11. Working Against Stigma and Discrimination – Promoting Equity, Inclusion and Respect for Diversity</p> <p>Module 12. Children Who Develop Differently – Children with Disabilities or Developmental Difficulties</p> <p>Module 18. Gender Socialisation and Gender Dynamics in Families – The Role of the Home Visitor</p> <p>Module 19. Early Childhood Education Programmes</p>	<p>Module 2. The New Role of the Home Visitor</p> <p>Module 10. Caring and Empowering – Enhancing Communication Skills for Home Visitors</p> <p>Module 13. Developmental Monitoring and Screening</p> <p>Module 15. Working with Other Services</p> <p>Module 17. Supervision – Supporting Professionals and Enhancing Service Quality</p>

The purpose of the resource modules is to contribute to building well-trained, respectful, sensitive and family centred home visitors promoting comprehensive young child health, development and wellbeing in the natural environment of the home and strengthening parenting competencies and family resilience.

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

TARGET AUDIENCE

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

HOW TO USE THE RESOURCE MODULES

The resource modules from the Supporting Families for Nurturing Care training package do not constitute a “stand-alone” course for home visitors, but complement existing education and training materials that are already provided in the medical and nursing schools or are available in other well-tested training formats, including for this cadre of professionals *Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI)*, *Babyfriendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI)*, *Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF)*, and *Care for Child Development (CCD)*. Delivery of the training is informed by **adult learning principles** and therefore provide ample opportunities for the learner to be actively engaged in reflection and guidance on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices that home visitors need in their “new” role of working in partnership with families to support parents and caregivers and empower them to provide the nurturing care.

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

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

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

SUMMARY OF MODULES

Module	Key contents	Tools
Module 1: Early Childhood – A Time of Endless Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the critical importance of the early years for child development and lifelong wellbeing, health, and achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 2: The New Role of the Home Visitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the vision for new and more comprehensive role for the home visitors Explains the skills and support needed for this new role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information cards on new practices, self-reflection Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 3: Infant and Young Child Health and Nutrition	Already existing training materials (IMCI, IYCF, Care for Child Development)	
Module 4: Falling in Love – Promoting Parent-Child Attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes the importance of attachment for development Provides information on how home visitors can support the development of secure attachments Information cards on promotional interviewing with families and ways of building secure attachments at different stages of development Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information cards on promotional interviewing with families and ways of building secure attachments at different stages of development Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 5: Engaging Fathers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence for the impact of positive father involvement on child development Shares tested approaches that home visitors can use to engage fathers more effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information cards on ways to reaching fathers and involving them in child development Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 6: The Art of Parenting: Love, Talk, Play, Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains how loving, talking to, playing with, and reading to infants and young children affect their development Provides basic information and tips on how to help parents in using these positive parenting skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information cards on ways to reaching fathers and involving them in child development Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 7: Parental Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the impact of perinatal mental illness on child development. Gives the home visitors information and tools to identify, support, and refer parents with perinatal mental health concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides screening tools and approaches Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
Module 8: Common Parenting Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses common parenting concerns related to sleeping, crying, toileting and the use of positive discipline that the home visitor will encounter in daily visits. Provides practical advice the home visitor can share with the caregivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information sheets of special topics with concrete suggestions the home visitor can discuss with caregivers on various parenting concerns. Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials

<p>Module 9: Home Environment and Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides information about the most common unintentional injuries during the early years. • Provides practical advice for education families on reducing unintentional injuries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides practical information about the prevention of common injuries and the correct first response. • Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
<p>Module 10: Caring and Empowering – Enhancing Communication Skills for Home Visiting Personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces good communication practices. • Gives concrete examples how home visitors can improve communications skills to engage families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides tools for home visitor to assess and improve communication skills. • Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
<p>Module 11: Working Against Stigma and Discrimination – Promoting Equity, Inclusion, and Respect for Diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows how stereotypes, stigma and discrimination make the home visitor less effective when working with caregivers and families, particularly those that are often marginalized by society. • Helps home visitors to reflect on their own biases and stereotypes in the context of life-long learning and self-improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes exercises for the home visitor to reflect on personal biases, stereotypes and stigma that can affect work with vulnerable groups. • Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials
<p>Module 12: Children who Develop Differently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains why some children develop differently. • Emphasizes the importance of the family and family relationships when supporting children with developmental difficulties. • Explains about new approaches, i.e., “teaming around the child” and the “routines-based approach” to more effectively support this group of children and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists additional websites that provide information on supporting children with developmental difficulties and their families.
<p>Module 13: Developmental Monitoring and Screening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains the concepts of developmental monitoring, screening, and assessment. • Provides information about basic monitoring tools that can be used in the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides access to additional websites, print and audiovisual materials
<p>Module 14: Keeping Young Children Safe from Violence, Abuse and Neglect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides evidence on the impact of abuse, neglect and abandonment on child outcomes. • Explains the role of the home visitor with respect to prevention, identification of risk, referral and collaboration with other sectors to support vulnerable families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides visual aids and decision-making tools, as well as indicators of abuse and neglect. • Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials.
<p>Module 15: Working with Other Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the rationale for collaborating with other sectors for the wellbeing of vulnerable young children and their families. • Supports the development of interdisciplinary collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides practical tools for interdisciplinary and cross sector collaboration for vulnerable families. • Provides access to additional print and audiovisual materials.

Module 16: Responsive feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence on the lifelong benefits of responsive feeding during the first years of life. Explains how to use the responsive feeding skills in each stage of child's early life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides practical tools and tips to engage parents in responsive feeding. Provides exercises for the home visitor to put in practice during home visits.
Module 17: Supervision – Supporting Professionals and Enhancing Service Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the importance of services supervision at different levels. Explains how “supervision” can be a guiding and be of help to deliver an appropriate service for families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides guidelines to conduct supervision sessions. Provides access to additional printable tools.
Module 18: Gender Socialisation and Gender Dynamics in Families – the Role of the Home Visitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the principles of gender equality, gender balanced parenting and how to address it with parents/ caregivers. Explain gender vulnerabilities and gender-based violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides case studies, examples, audiovisual materials and exercises to support the understanding of gender issues, gender balanced and gender-sensitive parenting.
Module 19: Early Childhood Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the importance of early learning and the impact that high-quality ECEC programmes, responsive to children's and families' needs and focused on play-based learning contribute to child holistic development. Addresses common parenting concerns and misconceptions about ECEC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence, as well as reflections, practical tips, audiovisual materials, and exercises to support understanding of the meaning and the importance of early learning and participation in ECEC.
Module 20: Healthy weight physical activity and sedentary time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an understanding of the importance of a healthy weight, developmentally appropriate and necessary levels of activity, and sleep during the first three years of life. Provides practical tips for families of young children to increase their activity levels and support good sleep in young children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence, as well as case studies, practical tips, audiovisual materials and exercises for caregivers to support physical activities and sleep from birth and reduce screen time for improved child health, wellbeing, and learning.
Module 21: The Care of Small and Sick Newborns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides practical approaches to support parents deal with the health, feeding, care and developmental needs of small and/or sick newborns, addressing also the coping and wellbeing needs of the caregivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides practical information, tips, and audiovisual materials for various aspects of care of small and/or sick newborns, as well as ways to support bonding and attachment, and caregiver agency and wellbeing.
Module 22: Protecting young children from vaccine preventable diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains how families make behavioral choices for or against vaccination. Strengthens communication skills to move caregivers that are hesitant or reject vaccines in a respectful and empathic way towards vaccination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides tools and approaches for effective and respectful communication to support caregiver decision to vaccinate, as well as relevant case studies, tip sheets and video clips.



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