

Parenting Training Program



CULTURALLY RELEVANT PARENTING PROGRAM (CRPP)

Cork Migrant Centre (CMC) is committed to advocating on behalf of migrant children, families, carers and communities, and to ensure they have access to the services and supports they need to keep migrant children safe and provide them the best possible opportunities for better developmental outcomes.

Migrant children and young people continue to be over-represented in the Irish child protection system (<https://www.childlawproject.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CCLRP>) requiring a concerted effort from services and the service system more broadly to effectively meet the needs of migrant children, young people, their families and communities. However, while there is a growing focus on investment in evidence-based approaches to achieve meaningful change for children and families across the continuum of support, there is very little in way of effective and innovative migrant led parenting supports and interventions. This program is a starting point in articulating key elements of a culturally embedded and locally tailored parenting support program.



Tusla, the Child & Family Agency define parenting support as “a style of work and a set of activities that provide information, advice and assistance to parents and carers in relation to the upbringing of their children in order to maximize their child’s potential” (Child & Family Agency, 2013, p.9). Department of Children and Youth Affairs defines parenting support to include advice, emotional and practical support, as well as formal support directed at individual parents, children or families (DCYA, 2015). This supports positive parenting that helps to reduce risks and/or promotes protective factors for their children, in relation to their social, physical and emotional wellbeing (p.9). Recommendation REC (2006) of the Council for Europe provides a definition of positive parenting as ensuring the fulfilment of the best interests of the child “that is nurturing, empowering, non-violent and provides recognition and guidance which involves setting boundaries to enable the full development of the child” (Council of Europe, 2006, p.19). Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People highlights the importance of parents in a child’s life and the benefits of positive parenting, while promoting better supports for parents as a priority (DCYA, 2014). CMC’s parenting and education skills program is aligned to these National and International definitions of parenting support.

The program was adapted from an Australian parenting program developed for Sub-Saharan African parents living in Australia by the Spectrum Migrant Resource (SMRC, 2008) to Irish settings. This was done by a multidisciplinary team of two migrants (Dr. Masheti, a Psychologist and Dr. Dalikeni, a Social Worker) from the two partner organizations, the Cork Migrant Centre and Dundalk Institute of Technology that collaborated on this project. The training program utilized a child wellbeing and a child protection lens. Dr. Dalikeni who has expertise in social work (child protection) adapted the training materials for the Social work related topics while Dr. Masheti who has expertise in psychology of migrants adapted the child development related topics. The adapted program aimed at enhancing both effective parenting and relationship skills, in order to help migrant parents raise their children confidently and understand their children’s needs throughout the various developmental stages in the new Irish cultural, social, and educational environments.

In line with the Australian program, the Bavolek & Keene (1999) scale was used prior and will be used three months post intervention to measure changes in five parenting dimensions (a) inappropriate parental expectations (b) inability to demonstrate empathy towards children’s needs (c) strong belief in the use of corporal punishment (d) reversing parent–child family roles and (e) restricting power/independence. The Parenting Skills-Development Education Sessions preventative intervention program covers:

1. Understanding child development and needs
2. Helping the child develop self-confidence
3. Improving children's communication and language
4. Family relations (e.g., effective communication and problem solving)
5. Education pathways for children
6. Legal issues
7. Managing family stress
8. Parenting children and teenagers in a new culture (e.g. issues of autonomy)

The program is targeted at promoting positive change in all four constructs of the Bavolek & Keene (1999) scale:

1. Inappropriate parental expectations: what are the needs and capabilities of children at various stages of growth and development; what tasks children are physically, emotionally, intellectually & socially capable of performing,
2. Inability to demonstrate empathy towards children's needs: sensitivity and positive response to needs, and feelings as opposed to finding them irritating or annoying; how do you support their development including language and communication, confidence, self-esteem, education etc.
3. Strong believe in the use of Corporal punishment: reducing strong belief in the use and value of corporal punishment by up-packing the rationale and offering alternative forms of discipline; an awareness of child protection and welfare and how this relates to use of corporal punishment.
4. Reversing parent-child roles: addressing appropriate parent-child roles; addressing in-appropriateness of parents reliance on children for nurturance & emotional support.
5. Restricting children's power/independence: addressing how demanding children's obedience, compliance and rigid adherence to parental authority relates to oppressing the child's developing independence/autonomy; enhancing parental capacity for negotiation and compromise with their children particularly teenagers; demonstrating how their behaviour affects their children and how the children's behaviour affects the parents behaviour; how change in parents behaviour affects change in children's behaviour and vice-versa.

CRPP adaptation from an Australian intervention was with respect to both content and delivery method. Because the training methodology was learner-centered, participatory, and collaborative the participants acted as co-partners in the adaptation of the training materials to their own contexts including input on parenting in direct provision settings in Ireland. As a result, the adapted Irish Parenting and Education Skills program is emically derived in that it is based on lived experiences of

participants, and due to this contextual embeddedness, it is culturally sensitive, and acceptable to the service users.

The training program was delivered to 35 migrant women, 90% of whom were from direct provision centres in Cork and its environs. The Australian program had a sample of 39 migrant parents which is very close to the Irish sample. For multiplier effect a group of 10 participants undertook a 'train the trainer' course and will be facilitated by the program developers to deliver the training to their own communities.

A graduation and a dissemination event was held on December 14th 2018 at the Mayor Conference Chambers, City Hall, Cork. At the event, 35 women were presented with certificates of completing the course by Maria Minguella from the Cork City Social Inclusion Office. Participants who spoke at the event about the training were pleased with the knowledge and skills gained during the parenting program discussions and they all had 'take home messages.'

There was also very positive feedback from relevant stakeholders who attended the event. One attendee commented that, just from observing the event, what struck her was the easy relationship that was evident between the women who took part in the training and how that differed from how they related with other migrant women (including those from their own direct provision centres) who attended the event but had not taken part in the workshops. And also, on how proud the women were of their certificates. About 10 migrant women from direct provision centres who were not part of the training but who attended the dissemination event have consequently joined the women coffee morning sessions.

The feedback on the training methodology by the participants was also very positive and the participants articulated that the facilitators were culturally respectful, non-judgmental and that even though they were very highly qualified professionals, they did not approach the training as professionals telling them what to do or how it is done. They stated that they very much felt part and parcel of the explorative process of the things that they wanted to keep and things that they wanted to change which mapped really well with a lot of child protection guidelines that were in the training workshop resource materials.

THIS IS WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS SAID:



Debie

Year..none perfect parents trying to raise perfect children... this puts too much pressure on us as parents. The parents course helped us to learn about child development and its different stages and having realistic expectations about what kids can do at different ages.



Miriam

I would like to thank those involved in this programme and allowing us to be involved in this as we all know, we are parents and everything comes naturally but taking the course not only helps us as parents but also gives us a chance to meet new people and get away from the daily sad life of being in our centres. I learnt a lot as I have two milestones in m life. My big son who is 12 and my 2 year old so sometimes I am stuck in between but parenting classes have taught me how to manage these two milestones of my kids. I can't say I am successful in this but I have learnt a lot about how to control myself with both of them.



Olayinka

It gave me more understanding about my kids. It taught me to support my kids and always remind them that they can do good things. It has also taught me how to stop nagging about everything. I am so glad I came for the training because I did achieve a lot from it. I felt loved by everyone. Thanks.



Arife

I thank all of the people who helped me through this training... Naomi, Jo, Colleta and I dedicate my graduation certificate to my baby and my husband.



Colletta

It has been a wonderful journey to watch these women grow from strength to strength in co-designing a grassroots-led parenting programme. Nothing stops them they come with their children and are always totally engaged. And really they just get on with it for the time they are there. So much laughter, fun and learning.. These ladies are simply amazing. I looked forward to each week and to seeing them and their children/beautiful babies.

PEOPLE



Dr. Naomi Masheti is a psychologist and is instrumental in setting up the psychosocial program at the Cork Migrant Centre. She has huge experience in community work, in lecturing at the University College Cork, and has developed and delivers a culturally sensitive training program to frontline service providers, which has been accredited for Continued Professional Development (CPD) points by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and by the Irish Association of Social Work.

Dr. Colletta Daliken is a social worker who has worked in child protection with experience in delivering parenting programs, and currently lectures at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) on the Social Care Program. She has extensive experience of delivering Intercultural Training to various organisations around Ireland and has also delivered a Train The Trainer cultural diversity training outside DKIT. Colletta is presently involved in Transnational Erasmus funded research with partners in Sweden, Italy, Latvia and Northern Ireland aimed at developing teaching materials to raise awareness about issues impacting on new comers and developing positive ways to aid Integration.

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