

# FATHER SCHOOL: Step by Step

# **FATHER SCHOOL: Step by Step**

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**Father School: Step by Step.**

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*Father School: Step by Step* is a guide on how to set and run male groups that prepare fathers-to-be to the birth of their babies and teach them to be actively engaged in their children's upbringing following the principles of shared equal responsibility with children's mothers.

This manual continues UNICEF tradition of publishing guidelines by nonprofit, nongovernmental or public organizations and social services that use gender-sensitive methods in their social work. In 2009 the UNICEF Representation Office in Ukraine published *Tato-Shkola: Yak Stvoriti Ta Zabezpechiti Stale Funktsionuvannya* (Тато-школа: як створити та забезпечити стале функціонування) which describes practical aspects of organizing and operating Father Schools in Ukraine.

This current book reviews and summarizes experiences of establishing and running male schools for fathers-to-be in Russia, Sweden and Belarus. It also includes some information on Ukrainian experience.

The manual provides information on how to start a group, what gender-specific technologies to use in running male groups, how to train moderators and to manage the group. The book contains programs and work materials of functioning Father Schools as well as accounts of domestic and foreign practices. It is also a source of guiding instructions for the organizers.

The book will be useful to teachers, undergraduate and graduate students in humanities and social studies, professionals in educational and social sectors.

The content of the book shall not be regarded as an official policy or the view of UNICEF.

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## From the Authors

Dear Readers,

In this manual we wanted to share with you some information that we believe is accurate based on our knowledge and experience. However, as you know, medical, pedagogical and psychological sciences constantly develop as well as the applicable law. Therefore, when your specific case requires medical, legal or other type of specialized assistance or a specific recommendation, we urge you to seek professional help. Recommendations and opinions based on peers' experience will not replace a qualified professional assistance.

We try to provide you with up-to-date and useful information though we cannot guarantee that it will cater for your specific individual needs.

Our manual includes links to internet resources. However, we cannot be held responsible for their content or for their third party responsibilities.

Use of photos placed in the manual is possible only after having obtained the author's team consent.

All materials and instructions we offer are free only for not-for-profit copy and use. We would prefer that you use the provided materials in full; however, you may choose to use segments most suitable for your goals (for example, a training or a lecture). We hope that you clearly reference the Guidelines as the information source.



# Father School: a Path of Equal Opportunities for New Fathers

The world is changing and that impacts the life of ordinary women and men. On the one hand, needs of the new age require abandoning gender stereotypes. The stereotypes where a woman is just a house wife taking care of family hearth and where a man is the chief breadwinner and defender. On the other hand, we must recognize that our society is still dominated by the norms where any change in men's or women's role is interpreted as a break with tradition and a damage of moral rules.

Improved efficiency and quality of social work for families with children by state and non-governmental providers along with introduction of innovations and technologies are a key objective of any modern social policy. Almost all post-soviet states signed and ratified the European Social Charter. The Charter proclaims the legality of the following rights:

- Family's right to social, legal and economic protection;
- Right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex.

Among its main principles the European Social Charter states that the family as a fundamental unit of the society has the right to appropriate social, legal and economic protection to ensure its full development.

Gender equality at society and family levels, gender awareness and general education, and trainings organized for men are rather new domains of social work. It shall be said that main types of gender-targeted methods of social work were primarily focused at protecting women's rights and interests and were used by women's nongovernmental organizations, women's crisis centers and state services assisting women.

Having reviewed current social projects and programs for families and children (regardless of whether the service provider is a state institution or an NGO) one could see that many of these programs are underpinned by gender stereotypes and do not promote gender equality or cooperation between men and women. Excluding men from social project clients in fact worsens gender imbalance and increases gender disparity in society.

Psychologically stable relations between all family members are an important component of family's social health. Young families with babies can gain the stability by assigning a more active role to the husband through his involvement in baby care from the very first days of baby's life. Such involvement can be promoted by training all interested fathers-to-be in Father Schools. Why is fatherhood so often undervalued? Possibly because we believe that only mothers can really cope with parenthood obligations and that fathers must put up with their support function.

Views on father's role in child's life continue to evolve. This subject interests scientists as well as millions of ordinary people who are getting ready to become or are already parents. Psychology and pedagogics of fatherhood is a dynamically developing domain in contemporary science, psychological and pedagogical practice, and in social work. Compared to the abundance of statistics and scientific materials on mother's role in child's life, there is a lack of research and papers that would clearly and intelligibly explain the role and the tasks of father in modern family and society.

Currently, social sciences and humanities differentiate between 'sex' and 'gender' as a means to label physiological and social/cultural differences between men and women. 'Sex' describes biological differences between people due to genetics, anatomy, physiology and reproductive functions. 'Gender' points out the social status and social/psychological personal qualities determined by sex and sexuality. These aspects are formed through interaction between people and are specific to a particular culture.

Traditionally the word 'sex' was used to denote anatomical and physiological differences between humans that divide them into men and women. Sex (i.e., biological differences) was considered the basis and the primary cause of psychological and social differences between women and men. The accumulated research data shows that, in terms of biology, men and women have more similarities than differences. Many researchers even believe that the only clear and significant biological difference between men and women is indeed their role in the reproduction of species.

Biological differences in people are accompanied by different social roles, occupations, behavioral specifics and emotional profiles. Anthropologists, ethnographers and historians have long ago found that our concepts of a 'typical

man' or 'typical woman' are rather conventional. Occupations (behavior, character traits) considered 'masculine' manifestations in one society can be considered 'feminine' in the other.

The diversity of social dimensions for women and men around the world versus the fundamental similarity of their biological parameters allows concluding that a biological sex is not the true ground for different social roles existing in different societies. This conclusion leads to defining 'gender' as a sum of social and cultural norms expected of people in a society based on the biological sex.

So, at the end, psychological qualities, behavior patterns, occupations and feminine/masculine professions are determined by social and cultural norms rather than biological specifics. To be a man or to be a woman in a society means (in addition to having anatomic particulars) to perform certain gender-prescribed roles.

The contemporary gender theory does not deny the existence of biological, social and psychological differences among women and men. The theory simply states that the difference per se is less important than the social value and interpretation of such differences and the power sharing system constructed around them. The gender approach is based on the concept that biological and physical differences between men and women are important not by themselves but due to the cultural and social weight attached to the differences. Gender research primarily analyses power and domination in the society achieved through gender roles and relations. Describing the specifics of the status, roles and other aspects in lives of men and women is of secondary importance. Gender approach declares achieving gender equality (or balance) of the roles and relations as its goal.

Contemporary gender psychology studies the distribution and the balance of 'male' and 'female' roles in family and society and tries to answer questions about motherhood and fatherhood in a modern society.

Gender equality ideas are most developed and widely spread in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands. Gender equality principles are actively implemented at public institutions throughout Europe and North America. Whether gender approaches are acceptable and useful at institutions of former Soviet republics is a subject of a heated public debate. Here the supporters of the classical 'orthodox' family model where father leads and dominates the family strongly disagree with the promoters of the 'postclassical' egalitarian model that welcomes equality of and flexibility in father's and mother's roles in family and society.

Studies of father's role in children's life were performed from the beginning of the psychological science. Prominent authorities in psychology including Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Karen Horney, Alfred Adler, Eric Berne and others paid a great attention to father's role. Alfred Adler, the founder of humanistic psychology, underlined father's importance in developing a social interest in the child. In his opinion, an 'ideal' father treats his children as equals and is actively involved (alongside his wife) in children's upbringing. Fathers shall avoid making two mistakes, i.e., an emotional withdrawal and a parental authoritarianism. These mistakes cause distortions in the development of a balanced personality; such children learn to defend their egoistic personal interests and ignore social interests, norms and rules.

The influence of fathers onto early children development is scientifically proven. Many studies had shown that fathers who held their babies right after the birth keep playing with them more often afterwards and spend more time together as they grow. It was also established that babies of close and active fathers achieved higher scores in mental and motor development; they also grow to be more socially sensitive. Another important discovery concerned conjugal relations which were found to be significantly more harmonious, pursued shared objectives and plans, and exhibited a low proneness to conflicts.

A distinguished scientist Grace J. Craig noticed that fathers who established strong emotional bonds with their infants had a higher sensitivity to the changing interests and needs of their growing children. These dads exert more influence on their offsprings who willingly listen to and want to imitate their fathers thanks to intimate relations based on trust. Developmental crises are less pronounced in such children and less painful for their family and society.

A direct positive influence on a young child by a caring father is usually accompanied by an indirect beneficial impact on the baby and the family. Multiple studies have shown the importance of father's support to his spouse during and after her pregnancy in establishing positive relations in the whole family. In the triangle of family contacts (mother – father – child) mother primarily has a direct impact. However, fathers influence both directly and indirectly (through mothers).

Large scale studies of fatherhood were organized in the USA in 1970-90s. Some of researchers concluded that fathers could deliver a full baby care except for breastfeeding. They are able to swaddle, to rock and to feed infants

as expertly as their mothers. Fathers who devote significant time to establishing and maintaining contacts with their infants will form a strong attachment beneficial both for the dad and his children.

Another study presented somewhat different outcomes. In this study psychologists observed new fathers and mothers who attended classes for young parents. At first fathers were very much involved and interested. So, it was expected that they would share child caring functions with their wives. However, once a child was born both parents assessed father's skills in child care as 'significantly inferior to mother's skills'. As a result, fathers received an auxiliary role of mother's assistants in the family. None of the fathers covered by the study stated that 'my wife helps me in taking care of our baby' (meaning none of them took the leadership in care delivery).

The researchers offered multiple interpretations of the 'fatherhood phenomenon' each claiming their model to be correct. One of the sensible arguments in the debate was an assumption that joint sessions of future mothers and fathers (though having evident advantages) do not allow fathers to openly discuss a whole range of themes and issues of future fatherhood due to the presence of their wives. Thus an idea of organizing special classes for fathers-to-be attended by men only and run by male psychologists was born. It marked the beginning of Father Schools designed for future and new fathers.

This book provides some theoretical and practical guidance on how to work with new fathers. You will read about the technologies and specifics of group work in male classes at Father Schools in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Sweden.

The Father School grew from first father groups in Sweden and has evolved with the society. Today's training program for groups is based on the experience of involving men into the upbringing of their children and uses their knowledge and skills. The program is unique in the sense that we do not tell fathers-to-be how they should live, act, and build their life and relations. Instead of lectures we engage men into discussions by offering workshop topics which enable participants to make their own conclusions on how to become closer to their child and improve family climate.

Here we would like to make an important comment explaining the gender approach to running schools for new fathers. The program is underpinned by one key principle: all participants and moderators of the sessions are men. Why is this condition essential? The countries where Father Schools started always had had a variety of parental clubs, schools for future parents and prenatal classes. However, there were no male classes to train fathers-to-be. Management of the schools asked themselves why the majority of men did not attend traditional classes. We ourselves had run several informal polls and the answer to the question by father groups was: because the available training for future parents is definitely marked by a 'female' ambience. The information and teaching methods are targeted exclusively at mothers and, therefore, husbands feel excluded. There is another significant organizational disadvantage in such courses: as a rule all of them function at week-days during working hours. However, father groups operate evenings or at week-ends.

Training techniques employed at male classes make possible for each participant to get answers to most of his questions. This knowledge helps to establish harmonious and gender-balanced family relations. The entire educational cycle starts with the 'very beginning' when a man just prepares to become a father. We believe it is important to set a stage for positive changes in man's life.

Of course, the offered training brings revisions in the traditional pattern of how future fathers behave. In a traditional family boys were raised according to the historically developed views, ideals and parenting means of child management where the father is the family head, breadwinner, anchorage and protection. In today's world women and men have to overcome the existing stereotypes and adapt family traditions and child upbringing to the contemporary requirements. Women better adjust to and learn new roles faster. While for many men changes in conventional canons are borne with a great difficulty. One of the reasons is a low level of knowledge in future fathers as it was testified by a UNICEF study across Russia, Belarus and Ukraine in 2008. Here are the study results:

- Women (84% of the polled) know better than men (77% of the polled) that the basic personality structure is formed within the initial 3 years of baby's life.
- 87% of women (and only 66% of men) know that newborns must be given breast within one hour of birth. Every 4<sup>th</sup> man (26%) has no idea when breastfeeding shall be started.
- 76% of men polled in Russia believe that not every woman is able to breastfeed her child.

It is important to take into account the general knowledge level of new parents.

- 33% of parents subscribe to the opinion that it is correct to feed the baby by hours.



- 21% of pregnant women believe that contemporary baby formulas have many healthy ingredients missing in breast milk; 20% among them could not answer the question.

Only 24% of the poll participants in Russia (33% in Belarus and 44% in Ukraine) are aware that breastfed babies will not need any extra food or drink up to 6 months of their age. Less than half of the polled (41%) know when complementary food is included into the ration in addition to mother's milk (or baby's formula). Roughly half of respondents (49%) believe that complementary food shall be started at about 3 to 4 months of age. 33% of parents think that tea (black, green or herbal) can be given to 3-month old babies; 12% are sure it can be given from day 1. Only half of parents know key developmental indicators in children.

No more than half of parents play age-appropriate developmental games and read to their children. Women do it more often than men:

- 57% of women daily play developmental games with their children;
- 63% of women read them books and tell fairytales every day.

Men make much weaker efforts:

- 34% daily play developmental games with their children;
- 38% read them books and tell fairytales every day.

Only 32% of parents say that immunization is safe for children; almost half of the polled (44%) did not know whether inoculations are safe for children or not.

Our classes are designed to fill in this informational gap. At the same time we help the audience to understand legal implications of a child birth for unmarried couples and/or for minor parents. We always have units on breastfeeding, on how to correctly choose baby food, toiletry, clothes and other things.

The training curriculum for future fathers at father groups provides an opportunity for every one of them to get information on how to care about the newborn, about specifics in sexual relations with the wife prior and after birth, and on how partner-assisted births proceed. The information is provided not by narrow specialists or lecturers. The knowledge is shared by meeting men who already became fathers. The contemporary level of information technology makes it easy to read the procedure of partner-assisted delivery on the Internet. However, future fathers are interested in getting an answer from a man who was with his wife in the delivery ward, who takes daily care of his baby and to learn the importance of such care for child's development.

Essentially, Father School is an informal men's club where future fathers meet to receive new knowledge, to discuss real issues and to get peer support. They do it for the benefit of their children and families. Father School programs are designed to update father's behavior pattern and to create the so called 'new father' model. In our opinion, trainings in male groups and the organized group work will enable us to change gender stereotypes about father's role not only in fathers but also in their spouses and to reduce domestic violence and risks of divorce.

## A Little Bit of History

*'For a novice father as I am, father group gave an extraordinary lot! Our group was medium size and it was so useful to discuss different questions together and to listen to opinions and concerns of other participants. The moderator was there to manage the discussion.'*  
*Svein, father of Aron*

The world history of Father Schools is yet quite short. Only several dozens of years compared to thousands of years of family relations may look insignificantly small. However, these are dozens of years in the current history of our society! The decades of rapid change, progress, new ideas search and acceptance in the society that is changing and forces to change female and male roles. This explains the need to train future parents.

Schools or training courses that would prepare future parents to the birth of their child existed in different countries. However, the training was mainly designed for women. Men continued to experience some sort of an informational blockade. They definitely want to learn and have many questions but very often they cannot get the answers during joint sessions for a variety of reasons. It could be that 'female' questions have a priority. May be men are too shy to ask some delicate questions in the presence of women or feel uncomfortable to address them to a female consultant. Or some men may find it difficult to show their incompetence in front of females and their male mentality just shuts them up.

There are many reasons. However, for men - similarly as for women - everything connected to their child is very important. Men require the same preparation to becoming a father as the one organized for women. The overwhelming majority of men are willing to take some household burden off their spouses; they do worry about the health of expectant mothers; they try to do more and better but quite often they do not know how. So, male schools for future parents were started out of a pressing necessity.

Men (fathers-to-be) were very often accused (and still are accused) of not getting prepared for the birth of their children. Sometimes women are disappointed when their partners do not read the same books and brochures they read (which women believe are important). Why does he rarely ask how his pregnant wife feels? Does it interest him at all?

In fact, man thinks about his future baby and upcoming delivery quite regularly. However, men are not carriers, they cannot tangibly experience the pregnancy and they focus on other thoughts. Men feel anxious (probably, to the same extent as women) but in a different domain. Usually men are expected to reassure women and to act as a reliable support. So, would it be right to express their worries and concerns? This is why men quite often find themselves as if bound hand and foot and firmly shut in alone with their emotions and thoughts. As a result men draw even deeper into their own shells being afraid to increase the anxiety of their wives.

How can we prepare a man (who does not carry to term, will not go into labor or breastfeed the child) to the coming event when he wants (and all the people around him expect him) to be there for it and to participate 100%?

A forum of expectant and new fathers is an excellent means to inspire, involve and inform. Here one can hear what others did, share what he did and be reassured by other men in similar circumstances.

Becoming a father is a conscious work. Relations cannot take care of themselves. We are not talking how to develop an attachment between father and his child but rather how to make babies attached to their fathers. That is the difference. When it comes to bonding all babies are unique and may require different time. How much time will your baby need?

As a future father you have options. You may join into the family life and be its full member who knows what is going on and how to act. This motivates and enriches you as a person. Or you may choose not to spend time, prefer to keep the distance and feel estranged. That will be depressing.

*'It meant a lot for me because I got an excellent reassurance for myself as a person and as a parent. And one more thing: I clearly understood my responsibility. I did not have this feeling before ...'*  
*Frederic, father of Stina*

Nothing could be more wonderful than the moment when you are told that you would be a father! Things that you both hoped and wished for are coming true. You worked and planned for it together ... And, perhaps, the opposite is also true: nothing is scarier than the news that you will become a father when you did not plan for or want or expected it ...

Over the years in business we met men from the both extremes described above and across the whole spectrum. Fortunately, the first category prevails.

What assistance is offered by maternity welfare centers and children's out-patient departments? How do maternity welfare centers plan labor preparation courses and what do they provide in terms of their content? What is discussed at parental groups at children's outpatient facilities and who is their prime audience? The practice shows huge differences among these institutions with regard to the time and effort invested into running such courses.

By and large most institutions do a good job. They explicitly want to follow the new trends and take gender aspect into account. However, sometimes they have an insufficient knowledge of the specified domains or lack a clear vision how to take them into account in practice.

All of the above had led to the establishment of the contemporary father groups. They focus on male needs and supplement the traditional formats (which are commonly geared at women). Father groups are child-centered and prepare men to birth, parenting and egalitarian relations with their 'significant others'.

## Sweden

The pioneers of setting a first male-only Father School were Swedish men (in Sweden the schools are called 'Pappagrupp'). It started in mid 1980s due to the fact that men did not participate in birth preparation classes.

One of the first ever training courses for beginner dads was organized as a joint project of Ornskoldsvik municipality and MansCentrum nongovernmental organization. The municipality undertook the prime responsibility for delivering the project as the organizers wanted to make the beginner dad training a permanent service. The project was a success. Afterwards father trainings became an integral part of parental training within the national Mother and Child Healthcare system. Today up to 97% of fathers-to-be in Sweden get trained this way. The high quality of father group training is confirmed by various organizations, including Västernorrland County social insurance office and ABF Adult Education.



**Photo: Classes at Minsk Father School (Belarus)**

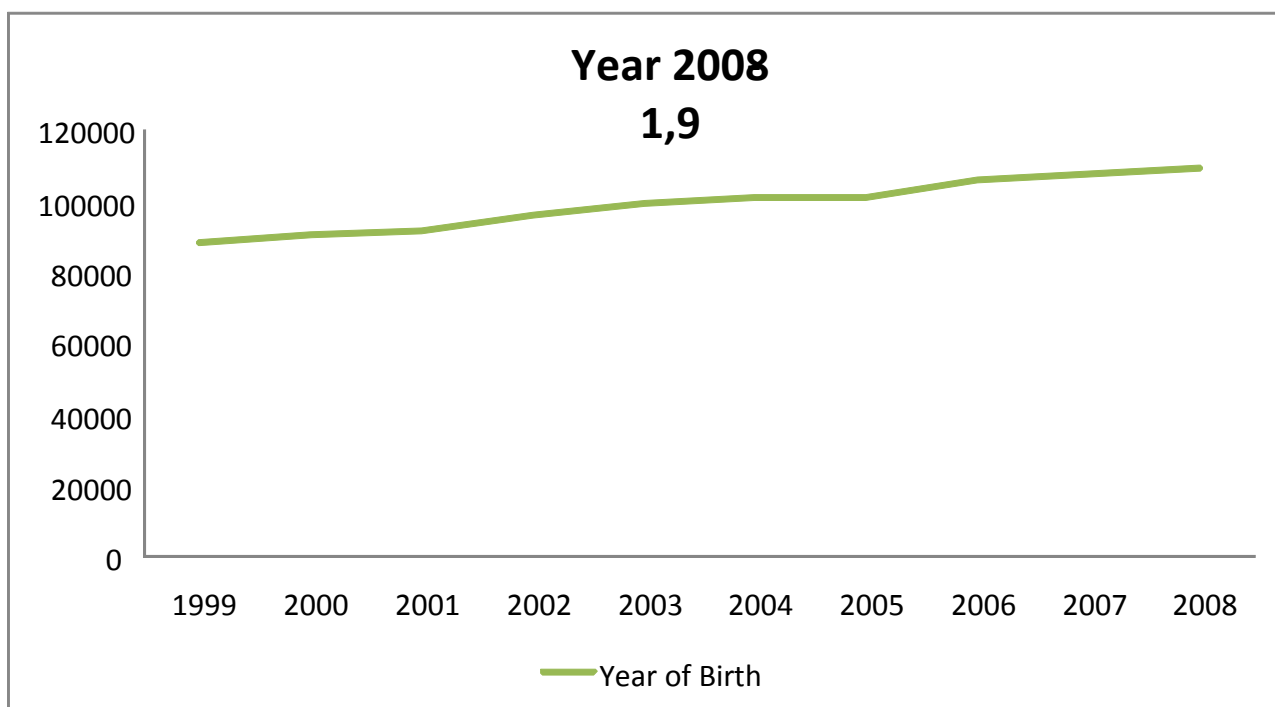
Sweden implemented a number of major projects financed by national, regional and municipal budgets. The biggest project – *Dad for Real* – was run between 2002 and 2007 in seven Stockholm municipalities. The project set 396 father groups where roughly 2,600 men participated. The results finalized in 2008 turned out to be brilliant. All stated objectives were achieved: more fathers started to actively participate in the life of their families, the divorce rate went down and gender equality improved. Later the *Dad for Real* project served as a template and model for similar activities across Sweden, Norway, Russia and Belarus.

A gender consultant participated in the project to assess the given information and the teaching materials from the gender point of view. The consultant attended group sessions and meetings of father group leaders. His research resulted in reports which assessed the project and helped to identify its weaknesses. Approximately 2,400 men participated in Phase 1 of the project in about 395 groups. Currently the project is being continued and gets high scores not only by male parents but also by mothers, healthcare professionals and social workers.

The key consideration in choosing and implementing the Swedish model of working with fathers and families and of Father Schools operations is the tangible breakthrough in Swedish demographics over the last 11 years.

By starting gender programs in 1990s aimed at involving men into childcare Sweden became the only country in Europe with the permanent growth of birthrate and the continuous natural increase of its population. You are welcome to see the statistics collected by SCB, the Swedish Statistics Central Office, at [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)

### Birthrate in Sweden



#### Number of Children Born:

2008	-	109 301	1,90
2007	-	107 421	
2006	-	105 913	
2005	-	101 346	
2004	-	100 928	
2003	-	99 157	
2002	-	95 815	
2001	-	91 466	
2000	-	90 441	
1999	-	88 173	1,50

## Ukraine

Already in the early 2000s Ukrainian men followed the example of Swedish fathers and started setting up Father Schools. First experimental groups for male parents commenced in Vinnytsia. A permanent Father School began its operations in 2004 and was based at Vinnytsia Maternity Hospital #2 (the hospital holds the Child Friendly Status assigned by the UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) and the WHO (World Health Organization)).

This Father School was launched in partnership and cooperation with OLEG, a Vinnytsia nongovernmental organization which by that time was a key player in the Ukrainian/Swedish project called OLEG and delivered with the support of SIDA (Swedish International Development Authority). The role of OLEG NGO was primarily in helping other regions to start Father Schools and crisis centers for men. It was planned at a later stage to include those schools and centers into the Ukrainian national network.

The Ukrainian organizers used the Swedish methods and adjusted them to the Ukrainian culture and mentality. Immediately there was a question how Father Schools could co-exist with Schools of Responsible Fatherhood included into the mandatory healthcare package of prenatal services provided in Ukraine. It was important to understand that different formats of working with parents pursue different objectives and as such can be perfectly compatible, organically cooperative and operate at the same area in any county or region.

The successful launch of the first Father School in Vinnytsia was facilitated by the extensive experience OLEG NGO had in servicing men at crisis centers. Plus OLEG employees together with the doctors who would become consultants went for training to Sweden. On top of that the trainers/consultants in the first Father School were experienced parents. With time the number of Father Schools in Ukraine increased. The schools opened in regions around Vinnytsia, Poltava, Lviv, Ternopol, Kirovograd and Kiev. Each of them combined the existing available methods with a search for their own approaches.

The cooperation with UNICEF started in 2006 and gave a new impetus to enlarge the Father School network and to improve the role played by Father Schools in family training. Joint operations in Ivano-Frankovsk, Donetsk and Zhitomir regions resulted in engaging these regions into the all-Ukraine network of Father Schools.

*Merry Saturdays* is yet one more format proposed by Father Schools. The idea was again borrowed from Sweden. *Merry Saturdays* are reunions for joyful and useful interaction of parents and children. It became the venue to share experiences, to play, to educate and to enjoy. Parents and their children together play sports, study cooking, ride horses, go for excursions, play music instruments, perform in stage plays, and learn to conserve nature among many other good things.

Experiences gained by Ukrainian and Swedish men proved valuable for males in other countries. Representatives of Ukrainian Father Schools together with the Swedish consulting companies Sprangbradan and AB Bonnie Communications were actively consulting and assisting with setting up similar Father Schools and male centers in other countries. The organizations sent their members to work in Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Lithuania, Russia, and Belarus. Lesson learned: a common goal would be attained faster if we work together. And the most important of all is that everyone wants to see his child happy, healthy and clever. Therefore, a Father School is very well equipped to help the wish come true.

## Lithuania

In 2003 - 2004 Lithuanian men built their training programs for expectant male parents around crisis centers for men. Working with men in crisis and understanding the adverse impact of crisis on family's and child's life made it important to run special classes for male parents.

## Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

Azamat, a consulting and analytical center, has been operating in Taraz (Kazakhstan) since 2005. The center has functions usual to organizations providing parental orientation classes. In addition to that Azamat engages in another noble domain of family counseling when parents filed divorce papers but the divorce has not yet been finalized. Professional efforts quite often help to rescue the marriage and allow children to grow in two-parent families.



Similarly to Kazakhstan, representatives of Ukrainian Father Schools worked in Kyrgyzstan in a joint project of Kyrgyz national government, SIDA and the UN Development Program on *Promotion of Gender Equality in Kyrgyzstan*. The joint project resulted in registering an organization named *Brother* at Osh city. The organization became a training provider for men.

## Russia

First in Russia Father School has been operating in St. Petersburg starting 2008 with the mission stated as 'To strong families via responsible parenting'. The training course specially focuses on equal responsibilities of both parents for raising their child. An initiative group - that went on to launch the first Russian father group - was formed in 2007 while its members participated in MIR project (Men in Russia) implemented in St. Petersburg by St. Petersburg Social and Economic Institute and Men21 Autonomous Non-for-profit Organization with the support of St. Petersburg Labor and Social Policy Committee and with the financial aid of SIDA.

In 2010 the initiative group in St. Petersburg established a public organization for social support named *Northern Way* which delivers a *Papa-School.RU* basic training program to disseminate knowledge and to create and promote Father School network across Russia.

## Belarus

Father Schools in Belarus started in 2009 during Nadezhda (translates as 'hope') Project implemented by Minsk City Center of Social Services for Family and Children together with ENVILA Women Institute and Sprangbradan and with SIDA support.

The current program is developed by the state institution named *Minsk City Center of Social Services for Family and Children*. It is based on Swedish and Russian experience and is approved by the Labor, Employment and Social Security Committee of Minsk Municipal Executive Committee.

Father School Project in Minsk is implemented via important national programs, namely, *The National Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality for 2008-2010* (as adopted by Resolution No. 1286 by the Belarus Council of Ministers of September 3, 2008) and *The National Program of Belarus Demographic Security for 2007 – 2010* and (as adopted by Presidential Decree No. 135 of March 26, 2007).

## International Organizations

In Czech Republic parental work is run by LIGA OTEVRENYCH MUZU. The Asosiasion de Hombres por la Igualdad de Genero (the Association of Men for Gender Equality) operates in Spain. Tato.Net exists in Poland. Similar trainings for men are provided in Norway, Finland, Iceland, Bulgaria and other countries.

In December 2004 Ukraine and Sweden initiated the Constituent Assembly in Vilnius (Lithuania) attended by representatives of Ukraine, Sweden, Lithuania, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan which established the International Men Network EAGLE (Eurasian Gender League). The network makes a logical step in the developing cooperation between men of different countries. In November 2006 the EAGLE was joined by members from Slovakia and Tadjikistan. In 2010 Northern Way, a St. Petersburg NGO became the member representing Russia. Organizations from Belarus, Czech Republic, Poland, Moldova, Georgia and Baltic States expressed their willingness to join the network in the short term. In January 2009 the EAGLE became a member in MenEngage Europe that is a large network of men organizations uniting representatives of 30+ countries. OLEG NGO is a member in the Coordination Council of MenEngage Europe .

Northern Way, an NGO from St. Petersburg, represents Russian male nongovernmental organizations in the MenEngage International Men Network.

## How to Start a Father School?

School's operational principals are determined by the legal framework of our countries. As the authors' experience shows, the Father Schools format is universal because it works in a variety of national contexts and in a number of organizational settings.

In fact all schools featured in these Guidelines progressively went through several developmental stages:

- The work is performed by the **initiative group** and no legal entity is established. The Russian group had operated in this format for three years and did not face problems with starting new groups or with participating as such at Russian and international forums in Sweden, Ukraine, Belarus and Poland. The group accumulated the most versatile experience of operating in such capacity. Advantages: the initiative group format pulls the team together and helps to overcome problems together. Zero state financing taught us how to find ways of resolving financial issues and as a result to survive without external money. Constraints: this format has its organizational limitations. You cannot sign contracts and rent premises. The Russian initiative group managed to receive a grant but such situations are rare for initiative groups as donor organizations prefer to cooperate with legal entities.

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**ПАПА-ШКОЛА**

Picture: A leaflet of Minsk Father School (Belarus) inviting to attend sessions offered to fathers-to-be. The leaflet is available at maternity welfare centers.

- Once your development came to the point of establishing the legal entity you can register as **nongovernmental** or **non-for-profit organization** as provided at your national law. Constraints: This option requires you to have administrative resources as the legal entity status comes with some responsibilities (including tax reporting and administrative work). Becoming a nongovernmental organization serves as a team test because you must assign responsibilities and choose the leader. Advantages: Your

capacity grows manifold. Ukrainian NGO OLEG started by launching a Father School in Vinnytsia. During the last decade it developed into the leader of men movement and an active builder of international men networks.

- Operating **within state agencies and services** can turn out to be an equally successful way. The Belarus Father School sets an example of how to effectively integrate male-centered methods into the system of public social services and to succeed in developing them as part of state facilities of social assistance to families and children. The experience of the Belarus Father School demonstrates an effective application of gender sensitive methods in social work and a possibility of efficient use of volunteers within state social services.

Above we listed the legal aspects associated with any public initiative. Now this section will focus on three main elements in starting a Father School as we see them:

1. Organizational arrangements
2. Training moderators for father groups
3. Session arrangements

## STEP 1. How to Start a Father School?

Any public initiative evolves by going through some organizational challenges. However, at the end you always get a reward of seeing the materialization of your intentions through hard efforts.

If you decided to start a Father School as a public initiative or a nongovernmental organization, keep in mind that this endeavor will not bring financial profit to the organization and that it is aimed at public good. Community work implies zero profit for private persons.

Men shall not be discriminated when accepted as members. Nobody can be accepted or excluded on the basis of nationality or religion as it would create inequalities.

Being an NGO you can finance your operations by membership fees, sponsor support and through fundraising. In our school father groups are free for fathers.

To finance operations of father groups you may run public campaigns and charity events inviting guests and public figures who support your ideas of setting up Father Schools.

Like any other organization you have to make some administrative decisions:

- **Determine your Father School Mission.** Do you want to organize the work of a socially responsible men initiative group? Or do you plan to build up a social network? Will you be a nongovernmental or charity organization? Will you work within your region or will you help developing a wider movement? Answers to these questions will facilitate your choice of the development vector.
- **Decide on the Father School Management.** You must determine the number of managers and their means to manage the school. Are your decisions to be taken collectively or by one individual? Who will define the Operations Plan and follow up on its implementation? Who will develop the Father School program? These answers are to be found. Papa-School.RU quite successfully operates under the *sociocracy principle*. We have many district schools and, therefore, a great variety of opinions. The principle dictates that any amendment to the School Program or its activities must be unanimously approved which means that a valid decision is the one supported by ALL schools. This mode helped us to preserve the School and to develop its agenda. In addition to the School Manager the organization needs a Coordinator to follow up on the execution of planned events and to provide organizational support for new groups. Besides the Manager any nongovernmental organization is required to have the Chief Accountant and usually the Board (regardless of the organization format).
- **Put together an Activity Plan for your Father School.** Your Activity Plan is different from your Operations Plan as it includes your participation at public events, visits to local authorities, meetings with members of municipal parliaments and time spent with heads of local NGOs. It covers all events you planned, like, charity concerts, exhibitions or camping trips. Traditionally within the Activity Plan we schedule the celebration of the International Father's Day (third Sunday in June).



Picture: An invitation by St. Petersburg Father School to join the celebration of 100 years of International Father's Day.

- **Draw the Operations Plan for your Father School.** The Plan covers the approved schedule of father group meeting dates, persons assigned as responsible for running the group and a plan on working with moderators. Good operation plans are made during brain storms as a means to select the best ideas appropriate for a specific region.
- Assign persons responsible for:
  - a) inviting and assembling father group attendees;
  - b) venue hosting a father group session;
  - c) housekeeping (snacks, stationary, tables and chairs, coat racks, etc.).
- When you are just starting your Father School, **it is important to stay in touch, to inform each other on difficulties and victories.** We noticed how much could be achieved through personal contacts of the initiative group members when help came from the most unexpected sources.
- **Take financial decisions together.** Money turns out to be a threshold which some initiative groups failed to pass. Though we already mentioned at the beginning of the Chapter that Father School projects are not designed for deriving personal profit, however, a nontransparent use of obtained sponsor funds may erode your collaboration.
- **Maintain contacts with the local community, disseminate information about your work and accept advice and recommendations with due respect.** Generally colleagues who have already went through some stages in arranging community work will help you by warning against possible mistakes and offering ways of avoiding them.
- You will cater for needs of expectant fathers in father groups. **Determine how many groups you will have.** We recommend that initially you run just one father group because for us quality matters more than quantity.

Once the team is set up, move on and develop your Father School Training Program. Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 offer you The Statutes Of Father School at the Center for Public Initiatives (Ukraine) and a standard program of *Dad for Real* (Russia). The Program provides a structure to the operations and gives a clear



understanding to your partners who help you with the establishment of the father group on what you will be doing. Having the Program is also important to enable cooperation with state institutions and services. The Program helps to plan activities of a specific group and to monitor the implementation of the plan.

The Program must always identify who you partner with in the delivery of sessions. Partners shall be also involved in making the Program. We would like to be explicit here: in our opinion the developing Father School movement is not aimed to create an isolated network of men groups. To the contrary, we see it as a part in the developing network of public and state organizations and socially active initiative men's groups which together engage in a joint effort of training 'new' fathers who promote gender equality and support our work.



**Photo: Father School sessions in St. Petersburg.**

## STEP 2. Moderators for Your Father Schools

### *Father group Moderator: What and Who Is He?*

*'Every time when I return home from an evening father group session I feel happy and inspired. My work as a father group moderator gives me a lot of energy.'*

*Niels Petterson, Father group Moderator at Stockholm*

A key to creating efficient and stable father groups is in finding good moderators. Many years of experience prove that every extra minute spent on finding suitable moderators will pay off in full. Running father groups without fitting moderators is like driving a car with no engine.

Moderator unites the group. Do not take just anybody who has agreed to the job (though first comers may turn out to be quite suitable). Take your time, place recruitment advertisements, organize briefings to inform interested candidates and have interviews with those selected in the first round. A number of father group start-ups received a bad publicity, scarcely worked and were wound up prematurely because the people in charge did not understand the importance of a good moderator and the significance of having a genuinely motivated project management.

Moderators and Project Managers act as the project's face in front of the society. If your father groups are based at a family center, outpatient children facility or at any other institution, it is highly recommended to establish strong ties and good relations with the institution management and employees. The message the participants of the sessions carry to the community about the series of meeting they attended is extremely important too. A motivated, punctual and well trained moderator usually plays a crucial role in the good image earned by the father group. The opposite profile will create a bad reputation for the group.

One thing to remember: The moderator's role is different from the standard definition of a group leader as a person who controls meetings. Our moderator SHALL NOT dominate the group. He acts as a facilitator, stays neutral and does not actively participate in discussions of topics.

From the very beginning of father groups moderators acted as guides or facilitators in discussion clubs rather than teachers. Moderator asks questions or offers statements to be later discussed by the group via dialogues. The principal objective of father group sessions is to help to fathers determine their parental role through discussions and talks. This is the way to change personal attitudes and mindset of men. Understanding man's importance, both masculine and parental, in a family motivates men to grow into father's role at a new level.

Father group moderator monitors the duration of speeches and gives everybody an opportunity to talk. Moderator applies group operation rules (adopted at the first group meeting) and ensures that the regulations are observed. Every group determines its operation rules. However, we would like to offer a set of general rules that helps to run the group:

- I speak for myself.
- I respect the right of everybody to have his personal opinion.
- We are all responsible for observing the rules.

When you start a group please remember that just a few of these men have ever attended any sessions of this type where men get together to talk about masculine and paternity angels of their family life. The situation is partly due to the fact that the majority of the attendees are going to have their babies for the first time. The other explanation is that in our culture men do not usually discuss amongst themselves these details of their lives. Having no experience of this sort gives you advantages and bears risks. A great benefit is that the moderator has an opportunity to create a completely new 'playing field' for such talks because the attendees will have no benchmarks.

A serious risk is that some men are frightened by such meetings which they view as unnatural, useless, etc.

You may want to recall these statements when some members skip classes. This rarely happens because of moderators. Most likely it is explained by the nature of father group meetings. A good start for every session is to make a small presentation while everybody is taking a seat and getting acquainted with the participants and the environment.

## **General Provisions**

Please remember that moderator is not required to be a professional. His main resources include passion for the subject, a sincere motivation and personal experience. Self-discipline and a positive attitude are yet other prime qualities. In-depth knowledge of psychology, family counseling, etc. may well become a valuable resource enabling father group to benefit from additional information but beware as these qualifications may backfire. Sometimes moderators – who were psychotherapists or family counselors during their day job – were carried away by their professional zeal and went deep into discussions of problems and risks. Participants who became tired of such topics just quitted. Inspire rather than dramatize! Be positive!

Of course, these are exceptional cases and there are excellent moderators coming from these professional backgrounds. However, we needed to bring that aspect to your attention.

## **DOs and DON'Ts of Father group Moderators**

- DO NOT assess statements made by group members and DO NOT judge their behavior or appearance.
- DO NOT label opinions as 'right' or 'wrong'.
- DO boost the group discussion by questions and not by lectures. Asking questions is indeed a means of opening up group members towards each other. Questions make men sensitive to the discussed topic.
- DO be aware of your personal attitude to people, however, DO discard your opinion and DO NOT impose it on the group;
- DO NOT comment on the 'flaws' in one's speech and DO NOT correct grammatical mistakes.
- DO treat statements by group participants as 'beacon signals' which help the moderator to navigate the course of the talk and to eliminate deviations.

It goes without saying that any personal verbal attacks, insults, humiliating comments and rousing of hatred are prohibited. Especially (but not only) any hints to one's sex, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, education, sexual orientation, disability or mental deficiency. The rule is absolute and is applicable whether the above said as a joke, masked accusation or ridicule.

Moderator's job is very stimulating and thrilling. It automatically makes a better man and father of you because you live by the rules you teach.

## **How to Recruit Moderators?**

One way of searching for good moderators is to talk to the personnel of the host institution. Communicate your need to obstetricians and nurses (if the group plans to operate at a Maternity Welfare Center) or to professionals at Centers of Social Assistance to Family and Children (that may provide the venue for sessions). Usually it makes a good starting point in the personnel search. Staff of the organization which will host your father group deals with parents and children, observes how fathers behave, and notices the ones who may act as role models for others. This could be a man (preferably already a father of several kids) who is active in child care, brings his child to the children's outpatient facility, club or hobby groups. Naturally this man must have a positive attitude to his family and other people, beam with enthusiasm and interest that inspire others.

Parent clubs lent an effective help in setting first father groups in the post-Soviet era. They hosted the groups at their own premises and provided first moderators from their most active fathers who regularly participated in clubs' operations. Those dads had different professions. For example, first moderators at Papa-School.RU at St. Petersburg were a worker, a bartender, a long-distance truck driver, a deacon, an IT specialist, and a real estate agent.

Next method would be to scan your own acquaintances and talk to your friends. Some of them may direct you to a friend, colleague or relative who fits into the profile. On your part it is important to clearly describe who you are looking for and not to lower the standard because a candidate was offered by a friend or relative.

Placing ads does not prove to be the most efficient method. Most often it becomes the last resort among searching techniques. As a rule placing a short but informative announcement in a local newspaper is inexpensive. Other options would be posting information in a social network or in parents' charts.

Always bear in mind the following guidelines:

- What type of men I expect to call? To what kind of men I want to appeal?
- What is the best way to word my message to catch their attention?

- It shall be clear that this information is addressed only to those who are ALREADY dads.
- This man must like being a father.
- This man must be PRO-gender equality.
- This man must be interested in working with other young fathers, to stimulate their new mindset, the choice of becoming a more involved father and their determination to challenge the traditional gender-based role stereotypes.

You may run this announcement several times in the newspaper and put ads at appropriate notice boards. And then you will answer phone calls, listen to the callers and try to understand those who emailed you expressing their interest. Do you sense that any of them have a potential to be invited even to the information briefing?

### ***Information Briefing***

This is a very important meeting. Plan that it will last between 1.5 and 2 hours. In fact, this is, probably, the first real stage in selecting promising moderators. The meeting serves for participants to decide whether they like the job and for the project manager to identify men to be invited for the next selection stage. Here we could recommend mixing in one meeting men who answered your ad, were recommended by the staff/relatives/acquaintances with men with whom the project manager already spoke in person.

The questions to be covered during the briefing:

- Who stands behind the project? Who is the project customer?
- What is a father group? How has this format developed?
- Objectives and methods
- Moderator and his qualities
- How shall moderator behave?
- Remuneration and practicalities
- Practical work

Once the above is covered, anybody can ask questions and those who would like to continue are appointed for an interview.

In your selection of the moderator take into account that quite often our moderators are more than just group leaders. They also represent the Father School at public campaigns, give lectures about group's operations to students at pedagogical and social faculties and lead an active social life in general. So, during the initial briefing you need to ask whether candidates have time available for community work. However, this shall not be taken as a stringent ground for rejection. Some of our moderators just manage groups and do not participate at events organized by the School. However, this must be also discussed with a potential candidate.

### ***Interviewing a Future Moderator***

Reserve 1 to 1.5 hours for a personal interview. Wherever possible, come to interview the candidate at his home: this way you will have a holistic view of the man. Try to answer the following questions:

- Why does he want to become a father group moderator?
- What can he specifically bring to the job? Towards which ideals does he want to inspire group participants?
- Talk with him about parenthood and gender equality.

If you set up a father group in a small community, consider the reputation the family and the man earned in the neighborhood. We doubt that you can trust a man to organize and lead a group if his neighbors and acquaintances do not wish to come.

After the talk you must have a feeling whether the man is right for the moderator's job. If you feel that he does not fit, do not hesitate to say 'no'.

### ***Moderator Training***

The basic training takes 2 days. You shall prepare the training schedule that will cover the topics (leading to discussions and talks) plus lectures with the factual knowledge about:

- Leadership
- Group dynamics

- Equal rights and gender
- Administration

*'This is a perfect format to talk about children, relations and equality.'*  
*Patrick, Father group Moderator at Stockholm*

### ***Internship***

Practice shall follow the theoretical training within the shortest time possible. On one hand, the learnt knowledge is still fresh and, on the other hand, one can expect that right after the base training novice moderators are very eager to try their skills in practice.

Internship can take different forms. Here are two equally good ways:

1. Recruit your own father group but run it in the presence of an experienced moderator.
2. Join the group run by an experienced moderator and co-moderate this group. And then in parallel to that recruit your own father group.

In both scenarios the ultimate responsibility for the way meetings are steered lays with the experienced moderator. The novice determines how long he needs to be trained on the job before he is ready to manage the group of his own.

### ***Supervision and Professional Improvement***

Father group moderation is quite often a one-man show. By this we mean that the moderator is solely responsible for his group, for the success of his sessions and for creating the environment where participants will feel relaxed and at ease. This makes both supervision and further training indispensable.



**Photo: International conference in St. Petersburg. Session is delivered by Vidar Vetterfalk, expert from Sweden.**

Moderators highly rate a group supervision. Such supervision is reputed for giving good results. Sharing your experience with colleagues or learning how they resolve certain situations make an excellent way to boost one's confidence and to reassure one of his leadership qualities. These things are very important for moderators. In our



opinion supervisions are best organized in mini-groups (3 to 5 persons per group). The supervision unrolls following the questions prepared in advance, however, we let people to express their opinions as well. If quite many moderators came to the supervision, then the initial supervision is done in small groups and afterwards the results are reported to a wide audience. Do not restrict the time.

Professional improvement most often organized by inviting external experts in fields like:

- Group dynamics
- Gender equality
- Ethology
- The science of child development.

Supervisions and improvement classes can be organized on week-days (evenings) and during week-ends. Moderators may suggest topics to study or the topics may be determined by the Project Manager.

It is advised – wherever possible – to mix experienced moderators and novices in the same group. Typically the blend of earned experiences and new ideas is to everyone's benefit.

### ***Moderators' Role in Father School Development***

Through the years of implementing Father Schools across different countries many moderators developed their own approaches to organizing father groups and to working with future fathers.

Over the time they managed to achieve these main things:

- to help future fathers to develop their own definition of masculinity (for example, whether men can openly express their emotions);
- to help men recognize the importance of giving a hand at such 'non-masculine' errands as housecleaning or cooking at par with material support;
- to talk openly that violence has absolutely no place in family life and is inadmissible towards women and children;
- to make fathers take responsibility for their actions and deeds.

An equally important achievement was the common discussion of fathers' role in the life of their children and understanding why fathers must play an active role from the early days of their children's coming to the world.

Father group development and the establishment of separate Father Schools depend on moderators' ability to cooperate. Our moderators have different education, belong to various professional groups and hold their personal views on how Father School movement should evolve. We are kept united by observing the *General Moderator Rules* that we jointly developed and approved at a meeting. The rules may exist under diverse names but our Swedish friends seem to come up with the best title by naming them **Moderator's Code**.

None of Father Schools has a rigid 'membership' definition for moderators. Some manage a session once a year while others work with the group on a permanent basis. The collectively adopted Rules regulate how one can participate in Father School life. A man who overstepped the rules he established for himself cannot represent the community.

We understand that it is unrealistic to set the rules that would in detail regulate daily activities of Father School or determine every aspect of the program for each father group you run. Adopting The Code enables you to set general rules for the community. These are the principles we uphold as we believe they are central to the 'Father School' definition.

## **Core Principles in Father group Operations (Code of Swedish Moderators)**

### ***Objectives for Setting a Father group***

Putting child's welfare into the center we offer men an opportunity to get ready for the birth, active parenthood and equitable relations with the spouse.

#### ***Key Objectives:***

- Follow the fundamentals of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Act as a reference group in different contexts

- Promote a higher rate of men using their right for the child care leave

### ***Breastfeeding***

***Guidelines:***

- Do not dictate who does what and how
- Focus on child's wellbeing
- Help fathers to receive the most possible knowledge on breastfeeding.

### ***Parents' Insurance***

***Guidelines:***

- Promote an equal use by parents of their right to take a child care leave.

### ***Violence***

***Guidelines:***

- Zero tolerance
- Be instrumental in reducing the level of domestic violence

### ***Racist and/or Sexist Statements***

***Guidelines:***

- We never welcome any racist, sexist or homophobic statements or any negative behavior towards these groups.
- We respond to possible jokes on these subjects with 'Socratic questioning' that is asking questions starting with 'if', 'what', 'how', etc. which show respect to the person but does not mean approving his vocabulary.

### ***Gender Equality***

***Guidelines:***

- All humans – regardless of their sex – possess equal rights, bear equal responsibilities and have equal opportunities.

### ***Our Attitude to other Organizations***

- We are willing to be a reference group for anybody who deals with parenting.
- We are willing to cooperate with organizations who maintain the same attitude as us.

## **POSSIBLE THEMES OF MEETINGS WITH MODERATORS**

### **Sessions with Moderators: How to Organize a Father group**

Maybe previously there was no times when dads were more dads than now. New dads are noted for their active involvement in raising and upbringing of their children. Modern dads consciously build their relations with children trying to preserve and strengthen the bond. These days many young fathers say that they want to be more engaged in child care compared to what their own dads did. And in fact some of them do engage a lot.

Why is the importance of paternity so often underestimated? Could it be due to our belief that only mothers can 'really' cope with parental duties? And, therefore, fathers must make their best at the support role? As research shows fathers can take care of their child, answer its needs, ensure proper care for newborns or elder children just like mothers. In general, there are more similarities than differences between fathers and mothers.

Becoming a parent is a significant life changing event. As a parent you can follow the growth of the new human. And for quite a long time you will stay one of the most important persons in your child universe.

For some people parenting feels as something absolutely natural from the very beginning. For the majority of us it means reconfiguring our life as we knew it to a lesser or bigger degree. The reconfiguration evolves in time and follows the development of your child and his new needs. Parents' age is also important for their parenting views and behaviors.

Usually we start reflecting about our own childhood once we become parents ourselves. Here, along with remembering good things to be passed on to the next generation we must consider things not to be reproduced. For many newly-minted parents it will be useful to think about life values and other important questions.

The training program for future fathers provides a space for every participant to get information on the practical care for his newborn, about specifics of sexual relations with the wife before and after the birth, and on how partner-assisted births proceed. The information is provided not by narrow specialists or lecturers. The knowledge is shared by meeting men who already became fathers. The contemporary level of information technology makes it easy to read the procedure of partner-assisted delivery on the Internet. However, future fathers are interested in getting an answer from a man who was with his wife in the delivery ward. Future fathers want to learn first hand how to take daily care of the baby from men who do it everyday. In fact many men do not know how to handle the baby and why it is important for an infant's development that dads are engaged in baby care.

It makes sense to discuss our expectations of each other as parents. What is our understanding of mother and father roles? What makes a family in our view? What kind of family we see for ourselves? What would we like to borrow from our parents' family? What would we rather not pass on to our children? What kind of cooperation and interaction did we have with our own parents? How will we do it with our own children?

Single parents are advised to consider whether they want other important people come into the life of their children. If yes, then who these people would be. Are there anybody in my close circle whom I would like to specifically engage and who could render me assistance and support?

Father groups provide men with the platform to discuss these topics. Such forum never existed before. Well-trained moderators will offer the following discussion topics at father group meetings:

- Childbirth
- Parenthood
- Change of relations within a conjugal couple
- Gender equality
- 'Life puzzle'

During the course every participant will have most of his questions answered. The answers will help in setting harmonious and gender-balanced relations within his family. The training will give an impulse to future fathers to change the traditional behavior pattern. The traditional way of raising boys in a family is based on the historically developed views, ideals and parental means of child management. In such family the father is the head, breadwinner, anchorage and protection. In today's world women and men have to overcome the existing stereotypes and to adapt family traditions and child upbringing to the contemporary requirements.

***'I attended every single meeting. The first session was a big surprise because I had a different expectation about such events. Our meetings were VERY important for me. They confirmed my conviction that it is normal for a man to be close to his child and to be an active dad.'***  
***Stephen, father of Sophia***

There are multiple ways of running a father group. Many moderators will develop their own manner of working in this format. The two examples we are about to give are proven by many years of experience in Sweden, Norway and Russia. This experience started with the *Dad for Real* project that operated in Stockholm between 2002 – 2007 and served as the very first model of the kind.

Try and form groups of 6 to 10 persons. Groups can be effective with the count below 6 but become vulnerable if somebody quits (and we shall consider such a scenario in every recruitment).

Groups bigger than 10 persons are also functional but could be hard to manage. Besides, the larger the group the more difficult is to have a candid talk. If some would rather prefer to hide behind others' backs and stay in the shadow, the chances they do so are higher when there are too many participants.

Father School moderators must create a proprietary database of information and used materials. This will make it easy to replace a moderator or to jointly run a group.

Once you confirmed the session plan, keep to it as you moderate the group even if the change seems necessary as you work with the group. Though some discussion of the announced topics may go better than others, everything you stated as today's agenda must be accomplished. Do not expect that every offered theme will initiate a lively discussion. Our objective is to give an impulse for collaboration and brainstorm. Even if it was not a hit, do not drop it. You may shorten the discussion and then discuss why the proposal has not sparked the interest.

### ***Moderators' General Rules of Group Management***

- Listen carefully and hear all participants in the group: all problems in group management start with the unheard information.
- Right at the beginning together with the group decide on the Group Rules and make sure the Rules are observed.
- Up front explain the procedure for private counseling because the group works collectively only on common topics.
- Support statements of group participants.

Generally speaking all difficulties in group work start with behavior problems. We will try and describe three standard profiles making your work challenging:

**Great Talker.** Knows a lot and speaks so much that you want to let him have your role (which is a bad idea). He may be indeed well informed but you do not know the ultimate hidden agenda of his statements. A member who talks at length may irritate other participants. As moderator - with all the due recognition of his input into operations of the group - you shall break his monopoly for attention. If necessary, remind the group that we promote group work and, if requested, after the session you will listen to all his proposals. You are the group leader. So, do not let somebody to highjack your role.

**Taciturn** is a direct opposite of the great talker. Taciturn does not always mean shy. As we know, traditionally men in our culture do not openly discuss amongst themselves their participation in baby care. Try to create a proper climate and engage the silent person into the talk by making him answer simple questions. It is equally important to monitor nonverbal signs given by the taciturn and to understand when he is ready to join a common discussion. When discussing common issues always engage him by addressing him by his name.

**Clown.** We must admit that having a joyous and spontaneous participant helps to relax the tense atmosphere of initial meetings. However, stay focused on your meeting objectives.

Most often problems with group management happen when a group is mainly made of close friends, fans, etc. They tend to often go off-topic. Some interruptions may also come from two extremes: either the topic is boring and nobody wants to discuss it or the topic is so exciting that everybody talks snapping each other off. It is recommended to stop a session for a while and to remind the group rules.

Try to involve every participant into discussing the offered topics. A good technique would be to start every session with the question 'What's new?'. This way you develop an atmosphere of trust needed for open interactions. Speaking about the changes they went through with the birth of their children fathers learn to share experiences. Each case is unique. Therefore, it is important to give space for speaking up and discussing the ideas that came to fathers' heads.

Discussions are an important element of group work. They teach one to respect opinions of others and to be patient. Sometimes you may follow the way statements change when participants realize that the role of a father actively engaged in baby care runs counter to their previous views. It is good when participants find similarities in statements or notice differences. Raising a simple question 'What is a father?' will reveal how participants understand their role.

While preparing for the session list out loud all items in the plan and all questions proposed for discussion. Though all items we offer in the methodology of group management are 'unclassified', make sure they suite your manner of working with the group. Assess whether you planned enough time for discussion or whether some questions may end up unanswered.

Give more practical tips from your personal experience or experience of group participants for that matter rather than stories from manuals. Discussion of real life cases helps participants to focus on situations from their

private life and their personal experience. Studying real life lessons allows accepting practical tips for home application. It also opens discussions of some controversial issues.

An effective training must include some exercises to understand a new dimension to father's role in addition to learning practical skills. In this respect teaching how to change a diaper for a baby doll proved to be very useful. When fathers are put into life simulating situations they learn to be caring and to undertake responsibilities in baby care. Life simulating exercises are best organized when:

- a man who has just recently become a father and who is actively engaged in infant care participates in the session;
- you organized interaction of participants in a way that they help each other.

Including the 'new fathers' behavior pattern into the training program is crucial in teaching useful practical skills. Fathers learn actions which are used to be assigned to mothers. So, at this stage it is good and appropriate to ask: 'How will you use the skills you've learned?' It is recommended to discuss the answers you get. This way you will understand participants' values and mindset.

Try to keep to the plan not only when delivering a particular session but throughout the course. The 5 topics we offer are not set in stone but used as a framework. The plan will let you follow an established routine. With practice it becomes easier to move from one session to the other. Having a clear plan will release you to focusing at achieving a tangible result: changing men's behavior to the child's benefit.

## Scenario 1

### ***The first meeting is organized prior to the childbirth, all the rest happen after the childbirth***

If a father group starts before the childbirth, then it makes sense to cooperate with a Maternity Welfare Center or with labor training classes run by family clubs. It is easier to enlist future fathers to your group through these channels. The best option is to talk to a doctor or other specialist responsible for traditional parent training classes.

In addition to running the group, moderator shall think how to keep it together. In this case the beginning is very important. The foundation of group's relations with the moderator is laid while assembling the group. The moderator shall personally meet with each potential participant before the group starts. The purpose of such prior meetings is to try and understand whether the participant is genuinely interested or whether his wife insists on his joining the group, to study his behavior pattern, to listen to his opinion on working in such group and to get to know his experience of family life. It could be that the man is interested in securing the audience to spread around his own ideas rather than in participating in group sessions.

Men sent to the group by their 'better halves' at first cannot clearly articulate their wishes. It should not stop you from admitting such men into the group. They must be given a chance to derive their own conclusions during initial sessions. However, if a man from the start displays a negative attitude towards the mother of his future child, you must not include him into the group. He can be offered individual counseling. Otherwise, his hostility toward the future child will trigger conflicts in the group and the moderator will be distracted from focusing on organizing joint activities.

The most efficient scenario proved to be when the course leader for future moms and the father group moderator split parents coming to classes. You take the men and the women stay with the course leader. Plan for, approximately, 2 hours per session. If you are not allowed to intervene into their work with future parents, chances are high that they still let you call in for a short time and leave an information leaflet about father groups where one can read about an easy way to enroll.





**Photo: Mats Berggren runs a session for moderators of Father School in St. Petersburg.**

The first session will focus almost entirely on the upcoming labor and the time before it. Start with a short self-introduction: name, number of children, and your position as father group moderator. Then move on to explain father group operations, history and objectives.

Tell the attendees that now you primarily and exclusively concentrate on either being or becoming a father. At the moment their age and profession do not matter. Then they introduce themselves by giving their name, the name of their wife/girlfriend, whether they already have any children and when the delivery is expected.

### ***Introduction to the First Session***

Start the session with a short account of your experience, when and how your children were born, what feelings you had. Or, possibly, you may have in stock a good story heard from a group participant or other moderator and use it 'to set the stage'. Tell your audience of the importance to voice their wishes and expectations because group discussion topics will be largely determined by what they say.

As research (run in particular in Sweden) shows men feel fear and anxiety about the impending delivery just like women. But this fear is uncomfortable to acknowledge and difficult to recognize. Talk about these things in general and then give your own example by telling about your own anxieties. Usually it helps other participants to open up and dare to speak about their concerns. Anxiety most often originates from the lack of information rather than fear. Together you will discover that they are not alone in such situation and with such thoughts. This will be a relief.

Try to form groups of 6 to 10 persons. A smaller group can be effective too but it becomes vulnerable if somebody quits (and in practice it is always a probability).

Groups bigger than 10 persons are also functional but could be hard to manage. Besides, the larger the group, the more difficult it is to give everybody time to speak or to have a candid talk. Large groups make harder to organize broad common discussions of general topics: if some would rather prefer to hide behind the backs and stay in the shadow, the chances are higher they do so when there are too many participants. Our experience shows that groups of 6 to 8 persons are the most efficient to work under the suggested program.

**Session Plan for Scenario 1** may look like this:

- Moderator's presentation; Presentation of father group as a work format
- Short self-presentation of each participant
- Current situation and expectations
- Getting ready for the labor
- Labor. Anxiety and my own thoughts. What does it mean to be a coach?
- Period after the labor when child is brought home
- Home work for the next meeting (it is recommended to give a task where the woman is also involved);
- Next father group meeting: when and where?

Prior to ending the talk always set the time and place for the next meeting. Note down the dates when participants expect their babies to be born. If for some of them the date is quite far – in about 2 or 3 months – schedule the next meeting prior to the delivery date otherwise the pause between the meetings is too long. It means the next time you meet some of the participants will already have kids and others not yet. However, the meeting can be a success because the mix will allow the attendees to share versatile experiences.

*'Father group is a good opportunity to exchange ideas among peers who are at the same situation.'*  
Lars, dad of Rufus

## Scenario 2

### ***All the sessions (including the first one) happen after the delivery***

Another way of starting a father group is to have the first rally after the babies are born. The advantage is that you ensure the continuity of sessions and avoid a time gap between the first meeting (before the childbirth) and the next (after the childbirth) as in Scenario 1.

It will be easier to enroll your group if you establish contacts with a children's outpatient facility or a center of social assistance to family and children. You may enlist into the father group fathers coming to these institutions. If possible, personally attend the meeting with parents or a session of parent groups. Bring with you a nice leaflet that tells about father groups. Leave you e-mail and phone number for interested fathers to enroll.

### ***Introduction to the Second Session***

Start the session with a short account of your experience, when and how your children were born, what feelings you had. Or, possibly, you may have in stock a good story heard from a group participant or other moderator and use it 'to set the stage'. Tell your audience of the importance to voice their wishes and expectations because group discussion topics will be largely determined by what they say.

**Plan for Scenario 2** may look like this:

- Moderator's presentation; Presentation of father group as a work format
- Short self-presentation of each participant
- How did the labor go? Every participant gets an opportunity and time to talk;
- What is the situation now when the baby is born? Feeding, care, sleep?
- Father's role in the family. Active dad or auxiliary personnel?
- Home work for the next meeting (it is recommended to give a task where the mother is also involved);
- Next father group meeting: when and where?

Prior to ending the talk always set the time and place for the next meeting. Even better if the dates of all further meetings are set at once. Tell the attendees that you will remind them via e-mail or text message about the upcoming meeting. Try to schedule the meetings with rather short intervals between them, like one to three (and never longer) weeks apart. The gained experience shows the more frequent the meetings are, the less risk for some participants to drop out is and the more solid the group becomes.

Once the session is done, think over its results:

- Have all attendees equally participated in group's work?
- What was the reaction of participants to the information on father's role and men's participation in housekeeping?
- Has information sharing happened in the group?
- Have you managed to accomplish everything planned within the given time?

### ***Several Tips on Working with Your Group***

- REMEMBER: You personally are not a 'dads' expert! Do not act as the most competent person. Be yourself. Perceive yourself rather as facilitator than teacher.
- Participants do not know the way a father group 'must operate' because they have no previous benchmark. Use this degree of freedom to create your own father group work style.
- It is good to start a regular meeting with a report. This way you set the framework for the group. It also gives an opportunity for the members to take a seat, adapt to the environment, see each other and understand the situation. Give a summary of the previous meeting and announce the topic of today's one; then launch a 'what's new?' question, so every one will get some words to say.
- Ask a question or offer a statement to be discussed in a group dialogue. It will make every participant to ascertain his individual parental importance. Refer to your experience. Speak in the first person.
- Fundamental values:
  - Child welfare, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - Gender equality
  - The right of both parents to have a parental leave.
- Look at father group as a process. It is better to use the present tense in dialogues.
- Be sensitive and flexible towards the topics fathers want to discuss. At the same time be persistent with regards to the topics you believe are important.
- A question that interests only one participant shall not take up too much time.
- Use the system of home assignments. Give fathers some home work to prepare by the next meeting. Performing the task shall preferably involve mothers.
- Understanding paves the way to knowledge. Do not burry fathers under heaps of facts. Aim at emotional experience and understanding.

The experience shows that when a raised question requires a qualified specialist's assistance, you shall help the asker to make an individual contact with such professional. Avoid confusing two things: arrangements/running a group work with a personalized professional care.

Concluding the section about moderators of Father Schools we strongly hope that our sessions will not look like meetings that everybody wants to leave as soon as possible. Though we will offer you more scenarios how to construct a session but they are not dogmatic even for us. The number of sessions the moderator delivers does not matter as much as the way he organizes his sessions. Our meetings are unique because they bring together participants of various professional backgrounds and different age who came with the sole goal of becoming the best fathers in the world. This is a big bonus to the organizer who should understand this and always consider the following aspects:

- time of the session;
- session's venue;
- a well developed and clear session plan;
- information to the participants about session's duration.

## ***Prevention of Domestic Violence: a Topic of Moderators' Session***

***Father School is a good place for the primary prevention of domestic violence. By studying relations new to them and understanding the gender role men change. It helps them to take more responsibilities in family life. We feel certain that men who take care of their children from day one will never use violence against women or children.***

Considering ways of reducing domestic violence makes us recognize that we must find out how to create a culture and society that do not excuse violence against women or children. It is important to include the discussion of and the prevention of domestic violence into moderator's training. One thing is clear: it is absurd to think that violence will stop by itself without involving men into violence prevention. Father Schools as a part of men's community seek for their way in confronting violence and creating a positive male image.

Our actions include:

- to arrange for discussions in the society;
- to include information on how to prevent conflicts without resorting to violence into father group sessions;
- to present men's group view on gender equality within the local community;
- to cooperate with local legislative and executive authorities in developing measures preventing violence against women and children;
- to organize our own events aimed at changing the custom of silence around domestic violence.

Moderators and leaders of Father Schools take part in public events and discussions on the situation of women and children. This makes an important part of their community work. When discussing family violence, be advised that usually people think of domestic violence as 'wife beating'. However, for us it includes all types of violence against family members and it is wider than just a physical violence. It covers psychological, economical and emotional violence including verbal abuse.

Domestic violence is a serious problem. As you prepare for the session, it is equally important to contact local organizations and services that deal with prevention, to talk to women NGOs and to read special literature.

We know that men are also subjected to violence by other men (fights, hooliganism). However, in our preparation of moderators we focus on preventing domestic violence where - as sad as it may be to acknowledge - men are the source of family violence in the great majority of cases.

This distinctive masculine monopoly over violence in families is a result of raising boys as 'real' men. Domination as a male behavior model is offered to boys not only at home but very often at school too. The model teaches to tolerate aggression, authoritativeness, and rudeness. By their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday our young men have already formed this myth-based notion of a 'normal' man. Once adult, they easily resort to violence when they think that their domination is questioned or when, in their opinion, woman does things she cannot.

With this in mind we offer our strategy of changing the attitude to domestic violence:

- offer general information on domestic violence and its sources to group participants;
- encourage empathy towards violence victims and show how violence is used to demonstrate domination in creating a 'real man' model;
- show that violence is unacceptable for us as a behavioral norm.

Discussing personal experiences and individual understanding are a crucial part in discussing the topic of domestic violence. As you examine cases, review non-violent ways of resolving a conflict and stimulate group participants to give their own examples. You may also construct discussions of violence by talking about relations with wife and the importance of love and trust environment for child's development.

Concluding this section we would like to add that violence against women and children will be eliminated only once the understanding of 'gender' (especially by men) and 'gender relations' has radically changed in the society.

## ***'Gender Equality and Gender Discrimination': a Topic of Moderators' Session***

A human being cannot choose whether to be born a man or a woman. However, very often one's life is forever determined by the gender. From the very childhood boys and girls are dressed differently based on their sex. Similarly to that boys and girls are obliged to follow different behavior norms.

Let us compare things we say to boys and to girls. 'Be a boy, hit back!' (These words can in fact form a foundation of future aggressive behavior). 'Stop crying like a girl!' (How do you think boys will treat girls after the message? Would not they think of them as cry babies and inferior persons?) 'Be tidy, do not get dirty, be a girl!' (Does it mean that boys shall not stay tidy and clean?) 'Be quiet and modest as a girl should be'. (And if this girl is brave and proactive, is it bad?)

What else do we say to our children? These are the messages family and people around children use to teach them different behavior norms. The norms are determined by sex. The established norms are encouraged and supported by all society institutions like kindergarten, school, army and various state agencies. Culture also plays a significant role in the process through books, movies, printed media and TV.

This is how the stereotyped masculine and feminine roles are gradually formed. However, both the society and its actors believe the roles are inborn in men and women. In reality we inherit only our biological sex as anatomical and physiological specifics, for example, the external sexual characters and the reproductive function (i.e., a capacity to conceive and to bear children). Nobody will that men and women are different at this level. Men cannot deliver children though as a rule they are taller and stronger. The biological sex is accompanied by the social gender. Gender means sex as a socially determined notion and phenomenon.

Men and women are a cultural product of their society. One's sense of belonging to his/her gender is developed through one's life when the person learns behavior standards that would determine him or her being a man or a woman. We are molded into gender roles by:

- clothes and behavior (even very small boys and girls are dressed differently and have different toys; later they would have different family obligations);
- focusing on the development of different psychological qualities (family and school encourage the development of some and the suppression of other qualities; the set is different for boys and girls);
- developing capacities of young women and men in different domains;
- setting barriers for men and women to engage in certain activities, etc.

This is how traditional male and female gender-based roles are formed. The biological sex and its functions stay intact along time/space vector. The gender and its parameters, on the contrary, change. One hundred years ago scientists in all earnestness discussed whether women could study mathematics and came to a conclusion that a woman would lose a child bearing ability if she had obtained a higher education. Unfortunately, as of today, different states provide different opportunities of self-fulfillment to men and women. There is a huge difference between the position of women in Ukraine and, for instance, in Afghanistan. At the same time men in this country and men in Canada have very different opportunities for participating in the upbringing of their children (unfortunately, the comparison is not to our advantage). Consequently, the differences in men's and women's positions we observe in different countries and at different times are gender-based.

Gender-determined behaviors are constantly reinforced by social expectations of people around us. Societies execute a gender control by formally or informally encouraging and rewarding the 'right' behavior and by punishing with shame, social isolation and contempt behaviors deviating from the frame of masculine or feminine roles. We can talk about the existence of a gender-based ideology that justifies current gender stereotypes. It also rationalizes different assessments of these stereotypes and claims that such assessments are natural. Often times the gender ideology is subconscious but it exists, visibly impacts our life and shapes views of the majority of people. The ideology dictates different scenarios of sexual behavior. A potent sexual drive and sexual aggressiveness are permitted in men while women are treated as a passive sexual object which can be sexually exploited. It means the society practices a double moral standard, i.e., one for men and a very different one for women. In fact, both standards are unnatural and artificial. Ask your group participants what qualities are considered 'masculine' and 'feminine'. Write down two lists and compare the results:





**Photo: Gender stereotypes session for leaders of Father Schools in Russia.**

These roles cause a gender-based division of labor: a situation when production labor and house keeping are assigned on a sex basis. In this case men usually occupy positions of higher prestige and better payment at the commercial sector and in government agencies while women work around the house. Generally there is a tacit ban on certain professions for men and women.

Which professions are considered 'masculine' and which are viewed as 'feminine'? Why? How does society treat a woman with a 'men's' profession? And vice versa, what faces a man who has chosen a 'female's' occupation? Of course, in this country a woman can serve in the special forces and get to the major's rank though she would apply measurably bigger efforts than a man. Nothing in the law prohibits a man to work as a nanny in a kindergarten but chances to be hired are slim. St. Petersburg, a city with millions of population, has only 2 men employed in this capacity. The same negative public opinion face men who decided to devote their life to child caring and homemaking while his wife works. Why? The society expects men to strive for work and carrier as the main drivers of their life and believes that home and family are prime occupations of women.

How have these qualities grown into humans and now claimed to be given to men and women by Mother Nature? Gender stereotypes create invisible but very much felt barriers holding men and women back from self-fulfillment and infringing on their human rights.

What are gender stereotypes? The word 'stereotype' is made by uniting two Greek words: 'stereos' (means 'hard') and 'typos' (means 'reflection'). The word translates as a simplistic, schematic and very often distorted perception of something or somebody. By using stereotypes we simplify or generalize what we see in other person or his/her behavior. For example, we may say that all women are emotional and all real men must control emotions. All girls are delicate and all boys are rough, etc. In other words stereotypes are simplified and highly generalized conceptions and clichés. People resort to them in order to have a rough understanding of a phenomenon which requires a bigger intellectual effort. Gender stereotypes reflect society's views on behaviors expected of men and women. Thus, gender stereotypes denote our understanding of traditional masculine and feminine gender-based roles.

In what way do gender stereotypes harm humanity? Gender stereotypes trap us into false conclusions that sex-based differences have more significance and substance than differences between individuals and personalities.

The myths circulating in society impair and reduce the capacity to realize our diverse human potential. They infringe on personal rights and lead to gender discrimination when human rights are violated on the basis of sex. Do we mean that women must reject family over work and career while their husbands must quit jobs? Of course, not. We just say that humans are deprived of a free choice. However, being a free individual at a constitutional state he or she shall be free to choose an individual life path. Are you aware how public opinion imposes a preconception that a woman can be happy only having realized herself as a mother; that a woman cannot make a good manager, businessman or politician? And vice versa, that a man does not fit into kitchen, next to his child, in kindergarten, taking care of disabled or retired?

Lastly we would like to describe two approaches which highlight gender discrimination in society. Constitutions of our countries proclaim equal rights of women and men. Hardly any international legal document goes without a reference to 'gender'. Our countries adopt national state-sponsored programs where 'gender' is mentioned; state agencies are set up to help humans to realize their potential in society. However, at the same time we see that women's position in society suffers from economic problems. The majority of unemployed are women. Females are 'washed down' into lower paid and unpromising jobs. The patriarchal stereotype that 'women are designed for home and family' is being actively revived. At the same time men are still detached from their families and do not view the family as their asset. This resulted in a demographic crisis and the decay of family. Gender discrimination hinders country's economic growth and suppresses national welfare.

As it is often the case we face a terminology problem as we develop materials to be used in trainings. Terms and notions in the specialized literature are either little known or interpreted in a number of ways. This challenge impedes a thorough understanding of the issues. Besides, many of the terms and conceptions are difficult to translate from English into other languages! We thought it would be helpful to offer here an international glossary with the adaptation of the terms by professionals of the Regional Center for Europe and CIS of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). For the first time the glossary was published in the *Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Toolkit* (we used the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of 2007 by UNDP Regional Center).

### ***Glossary of Main Terms Related to Gender Approach***

***Gender and Sex.*** Usually, sex is understood to refer to the biological difference between male and female bodies. Gender, on the other hand, refers to the sociologically-and culturally based distinction between men and women. One's gender is therefore most often comprised of those roles and attributes that are not purely 'natural' or biologically determined, but are rather dictated by norms and traditions. Because gender is not biologically given, the attributes of both male and female gender can (and do) change over time and across cultures.

***Gender Analysis.*** Also referred to as *gender-sensitive*, *gender-based* or *gender-aware* analysis, this is analysis that (a) makes visible any disparities between genders and (b) analyses these disparities according to established sociological (or other) theories about gender relations.

***Gender-Sensitive analysis.*** This term reminds us that gender differences are not always obvious. One should be especially sensitive to identify and use them in lawmaking and practical activity.

***Gender Balance.*** The concept 'gender balance' identifies men-women ratio in a particular situation. It suggests that gender balance is achieved only when men and women equally participate in a certain activity. In some cases this is described as gender parity.

***Gender-based violence*** means any act of violence which results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or inflicts sufferings to a woman. This includes also threatening with such acts, using force or accidental deprivation of liberty which may occur in social or private life.

***Gender-blindness*** refers to ignoring differences between male and female socially prescribed roles, responsibility and opportunities. Gender-blind policy is based on the information relating only to male activity and/or presumes that everybody under this course has the same (male) needs and interests.

***Gender Equality:*** equality is present when men and women have socially equal status, enjoy equal rights and responsibility and have equal chances (equal access to resources and opportunities) to use them.

**Gender Equity** means equitable treatment of men and women. For reaching equity it is often required to take measures which would compensate for historic and social barriers that prevented men and women from acting otherwise on a common playing field. Equity leads to equality.

**Gender-neutral:** gender-neutral strategies are not aimed at men or women specifically. It is presumed that they equally influence representatives of both sexes. However, in practice they may become gender-blind.

**Gender Perspective or Gender Lens:** using a 'gender perspective' means considering a certain issue in the context of different implications of a decision to be made or measures to be taken for men and for women. The process is also called issue examination through a gender lens, this implying that a filter (or a lens) highlights existing or potential differences between men and women.

**Gender Relations** mean social relations and distribution of authority between men and women in private and public realms.

**Gender Roles** represent the roles prescribed to men and women according to cultural norms and traditions. Mostly, gender roles are based not on biological and physical qualities but rather on stereotypes and suppositions on what men and women can and must do. Problems in the issue relating to gender roles arise when the society attributes higher value to the role of one sex – as a rule, to men.

**Gender Stereotypes:** gender stereotypes stem from conceptions (mostly old-fashioned) about male and female roles, opportunities and distinctive features. While in some cases these conceptions are based on real grounds, their soundness turn out to be quite questionable when applied to all men and women in all situations. This results in the formation of physical and psychological obstacles, which prevent men and women from making free choice and realizing their rights in full.

**Disaggregation by Sex, Gender disaggregation:** the term relates to statistical data or some other information, the collection and use of which is performed with disaggregation (detailing) by sex for separately demonstrating the effect of a certain event or phenomenon on men and women.

**Decent work** means business activity ensuring employees' rights protection and guaranteeing adequate income and adequate social protection. The primary task of the International Labor Organization (ILO) is to support opportunities for women and men to find decent and productive work (both in the formal and informal sector), with freedom, equity, safety and respect for human dignity being observed.

**Discrimination:**

**Direct discrimination** occurs when under similar conditions different people are treated differently based upon their sex.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when seemingly neutral position, criterion or activity may leave a person at a disadvantage on grounds of sex, except for the cases when general practice is substantiated by objective legitimate purposes while means towards these ends match the necessity.

**Violence against women** refers to any cruel act which results in or may cause physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering to a woman. This includes threatening with such acts, using force or deprivation of liberty which may occur in social or private life.

Violence against women involves but is not limited by the following:

- physical, sexual and psychological violence in a family, including bodily blows, sexual domestic violence against female children, violence as a part of dowry (ransom), marital violence, injury of female genital organs and other traditional forms of cruel acts against women, cruelty outside family life and exploitative cruelty;
- physical, sexual and psychological violence in a community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation (at work, including educational institutions and other places), human traffic and white slavery;
- physical, sexual and psychological violence committed by the state or with its connivance, wherever it occurs.

**Reproductive Health** means not merely absence of any diseases or weakness but the state of absolute physical, mental and social well-being in all that concerns the reproductive system, its functions and processes. Thus, the

concept 'reproductive health' implies a possibility for everyone to enjoy proper and safe sexual life, have a family and right to a free choice whether to have children, when and how many.

**Reproductive Work** means household work (often performed by women), which is not recompensed and not included into gross domestic product. This refers to sustaining the vital activity of social and family structures on which productive labor depends. This concept can also be defined by the expressions 'reproductive labor' or 'social reproduction'.

**Sexual harassment:** this term implies unwelcome sexual interest infringing personal security. This includes demanding sexual services, hostile or humiliating utterances or touches. This is a form of discrimination and abuse of office.

**Socialization** means that individuals learn to accept and perform functions and roles prescribed by the society. In the process of socialization, men and women learn to perform different social roles from birth. The formation of different roles and expectations for men and women is the main distinctive feature of gender socialization in most societies.

**The glass ceiling** refers to obstacles which do not allow women to occupy high posts both in private and public institutions. Thus, this term pertains to political, official, legal, social and economic areas. The word 'glass' is used here as these obstacles are practically invisible and are usually connected with maintaining the prevalent structure in an institution as opposed to an open and transparent system of career advancement opportunities for women and men.

**Engendering:** shows how differently events influence individuals depending on their sex as well as how individuals' sex influence certain events. Engendering also means acknowledging the fact that labor differentiation on the grounds of sex and relevant norms, values and opinions on prescriptive femininity and masculinity, are determined by the distribution of authoritative relations between sexes. Existing distribution makes women's voices less audible, diminishes the significance of their contribution into the society's cultural and social life, restricts their access to resources and control over them. Authoritative relations between sexes differ depending on historical and religious context. Besides, they are influenced by other social relations between classes, castes, ethnical groups or races inside a society.

## **STEP 3: Working with Father groups**

### ***Introduction to the Program***

The suggested materials are intended to help a father group moderator to organize classes for fathers-to-be. Having worked with expectant father groups we noticed that most men wish to take an active part in child upbringing but often do not know how to act in various situations and with whom to discuss arising problems. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that working with a group is not about lecturing. It means active discussions by all participants of subjects and issues proposed by the moderator.

Although each session plan includes providing some information to participants, studying and discussing of various situations, the group leader should not try to teach participants how to 'correctly' manage their lives or how to act in their families and with their children. Our work method is based on participants' sharing their personal experiences and opinions by discussing father's role in child's life.

A session plan offers a mere frame made of questions and topics. While getting prepared, the moderator should find some relevant information and use the frame to guide the discussion. As we have already mentioned, you may add your exercises and assignments. The important thing is to keep in mind the general objective that is to make men active participants in their children's life from its very beginning. At the end of each session plan you will find some information gathered by moderators of various groups which you can also use for your classes.

Each session consists of four parts:

- opening, exchanging of information;
- one or several exercises that require active involvement of all participants;
- discussion;
- summary.

The first half of the session is used to discuss topics proposed by the father group moderator. At the same time, participants are encouraged to propose their topics for discussion. For example, on one occasion participants showed their interest in vertical childbirth. By the next session all participants gathered information on and discussed the subject.

The last half of the session is used to discuss questions, ideas and topics of the agenda. An active discussion helps participants to achieve a fuller understanding of the subject. The moderator's role is to select the most interesting topics. If a discussion is waning, a new aspect or a new topic should be proposed. The discussion should not be aborted if giving more time would promote a group unity and the realization of its potential.

When you plan operations of your father group you must take care of certain practical arrangements.

### ***Arranging a Venue for Classes***

Such aspects as site's location and the availability of necessary equipment and rooms for evening and week-end classes for working men are of high practical importance. The best would be to run the group at a socially important organization. It could be a community oriented institution (for example, a district center of social assistance to family and children), a nonprofit organization serving the population, etc. The local community knows about such places and this will help you with enrolling participants into your groups.

Maternity welfare centers hold a specific position in the list of possible venues. On the one hand, it is easier to find expectant fathers through them. On the other hand, in a women's Center men may feel themselves being a 'supplement' to their expectant wives.

Some of these organizations may be interested in additional advertising of their work and in new types of social assistance (especially, such uncommon as yours). They may be ready to employ you.

Undoubtedly, this will be quite helpful for promoting your activity. However, you should know about the reverse of the medal: you may become dependent on the institution management. As a result, they will dictate the way your father group should operate. In future, such situation can lead to losing father groups' creative and democratic style of operations and turn them into a formal or 'educational' lecture-type activity.



It is important to create a comfortable atmosphere for participants because it would mean an optimal environment for group work. For this, introductory meetings with future father group participants should be held in the room where sessions are to be organized.

***'Please, make the waiting area comfortable and change this 'girlish' pink color in the corridors!'***  
***Comment by a male visitor of a medical Center***

A room where classes are to be held should have a table, chairs and a hot and cold water dispenser. When you choose the site ensure the following:

- geographical accessibility. The place should have a convenient location;
- comfortable conditions. Participants should know the location of the smoking area and men's room;
- during classes no one can enter the room except for group participants;
- no noise or loud music should interrupt classes. Participants should be able to quietly discuss agenda topics without having to raise their voices;
- father group participants should be informed about the institution hosting the classes. For example, if sessions are held in a district Center of social assistance to family and children, it will be useful to inform the participants about the social aid they and their family can get here on an individual basis.

### ***Organizing the Classes***

A father group may include 6 to 9 participants. We believe that the number of participants should not exceed 9 (with moderators). A higher count may break a group into mini-groups which will impede joint operations. On the other hand, a group consisting of less than 5 men is ineffective for organizing discussions.

As a rule, two moderators run the classes. One is a permanent leader and the other is a fellow-moderator who was a participant in the previous group. This co-moderator has a very important quality: new experience. Comments by the man who just recently became a father have a high qualitative significance for all group participants. The permanent instructor chooses whom he invites to sessions.

A father group session continues for 2-2.5 hours. However, it should be noted that sometimes our classes lasted between 3 and 4 hours. In some cases a break is possible. The number of smokers should be taken into consideration and the time for break should be set and agreed in advance.

The group moderator should maintain contacts with the participants, monitor their attendance and organize sessions by coordinating their dates and time. As a rule, the date of the next meeting is set during the previous class. Later on, e-mails and SMS messages are sent to participants, confirming the date and reminding about the coming meeting. If the session date is changed, a new one should be agreed by all participants.

The proposed Sessions' Plan is just a sketch. Therefore, you would need to make some additional preparations for the suggested topics and think about your own questions and tasks for participants.

Before each meeting, you should develop your own plan. Allot the time for discussing a topic or doing exercises based on your knowledge of the group and on the availability of necessary materials.

### ***Invited experts***

During sessions you may have to deal with questions which you will not be able to answer due the lack of professional knowledge. Most often these are medical questions.

In such cases we recommend inviting qualified experts: obstetricians-gynecologists, pediatricians, family psychologists, etc. It is preferable to invite a male expert to maintain the 'male spirit' of the group and to enable the participants to speak more openly and ask questions which they would hardly ask a female expert.

Before the invited expert meets your group, tell him about your program, ask about his opinion on the subject and make him voice his convictions and viewpoints concerning interfamily relations. If he supports rigid gender-role stereotypes, make sure that he will not speak about them with group participants. Otherwise, this can undermine your efforts to convert your men into full-fledged participants in the birth and upbringing of their children.

Once, during a father group meeting, we had an awkward situation. A man-pediatrician with a 25-year experience excitedly spoke about infant care for two hours and concluded with the following, 'Well, actually, I have

no idea why I spoke about this subject in such a detail. The main work should be surely performed by a mummy, while we just hang around'. Therefore, make sure you discuss such nuances beforehand.

### ***Necessary Materials***

Before each session, you should read the offered recommendations and prepare necessary materials. The group moderator should arrive at least 25-30 minutes before the meeting to prepare the room. His fellow-moderator should also come earlier to discuss his participation in group's work.

For meetings we need a flip chart, note pads for the flipchart and markers. At the beginning of each session plan we describe what is required for the class. During classes we often use an anatomic infant-doll. A diapering table, diapers and wet wipes are required for classes on infant care.

Considering the session duration, participants should be able to drink tea or coffee during breaks. If there is no common break for the group, participants decide on their own when they have a bite.

### ***Which Work Format to Choose***

The work should be organized as discussions where you just set the discussion course. A meeting lasts between 2 and 2.5 hours with a short tea/coffee break. Each class should be devoted to a certain but not absolutely mandatory topic. The following chapters will provide you with detailed plans. The plan will prevent you from missing important topics which are usually of concern to fathers-to-be. However, if your group is interested in discussing other subjects, which it considers more important, you should follow the requests. Group needs should be a priority.

Beware of the reverse side of such approach. Sometimes participants get too carried away with practical details of a process. For example, they can ask the facilitator to demonstrate infant swaddling or holding during bathing or bottle-feeding, etc. Undoubtedly, all this is quite important but the relevant information may be easily found in the abundance of available sources. At the same time, it is much more difficult to obtain some moral and psychological support. This is what such groups are meant for: to provide an expectant father with a feeling of unity with other men, to give him self-confidence and to eliminate anxiety and doubts.

Therefore, make sure you find the golden mean between the development of infant care skills and discussions of possible concerns of expectant fathers.

### ***How to Find Father group Participants***

Having a short presentation can be quite helpful in finding future father group participants. You can prepare two versions: a speech and a multimedia presentation (PowerPoint).

A speech is your way to speak about the program directly to men and women who are to become parents. The multimedia presentation is more useful at meetings with the management of institutions where you are going to organize classes, with officials and at other 'formal' situations. For example, you should be ready to demonstrate your work to a district administration which may get interested. Therefore, preparing the presentation in advance is helpful and makes you look professional.

Keep in mind that your sessions are not a training course but rather a series of group meetings. Therefore, the atmosphere should be as democratic and unassuming as possible. The facilitator's role is more about moderating (stimulating) discussions, sometimes setting a topic, but never being a lecturer, 'guru', etc. It is preferable to create a relaxed atmosphere, sincerity and trust between fathers-to-be and provide an opportunity for everyone to raise his questions and share concerns. Ideally, a session should run by itself with the minimum of facilitator's interference.

There are four channels to form the group:

- ***Maternity welfare centers and maternity clinics.*** Information on male groups for future fathers is made available at maternity welfare centers. Doctors are informed about our work during joint meetings. Leaflets and flyers about father groups are distributed. You should use the opportunity and suggest running a joint meeting to the female group facilitator. This can be done, for example, to answer questions concerning gynecology or medicine which men in your group may have. At the same time, your services are sure to be useful for women's group in discussing men's psychology and their possible reactions to the growing family. Thus, cooperation may turn out useful and productive for both sides;

- **Colleagues.** We organize classes jointly with parents clubs, non-government women's organizations, state social services which provide assistance to women in a difficult life situation. Our colleagues organize classes with expectant mothers while their husbands attend father groups;
- **'By word of mouth'**. Some participants had learnt about father groups from their friends, a newspaper or television. This works when classes are run continuously at the same place;
- **The Internet.** Participants living in other districts with no father groups find us through Father School websites and apply for joining the classes.

**Как работает папа-группа**

- встречу группы организует модератор;
- помещения для занятий предоставляют организации, поддерживающие работу Папа-школы в Санкт-Петербурге;
- в работе группы принимают участие только мужчины - будущие папы;
- занятия проходят в вечернее время или в выходной день;
- группа собирается один раз в месяц;
- пять встреч проводятся по общему плану работы папа-группы;
- дополнительные занятия проводятся по заявке группы;
- все занятия для будущих пап бесплатные.

**БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ РЕБЕНКА— МУЖСКАЯ ЗАБОТА**

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**К крепкой семье через ответственное отцовство**

**САНКТ-ПЕТЕРБУРГ**

**Picture: St. Petersburg Father School leaflet. Printed with the support of the St. Petersburg Committee on Social Policy.**

### **Operation Rules**

At the start of the new group participants agree on common rules, including the use of mobile phones during sessions (it should be taken into consideration that all participants have expectant wives), smoking breaks and communication rules.

Group's rules should include the following:

- no curse words;
- no attending of classes under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- no insulting statements related to women and children.

Participants may introduce the rule of 'silence'. The rule allows a participant, who does not feel like joining a discussion at a particular point or has no ideas about a particular subject, to skip the discussion. It is also quite useful if the group decides that there are no silly questions and any question related to the session topic may be raised and discussed. The common rules accepted by the group are necessary to facilitate the achieving of the classes' objectives. The group moderator should make sure that the rules are observed.

Through developing the common rules, participants are offered a model of responsible behavior where each participant undertakes responsibility for its functioning. When during further sessions participants start expressing lots of and sometimes contradictory ideas and suggestions, these jointly accepted rules will help to maintain mutual respect within the group.

Rules should be set for group moderators as well. For example, when St. Petersburg University sociologists worked with group participants or when father group participants were invited to take part in a TV program, it was done only after having received participants' agreement. Inviting persons who are not group members is possible only after a preliminary discussion with the group.

### **Feedback**

*'Actually, it took me about a week to learn how to swaddle my baby. That was not difficult. I learned pretty fast all other things. But if I had joined your group earlier, before the baby was born, everything would have been so much easier for me morally. You are doing the right thing.'*  
*Yevgeny, father of a 3-month old son. Feedback at the end of group sessions.*

Knowing how group participants assess the sessions helps to introduce necessary corrections, to make classes more productive and to meet expectant fathers' key needs. Occasionally getting a feed back about your leadership could be also quite useful.

To this end we suggest using a standard printed questionnaire. If you would like a deeper analysis of your work, you can organize this survey twice: at the beginning of the first meeting and after the classes are finished. Thus, you will be able to compare the results and find out whether any changes indeed happened (and what changes) after the participants have completed the whole course.

In fact, you can just hand out empty sheets of paper and ask participants to write down their impression on the attended classes and specify the topics they consider quite important but which were not covered by the course. Sometimes, such feedback may provide much more valuable information than answers limited by standard questionnaires.

### **Number of Sessions**

Five main sessions are organized for each group. The sessions cover the following topics:

**Becoming a Father.** We believe that it is important to support men who decided to be present at their child birth. This subject is discussed with fathers who attended their childbirth in maternity clinics. They tell how to behave and respond according to the evolving situation.

**The First Days.** The first days after the birth are a special time of life. Not being able to plan their meals or sleep comes as an absolutely new experience almost for all first time parents. During our classes we help men to realize themselves in the new father's role and learn to plan their time considering mother's and baby's interests.

**The First Month.** We speak how a man can act as the pylon for mother-baby relations. Many men feel themselves outsiders in these relations. However, men are needed to enable an easy start of breastfeeding for mothers. In classes we try to help fathers to find their own way of establishing close relations with the baby, for example, via bathing and massaging. Quite often babies cry because they need attention and warmth and not because they are hungry. And fathers can give this to their child just as good as mothers.

**Father's Care.** Most of today's fathers are more involved in taking care and upbringing of their children than previous generations of men. This is important both for the father and for the child as it is during this period men grow used to their parental role. During the session we discuss father's role in child's life.

**Parents' New Life.** At the class we speak about a new family composition and distribution of family duties.

Additional classes may be organized on topics suggested by expectant fathers. These can include 'Child's Safety', 'Postpartum Depression' or meetings with experts, as a rule, with pediatricians from children's outpatient facilities and psychologists.

**TIPS:**

### **Can the program be changed?**

The developed program ensures the course coherence and continuity for participants, keeping up the Father School's concept and a unified approach to presenting the information. The offered knowledge frame is a guide for group moderators. We do not regard this frame as self-sufficient. Being the group leader you are free to add your own observations and materials. An independent development of additional classes would be even more productive. If you feel a need to improve the suggested session plan, we recommend you thinking along the following lines:

- To what extent do the proposed topics correspond to my experience?
- What is the participants' attitude to the proposed topic? Are they interested in a group discussion of these particular proposals?
- Do the participants take responsibility for the group's work? Do I need to provide more opportunities for joint discussions in the class?

You should take into consideration the dates when children are expected to be born to group participants. The moderator may change the session agenda and encourage active new fathers to share their experience. Thus, it is important to take the advantage of situations when participants themselves become information sources, which serves as a basis for changes. Also, participants' ethnic and cultural traditions should be taken into account.

Adding a topic. An active group initiates topics for additional classes. You should not miss such an opportunity. It is only necessary to determine whether this is going to be a part of a planned session or a separate extra session organized by the participants.

### ***Can guests be invited?***

We assume that all classes are delivered by the father group moderator. But some situations may require participation of guests. This could be an interesting speaker invited by the moderator or an expert on the topic which interested the group. The moderator should know these people and they should be competent in the proposed topic. We suggest organizing guest's involvement in two ways:

- replacing the group's moderator (or his fellow-instructor);
- using part of the class to lecture on the proposed subject.

The practice of regular guests may break the group and lead to a failure in achieving its goals. Combining sessions with trainings not related to the planned topic is unacceptable.

### ***Should there be any reporting?***

This depends on the conditions of your using the premises, etc. For example, maternity centers are interested in including information on the organized classes into their reports. State social institutions are interested in obtaining information on your clients participating in group's work. In any case, you should follow local requirements on reporting.

### ***Does the ethnic origin influence a father group operation?***

Father School program is a unique format because it can be applied in different cultural and ethnic environments. In fact, it is perfect when group participants may speak about different cultural traditions and ethnic heritage and when they understand the special role their origin plays in sharing knowledge and experience. Discussions of ethnic traditions may lead to some disputes. The moderator should steer the group to work in a constructive and nonjudgmental way in order to help participants to find common ground.

The multi-national group moderator should:

- understand the existence of different ethnic traditions and stereotypes related to them;
- respect unwillingness of ethnic group representatives to discuss certain subjects;
- be attentive to group participants who are not fluent in the group language;
- avoid stereotypes as each stereotype denies individuality and right to diversity.





**Photo: Joint sessions of Father School attendees organized by Mats Berggren**

### ***What should be done when participants stop attending classes?***

The moderator should continue working with the remaining participants. This is likely to entail some corrections in the session plan in terms of time. It is OK. Once we had a group where only two participants stayed to the end but they completed the whole course.

In such situations it is important to contact absentees to find the reason for skipping the classes. If the participant fell ill, the moderator should discuss the plan of his participation by, for example, briefing him on the missed class and its topics.

If a significant number of participants is absent, the meeting's character changes. Therefore, it is important to introduce timely corrections into the plans. Absenteeism is a signal to the moderator to review his group structure and work practices. You may have failed to choose the right time for classes or to accommodate participants' busy schedules. You should evaluate your work efficiency as well as understand what organizational aspects should be changed.

### **Potential Challenges**

You may face certain challenges when you run a father group (or any other group for that matter).

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Solution</b>
Aggressive behavior of a participant.	Let the group react to this.
Passive behavior of group participants.	Personally pose questions to these individuals, encourage participants' activity and organize an active exercise.
Negative opinion of one participant on the session topic.	Find out whether this opinion is shared by others and modify the topic, if necessary
The scenario you conceived for the group meeting is not working.	Any group meeting is about creative communication and you should not confine it and yourself to the strict scenario.
Participants are talking with each other and pay no attention to you.	The discussed topic may be of no interest or participants are tired. Change the subject, do a warm-up exercise or make a break.
You do not like the group.	You might have formed the group's image prior to starting the work. You may have excessive expectations about the group. A real pleasure can be found only if you have a realistic view of the group you work with.
One of group participants monopolizes the right to speak.	You should tactfully thank him for his opinion and address the question to the other (less active) participant.
You feel nervous before sessions.	This is normal. You should focus on the pleasure you can get from working with the group.
You feel exhausted after a session.	This may indicate a mismatch between the state of the facilitator and the state of his group. The facilitator spends energy to overcome the confrontation.

# Materials for Organizing Classes with Groups of New Fathers

## SESSION 1

### TOPIC: BECOMING A FATHER

#### *SESSION PLAN:*

<b>1. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION</b>	<b>15 minutes</b>
<b>2. GETTING ACQUAINTED</b>	<b>10-15 minutes</b>
<b>3. BECOMING A FATHER</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
<b>4. PARTNER ATTENDED BIRTH</b>	<b>30 minutes</b>
<b>5. LIFE PUZZLE</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>
<b>6. ENDING THE SESSION</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>

#### *NECESSARY MATERIALS:*

Flip chart

A pad for flip charts

Markers

A4 paper (10-20 sheets)

Pens

Pencils

#### *INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION*

The moderator should begin the first session by introducing himself and telling the group about himself and his family. Then, the moderator should describe the Program and its objectives:

- the Program is intended for men who are to become fathers; it will develop skills in taking care of infants;
- during the class participants will learn practical aspects of baby care and share experiences useful in family life.

Participants will be informed about the organizations that helped to organize operations of the group.

You should tell participants about the tentative Session Plan and what they are going to do during the meetings.

Write down what else you would like to speak about during the first meeting:

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**GETTING ACQUAINTED**

Ask participants to introduce themselves. Make a list of group participants and their contacts.

Participants introduce themselves according to the plan:

- his name;
- his wife's name;
- the expected date of birth;
- whether he is going to be present at childbirth.

<b>##</b>	<b>First and Last Names</b>	<b>Mobile phone</b>	<b>e-mail</b>

Discuss the preferable way of contacting group participants. Session confirmation, date change or cancellation can be done via phone, e-mail, etc.

*'When I see that the group is engaged in a conversation and that participants are discussing topics of their concern, I just sit back in my chair and do not intervene.'*  
*Mats Berggren, the author of a Swedish Father School model called Dad for Real.*

## **BECOMING A FATHER**

### **Part 1**

The first session is crucial for the ultimate group successful. During the first meeting and introductions participants should learn about father group ideas and principles.

Start by proposing to formulate common rules. Usually, the rules are about regulating participants' behavior during discussions:

- speaking only for yourself;
- no judgments;
- a break after 40 (60) minutes;
- no attending of classes under the influence of alcohol;
- no smoking or with smoking breaks.

**A TIP: Be careful with proposing to switch off mobile phones. Wives of the group participants are pregnant and they should be able to call their husbands at any time.**

A pad page with the list of formulated rules should be placed on a wall.

The rules should be retained till the last meeting.

The rules may be changed by the collective group decision.

Formulating common rules is a good way to start a general conversation and to involve participants who meet for the first time at the class.

It would be useful to jointly discuss why a certain proposed rule is necessary.

## **BECOMING A FATHER**

### **Part 2**

During this part, we start talking about fatherhood and changes it brings into a man's life. The class duration depends on the number of participants.

The following questions should be discussed with participants:

#### **1. Topic: Fatherhood:**

- Did you plan to have a baby?
- How did you learn that you were to become a father?
- Do you have any experience in taking care of infants?

#### **2. Topic: Your wife's health**

- Do you know stages of pregnancy development?
- Do you attend antenatal classes together with your wife?
- Where do you get information on how to prepare for childbirth?
- Do you discuss with your wife how her pregnancy proceeds?
- Are you planning to participate in the childbirth?

#### **3. Topic: Becoming a father.** With whom did you discuss the news that you are going to be a father:

- with your father;
- with your colleagues;
- with your friends;
- with your relatives;
- what are you expecting?

## ***PARTICIPATION IN THE CHILDBIRTH***

During the class, you should support fathers' interest to be present at their childbirth. Not everyone is ready to participate in the childbirth. Considering whether to enter the delivery room or not, men often hesitate between the wish to be by their laboring wife and fears that watching the wife giving birth will be unpleasant.

If possible, you should invite a man, who participated in the birth, to the class and discuss the subject with the group.

### **Topics for discussion:**

- What do I know about participatory childbirth?
- Do I have any friends who were present at birth?
- Have you discussed with you wife your possible participation in childbirth?
- There is an opinion that men faint in delivery room. Do you know of such cases?
- They say that men present at childbirth lose sexual desire for their wives. What do you think about this?
- Do you know how participation in childbirth is organized?
- Why do men participate in childbirth?
- Does father's presence in delivery room influence doctors' attention to mother and baby?
- Have you ever attended classes preparing to participatory childbirth?
- How do you plan to use your time after the baby is born?
- Do you plan to take a short leave from your job?

If you have an Internet access, you can show your group an instructional film demonstrating participation in childbirth: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEIeX-Mcew>

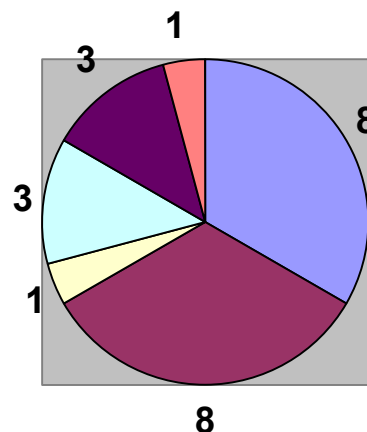
## ***LIFE PUZZLE***

Here is a group good exercise. On a flip chart pad draw a circle that represents 24 hours.

Participants are asked to schematically allocate times spent on different activities. It is better to start with work time that is more standard (about 7 to 8 hours) followed by:

- time for sleep;
- time for meals;
- time for communicating with relatives/friends;
- time for entertainment (TV, computer, etc.);
- time for housekeeping.

The result may look like this:





Having completed the puzzle the participants are suggested to determine the time they are going to give to their child and to include this time into the puzzle.

It is quite important to use this opportunity and discuss changes in their family life once the child is born. Note which parameters participants cut down as they look for time reserves. The exercise enables participants to start thinking about and get better prepared for the coming life changes.

Later, once the babies arrive, you may suggest drawing a similar puzzle for their wife's time. Such exercise helps to dismiss statements like 'she does nothing just stays at home with the baby'. Fathers begin to better understand what their wife does and how busy she is taking care of their baby.

You should keep the earlier drawn puzzle by the end of the course to analyze the changes that have happened:

- How do you allocate your personal time now?
- What inner reserves have you found for sleep?
- Do you have any private time?
- Do you have enough time for communicating with your friends?
- What would you add into the puzzle?

Write down participants' thoughts:

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## ***RARELY DISCUSSED SUBJECTS***

You will often hear that fatherhood will transform your life. But what does it mean in practice?

Discuss the following subjects with the group:

### **Changing the roles:**

- How do participants see themselves as fathers?
- What is to change in their life?
- Does fatherhood involve bringing up a child or only providing for the family?

### **Changing the rhythm:**

- Along with the joy of fatherhood a child brings sleepless nights. How do participants plan to share the time in baby care?
- Are they ready to get up at night to soothe the baby?
- How can fathers help mothers with nursing at night?

### **Sex after giving birth:**

- How will your sex life change after the childbirth?
- How to get through the period of sexual abstinence?
- How soon can you resume having sex?

### **Financial aspect:**

Baby's arrival increase expenses and reduces family income.

- How do you plan your family budget?
- Which expenses can be cut down?
- Will taking a loan during maternity leave really help the family?
- How much money will you have to spend on children's clothes?
- On what items can you save money?

- Eating out or at home?

When do you think mother can return to work? Should she use up the whole leave or can you share it with her?

### ***ENDING THE CLASS***

The goal of an ending exercise is to let participants share their thoughts about the session.

Ask each participant:

- to comment his feelings
- to name one topic that seems most important in today's class.

Present the next session agenda. Participants may have suggestions and questions concerning it. Remind them the next class date and time.

Write down their suggestions:

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### ***HOME ASSIGNMENT***

Sometimes at our sessions we offer home assignment. The results of home assignments are jointly discussed during the next class.

A recommended home assignment after the first class:

'Talk with your father or with any of your elder male relatives about their experience of becoming a father'.

### ***INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR***

#### ***Mini-Lecture: Participating in Your Childbirth***

The presence of one's partner at childbirth can work miracles! Labor is considered a natural continuation of a relationship between man and woman. If during this critical period she hears his words of love and support, she stays calm. This prevents the development of stress that is one of main causes in labor discoordination and, hence, of various complications.

Studies of pain syndrome at labor show that when baby's father is present and provides the needed emotional support, the woman calms down and copes with emotions. It also reduces the analgesia dose and decreases the number of women who report to feel panic, emotional exhaust and unbearable pain.

If we create an environment which would require a minimal control from the mind of the laboring woman, she will easily enter into a state to give birth naturally, without interventions and guided by instincts. This state, free of environmental impacts and mental strain, ensures a balanced secretion of hormones released during childbirth and permits to consider labor an expression of feminine sexuality. Therefore, partner's support, especially provided by her man, is so important during childbirth and many women quite naturally ask for the presence of their close ones at birth.

The partner will provide psychological and other non-medical help during birth. The participation of the father allows to display his proactive paternity. This starts during pregnancy: he tries to understand how his pregnant wife feels, learns to communicate with his future baby and attends antenatal classes. For such a man, participation in childbirth will be quite a logical and natural step in his becoming a father.

Psychologically, emotions experienced during childbirth are defined as peak: the emotional perception of an important event blocks its physiological aspect. The child birth is viewed a triumphal result of the hard joint work, therefore, most often fathers are overtaken with the dominating emotions of rapture and admiration despite the baby's specific appearance.

The main criteria for man's participation in childbirth are:

- woman's willingness and agreement;
- her partner's willingness and agreement;
- preparation to participating in childbirth;
- acceptance by medical staff plus coordinated actions of all participants. A decision to have participatory childbirth must be joint, well-thought and accepted by both partners.

### ***Labor Pain Relief Techniques***

At antenatal classes future parents learn different labor pain relief techniques (breathing, poses, relaxation, massage and acupressure). It is important to learn how to use at least one of them. During classes women choose a preferable technique and men learn how to practice it. The following techniques can help women to cope with pain.

**Breathing exercises** optimize oxygen concentration in the body and help control the body and relieve contractions. When a contraction begins, woman takes a slow deep breath and then exhales. Then, she breathes rhythmically (1-4): inhaling through the nose (at 1) and exhaling through the mouth in several short portions (at 2-3-4) – exhaling at 4 should be a bit longer. Then she takes a short breath and the cycle repeats.

At the same time the father:

- breathes together with his wife,
- makes sure that she channels her efforts downwards and not to the upper part of her body or to her face, and
- helps her to relax between contractions.

**Relaxation** is not just about rest or repose. The strain is exhausting and may cause pain and enhance discomfort. To relax, at the contraction end take a deep breath-in and breath-out. Try to relax all body and face muscles. The better you relax, the more effective next contractions are and, hence, the whole labor effort.

**Position.** If contractions feel very painful in the lower back, woman should find a position to relieve the back pressure.

This could be, for example, leaning forward, staying on her hands and knees, leaning on a table or a chair or hanging by holding round her husband's neck.

Women can ease the pain by:

- softly swinging her hips while keeping her knees wide apart;
- sitting on a big ball during contractions: that helps to effectively relax perineum muscles;
- squatting down at the floor: in this case the uterus stops pressing the spine, blood vessels, the diaphragm and the bowel while abdominal muscles are relaxed;
- sitting cross-legged: abdomen moves forward and gives the spine some rest; pelvic bones move apart and perineum muscles relax. Knees can be moved as wide apart as possible by pressing with bent elbows;
- kneeling down and leaning with her breast against a big ball, bed edge or armchair/sofa back;
- massaging hands and feet, leg muscles, hips, buttocks and shoulders.

### **Massage**

Different massaging techniques for woman's back, legs and abdomen can be used:

- Woman can self-massage her abdomen with both hands, from the bottom (the pubic bone) upwards, on the right and left sides;
- Back massage. The back can be massaged crosswise with fists or open palms. Woman can take a warm shower and place a hot-water bottle (hot wet towel) on her lower back;
- Stroking the abdomen with finger tips of both hands in the rhythm of breathing in and out;
- Pressing with fists the lumbosacral rhomb;
- Massaging prominent parts of iliac bones on the right and on the left;
- Circular massage with hands, starting with hips' inner surface and moving to knees and below;

- Massaging buttocks with fists in screwing motions. During antenatal classes you will learn that depending on contractions intensity, this massage can range from slight stroking to strong pressing.

### ***Father's Bag (packing a hospital bag for husbands)***

Usually, a woman packs her hospital bag according to the list of necessary items written during antenatal classes or at home. But does her man need such a bag and a list if he is going to be present at childbirth? Let me propose a list a father-to-be should consider.

**Something to eat and drink.** Keep in mind that labor and birth may take several hours. Having decided to be present during the birth, make sure you buy in advance what you need. These may be sandwiches, pies cooked by your dear mother-in-law and drinking water (preferably non-carbonated). Find out whether the maternity clinic has a microwave and an electric kettle you can use.

**Phone.** Obviously at that time dozens of people will wait for the news and for your call. They will also keep calling you. You cannot use your mobile phone in the delivery room. If you do not like using a fixed line phone, you may use your mobile phone but outside the delivery room. Your phone conversations should not disturb a laboring woman and obstetricians.

**Photo and video cameras.** Do not overuse your camera. Watching your child's birth through camera lens is not the best option. If you would like to make a movie about the birth of your child, shoot before and after the delivery. Never use flash when you take pictures of the baby. His arrival to the world is quite stressful and a bright flash is extremely harmful for babies.

**Clothing.** You may stay in the maternity clinic for a night or two. It would be better if you do not need to go home to change.

**Music.** If you take a radio or a music player to the maternity clinic, make sure you have a headset. Not everybody will appreciate the latest news or music.

**Champagne.** A child's birth is celebrated at home. If you would like to congratulate your beloved at the clinic, make it a surprise. Do not tell her about it in advance.

# SESSION 2

## TOPIC: FIRST DAYS

### SESSION PLAN:

<b>1. WHAT'S NEW?</b>	<b>15 minutes</b>
<b>2. HOME ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>15-20 minutes</b>
<b>3. BREASTFEEDING</b>	<b>25 minutes</b>
<b>4. HOUSEHOLD DUTIES</b>	<b>30 minutes</b>
<b>5. MY PRIORITIES</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>
<b>6. ENDING THE SESSION</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>

### NECESSARY MATERIALS:

**Flip chart**

**A pad for flip charts**

**Markers (2 colors)**

**A4 paper (10-20 sheets)**

**Pens**

**Pencils**

### WHAT'S NEW?

The second class should start with a question traditional for all future meetings: 'What's new?'

Participants should answer by speaking about:

- how their family life has changed;
- if the baby was born (length, weight, boy or girl, the chosen name);
- how the labor proceeded and whether the father was present at the birth.

Participants exchange views about changes they experience. The moderator shall write down important information on the changes in participants' families.

No.	Participant	What's new?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Ask participants whether they have any suggestions:

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If a new participant has joined the group, introduce him to others. The new member tells the group about himself and when his baby is due.

Briefly summarize the information of the previous meeting. Present the current class topic and identify the changes (if any) in the topic. The second session will be about changes following child's birth and baby safety.

Ask your participants:

- whether any of them would like to say something as a follow-up to the first class;
- to review the earlier formulated rules and whether we need to change anything.

If somebody is absent, after the session find out why and whether he will be able to attend future meetings.

## ***BREASTFEEDING***

**Human breast milk is an ideal baby food.** As you prepare for the session find information on:

- effects of breast milk on baby's growth and development;
- effects of breast milk on baby's immune system;
- whether breast milk composition changes as babies grow;
- how breastfeeding influences the development of facial muscles.

New mothers are quite often concerned about everything related to breastfeeding. As you discuss breastfeeding inform participants that:

- in addition to being baby's food, breastfeeding helps mother's organism to recover after pregnancy and labor;
- women easier lose excess weight gained during pregnancy as breastfeeding burns about 500 calories a day;
- breastfeeding decreases the risk of developing ovarian cancer and some forms of breast cancer;
- it protects from osteoporosis and strengthens bones;
- it helps to prevent postpartum depression.

Breastfeeding ensures a special intimate bond between mother and her baby. Skin-to-skin contact makes baby feel safe and calm.

Artificial feeding cannot replace breast milk in terms of quality.

**Here are some useful advice to mothers:**

- drink enough liquid (water, milk or juice);
- reduce (or better quit altogether) smoking;
- bring your baby to the breast but not vice versa;
- switch to simple healthy food;
- take medicines and vitamins only at doctor's prescription;
- if mother keeps forgetting from which breast she fed the baby, she should attach a pin to her bra or to put a ring on the hand corresponding to the breast which she had given to the baby.

## ***MY HOUSEHOLD DUTIES***

Discuss with participants their household duties:

- What does your newborn need?
- What was bought for your baby?
- What is better: buying new things or using second-hand ones provided by friends or relatives?
- How did you choose your baby stroller?
- What can we make ourselves?
- How are you involved in household duties?
- Do you divide domestic duties into men's and women's?
- What do women's duties involve?
- What do men's duties involve?
- Do you have any experience in housework?

Focus the attention of your discussion on the joint execution and equal sharing of domestic duties between men and women.

As you review case scenarios underline the idea that housework is aimed at making life comfortable for all family members. Therefore, it is a common responsibility. Baby care requires as many efforts from mother as work does from father.

Suggest your participants try staying home with the baby to give their wives time to have a break and go for a walk. During this time fathers should take care of their children alone.

## ***ANY DAD CAN DO IT***

This is a simple and effective exercise which demonstrates that men can cope with baby care as successfully as women.



Divide a paper pad into two columns: 'mother' and 'father'. Ask participants to list

- what mothers do? and write down answers.  
Then ask participants
- what fathers can do? and write down answers.

Compare the lists. Apart from 'giving birth' and 'breastfeeding', both men and women can equally execute all other duties.

Tentatively, a completed table may look as follows:

MOTHER	FATHER
<p>Gives birth</p> <p>Breastfeeds</p> <p>Takes care</p> <p>Educates</p> <p>Takes the baby outdoors</p> <p>Takes the baby to an outpatient children facility</p> <p>Bathes</p> <p>Shops</p> <p>Cooks</p> <p>Cleans</p>	<p><i>As they fill this column participants usually put down comments like:</i></p> <p>- bottle feeding;</p> <p>- difficult to go to the outpatient children facility during work day.</p>

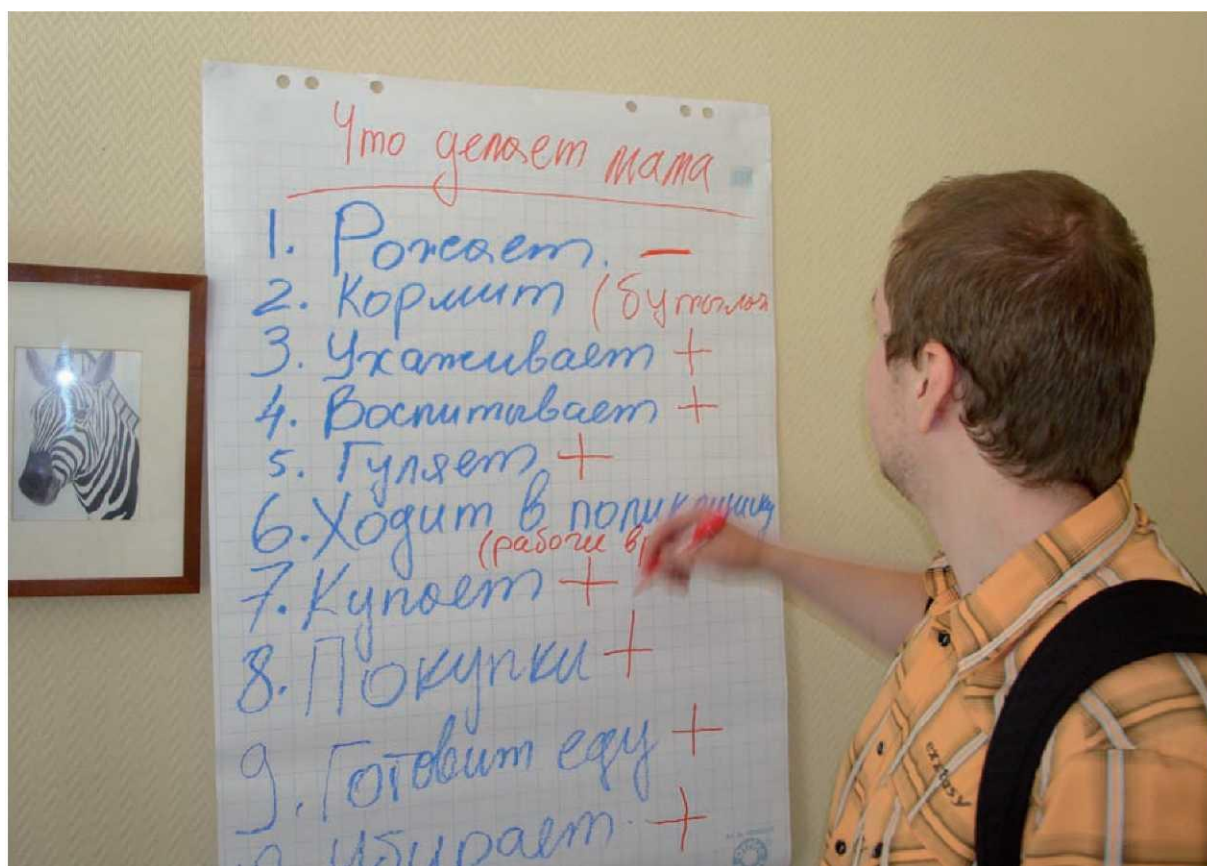


Photo: A group participant is marking out items in the Baby Care List that can be equally done either by mother or father.

## **MY PRIORITIES**

In this class we try to identify priorities in fathers' life and help participants to discuss their concerns. Participants receive pencils and sheets of paper with written life goals.

Participants are asked to grade each item using a five score system where 5 means 'very important', 4 is 'important', 3 is 'neutral', 2 means 'not important' and 1 means 'absolutely unimportant'.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Being rich ...
2. Being famous ...
3. Having many friends ...
4. Having lots of children...
5. Staying in one marriage ...
6. Taking care of my children ...
7. Sharing household duties...
8. Having fun ...
9. Visiting friends ...
10. Being a fan and attending matches to watch the favorite team ...
11. Travelling ...
12. Being socially active ...
13. Having a good car ...
14. Going in for sports ...
15. Having an active sexual life ...
16. Taking care of my health ...
17. Buying a residential real estate ...
18. Taking care of my aged parents ...
19. Shouting at my wife ...
20. Avoiding illnesses ...
21. Having a country house ...
22. Taking my child for a walk ...

Once participants have filled the work sheet ask them:

1. Which goals have you graded as 'very important'? Why?
2. Which goals have you graded as 'neutral'? Why?
3. Which of the 'very important' goals will it be difficult to achieve? Why?
4. Which 'very important' goals would you add to the list?
5. What goals would you want your children to achieve?
6. As a parent, how can you influence achieving of the goals by your children?
7. Would you want your children to have different goals?

## **FIRST TIME**

All parents learn how to communicate with their child but all of them once did it for first time. One day it will happen that your wife will have to go and leave you alone with the baby. Discuss with participants some recommendations on how fathers should get better prepared for taking care of the baby.

### **Make sure you have supplies**

Various things are needed to make babies comfortable. Before the baby is left in your care, ensure that you have:

- A sufficient supply of diapers;
- wet wipes;
- baby powder;
- enough expressed breast milk;
- if your baby is bottle-fed, make sure that you have enough formula so the child won't feel hungry.

**Timer**

If you stay with the baby for a longer period, you will need a reminder about feeding times and for checking a diaper at least once per hour.

**Keeping calm**

- always keep calm;
- we all started from learning how to do it;
- it is impossible to be skilled at everything.

**Patience**

- it may take a long time for your small baby to fall asleep;
- he may keep whimpering especially if you rarely hold or took care of him;
- diapers will always smell;
- your baby is sure to wet you and to posset at the most unexpected moment.

The only advice: be patient.

**Attention**

Follow the signals you baby gives you. If he cries, try feeding him. He may be hungry. Check the diaper, it may be wet.

If the baby has a hard time falling asleep, just recall how his mother lulls him. Try rocking him the way she does.

Make sure the music is not too loud.

**Plans**

If you stay with your baby for a long time, change your plans:

- you should not watch movies or sport programs;
- you should avoid working on your computer or playing computer games;
- cancel your physical exercises;
- do not start cooking lunch or dinner as you may get immersed into these activities and lose control over the baby.

**Don't feel shy**

Knowing everything is wonderful. However, if you feel concerned about something, do not feel embarrassed to call your wife, her or your parents for getting an advice.

***ENDING THE CLASS***

Discuss with the participants the current meeting. Ask them:

- how, in their opinion, household duties should be distributed;
- to comment on the statement that domestic duties are not divided into men's and women's;
- to name the topic of the meeting they thought was the most interesting.

Describe the agenda for the next session. Write down participants' suggestions and questions for the next class. \_\_\_\_\_

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Remind them the next session date and time.

***HOME ASSIGNMENT***

A recommended home assignment after the second class:

'How have you distributed household duties in your family? Make a list of various domestic duties and try to note who is responsible for them – the mother or the father?'

## **INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR**

### ***Mini-Lecture: Father's Role in Child's Life***

Father's role in child's life is a deep and ever-developing topic that attracts scientists and millions of ordinary people, including expectant and experienced parents. Paternal psychology and pedagogy is a dynamic modern area of research, psychological and pedagogical practice and social work. It should be admitted that while statistic and scientific material on mother's role in child's life is abundant, there is a lack of literature and research which would clearly describe father's role and his goals in the modern family and society.

Currently, social sciences and humanities differentiate between 'sex' and 'gender' as a means to label physiological and social/cultural differences between men and women. 'Sex' describes biological differences between people due to genetics, anatomy, physiology and reproductive functions. 'Gender' points out the social status and social/psychological personal qualities determined by sex and sexuality. These aspects are formed through interaction between people and are specific to a particular culture.

Traditionally the word 'sex' was used to denote anatomical and physiological differences between humans that divide them into men and women. Sex (i.e., biological differences) was considered the basis and the primary cause of psychological and social differences between women and men. The accumulated research data shows that, in terms of biology, men and women have more similarities than differences. Many researchers even believe that the only clear and significant biological difference between men and women is indeed their role in the reproduction of species.

Biological differences in people are accompanied by different social roles, occupations, behavioral specifics and emotional profiles. Anthropologists, ethnographers and historians have long ago found that our concepts of a 'typical man' or 'typical woman' are rather conventional. Occupations (behavior, character traits) considered 'masculine' manifestations by one society can be viewed 'feminine' by the other.

The diversity of social dimensions for women and men around the world versus the fundamental similarity of their biological parameters allows to conclude that a biological sex is not the true ground for different social roles existing in different societies. This conclusion leads to defining 'gender' as a sum of social and cultural norms expected of people in a society based on their biological sex.

So, at the end, psychological qualities, behavior patterns, occupations and feminine/masculine professions are determined by social and cultural norms rather than biological specifics. To be a man or to be a woman in a society means (in addition to having anatomic particulars) to perform certain gender-prescribed roles.

The contemporary gender theory does not deny the existence of biological, social and psychological differences between women and men. The theory simply states that the difference per se is less important than the social value and interpretation of such differences and the power sharing system constructed around them. The gender approach is based on the concept that biological and physical differences between men and women are important not by themselves but due to the cultural and social weight attached to the differences. Gender research primarily analyses power and domination in the society achieved through gender roles and relations. Describing the specifics of the status, roles and other aspects in lives of men and women is of secondary importance. Gender approach declares its goal to achieve gender equality (or balance) of the roles and relations.

Contemporary gender psychology studies the distribution and the balance of 'male' and 'female' roles in family and society and tries to answer questions about motherhood and fatherhood in a modern society.

Gender equality ideas are most developed and widely spread in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands. Gender equality principles are actively implemented in public institutions throughout Europe and North America. Whether gender approaches are acceptable and useful at institutions of former Soviet republics is a subject of a heated public debate. Here the supporters of the classical 'orthodox' family where father leads and dominates strongly disagree with the promoters of the 'postclassical' egalitarian model that welcomes equality of and flexibility in father's and mother's roles in family and society.

Studies of father's role in children's life were performed from the beginning of the psychological science. Prominent authorities in psychology including Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Karen Horney, Alfred Adler, Eric Berne and others paid a great attention to father's role. Alfred Adler, the founder of humanistic psychology, underlined father's importance in developing a social interest in the child. In his opinion, an 'ideal' father treats his children as equals and is actively involved (alongside his wife) in children's upbringing. Fathers shall avoid making

two mistakes, i.e., an emotional withdrawal and a parental authoritarianism. These mistakes cause distortions in the development of a balanced personality; such children learn to defend their egoistic personal interests and ignore social interests, norms and rules.

The influence of fathers onto early children development is scientifically proven. Many studies had shown that fathers who held their babies right after the birth keep playing with them more often afterwards and spend more time together as they grow. It was also established that babies of close and active fathers achieved higher scores in mental and motor development; they also grow to be more socially sensitive. Another important discovery concerned conjugal relations which were found to be significantly more harmonious, pursued shared objectives and plans, and exhibited a low proneness to conflicts.

A distinguished scientist Grace J. Craig noticed that fathers who established strong emotional bonds with their infants had a higher sensitivity to the changing interests and needs of their growing children. These dads exert more influence on their offsprings who willingly listen to and want to imitate their fathers thanks to intimate relations based on trust. Developmental crises are less pronounced in such children and less painful for their family and society.

A direct positive influence on a young child by a caring farther is usually accompanied by an indirect beneficial impact on the baby and the family. Multiple studies have shown the importance of father's support to his spouse during and after her pregnancy in establishing positive relations in the whole family. In the triangle of family contacts (mother – father – child) mother primarily has a direct impact. However, fathers influence both directly and indirectly (through mothers).

At babyhood every child through his family forms a so called 'base' stand in life. Eric Bern suggested that, at an early infantile stage of forming a life scenario, all babies already have certain notions about themselves and surrounding people, especially parents. These notions appear to stay with us for the whole life and may be characterized in the following way: 'I am OK' or 'I am not OK'; 'you are OK' or 'you are not OK'.

If these assumptions are combined in all possible variants, we receive four attitudes about ourselves and other people:

1. I am OK, you are OK;
2. I am not OK, you are OK;
3. I am OK, you are not OK;
4. I am not OK, you are not OK.

The first base stand in life is healthy and productive, while the remaining three contain considerable risks for the future wellbeing of a little person. Most parents wish their children happiness, joy and success. But where do so many unsuccessful and unhappy people come from? From the childhood.

From our childhood we bring psychological 'images' of our parents just as we remembered them before the age of three. Infant or young child perception is completely different from adult perception. However, many grown ups, especially young and inexperienced parents, have no idea about this.

A baby has an integrated perception of the world. He has no clear idea about time and space and considers everything around to be a 'part' of him.

A baby considers his mother's skin and breast, father's hair and hands, bed sheet, its rattle and light from a desk lamp a 'part' of himself. Only after three months of age he starts to distinguish between himself and his environment and forms the idea of 'This is Me, this is not Me'.

Feeling comfort or discomfort for this little person is just as comprehensive. Stomachache, loneliness, hunger and other problems, with which adults would easily cope, for the baby are similar to 'near death'. That is why a union of father and mother who love each other and their child is the best starting base for forming the 'I am OK, You are OK' stand of life.

Not so many young (as well as mature) families can boast about having achieved harmonious relationships. Not all new parents are confident in their parental abilities and have reached such a level of personal psychological maturity that would guarantee a happy life scenario to their child.

The emotional part of one's life scenario which is based on the nonverbal sensory perception is acquired by children before the age of three years. By this time, a child has already been 'trained' which emotions are 'more convenient' and more customary to perceive the surrounding world. And if family relationships were mainly based on reproaches, offences, anger, irritation and other negative emotions, the child will automatically develop the same



psychoemotional matrix for perceiving relations with other people. If family relationships were filled with respect, love, tolerance and joy, a likewise perception of the world through positive emotions will be formed.



**Photo: A discussion at the session of fathers-to-be.**

The intellectual part of one's life scenario is formed by the age of 6 or 7. While this part is being formed, a partial correction of the preceding stage emotional problems can occur. But usually, the already existing model for one's emotional attitude to himself/herself and to the world just becomes fixed in the mind.

A grown-up with a certain 'life scenario' believes that 'this is the only way it should be', that life can and should be perceived this way and that everything happens 'by itself'. For example, many people are sure that life is hard and merciless and one is doomed to struggle in it and with it, though chances for 'victory' are very slim. Such life mindset is primitive, immature and pathological but for that person it seems that 'this is what happens in reality'. And only as the person becomes more mature he/she realizes that social, gender, emotional and psychological stereotypes, used by him/her from the early childhood and based on the parental programming should be revised.

Such understanding often comes when people are getting ready to become parents. They begin to feel and understand that their child's birth and upbringing is an important part of life, in which there is a risk of repeating upbringing mistakes made by their parents.

From generation to generation, families pass on to their children not only examples of loving, respecting and caring for each other, but also examples of hostility, hatred and indifference. Yes, family is a self-regulating social system with resources and opportunities for a healthy and adequate functioning. However, in many cases young parents (especially fathers) are in real need to get important information on themselves, pregnancy and labor, methods of caring for the baby and its upbringing at an early age.

Thus, father's role in conscious parenthood becomes special, meaningful and important for the success of child's socialization.

In the history of post-Soviet countries several dozens of male generations grew up in a social atmosphere that cultivated a 'warrior-defender' and a 'hard worker' male stereotype/gender role. 'Mentoring father' and 'loving husband' were easily sacrificed to those roles. Even in the middle of the last century, the generation of our grandmothers and mothers firmly believed that a family can easily 'lose' its man, who could be killed at a war or



leave for a 'labor front'. The lack of society's confidence in men as parents and mentors formed a persistent imbalance in the family system and social upbringing of boys and girls. Having grown up, children began to realize the inherited gender stereotypes in their families. Once the war was over and women began to take equal part with men in developing the national economy the myth about men's 'unreliability' moved to the family where it acquired some peculiar manifestations.

The social structure of societies tends to turn gender roles into stereotypes while changes at the political, economic, psychological and cultural levels of the socium may moderate the process.

The main difficulty in changing the conceptions of father's and man's role in the family is the innate gravitation of social and family structures towards homeostasis (preservation of the current state which proved its value at a certain stage). However, the balance is ensured by the principle of development which sooner or later will prevail over homeostasis and moves the process into a qualitatively new stage. Such transitions often occur during crises. The crisis of fatherhood after the patriarchal model time is obvious. Therefore, we can distinctly observe manifestations of the new social models of equality-based paternity.

There is one idea that gets increasingly popular in the society. It states that to the extent parents make and form their children, the latter in return 'make and form' their parents. Thanks to their children parents mature into father and mother roles and accelerate their personal development and growth.

The modern society shows a stable positive trend of and a comfortable and expanding psychological space for the development of the new father's role. Today's fathers - in addition to providing the economic and authority foundation of the family - primarily act as friends, educators, assistants, happy husbands, responsible parents and creative members of their family and society.

#### **The WHO (World Health Organization) and UNICEF Global Strategy on Breastfeeding**

Undernourishment accounts for 35% of diseases among children under the age of five. Infant and young children feeding is one of important areas in improving their survival rate and ensuring their healthy growth and development. The first two years in child's life have a special importance: an optimal feeding during this period decreases illness and mortality rate, reduces the risk of chronic diseases and contributes to child's better development. Indeed, the optimal breastfeeding and complementary foods practice is so important that it can contribute to an annual saving of 1.5 million lives in children under the age of five. WHO's and UNICEF's recommendations concerning optimal infant and young children feeding include the following:

- an early breastfeeding initiation, within one hour of the birth;
- an exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months and introducing nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods, starting six months, along with continuing breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond.

However, many children in infancy and other age groups do not receive optimal feeding. For example, on average only 35% of babies under six months are exclusively breastfed.

Recommendations covering the needs of infants born to HIV-positive mothers have been finalized. Nowadays, due to antiretroviral medicines these babies can receive exclusive breastfeeding till the age of six months and continue being breastfed till the age of at least 12 months, with the significantly reduced risk of HIV transmission.

Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months has lots of benefits for infants and their mothers. The most important ones are protection from gastrointestinal infections that are registered not only in developing but in industrially developed countries. The early breastfeeding initiation (within one hour of the birth) protects newborns from infections and reduces the mortality rate. A risk of death caused by diarrhea or other infections can be higher among children who were earlier partially breastfed or not breastfed at all.

Human breast milk is also an important source of energy and nutrients for children 6-23 months of age. It can provide for half or more of all baby's energy needs at the age of 6-12 months and one third of a child's energy needs at the age of 12-24 months. Breast milk is also an important source of energy and nutrients during illnesses. It reduces mortality rate among undernourished children.

Adults, who were breastfed in infancy, have lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol, as well as lower overweight, obesity and insulin-independent (type II) diabetes indices. Breastfeeding is also beneficial for mothers' health and wellbeing. It decreases the risk of developing ovarian and breast cancer and allows to make pauses

between pregnancies as exclusive breastfeeding of babies for the first six months results in hormones that often stop menstruations. This is a natural (although not quite reliable) birth control method known as 'lactation amenorrhea'.

Mothers and families should be supported for optimal breastfeeding. Actions that protect, promote and support breastfeeding include the following:

- enacting a policy, such as *Maternity Protection Convention 183* of the International Labor Organization and the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes*;
- implementing the "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding" stated in the *Initiative on Creating Good Conditions for Breastfeeding in Maternity Clinics* including:
- body contact between mother and newborn immediately after birth and breastfeeding within the first hour of life;
- breastfeeding on demand (as often as the baby wants, day and night);
- rooming-in (allowing mothers and infants to remain together for 24 hours per day);
- infants should not be given complementary foods or drinks, even water.

In accordance with the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* each infant and child has the right to proper feeding.

Undernourishment accounts for 35% of disease burden in children under the age of five.

An estimated 30% (or 186 million) of world's children under the age of five fall behind in growth and 18% (or 115 million) have a low weight/height ratio which is mainly the result of undernourishment or recurring infections; 43 millions suffer from overweight.

On average, about 35% of babies are exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life.

Few babies receive nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods. In many countries, only one third of breastfed 6-23 month children receive complementary foods that meet the criteria for their age in terms of dietary diversity and feeding frequency.

Annually lives of 1.5 million children under five years of age could be saved via optimal breastfeeding and complementary foods practice.

Recommendations covering the needs of HIV-positive mothers and their infants have been finalized.

The *Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding* adopted by WHO member states and the UNICEF Executive Committee in 2002 is aimed at protection, promotion and support of proper breastfeeding of infants and young children. The strategy presents the framework used by the WHO to set priorities for scientific research and development in infants and young children feeding and provides technical support to countries in the realization.

The WHO and the UNICEF developed a 40-hour course 'Consulting on Breastfeeding: a Training Course' and later a five-day course 'Consulting on Infant and Young Children Feeding: a Comprehensive Course' for training health professionals in providing qualified assistance to breastfeeding mothers and helping them to cope with problems. The key skills in supporting breastfeeding are also included into the training course for health professionals 'Integrated Management of Childhood Illness'.

In 2010, the WHO published the revised guidelines on infant feeding in the context of HIV. Concurrently, new recommendations on antiretroviral therapy for preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission were also published. Together these recommendations present a simple, conforming and practicable guide for countries aimed at promoting and supporting proper infant feeding by HIV-positive mothers.

For more information, visit WHO's website:

<http://www.who.int/mediaCenter/factsheets/fs342/ru/index.html>

## ***FIFTEEN REASONS TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOUR CHILD***

### **1. You are normal and responsible.**

There is nothing unusual in wishing to have children at a certain time in life. By taking care of your baby, you take on responsibilities.

### **2. Your life reaches a better balance.**

It is very useful to be distracted from work. People with balanced private and working lives achieve better results at work.

### **3. You develop an incredible stress resistance.**

After a whole day spent with your newborn, there will not be many situations where you can lose your self-control. How can negotiation challenges compare with a child feeling sick in a car as you drive it through a snowstorm?

**4. You take a course in personal developing.**

There is no course which would teach you things a little child could. You learn to listen to others, find yourself in new unusual situations, your personal (and perhaps selfish) needs become less important and you learn juggling several tasks simultaneously.

**5. You will love your job (even stronger).**

Taking care of little children is a task much more complicated than many others. After such an experience, your job will not seem as exhausting.

**6. You will become an expert in improvisation.**

Your child is crying throughout the New Year night. No problem. Your 'ideal life' idea has changed dramatically with the birth of your child. You've learned to accept a true reality and make a maximum use of good opportunities life gives you.

**7. You will become a skilful diplomat.**

It is certainly more difficult to settle a disagreement with your child than to resolve most conflicts at work. You will become a top expert on diplomacy.

**8. You will become closer to your child's mother.**

You go through this life experience together and share responsibility.

**9. Your baby needs you.**

Your baby needs you as much as he needs his mother. The presence of two parents who help each other out by solving never-ending practical problems creates a better protected environment for the child.

**10. You should develop a close relationship with your baby.**

The foundation of the most trusting bond between the baby and his parents is laid when the baby is little and unprotected. Keep in mind that afterwards you will not be able to make up for lost opportunities.

**11. Your father instinct is developing.**

By taking care of your baby you become sensitive to his needs, learn to recognize his specific signals and establish an understanding at a special level. This is good for your self-confidence too.

**12. Your baby starts trusting you.**

Fathers who are rarely at home move to the background in their own family. If you take care of your child and demonstrate your interest, he will turn to you for help and will share his joy with you in future.

**13. You observe your child's development.**

You are not just listening how others tell the story of your child's growing up and developing. All events happen in your presence. Each day brings something new.

**14. Your life is interesting and full of events.**

Taking care of little children is difficult but you get an incredible return. You feel important and loved as never before.

**15. You will never feel sorry about anything in the future.**

In the future, you will not feel sorry that you were not able to form a close and trusting bond with your child from the very beginning.

# SESSION 3

## TOPIC: THE FIRST MONTH

### SESSION PLAN:

1. WHAT'S NEW	15 minutes
2. DOCTORS ARE OUR FRIENDS	20 minutes
3. DISCUSSING VACCINATION	30 minutes
4. POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION	25 minutes
5. DIAPER TRAINING	30 minutes
6. ENDING THE SESSION	10 minutes

### NECESSARY MATERIALS

- Doll
- Pack of diapers
- Blanket
- Wet wipes
- A4 paper (10-20 sheets)
- Pens
- Pencils

### WHAT'S NEW?

The third session begins with the traditional 'What's new?' question.

Participants should answer by speaking about:

- How they assess changes that have happened in their life;
- How they take care of the baby and what difficulties they face;
- How the baby's mother is feeling;
- Any close relatives who help them.

Participants exchange views about changes they experience. The moderator shall write down important information on the changes in participants' families.

No.	Participant	What's new?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Ask participants whether they have any suggestions:

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Present the current class topic and identify the changes (if any) in the topic. The third session will be about father's participation in baby's life and about baby's health. It will also cover postpartum depression.

If somebody is absent, after the session find out why and whether he will be able to attend future meetings.

Ask the participants if they succeeded with their home assignment:

- Show the list of household duties you have written;
- What problems did you have while working on the list of household duties?
- Who has more duties, mother or father?

Ask participants to compare their lists. Identify the differences.

### **DOCTORS ARE OUR FRIENDS**

At this session we study situations when baby may require professional medical help.

As you know babies cannot say or show where and what hurts. This means we have to learn and to understand the symptoms telling us when to seek for professional medical help.

Before you read the offered materials it should be said that our experience from all the father group sessions in different countries let us to conclude: if anything worries you in your baby's health, call the doctor. You know your baby better than anyone: do not ignore your own feelings.

Although it is impossible to review at the session all situations that might occur, it is necessary to go through some of the symptoms one must not ignore.

**Temperature.** Take your baby's high temperature very seriously. The temperature above 38°C should alert you. It might indicate the beginning of an infection.

If you think the temperature might have been caused by over-bundling the baby, take some of his clothes off and measure the temperature again after 20-25 minutes. One must not ignore the high temperature.

**The baby refuses to eat.** Newborns eat several times a day (with an interval of 1.5 hours for new babies; the interval gradually extends). During the first month of life the interval must not exceed four hours.

The baby may refuse food if:

- Sucking is painful;
- There are breathing problems.

Refusing food might cause dehydration. You must tell your doctor about the problem.

#### **Diarrhea**

Diarrhea is not always easy to identify in very little children, as it is normal for newborns' stools to be liquid. Diarrhea means the stools of a more liquid consistency, more watery and more frequent than normal.

Diarrhea might be caused by an intestinal infection or food intolerance. The danger of diarrhea is that it leads to body dehydration. High temperature makes dehydration even worse.

Signs of dehydration in babies:

- He urinates very seldom;
- The urine is dark;
- He has a 'dry' mouth;
- He has 'dry' tears: the baby cannot cry.

**Skin rash.** Babies get skin rashes rather frequently. It is more often annoys than really worries their parents. Nevertheless, it is important to pay attention to some kinds of rashes, if we are to decide whether we should urgently call the doctor.

Such decisions are taken in case of allergic rashes (nettle rash). The rose colored spots erupt on the skin on any body part. The danger is that being an allergic reaction the rash may signal a possible oedema of the face, mouth, throat which can lead to apnoea.

And, of course, any part of the body that looks unhealthy - infected or not, with or without purulence or any kind of rash - also requires doctor's attention.

**Vomiting.** All babies posset. The reason is they have an immature digestive system. After being fed the baby possets milk through his nose and mouth. It happens unexpectedly and – a good news - painlessly for the baby. Always check that the posseted milk is whitish and has no traces of blood or bile.

An alarming symptom is when the posseted milk contains blood or greenish bile. If it happens, contact your doctor.

Questions to group participants:

- Did a visiting nurse come to your place?
- How do you measure baby's temperature?
- Do you help your wife to bathe the baby?
- Do you know where the children's outpatient facility is?

- Did your family receive an obligatory medical insurance policy?

Once this part of the session is complete ask the participants to think what else they would like to know about baby's health and if they want to invite a pediatrician from a children's outpatient facility to our session.

### ***DISCUSSING VACCINATION***

Our children are exposed to infections. A newborn has no immunity against diseases. The National Calendar of Prophylactic Immunization aims at protecting children against the most dangerous diseases.

On the other hand, vaccination is a much debated subject among parents. Propose the participants to answer these questions:

- Do you know about the National Calendar of Prophylactic Immunization?
- What is your attitude towards children's vaccination?
- What is the 'vaccine for the future'?
- Why are some parents against vaccination?

Discuss six typical myths regarding vaccination:

1. No need to vaccinate children as there is no threat of epidemic and many diseases have already been eliminated.
2. There is no need to vaccinate your child as the rest of parents have already vaccinated theirs.
3. Triple-vaccine against measles-mumps-rubella causes autism.
4. Thimerosal causes autism.
5. Vaccination depresses child's immune system.
6. Frequent illnesses strengthen child's immune system.

Concluding the discussion the group is informed that the National Calendar of Prophylactic Immunization uses domestic and imported vaccines duly registered and permitted for use in accordance with instructions for their use.

### ***POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION***

After giving birth new mothers may experience frequent mood swings. During the session the group discusses the reasons of postpartum depression. According to medical evidence, five to seven women out of ten are prone to postpartum depression.

As a rule, postpartum depression occurs on the third or fourth day after delivery and peaks on the fourth-fifth day. Unmotivated crying is the most common postpartum depression manifestation. Another possible symptom is when bursts of energy and rushes of love to the family are suddenly replaced with melancholy and despair. Other symptoms are irritability, anger, hostility, chronic headaches, feelings of unreality, exhaustion and devastation, and persistent anxiety. Sleep disorders must be also included into the symptom list: they are indispensable companions of female postpartum depression.

A mild form of postpartum depression - also called blues syndrome - goes away without any interference in two weeks and leaves no traces.

Nevertheless, there are a number of not purely medical reasons that might cause postpartum depression. Fathers should be aware of such causes:

1. Bleeding. Many women suffer hemorrhage even six weeks after delivery.
2. Excessive weight gained during pregnancy.
3. The size of her belly. It especially worries women with caesarean section.
4. Urine incontinence.
5. Breast pain.
6. Problem hair.
7. Acne eruption.
8. Stretch marks.
9. Hemorrhoids that appeared at pregnancy's late term.
10. A need to renew her wardrobe.
11. Sexual abstinence.
12. Resumed periods.
13. New body.



If the postpartum depression symptoms do not go away, it is advisable to talk to a specialist, for instance, to a psychologist at the maternity welfare clinic.



**Photo: Discussing the postpartum depression symptoms.**

Ask fathers to discuss things they can do to give the baby's mother a chance to rest and recover (you offer a list).

**Give her a chance to have some private time.** She can go for a walk in the city or a park by herself. Give her some time to be alone.

**Shopping.** Give her an opportunity to go shopping, choose some new clothes for herself and the baby. To renew her wardrobe and her make-up.

**Hairdresser.** Arrange for a trip to the hairdresser. Doing her hair, nails, and feet has a very beneficial influence on woman's state of mind. Let her feel refreshed.

**Sleep.** Let the mother have a good sleep by taking care of the baby. Sometimes it is enough to give her a chance to have a nap during the day, for example, while the father takes the baby outdoors.

**Friends.** Having delivered the baby mother would like to share so many news with her friends; or just have a chat in a café.

**Hot bath.** Making a hot bubble bath with candles for the mother.

### ***DIAPER TRAINING***

This practical session does not have a goal to train fathers in records breaking speed-change of their baby's diapers.

Our goal is to show that baby care is quite a masculine business. This way male group sessions make an input in revising stereotypes of father's role and duties.

The technical side of putting a diaper on looks like this:

1. Put the baby (or a doll at the training session) on the back on a blanket spread over an even hard surface. Take a diaper out of the pack. Open the diaper. Straighten all the tapes and elastic ribbons.
2. Wipe the baby's bottom with a wet wipe. Little girls should always be wiped from their tummy towards the bottom (and NOT the reverse movement) to avoid genital infection. Grab both baby's feet and lift them up. Place the diaper under the baby's bottom. Bring down the baby's feet.

3. Straighten the upper part of the diaper on the baby's tummy. Make sure the diaper does not touch the umbilical wound.
4. Fix the tapes on the diaper.
5. Check whether everything is fixed properly and the diaper sits firmly. It is important not to overtighten it, to avoid diaper rash.

You can see the details of diaper-training at Papa School.ru web-site:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/papaschool#p/c/D2EA4CF4E03B3A4B/1/QyJS682GoOo>

Offer some questions to the participants:

- Are diapers harmful for little boys?
- How to use a diaper correctly? How long can one go without changing it?
- Is it true that diapers create a greenhouse effect?
- Is it true that children who wore diapers have difficulties in potty-training?

### ***ENDING THE SESSION***

Discuss the current session with the participants. Ask them:

- Will you discuss the session with the baby's mother?
- Do you think you cope with household duties?
- Do you know the phone number of the children's outpatient facility?

Ask them to name the theme they thought was the most interesting in the session.

Remind the next session agenda. Write down participants' suggestions regarding the following session and their questions:

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Remind the date and the time of the next session.

### ***HOME ASSIGNMENT***

A possible home assignment after the third session:

'**Bad advice**'. After a new baby arrives, lots of people start giving their advice on how to bring him or her up 'the right way'.

Make a list of pieces of advice you think are needless to your family.

### ***INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR***

#### ***Mini-Lecture: Postpartum Depression***

In our culture a child birth by default shall be regarded as a very happy event. Anyone who is not happy about it risks to undermine the tradition. However, bearing a child, giving birth and, especially, the beginning of the postpartum period do not always unfold the way women expect them. First of all, the very fact of childbirth – just like any stressful situation – raises mother's risk to develop depression.

The 'depression following childbirth' as a term was first suggested in 1968 by a psychiatrist B. Pitt (Atypical Depression Following Childbirth, Br J Psychiatry, 1968). However, as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC a Greek doctor Hippocrates mentioned some chronic psychosis symptoms developing by some women after having given birth to a child.

These days, postpartum depression as a disease presents a considerable problem and, according to various sources, is said to affect between 10% and 15% of women.

One of the most typical signs of postpartum depression is mothers' unwillingness to seek help. That can be explained by a deep sense of guilt felt when faced with the difficulties of baby nursing. The majority of mothers expect their 'mother's instinct' or 'maternal love' - that surely must appear once the baby is born – to sort out all problems of adapting to the baby. In reality, however, the bond builds through a rather long period of a two-way learning. It takes several months for all the necessary skills to be formed. As a result mothers' disappointment may lead to guilt which manifests through depression.

In addition to that there are other traditional beliefs and behavioral stereotypes that might cause postpartum depression or deepen it even further. For example, some mothers are convinced they are solely responsible for the child. Day to day responsibilities exhaust their physical and psychological resources and beget the feeling of helplessness made worse by isolation.

That is why depression is not easily recognized even by the new mother or by people around her. As the time goes the suppressed depression symptoms weaken and the disease tends to become chronic. Nevertheless, about 20% of women still feel depressed a year after childbirth.

Thus, even if the postpartum period in itself does not provoke a depression, there is a combination of other factors (related and unrelated to maternity) that might increase a postpartum depression risk.

According to research THESE factors contribute to the risk:

- unplanned or unwanted pregnancy;
- low social and economic status;
- previous record of depression in the mother or her family members;
- physical exhaustion and malnutrition;
- alcoholism;
- complicated pregnancy;
- over 40 years of age;
- no vocational education;
- completely quitting the job before the delivery;
- early quitting the job in the first or second trimester of pregnancy;
- lack of family support;
- troubled marriage or lack of actions on the husband's part.

Support from the family is a very important resource in reducing the postpartum depression risk. For example, in traditional societies a young mother and her baby receive constant attention and systematic care, mostly from grandmothers and other elderly women. Such care may have a positive influence on mother's and baby's psychological condition. However, husband's support remains the key element of social support for the mother.

Moreover, having no husband tends to add a neurotic component to depression.

On the other hand, the presence of a close person seems to protect the mother from depression, even if she is at a very low social and economic level.

A valid correlation was also established between mother and child separation right after birth for medical reasons and a postpartum depression development three months after the birth.

Woman's physiology is, undoubtedly, also an important factor in developing a depression.

For example, after the delivery the levels of estrogen and progesterone hormones fall rapidly and it may provoke a depression. The level of thyroid hormones drops down as well, which leads to fatigue, the sense of 'losing herself' and a consequent depression. The changes in metabolism, blood pressure and blood volume in the body after delivery also have a negative impact on new mother's psychology.

However, most researchers believe the reasons for postpartum depression are more linked to psychosocial factors rather than to purely physiological endocrine changes in the body.

## ***THE CONSEQUENCES OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION FOR THE BABY***

Postpartum depression can certainly be considered a potential risk for the baby in the early period and can partially influence his future. It is indeed connected with the child birth and impedes mother's interaction with the baby.

Studies of remote consequences of mother's postpartum depression had identified numerous disorders in children. Depressive mothers often think their children are too demanding. They think they are unable to manage their children. That damages the mother-child relationship harmony as well as the family relationship in general.

Some researchers think maternal depression has a bigger influence on the baby during his first months, than at any other age.

This is how a depressed mother communicates with her baby:

- Sad, slow, quiet and self-absorbed mothers who hardly show their feelings;
- Choleric mothers who feel an inside tension and have twitching facial muscles;
- Mothers who are brusque and rude with their babies;
- Mothers who combine the above characteristics.

Some studies have found a correlation between postpartum depression and child's development issues. Specialists believe children breast-fed by depressive mothers are sad, apathic or, on the contrary, excessively agitated.

Babies of depression-suffering mothers show fewer positive bright emotions during their first twelve months. Such babies look self-absorbed and demonstrate a lack of attention and low level of activity.

### ***PREVENTION AND TREATMENT***

Family support, especially coming from her husband and her mother, plays an important part in preventing postpartum depression in a new mother. Just some encouragement and praise coming from them, sympathetic words, and a usual human care and help in most cases to alleviate the challenging situation of the woman.

For example, husbands can arrange for a 'mom's day-off' once a week. It can be planned in advance with a trip to a beauty parlor or visiting a closest friend, in a swimming pool, sauna or a café. The key here is to be able to leave the house and to disrupt the routine.

Sometimes, though strange it may seem, mother's feelings are not fully understood by her family. Then it would be preferable that a psychotherapist works with all the parties concerned (husband, parents, father-in-law, and mother-in-law).

Family psychotherapy is the most successful in achieving the task as it finds and corrects possible disaccords and misunderstandings in the family. Individual psychotherapeutic sessions combined with family therapy give the best results. If non-medicated treatment proves inefficient, one may be temporarily prescribed special anti-depressant preparations.

**STAGES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT.  
MAIN PROCESSES AND FUNCTIONS.**

**Typical Speech Development**

Age (Months)	At this age most children have developed the following language skills. <i>(If a child does not show them at this age, parents should consult the doctor)</i>
0 - 3	Baby mainly communicates through crying as his larynx is still high in the throat.
	Baby turns his head to voices of family members.
	Baby shudders at loud or unexpected voice sounds
3 - 6	Baby starts cooing to attract adults' attention
	Baby starts playing with his/her voice
6	Baby watches an adult's facial expressions and being addressed often shapes his/her mouth the same way
	Baby reacts to his/her name
	Baby reacts to human voices without visual signals turning his/her head and eyes
12	Baby reacts accordingly to friendly and angry intonations
	Baby meaningfully uses one or more words (it may be a word fragment)
	Baby understands simple instructions, especially if they are accompanied by voice or physical signals
18	Baby understands social meaning of speech
	Baby's vocabulary is about 5-20 words
	The vocabulary consists mostly of nouns
24	There is a lot of emotional gibberish in baby's speech
	Baby is able to follow simple commands
	Baby can name a number of objects in his standard surrounding
36	Baby can make short sentences, mostly a combination of a noun and a verb
	About 2/3 of what he says can be understood
	Baby's vocabulary is about 150-300 words
48	Notions of 'my' and 'for me' appear
	Child uses several words in plural and in the past tense: 'We played a lot'
	Child easily handles three word sentences: 'I want a candy'
48	Child's vocabulary is about 900 – 1000 words
	About 90 % of what the child says is clear
	Verbs dominate the speech, such as 'let's go', 'let's run', 'let's crawl', 'let's play'
48	Child knows the names of his favorite animals
	Child is able to name familiar objects in picture books or in magazines
	Child knows one or more colors and common shapes
48	Child can repeat four numbers in a row, if they are pronounced slowly
	Usually child can repeat a word of four syllables
	Child often begins to fantasize
48	Child's actions are accompanied by rich verbalization
	Child knows such concepts as longer, bigger when shown these opposite qualities in things
	Child often repeats words, phrases, syllables and even sounds

**Developing Attention: Things to Do at the Early Age**

0-6 months
Try communicating with your baby face to face more often (25-30 cm between your faces); exaggerate your expression and articulation
Look your baby in the eye and try to encourage him do the same

Use a rattle or another object to so your baby tracks it with his eyes along the middle line. Try to achieve baby's focusing on the object
Show the baby different objects and name them, do the same with the actions you perform throughout the day
Talk 'parentese' to the baby to get his attention
Note the time of the day when your child is awake and lively. Plan and use this time for communication.
From time to time change his toys or brightly colored objects or swap their places to create the novelty effect
Use objects and toys of contrasting colors (red, yellow, black or white) and of contrasting patterns, such as squares or stripes to attract the child's attention. Gradually add more colors, such as blue and green.
Place mobile objects and toys 25-30 cm from the baby's face.
Make faces to the baby and watch him imitating you (e.g., showing his tongue to you)
<b>6-18 months</b>
Try communicating with your baby face to face more often (25-30 cm between your faces); exaggerate your expression and articulation
Look your baby in the eye and try to stimulate the child to do the same
Use a rattle or another object to so your baby tracks it with his eyes along the middle line. Try to achieve baby's focusing on the object
Show the baby different objects and name them, do the same with the actions you perform throughout the day
At the beginning of this period (6-9 months) use sometimes 'parentese' to attract the baby's attention then switch to an addressed speech in the ordinary conversation style and speed
Note the time of the day when your baby is awake and lively. Plan and use this time for communication.
From time to time change his toys or brightly colored objects or swap their places to create the novelty effect
If you want your baby to watch what adults do, say the key word 'Look!' Make sure the baby has turned to you before you start doing something. This way you establish a routine signal calling for his attention.
After you have your baby's attention, talk in a calm voice or keep silent while modeling (or demonstrating) an action. This will help the baby to concentrate on the action.
Introduce only one change (notion) at a time, so that he could concentrate on it, while all the rest shall stay unchanged. For example, sort objects according to their color. Preferably, they should be of the same shape and size and differ just in color (red, blue and yellow balls or red, blue and yellow socks).
By the end of this period (16-18 months) to get the baby's attention point at his playmat where action are happening
If it is safe for your baby, carry him in your arms and not in a kangaroo, so that he can watch in the direction you look
<b>18-36 months</b>
Bend more often to your baby's eye level, if you want to attract his attention
Look your baby in the eye and try to encourage him to do the same.
Roll a ball between you and your baby to stimulate his visual following and eye-hand coordination.
Show the baby different objects and name them, do the same with the actions you perform throughout the day
When introducing new words, say them very distinctly, so that the baby may see your mouth and facial movements.
Note the time of the day when your child is awake and lively. Plan and use that time for communication.
From time to time change his toys or brightly colored objects or swap their places to create the novelty effect
If you want your baby to watch what adults do, say the key word 'Look!' Make sure the baby has turned to you before you start doing something. This way you establish a routine signal calling for his attention.
After you have attracted your baby's attention, talk in a calm voice or keep silent while modeling (or demonstrating) an action. That would help the baby to concentrate on the action.
Having achieved success with one variable (concept), switch to two variables at a time. For example, group all objects according to their color, regardless of their shape and size (red, blue and yellow balls of different sizes or



different objects, such as toy-cars, balls and socks, grouped according to their color)
Use the playmat as a voluntary signal to your baby that he can sit there and focus his attention on actions.
Use objects (or people) in books to concentrate on details (for instance, 'What is Ernie holding? Find a blue bird. Where did the driver go first? And then? And at the end?')
Play games where the baby has to bend over the centerline of his body (for example, to get an object to his left with his right hand: that is important to stimulate his general motor skills).
Tap a melody with your finger and sing it, make melodies or rhythm more complicated as the baby grows.
Play games such as I-spy according to set rules.
Repeat simple rhythmical hand clapping series or use signals to make your child ready (for example: 'If you hear me, touch your shoulders; if you hear me, clap your hands like this.'
Use touching or massage to calm your baby down, make him ready or change his activities.
At the end of this period play games like 'Statue' or 'Red Light – Green Light' to calm down your baby's excitement.

**Developing Links: What Can Be Done at Different Stages of Development**

<b>0-6 months</b>
Carry the baby in your arms, not in a seat-carrier. Kisses, hugs, swinging on your lap must be a part of your daily rituals
Skin contact between you and your baby is very important. Give a massage every day (while giving a bath, before putting to bed, etc.).
Hold the baby in your arms as you feed him, do not just give him a bottle.
React to your baby's crying quickly and in a predictable way (the baby must form an image of you appearing in a couple of minutes, comforting him with a cheering voice and taking him into your arms).
Try to understand the meaning of different crying patterns (the baby is hungry, it's time to change, he's tired, bored or needs stimulation).
Work out a fixed schedule for feeding, bathing and sleeping.
Make your baby familiar with new sensations (for example, new textures, temperature, etc.), name them for the baby.
Your baby must have a variety of objects to touch and explore with his hands, mouth and feet. They also should be named.
If the quality of childcare needs improvement, do it as soon as possible. Keep the same person to give baby's care (However, you should not wait for the right moment to replace a careless nanny, like, waiting till summer comes, till holiday ends, etc.).

<b>6-18 months</b>
Carry the baby in your arms, not in a seat-carrier. Kisses, hugs, swinging on your lap must be a part of your daily rituals
Skin contact between you and your baby is very important. Give a massage every day (while giving a bath, before putting to bed, etc.).
At the beginning of the period (6 to 9 months) hold the baby in your arms as you feed him, do not just give him a bottle.
React to your baby's crying quickly and in a predictable way (the baby must form an image of you appearing in a couple of minutes, comforting him with a cheering voice and taking him into your arms).
Try to understand the meaning of different crying patterns (the baby is hungry, it's time to change, he's tired, bored or needs stimulation)
Create predictable procedures when putting your baby to bed, feeding, dressing in the morning, etc., so that the baby could look forward to what is going to happen next and would know what to expect.
Make your baby familiar with new sensations (for example, new textures, temperature, etc.), name them for the baby.

Your baby must have a variety of objects to touch and explore with his hands, mouth and feet. They also should be named.
From time to time slow down your activities and create a calm and relaxed atmosphere.
React in a predictable repeated way to your baby's repeated actions.
Work out a system of physical signs that would help him calm down (for example, hold your baby's arms close to his body as in a cocoon).
Name feelings, emotions and sensations when your baby's behavior changes (for example, 'Are you tired and want to go to sleep?', 'You seem so proud', and 'You can't manage? Never mind, it is a difficult thing to do').
Be explicitly positive towards the baby showing him your love and care (smile, hug him, get the eye-contact, give praise, show your pleasure and gratitude).
Looking for a nanny or a nursery school follow the rules: One nanny for three children maximum (the total number of children in his group shall not exceed nine); one nanny for maximum five crawlers.

<b>18-36 months</b>
Find some time during the day to hold and hug your child.
Skin contact between you and your baby is very important. Give a massage every day (while giving a bath, before putting to bed, etc.).
Create more possibilities for touch; include games like father's back riding.
Stand by your baby when he makes mistakes; limit your expectation of his results.
Differentiate between different ways of crying: whether your help is really needed or whether it is just little sobbing.
Keep the rituals you have created at previous stages while putting your child to bed, feeding, dressing in the morning, etc., so that the child could look forward to what is going to happen next and would know what to expect.
Set distinct standard procedures for the day and even make a list of them. Explain why they are important.
Encourage your child's exploring many objects and sensations (however, observe key safety rules).
Do not be tempted to squeeze your baby into a rigid day schedule. From time to time slow the activity down and create a calm and relaxed atmosphere.
Regularly revise and model the expected results as to be reminded and reinforced. React in a predictable repeated way to your baby's repeated actions.
Work out a system of physical signs that would help him calm down (for example, hold your baby's arms close to his body as in a cocoon).
Name feelings, emotions and sensations when your baby's behavior changes (for example, 'Are you tired and want to go to sleep?', 'You seem so proud', and 'You can't manage? Never mind, it is a difficult thing to do').
Be explicitly positive towards the baby showing him your love and care (smile, hug him, get the eye-contact, give praise, show your pleasure and gratitude).
Reward your child's good behavior with non-material reward (more time for story-telling and back-patting) rather than material (sweets and toys).
Begin to point out, describe and model some of your favorite rituals (religious, cultural or family).
Train a skill of reading together with your child sitting on your lap. Turn off the TV, especially during such sessions together.
Looking for a nanny or a nursery school, follow the rules: One nanny for three children maximum (the total number of children in his group shall not exceed nine); one nanny for maximum five crawlers. One nanny for ten three-year olds (the number of children in his group shall not exceed twelve).

**Communication Development: What Can Be Done at the Early Age**

As little children pass every developmental stage differently, psychologists recommend not to focus on your child achievements and failures (that is, to a large extent, out of your control), but rather concentrate on what YOU as the principal adult in his life can do to develop his speech and to improve the communication between you and your child.

<b>0-6 months</b>
Intentionally use the 'parentese' to stimulate certain zones of speech processing and to increase his attention zone.
Talk more often to your baby throughout the day; describe your actions and objects of everyday life (when dressing, changing, feeding, shopping, bathing, cooking, etc.)
Change your voice, facial expression, and your intonations to adapt to the level of enthusiasm, emotions and meanings to the baby's condition.
Speak with your baby face to face at a distance that enables him clearly see your mouth and facial expression.
If you are bilingual, speak both languages naturally.
At different times throughout the day turn on music and sing simple songs.
Put photos above the baby's bed, in his pram, on his car-chair and on the floor to stimulate his visual discrimination.

<b>6-18 months</b>
At the beginning of the period, sometimes intentionally use the 'parentese' to stimulate certain zones of speech processing and increase baby's attention zone, then gradually switch to a normal conversation.
Talk to your baby more often throughout the day; describe your actions and objects of everyday life (when dressing, changing, feeding, shopping, bathing, cooking, etc.)
Change your voice, facial expression, and your intonations to adapt to the level of enthusiasm, emotions and meanings to the baby's condition.
Speak with your baby face to face at a distance that enables him clearly see your mouth and facial expression.
If you are bilingual, speak both languages naturally.
At different times throughout the day turn on music and sing simple songs.
Put some photos above the baby's bed, in his pram, on his car-chair and on the floor to stimulate his visual discrimination.
Intentionally point out objects and name them (for example, a switch, cupboard door, dish, etc.).
Intentionally point out objects and name their simple qualities (for example, smooth, rough, hot, big, square, round, blue, red, striped, etc.).
Intentionally point out similar objects with one different feature (for example, smooth/rough, hot/cold, top/bottom, above/under, wet/dry, etc.).
Intentionally point out and discuss sensations (for example, tired, happy, angry, painful, cheerful, etc.).
Hold the baby on your lap and read plastic, cardboard or textile books to help the baby learn new words; read his favorite, most enjoyable books repeatedly.
Read poems more often and play rhymes with your baby, demonstrating similarities and differences in how words sound (mouth, mouse, spoon, moon, cat, bat, etc.)
Buy building blocks for your baby to make pyramids, this will stimulate eye-hand coordination required for writing.
Allow your baby to take breadcrumbs, cereal flakes, bananas, etc. to train fine movements.
Show your baby books with one or two sentences on a page.
Let the baby turn pages in a cardboard book.
Play as you read (for example, you can have fun imitating animal sounds)
Invite your baby to take part, asking, for instance: 'And what's the doggie doing?'. Or you may ask your baby to show you in real life the objects he has seen in his book pictures.

Keep re-reading the same book over and over again (or tell the same story).
Hold your baby close to you while reading.
Make expressive faces while reading.

<b>18-36 months</b>	
Talk to your baby more often throughout the day; describe your actions and objects of everyday life (when dressing, changing, feeding, shopping, bathing, cooking, etc.)	
Change your voice, facial expression, and your intonations to adapt to the level of enthusiasm, emotions and meanings to the baby's condition.	
Accentuate eye to eye contact while talking to your baby for better understanding	
If you are bilingual, speak both languages naturally.	
At different times throughout the day turn on music and sing simple songs.	
Put photos above the baby's bed, in his pram, on his car-chair and on the floor to stimulate his visual discrimination	
Intentionally point out objects and name them (for example, a switch, cupboard door, dish, etc.).	
Intentionally point out objects and name their simple qualities (for example, smooth, rough, hot, big, square, round, blue, red, striped, etc.).	
Intentionally point out similar objects with one different feature (for example, smooth/rough, hot/cold, top/bottom, above/under, wet/dry, etc.).	
Intentionally point out and discuss sensations (for example, tired, happy, angry, painful, cheerful, etc.).	
Hold the baby on your lap and read plastic, cardboard or textile books, to help the baby learn new words; read his favorite, most enjoyable books repeatedly.	
Read poems more often and play rhymes with your baby, demonstrating similarities and differences in the way words sound (mouth, mouse, spoon, moon, cat, bat, etc.)	
Buy building blocks for your baby to make pyramids; this will stimulate eye-hand coordination required for writing.	
Allow your baby to take breadcrumbs, cereal flakes, bananas, etc. to train fine movements.	
Show your baby books with one or two sentences on a page.	
Let the baby turn pages in a cardboard book	
Play as you read (for example, you can have fun imitating animal sounds)	
Invite your baby to take part, asking, for instance: 'And what's the doggie doing?' Or you may ask your baby to show you in real life the objects he has seen in his book pictures.	
Keep re-reading the same book over and over again (or tell the same story).	
Hold your baby close to you while reading.	
Make expressive faces while reading.	
At the end of this period start simple music 'lessons' using a key-board or a violin.	
Sing baby's favorite songs and teach him new ones that would include simple actions and movements.	
Your baby may read inscriptions (for example, restaurant names or logos) on food and non-food products, street signs, etc.	
Ask more of open-end questions (for example, 'What do you think is going to happen next?')	
Read expressively: use different voices for different characters (for example, Three Little Piglets, Goldilocks and Three Bears, etc.)	
Give your baby a chance to be a leader in your conversation. Name and discuss the subjects he is talking to you about. Look for books about that subject and read them together with him.	

**Auditory Analyzer Development in Children up to One Year of Age**

Age	Auditory Perception Reactions
End of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> week	Auditory concentration

End of the 1 <sup>st</sup> month	Initial orientation reaction to loud sounds (the baby gets quieter)
End of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> month	Distinct orientation reaction towards sounds, an attempt to find their source.
The 2-3 <sup>rd</sup> month	Listens to sounds, reacts to them.
2- 3 ½ months	Quickly and unmistakably finds the sound source
3 – 7 months	Highly differentiated constant activity in response to various sound stimuli.
From 10 – 11 months	Reacting to a sound based on its meaning

**Motor Function Development Index in Children of the First Year of Life**

Age (Months)	Motor Skills
1	Multiple chaotic movements by limbs adducted to the body, with hypertonic flexor muscles, grasping one hand by another. Unable to hold his head in a vertical position, unable to lift his head in a horizontal position.
2 – 2 1/2	Holds his head in a vertical position, lifts his head in a face-down position.
3 – 3 1/2	Able to lift his body while lying on his tummy and supported by his forearms, stands upright when supported by armpits
4	Rolls from his back to his side, able to sit when supported by hands
5 – 5 1/2	Rolls from his back to his tummy; lying on his tummy is able to lift his body leaning on his straightened arms; able to sit when supported by one hand; stands when held by both hands; balances on his feet when supported by armpits
6	Rolls independently from his tummy to his back
7	Stands on all-fours.
8 – 8 1/2	Sits without support, crawls, and balances on his feet when supported by his hands; sits up from a lying position; lies down from a sitting position; stands up on his feet holding on to a fixed support (barrier); sits down independently.
9	Stands when supported by his hand, balances on his feet holding on to a fixed support with both hands; climbs up and down a set of stairs on all fours.
10	Takes steps holding to a moving support (pusher) with both hands.
11 - 12	Stands without support, takes steps when held by a hand
12 - 13	Squats down, stands up and steps without support (initial walking).

**Visual Analyzer Development in Children up to One Year of Age**

Age (months)	Visual Perception Reaction
End of the 1 <sup>st</sup> – beginning of the 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Visual concentration; fixing his eyes on surrounding people's faces and objects; unsteady ability to follow moving objects
By the 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Fixing his eyes with the simultaneous proper response of eyeballs, neck muscles and head, an ability to follow moving objects.
By 3 1/2	Differentiation of surrounding objects, long concentration, tracking of objects.
By the 5 <sup>th</sup>	An ability to examine an object with both eyes at a close distance (accommodation), differentiate main colors and shapes
By the 6 <sup>th</sup>	Differentiates colors and surrounding objects well, expresses an attitude to them

# SESSION 4

## TOPIC: DAD'S BUSINESS

### SESSION PLAN:

1. WHAT'S NEW	15 minutes
2. NEW LIFE	25 minutes
3. LEARNING TO PLAY WITH YOUR CHILD	20 minutes
4. FATHERHOOD MYTHS	25 minutes
5. HOW WELL DO I KNOW YOU?	30 minutes
6. ENDING THE SESSION	10 minutes

### NECESSARY MATERIALS

Doll

3 toys: with a smooth, hairy and long pile exterior surfaces

A4 paper (10-20 sheets)

Pens

Pencils

### WHAT'S NEW?

The fourth session begins with the traditional 'What's new?' question.

Participants should answer by speaking about:

- Their baby's development;
- How they help baby's mother with bathing, nursing and taking the baby outdoors; what difficulties they face;
- How the baby's mother feels;
- Things to know for the participants who are still expecting their babies.

Participants exchange views about their current changes.

The moderator shall write down important information on changes in participants' families.

No.	Participant	What's new?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Ask participants whether they've completed their home assignment:

- Have they identified any bad advice?
- Who most commonly advises the family on how to improve baby care?
- What do you do if you do not like the advice?
- What pieces of advice you could give about baby care?

Ask your participants to compare lists and to highlight differences.

Ask the participants whether they have any suggestions:

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Present the current class topic and identify changes (if any) in the topic. Session 4 will be about father's involvement in baby's upbringing.

## ***NEW LIFE***

Ask your participants to share with the group how they have organized and what they do in the first weeks of baby's delivery.

- What special is happening in your life?
- How is your baby developing?
- What life events do you view as positive?
- What life events do you view as negative?

Discuss with group participants their outlooks on child's upbringing. How do they think it will be done? What shall parents do? What shall not parents do?

Discuss the following questions:

- What are the 'allowed limits' for children?
- What things must parents consider in their baby care?
- What methods can you use in child upbringing?
- How were you brought up by your parents?
- At what age does your child begin to understand you?

Responsibilities of fathers and mothers as viewed by attendees:

- Who is responsible for your child upbringing?
- What are the periods when mothers shall lead in baby care?
- What are the periods when fathers shall lead in baby care?
- Is there a difference between mother's and father's responsibilities or do we simply shift the responsibility to our partner?
- Which family members participate in baby's upbringing?
- Are there any not-to-overstep boundaries to the involvement of other family members into our child's upbringing?

## ***LEARNING TO PLAY WITH YOUR CHILD***

Sometimes group attendees wondered how they would be playing with the so little infant who understands nothing. The aim of the game during first few months of baby's life is to develop his eye-hand coordination, tactual sensations and visual perception.

This is easy to do.

**Exercise 1.** Aimed at developing tactual sensations. Play with the child and touch his skin with toys of different surfaces. Show the toy to your child. Touching the skin say 'soft', 'rough', 'fuzzy' to describe the toy surface.

The moderator demonstrates the exercise using the doll. Let the participants to play on their own.

Introduce participants to other games:

**Drummer.** At two months of age children start hand tapping on different things. Unfamiliar objects are the most desirable for tapping. Reaching for the object your kid learns to coordinate his movements. Fold your scarf into a soft ball and hang it above your child's bed so that he can reach but cannot tear it off.

**Butterfly.** Once they've learned focusing their eyes babies like to follow with their eyes brightly colored toys. It develops their visual reception. Do not forget to always swap places of rattles hanging above his bed.

**Hide-and-seek.** Play hide-and-seek with your baby. Cover baby's eyes with your palm for several seconds and then take your palm away. Always smile to your baby.

**Singer.** Children love music. Sing (even if you have no voice). Sing songs you know or just sing what you see, like 'our mom went for a walk' or 'we will be bathing soon'.

Tell us what other games you know to be played with babies.

## **FATHERHOOD MYTHS**

Discuss various myths that your society has around active fatherhood, being in delivery room, and child upbringing. As you present a myth ask participants to share their opinions about the statements offered for discussion.

### ***Myth 1: Paternal Instinct Is Much Inferior to Maternal Instinct***

It was long believed that since nature designed women to conceive, deliver and nurture children they have an expressed maternal instinct. Men's paternal instinct is more modest. That is why women are fit to take a full care of the small baby.

If a pregnant woman correctly builds her relations with her husband (shares her concerns, worries and preoccupations with him, tells him about her sensations), she facilitates his early preparation for the new role. He will read literature on the subject, study pictures, listen to his baby's heartbeat, tries to catch baby's first movement, talks to him and even can be present at his delivery. Quite often such men will feel an enthusiasm about their baby similar to their wives'. There are fathers-to-be who worry about their baby's wellbeing even more than expectant mothers.

Some men will feel themselves fathers from the moment of conception. Others will discover the sensation when they first pick up the baby in their arms. And some men will realize their fatherhood many months after the birth. Being critical will not help. Situations must be created to help men to show paternal feelings. The earlier husbands take care of the baby and the more they get involved, the stronger and deeper their parental feelings grow and the better they understand their babies. Psychologically prepared dads readily admire their babies, feel pleasure in touching them and are equal to mothers in the art of baby care.

### ***Myth 2: Men Are More Strict and Demanding and Less Emotional Than Women***

If a father got prepared in advance for his baby's birth, he knows how his baby will grow and develop. If a couple discussed the upbringing principles to be upheld in their family, then the new dad will feel quite sure of himself in the new role and will match his requirements to the baby's age.

Besides, as we already mentioned, the more often fathers deal with their babies, the higher is the emotional response of the baby. Babies liven when they see dads and stretch their little hands to them. This triggers very tender feelings and deep attachment in men.

### ***Myth 3: Inexperienced Fathers Will Take Babies in Their Arms Every Time Babies Cry and Will Spoil Them***

Remember that it is impossible to spoil a newborn. His life relies completely on people around him. Caress him and take him often in your arms to avoid your baby growing into an ill-tempered person. By always satisfying infant's needs his parents help him to trust this world.

### ***Myth 4: Fathers Are Inferior in Baby Care to Mothers***

It is quite natural that at first mother will feel a little worried to leave her husband alone with the baby and household chores. The younger the child is, the bigger her worries are. Will the father manage and will he understand what the baby wants?

Here one must remember that childcare experience – like any experience for that matter – is acquired gradually. Just be patient. And we have no doubts that both parents can master it.

We frequently heard young mothers complaining that their husbands are afraid of staying home with the baby even for a short while, scared to take him in his arms or to swaddle him. It just indicates that such fathers are insufficiently prepared for the task and were not bound to overcome their fears and timidity to do it for the first time because there always was a person willing and loving to do all the required procedures. If the situation

develops to the point 'who if not me', then father will perfectly cope with everything. And they will clearly understand his baby's needs. Even infants know how to signal their dissatisfaction with the service delivered. Though not at once but over time fathers learn what exactly their babies want on the first try.

***Myths Five: Fathers Are Needed Only to Raise Boys. Girls Mandatorily Shall Be Taken Care by Mothers.***

Till recently it was believed that to learn male and female roles boys shall be closer to their fathers while girls shall bond more with mothers. To that end it may seem more natural when father stays home with boys to help developing masculinity in his baby boy. And if he has a girl?

Contemporary observations have changed these stereotypes. It has been proved that a father-daughter bond in the initial five years of girl's upbringing plays a crucial role in how she later builds interpersonal relations with the opposite sex. Girls who had not received enough attention from their fathers will not feel secure in relations with men when they grow up. It means that in any case fathers play an equally important influence on his daughter's development as on his son's.

### ***HOW WELL DO I KNOW YOU?***

How well do participants know their partners? Any long term and solid relations require a man and a woman know each other well. We offer some questions to help participants gauge whether they know well their 'better half'.

Hand out questions and ask to write their answers:

- Her favorite song?
- Her favorite color?
- Her favorite food?
- Your wife's weight?
- Your wife's patronymic?
- How many rings does she wear?
- When is her birthday?
- Her dream job?
- Her star sign?
- Best TV show?
- What's the name of her best girlfriend?
- When is her mother's birthday?
- How many kids she would like to have?
- Faced with a difficult situation whom will she turn to for an advice?
- What is her favorite body side during sleep?
- What movie did she see last?
- One thing that she bought lately for herself?
- How would she describe your relations with her mother?

### ***HOW TO GET ENOUGH SLEEP***

A new dad is asked about his life after his baby is born. He answers, 'Having children gives your life some purpose. Right now, my purpose is to get some sleep'.

Now, jokes aside, consider with your attendees how parents provide for each other to have enough sleep:

- Set shifts. Agree with the wife on taking turns to attend to the baby at night. Sometimes babies cry not because they are hungry. However, if this is indeed the case, dad can bring the baby to bed so mother can breastfeed him;

- Pay attention to the way mother holds the baby to calm him down. Try to make him comfortable in your arms: being in the known position the baby gets quiet faster.
- Learn to be kind. Sing to your baby: the sound of your voice will calm him down. Plus once the baby makes a connection between your voice and security he will get quiet faster;
- Be tender. Do not shake your baby. Do not fling about with the baby in your arms.
- Baby rockers and cradles can be useful in lulling the baby;
- Many babies cry when they loose their pacifiers. Check, it could be the reason.

In addition to rocking the baby sometimes it is just fine to hold your baby in your arms and walk about the room.

What are other ways of helping your baby to fall asleep?

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### ***ENDING THE CLASS***

Discuss the class with the participants and ask them:

- Have you discussed the previous session with your baby's mother?
- Do you think it will be difficult for you to play with your baby?
- Have you already equipped the crib? How?
- What toys do you have?

Let them name the most interesting things they have learned in today's class.

Describe the agenda for the next session. Write down participants' suggestions and questions for the next class.

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Remind the date and the time of the next session.

### ***HOME ASSIGNMENT***

A proposed home assignment after Session 4.

Discuss your answers to *How well do I know you ?* exercise at home and highlight your correct answers. Identify the answers with which your wife disagrees.

## **INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR**

### ***Communicating with Your 1 – 4 Month Old Baby***

Our children develop very fast. Week 2 you will notice that your baby pays attention to your face. Starting week 6 your baby will recognize you and will smile to you

Taking daily care of the baby gives you a chance to see him growing, changing and becoming conscious of himself. The changes get most pronounced by month 4.

At 6 to 8 weeks of age you will hear your baby exploring the sounds: cooing, crying and grunting to get your attention.

After 3 months you will notice how your baby lifts and holds his head as he lies on his tummy. How he stretches his arms to bright toys placed next to him.

Things you will also see during this time:

- Infants learn holding toys in their hands;
- Babies play with their hands and feet;
- Babies become interested in watching moving toys;
- Your baby starts playing with sounds and noise as he tries to make different sounds.

Babies began showing attachment to people they know well and start crying when a new person takes them into his/her arms.

Babies become aware of the overall atmosphere and start whining and crying in a noisy company or at an uncomfortable environment.

### ***Talk and Listen***

This time baby needs communicating more with you than with toys. Carry the baby in your arms showing him the environment: point out and name things you see. Standing by the window point at moving cars. If you have an aquarium, bring the baby closer so he could see the swimming fish. Talk, sing and coo: remember how our grandmothers and grandfathers did it?

### ***Observe***

Your baby may get tired of information. He responds by closing his eyes, turning away, crying or falling asleep. Follow suit: if your baby needs a break, make a break for yourself. Be ready to resume your communication when the baby shows his interest again.

### ***Socialize and Help Your Baby to Do the Same***

Babies like the change of scene. Try to go outdoors together more often. With time you will have your own circle of contacts and a 'work station' at the playground. This is a good location: here your child will hear unfamiliar voices and will learn to adapt to new surroundings.

# SESSION 5

## TOPIC: NO VIOLENCE FAMILIES

### SESSION PLAN:

- |                                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>1. WHAT'S NEW</b>              | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| <b>2. RELATIONS IN THE FAMILY</b> | <b>20 minutes</b> |
| <b>3. I TRY TO UNDERSTAND YOU</b> | <b>25 minutes</b> |
| <b>4. LIFE WITHOUT CONFLICTS</b>  | <b>20 minutes</b> |
| <b>5. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR ANGER</b>  | <b>30 minutes</b> |
| <b>6. ENDING THE SESSION</b>      | <b>10 minutes</b> |

### NECESSARY MATERIALS

- Flip chart
- Paper pad for flipcharts
- A4 paper (10-20 sheets)
- Pens
- Pencils

### WHAT'S NEW?

The fifth session begins with the traditional 'What's new?' question.

Participants should answer by speaking about:

- How their babies develop;
- How they take care of the baby (bathing, nursing, taking outdoors, etc.) and what difficulties they face;
- How the baby's mother is feeling;
- Things to be noted by attendees whose babies have not yet been delivered.

Participants share views about changes they experience. The moderator shall write down important information on the changes in participants' families.

No.	Participant	What's new?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Ask participants about the outcomes of their home assignment:

- How many answers were marked 'true'?
- How many answers were marked 'false'?
- Have you discussed your answers to the questions?

Ask participants whether they have any suggestions:

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Present the current class topic. The fifth session will be about family violence.



## ***FAMILY RELATIONS***

The session provides an all-male audience to discuss an issue of family violence.

In the discussion it is important to set a limit on how long participants can talk and, at the same time, to highlight the value of each speaker's input.

A psychologist can be invited for the session to help in discussing the following:

- how family conflicts begin;
- role of emotions;
- stress and anger;
- anger as a cause of conflicts;
- domestic violence: why do you think it starts?
- victims of domestic violence.

Focus your group attention on some key issues as you conduct the session:

- a) Anger is a normal way to express emotions. We sometimes feel angry even without a visible cause. So, when we are enraged, we must find an acceptable way of overcoming the anger.
- b) Domestic violence as the use of physical force against or the abuse of power over family members is an unacceptable behavior. Anger expressed through aggression entails negative consequences.
- c) It is natural to encounter conflicts in family relations like in any other. We must learn to resolve conflicts productively.
- d) We shall learn to understand what caused our anger or stress. Knowing the cause may help us refrain from violence and aggressive behavior.
- e) We can learn how to manage conflicts. There are different strategies of conflict resolution;
- f) Violence destroys family.

## ***I TRY TO UNDERSTAND YOU***

Here the group together tries to identify and to discuss what causes disagreements that lead to family conflicts. Ask attendees to finish phrases: 'I quarrel when...':

- She does not like what and how I do things at home.
- She thinks I pay little attention to her and the baby.
- Her mother is displeased with me.
- Her father is displeased with me.
- She thinks I should earn more money.
- Her friends criticize me.
- She pays no attention to my requests.
- I failed to deliver my promise.
- I spent the money wrong way.
- I spend long hours with my friends.
- She cannot explain why she spends so much money.
- I do not talk with her often enough.
- Reasons suggested by group participants \_\_\_\_\_.

## ***LIFE WITHOUT CONFLICTS***

Start by explaining that now we will try to identify sources of conflicts in men's life and of our conflicts with mothers of our children. The group will discuss the following statements:

There are two parties in any conflict. What role do you play in a conflict? What is the role played by your baby's mother?

In your opinion how conflicts impact child's development?

What is the main cause of conflicts:

- Insufficient money?
- Poor living conditions?
- Little time spent with the family?
- Intervention of extended family members?
- External causes?

Conflicts happen not only in family but at work, in the street and in other situations. Did it happen to you? How did you resolve conflicts?

Review any two situations of the suggested conflict causes list. Participants may choose the two situations themselves and try to explain what caused the conflicts and how one can change the cause. Having discussed the conflict cause the group attendees answer the following questions:

- How would you have felt in the described situation if it were your case?
- How would you have behaved in such situation?
- What are possible ways of handling the situation and resolving the problem amicably?
- In your opinion what is the best behavior strategy in conflicts?
- When in conflict do you pay attention to people around you and how they react to your behavior?
- Do strangers impact the way family conflicts develop?

### ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR ANGER

In this session participants are learning to understand what causes their anger and try to find a way out of the conflict situation. Write the following on the flipchart:

#### ANGER

Draw an Anger Chart below

Low Level (Disappointment)	Medium Level (Irritation)	High Level (Rage)
1-2-3	4-5-6	7-8-9

Mark relative scores of the levels

Offer group participants a question: how *anger* differs from *violence*. Write down their answers.

Define *emotions*, *anger* and *violence*. As you introduce these terms highlight the following:

- Feeling angry is normal and natural for a human being.
- If one learns to properly control one's anger, the feeling can be used constructively.
- Uncontrolled anger leads to aggressive behavior and begets violence;
- Family violence is physical in most cases and always brings negative consequences both for family members and for the offender.
- Understanding what caused the anger is the first step towards controlling one's aggressive behavior.

Question for the group: *Can you recognize your anger symptoms?*

Remember a situation that enraged you and what was your body response to the anger. Please, describe the response (tension, breathing, racing heartbeat, etc.) Write down three strongest indicators:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Once the group answered offer the following questions:

- What do you usually do when you are angry?
- How do you usually behave when you are angry?

Note down three most common behavior patterns:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Come back to the situation where you felt angry. How would you score it (on the given scale)?

Having seen the answers point out that usually men give high scores (5 points and up) to such situations. As a rule, men ignore low levels of anger (between 1 and 4) as they consider them a common irritation and do not link them to anger.

Explain that acknowledging low anger levels will prevent anger accumulation that leads to aggressive behavior.

## ***ANGER CONTROL SKILLS***

### **Low Level**

- It is necessary to learn how to recognize your anger before it progresses to higher levels.
- Prior to speaking your mind and feelings, assess the situation and decide whether this is a good time.
- Take a 5 minute break, leave the room and walk a little. Only then come back to start a discussion.

### **Medium Level**

- Assess the situation.
- Say what you think straight. Do not accumulate your anger, tell what you feel now.
- Take a longer timeout.

### **High Level**

A long timeout. If you feel that you may lose control, before taking the break say that you are extremely angry and that you need a break to cool down. No accusations and no cursing. Just briefly state: 'I am angry.' 'I am cross.' You shall name your state distinctly and directly.

Learn how to cool down in a conflict. Try to step out for at least 1 hour: you and all conflict parties must calm down. It is important to observe several rules:

- Do not drink alcohol;
- Do not take drugs;
- Do not drive.

Make some physical exercises: walk, kick the ball, or chinup. Physical exercises relieve body tension better than alcohol.

Having calmed down come back to discuss the conflict (or move the discussion for tomorrow). The discussion is necessary to avoid conflict entrenching. Every time you go in for discussion, you receive a valuable experience of resolving family issues.

Concluding the exercise repeat once again that you have examined theoretical conflicts and their resolutions. Offer to answer the following questions:

- What do you think about your capacity of handling your anger?
- Have you learned anything new about yourself?
- Can this be useful personally for you?
- Were there any situations where you could have behaved differently?

At the end of the exercise add that we cannot change after one session. Change takes time. However, once in a conflict remembering today's talk will prove useful when you try to find a non-violent way of resolving the issue.

If some participants feel that they cannot manage the situation on their own, they shall seek professional help.

### ***ENDING THE CLASS***

As you conclude the session summarize other classes of the course and discuss with participants:

- Were father group sessions useful for you?
- Have you learned anything new about yourself?
- Any remarks you would like to make about any session in particular?
- Any suggestions for future father groups?
- Any volunteers to become father group moderators?
- Do you want to have a joint family meeting?

## SESSION 6

OPTIONAL

### A JOINT MEETING

It is good if the course can be concluded with the joint meeting attended by participants and their wives.

Give the floor to all participants so they share their family experience of caring about the baby:

- How do you split time?
- What are dad's responsibilities?
- When does father spend more time with the baby, on weekends or on weekdays?
- What is your mother daily schedule? (you can repeat the Life Puzzle exercise this time done by mothers).

The joint meeting is important to reinforce equal responsibilities of both parents in baby care.



**Photo: A joint family meeting at the end of the Father School course.**

Discuss the following statements with the attendees:

'Legally men become fathers right after baby's birth but they are not yet fathers psychologically. Men do not get pregnant and carry to term. Therefore, they do not yet feel engaged. Probably men are not quite ready to father's role because they do not play house and pretend to be a parent with dolls as girls do. Paternal feelings need to be woken up through father's active involvement in baby care from the very first days.'

'Fathers need more time to develop a close bond with their babies. One of the reasons is that mothers spend more time with babies and their connection is more intimate. At this age child-parent relations are founded on a physical contact. Naturally, fathers have less of it compared to mothers. What could you recommend to dads?'

'Men acutely feel a shift in relations once the baby is born. Mothers are bound up in babies and baby care. Men feel 'envious' and think they do not get enough attention. The couple loses something in their emotional relations. Is that true?'

'After baby's birth men focus on providing for and less on spending time with the family. The financial responsibility may hamper the bond developing between father and his baby. Men can get so concentrated on money earning that they start forgetting about their families.'

'Often having learned that his wife is pregnant a man tries to protect her and withhold any bad news or conceal his insecurity about father-child relations. Many men are afraid to take babies in their arms in fear of injuring them. What shall be done about such situation?'

'Men must be left more often on their own with their babies to deliver an independent care and to give a break to babies' mothers. On the other hand, the traditional pattern encourages shuffling all baby care to mothers. Do you think that the child benefits from the traditional model?'

By organizing male groups for fathers-to-be we change the traditional outlook on father's role in families. However, the traditional view is embraced equally by men and women. Without mothers' support and assistance it will be very difficult for us to engage men into active involvement in their children's life.

Other aspects that can be covered during the session:

- How much time do partners have for each other?
- What do they think about male courses for dads?
- What can they recommend to course organizers?
- Will they be interested in attending any new future meetings?

The session is run as a parent club meeting and does not have a set agenda. It would be best to draw the agenda together with dads at the previous session. It is also nice if you together arrange for some surprises for moms or show a small concert.

At the end thank all of the group attendees (fathers and mothers).



**Appendix 1**

**Center for Public Initiatives, Regional Charitable Organization**

(Ukrainian)

**Guidelines on How to Establish and Operate a Father School**

**THE STATUTES  
of the Father School of the Center for Public Initiatives**

Father School is an informal organization that unites fathers who meet together for learning, discussing their problems and communicating. It is aimed at enhancing a father's role and responsibility in a child's life. Activities offered to Father School participants promote change in stereotypes of gender behavior in the family and society.

The Father School's educational activity focuses on improving men's awareness of gender issues, on drawing attention to domestic violence, and on studying and adopting the best world practice in the field.

The Father School in Kosovo also aims to establish a network of Father Schools in the region, including rural communities. To this end, the school will provide guidance to men's action groups working at the local level.

The Father School is primarily a consulting and educational center. It is established for organizing educational, training, consulting, legal, medical and public activities with parents, based on gender relationship and awareness of father's role not only in child's upbringing but also in creating a strong family.

**I. Goal, Objectives and Activities of the Father School**

1.1. The main goal of the Father School is achieving public awareness and acceptance of democratic principles of gender equality as a basis for observance of human rights in the society and especially in the family, and enhancing father's role in preparation, birth, taking care and developing of a child.

1.2. The main objectives of the Father School are to:

- help men understand the basics of gender equality and democratic relations in a family and to give up gender stereotypes;
- help men to realize the importance of father's role in child's life;
- help men to gain understanding of the concept of children's rights;
- prepare fathers to the birth of their child and, through their participation in the birth, raise the level of men's competence in taking care of infants and in infant development;
- disseminate positive Father School experiences.

1.3. For achieving its main goal, the Father School organizes the following activities:

- educational and consulting (trainings, seminars, classes, round tables, and debating clubs);
- recreation and family events (family celebrations, "father's day", leisure-time, national and religious holidays);
- sports and fitness (men's club, competitions, fitness training, tourism, and environmental studies);
- social and financial (social and financial security, planning future children's wellbeing, and a mutual aid fund).

**II. Legal Status of the Father School**

2.1. The Father School is a structural unit of the Regional charitable organization *Center for Public Initiatives*.

2.2. Father School operations should be guided by the current legislation of Ukraine, applicable state programs and directives in the field of public health, education, social security of population, programs and

guiding documents of regional and district state authorities, the Charter of the Center for Public Initiatives, and these Statutes.

### **III. Management of the Father School**

3.1. The Father School is managed by its Coordinator (Manager).

3.2. The Center for Public Initiatives Council Chairman will appoint or dismiss the Father School Coordinator subject to the Council's approval and in accordance with the current legislation.

3.3. The Father School Coordinator will run the Father School's on his own discretion except for the matters within the competence of the Center for Public Initiatives or under a Center's particular project.

3.4. The Father School Coordinator will:

- be fully responsible for the Father School's implementing its activities;
- act on behalf of and represent the Father School at all institutions and organizations.

3.5. The Father School Coordinator duties will include:

- develop the training program and schedules in cooperation with other consultants;
- select, organize trainings for, arrange for professional development of, coordinate and monitor the job of father groups' leaders;
- ensure continuous operations of the Father School's in certain fields;
- prepare job specifications for invited consultants;
- disseminate information about the Father School;
- analyze client needs and get client feedback;
- maintain Father School documentation.

### **IV. Father School Target Audience and Operations**

4.1. Father School's target audience includes men with children under one year of age or who are about to become parents and live in Kosovo or in the area.

4.2. Father School's will provide training for men in new fathers groups. On average, a group consists of 5 to 15 men, who are expectant or new fathers. The group is run by a Father School Consultant (who must be already a father).

4.3. Each Father School's Consultant (Leader) must meet the following three main criteria: have a child/children, a positive fatherhood experience and special training as a Father School's Consultant.

4.4. The group meets once per week for an approximately 1.5 hour session. The whole training course includes eight classes in accordance with the Base Program of the Father School.

4.5. On completing the training course, each attendee receives a Father School certificate.

### **V. Liquidation and Reorganization**

5.1. Liquidation and reorganization of the Father School must be performed in accordance with the order of the Center for Public Initiatives Council Chairman, subject to the Council's approval.

### **Regulations about Father School Leaders**

#### *1. Father School Consultant (Leader)*

1.1. A Father School Consultant (Leader) should meet the following three main criteria: have a child/children, a positive fatherhood experience and special training as a Father School's Consultant.

1.2. A Father School Consultant (Leader) will report directly to the Manager of the Father School of the Center for Public Initiatives.

1.3. Father School Consultant (Leader) will be guided by the current legislation, theoretical and practical guidelines of Father Schools, the Charter of the Center for Public Initiatives, job descriptions, and these Regulations.

1.4. A Father School Consultant (Leader) will deliver a set of services, trainings and consulting programs for parents focused at how to prepare to conception and birth, to participate in birth, to breastfeed, to provide infant care and feeding, to develop a child physical and psychomotor functions, to develop a child by taking care,

to learn legal and gender aspects of fatherhood, to know early intervention, etc. Special attention will be given to preventing child injuries in rural areas and to working with vulnerable families and families with retarded children.

1.5. A Father School Consultant (Leader) will select and process information and analytical materials in keeping with the Father School's mission and regional traditions of family upbringing.

1.6. A Father School Consultant (Leader) must improve his professional qualification by attending seminars (trainings), including international ones, related to Center's activities.

1.7. A Father School Consultant (Leader) will be held responsible for an inadequate performance or a failure to perform his professional duties as well as for a failure to use or for a partial use of his job rights specified herein.

#### *2. A Father School Consultant (Leader) Must Know:*

2.1. Current public health legislation and fundamental regulations in healthcare, education and labor legislation.

2.2. Sociodemographic characteristics of Kosovo district and children health indicators.

2.3. Coordination of organizational-methodological and monitoring activities

2.4. Relevant international documents that determine global and European strategic approaches to Father School's activities:

- the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- WHO Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding;
- WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health;
- WHO European Strategy for Child Health and Development;
- the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes;
- Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe;
- European Strategy for Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases;
- European Action Plan on Mental Health Protection.

#### **Base Program of the Father School**

1. **Before Birth.** Father's role during pregnancy.

2. **During Birth.** Myths about delivery. Participating at birth: we are all for it!

3. **After Birth.** Breastfeeding. Mother's postnatal depression. Worrying signs. Sexual life.

4. **Child Development.** Physical and psychomotor development, brain development, speech development, developing through taking care. Myths about 'spoiling' your child. Difference between a *young child development* and *early development*. Preventing injuries. First aid. A child with special developmental needs.

5. **Law and Everyday Life.** Child's birth certificate. How to receive aid after child's birth. Registering a parental leave. Registering a child benefit. Fathers using paternity leave. Ukrainian legislation on marriage.

6. **Basics of Gender and Gender Equality.** Gender as a new progressive approach to male and female roles in the society and family. Three generations (our fathers', ours and our children's) and progressive changes.

7. **A Democratic and a Totalitarian Family.** Violence in the family and society. Methods of non-violent conflict resolution and child protection.

8. **Healthy Father.** How men can take care of their physical and mental health during their wife's pregnancy or during preparation to fatherhood.

9. **Confidence in Your Child's Future.** Providing for children's education, work and marriage using insurance programs.

**Appendix 2**

St. Petersburg Public Organization of Social Support

**NORTHERN WAY**

(Russia)

**Program of District School for New Fathers**

**Passport of the Program**

**Name of the Program:** *Dad for Real*, a District School for New Fathers.

The program is implemented under the *Father School.ru* program of *Northern Way*, St. Petersburg Public Organization for Social Support and according to the Action Plan for 2009 for Realizing the Concept of St. Petersburg Demographic Development up to 2015 (Article 2.5 of Social Security).

**Program Developer:** Methodology Council of Father School.ru.

**Program Goals:**

- support men's creative and pioneering initiatives;
- create conditions for fathers-to-be personal growth, which would be aimed at overcoming gender stereotypes and developing their legal culture and healthy life style.

**Program Objectives:**

- promote responsible fatherhood;
- organize an interaction between men and women to reach gender equality for the benefit of children;
- promote and streamline family education and training of various population groups, primarily, of new parents;
- reach a clear understanding by new parents of mother's and father's roles and influence on child's upbringing;
- involve fathers into social activity.

**Program Duration:** 12 months.

**Main Activities:**

- training of group moderators;
- group work with fathers-to-be according to the school program;
- joint seminars with professionals of antenatal training programs for parents;
- organizational and informational support to expectant parents emphasizing principles of equal responsibility for upbringing;
- improving and developing functions of the School for New Fathers to educate parents, to encourage responsible fatherhood and to support opening of father groups in other districts of St. Petersburg;
- promoting healthy life style.

**Program Implementers:**

- manager of the district Father School
- coordinator of the Father School.ru project of Northern Way St. Petersburg Public Organization for Social Support.

**Program Co-Implementers:**

- families expecting their first child;
- expectant fathers;
- professionals and volunteers of organizations of various legal forms who work with men and focus on father's and mother's equal responsibility for child's upbringing.



**Managers of Ukrainian Father School visiting St. Petersburg Father School**

**Expected Results of Implementing the Program; Social Effectiveness:**

- decrease divorce risk factors that lead to family disruption;
- prevent asocial behavior of young men in families;
- promote socially important men's functions for preserving families and supporting responsible fatherhood;
- raise the level of legal culture in parents.

**Program Implementation:**

- the Program is implemented by specialists of Northern Way St. Petersburg Public Organization for Social Support, the district group manager and volunteers;
- the program delivery is monitored by the Sector for Family and Childhood Protection of the Social Security Department of the St. Petersburg district administration;
- intermediate and final outcomes of Program's implementation are discussed at meetings of the Methodology Council and during Father School.ru council meetings.

**Program Justification**

The Dad for Real school for new fathers is established under the *2009 Father School.ru Program* of the *Northern Way* St. Petersburg Public Organization for Social Support and according to the 2009 Action Plan aimed at realizing the *Concept of St. Petersburg Demographic Development up to 2015* of the district administration. Establishing the district Father School was included into the Action Plan for 2009.

The project is innovative as it involves a practical use of gender-sensitive techniques to work with men. Group work with new and expectant fathers is organized only by men (who are themselves fathers and raise their children).

It should be noted that the diversity of courses, schools and groups which prepare families to birth and are available in St. Petersburg and the Russian Federation does not offer schools for new fathers that would be completely run by men with practical upbringing experience.

The practice of gender-specific groups working with expectant fathers was developed by *Northern Way*, St. Petersburg Public Organization for Social Support. The methods are based on materials that the initiative group received while participating in MIR2 project (Men in Russia-2). The project was part of *Responsible Fatherhood* deployed in St. Petersburg with the support of SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency).

We suggest organizing the work according to "from today's fathers to future fathers" formula. In our opinion, this will ensure a more relevant male education, especially in situations when men grew up in single-parent families and have no knowledge of father's role. Information and support obtained directly from men with paternal experience will help to overcome a lack of self-confidence and will support a young man in his most important role, i.e., being a father.

Preparing men to fatherhood in our school mainly focuses on social rather than medical aspects. Father group will function in cooperation with maternity centers and children's district outpatient facilities. It will serve as an additional component of family's preparation for child's birth and man's preparation for a new father's role.

### **Program Main Goals and Objectives**

#### **Main Goals and Objectives of the Program are:**

- 1) Create conditions for parents' personal growth, promote socially important actions of men and women aimed at preserving family as a society institution, and support a healthy life style as a prerequisite for responsible fatherhood and motherhood.
- 2) Harmonize social contacts and protect child's interests and rights to grow in a two-parent family.
- 3) Improve legal, social and pedagogical education of parents.
- 4) Create a new social environment in which fatherhood has a high social and family status.
- 5) Strengthen father's status and raise his role in children's upbringing.

### **Program Implementation Stages**

#### **I. Organizational Arrangements (during 2 months):**

- study what's being done in St. Petersburg with regard to families' preparation to childbirth;
- develop School information materials;
- sign agreements with partner organizations;
- form groups of center specialists and representatives of partner organizations who will cooperate in the joint implementation of the program;
- form a group of coordinators who will run new fathers training sessions.

#### **II. Practical Implementation (during 12 months):**

- form new fathers groups;
- implement the Father School.ru program for new fathers.

#### **III. Summary (the 12<sup>th</sup> month):**

- generalize the acquired experience and summarize work outcomes;
- determine promising areas;
- analyze outcomes of school operations;
- develop proposals on improving school's operations and to further developing its activities.

### **Program Implementation**

#### **The Program is realized through:**

- providing legal, psychopedagogical and social knowledge to parents;



- establishing partner relationship between parents, the Father School manager, invited specialists, and representatives of nongovernmental and state institutions;
- promoting men's socially significant activity.

**The Program Focus:**

1. to strength family through responsible parenthood.
2. to provide legal knowledge to parents.
3. to prevent divorces.

**Program Expected Results and Efficiency Evaluation Criteria**

**Results to Be Achieved:**

1. Reduce risk factors leading to divorce, family conflicts and more children brought up in single-parent families. The sessions will be attended by 1 % of district new fathers (from the total number of district families with children born in 2009).
2. Raise the level of legal knowledge in parents. Father group sessions will be attended by 100 parents.
3. No violence against women in the families of program's participants.
4. Create a system of comprehensive interactions between family, district social services, health authorities and non-governmental organizations in order to raise the parenthood prestige at the time of declining demographics.
5. Support socially important actions of district parents. Five father group leaders will be trained.

**Legal Framework of Program's Implementation:**

1. No. 195-FZ *On the Fundamentals of Social Service for the Population of the Russian Federation.*
2. Order of St. Petersburg Government of July 10, 2007 No. 794 *On the Action Plan for 2007-2008 for Implementing the Concept of St. Petersburg Demographic Development up to 2015.*
3. Order of St. Petersburg Government of June 5, 2007 No. 627 *On the Family Policy Concept in St. Petersburg for 2007-2011.*
4. Order of the Ministry of Labor of the Russian Federation of July 19, 2000 No. 52 *On the Approval of the Methodology Recommendations on Organizing the Activity of the State (Municipal) Institution "Center for Social Assistance to Family and Children" (with modifications of March 26, 2001).*
5. GOST R 52142-2003 *Quality of Social Services.*

**Control and Monitoring:**

The program of the *Dad for Real* school for new fathers is included into the *Action Plan for 2008-2009 for Implementing the Concept of St. Petersburg Demographic Development up to 2015* (Social Security Section).

The program of the district school for new fathers is to be implemented within one year (2009).

The program shall be monitored by the Department of Social Security of Population of the district administration, the Methodology Council and the School Council of Northern Way St. Petersburg Public Organization for Social Support.

The manager of the district Father School shall arrange for and coordinate operations of father groups.

The manager of Father School.ru Program of Northern Way St. Petersburg Public Organization for Social Support shall act as the Program coordinator.

**List of Main Actions**

<b>2009</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Completion Mark</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Month</b>		
1	Coordination meeting of organizers of the district father group	
2	Coordination meeting of specialists participating in the School Program	
3	Inform district institutions and organizations that the Dad for Real district school for new fathers starts its operations.	
4	Develop training hand-outs	
5	Monitoring of potential school attendees via telephone	
6	Create database of attendees	
7	Send press releases to mass media	
8	Hold a coordination meeting between specialists of the center, institutions and organizations that take part in the School program	
9	A work meeting with group leaders	
10	A class in the city school to train father group moderators	
11	A meeting with father group attendees	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Month</b>		
12	A coordination meeting between the specialists who participate in the School program	
13	Develop training hand-outs	
14	Develop advertising materials for publishing	
15	A class in the city school to train father group moderators	
16	Organize and deliver sessions as per the School program for 2 father groups	
17	Develop a plan of cooperation with district social services and educational institutions	
18	Organize and deliver individual consultations as per requests of groups' attendees	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Month</b>		
19	Organize and run classes as per School program for 2 father groups	
20	Conduct one field trip session	
21	Organize and deliver individual consultations as per requests of groups' attendees	
22	Place information materials in mass media	
23	Organize and hold a meeting of father groups attendees (both fathers and mothers participate) with social services representatives. Subject: social welfare, benefits	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Month</b>		
24	Organize and hold classes as per the School program for 2 father groups	
25	Conduct one field trip session	
26	Organize and deliver individual consultations as requested by groups' attendees	
27	Organize and hold a meeting of father groups attendees (both fathers and mothers participate) with educators and psychologists of the district psychoeducational center. Subject: bringing up a child	
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Month</b>		
28	Organize and hold classes as per the School program for 2 father groups	
29	Conduct one field trip session	

30	Organize and deliver individual consultations as requested by groups' attendees	
31	Organize and hold a meeting of father groups attendees (both fathers and mothers participate) with health professionals from children's outpatient facility. Subject: child's health	
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Month</b>		
32	Hold an interim coordination meeting of center specialists who participate in the school program	
33	Organize and hold classes as per the School program for 2 father groups	
34	Conduct a field trip session at a maternity welfare center	
35	Organize the International Father's Day celebration (the third Sunday of June) for the district Father School attendees and community	
36	Organize and deliver individual consultations as requested by groups' attendees	
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Month</b>		
37	Organize and hold classes as per the School program for 2 father groups	
38	Conduct a field trip session at a maternity clinic (subject to agreement)	
39	Conduct a class in the city school: training of father group moderators	
40	Organize and hold a meeting of father groups attendees (both fathers and mothers participate) with social services specialists. Subject: social welfare, benefits	
41	Organize and deliver individual consultations as requested by groups' attendees	
<b>8<sup>th</sup> Month</b>		
42	Organize and hold classes as per the School program for 2 father groups	
43	Conduct a field trip session	
44	Conduct a class in the city school: training of father group moderators	
45	Organize and hold a meeting of father groups attendees (both fathers and mothers participate) with educators and psychologists of the district psychoeducational center. Subject: bringing up a child	
46	Organize and deliver individual consultations as requested by groups' attendees	
47	Hold an interim coordination meeting between center specialists and representatives of the institutions and organizations who participate in the school program	
<b>9<sup>th</sup> Month</b>		
48	Organize and hold classes as per the School program for 2 father groups	
49	Conduct a class in the city school: training of father group moderators	
50	Conduct one field trip session	
51	Organize and hold a meeting of father groups attendees (both fathers and mothers participate) with health professionals from children's polyclinics. Subject: child's health	
52	Organize and deliver individual consultations as requested by groups' attendees	
<b>10<sup>th</sup> Month</b>		
53	Organize and hold classes as per the School program for 2 father groups	
54	Conduct a field trip session	
55	Organize and hold individual consultations on the groups attendees' requests	
56	Conduct a demonstration class for specialists from district service agencies and organizations	
<b>11<sup>th</sup> Month</b>		
57	Organize and hold classes in accordance with the School program for 2 father groups	
58	Conduct a "Responsible parenthood" seminar for specialists	
59	Organize and deliver individual consultations as requested by groups' attendees	
60	Present operational outcomes at the coordinating council of the Father School	
61	Develop an Operation Plan for the next year	
<b>12<sup>th</sup> Month</b>		

62	Hold a concluding meeting with the attendees of the district school for new fathers	
63	Organize and hold a New Year party for the district Father School participants	
64	Hold a concluding meeting. Summarize the year's operational results	

**Appendix 3**

**Program of New Fathers School  
(Father School) of Minsk State  
Agency named the City Center of  
Social Service for Family and Children**

(Belarusian)

**DAD FOR REAL**

**Program Passport**

**Program Name:**

*Dad for Real*/Young Fathers School in Minsk (Father School).

**Program's Legal Framework:**

The Program is implemented within the framework of the National Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality for 2008-2010 approved by decree No. 1286 of the Belarus Council of Ministers of September 3, 2008, and the National Program of Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus for 2007-2010, approved by order No. 135 of the President of the Republic of Belarus of March 26, 2007.

**Program Designers:**

A. A. Turovets, Director of Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency; A. A. Krikunov, Deputy Director of Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency; A. A. Aladin, PhD (Psychology), Leading Consulting Psychologist of Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency; I. A. Fillipov, Head of the Day Center for Disabled Persons of the Territorial Center of Social Service for Population of the Central district of Minsk; R. V. Kryuchkov, Psychologist of the Territorial Center of Social Service for Population of Pervomaysky district of Minsk; N. N. Eremin, Head of the Department for Admission and Counseling of the Center for Social Assistance to Family and Children of Nevsky district of St. Petersburg.

**Program Goals:**

- promote gender equality in families and society;
- overcome gender stereotypes and deliver targeted socio-psychological assistance to men;
- promote state demographic security based on enhancing young families' stability by resorting to paternal and partnership qualities in men;
- create conditions for personal development of fathers-to-be and improve their knowledge of the psychology of family interactions and of the healthy life style practice.

**Program Objectives:**

- strengthen family as society institution by optimizing father's role in families and revealing expectant and new fathers' potential;
- develop a positive social image of responsible fatherhood;
- organize interactions between men and women for achieving gender equality;
- promote and streamline family education and training of various population groups, primarily, of parents;
- organize psychological education of young parents about mother's and father's roles and influence on child's upbringing;
- involve fathers into social activities.



РЕСПУБЛИКА БЕЛАРУСЬ  
МІНСКІ ГАРАДСКІ  
ВЫКАНАЎЧЫ КАМІТЭТ  
КАМІТЭТ ПА ПРАЦЫ, ЗАНЯТАСЦІ  
І САЦЫЯЛЬНАЙ АБАРОНЕ

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РЕСПУБЛИКА БЕЛАРУСЬ  
МІНСКІ ГОРОДСКОЙ  
ИСПОЛНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ КОМИТЕТ  
КОМИТЕТ ПО ТРУДУ, ЗАНЯТОСТИ  
И СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ ЗАЩИТЕ

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ГУ «Минский городской  
центр социального  
обслуживания семьи и детей»

### О согласовании программы

Комитет по труду, занятости и социальной защите  
Мингорисполкома сообщает, что замечаний по программе школы  
молодых отцов «ПАПА-ШКОЛА» не имеет.

Председатель комитета

А.А.Ражанец

**Picture: The Program of Minsk Father School is supported by the Committee on Labor, Employment and Social Security.**

Translation of the Picture:

25.11.2009

FROM: Committee on Labor, Employment and Social Security of  
Minsk City Executive Committee, Republic of Belarus

ATTN: Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency

SUBJECT: Program Approval

This is to inform that the Committee on Labor, Employment and Social security of Minsk City Executive Committee has no critical comments on the Program of Father School for new fathers.

Chairman of the Committee /signed/

A.A.Razhanets

#### **Program's Main Activities:**

- train group instructors (moderators);
- operate groups for fathers-to-be as per the school Program;
- disseminate experience at the Territorial Centers of Social Service for Population of Minsk and the Republic of Belarus;



- organize joint seminars with specialists of other agencies implementing antenatal training Programs for parents;
- provide organizational and informational support to expectant and new parents emphasizing principles of equal responsibility for child's upbringing;
- guide in terms of didactics and methodology in order to improve operations of the New Fathers School, educate parents and encourage responsible fatherhood;
- support family healthy life style and family values.

**Program Implementers:**

- specialists of Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency and of the Minsk Territorial Centers of Social Service for Population; volunteers.

**Program Co-Implementers:**

- families expecting their first child;
- expectant fathers;
- fathers;
- specialists of organizations and members of non-governmental organizations which work with men emphasizing principles of father's and mother's equal responsibility for child's upbringing.

**Program Expected Results and Their Social Importance:**

- strengthen interactions between children and parents as well as between partners (spouses) in young families;
- harmonize family environment that will support family's stability and spouses' willingness to have more children;
- decrease divorce risk factors that lead to family disruption; reduce the number of young family divorces (during the first three years after birth);
- prevent asocial behavior in young men;
- promote a socially important men's activity, i.e., preserving family as an institution and supporting responsible fatherhood;
- raise parents' knowledge in psychology, pedagogies and law.

**Program Implementation:**

- the Program is implemented by specialists of Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency and of Minsk Territorial Centers of Social Service for Population as well as by volunteer-fathers who were specially trained at Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency;
- the Program is monitored by the administration of Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency and by specialists of the Committee on Labor, Employment and Social Security of Minsk City Executive Committee;
- the Program's intermediate and final results are reviewed during meetings of Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency, meetings of the Methodology Association of Minsk Social Service as well as during scheduled seminars and conferences on this subject.

**Program Feasibility in Brief:**

*Dad for Real* new fathers school (FATHER SCHOOL) is established under the Plan on Additional Measures developed by Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency for 2009-2010 and aimed at realization of the *National Action Plan Promoting Gender Equality for 2008-2010* approved by decree No. 1286 of Belarus Council of Ministers of September 3, 2008 and *the National Program of Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus for 2007-2010*, approved by order No. 135. of the Belarus President of March 26, 2007

The project is innovative as group work with expectant and new (with several month old babies) fathers is organized only by men (either experienced or trained in the theory of children upbringing).

It should be noted that among a few courses, schools and groups which prepare families to birth and are available in Minsk none operate as a school for new fathers that would be completely run by fathers with practical upbringing experience and special training.

The methodology of working with groups of expectant or new fathers was mastered during training seminars run in June and October 2009 at Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency. The seminars disseminated the experience of MIR (Men in Russia) project implemented in St. Petersburg in 2007-2008 by the Labor and Social Security Committee of St. Petersburg, the Social and Economic Institute and experts of SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency).

We suggest organizing the work according to "from today's fathers to future fathers" formula. In our opinion, this will ensure a more relevant male education, especially in situations when men grew up in single-parent families and have no knowledge of father's role. Information and support obtained directly from men with paternal experience will help to overcome a lack of self-confidence and will support a young man in his most important role, i.e., being a father.

An extensive long-term sociological study of the eight years of Father Schools operations was organized in Sweden. It was found out that fathers who had attended Father Schools spend by far more time at home with their young children, with the educational value of this time being much higher. This significantly reduces the level of child neglect and abandonment not only during early childhood but at later periods as well, for example, during adolescence.

The divorce rate among fathers who had attended the Father School reduced by 30 % compared to the sample of fathers who had not studied at the Father School. The polled sample of the project participants (over 4,000 men) confirmed a statistically valid and considerable (up to 70%) decrease of cases of family violence against women and children. These families also showed an increase in the number of 'unplanned' births. These children were born due to harmonized relations of the married couples achieved through the experience of bringing up their first child with the father's increased responsibility. This harmonization is an essential factor for the demographic progress in Sweden which has been achieved over the last decades.

Preparing men to fatherhood focuses on social rather than medical aspects. However, the work will be performed in cooperation with maternity welfare centers and children's outpatient facilities. It will serve as an additional component of family's preparation to child's birth and man's preparation to a new father's role. The Program plans to engage specialists of all interested agencies and representatives of nongovernmental organizations.

The experience of Russian specialists (from St. Petersburg), including that obtained by the Territorial Center of Social Service of Nevsky district, confirmed a positive dynamics created by using the Swedish model in Slavic sociocultural and mental setting. This allows to draw a conclusion about the applicability of the Swedish model in the Republic of Belarus.

### **Tentative Dates and Stages of the Program**

**Stage 1:** June 2009 - December 2010;

**Stage 2:** January 2011 - December 2013.

#### **Brief Description of Stage 1:**

1.1. Arrangements and Methodology (January - December 2009):

- study events aimed to prepare families' to childbirth;
- develop and publish information about the school;
- sign agreements with partner organizations;
- form groups of specialists of the Centers, representatives of partner organizations and volunteers who will cooperate in Program's joint implementation;
- form and train moderator groups who will train new fathers.

1.2. Practice (November 2009 - November 2010):

- form new fathers groups;
- deliver the Program of new fathers school in all districts of Minsk;
- support new fathers schools set up in other regions of the Republic of Belarus.

1.3. Summary (December 2010 - February 2011):

- generalize the acquired experience and summarize operational outcomes;

- identify promising developmental areas;
- analyze the experience and results of the new fathers school operations in Minsk and the Republic of Belarus at a special round table;
- develop proposals to improve and to enhance operations of the new fathers school's.

**Brief Description of Stage 2:**

- 2.1. Develop the Father School Models of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Level (for fathers with children of up to seven years) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Level (for fathers of teenagers and youngsters);
- 2.2. Introduce the three-level model into the practice of interested institutions.

**Expected Results and Efficiency Criteria of the Program:**

Results to be achieved through the Program:

1. Reduce risk factors leading to divorces, family conflicts and increasing the number of children growing in single-parent families. Dozens and hundreds of young expectant fathers or fathers of several month old children can attend the classes.
2. Raise parents' knowledge in psychology, pedagogics and law.
3. Prevent family violence against women and children.
4. Optimize the system of comprehensive interaction between family, the Center of Social Service for Family and Children (population), education and health authorities and non-governmental organizations to promote responsible parenthood prestige in declining demographics.
5. Promote young parents' socially important activity that strengthens families and prevents various family problems.

**Financing:**

The Program does not require any additional budgetary financing. Due to its high social value, the Program can be implementing with out-of-the-budget sources, i.e., investments by foreign organizations, sponsorship, and grants of various funds and organizations.

**Appendix:** An example of Father School Moderator Guide.

**Appendix 4**

**Mobile Father School**

In August 2009 it was decided to set up a Belarusian mobile Father School. The idea came during a meeting of moderators who discussed how to expand the geographical coverage of the Responsible Fatherhood Movement.

A town maternity hospital of Molodechno (Minsk region, 70 km from Minsk) asked the Father School to organize several meetings with expectant fathers. The Belarusian national healthcare system legally allows health workers to organize meetings between expectant fathers and consulting doctors. For fathers who attended such meetings doctors endorse a certificate qualifying for a child benefit allowance.

Having no trained moderator in Molodechno it was decided to send there two very experienced moderators from Minsk and a candidate moderator from Chist village of Molodechnensky district.



**Managers of the Mobile Father School arrived to Molodechno (Belarus)**

The meeting with expectant fathers was a success. However, the contact with local doctors proved to be even a bigger success. Doctors got interested in setting up a system of sessions with fathers-to-be.

In Belarus distances to district or regional centers from a given point generally exceed 300-350 km. There are Territorial Centers of Social Service for Population in local towns, villages, big and small settlements which are ready to support the Program. However, most of them lack men-employees who could become Father School moderators. Women account for 100% of the personnel in most Centers (there are more than 150 centers across the country).

The idea of developing the mobile Father Schools is based on the following principles:

1. Search for initiators and set action groups that will support regional Father Schools;
2. Schedule contacts and organizational meetings in regions;

3. Schedule visits and form mobile support groups which would consist of experienced moderators (from Minsk);
4. Prepare the Programs of an initial seminar for working with expectant fathers or for organizing a local Father School for each region based on the standard Program.
5. Organize a group's field trip and on-site work. Expand contacts and support action groups in regions.
6. Receive feedback, plan new trips, plan seminars in Minsk with the participation of regional candidate moderators.
7. Discuss achieved results and set new goals at moderators' working group in Minsk.

One year was spent on preparations. The mobile group has made over 10 working filed trips since May 2010.

The Gomel mobile Father School was the most successful. The team of young moderators is led by S. Bychkov. Based on team approach they organized several meetings attended by both father group instructors and participants. Each meeting included a lecture, discussion and answering questions. Such meetings considerably increased the number of people interested in promoting responsible fatherhood and supporting the development of gender equality among teenagers.

The mobile Father School also came to towns of Grodno, Molodechno, Dzerzhinsk and Fanipol.

Thanks to moderators' active work and personal and professional contacts, today more towns get interested in organizing meetings and starting the work with expectant fathers, among them Stolin, Slonim, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Brest, Borisov, Bobruisk, Lida, Rechitsa, Maryina Gorka and others.

All these towns have Territorial Centers of Social Service for Population which are interested in organizing and supporting the work with young families and expectant parents. These Centers and their specialists serve as 'support points' for operations of the mobile Father School.

Thus, an environment is being created for developing and supporting the rooting of new ideas and socio-psychological technologies.

Financial and organizational support by our Swedish partners makes possible to organize such trips and to use a special minivan, computer and overhead projector. Two-day seminars on fatherhood issues with an overnight stay can be also organized. Modern communication information technologies and the internet open great prospects for distance training of moderators and working with fathers. However, in our communication culture, nothing can replace a personal contact or meeting. And it is the mobile Father School that can make such personal contacts possible.

Hence, the mobile scenario provides the following opportunities:

1. Following an initial informational briefing bring together a group of interested people and representatives of various agencies with a professional interest in working with expectant and new fathers;
2. Provide methodological guidance to administrators and professionals and clarify the Father School's goals and objectives.
3. Organize a master class and demonstrate videos of how father groups run in Minsk and in St. Petersburg.
4. Organize a field trip master class for a group of fathers and candidate moderators locally at an educational, healthcare or social security institution.
5. Participate in a press conference for local mass media.
6. In cooperation with local authorities, non-governmental organizations and action groups, implement other events to promote responsible fatherhood ideology in regions.
7. If requested, provide methodological guidance and organizational support to existing and functioning father groups and moderators.



## **Internet Information Sources:**

### **International Organizations Supporting Families and Children:**

#### ***UNICEF***

UNICEF is the United Nations Children's Fund. UNICEF's main goal is to protect child rights and to support children's right to safe, healthy and happy childhood.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was created in 1946 to help children who were post-World War II victims. Since 1953, UNICEF's goal has been providing charitable assistance to children worldwide. UNICEF's activity is aimed at fundraising and organizing Programs to protect children's rights in hard living conditions and emergency situations and to save their health and lives.

For more information on UNICEF's worldwide activities visit the website of UNICEF's national branch in your country.

[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

#### ***UNFPA***

The United Nations Population Fund is an international development agency which promotes the rights of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunities. The UNFPA supports countries in using demographic data for developing policies and Programs to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

[www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

#### ***UNDP***

The United Nations Development Program is the United Nations' global development network. It advocates for positive changes and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. The network operates in 166 countries, working with nations on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on UNDP staff's knowledge and experience and its wide range of partners.

World leaders have made commitments on achieving the Millennium Development Goals which are aimed primarily at reducing poverty by half by 2015. UNDP coordinates global and national efforts to achieve these goals.

UNDP focuses on assisting countries in democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment, social development, and HIV/AIDS.

Within the context of all our activities we support countries in protecting human rights and expanding women's capacities.

[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

#### ***WHO***

The World Health Organization is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries, and monitoring and assessing health trends.

[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

#### ***ENGAGINGMEN.NET***

This is a non-governmental network for those who are committed to gender justice and ending violence against women. The website is managed by Partners for Prevention and supported by MenEngage, a global network of nongovernmental organizations and UN agencies that seek to engage boys and men in activities aimed at achieving gender equality.

[www.engagingmen.net](http://www.engagingmen.net)

#### ***MENENGAGE***

MenEngage is a global alliance of nongovernmental organizations that seeks to engage men to achieve gender equality. The Coordination Committee includes Promundo, International Center for Research on Women, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Family Violence Prevention Fund, WHO, UNFPA, UNDP, Sahyog and White Ribbon Campaign.



The MenEngage members work collectively and individually toward the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those components that focus on achieving gender equality. Activities of the alliance include information-sharing, organizing joint activities and preparing national, regional and international human rights advocacy actions.

[www.menengage.org](http://www.menengage.org)

## Scientific View on Modern Fatherhood

### *Australian Institute of Family Studies*

[www.aifs.gov.au](http://www.aifs.gov.au)

### *European Fatherhood*

This is a researchers' network. The website is dedicated to presenting new knowledge and best practice for improving gender equality for fathers. Its goal is to promote and assist professionals involved in promoting and supporting men in their fathers' role. The need for knowledge concerning the psychological transition to fatherhood and an examination of methods to overcome gender stereotypes are their priorities.

[www.european-fatherhood.com](http://www.european-fatherhood.com)

### *Igor Kon's Website*

The author's website is addressed to a wide range of professionals including psychologists, sexologists, sociologists, doctors, teachers, social workers and others. The website's materials can be used for self-education purposes.

[sexology.narod.ru/info198.html](http://sexology.narod.ru/info198.html)

## Fatherhood. National websites

### **Australia** *Dad Man*

Dads and daughters. This a website of Joe Kelly, a fatherhood expert. It teaches how men can become better fathers and strengthen their families.

[www.thedadman.com](http://www.thedadman.com)

### **Belarus** *Papa-school: Belarus*

The website of Belarusian organizations which actively promote Father Schools.

[www.papaschool.org](http://www.papaschool.org)

### *I father*

The website of Belarusian Father Schools in Gomel.

[www.ipapa.by](http://www.ipapa.by)

### **Canada** *Caring Dads*

The website is addressed to men who want to improve their knowledge and become better fathers. The Program was developed by Katreena Scott (Institute for Studies in Education, Ontario), Tim Kelly (the University of Toronto), Claire Crooks (the University of Western Ontario), and Karen Francis (the University of Western Ontario).

[www.caringdadsProgram.com/dads/index.html](http://www.caringdadsProgram.com/dads/index.html)

### **Moldova** *Dad's Club*

A Moldavian informational Internet portal dedicated to fathers-to-be and to experienced fathers.

[www.papaclub.md](http://www.papaclub.md)

**Poland**

***Tato.Net***

A website of the international movement of men who wish to take a more active part in their children's life. Some pages are in Russian.

[www.tato.net](http://www.tato.net)

**Russia**

***Papaschool.RU***

The website of the Russian New Fathers School. It was founded by men's action groups organizing father groups in Russia.

[www.papaschool.ru](http://www.papaschool.ru)

***Papaland***

The website presents news about fathers' movements, web links on fatherhood and various articles. It lists Centers for Fathers (rare information in Russia).

[www.papaland.ru](http://www.papaland.ru)

***Papam.info***

The website about children and mothers developed for loving fathers.

[www.papam.info](http://www.papam.info)

***Papa-club***

The website is about fatherhood and designed for men who love their children and enjoy being involved in their upbringing.

[www.papa-club.ru](http://www.papa-club.ru)

***Severny Put (Northern Way)***

A St. Petersburg NGO that implements social programs engaging men in activities to reach gender equality and focuses on man's role in family.

[www.svrp.ru](http://www.svrp.ru)

***Ya Papa (I am a father)***

The website includes sections on Birth, Family, Health, Feeding, Psychology, Arsenal (what is required for children), Time off (spending free time with a child), and Forum.

[www.ipapa.ru](http://www.ipapa.ru)

**Romania**

***Asociatia Nationala a Tatilor din Romania (A.N.T.R.)***

The National Association of Romanian Fathers. The Association's motto is "Fathers, unite". Special attention is given to working with divorced fathers under the Right to Have a Father Program.

[www.asociatiatatilor.ro/index.php](http://www.asociatiatatilor.ro/index.php)

**USA**

***The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC)***

The NRFC supports governmental and local community efforts aimed at encouraging and supporting responsible parenthood and healthy marriage.

[www.fatherhood.gov](http://www.fatherhood.gov)

***National Fatherhood Initiative***

The organization professes the following main ideas:

- fathers make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to children's life;
- fatherlessness leads to children's problems;
- a society which does not cultivate a responsible fatherhood becomes a society of fatherlessness;
- growth of fatherlessness is today's biggest social problem.

[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

### ***Center for Fathers and Families***

The center's mission is strengthening the society through strengthening families.

[www.fathersandfamilies.com](http://www.fathersandfamilies.com)

### ***Father's Day USA***

The USA government website is dedicated to celebrating the International Father's Day. It describes the history of the holiday, presents the USA President's Fatherhood pledge, and contains links to family centers.

[www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Fathers\\_Day.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Fathers_Day.shtml)

## **Ukraine**

### ***A Resource Center of Ukrainian Father Schools***

[www.papa-ua.net](http://www.papa-ua.net)

### ***Daddy Club RV***

The website of the Ukrainian Fathers Organization in Rovno

[www.tato-club.rv.ua](http://www.tato-club.rv.ua)

### ***Kirovograd Father School***

A project by TORO Creative Union.

[www.toro.org.ua/projects/27.html](http://www.toro.org.ua/projects/27.html)

## **Sweden**

### ***Södertörns Lärcentra***

Father groups. The website of the Dad for Real Program's author Mats Berggren who has been providing support to fathers in Stockholm for many years. The website has information in Russian and English.

[www.s-larcentra.se](http://www.s-larcentra.se)

## **Projects and Programs Supporting Family and Children:**

### ***Maternal and Infant Health Project***

JSI / AED / USAID.

The project is financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the private sector. It is organizationally, legally and technically supported by the Ministry of Health. The project's goal is to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality in Ukraine and to improve maternal and infant health by introducing evidence-based practices into obstetrical and neonatal care.

[www.mihp.com.ua/index.html](http://www.mihp.com.ua/index.html)

### ***Ukrainian-Swiss Mother and Child Health Program***

The project is aimed at supporting health sector reforms and modernizing health services in Maternal and Child Health.

[www.motherandchild.org.ua/home](http://www.motherandchild.org.ua/home)

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