



PACIFIC PARENTING TOOLKIT

MODULE 2: HEALTH AND WELLBEING

1. Background

Parents and caregivers are central to improving health outcomes of children and adolescents through their specific influence which evolves as the child grows. Across the life course, there are core actions that parents and caregivers can consistently take, such as providing nutritious food, maintaining hygiene, seeking preventive care, and creating safe and nurturing environments. (1) These actions are supported by parenting skills that address children's physical, mental, and social well-being.

- **In Early Childhood:** The protective role is focused on foundational survival and prevention. Parents and caregivers influence health outcomes through the early recognition of illness, ensuring timely immunisation, and establishing proactive care-seeking patterns.(1) Their vigilance during these years creates the safety net necessary for healthy physical development.
- **In Middle Childhood:** As children enter school and expand their social circles, the protective role shifts toward habit formation and home-based care. During this stage, parents foster resilience by modeling healthy lifestyle choices and providing a stable domestic environment that reinforces physical and emotional security. (2)
- **In Adolescence:** The protective role matures into guidance and open communication. Parents and caregivers influence long-term outcomes by paying close attention to mental well-being and navigating the complexities of puberty (3). By facilitating honest dialogue around sexual and reproductive health, they provide essential foundations that help adolescents make informed, safe decisions during their transition to independence. (4)

Parenting interventions can reinforce these protective behaviours, strengthen family and health system linkages, and support multisectoral collaboration across health, nutrition, education, protection, and WASH. (1) By positioning parents and caregivers as active partners in health promotion, the Pacific region can leverage existing policies and community structures to support children and adolescents throughout the life course.

The Pacific region has made notable progress in improving child health outcomes over recent decades, particularly through strengthened primary health care systems, expanded vaccination coverage, and improved maternal and newborn care.(5) Countries, including the Cook Islands, Palau, and Tonga now report some of the lowest under-five mortality rates in the region, demonstrating alignment with global child survival targets. (6) However, disparities remain pronounced. Kiribati continues to experience high child mortality, (6) and Fiji has recently seen under-five mortality rise from 21 in 2012 to 29 per 1,000 live births in 2023, (7) underscoring ongoing vulnerabilities in service quality and health system resilience.

Adolescent health is an emerging priority in the Pacific, particularly in relation to mental

well-being and sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Evidence indicates that suicide and self-harm are among the leading causes of death among adolescents aged 15–19 in several Pacific countries. (8) Data from school-based surveys show a concerning proportion of adolescents report attempts at self-harm. (9) Similarly, low contraceptive use, limited adolescent-friendly services, and gaps in comprehensive sexuality education highlight the ongoing need for preventive, family-centred approaches. (10) Engaging parents and caregivers in these areas can support early communication, build trust in health services, and encourage timely care-seeking. This helps create safe and supportive environments for adolescents and younger children.

National policies and regional frameworks, such as the Healthy Islands Monitoring Framework and the Pacific Youth Development Framework, provide a strong foundation for strengthening parenting support within health systems. Countries including Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu have implemented community outreach initiatives, school health programmes, and policy measures that demonstrate the value of engaging parents to reinforce positive health behaviours. For example, school-based health initiatives, ranging from counselling services to health promotion activities, have proven more effective when families are involved as partners. Similarly, high vaccination coverage in many Pacific countries shows the important role that parents and caregivers play in ensuring children receive preventive care. By integrating parents systematically into policy and practice, health systems can strengthen preventive care, improve psychosocial and physical well-being, and enhance equity of access, especially for families in remote communities.

1.1 Module Structure

The module follows the structure outlined in Chapter 1 Section 1.4 Content Overview. In addition, there are four annexes at the end of this module, which provide further information or guidance for facilitators and programme managers. These include:

- 1. Guidance on Multi-sectoral integration:** identifying potential entry points for health and well-being activities across other sectors to encourage a holistic approach to parenting
- 2. Programmes from the Region:** Programmes or interventions in the Pacific and globally that make reference to specific health and well-being skills.
- 3. Facilitator Checklist:** A simple checklist per skill designed to support facilitators in preparing for and delivering the content related to health and well-being skills.
- 4. Additional resources:** A list of resources with links for additional materials including factsheets, videos and posters, to support the skills included in this module.

2. Best Practices Across the Life Course

Good health practices start from early childhood and continue as children grow. Parents and caregivers influence health-related behaviours such as preventive care, healthy eating, physical activity. (1) Evidence shows that positive parent-child communication and engagement characterised by warmth, openness, and supportive dialogue is associated with better health and well-being in children, including healthier behaviours and improved psychosocial outcomes. (11)

This section focuses on two core skills that support health and well-being across the life course, from pregnancy through early childhood (0–5 years), middle childhood (6–10 years), and adolescence (11–18 years). These skills are:

1. **Adopting Early Health-Seeking Behaviour as a Preventive Health Measure**
2. **Creating Safe, Clean, and Healthy Home Environments**

While these skills are relevant at every stage of development, how parents and caregivers apply them changes as children grow and gain independence. During pregnancy and early childhood, parents and caregivers take primary responsibility for decisions about preventive care, routines, and healthy behaviours. As children grow older, parents and caregivers gradually guide, support, and model healthy choices while encouraging autonomy. Together, these skills help build strong foundations for lifelong physical and mental well-being, support early recognition and management of health issues, and foster the development of positive, health-promoting habits.



For more information see Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practices:

- **Sub-topic 4: Health Daily Routines and Behaviours**
- **Sub-topic 5: Social Emotional Digital well-being**



For more information see Module 1: Child Protection and Safety: Best Practices Across the Life Course

- **Skill 2: Communication and Spending Time Together**

Skill 1: Adopting Early Health-Seeking Behaviour as a Preventive Health Measure

Why It Matters

Parent and caregiver knowledge about health services is essential for timely care-seeking, navigating referrals, and ensuring children receive appropriate support for both general and special health needs. (12) When parents and caregivers lack understanding of what services exist, how to access them, or how referral systems work, they may delay seeking care or underutilise available services, negatively affecting child health outcomes. (12) Strengthening parent and caregiver understanding of health systems will enable families to take proactive steps in safeguarding child and adolescent health.



Disability Considerations

Children and adolescents with disabilities or developmental delays may require additional health services, ongoing monitoring, or specialised support. Parents and caregivers play an important role in recognising early signs that a child may need additional assessment or support and seeking guidance from health providers as early as possible.

Early identification can help children access services that support their health, development, and well-being. In some communities, specialised services may be limited or located far from families. Parents and caregivers can still play an important role by asking health workers about available referral pathways, outreach services, rehabilitation support, or community-based programmes that may assist children with specific needs. Keeping records of appointments, treatments, and recommendations can also help ensure continuity of care when visiting different providers. Parents and caregivers may also need to communicate clearly with health workers about their child's abilities, challenges, and health needs. Asking questions and seeking clarification can help parents and caregivers better understand treatment options, therapies, or home-based practices that support the child's health and development. Identify referral pathways for children with specific needs: Find out which additional services are available for children with disabilities or developmental delays, and when referrals to these services should be made.



See Activity 1 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on adopting early health-seeking behaviour.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Understand what health services are available:** Know what health services are available in your community (for example, immunisation programmes for children) and which services may be farther away.
- **Know how to access services and outreach programmes:** Know how to access health services and outreach programmes, where they are situated, and when they are open, including clinic times for children.
- **Seek health care early:** Seek care as soon as a child becomes unwell and identify health concerns early to support better health outcomes.
- **Preventive health is better:** Prevent your child from becoming ill by ensuring their vaccinations are up to date and they have regular health check-ups.

Social Media Messages

- Every child deserves care, no matter which island, no matter how remote.
- Health is wealth. Know where to go when your child is sick, every visit counts.

Skill 2: Creating Safe, Clean, and Healthy Home Environments

Why It Matters

A safe, clean, and healthy home is fundamental to children’s physical and mental well-being. Parents and caregivers shape the environments in which children grow. This includes household hygiene and sanitation, safe spaces for play, food storage and preparation areas, and access to clean water and nutritious food. (1) These environmental factors directly influence children’s exposure to illness and infections and affect their ability to grow and develop in a healthy and secure setting. (13) Supporting families in the Pacific to maintain safe and healthy home environments, especially in remote or resource-limited communities, can significantly reduce preventable illness and improve health outcomes.



For more guidance, refer to the Module 4: Best Practices Across the Lifecourse: Skill 2 about using safe water and water storage and the link between diarrhoea and hygiene.



See Activity 2 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on creating safe, clean, and healthy home environments.



Disability Considerations

Children and adolescents with disabilities may experience their home environments differently depending on their mobility, sensory, communication, or developmental needs. Some children may be more vulnerable to household hazards, infections, or injuries, particularly if they spend more time at home or require assistance with daily activities.

Parents and caregivers may need to take additional steps to ensure that spaces for sleeping, playing, eating, and hygiene are safe, clean, and accessible. This may include keeping pathways clear for mobility, ensuring safe storage of medicines and cleaning products, adapting hygiene routines, or providing additional supervision where needed. At the same time, children with disabilities should be encouraged to take part in simple household routines, such as handwashing or helping with cleaning, in ways that build independence, confidence, and healthy habits.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Reduce infection risks through routine handwashing:** Promote regular handwashing and basic household cleanliness to reduce the spread of infections and illness.
- **Safe storage of food and drinking water:** Store food and water in clean, covered, and safe spaces to prevent contamination and illness.
- **Model healthy home practices:** Support parents and caregivers to demonstrate everyday cleaning, hygiene, and safe behaviours so children learn by observing.
- **Identify household safety risks:** Support families to identify and reduce hazards by keeping dangerous objects, substances, and tools out of children's reach.
- **Link home environments to child health and development:** Reinforce the message that safe, clean, and organised home environments support children's physical health, learning, and well-being across the life course.

Social Media Messages

- A safe and clean home keeps your child healthy.
- Small changes at home can protect children from illness and injury.
- Clean water, safe spaces, healthy children.



Activities for Facilitators

Activity 1

Supporting Skill 1: Adopting Early Health-Seeking Behaviour as a Preventive Health Measure

Purpose: To help caregivers map out local health resources and establish clear plans for seeking help early when a child shows signs of illness or developmental concerns.

Time: 40–50 min

Note: Facilitators should familiarise themselves in advance with local clinics, outreach services, operating hours, and referral pathways, including services for children with disabilities or developmental concerns.

Steps

1. Mapping Community Health Services: Ask caregivers to think about the health services available in their community.

Guiding Questions:

- Where do families usually go when a child is sick?
- What clinics or health workers are available in your area?
- Are there outreach clinics or mobile health services?
- Which services require travelling to another town or island?
- Write responses on a flipchart or draw a simple community map showing the location of health services.

2. Understanding Preventive Health Services: Discuss the types of services that support children's health before illness becomes serious.

Guiding Questions:

- What services help keep children healthy, not just treat illness?
- What check-ups or services should children receive regularly?
- What services are available for children who may have developmental delays or disabilities?

Highlight key preventive services such as:

- Routine child health check-ups
- Immunisation

- Growth and development monitoring
- Nutrition guidance
- Referral services when specialised care is needed

3. Understanding Referral Pathways: Explain how referral systems work when children need more specialised care.

Guiding Questions:

- What happens if the local clinic cannot treat a child's illness?
- Where might families be referred for additional services?
- Who can help caregivers understand the next steps?
- Discuss possible referral locations such as **district hospitals, larger health centres, or specialist services.**

4. Planning for Early Care-Seeking: Ask caregivers to reflect on how they would respond if their child becomes sick.

Guiding Questions:

- How can families prepare to seek care quickly when needed?
- Who can help with transport or information if services are far away?
- What steps can caregivers take to make sure children receive preventive care?
- Encourage caregivers to identify one action they will take, such as learning clinic hours or speaking with a health worker.

Activity 2

Supporting Skill 2: Creating Safe, Clean, and Healthy Home Environments

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers identify risk and opportunities in their home environment and take practical steps to create a safer, cleaner and healthier space for their children,

Time: 20–30 mins

Steps

1. Recognising What Families Are Already Doing Well

Guiding Questions:

- What are some things you already do to keep your home clean and safe for children?
- How do you encourage handwashing or hygiene in your household?
- Encourage caregivers to share practical ideas with each other.

2. Reviewing Key Areas of the Home Environment: Guide caregivers through a simple review of key household areas.

Guiding Questions:

- Where do children usually play in your home? Is it safe and free from hazards?
- How do you store food and drinking water to keep them clean and safe?
- When and how do family members wash their hands?
- What household items (e.g., tools, chemicals, medicines) might be dangerous for children?
- Discuss common risks and simple ways to reduce them.

3. Learning From Each Other: Encourage caregivers to share solutions that work in their homes.

Guiding Questions:

- What strategies help keep your home clean even when resources are limited?
- How do you keep children safe when they play around the house?
- What tips could you share with other caregivers?

4. Planning Small Improvements: Ask caregivers to identify one or two realistic changes they could make at home.

Examples may include:

- Creating a regular handwashing routine
- Covering food and water storage
- Moving hazardous objects out of children's reach
- Creating a safer play space

Guiding Questions:

- What small change could you try this week to make your home safer or healthier for children?
- Who in your household can help make this change?

Key messages for parents and caregivers: Small improvements in home safety and hygiene can make a meaningful difference in children's health and well-being.

3. Pregnancy and Age-Specific Skills Sections

This section builds on the life course skills outlined in the previous section and identifies specific skills that apply to children's health and well-being at different stages of growth. The section is organised by life stage: pregnancy and prenatal care, early childhood (0–5 years), middle childhood (6–10 years), and adolescence (11–18 years). To avoid repetition, the life course skills are not described in full again here. Instead, this section highlights the priority skills that are most important at each stage of growth and development. These skills reflect the same core principles introduced earlier but provide more practical guidance for expectant mothers, parents, and caregivers at each stage. Where skills overlap with those described in Best Practices Across the Life Course, readers are directed back to that section for full details.

This approach helps facilitators focus discussions, activities, and messages on the skills that matter most at each stage, while still reinforcing continuity across the life course. At the end of each developmental stage, the module provides sample activities that facilitators can use with expectant mothers, parents, and caregivers. These activities can help expectant mothers, parents, and caregivers understand, practise, and apply the health skills discussed in the module. Parent support programmes and activities should pull the relevant content applicable to the parents and caregivers they are supporting and the age of the children they would like support with.

3.a. Pregnancy: Health Before the Baby is Born

Pregnancy is an important time for protecting the health and well-being of both the pregnant woman and the developing baby. During this period, regular health care, good nutrition, emotional support, and healthy daily practices can help reduce risks and support positive outcomes for both mother and child. Partners, families, and communities also play an important role by supporting pregnant women to access health services, maintain healthy habits, and prepare for the arrival of a new baby.

This section focuses on the following seven skills that support health and well-being during pregnancy:

1. **Engage in Preventive Maternal Health Care**
2. **Mental Health During Pregnancy**
3. **Avoiding Harmful Substances to Protect Your Baby's Health**
4. **Maintaining Safe and Moderate Physical Activity During Pregnancy**
5. **Preparing for Childbirth**
6. **Planning Birth Spacing**
7. **Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers**



Male Caregiver Engagement: Supporting a Healthy Pregnancy

Fathers and male family members play an important role in supporting maternal and infant health during pregnancy. When men are involved, women are more likely to attend antenatal check-ups, adopt healthy behaviours, and receive emotional support (14). Male engagement can include:

- Attending clinic visits or antenatal appointments where culturally appropriate.
- Supporting healthy habits by helping reduce exposure to alcohol, tobacco, kava, or betel nut in the household.
- Providing emotional support by listening, encouraging rest, and helping manage stress.
- Helping with nutrition and daily tasks to allow the pregnant woman to focus on her health and well-being.
- Learning about pregnancy, birth, and early childcare to share responsibilities and build confidence as a parent.

Skill 1: Engage in Preventive Maternal Health Care

Why It Matters

Research shows the use of antenatal care services, where available, is associated with better child health outcomes. (15) Antenatal care is essential for protecting the health of women and their unborn children. During antenatal care visits, women and support partners can learn about healthy behaviours during pregnancy, better understand pregnancy and childbirth warning signs, access micronutrient supplements, get treatment for conditions that may lead to pregnancy complications like eclampsia, and be immunised against tetanus. (15)



See Activity 3 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on attending regular antenatal check-ups.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Early and regular antenatal care attendance:** Promote attending antenatal check-ups early in pregnancy and continuing regularly to support a safer pregnancy and healthy baby.
- **Understanding the benefits of antenatal care:** Support parents and caregivers to understand how antenatal visits help monitor maternal and foetal health, identify risks early, and provide timely advice and support.
- **Maternal vaccination awareness and uptake:** Encourage pregnant women and families to ask health providers about recommended vaccines during pregnancy and ensure these are received to protect both mother and baby.
- **Engaging partners and family support:** Promote the involvement of partners and family members in supporting attendance at antenatal visits and vaccination appointments.
- **Addressing access and practical barriers:** Help families plan for transport, timing, and costs associated with attending antenatal services, including referrals to higher-level facilities when needed.
- **Linking families to trusted health providers:** Reinforce the importance of seeking information and care from qualified health workers and following national maternal health guidelines.

Social Media Messages

- Start antenatal care early. It is one of the best ways to give your baby a healthy beginning.
- Maternal vaccines save lives, check your schedule with your nurse or midwife!
- Did you know? The World Health Organisation recommends at least eight antenatal care visits during pregnancy.
- Your baby's life is in your hands. Stay strong and healthy. It is worth it!

Skill 2: Mental Health During Pregnancy

Why It Matters

Mental health problems during pregnancy, including depression and anxiety, are common and influenced by factors such as stress, lack of support, and exposure to violence, and are recognised as significant contributors to pregnancy-related morbidity. (1) While there is limited data from the Pacific, data from Pacific populations in New Zealand shows that approximately 25% of Pacific women suffer from depression during pregnancy, significantly higher than the global average of 10%.(16,17) Support from partners and family members during pregnancy is important for the health and well-being of both the mother and the baby. Emotional and practical support can help mothers feel safer, less stressed, and better able to care for themselves during pregnancy. (1)



See Activity 4 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on supporting mothers during pregnancy.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Normalising emotional well-being during pregnancy:** Reinforce that a mother's emotional health matters and that it is normal to experience stress, worry, or low mood during pregnancy.
- **Regular emotional check-ins by partners and family:** Encourage partners, husbands, and family members to regularly ask how the mother is feeling and listen with care and respect.
- **Encouraging help-seeking and professional support:** Support families to recognise when additional help is needed. Encourage mothers to speak with health providers about how they are feeling.
- **Linking families to trusted services:** Reinforce pathways to antenatal care providers, counselling, and referral services when emotional or mental health concerns arise.
- **Reducing stigma and isolation:** Emphasise that seeking support is a strength, not a weakness, and that mothers are not alone during pregnancy.



Male Caregiver Engagement:

Supportive partner and family involvement: Promote practical and emotional support from partners and family members, including sharing household tasks and offering reassurance.

Social Media Messages

- Feeling overwhelmed? You are not alone. Reach out for support.
- Partners and families, your love helps protect both mother and child.

Skill 3: Avoiding Harmful Substances to Protect Your Baby's Health

Why It Matters

Substance use during pregnancy can harm both the pregnant woman and the developing baby. Substances such as alcohol, tobacco, kava, and betel nut can affect foetal growth and early brain development. (18) Exposure to these substances during pregnancy has been associated with increased risks of miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth, low birthweight, and complications that may contribute to developmental delays in children. (19,20)

In many Pacific communities, these substances are socially and culturally embedded, which can make them difficult to avoid. However, reducing or avoiding substance use during pregnancy with support from partners, families, and health services, can significantly reduce health risks and improve outcomes for mothers and babies. (18)



See Activity 5 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on avoiding harmful substances during pregnancy.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Understand how substance exposure happens during pregnancy:** Explain that substances consumed by the mother can pass to the baby during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- **Identify health risks for the unborn and newborn baby:** Support awareness that alcohol use, smoking, and betel nut chewing are linked to low birthweight, withdrawal symptoms at birth, and other health risks for babies.
- **Seek professional support when needed:** Connect families with health providers and support services when help is needed to reduce or stop substance use.



Male Caregiver Engagement:

Partner and family support for behaviour change: Encourage husbands, partners, and family members to actively support and encourage mothers to avoid harmful substances.

Social Media Messages

- Your baby's health starts today. Avoid substances that cause harm to you and your baby.
- Healthy pregnancy = avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and betel nut.
- You smoke, your baby smokes!
- If some foods are avoided during pregnancy to protect the baby, harmful substances should be avoided too.

Skill 4: Maintaining Safe and Moderate Physical Activity During Pregnancy

Why It Matters

Physical activity during pregnancy is generally safe and beneficial for maternal health. It supports a healthy pregnancy, reduces the risk of gestational diabetes, and can make childbirth easier. (21) It also helps mothers recover quickly after delivery. Safe daily movement and gentle exercises during pregnancy help mothers feel stronger, less tired, and better able to cope with daily activities. Some examples of safe moderate physical activity during pregnancy include walking, stretching, and strength training. Mothers should follow proper lifting techniques and ask for assistance whenever needed.



See Activity 6 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on maintaining safe and moderate physical activity during pregnancy.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Promote safe physical activity during pregnancy with appropriate guidance:** Encourage awareness that gentle, regular physical activity is safe and beneficial for most pregnant women, supporting maternal health and healthy foetal growth. Emphasise the importance of seeking advice from health providers to ensure activities are appropriate, particularly for women with health conditions or pregnancy complications.
- **Identify the benefits for childbirth and recovery:** Reinforce that maintaining strength and mobility helps prepare the body for labour, delivery, and post-partum recovery.
- **Identify possibilities for daily movement:** Encourage small, manageable activities, such as walking, stretching, and household tasks, that help reduce fatigue and improve physical and emotional well-being.



Male Caregiver Engagement:

Partner and family support: Encourage partners to support mothers to do regular light exercise, by giving her time and space to do so and reminding her of the importance of gentle exercise. Partners and husbands could also benefit from doing the exercises with the mother.

Social Media Messages

- Walking, stretching, and gentle activity during pregnancy help mum and baby.
- Stay active safely: ask for support with heavy lifting and take breaks when needed.
- Strong mum, strong baby. Safe physical activity is part of healthy pregnancy.

Skill 5: Preparing for Childbirth

Why It Matters

Preparing for childbirth is important to reduce the risk of complications after delivery and to ensure the safety of both mother and child. Understanding birth preparedness, including when and where to seek care, available services, and warning signs of complications can help ensure a safe pregnancy and birth. (22)

Essential Building Blocks

- **Involve older children:** Encourage parents and caregivers to involve older children and explain what will happen in simple age appropriate terms. Sharing the excitement of a new baby will help siblings bond together.
- **Be prepared for Emergencies:** Encourage seeking information about potential complications and how to recognise them, such as bleeding, severe pain, prolonged labour, and make plans for these should they happen.
- **Make Practical arrangement:** Encourage discussion as a family and make practical arrangements, such as preparing items like clean clothes for delivery, clothes and blankets, as well as who will look after other children in the family.
- **Planning for family health after delivery:** Support families to plan ahead for postpartum care, follow-up visits, and access to family planning services.



Male Caregiver Engagement:

Preparing for childbirth: Encourage husbands, partners, and other family members to plan for where the birth will take place, including transportation plans, access to skilled birth attendants, and childcare for any older children.

Social Media Messages

- A birth plan is a helpful way to share your preferences for labour, birth, and after-birth care and have a safe birth.
- Attend regular antenatal check-ups and follow the advice from your health professionals. Healthy mum = Healthy baby
- Child birth is a family affair! Discuss practical arrangements for clean clothes, organise care for other children, delivery place, transportation and money to cover expenses.
- Choose your birthplace. Choose where you feel mentally and emotionally safe.
- Be prepared for emergencies. Know the warning signings and take quick actions to take help.

Skill 6: Planning Birth Spacing

Why it Matters:

Birth spacing refers to the time between pregnancies. When possible, allowing time between pregnancies helps mothers recover physically, strengthens bonding with the newborn, and improves health outcomes for both mother and child. However, families' ability to plan birth spacing may be influenced by access to services, social expectations, health needs, and life circumstances. (23)

Essential Building Blocks

- **Understanding healthy birth spacing:** Explain that spacing pregnancies supports maternal recovery and healthier pregnancies.
- **Linking birth spacing to infant well-being and bonding:** Reinforce that allowing time between pregnancies enables parents and caregivers to give newborns focused care. This strengthens early bonding and development.
- **Family planning information and options:** Provide clear, respectful information on family planning methods available after delivery, aligned with national guidelines and services.

Social Media Messages:

- Talk with your provider about family planning after delivery.
- Give your body time to recover.

Skill 7: Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers

Why It Matters

Teenage pregnancy remains a health and social concern in the Pacific, with birth rates above global averages in many countries and ongoing gaps in SRH information, health services, and access to contraception. (24,25) Many adolescent mothers and fathers lack access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, appropriate health services and contraception. Adolescent mothers face higher risks of dangerously high blood pressure during pregnancy (eclampsia), infections of the womb after childbirth, and other serious infections, while their babies are at higher risk of low birth weight, preterm birth, and severe neonatal conditions. (26)

Supportive caregiver engagement and timely access to appropriate health services can improve health outcomes for adolescent mothers and fathers and their child (2). Supporting the mental health and well-being of adolescent fathers is important as it can improve their ability to care for themselves, their partner, and their children. Key topics for parents and caregivers include the importance of early antenatal care, emotional support without judgment, opportunity and options for continuing school, community support, nutrition, safe delivery, and postpartum care.

Parenting programmes that offer support and guidance for parents and caregivers on adolescent pregnancy need to discuss this topic in sensitive and non-judgmental ways. The pregnancy may be a result of a consensual relationship between two adolescents, but may also be the result of abuse by an adult male. Understanding and being sensitive to different circumstances is critical, to offer support and guidance and to prioritise the safety, dignity, and well-being of adolescent girls.

In communities or settings with high rates of adolescent pregnancy, it may be important to run adolescent-focused parenting sessions to support adolescents and guide them through their own needs as well as those of their growing baby. Bringing adolescents, parents, and caregivers together to strengthen communication, encourage support-seeking, and discuss education options can help build trust and strengthen support networks.



See Activity 7 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on supporting adolescent mothers and fathers.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Non-judgemental care and emotional support:** Help parents and caregivers respond with empathy, protect the adolescent's dignity, reduce stigma, and keep

communication open so the adolescent girl or boy feels safe, supported, and not alone.

- **Early and continuous access to health services** Support adolescents to access antenatal care, nutrition, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health services as early as possible, including support to attend the first antenatal visit and follow-up care, in line with WHO recommendations for adolescent pregnancy.
- **Family and co-parent engagement:** Guide parents and caregivers to seek their adolescent's consent to discuss safe, respectful involvement of the baby's father and wider family in order to share responsibility and support healthy outcomes.
- **Linkages to social protection and continued education:** Connect families to social, education, and protection services to help the adolescent continue schooling or training where possible and access practical support for parenting and well-being.

Social Media Messages

- Leading with care and zero judgment keeps the door open for adolescent parents to seek the help they need.
- Early and continuous antenatal care is the most effective way to protect the health of both the young mother and her baby.
- A pregnancy should not end a future; let's work together to keep adolescent parents connected to their schooling and dreams.
- When we provide adolescent mothers and fathers with a safe, supportive network, we build a healthier foundation for the next generation.
- Respectful and consensual involvement of the baby's father strengthens the family's ability to share responsibility and thrive.
- Prioritizing the dignity and safety of adolescent girls means understanding their unique circumstances and responding with absolute sensitivity.
- Supporting the mental health of a young father is a critical step in helping him care for himself, his partner, and his child.



Activities for Facilitators

Activity 3

Supporting Pregnancy Skill 1: Engage in Preventive Maternal Health Care

Purpose: To familiarize families with the medical benefits of antenatal care and to identify practical ways the household can ensure the mother attends every scheduled appointment.

Time: 60 min

Note: Facilitators should ensure information reflects current national guidance and, where possible, coordinate with local health workers to provide accurate and updated advice.

Steps

1. Understanding Antenatal Care: Begin with a discussion about antenatal visits.

Guiding Questions:

- What do you think happens during an antenatal check-up?
- Why might it be important for pregnant women to attend regular antenatal visits?
- When should a pregnant woman begin antenatal care?
- Explain that antenatal visits allow health workers to check the health of both the mother and baby, including monitoring growth, blood pressure, and overall well-being.

2. Vaccines and Micronutrients During Pregnancy: Provide clear information about recommended vaccines and micronutrients during pregnancy.

Guiding Questions:

- Why might vaccines be recommended during pregnancy?
- What nutrients or supplements might health workers provide to support a healthy pregnancy?
- How do these services protect both mother and baby?
- Explain that vaccines during pregnancy can protect both the mother and newborn from certain infections, while micronutrients such as iron and folic acid support healthy development.

3. Introduce Key facts

The facilitator to introduce the following:

- Antenatal care should begin as early as possible, ideally in the first trimester, and continue throughout pregnancy with regular visits (more visits are better than one)
- Regular visits help detect problems early and protect both mother and baby, and support healthy foetal growth
- During visits, health workers:
 - Check blood pressure, weight, and baby's growth
 - Provide iron and folic acid supplements
 - Give recommended vaccines
 - Offer advice on nutrition, rest, and pregnancy care
- Pregnant women should know the danger signs (e.g., bleeding, severe headache, swelling, fever, reduced baby movement) and seek care immediately if they occur
- Antenatal care also helps families prepare for a safe delivery
- Family support helps women attend visits and maintain healthy practices
- Even if visits are missed, it is never too late to start or return to antenatal care

4. Reflection and Family Support: Ask caregivers to reflect on how families can support pregnant women.

Guiding Questions:

- How can partners, family members, or community members support antenatal attendance?
- What challenges might make it difficult to attend regular visits?
- What solutions could help overcome these challenges?

Encourage participants to think about **practical support**, such as helping with transport, childcare, or reminders.

Activity 4

Supporting Pregnancy Skill 2: Mental Health During Pregnancy

Purpose: To help partners and family members recognize the emotional changes common during pregnancy and to build practical communication skills such as active listening and sharing household burdens that reduce maternal stress and improve family well-being.

Time: 40 min

Note:

- Encourage active participation from fathers and partners in the discussion.
- Maintain a respectful and non-judgemental tone, recognising that families support mothers in different ways.
- Use examples that reflect local cultural practices and family structures.
- Where possible, link discussions to local maternal health services and referral pathways and include perspectives of fathers.

Steps

1. Understanding Emotional Changes During Pregnancy: Begin by discussing common emotional experiences during pregnancy.

Guiding Questions:

- What emotional changes might women experience during pregnancy?
- Why might pregnancy sometimes feel stressful or overwhelming?
- How can family support help during this time?
- Explain that emotional ups and downs are common during pregnancy, but persistent sadness, anxiety, or withdrawal may signal the need for additional support.

2. Everyday Emotional Support and Self-Care: Discuss simple ways families can support pregnant mothers in daily life.

Guiding Questions:

- What small actions can help reduce stress for a pregnant woman?
- How can family members share responsibilities to support her well-being?
- What activities help people relax or feel supported?
- Examples may include ensuring adequate rest, helping with household tasks, offering reassurance, and encouraging positive self-care.

3. Partner and Family Check-Ins (Role Play)

- Invite volunteers to practise a short role-play. One participant plays a pregnant mother, and another plays a partner or family member checking in.
- The role-play can include:
 - Asking how the mother is feeling
 - Listening without interrupting or judging
 - Responding with reassurance and support
 - Offering help or practical assistance and sharing their own experience
- After the role-play, ask:
 - What made the conversation supportive?
 - How did listening without judgement help?
 - What could family members do if the mother seems stressed or worried?

4. Recognising When Additional Support Is Needed: Discuss signs that a mother may need additional help.

Guiding Questions:

- What signs might suggest a mother is struggling emotionally?
- When should families encourage a mother to seek professional support?
- Who can families turn to for help?
- Explain how families can support mothers to seek help from health workers, antenatal services, or community support networks.

Activity 5

Supporting Pregnancy Skill 5: Avoiding Harmful Substances to Protect Your Baby's Health

Purpose: To inform caregivers and partners about the specific risks that alcohol, tobacco, kava, and betel nut pose to fetal development and to identify practical, household-level strategies to reduce or stop substance use during pregnancy.

Time: 60 min

Steps

1. Opening Discussion – Protecting the Baby During Pregnancy

- Explain that the session will focus on substances that can harm pregnancy, including **alcohol, tobacco, betel nut, and kava**.
- **Guiding questions:**
 - *What are some things that help keep a mother and baby healthy during pregnancy?*
 - *What are some things that might be harmful during pregnancy?*
 - Allow participants to share ideas.

2. Understanding Substance-Related Risks

- Explain in simple, clear language that certain substances can affect the developing baby.
- Possible discussion points include:
 - Alcohol may affect the baby's brain development.
 - Tobacco smoke can reduce oxygen available to the baby.
 - Betel nut and other stimulants may affect pregnancy health.
 - Kava and other substances may have effects on maternal well-being and fetal development.
- Acknowledge that stopping may be difficult for some people, especially if use is part of daily habits or social situations.

3. Strategies for Reducing or Stopping Substance Use

- Explain that many people are able to reduce or stop substance use during pregnancy with the right support.
- Discuss practical strategies, such as:
 - Identifying situations or triggers that encourage substance use
 - Finding alternatives to replace the habit
 - Asking family members for support
 - Seeking advice from health providers

- o Reducing exposure to environments where substances are used
- Invite a few participants to share their ideas.

4. Family and Partner Support

- Explain that partners, relatives, and other household members can play an important role in helping pregnant women maintain healthy behaviours.
- **Examples may include:**
 - o Avoiding smoking or substance use around the mother
 - o Encouraging healthy habits
 - o Providing emotional support
 - o Helping reduce stress

5. Counselling and Support Services

- Explain that sometimes people need additional support to stop or reduce substance use, and this support is available through health services.
- Provide information about local support services available.

Activity 6

Supporting Pregnancy Skill 6: Maintaining Safe and Moderate Physical Activity During Pregnancy

Purpose: To help pregnant women stay active safely, reduce physical strain, and support preparation for childbirth.

Time: 20–30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduction – Why Movement Matters During Pregnancy

- Begin by explaining that staying active in safe ways can help women maintain strength and reduce discomfort during pregnancy.
- Explain that activity does not necessarily mean formal exercise. Many **daily tasks already involve movement**, and small adjustments can help make them safer.
- Encourage participants to share examples from their daily lives.

2. Identifying Daily Activities

- Ask participants to list the activities they commonly do each day.
- Examples might include:
 - Walking to markets or work
 - Cooking
 - Cleaning
 - Gardening
 - Carrying water or firewood
 - Washing clothes
 - Caring for children

3. Practicing Gentle Movements

- Facilitators demonstrate a few gentle stretches or light exercises suitable during pregnancy. Examples may include:
 - Gentle shoulder rolls
 - Slow neck stretches
 - Light leg stretches
 - Simple back-relief movements
 - Slow walking or stepping movements

4. Reflection and Planning

- Encourage participants to reflect on how they might apply what they learned.
- **Guiding questions**

- o What is one activity you might adjust to make it safer during pregnancy?
 - o What gentle movement could you include in your daily routine?
 - o How can family members help support safe activity during pregnancy?
- Encourage women to continue discussing any concerns about physical activity with a facilitator, health worker, or trusted family member.

Key messages:

- Safe, moderate activity during pregnancy can support strength, circulation, and overall well-being.
- Everyday activities such as walking, cooking, or light household tasks can contribute to healthy movement.
- Some activities may need to be adjusted during pregnancy to reduce strain or risk.
- Taking regular breaks, avoiding heavy lifting, and asking for help when needed can help prevent fatigue or injury.
- Gentle stretching and movement may help improve comfort, mobility, and preparation for childbirth.
- Taking care of your body during pregnancy also means knowing when to take a pause.

Activity 7

Supporting Pregnancy Skill 7: Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers

Purpose: To identify the immediate challenges faced by adolescent parents and establish a concrete support plan that ensures they can stay in school, access medical care, and stay connected to their community.

Time: 60 min

Note: This activity should be run together with parents/caregivers and adolescents only if prior work has been done to support parents and caregivers in accepting the adolescent pregnancy and they want to be supportive. If this is not the case, facilitators should first hold sessions separately with parents and caregivers to discuss negative perceptions of adolescent pregnancy. If this is not successful, separate sessions with only adolescent mothers and then fathers should be run to help them identify where they can access support.

Steps

1. Understanding the Challenges

Ask participants to think about the challenges an adolescent parent might face (*Common challenges may include: Continuing school or education, Financial stress, Social stigma or judgment, Lack of parenting experience, Emotional stress or isolation*)

Guiding questions:

- What challenges might a young mother face after having a baby?
- What challenges might a young father face?
- What kinds of support might they need from family or community?

2. Family Support Matters

Divide participants into small groups and give them a scenario: *A 16-year-old girl in the community becomes pregnant. She is afraid to tell her family and worries about leaving school.*

Ask groups to discuss:

- How might the family respond in a way that supports the young mother?
- How could the family support the young father?
- What actions could help both young parents care for the baby and continue their future plans?

- **What practical steps can adolescents and caregivers take together to address these challenges?**
- Which of these actions are realistic to implement in your community?
- Groups share their ideas.

3. Connecting to Support Services

Ask participants:

- What health or community services could support adolescent parents?
- Who could they talk to for advice or support?
- **Ask both adolescents (if present) and caregivers: What is one action you can take together after this session to support a young parent in your family or community?**

Examples may include:

- Health clinics or maternal health services
- Counsellors or social workers
- Teachers or school support staff
- Community leaders or youth programmes

Discuss how caregivers can help adolescent parents access these services early.

4. Encouraging Positive Futures

- Ask caregivers to reflect: How can families support adolescent parents to continue learning, growing, and planning for the future?
- Emphasise that supportive families can help young parents build confidence and provide a healthy start for their child.
- **Planning a support circle:** Caregivers and adolescents identify trusted support people (other family members or relatives, health workers), list care steps (first antenatal visit, nutrition, schooling), and agree on regular check-ins.

Key messages:

- Adolescent parents often need additional support, guidance, and encouragement from family and caregivers.
- Supportive family relationships can improve outcomes for both the young parent and the baby.
- Caregivers can help adolescent parents continue education, access health services, and build parenting skills.
- Fathers of babies also need encouragement and support to stay involved and responsible.
- Connecting adolescent parents to health workers, social services, and community programmes can strengthen family well-being.

3.b. Early Childhood (0–5 years)

The early years are a critical period for children’s growth, development, and long-term health. During this stage, parents and caregivers play a central role in protecting children from illness and injury, establishing healthy routines, and recognising when a child may need medical care. The following skills focus on practical actions parents and caregivers can take to support children’s health and safety in everyday life. Strengthening these practices during early childhood helps prevent illness, promotes healthy development, and builds strong foundations for well-being as children grow.

This section focuses on the following four skills that support health and well-being during early childhood (0–5 years):

1. **Remembering Immunisation and Well-Child Checks**
2. **Recognising Common Childhood Illness**
3. **Keeping Dangerous Household Items Away From Children’s Reach**
4. **Keeping Medicines Away From Children’s Reach**



For more information see [Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practices: Section 4: Health Daily Routines and Behaviours](#)



For more information see [Module 3: Healthy Nutrition for Children and Adolescents: Best Practices Across the Life Course: Skill 1: Making family meals a daily routine](#)

Disability Considerations



Developmental Warning Signs: When to Seek Advice: (See [Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practice: Sub-topic: Child Development](#))

During the early years, children grow and develop rapidly. While children develop at different speeds, parents and caregivers should seek advice from a health worker if they notice delays in development, changes in behaviour, or difficulties in seeing, hearing, moving, communicating, or interacting with others. Early identification and support can improve children’s health, learning, and participation as they grow.

Parents and caregivers may consider seeking guidance from a health worker if a child:

Communication and social interaction

- Does not respond to sounds or their name.
- Has difficulty hearing, seeing, or making eye contact.
- Is not babbling, pointing, or using simple words by around 1–2 years.
- Shows limited interest in interacting, playing, or communicating with others.

Movement and physical development

- Has difficulty sitting, crawling, standing, or walking compared with other children of a similar age.
- Appears very stiff or very floppy.
- Has difficulty using their hands, holding objects, or feeding themselves as they grow older.

Behaviour and learning

- Has extreme difficulty calming down, sleeping, or responding to comfort.
- Stops using skills they previously learned (for example, losing words or motor skills).
- Shows very limited interest in play or exploring their environment.

Health and physical signs

- Experiences frequent seizures or unusual movements.
- Has ongoing feeding difficulties or difficulty swallowing.
- Shows significant delays in growth or gaining weight.

If parents or caregivers notice any of these signs, they are encouraged to seek advice from a health worker. Early assessment can help identify whether additional support, monitoring, or referral services may be helpful.

Skill 1: Remembering Immunisation and Well-Child Checks

Why It Matters

Routine immunisation and regular well-child health checks are proven, cost-effective interventions that protect young children from serious and preventable illnesses such as measles, polio, pneumonia, and diarrhoeal disease. (27) Across the Pacific, immunisation coverage has improved, but gaps persist, particularly for families living in rural, remote, and outer-island communities, making consistent follow-up and outreach especially important. (28)

Supporting parents and caregivers to access and use health services helps ensure timely completion of immunisations, vitamin A supplementation, and deworming, while regular well-child visits allow health workers to monitor growth and development, identify concerns early, and provide guidance that supports children's survival, development, and well-being (1). Vitamin A supplementation helps to strengthen children's immunity and prevent deficiency, (29) deworming helps to reduce intestinal parasites that affect nutrition and growth, growth monitoring helps to identify nutritional deficiency, (30) and monitoring developmental milestones helps to detect possible developmental delays so that children can receive timely support. (31)



See Activity 8 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on remembering immunisation and Well-Child Checks.

Disability Considerations



Children with disabilities should receive routine immunisation on time, regardless of their disability. Well-child visits also provide an opportunity to monitor growth, hearing, vision, and developmental milestones. Parents and caregivers should feel comfortable sharing any concerns they have about their child's development with health workers.

Possible signs that may require further assessment include:

- Difficulty hearing or seeing
- Delays in sitting, walking, or talking compared with other children of a similar age
- Limited response to sounds or interaction with others
- Loss of skills the child previously learned

Identifying developmental delays early can help children access additional support, services, or guidance that support their health, learning, and participation as they grow.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Timely completion of routine immunisation:** Promote vaccinating children on time according to national schedules to protect against preventable illnesses.
- **Regular well-child health checks:** Encourage parents and caregivers to bring children for routine check-ups to monitor growth, development, and overall health.
- **Use of child health records:** Support parents and caregivers to keep child health or immunisation books up to date and bring them to every health visit.
- **Understanding prevention and early detection:** Reinforce that regular check-ups help prevent illness, identify concerns early, and allow timely treatment.
- **Reducing access barriers and supporting follow-up:** Help families plan for clinic visits and follow-up appointments, including outreach services and referrals when needed.

Social Media Messages

- Routine immunisations are a proven, cost-effective way to shield your child from serious illnesses like measles and polio. In many Pacific communities, these life-saving vaccines are available for free at local health clinics, making it easier to protect every child.
- Regular well-child checks allow health workers to track your child's development and catch any health concerns before they become serious.
- Routine deworming helps ensure that intestinal parasites don't interfere with your child's nutrition, energy, and physical growth.
- For families in rural or outer-island communities, consistent follow-up with outreach clinics is the best way to bridge the gap in healthcare.
- Well-child visits aren't just for when a child is sick; they are essential for ensuring your child survives, develops, and thrives.

Skill 2: Recognising Common Childhood Illness

Why It Matters

Children can become seriously ill very quickly if illnesses are not recognised or treated early. The common childhood illnesses in the Pacific include acute respiratory illness (including pneumonia), diarrhoeal diseases and febrile illnesses. (6) Malaria is also a concern in some Pacific countries particularly in Vanuatu and Solomon Island. (32) Waiting too long to seek care can lead to severe complications or even death. Parents and caregivers should learn to recognise danger signs such as high fever, difficulty breathing, severe dehydration, persistent tiredness, diarrhoea, or unusual behaviour and seek medical help immediately. Early care improves recovery, prevents complications, and supports children's physical health, growth, and overall well-being. It also helps build the confidence of parents and caregivers in managing their child's health.



See Activity 9 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on recognising common childhood illness.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Be aware of your child's breathing:** If your child is breathing fast or their chest is sinking, take them to the nearest clinic now.
- **A baby's condition can change fast, so do not wait:** If your child looks weak, sleepy, or not feeding well, get help immediately.
- **Fever, fast breathing, diarrhoea, or vomiting that won't stop:** Take your child to a health worker today to make sure it is not something serious.
- **If in doubt, seek help:** If you are concerned, just ask. It might be nothing, but it's always better to be sure.
- **Better to be safe than sorry:** Trust your instinct! Don't wait if you are worried.

Social Media Messages

- If something feels "off" with your child, don't wait for it to get worse—trust your instinct and seek medical advice immediately.
- If your child is breathing faster than usual or their chest is sinking in, take them to the nearest clinic right away.
- A baby's condition can change in minutes; get help now if they seem unusually weak, sleepy, or refuse to feed.
- Recognizing danger signs early doesn't just prevent complications—it gives your child the best chance at a quick recovery.
- It is always better to be told it's nothing than to wait too long; if you are in doubt, just ask a professional.

Skill 3: Keeping Dangerous Household Items Away From Children's Reach

Why It Matters

Many accidental injuries to young children occur at home due to hazards that adults may overlook. These include sharp objects, chemicals, cleaning products, tools, and small choking hazards. The ingestion of faecal bacteria from humans, animals, and birds can also cause infections in the stomachs of young children that can reduce the absorption of nutrients and limit their growth. (33) In households across the Pacific, children often explore their environments freely and can easily access dangerous items if left within reach. Teaching families how to safely store dangerous items and make their homes safer can significantly reduce preventable injuries and poisonings.



See Activity 10 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on keeping dangerous household items away from children's reach.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Understanding household injury risks for young children:** Support parents and caregivers to recognise that young children are naturally curious and that they explore their environment by touching and putting objects in their mouths.
- **Safe storage of sharp and dangerous items:** Promote keeping tools, knives, scissors, and other sharp or hazardous objects securely out of children's reach.
- **Preventing choking and poisoning risks:** Encourage safe storage of small objects and household chemicals, cleaning products, and medicines, even if containers appear closed.
- **Maintain a safe home environment:** Encourage parents and caregivers to regularly check the home for hazards.
- **Model safe behaviours** to prevent injuries in young children.

Social Media Messages

- A safe home is the best playground! Put sharp and heavy objects out of reach.
- Many household injuries happen with items we use every day. Protecting our children starts with a "child's-eye view" of the home.
- Children explore the world by touching, grabbing, and—most often—tasting! What looks like a boring bottle to us looks like a bright toy to them.

Skill 4: Keeping Medicines Away From Children's Reach

Why It Matters

Unintentional poisoning from medicines is a significant cause of accidental injury among young children worldwide. (34) Studies show that medicines, including prescriptions, over-the-counter products, vitamins, and traditional remedies can cause serious harm if ingested by children. Storing medicines securely, out of children's sight and reach, and ensuring that only adults handle them can help prevent accidental poisoning.



See Activity 10 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on keeping medicines away from children's reach.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Safe storage of all medicines:** Keep all medicines - both adult and child medicines - out of sight and out of reach of children, preferably locked away or stored in high cabinets.
- **Adult-only handling and supervision:** Reinforce that only adults should handle and give medicines, as incorrect amounts can be dangerous - even for medicines intended for children.
- **Preventing accidental poisoning at home:** Encourage parents and caregivers to regularly check common areas (e.g. bedside tables, bags, or low shelves) to ensure medicines are stored safely and consistently.

Social Media Messages

- Keep medicines away from children.
- The wrong medicines can harm children.
- Adult medicine is not for children.



Activities for Facilitators

Activity 8

Supporting:

- **Early Childhood Skill 1:** Remembering Immunisation and Well-Child Checks
- **Middle Childhood Skill 1:** Continuing Vaccinations and Explaining Why They Are Important

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers understand their child's immunisation schedules, the importance of each vaccination and where to access these services.



Disability adaptation considerations

Remind parents and caregivers that children with disabilities should also receive vaccinations and attend well-child check ups.

Time: 40 mins

Materials:

- Before the activity, collect information on the national immunisation schedule and health check-up schedules, including growth monitoring and developmental screening. This should be available on the Ministry of Health website or local health centers.
- Ask parents and caregivers to bring their child's health cards and immunisation record for this activity.

Note:

- Where possible, the following activity should be delivered in coordination with local health workers, who can provide accurate information and answer questions about vaccines and well-child services.

Steps

1. Share: Understanding Immunisation and Health Checks:

- The facilitator introduces the topic by explaining:
 - That regular vaccinations and health check-ups help ensure that children grow and develop in a healthy way.
 - That immunisation protects children from diseases such as those included in the national vaccination schedule

- The facilitator shares information on:
 - The recommended vaccination schedule based on children’s ages
 - Why it is important to receive vaccines at the correct times
 - The safety and benefits of vaccines (see facts about immunisations below to support this discussion)
 - The importance of completing all required doses
- The facilitator also explains that health visits often include:
 - Growth monitoring (weight, height/length, and head circumference)
 - Developmental screening to monitor milestones
 - Advice on nutrition, feeding, and childcare

2. Review: Looking at the Child Health Card

- The facilitator asks caregivers to take out their child’s health or immunisation card.
- The facilitator gives participants time to review the card and identify:
 - Which **vaccines their child has already received**
 - Any **vaccines that are due soon**
 - When their **next clinic visit** should be scheduled
- Facilitators walk around the group and provide support where needed.

3. Discuss: Questions and Planning

- Facilitators support caregivers to think about practical steps for staying up to date, such as:
 - Marking the next appointment date
 - Asking health workers for reminders
 - Planning transportation to clinics or outreach services

Key messages:

- Vaccines help protect children from serious and preventable diseases.
- Completing all recommended doses on time helps ensure full protection.
- Child health/immunisation cards help caregivers and health workers track vaccinations, growth, and development.
- Regular well-child visits allow health workers to monitor growth, check development, and provide advice to caregivers.
- Caregivers should feel comfortable asking questions and seeking clarification during health visits.

Five key facts about immunization (35)

Fact 1: Immunization through vaccination is the safest way to protect against disease.

Whatever you might read or hear, vaccines produce an immune response similar to that produced by the natural infection, but without the serious risks of death or disability connected with natural infection.

Fact 2: It is *always* best to get vaccinated, even when you think the risk of infection is low.

Deadly diseases that seem to have been all but eradicated have a nasty habit of making a come-back when immunization rates drop – as we see with the recent measles outbreaks across Europe. Only by making sure everyone gets their jabs can we keep the lid permanently on vaccine-preventable diseases. We should not rely on people around us to stop the spread of disease – we all have a responsibility to do what we can.

Fact 3: Combined vaccines are safe and beneficial.

Giving several vaccines at the same time has no negative effect on a child's immune system. It reduces discomfort for the child, and saves time and money. Children are exposed to more antigens from a common cold than they are from vaccines.

Fact 4: There is *no link* between vaccines and autism.

There is no scientific evidence to link the MMR vaccine with autism or autistic disorders. This unfortunate rumour started with a single 1998 study which was quickly found to be seriously flawed, and was retracted by the journal that published it.

Fact 5: If we stop vaccination, deadly diseases will return.

Even with better hygiene, sanitation and access to safe water, infections still spread. When people are not vaccinated, infectious diseases that have become uncommon can quickly come back to haunt us.

When people have questions about vaccines they should ask their health providers and check accurate websites for information. Vaccine Safety Net, a global network of vaccine safety websites certified by WHO, provides easy access to accurate and trustworthy information on vaccines. (36)

Activity 9

Supporting Early Childhood Skill 2: Recognising Common Childhood Illness

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers practise recognising common childhood danger signs and taking timely action to seek appropriate health care.



Disability adaptation considerations

Children with disabilities will display all the same common signs as other children, related to common illnesses, such as high fever, difficulty breathing, diarrhoea, but they may not be able to express themselves or communicate how they are feeling, so being more attentive and recognising the symptoms is equally important and seeking help early when in doubt.

Time: 25–30 minutes

Steps

1. Set the Scenario

The facilitator introduces a short scenario about a child who becomes unwell.

- o Facilitators encourage participants to imagine that this is their own child and consider what they might notice first.
- o Facilitator may introduce symptoms that commonly occur in many communities, such as:
 - Fever (especially high or lasting more than one day)
 - Fast or difficult breathing
 - Repeated vomiting or inability to keep fluids down
 - Diarrhoea, especially with signs of dehydration
 - Unusual sleepiness, weakness, or lack of responsiveness
 - Poor feeding or refusal to drink (especially in infants)
 - Skin rash with fever
 - Signs of dehydration such as dry mouth, sunken eyes, or very little urine

2. Identify Danger Signs

Ask caregivers to discuss which symptoms they believe are serious or concerning.

3. Decide on Action

Participants now discuss what action they would take.

Facilitators encourage participants to consider options such as:

- o Visiting a local health post or clinic

- Contacting a community health worker or outreach clinic
- Going to a referral hospital if symptoms are severe
- Reinforce that seeking care early can prevent illness from becoming more serious.

4. Practise Care-Seeking

Role play scenario: Participants form pairs or small groups. One participant plays the role of the caregiver, and another plays the role of the health worker.

- The caregiver practises explaining the child's condition clearly.
- **Encourage caregivers to describe:**
 - What symptoms the child has
 - When the symptoms started
 - Any changes in behaviour or feeding
 - What actions they have already taken
- **Example prompts for caregivers**
 - "My child started having a fever yesterday evening."
 - "She has not been drinking fluids since this morning."
 - "He seems weaker than usual and is sleeping more."

5. Debrief and Reinforce Learning

The facilitator leads a brief reflection discussion.

Reinforce that early care-seeking helps prevent complications and can save lives.

Activity 10

Supporting Skills:

- **Early Childhood Skill 3:** Keeping Dangerous Household Items Away From Children's Reach
- **Early Childhood Skill 4:** Keeping Medicines Away from Children's Reach

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers identify potential hazards in their household and prevent injury to their children.



Disability adaptation considerations

Parents and caregivers of children with disabilities should pay additional care to ensure their children are not able to reach or touch dangerous household items or medicines. Parents and caregivers should not assume that a child with disabilities will not try to reach these items.

Time: 30 mins

Steps

1. **Discuss:** Why Young Children Are at Risk
 - Facilitator to begin with a short discussion about how children explore their environments.
 - Explain that as children grow, they begin to **crawl, walk, climb, and reach for objects**, often without understanding what is dangerous.
 - Explain that the goal of the activity is to help families **recognise hazards and make simple changes to reduce risks**.
2. **Home Hazard Walk-Through:** Identifying Risks
 - Facilitators to ask caregivers to imagine walking through their homes and identifying potential hazards in different areas:
 - **Examples of hazards may include:**
 - Knives or sharp tools stored within reach
 - Cleaning chemicals or pesticides accessible to children
 - Small objects that could be swallowed
 - Matches, lighters, or hot cooking areas
 - Buckets, water containers, or wells
 - Uncovered pits or tools in outdoor areas
3. **Safe Medicine Storage:** Show and Explain
 - Facilitators explain that medicines can be very dangerous for children if taken accidentally, even if they are prescribed for children (Show pictures or examples of common household medicines **if** available).

- Discuss key medicine safety practices:
 - Store medicines **high up and out of reach**
 - Use **locked or secure storage where possible**
 - Keep medicines in **their original packaging with labels**
 - Avoid leaving medicines on tables or bedside areas
 - Never describe medicine as “candy” to children
- Explain the importance of **reading labels carefully and following health worker instructions** when giving medicines.
- Also explain that caregivers should **seek urgent medical help if a child may have taken medicine accidentally.**

4. Practice: Medicine Safety and Safe Storage

- Ask caregivers to practise identifying safe places in their homes where medicines and dangerous items could be stored.
- Ask caregivers: *“What is one change you could make this week to make your home safer for children?”*
 - **Examples may include:**
 - Moving knives or tools to higher shelves
 - Storing medicines in a locked container
 - Keeping chemicals or pesticides out of reach
 - Covering pits or removing dangerous objects from play areas
 - Creating a designated safe play area

Key messages:

- Young children are naturally curious and may not recognise danger.
- Everyday household items, such as knives, cleaning products, medicines, and small objects, can cause injuries if left within reach.
- Storing dangerous items high up, locked away, or out of sight can prevent accidents.
- Medicines must always be stored safely and used only under adult supervision.
- Safe play spaces and careful supervision help protect children as they grow and explore.

3.c. Middle Childhood (6–10 years)

Middle childhood is an important stage for strengthening children’s physical, emotional, and social development. During this period, children become more independent, spend more time in school and with peers, and begin to develop a deeper understanding of their bodies, emotions, and relationships. Parents and caregivers continue to play a critical role in guiding children, building their confidence, and creating safe spaces for open communication.

The following skills focus on practical ways parents and caregivers can support children’s health, emotional well-being, and understanding of the changes that occur as they grow, while encouraging healthy habits and positive relationships that support lifelong well-being.

This section focuses on three skills that support health and well-being during middle childhood (6–10 years). These skills are:

- 1. Continuing Vaccinations and Explaining Why They Are Important**
- 2. Supporting Children’s Emotional well-being**
- 3. Talking About Body Changes and Puberty in a Positive Way**



For more information see Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practices:

- **Sub-topic 3: Health Daily Routines and Behaviours**
- **Sub-topic 4: Social, Emotional, and Digital well-being**



For more information see Module 1: Child Protection and Safety:

- **Adolescence: Skill 2: Managing Risk and Online Safety and Activity 15.**

Skill 1: Continuing Vaccinations and Explaining Why They Are Important

Why It Matters

In Pacific countries, childhood immunisation follows the WHO Expanded Programme on Immunisation schedule. Most vaccines are given in infancy, but children aged 6–10 years still receive booster doses, including Diphtheria–Tetanus–Pertussis booster (DTPa / DTaP), Measles-Rubella or Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MR/MMR) booster, Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine (Polio booster), Tetanus–diphtheria (Td) booster, Pneumococcal Disease Vaccine and some new vaccines including human papillomavirus (HPV). (37)

Parents and caregivers play an important role in ensuring their child receives these vaccines, whether through schools or health clinics. They can support by explaining why vaccines are important and reassuring children if they feel worried or scared. Completing the full vaccination schedule protects children and adolescents from serious diseases. (27) Some vaccines, such as HPV, also protect long-term health, including reproductive health. (38)

Children may be scared of vaccinations, especially those that may involve needles and injections. When parents and caregivers build trusting relationships and encourage open conversation, children are more likely to share concerns and seek guidance. This helps create a safe space for discussing health topics and why vaccines are important and not something to be scared about.



See Activity 8 at the end of the [previous section](#) for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on recommended vaccinations and why they are important.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Understanding why vaccines matter:** Support parents and caregivers to explain, in simple and reassuring ways, how vaccines protect children from serious illnesses and help keep families and communities healthy.
- **Keeping immunisations up to date:** Encourage parents and caregivers to track vaccination schedules, keep health records safe
- **Ensuring timely vaccination coverage:** Support parents and caregivers in understanding vaccination schedules and where to access services.
- **Supporting school-based vaccination (including HPV):** Prepare parents and caregivers to support children emotionally and practically for vaccines offered through schools. Reinforce that receiving vaccines together with peers can reduce fear and help address any concerns openly.
- **Addressing questions and misconceptions:** Equip parents and caregivers with clear and accurate information so they can respond calmly to concerns or

misinformation about vaccine safety and effectiveness. Encourage them to rely on trusted health sources, such as ministry of health websites, local health centres and clinics. Activity 8 at the end of the previous section includes examples of trusted sources.

Social Media Messages

- Vaccines help protect your child and your community from diseases
- Ask your health care professional about where to get your child vaccinated
- HPV reduces cancer risk - protect your child.

Skill 2: Supporting Children’s Emotional well-being

Why It Matters

Middle childhood is an important time for children to learn how to understand what they are feeling and how they can manage their emotions. During this stage, children grow mentally, physically, and emotionally. Caring and supportive parents and caregivers are essential for healthy development.(39, 40)

Like children everywhere, children in the Pacific face challenges, including displacement or relocation, natural disasters, and social pressures. Parents and caregivers may struggle to understand how their children are feeling, talk with them, give guidance and know when to get help. A strong and positive relationship with a parent or caregiver can protect children from stress, support their emotional and behavioural well-being, and help them cope with challenges. (41) When parents and caregivers understand children's emotional and mental health, they can give early support, prevent problems and help children build peer relationships.

If parents and caregivers notice ongoing changes in behaviour, mood, sleep, learning, or relationships, they may wish to seek advice from a teacher, health worker, counsellor, or trusted community support.



For more information see Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practices:Sub-topic 5: Social Emotional Digital well-being



For more information see Module 1: Child Protection and Safety: Adolescence: Skill 4: Discipline and Emotional Regulation



See Activity 11 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers to support children’s emotional well-being.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Recognising and naming emotions:** Support parents and caregivers to notice children’s emotional signals and help them name their feelings using simple, age-appropriate language.
- **Responsive listening and emotional support:** Promote attentive listening, reassurance, and being present and available when needed, so children feel safe, valued, and supported when experiencing strong emotions.
- **Building emotional regulation and coping skills:** Encourage parents and caregivers to guide children in calming strategies to understand and manage their emotions

- **Teaching how to solve problems:** Guide parents and caregivers through the key steps of problem-solving: identifying the problem, thinking of solutions together, trying one out, adjusting if needed.
- **Fostering empathy and social understanding:** Support parents and caregivers to help children recognise the feelings of others, building kindness, empathy, and positive relationships.

Social Media Messages

- Check in with your child's feelings every day. Small conversations make a big difference.
- If it all gets too much, take a pause and reset.
- Identify the problem, discuss the solutions, try one out!
- Mental health is part of overall health. Support your child's emotional growth.
- Ask, listen and care. Your attention can help your child thrive.

Skill 3: Talking About Body Changes and Puberty in a Positive Way

Why It Matters

Puberty can begin earlier than many parents and caregivers expect, especially for girls. Some children may begin experiencing changes during middle childhood. Helping children to understand the physical, emotional, and social changes associated with puberty helps them feel prepared, reassured, and supported during this transition. (3) Equipping parents and caregivers with accurate, age-appropriate information enables them to guide children confidently, respond to questions with care, and promote positive body image, emotional well-being, and healthy relationships. (3) At the same time, children should receive clear and supportive information that helps them stay safe and healthy as they grow.

See also Chapter 3: Delivering Parenting Support in the Pacific on “Talking about Difficult and Sensitive Topics”.



See Activity 12 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on talking about body changes and puberty in a positive way.



Father and Male Caregiver Engagement: Supporting Children Through Puberty

Fathers and male caregivers play an important role in supporting children during puberty, particularly boys but also girls. Male caregivers can:

- **Talk openly and age-appropriately** about body changes, growth, and health, using clear and respectful language.
- **Listen and respond** to questions with reassurance, helping children feel supported and understood.
- **Model positive attitudes** toward their own bodies and healthy behaviours, reinforcing respect and self-care.
- **Support emotional well-being** by encouraging children to share their feelings and validating their experiences.
- **Collaborate with mothers and female caregivers** to provide consistent, culturally sensitive guidance, ensuring both boys and girls receive accurate information and feel safe.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Normalising puberty as a healthy part of development:** Support parents and caregivers to explain that everyone goes through puberty, using age-appropriate language that helps children understand physical and emotional changes without fear or shame.
- **Preparing children early and positively:** Encourage parents and caregivers to start conversations before changes begin, helping children feel prepared, reassured, and confident as their bodies develop.
- **Open, honest, and respectful communication:** Support parents and caregivers to answer questions calmly and truthfully. If they do not know the answer, they can look for reliable information together.
- **Strengthening trust and emotional safety:** Reinforce that openness from parents and caregivers helps children feel safe to ask questions, share worries, and seek guidance as they grow.

Social Media Messages

- Talking about puberty and body changes before they happen makes it less scary.
- Tell your kids what you wish someone had told you about puberty and body changes.
- It's not taboo - we all go through puberty and body changes.



Activities for Facilitators

Activity 11

Supporting

- **Middle childhood Skill 2:** Supporting Children’s Emotional well-being
- **Adolescence Skill 1:** Talking With Your Adolescent About Mental Health

Purpose: To help parents, caregivers, and children recognise, express and talk about feeling in a safe and supportive way.



Disability adaptation considerations

Parents and caregivers of children with disabilities should be aware that their children may express their emotions differently, may act out more, or be more silent and less expressive. They may also struggle to manage their emotions and may need to be supported differently to be able to express themselves and learn how to manage their feelings. Parents and caregivers of children with disabilities are encouraged to seek support from trained professionals as needed to help them support their children to manage their feelings and emotions.

Time: 20-30 mins

Steps

Phase 1: Connect & Name – Understanding Emotions (Middle Childhood)

1. **Introduction:** Talking About Feelings

- Facilitator explains that children experience many emotions as they grow and learn.

2. **Act:** Recognising Emotions

- Facilitator acts out emotions using facial expressions and body language.
- Caregivers guess the emotion and discuss real-life situations.

3. **Support:** Helping Children Cope

- Discuss how caregivers can respond to children’s emotions.
- Examples:
 - Listening calmly
 - Naming the feeling (“You seem upset”)
 - Offering comfort
 - Encouraging problem-solving
 - Taking calming breaths together

Phase 2: Listen & Support: Adolescent Well-being (Adolescents)

4. Introduction: Creating a Safe Space

- Facilitators explain that regular, simple conversations can help adolescents feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings over time.
- **Role play:** Participants sit in a circle (or small groups). Parents and caregivers work in pairs taking turns playing the adolescent and the parent/caregiver:
 - The “adolescent” responds to simple prompts such as:
 - “What made you feel proud this week?”
 - “What was something difficult this week?”
 - “What helped you feel better?”
 - The caregiver practises:
 - Listening without interrupting
 - Acknowledging feelings (“That sounds really stressful”)
 - Avoiding immediate advice or judgement
 - After a few minutes, participants switch roles.

5. Learn: When to Encourage and When to Seek Support

- Facilitator to discuss when additional support may be needed:
 - Ongoing sadness or anxiety
 - Withdrawal from others
 - Difficulty coping
- Facilitator to discuss available services

6. Take-Home Practice (All Ages)

- Caregivers identify one action to practise at home:
 - Talking about feelings with younger children
 - Having a weekly check-in with adolescents
 - Practising listening without interrupting
- Facilitators to encourage caregivers to:
 - Choose a calm, private moment
 - Ask open questions
 - Listen with empathy

Key Messages:

- Children and adolescents experience many emotions, and all feelings are valid
- Naming emotions helps children understand themselves and others
- Adolescents benefit from being heard, not just advised
- Regular conversations reduce stress and strengthen relationships
- Seeking help from trusted adults or services is important when challenges feel overwhelming

Activity 12

Supporting:

- **Middle Childhood Skill 3:** Talking About Body Changes and Puberty in a Positive Way
- **Adolescence Skill 2:** Discussing Body Changes and Puberty
- **Adolescence Skill 3:** Supporting Positive Body Image

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers support their children with age-appropriate information about puberty in a calm and respectful way.



Disability adaptation considerations

Children with disabilities will also go through puberty and parents and caregivers will need to identify the right time and appropriate language to use to ensure they are aware of what will be happening to them, why and that it's a normal part of growing up.

Time: 40 minutes

Note

- **Joint Caregiver-Child Participation:** This session can include both caregivers and children where appropriate. Participating together helps normalise conversations about puberty and allows caregivers to model open and supportive communication.
- **Consistent Messaging from Caregivers:** Encourage the involvement of both male and female caregivers when possible. When children receive clear and consistent messages from both caregivers, they are more likely to feel comfortable asking questions and seeking support.

Steps

1. **Introduction:** Understanding Puberty (Listen & Share)

- The facilitator introduces puberty as a stage when children's bodies and emotions change as they grow.
- **Examples include:**
 - Physical growth and body changes
 - Skin changes (e.g. acne)
 - Body odour and hygiene needs
 - Emotional changes and sensitivity
 - Curiosity about bodies and relationships
 - **Additional points to note:**
 - Puberty happens at different times for everyone
 - Changes in the body, skin, and emotions are normal

- New hygiene habits are part of growing up
- Explain that caregivers can help children feel prepared and confident by talking about these changes early and in a positive way.

2. **Listening Practice:** What Children and Adolescents Experience

- Participants to take turns asking and answering questions:
 - “What changes do children notice as they grow older?”
 - “What questions do children sometimes ask about their bodies?”
 - “Who can children talk to when they have questions about growing up?”.

3. **Share:** Reflecting on Experiences

- Participants reflect on what they have heard or noticed about puberty and body changes.
- Facilitator to introduce the next discussion questions:
 - o *What questions have children asked about growing up?*
 - o *What makes these conversations easy or difficult for caregivers?*
 - o *How can caregivers respond in a calm and supportive way?*
- Caregivers to discuss:
 - o Questions children have asked them
 - o Concerns they have about discussing puberty
 - o Ways they currently respond to children’s questions
- Facilitator to encourage caregivers to learn from one another and share strategies that have worked well.

4. **Support:** Building Positive Body Image

- Discuss how adolescents may compare themselves to others (especially media or peers).
- Facilitator emphasises:
 - o Bodies develop differently and at different speeds
 - o Media often shows unrealistic images
 - o Confidence, kindness, and health matter more than appearance

5. **Care:** Promoting Healthy Self-Care Habits

- The facilitator explains that self-care habits can help adolescents stay healthy and feel confident. These may include:
 - o Washing the face gently and maintaining hygiene
 - o Using deodorant and maintaining personal cleanliness
 - o Eating nutritious foods
 - o Getting enough sleep

- o Staying physically active
- o Drinking enough water
- o Protecting skin from excessive sun exposure
- Caregivers practise explaining one habit using **supportive, encouraging language**.

6. **Role Play:** Practising Conversations

- **Role play:** Caregivers form pairs. One participant plays the caregiver, and the other plays the child or adolescent asking a question about body changes.
- **Debrief:** After the role play, participants briefly discuss:
 - o What felt comfortable or challenging?
 - o What responses were helpful?

7. **Take-Home Practice**

- Facilitators to ask caregivers to identify one topic they feel comfortable discussing with their child at home.
- Facilitators encourage caregivers to choose a quiet and comfortable moment to begin the conversation with their child or adolescent at home.

Key messages:

- Puberty is a natural and healthy part of growing up.
- Children benefit from receiving accurate, age-appropriate information before and during puberty.
- Caregivers play an important role in helping children understand body changes and feel confident.
- Open and respectful conversations help children feel safe asking questions and seeking guidance.
- Both male and female caregivers can help provide consistent, supportive information.

3.d. Adolescence (11–18 years)

Adolescence is a period of rapid physical, emotional, and social change. During this stage, young people develop a stronger sense of identity, form new relationships, and begin making more independent decisions that affect their health and well-being. Parents and caregivers continue to play an important role by providing guidance, creating safe spaces for open conversations, and helping adolescents develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed and healthy choices. Supportive relationships with parents and caregivers can strengthen adolescents' confidence, protect their mental and physical health, and help them navigate the challenges and opportunities of this important life stage.

This section focuses on four skills that support health and well-being during adolescence (11–18 years). These skills are:

1. **Talking With Your Adolescent About Mental Health**
2. **Discussing Body Changes and Puberty**
3. **Supporting Positive Body Image**
4. **Talking Openly About Sexual and Reproductive Health**



Father and male caregiver involvement

Fathers and male caregivers have an important role to play in addition to mothers in supporting adolescents' health and well-being. When fathers, mothers and other caregivers work together adolescents benefit from more consistent guidance, emotional support, and access to information. Fathers can:

- **Talk and listen regularly** about mental health, puberty, relationships, and sexual and reproductive health.
- **Work with mothers and other caregivers** to reinforce household rules to keep adolescents safe
- **Provide guidance and reassurance** to help adolescents make safe and informed decisions.
- **Collaborate with mothers and other caregivers** to ensure consistent support and care.
- **Help correct myths and misinformation** that adolescents may encounter.

Skill 1: Talking With Your Adolescent About Mental Health

Why It Matters

Adolescence is a period of major emotional, social, and physical change, during which children are more vulnerable to mental health concerns, including depression and anxiety, stress, and risk-taking behaviours. (42) When adolescents have a trusting relationship with their parents and caregivers and a space to communicate openly about their mental health, it helps reduce stigma, encourages help-seeking, builds confidence, and supports healthy decision-making. (42,43) Adolescents need a supportive environment in their households and community to strengthen emotional well-being and remain connected to their family, culture, and surroundings.

Stigma around mental health stigma in the Pacific is a significant issue, with people viewing mental health disorders through a lens of cultural belief, sometimes interpreting them as spiritual disturbances or curses. (44) This attitude can discourage individuals, and especially young people from seeking help as they may fear judgment and ostracism from their families and communities, (45) and has been linked to increases in self-harm and substance abuse in young people. (44) Promising shifts are occurring across the Pacific, such as the establishment of the National Mental Health Committee in Samoa or a shift in attitudes in the Cook Islands with an increased willingness amongst the population to discuss mental health issues. (45)



For more information see **Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practices:**

- **Sub-topic 4: Health Daily Routines and Behaviours**
- **Sub-topic 5: Social Emotional Digital well-being**



For more information see **Module 1: Child Protection and Safety: Best Practices Across the Life Course**

- **Skill 2: Communication and Spending Time Together**



See **Activity 11** at the end of the [previous section](#) for a **facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on talking to adolescents about mental health.**

Essential Building Blocks

- **Open, respectful communication:** Support parents and caregivers to talk openly about emotions and mental well-being. If parents demonstrate talking about mental health and taking it seriously (using “I feel....” statements), it will encourage adolescents to do the same and share their emotions.

- **Create Safe Spaces:** Encourage parents and caregivers to listen without judgement and create safe spaces where adolescents feel heard and respected.
- **Mental health literacy & stigma reduction:** Support parents and caregivers in understanding common emotional challenges in adolescence. Normalise help-seeking and challenge stigma using culturally appropriate language and community values.
- **Knowing when to seek support:** Equip parents and caregivers to recognise signs of distress, respond calmly and supportively. Encourage taking a pause, supporting with love and saving discussions around consequences if required, for a calmer moment.
- **Knowing where to seek support:** Encourage parents and caregivers to connect adolescents to trusted services (health, school, community, faith-based) while maintaining confidentiality and dignity.

Social Media Messages

- Talk. Listen. Support. Teens need a safe space to share their feelings. Open conversations at home builds trust.
- Emotions are normal. Feeling anxious, sad, or stressed is part of growing up.
- Spot the signs, step in with care. Notice changes in mood, sleep, or behaviour? Respond calmly, listen, and guide your teen to trusted help.
- Creating supportive homes and communities helps teens thrive. Respect, understanding, and listening go a long way!

Skill 2: Discussing Body Changes and Puberty

Why It Matters

Puberty involves significant physical, social, and emotional changes as children transition into adolescence. Many adolescents lack accurate and timely information about these changes. (46,47) Without proper guidance, adolescents may experience confusion, believe myths, develop negative body image or low self-esteem, delay seeking care, or engage in risky behaviours, including unsafe sexual activity. (43)

Adolescents need clear, age-appropriate, and culturally relevant information to help them understand what is normal, build confidence, make healthy choices, and strengthen trust between parents/caregivers and adolescents. (42,43) Important topics to include in discussions are:

- The normal timing and variation of puberty
- Hygiene practices, including menstruation management
- Emotional and social changes during adolescence
- When to seek health advice if changes are concerning

Building on Middle Childhood Skill 3: Talking About Body Changes and Puberty, this skill focuses on the adolescent stage.

For additional guidance on having difficult conversations refer to:

- **Chapter 3: Delivering Parenting Support in the Pacific on “Talking about Difficult and Sensitive Topics”.**



**Module 4: Clean Water, Hygiene, and Sanitation
Adolescence**

- **Speaking about Puberty, Changing Bodies, and Hygiene Routines**
- **Speaking with Girls (and Boys!) about Menstruation**



See Activity 12 at the end of the [previous section](#) for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on discussing body changes and puberty with adolescents.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Accurate, age-appropriate information:** Support parents and caregivers with clear, factual guidance on physical, emotional, and social changes during puberty.
- **Supportive communication skills:** Support parents and caregivers to talk openly, listen without judgement, answer questions honestly (including saying “let’s find out together”), and reassure adolescents that puberty is normal and different for everyone.

- **Positive framing and well-being focus:** Emphasise body respect, self-esteem, and emotional well-being, linking puberty discussions to hygiene, self-care, mental health, and healthy relationships.
- **Consistent, inclusive caregiving:** Encourage the involvement of both male and female caregivers and trusted adults so adolescents receive consistent, respectful guidance that reflects Pacific values and supports their safety and dignity.

Social Media Messages

- Puberty brings big physical, emotional, and social changes.
- Open conversations with teens help them understand what's normal and build confidence.
- Listen, guide, reassure: Answer questions honestly, listen without judgment, and help teens know everyone develops differently.
- Body respect starts at home. Talking about hygiene, self-care, and emotional well-being during puberty supports self-esteem and healthy relationships.
- Everyone's role matters. Both male and female caregivers can help teens navigate puberty.

Skill 3: Supporting a Positive Body Image

Why It Matters

Body image concerns and skin health issues like acne are common among adolescents and linked with emotional well-being, confidence, and social participation. In the Pacific, overweight and obesity rates among adolescents are high (almost 60 per cent in some areas) and body perceptions vary across cultures. Supporting a positive body image is therefore important for strengthening self-esteem, promoting mental health, and encouraging healthy self-care habits such as adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, and good hygiene. (48,49) Parents and caregivers can support adolescents to develop a positive body image by encouraging open, non-judgmental discussion about different body shapes and sizes, and cultural norms. They can also help them understand normal developmental changes and self-care practices including skin health, sleep, hygiene, and nutrition, and knowing when to seek medical help.



For additional guidance on supporting positive body image in adolescents and good self-care habits, refer to:



- **Module 3: Healthy Nutrition for Children and Adolescence: Skill 2 Support Positive Body Image and Healthy Eating in Adolescents**
- **Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practices: Sub-topic 4: Health Daily Routines and Behaviours**



See Activity 12 at the end of the [previous section](#) for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on supporting positive body image and good self-care habits.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Positive body image and self-worth:** Support adolescents to appreciate body diversity, challenge unrealistic beauty ideals, and value strengths beyond appearance.
- **Open, non-judgemental communication:** Create safe spaces to talk about body changes, skin concerns (e.g. acne), and self-confidence, normalising that change looks different for everyone.
- **Healthy self-care habits:** Guide practical, age-appropriate self-care (skin hygiene, nutrition, sleep, physical activity) as part of overall health and well-being, not appearance.
- **Help-seeking and support:** Encourage adolescents to seek trusted advice (parents, caregivers, health workers, school counsellors) when concerns affect confidence or well-being, reinforcing that asking for help is a strength.

Social Media Messages

- Sun protection helps to keep your skin healthy.
- You are beautiful, be proud of who you are!
- Teens' bodies grow and change in different ways: Encourage your teen to appreciate their differences and value strengths beyond appearance.
- Create spaces where teens can talk about body changes, skin concerns, or self-confidence without judgment.

Skill 4: Talking Openly About Sexual and Reproductive Health

Why It Matters

Frequent, open communication between parents and adolescents about Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) strengthens adolescents' confidence, autonomy, and decision-making. Parents and caregivers need to have accurate, culturally appropriate information in order to be able to correct myths while guiding healthy behaviours. However, barriers such as cultural norms, limited knowledge, lack of confidence, and embarrassment often make these conversations difficult. (50) Fathers and male caregivers should be equally engaged in providing guidance to adolescents and reinforcing messaging, where they have the confidence, clarity and ability to do so, especially in households with a single caregiver.

Adolescents in the Pacific are increasingly exposed to misinformation through peers, social media, and online platforms, including inaccurate information about puberty, HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), contraception, and pregnancy. Evidence shows that when parents and caregivers provide age-appropriate, factual guidance in a supportive, non-judgemental way, adolescents are more likely to delay sexual initiation, practise safer behaviours, seek services early, and make informed choices that protect their health and well-being. (51) Open dialogue also strengthens trust, helps adolescents critically assess online content, and reduces stigma around asking questions or seeking help.

Parents and caregivers should be supported to discuss:

- Body changes and puberty
- Menstruation and hygiene
- Reproduction and conception basics
- HIV and STIs
- Pregnancy prevention, including condom use
- Consent, boundaries, sexuality, and respectful relationships

Parenting programmes should build the skills of parents and caregivers to listen without judgement, acknowledge when they do not know an answer, and model how to find reliable information together from trusted sources, including health workers, schools, and official health platforms. Sessions should also address practical strategies for identifying misinformation, questioning sources, recognising myths and rumours, and discussing information adolescents encounter online or through peers. Emphasis should be placed on respectful dialogue, reducing shame, and reinforcing that asking questions is a healthy and protective behaviour.

For additional guidance on having difficult conversations refer to:

- Chapter 3: Delivering Parenting Support in the Pacific on “Talking about Difficult and Sensitive Topics”.



Module 1: Child Protection and Safety: Adolescence Skill 5: Consent and Healthy Relationships



Module 2: Health and Well-being: Middle Childhood Skill 2: Discussing Body Changes and Puberty



Module 4: Clean Water, Hygiene and Sanitation: Adolescence

- Skill 1 on Speaking about Puberty, Changing Bodies, and Hygiene Routines
- Skill 2 on Speaking with Girls (and Boys!) about Menstruation



See Activity 13 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on talking with adolescents about sexual and reproductive health.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Normalise puberty and development:** Frame puberty, menstruation, and bodily changes as natural, healthy parts of growing up for all adolescents. Use age-appropriate, factual language to reduce fear, confusion, and stigma. Highlight that variations in timing and development are normal.
- **Rights, respect, and consent:** Reinforce bodily autonomy (“my body, my choice”), mutual respect, and consent for both girls and boys. Emphasise the message that no means no, and that adolescents have the right to make safe decisions about their own bodies and relationships.
- **Open, honest communication:** Create safe spaces where adolescents can ask questions without fear or shame. Parents and caregivers should model calm, respectful listening, acknowledge when they do not know an answer, and demonstrate how to seek reliable information together.
- **Menstrual health literacy:** Support girls and boys to understand menstruation as normal and healthy. Include basic hygiene, dignity, and practical support at home and school, helping adolescents feel confident and prepared.
- **Non-judgemental risk discussions:** Discuss relationships, sexual activity, STIs, pregnancy, and peer pressure without judgement or blame. Help adolescents understand risks and protective choices in ways that encourage informed, safe decisions.
- **Evidence-based guidance:** Open parent/caregiver–adolescent communication about how SRH is linked to delayed sexual initiation, healthier decision-making, and improved overall well-being. Reinforce that these discussions are protective and beneficial.

Social Media Messages

- Puberty is normal. Everyone grows at their own pace.
- No means no.
- Consent matters for boys and girls.
- Honest conversations build trust and safety.
- Make space for questions without fear or shame.
- Encourage teens to seek help and support when needed.



Activities for Facilitators

Activity 13

Supporting Adolescents Skill 4: Talking Openly About Sexual and Reproductive Health

Purpose: This activity also introduces a **Myths and Facts Fact Sheet (see below)**, which can be adapted and used to help caregivers recognise common misinformation, practise clear and confident responses, and support ongoing conversations with their adolescents at home.

Time: 30-40 mins

Steps

1. **Introduction:** Why Communication Matters

Facilitator to begin by discussing why adolescents need reliable information about relationships and sexual health.

- Explain that young people often hear information from friends, social media, or rumours, which may not always be accurate.
- Explain that caregivers can help by providing accurate information and creating a safe space for questions.
- Introduce the **Myths and Facts Fact Sheet**. Depending on the literacy level of participants, either allow parents and caregivers a few minutes to review it or read it out loud and explain that it will be used during the activity to help respond to common questions and misinformation.

2. **Practising Conversations:** Listen and Respond

Role play: Caregivers work in pairs to practise short conversations. One person plays the role of the adolescent asking a question, and the other plays the caregiver responding.

Encourage caregivers to respond in their own words first, and to use the fact sheet to check or support their answers if they are unsure.

After the role play, participants briefly discuss:

- What helped the conversation feel respectful
- What made responding easier or more difficult
- How the fact sheet helped (or could help) in responding to questions

3. **Fact or Rumour?** Addressing Misinformation

Caregivers use the Myths and Facts for Caregivers Fact Sheet provided.

In pairs or small groups, caregivers:

- o Identify a myth from the fact sheet that they heard when they were adolescents or one that adolescents today commonly hear
- o Read the corresponding fact
- o Discuss how they would explain this to their adolescent in a simple, calm way
- o Facilitator to encourage caregivers to practise explaining the fact in their own words, rather than reading directly from the sheet.

4. Linking Adolescents to Trusted Support

Facilitators explain that adolescents should know where they can access trusted information and confidential services if needed. Examples may include:

- o Parents or caregivers
- o Health workers
- o Teachers or school counsellors
- o Youth-friendly health services

Facilitators may share information about local services providing SRH information, STI testing, HIV prevention support, contraception advice, or counselling.

Facilitators should also be familiar with local referral pathways, so caregivers and adolescents know where to access confidential counselling, information, and health care.

Reinforce that the fact sheet is one helpful tool, but parents and caregivers can also guide adolescents to trusted people and services when additional support is needed.

Key Messages:

- Adolescents benefit from accurate, age-appropriate information about sexual and reproductive health.
- Open conversations help reduce confusion, stigma, and misinformation.
- Listening calmly and without judgement helps adolescents feel safe asking questions.
- Caregivers can guide adolescents toward trusted health information and services.
- Respectful communication helps adolescents understand relationships, consent, and personal responsibility.

Talking Openly with Adolescents About Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)

Myths and Facts for Caregivers

This fact sheet is based on evidence and guidance from leading global organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) (52), UNESCO (53), UNICEF (54), UNAIDS (55), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (56,57), and the Guttmacher Institute (58).

1. Talking About SRH and Communication

MYTH: Talking about sex encourages adolescents to become sexually active.

FACT: Research shows that open, honest, and age-appropriate conversations about sexual and reproductive health help adolescents make safer and more informed decisions. When caregivers provide accurate information, adolescents are more likely to delay sexual activity and protect themselves when they do become active.

MYTH: Adolescents already know everything about sex from the internet.

FACT: While adolescents may access information online, much of it can be incorrect or misleading. Caregivers play a crucial role in helping adolescents understand what is accurate and what is not, and in providing values, guidance, and safe spaces for questions.

MYTH: Adolescents should not ask questions about sex or their bodies.

FACT: Curiosity is a normal part of development. When adolescents feel safe to ask questions, they are more likely to seek accurate information and make informed, healthy decisions.

2. Condoms, Protection, and Responsibility

MYTH: Condoms reduce pleasure or are not worth using.

FACT: Condoms are an effective way to prevent both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. While some people believe condoms reduce pleasure, many find that using condoms increases confidence and reduces anxiety about risks, which can improve overall comfort and well-being.

MYTH: Using condoms is only the responsibility of one partner.

FACT: Preventing pregnancy and STIs is a shared responsibility. Both partners should feel confident discussing and using protection, and both should be involved in making safe choices.

MYTH: Condoms are only for people who don't trust each other.

FACT: Using condoms is a sign of care and responsibility. It shows that both partners respect each other's health and want to prevent infections and unintended pregnancy.

3. STIs and HIV

MYTH: You can tell if someone has an STI or HIV by looking at them.

FACT: Many STIs, including HIV, may not show visible symptoms, especially in the early stages. A person can look healthy and still have an infection. Testing is the only reliable way to know, which is why regular health check-ups are important.

MYTH: HIV can be spread through casual contact like hugging or sharing food.

FACT: HIV is not spread through everyday contact. It is transmitted through specific body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. Hugging, sharing food, or sitting near someone does not spread HIV.

MYTH: Only certain groups of people get STIs or HIV.

FACT: Anyone who is sexually active can be at risk of STIs or HIV. Risk depends on behaviours, not identity. This is why it is important for all adolescents to have access to accurate information and prevention methods.

4. Relationships, Consent, and Respect

MYTH: Good relationships mean you don't need to talk about consent or protection.

FACT: Healthy relationships are based on respect, communication, and consent. Talking openly about boundaries, protection, and expectations helps build trust and ensures both partners feel safe and respected.

MYTH: Talking about relationships will encourage dating too early.

FACT: Discussing relationships helps adolescents understand respect, boundaries, and communication. This supports healthier decisions and reduces the likelihood of risky or harmful situations.

MYTH: Boys and girls should not talk openly about relationships and SRH topics.

FACT: Both boys and girls benefit from understanding SRH and relationships. Open communication helps promote respect, shared responsibility, and healthier interactions between adolescents.

MYTH: Boys should take the lead in relationships, and girls should be passive.

FACT: Healthy relationships are based on equality, mutual respect, and shared decision-making. Both boys and girls should feel empowered to express their thoughts, set boundaries, and make decisions about their bodies and relationships.

MYTH: Jealousy or control is a sign of love.

FACT: Jealousy, control, or pressure are not signs of love. They are warning signs of unhealthy relationships. Healthy relationships are built on trust, respect, and freedom, not control or fear.

MYTH: It is embarrassing or shameful to talk about consent.

FACT: Talking about consent is a normal and important part of healthy relationships. It helps adolescents understand personal boundaries, respect others, and build safe and positive relationships.

MYTH: Girls are responsible for preventing pregnancy, not boys.

FACT: Preventing pregnancy is a shared responsibility. Both boys and girls should be informed, respectful, and involved in decisions about protection and sexual health.

5. Help-Seeking & Communication

MYTH: Adolescents should solve their problems on their own.

FACT: Adolescents need guidance and support. Encouraging them to talk to trusted adults, caregivers, or health workers helps them stay safe and make informed decisions.

MYTH: If caregivers don't have all the answers, they shouldn't start the conversation.

FACT: Caregivers do not need to know everything. Being open, listening, and learning together builds trust and encourages adolescents to keep asking questions.

4. Annexes

1. Multi-sectoral Integration

This annex provides guidance on how and where health and caregiving messages can be delivered across different sectors and community actors. Children's health and well-being are shaped not only through health services, but also through the daily actions of families, schools, and community programmes.

Coordinated efforts across sectors such as health, education, social protection, and community services can help ensure that parents and caregivers receive consistent guidance on practices that support children's health, hygiene, and development.

In addition to in-person services, digital communication platforms such as SMS, WhatsApp, and Facebook can be used to reinforce key parenting and health messages at scale. These platforms can provide reminders, practical tips, and prompts that encourage parents and caregivers to practice healthy behaviours at home, such as hygiene routines, safe feeding practices, and care-seeking when children are unwell.

The tables below highlight entry points for integrating health and parenting guidance across sectors, helping programmes align their efforts and avoid fragmented or conflicting advice. By coordinating messages and activities across different delivery platforms, implementers can strengthen support for parents and caregivers, and promote consistent health practices in homes and communities.

The table identifies key sectors and actors who interact with families, the delivery platforms through which they reach parents and caregivers, and practical suggestions for coordination at the community level. It also highlights which parenting and health-related skills are reinforced at different stages of childhood, showing how multiple services can support children's health and well-being across the life course.

Programme implementers can use this annex to:

- identify opportunities for collaboration across sectors
- align health and caregiving messages across services
- strengthen referral pathways and coordination between actors
- ensure parents and caregivers receive consistent guidance on practices that protect the health and well-being of children and adolescents.

Table M2.1: Multi-Sectoral Integration for Health

Sector / Actors	Delivery Platform	Coordination Tips for Implementers (Pacific Context) to Support Parents and Caregivers	Parenting Skills Reinforced (Across Ages)
Health Clinics & Community Health Workers	Clinics, ANC visits, outreach services, village health outreach	Align messaging with schools and churches; share updated referral pathways; confirm clinic schedules; reinforce consistent preventive, SRH, mental health and immunisation messages across parenting sessions	Preventive health & early care-seeking; ANC attendance; vaccines in pregnancy; recognising childhood illness; immunisation completion; safe medicine storage; puberty discussions; mental health support; SRH communication; adolescent pregnancy support
ECD Centres & Schools	PTAs, parent-teacher meetings, classrooms, parent workshops	Coordinate opportunities for parenting workshops; understand content delivered in SRH and puberty education; reinforce complementary messaging to caregivers	Preventive care; hygiene and safe home environments; puberty preparation; emotional well-being; positive encouragement; vaccination importance; SRH communication; body image support

Churches & Faith-Based Organisations	Church gatherings, marriage classes, community discussions	Align messaging with health guidance; reduce stigma around SRH, mental health and pregnancy; reinforce supportive partner roles; coordinate discussions with parenting sessions	Early care-seeking; ANC support; partner emotional support; family planning; avoiding harmful substances; supervision norms; puberty discussions; reducing mental health stigma; adolescent pregnancy support
Community Groups & Leaders	Community gatherings, celebrations, village meetings	Coordinate with health clinics on service availability; reinforce immunisation and safety messaging; promote community norms for supervision and safe play spaces	Safe home environments; ANC awareness; immunisation; home safety; supervision; injury prevention; reducing stigma; adolescent well-being
Sports Clubs & Youth Groups	Fitness centres, youth sessions, peer-led activities	Coordinate health messaging with clinics and schools; promote accurate information; reinforce healthy lifestyle and self-care discussions	Physical activity in pregnancy; body image and self-care; tackling misinformation; adolescent health awareness

2. Programmes Per Skill

This annex highlights programmes, tools, and resources that support the parenting and caregiving skills presented in this module. Many organisations and initiatives have already developed materials that address similar topics related to children and adolescent health and well-being.

The table below provides examples of programmes and resources that facilitators can consult to deepen their knowledge, access additional training materials, or adapt practical activities for use in their own contexts. These resources can help strengthen programme delivery by offering further guidance, practical examples, and evidence-based approaches that reinforce the skills promoted in this toolkit. Where links are not available, programme managers and facilitators are encouraged to reach out to the relevant organisation directly to get more information.

Facilitators are encouraged to explore these resources where relevant, adapting them to local needs while maintaining consistent messaging on key parenting and caregiving practices that support the health and well-being of children and adolescents.

Table M2.2: Programmes for Health Skills

Programme	Skill
<p>Name: <i>Village Health Worker Programme</i></p> <p>Organization: Ministry of Health, UNICEF</p> <p>Country or Countries: Vanuatu</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: In this programme over 200 village health workers are trained to promote health-seeking behaviours and caregiver engagement at household level. Caregivers are supported to recognise early signs of illness in children and encouraged to seek timely care from local health providers.</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Life Course Skill 1: Adopting Early Health-Seeking Behaviour as a Preventive Health Measure</p>
	<p>Early Childhood Skill 1: Remembering Immunisation and Well-Child Checks</p>
	<p>Early Childhood Skill 2: Recognising Common Childhood Illness</p>
<p>Name: <i>Integrated Health and Nutrition Outreach Services</i></p> <p>Organization: UNICEF and the Vanuatu Red Cross</p> <p>Country or Countries: Vanuatu</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: Deliver immunisations and nutrition screenings via outreach clinics across eight islands while integrating parenting, education, and child health</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Life Course Skill 1: Adopting Early Health-Seeking Behaviour as a Preventive Health Measure</p>
	<p>Early Childhood Skill 1: Remembering Immunisation and Well-Child Checks</p>

Programme	Skill
<p>messages during caregiver waiting times. This initiative has also raised family awareness and access to health services.</p>	<p>Early Childhood Skill 2: Recognising Common Childhood Illness</p>
<p>Name: <i>Health Promoting in Schools initiative</i> Organization: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, UNICEF Country or Countries: Fiji Date of programme: Initiated in 2016 and ongoing Short description or link to the module: A long-term initiative integrating health, well-being, and parenting support within school frameworks. The initiative reinforces parenting messages through school by encouraging the integration of health promotion into school curricula, the establishment of health committees and the implementation of school-based health initiatives.</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Life Course Skill 1: Adopting Early Health-Seeking Behaviour as a Preventive Health Measure</p> <p>Middle Childhood Skill 3: Talking About Body Changes and Puberty in a Positive Way</p>
<p>Name: WASH in Schools (WinS) programmes Organization: Live & Learn Environmental Education, UNICEF Country or Countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu Short description or link to the module: Support household hygiene and sanitation practices through school and community linkages. Actively involves parents via PTAs and promotes parents engagement in school hygiene campaigns. https://livelearn.org/assets/media/docs/resources/WASH-in-Schools-Resources-1.pdf</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Life Course Skill 2: Creating Safe, Clean, and Healthy Home Environments</p>
<p>Name: Famili i Redi Programme Organization (Delivery Partners): IOM, World Vision, Department of Labour and Departure Services. Country or Countries: Vanuatu Short description or link to the module: Integrates home safety, hygiene, and preparedness planning for families facing mobility</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Life Course Skill 2: Creating Safe, Clean, and Healthy Home Environments</p>

Programme	Skill
<p>or change. https://roasiapacific.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl671/files/documents/2023-10/famili-i-redi-rapid-review-report-digital.pdf</p>	
<p>Name: The Maternal and Child Health Care Programme Organization: Ministry of Health and Medical Services Country or Countries: Kiribati Short description or link to the module: The programme aims to provide health, nutrition, and hygiene guidance to expectant and new parents during routine health system appointments. The programme provides guidance on health, nutrition, and hygiene to expectant and new parents during routine health appointments including antenatal care (ANC) visits, postnatal care (PNC) visits, and well-child visits focused primarily on vaccination coverage.</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 1: Engage in Preventive Maternal Health Care Pregnancy Skill 3: Avoiding Harmful Substances to Protect Your Baby’s Health Pregnancy Skill 4: Maintaining Safe and Moderate Physical Activity During Pregnancy Pregnancy Skill 5: Preparing for Childbirth Pregnancy Skill 6: Planning Birth Spacing Pregnancy Skill 7: Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers</p>
<p>Name: RMI Multisectoral Early Childhood Development Project II Organization: World Bank Country: RMI Short description or link to the module: A multisectoral, integrated service delivery programme focuses on health, nutrition, education, and social protection, aiming to improve child health and nutrition, early learning outcomes, parenting practices, and service utilisation across both urban and rural areas. Key modalities include child health visits, antenatal care, and conditional cash transfers linked to behavior change and preschool attendance interventions.</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 1: Engage in Preventive Maternal Health Care Pregnancy Skill 5: Preparing for Childbirth Pregnancy Skill 6: Planning Birth Spacing</p>
<p>Name: Mama Talanoa Organization: Mama Talanoa Country or Countries: Fiji</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 2: Mental Health During Pregnancy</p>

Programme	Skill
<p>Short description or link to the module: Mama Talanoa facilitates peer-support groups and talanoa sessions for maternal mental health and responsive caregiving. It functions as a collective of mothers that facilitates peer support and dialogue on maternal mental health, particularly around issues such as postpartum depression and the challenges of motherhood. Mama Talanoa uses community-based workshops, peer-support and online platforms.</p> <p>https://www.fijitimes.com.fj/mothers-face-loneliness-lack-of-support/</p>	
<p>Name: One-year pilot Nutrition project Organization: Canvasback Wellness Centre in partnership with WUTME Country or Countries: RMI Date of programme: June 2025 Short description or link to the module: Canvasback in RMI has launched a 1-year pilot project of nutrition workshops for parents to teach them how to prepare healthy meals for their family under 10 USD. It also promotes healthy eating among pregnant women.</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 3: Avoiding Harmful Substances to Protect Your Baby’s Health</p>
<p>Name: Mum’s a Hero Organization: Implemented by Basketball Fiji under its Hoops for Health initiative, Country or Countries: Fiji Date of programme: 2014 Short description or link to the module: Aims to improve the health of women, particularly mothers, through basketball-based physical activities and nutrition education. Programme is delivered via sported sessions, nutrition talks and community engagement.</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 4: Maintaining Safe and Moderate Physical Activity During Pregnancy</p>
<p>Name: Faith of Life Book Initiative Organization: UNICEF Pacific Country or Countries: Fiji</p>	<p>Early Childhood Skill 1: Remembering Immunisation and Well-Child Checks</p>

Programme	Skill
<p>Date of programme: 2025</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: This faith-based resource embeds parenting guidance within religious teachings to encourage values-based caregiving and incorporates parenting messages related to child health, immunisation, emergency preparedness, and care.</p>	<p>Middle Childhood Skill 1: Continuing Vaccinations and Explaining Why They Are important</p>
<p>Name: Safe Families</p> <p>Organization: Save the Children</p> <p>Country or Countries: Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea</p> <p>Date of programme: 2024 (5 year project)</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: Manual-based intervention promotes positive discipline, parenting without violence, and safe family environments and focus on fostering strong child-caregiver relationships.</p>	<p>Early Childhood Skill 3: Keeping Dangerous Household Items Away From Children’s Reach</p> <p>Early Childhood Skill 4: Keeping Medicines Away From Children’s Reach</p>
<p>Name: Vuli Taumada Shishak Project</p> <p>Organization: Save the Children Fiji</p> <p>Country or Countries: Fiji</p> <p>Date of programme: 2014</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: The <u>Vuli Taumada Shishak Project</u> is a school and community-based initiative using a manual on positive discipline promoting non-violent parenting practices and fostering strong child-caregiver relationships.</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Life Course Skill 2: Creating safe, clean, and healthy home environment</p> <p>Early Childhood Skill 3: Keeping Dangerous Household Items Away From Children’s Reach</p>
<p>Name: Positive Parenting Maroro Accelerated School Readiness Programme (ASRP)</p> <p>Organization: Ministry of Education</p> <p>Country or Countries: Kiribati</p> <p>Date of programme: 2018-2019</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: This programme aimed to prepare parents and children for the transition to primary school through workshops on play, nutrition, and positive parenting. It includes community conversations</p>	<p>Early Childhood Skill 3: Keeping Dangerous Household Items Away From Children’s Reach</p> <p>Early Childhood Skill 4: Keeping Medicines Away From Children’s Reach</p>

Programme	Skill
<p>(Maroro) - facilitated workshops: Nine modules were developed covering: (1) From conception to birth, (2) The first 1,000 days, (3) 3 years to 5 or 6 years (school entry age), (4) Parenting Styles, (5) 6 Principles of Positive Parenting, (6) The Importance of Play, (7) Parents interactions with children, (8) Parent's Creativity, and (9) Health, nutrition and WASH. Maroros (dialogue sessions) were provided to parents during the ASRP period.</p>	
<p>Name: Parenting Support Programme (PSP) Organization: MoET - Government of Vanuatu, UNICEF Country or Countries: Vanuatu Date of programme: 2024 Short description or link to the module: PSP is a structured national parenting initiative in the country for parents of children under the age of six years, which addresses all five components of nurturing care, including health, nutrition, safety, responsive caregiving, and early learning, through community-based workshops.</p>	<p>Early Childhood Skill 4: Keeping Medicines Away From Children’s Reach</p>
<p>Name: Pacific Council of Churches (PCC) Child Protection and Safeguarding Pilot Programme Organization: Pacific Council of Churches Country or Countries: Fiji, RMI, SI Short description or link to the module: The programme is delivered through the PCC, training Church Enablers and community leaders to promote child protection and faith-integrated parenting. The programme includes components on safety and child protection for adults and caregivers and actively engages adolescents in their programmes.</p>	<p>Early Childhood Skill 3: Keeping Dangerous Household Items Away From Children’s Reach</p>
<p>Name: Blossom Family Life Education Programme Organization: ADRA Vanuatu Country or Countries: Vanuatu</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 7: Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers</p>

Programme	Skill
<p>Date of programme: 2017</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: Originally designed to address teenage pregnancy, ADRA has expanded this programme to also promote holistic, values-based parenting using faith and traditional frameworks. This programme includes counselling services, training materials, and media outreach. A related radio programme delivers weekly family life content in local languages, raising awareness and directing listeners to support services. Caregivers are trained to recognise children’s emotional needs, provide supportive listening, and reinforce positive coping strategies.</p>	<p>Early Childhood Skill 3: Keeping Dangerous Household Items Away From Children’s Reach</p> <p>Middle childhood Skill 2: Supporting Children’s Emotional well-being</p> <p>Middle Childhood Skill 3: Talking About Body Changes and Puberty in a Positive Way</p>
<p>Name: HPV Awareness and Parent Engagement</p> <p>Organization: UNICEF, Wan SmolBag</p> <p>Country or Countries: Vanuatu</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: UNICEF is leading a campaign to train teachers to engage with parents on HPV vaccination. The programme also aims to strengthen the role of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) to build community trust and improve uptake. Delivery modality includes school- and community-based delivery, theatre, comics, peer education, lifestyle events, and outreach activities.</p>	<p>Middle Childhood Skill 1: Continuing Vaccinations and Explaining why they are important</p> <p>Middle Childhood Skill 3: Talking About Body Changes and Puberty in a Positive Way</p> <p>Adolescence Skill 2: Discussing Body Changes and Puberty</p> <p>Adolescence Skill 3: Supporting Positive Body Image</p>
<p>Name: Counselling Support for Parents and Children</p> <p>Organization: Ministry of Education: Substance Abuse Advisory Council (SAAC)</p> <p>Country or Countries: Fiji</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: Delivered through NGOs, churches, or health services and focuses on providing psychosocial support for families, often in connection with child protection, trauma recovery, or special needs support. The programme includes, counselling provided through in-person counselling sessions,</p>	<p>Middle childhood Skill 2: Supporting Children’s Emotional well-being</p>

Programme	Skill
<p>Itaukei radio programme for women in rural and urban communities, school awareness programme: Conduct awarenesses in schools using the parent teacher association and conduct awareness activities in churches or religious institutions.</p>	
<p>Name: Cancer Screening Project Organization: Women United for the Marshall Country or Countries: RMI Short description or link to the module: Aims to improve access to reproductive health services, specifically HPV screening for women and girls. As parental consent is required for girls to receive the HPV vaccine, the project targets parents through awareness-raising activities to increase their understanding of the importance of early vaccination and screening for their children. The project includes referrals for sexual and reproductive health services to reproductive health centres to get screened. They want to utilise parent educators to encourage more women to get tested.</p>	<p>Middle Childhood Skill 1: Continuing Vaccinations and Explaining Why They Are Important</p>
<p>Name: Yut Rise Up Organization: Save the children Country or Countries: Vanuatu Date of programme: 2023-2026 Short description or link to the module: Supports adolescents 10–19 years in Vanuatu has a 4-week workshop programme with parents on adolescents focused on: adolescent development, positive discipline, adolescent development, healthy relationship, SRHR, online safety, peer relationships and parental stress management.</p>	<p>Adolescence Skill 1: Talking With Your Adolescent About Mental Health</p>
<p>Name: Get Into Rugby PLUS Organization: Samoan Victims Support Group, Ministry of women, Football Federation and Netball Federation, Child Fund</p>	<p>Adolescence Skill 3: Supporting Positive Body Image</p>

Programme	Skill
<p>Country or Countries: Samoa</p> <p>Date of programme: 2021</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: A school and community-based programme focusing on promoting safety, protection, and learning through sports. The Get Into Rugby PLUS Samoa programme is delivered via school and community settings and works with school principals and teachers to deliver the <i>Get into Rugby PLUS</i> curriculum including sessions for parents. It also reaches the villages by directly working with village mayors or faith-based organisations.</p>	
<p>Name: Yes I Do Programme</p> <p>Organization: Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs (MWYSSA)</p> <p>Country or Countries: Kiribati</p> <p>Date of programme: 2018</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: The Yes I Do Programme builds awareness around human rights-based parenting and is geared towards couples and young parents. Couples receive six full days of training across 11 modules: (1) Religious principles on marriage (Faith-Based Organizations), (2) Family visioning (community resource person), (3) Culture and harmful cultural beliefs (Women's Division, MWYSSA), (4) Gender and sex (Women's Division, MWYSSA), (5) Violence and effects on family (Police Domestic Violence Office), (6) Human rights (Ministry of Justice), (7) Family care (Ministry of Health), (8) Positive communication skills (Youth Division, MWYSSA), (9) Financial literacy (Ministry of Commerce), (10) Positive parenting (Social Welfare Division, MWYSSA), and (11) Self-reliance concepts (Youth Division, MWYSSA), delivered in workshop, lecture-based format and receive financial compensation and meals.</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 5: Preparing for Childbirth</p>
	<p>Pregnancy Skill 6: Planning Birth Spacing</p>
	<p>Pregnancy Skill 7: Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers</p>
	<p>Middle Childhood Skill 3: Talking About Body Changes and Puberty in a Positive Way</p>
	<p>Adolescence Skill 2: Discussing Body Changes and Puberty</p>
<p>Adolescents Skill 4: Talking Openly About Sexual and Reproductive Health</p>	

Programme	Skill
<p>Name: Place of Life Programme</p> <p>Organisation: Women United for the Marshall Islands, UNICEF Pacific, World Bank</p> <p>Country or Countries: RMI</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: This is a support service for women and girls aged 14 and above, offering abuse response and referrals for individuals under 18.</p>	<p>Adolescents Skill 4: Talking Openly About Sexual and Reproductive Health</p>
<p>Name: Family Life Education (FLE) programme (In School and Out of School FLE)</p> <p>Organization: UNFPA</p> <p>Country or Countries: Nine Pacific countries: FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.</p> <p>Date of programme: 2012. "Out-of-School" (OOS) launched in 2020 as part of the Spotlight Initiative.</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: FLE initiative, delivered both in schools and in out-of-school settings, covers sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), healthy relationships and violence prevention and safety, and is implemented as part of UNFPA's Transformative Agenda in nine Pacific countries.</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 5: Preparing for Childbirth</p>
	<p>Pregnancy Skill 6: Planning Birth Spacing</p>
	<p>Pregnancy Skill 7: Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers</p>
	<p>Middle Childhood Skill 3: Talking About Body Changes and Puberty in a Positive Way</p>
	<p>Adolescence Skill 2: Discussing Body Changes and Puberty</p>
<p>Adolescents Skill 3: Supporting Positive Body Image</p>	
<p>Adolescents Skill 4: Talking Openly About Sexual and Reproductive Health</p>	
<p>Name: Mother-to-Mother Support Groups</p> <p>Organization: Nei Mom Uprising</p> <p>Country or Countries: Kiribati</p> <p>Date of programme: 2018</p> <p>Short description or link to the module: Empower young mothers through peer support and practical advice, helping address the underlying conditions necessary for good parenting. They organise community engagement events like coastal clean-ups, walkathons, and volleyball tournaments to build community among mothers and promote healthier lifestyles.</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 7: Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers</p>

Programme	Skill
<p>Name: Programmes for Young Parents</p> <p>Organization: Social Welfare Department, FFEKT, TuFHA, and UNICEF</p> <p>Country or Countries: Tuvalu</p> <p>Short description or link to the module:Community-based two-day in-person training sessions covering newborn care, parenting skills, and distribution of newborn care items.</p>	<p>Pregnancy Skill 7: Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers</p>

3. Facilitator Checklist

This checklist is designed to support facilitators in preparing for and delivering the health-related content of the Pacific Parenting Toolkit effectively. It highlights key steps to consider before, during, and after each session to ensure that activities are well organised, inclusive, and supportive for parents and caregivers.

The checklist helps facilitators:

- prepare materials and plan activities in advance
- create a safe and respectful learning environment for participants
- guide discussions and practical exercises effectively
- reinforce key parenting and child and adolescent health messages
- reflect on what worked well and identify areas for improvement.

Facilitators can use this checklist as a practical reminder during content preparation and delivery, helping maintain consistent quality across sessions and supporting positive learning experiences for parents and caregivers.

Table M2.3 Facilitator Checklist For Health and Well-being

Best Practices Across Life Course

Skill 1: Adopting Early Health-Seeking Behaviour as a Preventive Health Measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide parents and caregivers to understand the importance of regular health check-ups, vaccinations, and dental visits across developmental stages.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage parents and caregivers to teach children and adolescents to communicate when they feel unwell, unsafe, or in need of support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on accessing local health clinics, community health workers, and other trusted services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate discussion on creating open communication at home so children feel comfortable sharing health concerns.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support parents and caregivers in tracking immunisations, growth, and follow-

up care through proper use of child health records or cards.

- Guide parents and caregivers in helping adolescents understand how to seek confidential and safe health services when needed.

Skill 2: Creating Safe, Clean, and Healthy Home Environments

- Support parents and caregivers in assessing and improving home safety to create secure spaces for children to play and learn.
- Facilitate discussion on reducing household risks (e.g., storing harmful items safely) and identifying safe outdoor play options where possible.
- Encourage families to engage in calm, screen-free shared activities that strengthen relationships and well-being.
- Promote inclusive caregiving by involving extended family and community members as supportive resources.
- Reinforce respectful, kind, and cooperative behaviours within the home environment.
- Guide parents and caregivers in balancing adolescents' need for privacy with appropriate safety and supervision.

Pregnancy

Skill 1: Engage in Preventive Maternal Health Care

- Provide information on the importance of regular antenatal check-ups at health clinics or hospitals throughout pregnancy.
- Guide parents and caregivers to understand recommended vaccinations during pregnancy and encourage adherence to health worker guidance.
- Emphasise the importance of consistent folic acid intake and other prescribed supplements.
- Facilitate discussion on following medical advice related to nutrition, supplementation, rest, and healthy behaviours.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to maintain and bring antenatal cards or records to every health visit and to track care appropriately.

Skill 2: Mental Health During Pregnancy

- Create a safe space for parents and caregivers to discuss emotional well-being, including stress, fears, and changing feelings during pregnancy.
- Encourage open communication between pregnant women and their partners or family members.
- Provide information on identifying signs of prolonged sadness, anxiety, or emotional distress that may require professional support.
- Guide parents and caregivers in identifying trusted sources of support, including family members, community leaders, and health workers.
- Promote active involvement of partners and family members in providing practical and emotional support throughout pregnancy.

Skill 3: Avoiding Harmful Substances to Protect Your Baby's Health

- Provide clear information on the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy and reinforce complete avoidance.
- Educate parents and caregivers on the harms of tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure during pregnancy.
- Discuss the risks associated with betel nut use (with or without tobacco) and promote complete avoidance during pregnancy.
- Discuss the risks associated with kava use and promote complete avoidance during pregnancy.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to engage partners and family members in maintaining a smoke-free and alcohol-free home environment.

Skill 4: Maintaining Safe and Moderate Physical Activity During Pregnancy

- Guide parents and caregivers in understanding safe levels of physical activity during pregnancy and when to avoid heavy lifting or strenuous work.
- Encourage regular rest and proactive requests for assistance with physically demanding tasks.
- Facilitate discussion on safe travel practices, particularly in high-risk conditions (e.g., boats, uneven roads, long journeys).
- Advise parents and caregivers to consult health workers when uncertain about safe activities or experiencing discomfort.

Skill 5: Preparing for Childbirth

- Provide accurate, age- and culturally appropriate information on birth preparedness, birth spacing and available family planning options through health services.
- Facilitate respectful discussions on how parents and caregivers can communicate with partners or family members about family planning decisions.
- Guide parents and caregivers in planning for postnatal health care, including follow-up visits and support systems after delivery.
- Emphasise the health benefits of adequate birth spacing for maternal recovery and child well-being.

Skill 6: Planning Birth Spacing

- Explain what birth spacing is and provide clear information on the benefits of allowing time between pregnancies for maternal and child health.
- Reinforce that healthy spacing supports newborn care, strengthens parent-child bonding, and promotes early child development.
- Provide clear, respectful information on postpartum family planning options and how to access available services.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to engage partners and family members in

planning pregnancies and supporting healthy birth spacing.

Skill 7: Teenage Pregnancy: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Fathers

- Check and confirm attitudes regarding teenage pregnancy and relationship between adolescent girl and her caregivers. Run activities separately if needed and in line with wishes of adolescent girl.
- Guide parents and caregivers in responding with care, dignity, and non-judgmental support if an adolescent daughter becomes pregnant.
- Provide information on early access to antenatal care, health services, and social support.
- Facilitate reflection on reducing stigma within the family and community.
- Encourage engagement of trusted family members, health workers, and community services to ensure safety and well-being.

Early Childhood (0–5 years)

Skill 1: Remembering Immunisation and Well-Child Checks

- Reinforce the importance of completing recommended immunisations according to schedule.
- Encourage regular attendance at growth monitoring and well-child health visits.
- Support parents and caregivers in maintaining and bringing the child health card to every appointment.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to ask health workers for clarification about immunisation schedules or follow-up care.

Skill 2: Recognising Common Childhood Illness

- Provide information on common childhood illnesses and key danger signs (e.g., high fever, difficulty breathing, poor feeding).
- Guide parents and caregivers on when and how to seek care promptly from a health facility.
- Emphasise the importance of not delaying care when symptoms are severe, persistent, or worsening.

Skill 3: Keeping Dangerous Household Items Away From Children’s Reach

- Facilitate household safety assessments to identify potential hazards (e.g., knives, tools, chemicals).
- Guide parents and caregivers in implementing practical strategies to safely store hazardous items.
- Promote safety measures around water containers, fires, and cooking areas.
- Encourage routine checks of floors and play areas to reduce injury risks.

Skill 4: Keeping Medicines Away From Children’s Reach

- Discuss with parents and caregivers on safe storage of medicines out of

children's sight and reach.

- Emphasise that medications should only be given to children under adult supervision and according to health worker guidance.

Middle Childhood (6–10 years)

Skill 1: Continuing Vaccinations and Explaining Why They Are Important

- Provide information on recommended vaccinations during middle childhood (e.g., HPV, tetanus, according to national schedules).
- Support parents and caregivers in explaining the long-term health benefits of immunisation in age-appropriate ways.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to involve their children in health visits, inviting them to ask questions.

Skill 2: Supporting Children's Emotional well-being

- Encourage parents and caregivers to spend daily one-on-one time listening and checking in on children's feelings.
- Guide parents and caregivers in teaching children to identify and name emotions and talk about experiences.
- Model calm coping strategies for stress and frustration.
- Reinforce the importance of praising effort, kindness, and problem-solving skills.

Skill 3: Talking about body changes and puberty in a positive way

- Support parents and caregivers in initiating age-appropriate conversations about body changes and puberty before they occur.
- Provide guidance on reassuring children that physical development is normal and happens at different times.
- Model how to encourage questions and provide honest, accurate responses.
- Promote creating a safe, trusting environment where children of all genders feel respected and supported.

Adolescence (11–18 years)

Skill 1: Talking With Your Adolescent About Mental Health

- Create a safe space for parents and caregivers to explore how to discuss mental health calmly and respectfully with adolescents.
- Model and practice non-judgmental listening skills and validating responses.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to support adolescents in sharing worries, stress, or challenges openly.
- Facilitate reflection on framing help-seeking as a sign of strength and responsibility.
- Provide information on when and how to seek early support from trusted adults, health workers, or counsellors.

Skill 2: Discussing Body Changes and Puberty

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guide parents and caregivers in initiating timely, age-appropriate conversations about body changes and puberty.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide strategies for reassuring adolescents that physical development is normal and varies across individuals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model how to respond honestly and confidently to questions while maintaining openness and trust.
Skill 3: Supporting a Positive Body Image
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage parents and caregivers to promote positive body image and respect for self and others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitate discussion on healthy hygiene, skincare, and personal care habits.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address the harms of teasing, shaming, or body comparison and promote respectful communication.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce focusing on overall health and well-being rather than appearance.
Skill 4: Talking Openly About Sexual and Reproductive Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support parents and caregivers in initiating open, age-appropriate conversations about sexual and reproductive health.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model strategies for answering questions honestly and correcting myths or misinformation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitate discussions on respect, consent, boundaries, and healthy relationships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide guidance on connecting adolescents to reliable health services and accurate information sources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equip parents and caregivers with accurate, age-appropriate information on puberty, HIV, STIs, pregnancy, and contraception.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage open dialogue where adolescents can raise questions or discuss rumours encountered online or from peers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address stigma, embarrassment, or discomfort related to sexual and reproductive health topics in a supportive manner.

4. Links to Pacific and Global Resources

This annex provides a selection of health resources developed by Pacific partners, national programmes, and international organisations that complement the parenting and caregiving skills presented in this module. Many of the materials come from organisations working in the Pacific region, including regional bodies such as the Pacific Community (SPC), national guidance from the Kiribati Ministry of Health and Medical Services, and community initiatives such as the Aunty Dee Foundation, which promotes

mental well-being through storytelling approaches. Additional global resources from organisations such as the World Health Organization are also included to provide further evidence-based guidance across the life course.

Together, these resources cover key health topics including immunisation, physical activity, mental health and well-being, sexual and reproductive health, pregnancy, early childhood development, and adolescent health. Facilitators and implementers can use these materials to access additional information, practical tools, and visual resources to support learning and reinforce health messages with parents and caregivers.

Pacific Resources	Resource Name and Links
Immunisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific childhood immunisation toolkit • Immunisation schedule from the Cook Islands
Physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kiribati guidelines for health living • Healthy living advice
Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core elements of Pacific primary mental health and addiction service provision. • Aunty Dee storytelling projects that share mental well-being themes. • Mental health wellness
SRH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kiribati national evidence-based family planning guidelines • Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the pacific • Adolescent Pregnancy in Asia and the Pacific: A call for right-based solutions • Understanding and addressing adolescent pregnancy
Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care for Parents in Pacific
Global Resources	Links
Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important pregnancy test and checks • Alcohol, tobacco and drugs during pregnancy and breastfeeding • Physical activity infographics
Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child development 0-2 years • Diphtheria

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Measles ● Influenza ● Polio ● Whooping cough ● Rubella ● Pneumococcus
Adolescence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HIVInfo infographics make HIV-related concepts easy to understand ● Over the counter contraceptives ● Vaccination of young adolescents against HPV is safe and prevents cervical cancer ● Adolescents are unique ● What adolescents can do ● What governments can do ● What health workers can do ● Young people need access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception ● Pregnancy and childbirth related complications are the leading cause of death among 15-19-year-old girls ● Four things you can do to support your teen's mental health ● How to support your teen during stressful times ● We need to learn about puberty and growing up ● Common questions about puberty ● I am Aishah and I just got my first period ● I am Mark and I spend many hours on my smartphone ● Sex education ● We need to learn about safe sex and sexual health ● We need to learn about respect equality and consent ● I am Grace and I am a sex education teacher ● We need to learn about where to get information and help if we need it ● Human Papilloma Virus

