



PACIFIC PARENTING TOOLKIT

MODULE 5: EDUCATION AND LEARNING SUPPORT

1. Background

Primary education enrolment rates have increased substantially across the Pacific. Most countries and territories in the region now report enrolment rates above 90 per cent and are approaching gender parity at the primary level. (1) These gains reflect significant progress toward equitable access to education.

Participation in Early Childhood Education (ECE) has also improved, with several countries, including Tokelau, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and the Cook Islands reporting participation rates above 80 per cent in 2021. However, progress remains uneven, with some countries continuing to record low participation, such as Samoa (34.9 per cent) and the Federated States of Micronesia (12.6 per cent). Despite overall growth, challenges remain in expanding access and ensuring the quality of ECE services across the Pacific. (2)

Participation in secondary education remains more variable. Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga report enrolment rates above 90 per cent. In contrast, participation is much lower in countries such as Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. These gaps reflect several compounding factors, including geographic remoteness, infrastructure constraints, shortages of skilled teachers, and economic pressures. (3)

Despite these improvements in access, learning outcomes remain a concern.

Results from the 2018 Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment show that only 53 per cent of Year 4 students and 63 per cent of Year 6 students met minimum literacy proficiency standards across 15 Pacific countries and territories. (4) Teacher quality and professional development are contributing factors. In some cases, up to one in five students are learning in classrooms where teachers have not received recent training in literacy or numeracy. (5)

While all Pacific countries have legislation and policy frameworks supporting inclusive education, implementation gaps persist. Students with disabilities in many countries report that school cultures do not fully reflect inclusive principles. Only five countries indicated that inclusion met expected standards. (6)

At the regional level, strong governance structures support education systems. All countries and territories in the Pacific have foundational education legislation. These are supported by regional frameworks such as the Pacific Regional Education Framework 2018–2030 (PacREF) and the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF). These frameworks emphasise inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education and recognise parents and caregivers as key partners in supporting learning outcomes. (7)

Many Pacific countries have also embedded parental involvement within education and social sector policies, including participation in individualised learning plans, school health initiatives, nutrition programmes, and safety protocols. As children’s learning needs evolve across the life course, families require tailored guidance and resources to support cognitive development, school readiness, life skills, and ongoing educational achievement.

This module recognises learning as a holistic, lifelong process that extends beyond academic outcomes. It draws on the Pacific Employability Transferable and All-Life Skills (PETAL) Framework under PacREF and outlines key practices for supporting children’s learning at each developmental stage within the Pacific context.

Module Structure 1.1

The module follows the structure outlined in Chapter 1 Section 1.4 Content Overview. In addition, there are three 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 education and learning support across sectors to support a holistic approach to child development and parenting.
- 2. Programmes from the Region:** Examples of programmes or interventions in the Pacific and globally that promote key education and learning support skills.
- 3. Facilitator Checklist:** A simple checklist for each skill to support facilitators in preparing for and delivering education-related content.
- 4. Supporting Literacy and Numeracy at Home:** A set of simple, low-cost activities help parents and caregivers support children’s literacy and numeracy.

2. Best Practices Across the Life Course

This section outlines key practices that support parents and caregivers in the Pacific to promote the holistic education and overall development of their children. It recognises the vital role that parents, caregivers, and families play in nurturing not only academic learning but also cultural identity, values, wellbeing, and spiritual growth. These practices reflect Pacific ways of knowing and being. They emphasise strong relationships, collective responsibility, and active partnerships between families, schools, and communities. Together, these relationships help ensure that children are supported to thrive in all aspects of their education.

- 1. Parental Engagement in Learning and Schooling**
- 2. Play-Based, Active and Everyday Learning**
- 3. Education Is For Every Child**
- 4. Promote Well-being, Social and Emotional Learning**

Skill 1. Parental Engagement in Learning and Schooling

Why It Matters

When parents and caregivers are actively engaged in children's learning at home, in early learning and community settings, and in school, children are more likely to attend regularly, learn more effectively, and feel confident and supported as they move through different stages of education. (8) Parent and caregiver engagement strengthens children's language, thinking, and social skills, and supports smoother transitions from early childhood into primary school, and from primary into secondary education. (9,10) In Pacific contexts, where extended family and community play a strong role in children's learning, the supportive involvement of parents, grandparents, and other caregivers helps reinforce positive attitudes towards education. It also helps children stay connected to school despite distance, mobility, or climate-related disruptions, and contributes to more inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for girls and boys. (11)

Why this Skill Matters Across the Life Course

- **0–5 years (Early Childhood):** Engaging with children's learning through play, reading, and conversation supports brain development, language skills, and curiosity. Parental and caregiver involvement helps toddlers build confidence, explore new ideas, and develop a positive attitude toward learning that lays the foundation for school readiness. (12,13)
- **6–10 years (Middle Childhood):** Active engagement in schoolwork, projects, games and play-based learning, and extracurricular activities boosts academic achievement, attendance, and motivation. Parents and caregivers can guide problem-solving, encourage curiosity, and help children develop study habits, resilience, and self-confidence during the early years of formal education. (9,10)
- **11–18 years (Adolescence):** Continued parental and caregiver involvement supports motivation, independence, and long-term academic and career planning. By staying engaged in their children's learning and how they continue to learn through play and games, parents and caregivers can help adolescents navigate challenges, develop critical thinking and time management skills, and maintain strong family connections. This support also encourages self-directed learning and responsible decision-making. (9)

Box 1. Helping Caregivers Focus on Progress, Not Comparison

Children develop and learn at different speeds. Comparing a child to siblings, classmates, or other children can reduce confidence and discourage learning. Facilitators can support parents and caregivers to recognise and celebrate each child's individual progress, strengths, and effort.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Promote learning through play from an early age:** Guide parents and caregivers to support play-based learning from early childhood through adolescence, integrating learning into play, reading, and everyday interactions across different stages.
- **Emphasise that learning happens everywhere:** Encourage parents and caregivers to recognise learning at home, in the community, and at school, and to use daily activities as opportunities to build curiosity and skills.
- **Model positive attitudes toward learning:** Support parents and caregivers to show interest and curiosity in learning, reinforcing effort and persistence while avoiding framing learning as pressure or punishment.
- **Adapt support as children grow:** Guide parents and caregivers to provide hands-on support in early childhood, encouragement in middle childhood, and increasing independence during adolescence while staying engaged.
- **Focus on skills and confidence, not just results:** Encourage parents and caregivers to prioritise problem-solving, critical thinking, and resilience, emphasising the learning process over grades or outcomes.
- **Balance support with independence:** Support parents and caregivers to stay involved without taking over, gradually reducing direct support and encouraging self-directed learning and responsible decision-making.

Social Media Messages

- Learning starts at home, with what you know.
- Children learn through play! Support your child and adolescent to engage in playful learning activities.
- Read together, talk about what they learned, and celebrate small wins – your interest helps your children thrive.
- It takes a village! Stay connected with your child's school and learning.



How Fathers and Male Caregivers Can Make a Difference

Fathers and male caregivers being involved in children's learning makes a real difference. Reading with children, engaging in play-based activities, talking about school, and participating in school activities can help them feel more confident, motivated, and engaged. (14) Asking about homework, celebrating successes, and attending school events shows children that their education matters. Sharing experiences, supporting problem-solving, and encouraging curiosity at home further reinforce learning. Even small, consistent actions help children develop a love of learning and feel supported both at school and at home.

Skill 2: Play-Based, Active, and Everyday Learning

Why It Matters

Play-based learning is supported by research as an effective way to develop children's problem-solving skills, early literacy and numeracy, and creativity. (15) Through play, children explore language, numbers, and ideas in meaningful contexts while learning to think critically and make decisions. Adolescents learn critical skills like problem-solving, teamwork, and creative thinking when engaged in playful activities. Evidence also shows that play promotes independence and self-regulation, which are key foundations for school readiness and successful lifelong learning. (15, 16)



See Activity 1 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on supporting play-based, active and everyday learning.

Why this Skill Matters Across the Life Course

- **0–5 years (Early Childhood):** Using play in everyday learning experiences such as exploring objects, storytelling, and simple games, support cognitive development, early literacy and numeracy, creativity, and problem-solving. Engaging in playful learning builds curiosity, independence, and confidence, and helps prepare children for school. (12) (17)
- **6–10 years (Middle Childhood):** Play and everyday learning activities such as hands-on projects, experiments, and real-world problem-solving, help reinforce literacy and numeracy skills, creativity, and critical thinking. Children develop persistence, independence, and confidence when they apply knowledge, making learning enjoyable and meaningful. (18)
- **11–18 years (Adolescence):** Adolescents benefit from applying learning in school as well as everyday contexts, such as hobbies, community projects, or creative challenges. Playful and experiential learning fosters innovation, resilience, and higher-order thinking skills, while encouraging independence, self-directed learning, and the practical application of knowledge in real-life situations. (9)

Essential Building Blocks

- **Promote play as a core way children learn:** Guide parents and caregivers to recognise play as meaningful learning, valuing curiosity, exploration, and imagination across all ages.
- **Reinforce the importance of play in adolescence:** Encourage parents and caregivers to recognise that adolescents also benefit from play, and to support time for rest and recreation alongside increasing responsibilities.

- **Use everyday activities as learning opportunities:** Support parents and caregivers to incorporate learning into daily routines, encouraging problem-solving and showing that learning happens beyond formal settings.
- **Follow children’s interests:** Guide parents and caregivers to build learning around children’s curiosity, encouraging questions, creativity, and deeper engagement through interest-led activities.
- **Encourage thinking, not just doing:** Support parents and caregivers to ask open-ended questions during play and activities, promoting problem-solving, reasoning, and reflection rather than focusing only on correct answers.
- **Support independence and confidence:** Encourage parents and caregivers to create opportunities for children to try, explore, and persist, building confidence through supported independence.
- **Promote learning through mistakes:** Guide parents and caregivers to frame mistakes as learning opportunities, encouraging reflection on what happened and what can be done differently next time.
- **Value cultural and traditional learning:** Encourage parents and caregivers to engage children in traditional games, storytelling, music, and cultural practices that support learning, identity, and community connection.
- **Adapt play and learning as children grow:** Support parents and caregivers to adjust approaches over time, using play and exploration in early childhood, hands-on learning in middle childhood, and more self-directed experiences in adolescence.

Social Media Messages

- Play, laugh, learn! Everyday fun = lifelong skills.
- From games to real-life projects kids grow, explore, and shine!
- Learning happens everywhere, every day, not just at school.
- Follow their lead so they can learn at their own pace.

Skill 3: Education Is For Every Child

Why It Matters

Evidence shows that when parents and caregivers actively support their children's learning, through encouragement, guidance, and practical involvement, children are more likely to feel confident, motivated, and engaged in school, (19,20) Family support strengthens children's sense of belonging and helps them navigate key transitions across the life course, from early learning into primary and secondary education. (9,21) In Pacific contexts, where extended family and community play a central role in children's lives, supportive involvement by parents, grandparents, and other caregivers helps ensure that girls and boys are encouraged to learn, stay in school, and pursue their aspirations. (9)

Why this Skill Matters Across the Life Course

- **0–5 years (Early Childhood):** Believing in every child's right to learn encourages parents and caregivers to provide supportive, inclusive, and stimulating early learning experiences. This helps toddlers develop confidence, curiosity, and a sense of belonging, laying the foundation for positive attitudes toward learning. (6, 21)
- **6–10 years (Middle Childhood):** When parents and caregivers actively encourage all boys and girls, including those with diverse needs, it strengthens motivation, participation, and school attendance. Inclusive family support helps children feel valued, strengthens social skills, and improves learning outcomes.
- **11–18 years (Adolescence):** Adolescents thrive when parents and caregivers continue to champion every adolescent girl and boy's right to education. Encouragement, practical support, advocacy for adjustments, and recognition of individual strengths foster resilience, self-confidence, and persistence. Inclusive engagement promotes social belonging, equal opportunities, and helps adolescents pursue their academic, career, and personal goals.



Disability Considerations

Inclusive caregiving is especially important for children with disabilities and those facing barriers linked to poverty, distance, mobility, or crises. It helps reduce exclusion and improve learning and wellbeing outcomes. (21)

Essential Building Blocks

- **Promote every child's right to learn:** Guide parents and caregivers to recognise learning as a right for all children, including those with disabilities or diverse needs, and to use practical supports that enable participation and access.
- **Encourage consistent support and motivation:** Support parents and caregivers to celebrate effort, curiosity, and persistence, while providing practical help that builds confidence and motivation for learning.
- **Create inclusive learning opportunities:** Encourage parents and caregivers to include children of different abilities in shared activities, promoting participation, collaboration, and a strong sense of belonging.
- **Connect learning to everyday life:** Guide parents and caregivers to use home and community activities to reinforce learning, encouraging exploration, problem-solving, and engagement beyond school.
- **Foster resilience and self-confidence:** Support parents and caregivers to help children manage challenges, reflect on setbacks, and understand that mistakes are part of learning and growth.
- **Maintain engagement across developmental stages:** Encourage parents and caregivers to provide hands-on support in early childhood, guidance in middle childhood, and increasing independence and self-directed learning in adolescence.

Social Media Messages

- Support every child to learn and grow.
- When families believe in children, children believe in themselves.
- All children can learn when we remove barriers and offer support.

Skill 4: Promote Well-being, Social and Emotional Learning

Why It Matters

Children’s ability to learn, build positive relationships and stay engaged in school is closely linked to their emotional wellbeing and sense of identity. When parents and caregivers provide warm support and guidance to help children manage stress, bullying, online risks, changes linked to puberty, and academic pressures, children are more likely to develop confidence, resilience, and healthy ways of coping with challenges. (22) Supportive family relationships strengthen children’s social and emotional skills, protect against violence and mental distress, and contribute to safer learning environments and better educational outcomes across the life course. (12) In Pacific contexts, where culture, language, faith, and community are central to identity, support from parents and caregivers that affirms children’s strengths and sense of belonging helps them feel valued and connected. This support promotes wellbeing and encourages positive participation in school and community life.



See Activities 2 and at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activities:

- **Activity 2 helps parents and caregivers support children’s emotional regulation.**
- **Activity 3 introduces a simple approach to teach children to pause, think, and choose before acting**

Why this Skill Matters Across the Life Course

- **0–5 years (Early Childhood):** Supporting young children’s emotional well-being helps them feel secure, develop self-regulation, and build trusting relationships. Responsive caregiving, comforting routines, and encouragement during challenges foster confidence, curiosity, and early social skills. (12)
- **6–10 years (Middle Childhood):** At this stage, children benefit when parents and caregivers help them manage stress, navigate friendships, and cope with challenges at school. Guidance and emotional support strengthen resilience, problem-solving, and self-confidence, helping children stay engaged and socially connected. (23)
- **11–18 years (Adolescence):** Adolescents face increasing academic, social, and digital pressures. Parental and caregiver support in managing stress, peer conflicts, bullying, and puberty-related changes promotes resilience, healthy coping strategies, and a positive sense of identity. Ongoing guidance helps adolescents make safe choices, maintain well-being, and thrive in school and life. (24)



See Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practice: Sub-topic: Social, Emotional, and Digital Wellbeing



See Module 2: Health and Wellbeing: Middle Childhood: Skill 2: Supporting Children's Emotional Wellbeing

Essential Building Blocks

- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) are part of education:** SEL is the process through which children acquire the skills to manage emotions, set goals, show empathy and maintain positive relationships. Explain to parents and caregivers that by integrating SEL into education (including curricula and school culture), it improves academic performance, behaviour and mental health, while fostering resilience.
- **Support emotional development from early childhood:** Encourage parents and caregivers to provide responsive care and consistent routines, and to help children recognise, express, and manage their emotions to build security, confidence, and early social skills.
- **Strengthen relationships and social skills:** Support parents and caregivers to guide children in building friendships, navigating peer interactions, and developing empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills through modelling and everyday interactions.
- **Teach coping and stress management skills:** Guide parents and caregivers to help children identify stress and challenges, practise problem-solving and reflection, and build persistence, while reinforcing that setbacks are part of learning.
- **Promote positive identity and self-confidence:** Encourage parents and caregivers to help children recognise their strengths and uniqueness, support self-expression and decision-making, and build a strong sense of belonging at home, school, and in the community.
- **Adapt support to developmental stages:** Support parents and caregivers to focus on emotional security and self-regulation in early childhood, social skills and resilience in middle childhood, and managing academic, social, and personal pressures during adolescence.

Social Media Messages

- Help your child handle challenges at school like bullying, stress, or anxiety. Listen and guide with care. This is part of learning, too.
- Strong families = strong emotional skills. Talk about feelings, celebrate identity, support learning.

- Digital safety and mental health are important parts of learning to navigate risks safely.
- Children have something to teach you, too!
- Encourage children to be proud of who they are, identity matters for confidence and learning.



Activities for Facilitators

Activity 1

Supporting Skill 2: Play-based, Active and Everyday Learning

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers use simple play and daily routines to support children’s learning, curiosity, and problem-solving at home and in the community.

Time: 20–30 minutes

Step 1: Warm-Up: Share Learning Moments (5 min)

- Ask parents and caregivers to share one fun or playful thing their child enjoys doing and reflect on what skills their children learn while doing the fun activity they enjoy.
- Explain that children learn through play all the time and not only through playful learning activities, but also through playing which is not structured around learning activities.
- *Facilitator tip:* Keep the warm-up and participant sharing short and positive; validate different ways children learn.

Step 2: Add a Playful Twist to Daily Activities (10 min)

- Invite parents and caregivers to choose one everyday activity and add a playful learning element:
 - Cooking: “Who can help measure the cups?” / counting ingredients together.
 - Gardening or fishing: Counting plants or catch; noticing changes over time.
 - Storytelling: Each person adds one sentence to create a funny family story.
- Role-play one example in pairs or small groups.
- Key reminder: Focus on fun, participation and curiosity, not doing things “perfectly.”

Step 3: Simple Planning Tool (Optional) (5 min)

- Support parents and caregivers to draw a simple chart or checklist (e.g., days of the week) to remind them of one daily activity they can turn into a playful learning moment. When they are at home, they can invite their children to add to the list, too!
- Emphasise low-cost, locally available activities.

Step 4: Reflection and Take-Home Practice (5–10 min)

- Parents and caregivers choose one everyday activity to try this week and decide how to make it playful and interactive.
- Encourage them to notice what their child enjoys and what they learn through the activity.
- Optional: Encourage parents and caregivers to observe their children as they are playing and think about what they are learning in that moment.

Key takeaway for parents and caregivers: Children learn through play and everyday life. Turning daily activities into shared, enjoyable learning moments builds thinking skills, confidence, and connection across the life course.

Activity 2

Supporting Skill 4: Promote Well-being, Social and Emotional Learning and Identity

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers learn simple ways to support children to recognise both positive and negative feelings, calm themselves, communicate about emotions, and think about solutions when problems arise.



Disability Considerations

Children with disabilities may find it more difficult to express their emotions and to manage them. Parents and caregivers will need to find different ways of supporting their children to understand their feelings and manage them, depending on the type of disability. Additional guidance should be sought from support services to help parents and caregivers understand and support their children.

Time: 30–40 minutes

Materials:

- Flipchart or large paper
- Markers
- Emotion cards or simple drawings (happy, sad, angry, worried, excited)

Step 1: Recognising Feelings (10 minutes)

Facilitator

guidance:

Explain that understanding children’s emotions starts with noticing and recognising feelings in ourselves and others. Ask parents and caregivers to pair up. Each person takes a turn to:

- Think of a feeling (e.g. happy, sad, angry, worried)
- Show that feeling using only their face (no words)

Their partner then:

- Mirrors the same facial expression
- Guesses the emotion

After each turn, ask:

- *How did you know what feeling your partner was showing?*
- *How did it feel to copy or “catch” that emotion?*

Group

reflection:

Bring the group back together and ask:

- What feelings do children experience every day?
- How can you tell when your child is upset, angry, or worried?

Highlight common signs such as crying, shouting, withdrawing, or refusing to cooperate.

Facilitator message: Children often show their feelings through their behaviour before they can explain them. Emotions can be “catchy”. When we stay calm and understanding, it helps children feel calm too. When parents and caregivers notice and name children’s feelings, it helps children learn how to understand and manage them.

Example phrases parents and caregivers can use:

- “I can see you are feeling angry.”
- “You look very happy about that.”
- “It seems like you are upset.”
- “That must have made you feel proud.”

Step 2: Calm the Body (10 minutes)

Explain that children need help to calm down before they can solve problems.

Teach parents and caregivers two simple strategies they can practice with children:

1. Take Slow Breaths

Ask parents and caregivers to practice breathing slowly together:

- Start by sitting comfortably, and closing your eyes.
- Breathe in slowly through the nose.
- Breathe out slowly through the mouth.
- Repeat 3–4 times.

2. Take a Pause

Parents and caregivers can guide children to:

- Sit quietly for a moment
- Hold a comfort object
- Take a short walk
- Get a drink of water

Facilitator message: When adults stay calm, children learn how to calm themselves.

Step 3: Problem-Solving Together (10–15 minutes)

- Present a simple scenario: Two children want the same toy.

Ask parents and caregivers:

- What might a child feel in this situation?

- What could a parent or caregiver say or do?

Introduce a simple five-step approach:

1. Notice the problem - "You both want the toy and feel frustrated"
2. Notice how you feel - "you both feel frustrated"
3. Take a pause - "Let's take a breath first and calm down together."
4. Discuss possible solutions - invite the children to propose solutions (eg sharing, taking turns, playing together)
5. Try one out and adjust if you need to.

Step 4: Reflection (5 minutes)

Ask parents and caregivers to discuss:

- What helps your child calm down when they are upset?
- What new strategy might you try at home this week?

Encourage parents and caregivers to share ideas.

Key messages for parents and caregivers:

- All children experience strong emotions - positive ones and negative ones.
- Children learn emotional control by watching adults.
- Helping children name feelings, calm their bodies, and solve problems builds confidence and strong relationships.

Activity 3

Supporting Skill 4: Promote Well being, Social and Emotional Learning

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers support older children and adolescents to pause during strong emotions, reflect on what they are feeling, and choose thoughtful responses instead of reacting impulsively.

Time: 30–40 minutes

Materials:

- Flipchart or paper
- Markers

Step

1. Discussion – Strong Feelings in Adolescence (10 minutes)

Ask parents and caregivers:

- What situations make older children or teenagers feel angry, embarrassed, afraid, or stressed?
- What situations make older children or teenagers feel happy, excited, or proud?
- How do young people sometimes react when emotions are strong?

Common examples for strong negative emotions may include:

- Arguments with friends or siblings.
- Pressure at school.
- Feeling misunderstood by adults.
- Online conflicts or social media issues.

Common examples of strong positive emotions may include:

- Doing well in a recent test at school
- Being invited to go and play with friends
- Winning a sports match or game

2. Introduce the “Pause – Think – Choose” Strategy (10 minutes)

Explain a simple three-step strategy parents and caregivers can teach adolescents.

1. Pause

Encourage young people to stop and take a moment to pause before reacting.

Examples:

- Take three slow breaths.
- Step away from the situation.
- Count slowly to ten.

2. Think

Ask themselves:

- What am I feeling?
- What might happen if I react right now?
- Is there a better way to handle this?

3. Choose

Encourage a positive response, such as:

- Talking calmly.
- Asking for help.
- Walking away from conflict.
- Finding a solution with others.

3. Role-Play Scenario (15 minutes)

Divide parents and caregivers into small groups and give them a scenario.

Example situations:

- A teenager is angry because a sibling borrowed their belongings without asking.
- A young person receives an upsetting message from a friend online.
- A teenager feels embarrassed after being corrected by a teacher.

Ask parents and caregivers to discuss:

- What emotions might the young person feel?
- How could a parent or caregiver guide them through Pause – Think – Choose?

Groups can briefly share their ideas.

4. Supporting Emotional Regulation at Home (5 minutes)

Discuss ways parents and caregivers can support older children:

- Listen without immediately judging or lecturing.
- Encourage young people to talk about feelings.
- Model calm behaviour during disagreements.
- Praise young people when they handle emotions well.

Facilitator message: Adolescents learn emotional control through guidance, trust, and respectful communication.

3. 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 education and learning support at different stages of growth. The section is organised by age group: 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 for supporting learning and education at each stage of development. These skills reflect the same core principles introduced earlier but provide more practical guidance for parents and caregivers to support children’s cognitive, social, and emotional learning. 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 parents and caregivers. These activities can help parents and caregivers understand, practise, and apply the skills discussed in the module, strengthening their ability to support children’s learning and educational development at home and in collaboration with schools. 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. Early Childhood (0–5 years)

This section focuses on the early years from birth to age five, when children’s learning, identity, and wellbeing are shaped through everyday relationships and experiences. It highlights key practices that help parents and caregivers in the Pacific support young children’s learning and development. At this age, children learn through play, care, language, storytelling, and daily routines at home, in the community, and in early learning settings.

Grounded in Pacific values and ways of raising children, this section emphasises nurturing strong bonds, cultural identity, emotional wellbeing, and curiosity, while supporting children to be ready for school and life. It recognises families as central to early learning and encourages active partnership between parents, caregivers, early childhood services, schools, and communities so every child is supported to thrive.

The skills highlighted in this section are:

- 1. Parents and Caregivers are Children’s First Teachers**
- 2. Play Is Children’s First Classroom**
- 3. Reading and Storytelling**
- 4. School Readiness**
- 5. Helping Every Child Thrive**

Skill 1. Parents and Caregivers are Children's First Teachers

Why It Matters

Early learning is shaped first and foremost through children's relationships with their parents and caregivers. When parents and caregivers are confident and supported in their role as children's first teachers, babies and young children are more likely to develop strong foundations in language, early thinking skills, identity, values, and wellbeing, which support lifelong learning and development (9). In Pacific contexts, learning is strongly shaped by relationships between families, generations, and communities. When parents and caregivers are recognised as children's first teachers, their knowledge is valued and family bonds are strengthened. It also helps create strong links between learning at home, in early learning settings, and in the wider community (12).

Essential Building Blocks

- **You can teach:** Explain that parents and caregivers teach babies and children through everyday interactions. Parents and caregivers are powerful teachers in daily life.
- **Learning starts from day 1:** Explain to parents and caregivers that even new born babies learn everyday. Parents and caregivers can use all opportunities to teach: singing songs while changing nappies/diapers; gently explaining the actions while bathing a new born; smiling at babies while they are feeding.
- **Learning starts at home:** Encourage parents and caregivers to teach their child everyday through love, care, culture, language, and routines. Encourage curiosity, learning from mistakes, managing feelings and solving problems.
- **Learn through everyday activities:** Talking, listening, storytelling, chores, cooking, praying, singing and playing all contribute to children's learning.
- **Involve children in daily activities:** Children learn by accompanying their parents and caregivers in their activities, meeting up with other parents, going shopping, attending early childhood centres or activities, going to church and engaging in community activities.

Social Media Messages

- You are your child's first teacher. What you do everyday matters.
- Learning happens at home, in language, culture, and love.
- Fathers matter in early learning.
- Reading, talking, praying, and playing with your child builds their future.

Skill 2: Play Is Children’s First Classroom

Why It Matters

Young children learn best through play. Through simple games, pretend play, and exploring their surroundings, children develop early language, thinking, creativity, and numeracy skills that lay the foundation for later learning and school readiness (9,12, 25). When parents and caregivers encourage curiosity, respond to children’s questions, and create safe spaces for exploration, children are more confident to try new things and learn from everyday experiences (26). Playful, responsive interactions also strengthen warm parent/caregiver-child relationships, which are central to healthy early development and positive parenting (12). In Pacific contexts, where children learn through shared activities, storytelling, and community life - play strengthens both learning and connection within families and communities.



See Activity 4 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on teaching through play at home.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Promote play as the core of early learning:** Guide parents and caregivers to recognise play as meaningful learning, encouraging activities like singing, storytelling, pretend play, simple games, and exploration that build problem-solving, creativity, language, and early numeracy skills.
- **Encourage curiosity and exploration:** Support parents and caregivers to respond to children’s questions and interests, creating safe opportunities for experimentation, discovery, and persistence in learning.
- **Strengthen warm and responsive relationships:** Encourage parents and caregivers to engage in playful interactions that build connection, trust, and emotional security, reinforcing positive relationships through shared enjoyment.
- **Support caregiver wellbeing through play:** Guide parents and caregivers to use play as a way to reduce stress and build positive emotions, highlighting the mutual benefits for both caregiver and child.

Social Media Messages

- Play is the children's first classroom! Simple games and pretend play help build language, problem-solving, and early maths skills.
- Safe exploration = learning. Let children touch, try, talk, and test ideas.
- Learning starts at home. Keep play fun, safe, and full of encouragement.
- Songs and stories carry our language, culture, and learning from one generation to the next.

Skill 3: Reading and Storytelling

Why It Matters

Reading and storytelling do not require books alone. Stories told through voices, songs, prayer, humour, and everyday experiences are powerful learning tools that parents and caregivers already use. Reading and storytelling are deeply rooted in Pacific cultures through oral traditions, songs, legends, and shared family stories. These practices support language development, literacy, imagination, identity, and belonging. When children hear stories in their home language and cultural context, they build strong foundations for learning, communication, and confidence at school and in life. (7, 27)

Essential Building Blocks

- **Promote storytelling as a way children learn:** Guide parents and caregivers to include storytelling in daily routines, songs, prayers, and play, using both books and oral stories to support learning in everyday moments.
- **Connect stories to culture and language:** Encourage parents and caregivers to share stories in the home language and include cultural traditions, legends, and family histories to strengthen identity, belonging, and respect for heritage.
- **Support language and literacy development:** Support parents and caregivers to engage children in listening and discussion, asking questions and encouraging imagination to build communication, comprehension, and early literacy skills.
- **Strengthen connection and confidence through storytelling:** Guide parents and caregivers to use storytelling to build strong relationships, foster curiosity and engagement, and support children's confidence for school and lifelong learning.
- **Value oral storytelling traditions:** Encourage parents and caregivers to draw on traditional storytelling practices, recognising that stories passed down through generations are powerful ways to share knowledge and learning.

Social Media Messages

- Stories connect generations. Read, tell, learn, and share!.
- Home languages and family stories build strong learners.
- Storytelling builds language and confidence.
- Books or family stories - learning starts with stories.

Skill 4: School Readiness

Why It Matters

School readiness goes beyond knowing letters and numbers; it includes social, emotional, physical, and cognitive foundations that help children thrive in early learning environments. (17) When parents and caregivers engage in play, storytelling, routines, and responsive communication from the earliest years, children arrive at school confident, curious, and ready to learn. (7)



**See Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practice:
Subtopic: Establishing Daily Routines**



See Activity 5 at the end of this section for a facilitator-ed activity to do with parents and caregivers to support children to be ready for school.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Support holistic development:** Guide parents and caregivers to foster children’s social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development through everyday interactions that encourage curiosity, problem-solving, and exploration.
- **Build strong foundations through routines:** Encourage parents and caregivers to use daily routines to develop foundational skills that support readiness for school.
- **Promote learning through play and storytelling:** Support parents to use games, pretend play, songs, crafts, stories, and cultural traditions to strengthen early literacy, numeracy, and imagination.
- **Encourage responsive communication during play:** Guide parents to interact with children during play through talking, listening, and responding, helping to build language and communication skills.
- **Build confidence and independence:** Encourage parents to support children to try, explore, and persist, while developing self-expression, decision-making, and emotional regulation.
- **Connect learning across home and early learning settings:** Support parents to align home activities with early learning environments to strengthen continuity in children’s development.

Social Media Messages

- Everyday learning builds school-ready kids!
- Strong routines help children feel ready to take on structure at school.
- Read, count, explore! Small daily moments grow big brains.
- Talk, sing, play, pretend, read - together! Small moments together build big school skills.

Skill 5: Helping Every Child Thrive

Why It Matters

Children develop at their own pace, but understanding common developmental milestones helps parents and caregivers recognise how their child is growing and when additional support may be needed. Identifying developmental delays early and seeking support improves children’s long-term outcomes in learning, wellbeing, and participation in school and community life. (9,12) When parents and caregivers understand their child’s development, they are better able to respond with warm, responsive interactions that build children’s confidence, communication, and early learning skills. (12, 28). In Pacific contexts, families and communities play an important role in supporting young children. When parents and caregivers are more aware of children’s needs, they can help ensure that every child, including children with disabilities or additional needs, receives timely support so that they can thrive in their family and community.



See Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practice:

- **Subtopic: Child Development**
- **Subtopic: Social, Emotional, and Digital Wellbeing**

Essential Building Blocks

- **Build understanding of child development:** Guide parents and caregivers to learn about developmental milestones and recognise that each child develops at their own pace, using this understanding to shape expectations and interactions.
- **Encourage responsive support to children’s needs:** Support parents and caregivers to adapt their guidance based on their child’s abilities, interests, and stage of development.
- **Promote early identification and support:** Encourage parents and caregivers to notice potential delays or challenges and seek advice or professional support early, reinforcing the importance of timely intervention.
- **Strengthen relationships to support learning and wellbeing:** Guide parents and caregivers to engage warmly and responsively with their child, building trust and connection while using play and everyday interactions to support development and resilience.

Social Media Messages

- Every child grows in their own way: watch, listen, and support.
- Noticing changes and asking for help early supports strong development.
- Parents know their children best: trust your instincts about when to help.



Activities for Facilitators

Activity 4

Supporting Early Childhood Skill 2: Play is Children's First Classroom

Purpose: To empower parents to recognize everyday household items as powerful learning tools and to practice child-led play.

Time: 40 min

Materials: every items that can be easily found in the home or community, such as shells, dry leaves, plastic cups, old spoons, plastic bottles or coconut husks.

Steps

1. The Setup (Facilitator Instructions): Before parents arrive, arrange "stations" or small piles of "loose parts"—items that have no single fixed purpose.

- Start by asking parents: *"What was your favorite thing to play with as a child that wasn't a 'store-bought' toy?"*

2. The Creative Challenge: Divide parents into small groups and give them 5–10 minutes to complete the following:

- Ask parents to look at the materials provided.
- Ask parents to brainstorm three different ways a child might use these items.
 - *Example:* "We could use these cups for a drumming rhythm (music), for stacking (motor skills) or counting (numeracy)."
- Roleplay option: Have one parent pretend to be the child and shows how they could use the items and the other the adult who engages with the child
- Remind parents and caregivers that when they do this activity with their child, they should let their child lead the game and invent how to use the items.

3. Guided Reflection: Once the "play" session concludes, gather the group for a debrief.

Ask parents and caregivers the following:

- While roleplaying, what did you notice about how the "child" interacted with the objects? Did they do what you expected, or something different?
- How does sorting shells by size help a child's brain prepare for math? How does pretending a leaf is "money" help with social development?
- Thinking about your own home, kitchen or garden, what are three items you usually throw away or ignore that could become a game tomorrow?

Activity 5

Supporting Early Childhood Skill 4: School Readiness

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers recognise and support key developmental skills children need for school using everyday activities.

Disability Considerations



Parents and caregivers of children with disabilities will need to explore what school options there might be for their child and may need to adapt strategies to help their child prepare for school, appropriate for each individual child. Additional support and guidance, including what educational options are available for their child should involve a discussion with local schools as well as local ministry of education officials where appropriate.

Time: 20–30 minutes (at home or in a group session)

Steps:

1. **Morning routine practice:** Practise simple routines (washing, dressing, eating) to build independence, calmness, and self-control.
2. **Play together:** Play a simple game (ball play, puzzles or pretend play) to practise sharing, listening, and problem-solving.
3. **Story time:** Read or tell a story and talk about what is happening to build language skills and understanding of feelings.
4. **Feelings check-in:** Talk with the child about how they feel about new experiences (such as starting school) to build confidence, trust, and emotional awareness.

Key message for parents and caregivers: Everyday routines, play, and warm conversations help children build the confidence, social skills and emotional readiness they need to start school and keep learning. [For more specific activities related to supporting literacy and numeracy at home, please see Annex 4.](#)

3.b. Middle Childhood (6–10 years)

This section focuses on middle childhood, from ages six to ten, when children build strong foundations for learning, independence, and belonging at school and in the community. It outlines key practices that help parents and caregivers in the Pacific stay involved in their child’s education during the primary school years.

At this stage, children develop literacy, study habits, social skills, and a growing sense of responsibility (26).¹ Parents and caregivers can support this by reading together, encouraging regular school attendance, and helping create safe and inclusive learning environments.

The section also emphasises learning through children’s strengths, promoting equity and inclusion, and supporting continued learning during times of disruption or crisis. It highlights the shared role of families, schools, and communities in helping children grow into confident learners who feel safe, supported, and able to thrive.

The skills highlighted in this section are:

- 1. Continuing to Learn Through Play**
- 2. Reading With Your Child**
- 3. Support Regular School Attendance**
- 4. Equity and Inclusion: Learning Through Strengths**
- 5. Schools and Safe Places: Continuing Education After a Crisis**
- 6. Teaching Independent Study Skills**
- 7. Life Skills and Responsibilities**

¹ Epps EG, Smith SF. School and children: the middle childhood years. In: Collins WA, editor. *Development during middle childhood: the years from six to twelve*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1984. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK216779/>

Skill 1. Continuing to Learn Through Play

Why it matters

As children enter primary school, learning often becomes more structured and academically focused, but play remains a vital part of how they learn and develop. Through play, children strengthen problem-solving and critical thinking skills, build creativity and imagination, and practice essential social abilities such as cooperation and communication. Play also supports emotional development by helping children manage frustration, build resilience, and develop confidence. Importantly, play keeps learning engaging, meaningful, and enjoyable, which helps children understand and retain new concepts better. In middle childhood, continuing to learn through play is not a distraction from education, but a powerful way to support it. (30, 31, 32)

Essential Building Blocks

- **Show how play supports learning:** Help parents and caregivers understand that play is not “extra,” but a key way children build thinking, social, and problem-solving skills that support school success.
- **Follow their lead:** Encourage parents and caregivers to follow their children’s lead in identifying play opportunities and games that their child enjoys.
- **Create opportunities to practise play together every day:** Prioritise time every day for parents/caregivers and children to play together.
- **Promote positive encouragement during play:** Guide parents and caregivers to praise effort, creativity, and persistence rather than focusing on correct answers or winning outcomes.
- **Build on children’s interests:** Support parents and caregivers to recognise what their child enjoys and use these interests as a starting point for playful learning.
- **Facilitate reflection and shared learning:** Encourage parents and caregivers to share experiences, reflect on what worked, and learn from each other to build confidence and consistency.

Social Media Messages

- Learning through play doesn’t stop when school starts, it evolves.
- Through play, children build creativity, confidence, and problem-solving skills.
- Making play part of everyday life supports both development and a love of learning.
- Homework is important, and so is play. A balance between the two helps children develop social skills, resilience, and a lasting motivation to learn.

Skill 2: Reading With Your Child

Why It Matters

Shared reading and storytelling support children’s literacy, language development, and imagination, and are linked to stronger engagement and learning outcomes in the primary school years. (9) Parents and caregivers do not need to be confident readers to support their child’s learning. Talking about pictures, telling stories from memory, listening to children read aloud, and using local stories and songs all help build vocabulary, understanding, and a love of learning. (7, 33) When parents and caregivers regularly share stories or talk about what children are learning at school, children feel more supported and motivated. This also strengthens parent/caregiver–child relationships and helps build positive learning habits that support continued school participation and success. (9, 10)



See Activity 6 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers to read with their child.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Promote play as part of everyday learning:** Guide parents and caregivers to include play in daily routines and recognise it’s an important way children learn.
- **Encourage shared play experiences:** Support parents and caregivers to play with their children, follow their lead, and build connection through shared activities.
- **Use simple and accessible play ideas:** Encourage parents and caregivers to use everyday materials and familiar games so play is easy to include at home.
- **Promote positive encouragement during play:** Guide parents and caregivers to praise effort, creativity, and persistence rather than focusing only on correct outcomes.
- **Build on children’s interests:** Support parents and caregivers to recognise what their child enjoys and use these interests to guide play and learning.
- **Encourage thinking and communication:** Guide parents and caregivers to ask questions, talk through activities, and support children’s language and problem-solving during play.
- **Promote learning through mistakes:** Encourage parents to support children in trying, exploring, and learning from mistakes as part of the learning process.

Social Media Messages

- 10 minutes of reading together a day = a lifetime of learning.
- Stories spark imagination, read with your child tonight!
- Storytelling is as powerful as reading.

Skill 3. Support Regular School Attendance

Why It Matters

Helping children get to school on time and attend every day builds strong learning habits and sets the foundation for academic success. Regular attendance keeps children engaged with teachers and classmates, improves concentration, and ensures they do not miss important lessons. (34) Staying connected with teachers allows parents and caregivers to support learning at home and address challenges early. This helps children develop confidence, responsibility, and a love for learning. (35)



See Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practice, Sub-topic: Healthy Daily Routines and Behaviours



See Activity 7 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers to support regular school attendance.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Establish consistent routines:** Guide parents and caregivers to set regular wake-up, bedtime, and morning routines, and to encourage preparation the night before to support punctuality and consistent attendance.
- **Support engagement with learning:** Encourage parents and caregivers to talk with their child about school experiences and lessons, and to reinforce effort and consistency in attending school.
- **Stay connected with teachers:** Support parents and caregivers to communicate regularly with teachers about progress, challenges, and achievements, and to use this feedback to support learning at home.
- **Encourage responsibility and positive attitudes:** Guide parents and caregivers to help children take ownership of their attendance and punctuality, reinforcing self-discipline and positive attitudes toward school.

Social Media Messages

- Confidence and learning grow in the classroom. Support your child to attend school every day.
- Strong routines, strong learners. Help your child get ready for school each day.



Skill 4: Equity and Inclusion: Learning Through Strengths

Why It Matters

Focusing on a child's strengths and adapting learning to their needs ensures that every child can access education. Inclusive education supports social development for everyone and fosters a sense of belonging. Children with disabilities or learning differences benefit from early support, clear routines, and adapted learning tools. When families are involved, they can also help reinforce learning at home. (11)

Essential Building Blocks

- **Recognise each child's strengths:** Support parents and caregivers to identify what their child does well and enjoys, and encourage them to build learning activities around these strengths.
- **Adapt support to individual needs:** Guide parents and caregivers to use appropriate tools and strategies for children with disabilities or learning differences, and to adjust learning approaches to match their child's abilities.
- **Promote inclusion and social development:** Encourage parents and caregivers to support friendships and collaboration at home and school, and to help children understand and value differences while fostering a sense of belonging.
- **Engage families in the learning process:** Support parents and caregivers to stay actively involved in their child's learning, reinforce skills at home, and collaborate with teachers to ensure consistent support and inclusion.

Social Media Messages

- Different strengths, equal potential.
- Early support helps every child learn and belong.

Skill 5: Schools and Safe Places: Continuing Education After a Crisis

Why It Matters

After crises such as cyclones, floods, displacement or disease outbreaks, safe and continued access to learning helps restore children's sense of routine, safety and belonging. Schools and community learning spaces provide protective environments where children can recover emotionally and socially, maintain learning, and receive psychosocial support from trusted adults. (21) Continued education after emergencies is also linked to better mental wellbeing and protection from risks such as neglect, exploitation, and harmful coping strategies. This also supports families and communities in rebuilding and restoring hope for the future. (9, 36) In Pacific contexts, communities often face climate-related shocks that disrupt schooling. Strong links between families, schools, and community learning spaces help ensure children can continue learning safely during and after crises.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Schools support stability:** Encourage parents and caregivers to prioritise children's return to school and consistent attendance, highlighting how routine and structure support recovery and reduce stress.
- **Support emotional and social recovery:** Guide parents and caregivers to listen to their child's feelings and encourage connection with peers and teachers, while reinforcing coping and resilience through everyday interactions and play.
- **Promote caregiver wellbeing:** Remind parents and caregivers to recognise their own efforts, take moments to rest, and seek support when needed, emphasising the link between caregiver wellbeing and child wellbeing.
- **Ensure safe learning environments:** Support parents and caregivers to stay engaged with schools, advocate for their child's safety, and collaborate with teachers to address both learning and psychosocial needs.
- **Maintain hope and connection:** Encourage parents and caregivers to recognise children's progress, foster a sense of hope, and support ongoing connection with peers, school, and community activities.

Social Media Messages

- Learning routines bring stability in difficult times.
- Don't forget to take care of yourself, too.

Skill 6: Teaching Independent Study Skills

Why It Matters

Helping children develop independent study skills equips them to manage time, organise tasks, and take responsibility for their learning. Teaching strategies like goal setting, note-taking, and planning help children succeed academically and build lifelong learning habits. Encouraging independent study empowers children to approach challenges confidently. (9)



See [Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge and Practice, Sub-topic: Healthy Daily Routines and Behaviours](#)



See [Activity 8 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers to build independent study skills in children.](#)

Essential Building Blocks

- **Build confidence through guided independence:** Encourage parents and caregivers to support children in practising independent study with age-appropriate guidance and praise, and to gradually step back as confidence and autonomy grow.
- **Create simple, consistent study routines:** Guide parents and caregivers to establish regular times and quiet spaces for homework or reading, using routines that fit their family and community context.
- **Teach basic learning skills:** Support parents and caregivers to help children plan tasks, focus for short periods, ask for help when needed, and reflect on their learning.
- **Normalize learning through mistakes:** Remind parents and caregivers to reinforce that making mistakes is part of learning, and to encourage children to recognise when they need help and seek support.

Social Media Messages

- Small study habits build big futures.
- Support learning with encouragement and praise.

Box 3. Supporting Parents and Caregivers to Guide Safe and Positive Technology Use for Learning (8+ years)

Digital tools such as phones, tablets, computers, and the internet can support children's learning when used for specific tasks, as alternatives when school isn't available and always with adult supervision. Facilitators can help parents and caregivers understand how technology can be used to support education, while also encouraging safe and balanced use at home.

Facilitator guidance:

- Encourage parents and caregivers to talk with children about how technology can be used for learning, such as reading, researching school topics, educational games, or creative projects.
- Support parents and caregivers to discuss safe online behaviour, including privacy, being cautious about sharing information and always telling a trusted adult if they have any questions about something they have read or seen online.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to establish simple family guidelines with their children for screen time and device use that are appropriate for the child's age.
- Remind parents and caregivers that children benefit when adults show interest in what they are doing online, ask questions about what they are learning, and explore digital learning together where possible. Being able to talk to children about their activities online is an important step in keeping them safe!
- Discuss ways families can balance technology use with other activities, such as outdoor play, cultural activities, reading, and family time.
- Where internet access is limited, digital learning may also include radio education programmes, offline learning materials, or shared devices used in schools or community centres.



See Module 0: Foundational Parenting Knowledge: Sub-topic: Social, Emotional, and Digital Wellbeing for more information on managing screen time

Skill 7: Life Skills and Responsibilities

Why It Matters

Developing life skills in middle childhood, such as communication, basic money awareness, time management, problem-solving, and helping with everyday tasks, supports children’s growing independence. (9,18) These skills also help prepare children for learning and participation at school, at home, and in the community. When parents and caregivers combine practical responsibilities with guidance and encouragement, children are more likely to build confidence, self-control, and resilience. They also learn how to take responsibility in age-appropriate ways (9). Learning life skills through everyday family and community activities also strengthens children’s social and emotional development and supports positive transitions into adolescence.(10)



See Activity 9 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers to strengthen life skills and responsibilities in children.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Strengthen planning and organisation skills:** Guide parents and caregivers to support children in setting goals, prioritising tasks, and creating simple study schedules, using tools like checklists and calendars to break tasks into manageable steps.
- **Promote active study strategies:** Encourage parents and caregivers to show children techniques such as note-taking, summarising, and reviewing, while reinforcing problem-solving, critical thinking, and consistent study habits.
- **Support responsibility and self-motivation:** Help parents and caregivers encourage children to take ownership of their learning, praising effort, persistence, and independent problem-solving while balancing guidance with opportunities for self-directed learning.
- **Build confidence and lifelong learning habits:** Support parents and caregivers to reinforce that challenges are part of learning, celebrate progress and achievements, and connect study skills to real-life tasks and future goals.

Social Media Messages

- Life skills are more than chores. They teach teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. They prepare young people to face life’s challenges confidently.
- Guiding children in budgeting, cooking, and time management helps them make smart choices for life.



Activities for Facilitators

Activity 6

Supporting Middle Childhood Skill 2: Reading With Your Child

Purpose: To show parents and caregivers how to support children’s literacy even if they do not read confidently.



Disability Considerations

Involving children with disabilities in reading and story telling activities is just as important, and enables children to feel involved, loved and part of the family. Some children with disabilities may find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time, or may not be paying attention. Allowing them to move around, while continuing to engage them in the story is important.

Time: 20–30 minutes

Materials:

- Simple reading books
- Recording of a short story

Role play: Divide the parents and caregivers into pairs, one plays the part of the child and the other the part of the parent/caregiver.

Steps:

- 1. Listen together:** Parents/caregivers and children listen to a short radio story or audio programme (or the child reads aloud from a book).
- 2. Talk about the story:** Parents/caregivers ask simple questions about what happened (“Who was in the story?” “What did you like?”) and talk about the pictures or ideas.
- 3. Tell a family story:** Parents/caregivers share a short family or community story, song or rhyme linked to the theme.
- 4. Take-home practice:** Parents/caregivers choose one story, song or radio programme to share with their child this week.

Key message for parents and caregivers: You do not need to read fluently to support your child’s learning. Listening, talking, and sharing stories all build strong language and literacy skills.

Activity 7

Supporting Middle Childhood Skill 3: Support Regular School Attendance

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers identify barriers to school attendance and find practical ways to help children attend school every day.

Time: 30 minutes

Steps

1. Setting the Context

The facilitator reads or tells a short story of a child who often misses or has prolonged absences from school due to tiredness, household chores, a death in the community, heavy rain and/or flooding, or transport challenges.

2. Group Discussion

Parents and caregivers discuss:

- Why is this child missing school?
- How might missing days affect learning and confidence?

3. Problem-Solving

In small groups, parents and caregivers identify:

- One action the family can take at home (e.g. earlier bedtime, preparing uniforms the night before).
- One action involving the school or community (e.g. talking with teachers, organising shared transport).

Key message for parents and caregivers:

- Everyday counts, small changes at home and good communication with schools help children succeed.
- Challenges are common. Working together with schools and community services can help keep children learning.

Activity 8

Supporting Middle Childhood Skill 6: Teaching Independent Study Skills

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers practise supporting children to plan and complete study tasks with growing independence.

Time: 20–30 minutes

Role Play: Divide parents and caregivers into pairs: one plays the part of the parent/caregiver and the other plays the part of the child.

Steps:

- 1. Choose one small task:** Parents/caregivers help the child pick one simple school task (e.g. reading a page, practising spelling, finishing a short worksheet).
- 2. Make a simple plan:** Together, both agree on when and where the child will study (e.g. after dinner at the table), and how long (short, focused time).
- 3. Set a small goal:** The child names one goal for the session (e.g. “I will try my best to read this page”). Parents/caregivers offer encouragement during the task.
- 4. Reflect:** Parents and caregivers briefly talk about what went well and one thing to try next time.

Key message for parents and caregivers:

- Small routines, simple plans, and encouragement help children build confidence and independence in learning.
- Involve children in making decisions about study routines.

Activity 9

Supporting Middle Childhood Skill 7: Life Skills and Responsibilities

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers identify age-appropriate life skills children can learn at home and practise guiding and encouraging them.

Time: 20–30 minutes

Materials: Flipchart or paper, markers (optional)

Steps:

- 1. Start with daily life (5 min):** Ask parents and caregivers what tasks children already help with at home and what skills these tasks teach (e.g. chores = responsibility; cooking = planning and safety).
- 2. Skill mapping (10 min):** In small groups, choose one area (money, meals, time, communication). Discuss what a child of this age can do safely and how parents and caregivers can guide without taking over.
- 3. Guiding, not controlling (5–10 min):** Emphasise simple approaches: explain and show first; give small responsibilities; praise effort, not perfection; correct gently and allow mistakes.
- 4. Take-home commitment (5 min):** Each parent/caregiver will work with their child to identify one life skill they will practise.

Key message for parents and caregivers: Everyday responsibilities, guided with care and encouragement, build children’s confidence, resilience and readiness for learning and life.

3.c. Adolescence (11–18 years)

This section focuses on adolescence, from ages eleven to eighteen, a period of rapid change, growing independence, and identity formation. It highlights key practices that support Pacific parents and caregivers to stay connected and engaged as young people navigate the transition from primary to secondary school and move toward adulthood. During these years, adolescents develop deeper thinking, stronger study habits, career interests, and life skills that shape their future pathways. This section focuses on supporting independent learning, building life skills, and encouraging adolescents to explore different education, training, and career pathways. It recognises the important role families play in helping adolescents build confidence, resilience, and a sense of purpose. Families can also work with schools and communities to support lifelong learning and help adolescents make positive transitions into adulthood.

The skills highlighted in this section are:

- 1. From Primary to Secondary: Guiding Your Child's Next Steps**
- 2. Strengthening Independent Study Skills**
- 3. Extending Life Skills and Responsibilities**
- 4. Encouraging Multiple Pathways, Play, and Lifelong Learning**

Skill 1: From Primary to Secondary: Guiding Your Child's Next Steps

Why It Matters

The transition from primary to secondary school is a major change for adolescents and their families, bringing new routines, academic demands and social environments. Without support, this transition can increase stress, disengagement, and the risk of dropout, particularly for adolescents facing poverty, distance to school or other barriers.(21, 24) When parents and caregivers provide guidance, encouragement, and practical support, adolescents are more likely to adjust well, stay engaged in learning, and build confidence. Staying connected with the school through Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, school events, or open days can also help (24). In Pacific contexts, secondary schooling may involve travel, boarding, or time away from family and community. Continued support from parents and caregivers, and strong links between families, schools, and communities, are important to support adolescents' wellbeing, sense of belonging, and continued participation in education.



Disability Considerations

As children with disabilities progress in their education, families may need to consider different pathways to support continued learning, including options that involve studying away from home. This can require careful planning around where the child will stay and how caregivers can ensure ongoing support and care. Parents and caregivers should be encouraged to seek guidance from trained professionals to make informed decisions.



See Activity 10 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers to support children's transition from primary to secondary school.

Box 2. Children living away from home

In some Pacific contexts, children may live with relatives or caregivers while attending school. Supporting communication between parents, caregivers, and schools helps maintain consistent support for children's learning.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Prepare for the transition:** Encourage parents and caregivers to discuss upcoming changes in schedule, subjects, and responsibilities, and where possible, to visit the new school to help children become familiar with the environment and feel more confident.
- **Support emotional adjustment:** Guide parents and caregivers to listen to their child’s feelings, validate their experiences, and encourage coping strategies for stress, while maintaining routines that provide stability at home.
- **Foster social skills and relationships:** Support parents and caregivers to encourage positive relationships with peers and teachers, promote participation in extra-curricular or interest-based activities, and guide respectful communication and problem-solving.
- **Maintain engagement and monitoring:** Encourage parents and caregivers to stay involved in their child’s education while allowing increasing independence, regularly checking on both academic progress and wellbeing, and working with teachers when challenges arise.
- **Strengthen school and community connections:** Support parents and caregivers to engage with schools through meetings and events, and to build strong links between family, school, and community—particularly in contexts where adolescents may need to travel, board, or spend time away from home.



Fathers and Male Caregivers can Help Guide Adolescents Through Key Transitions

Fathers and male caregivers can play an important role as children grow into adolescence. (37) Staying connected through the school, such as attending PTA meetings, open days, or career events, demonstrates that education and future opportunities are valued. Fathers and male caregivers can support independent learning by discussing school projects, study routines, and goals in a guiding way.

Sharing experiences and exploring different career, training, or education pathways together helps adolescents consider their future and make informed choices. Encouraging life skills, responsibility, and resilience at home reinforces what adolescents are learning at school and in the community. Even small, consistent actions help adolescents feel supported, confident, and prepared as they transition toward adulthood.

Social Media Messages

- New school, new challenges and opportunities: parents play a key role in a smooth transition.
- Listening and planning together helps teens feel ready for secondary school.
- Strong connections between families, schools, and communities help adolescents feel supported, confident, and ready for this next step.

Skill 2: Strengthening Independent Study Skills

Why It Matters

Helping adolescents study independently equips them to manage time, organise tasks, and take responsibility for their interests and learning inside school as well as outside school. Teaching strategies like goal setting, note taking, and planning helps them succeed academically and build lifelong learning habits. Encouraging independent study empowers children to approach challenges confidently (9, 24)



See Activity 11 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers on strengthening children’s independent study skills.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Strengthen planning and organisation:** Guide parents and caregivers to encourage adolescents to set goals, prioritise tasks, and create study schedules, using tools like planners or calendars to break larger tasks into manageable steps.
- **Promote effective study strategies:** Support parents and caregivers to reinforce note-taking, summarising, and active review, while encouraging problem-solving, critical thinking, and consistent study habits.
- **Encourage responsibility and motivation:** Help parents and caregivers support adolescents to take ownership of their learning, praising effort, persistence, and independent problem-solving while allowing space for self-directed learning.
- **Build confidence and lifelong habits:** Guide parents and caregivers to celebrate progress and achievements, reinforce that challenges are part of learning, and connect study skills to future goals and real-life situations.

Social Media Messages

- Organising time and tasks helps teens take charge of learning for themselves.
- Supporting good habits at home-small routines make a big difference.
- Study skills are life skills.

Skill 3: Extending Life Skills and Responsibilities

Why It Matters

Building life skills in adolescence such as budgeting, cooking, time management, communication, and problem-solving, helps young people become more independent. (38) It also prepares them for further education, training, and work. When parents and caregivers combine practical responsibilities with guidance and encouragement, adolescents are more likely to build confidence, resilience, and accountability, and to make informed decisions in their daily lives. (9, 39) Learning life skills through everyday family and community activities also strengthens social and emotional development and supports positive participation at school, at home, and in the wider community. This contributes to healthier transitions into adulthood. (10, 34)

Promoting equitable gender norms in the development of life skills is also essential, ensuring that both girls and boys have equal opportunities to learn, practise, and take on responsibilities at home and in the community. Encouraging shared roles and challenging harmful stereotypes helps adolescents develop respect, confidence, and the skills needed for healthy, collaborative relationships in adulthood. (40)



See Activity 12 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers to extend life skills and responsibilities.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Promote practical life skills:** Guide parents and caregivers to introduce skills such as cooking, budgeting, cleaning, and time management, encouraging hands-on practice and showing how these apply in everyday life.
- **Encourage responsibility and accountability:** Support parents and caregivers to provide adolescents with age-appropriate responsibilities at home and school, reinforcing follow-through, planning, and independent task completion.
- **Develop problem-solving and decision-making:** Help parents and caregivers encourage adolescents to make choices and solve everyday challenges, reflecting on consequences and learning from mistakes.
- **Build confidence and resilience:** Guide parents and caregivers to celebrate successes, support learning through challenges, and encourage independence while reinforcing self-efficacy and readiness for adult responsibilities.

Social Media Messages

- Everyday responsibilities build lifelong skills.
- Learning at home prepares youth for life beyond school.

Skill 4: Encouraging Multiple Pathways, Play, and Lifelong Learning

Why It Matters

Adolescents learn in different ways and benefit from having multiple pathways to continue learning and develop skills. (41) Learning through play, creativity, and hands-on experiences continues to support adolescents' problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking, helping them apply knowledge in real-life contexts.

When parents, caregivers, and communities recognise young people's different talents and support a range of pathways such as completing school, vocational or technical training, apprenticeships, and creative learning, young people are more likely to stay engaged. They can build useful skills and find activities that match their strengths and interests. (24). Supporting flexible and inclusive learning pathways reduces the risk of disengagement and dropout, promotes lifelong learning, and helps adolescents prepare for meaningful participation in work, family, and community life. (9,10) In Pacific contexts, where access to secondary and post-secondary education may vary by location and opportunities may differ across islands, valuing multiple pathways helps ensure no young person is left behind.



See Activity 13 at the end of this section for a facilitator-led activity to do with parents and caregivers to encourage multiple pathways and lifelong learning.

Essential Building Blocks

- **Recognise diverse learning styles and strengths, including learning through play:** Guide parents and caregivers to understand their child's learning style and strengths, encourage exploration of interests and talents through hands-on activities, creativity, games, and practical experiences and reinforce that success can take many forms.
- **Support multiple learning pathways:** Encourage parents and caregivers to explore different pathways with adolescents, such as formal education, vocational training, or creative pursuits, and to connect learning with real-world opportunities. Encourage participation in sports, arts, music, drama, cultural activities, and community projects as valuable learning pathways
- **Foster lifelong learning habits:** Support parents and caregivers to encourage curiosity and problem-solving through games, creative activities and real life challenges. Support adolescents to learn by trying, experimenting, and reflecting.
- **Reduce barriers and promote engagement:** Guide parents and caregivers to advocate for access to opportunities, support adolescents in overcoming

challenges, and reinforce confidence and persistence across different learning experiences.

Social Media Messages

- Learning doesn't stop at school! Celebrate skills, hobbies, and practical experiences.
- Support your child to discover their strengths and interests, it builds confidence and success.
- Learning can happen through sports, music, and creative activities – support your adolescent to explore what they enjoy.
- Trying new activities helps young people discover their strengths and build confidence.



Activities for Facilitators

Activity 10

Supporting Adolescence Skill 1: From Primary to Secondary: Guiding Your Child's Next Steps

Purpose: To offer strategies to parents and caregivers on how to support their child's transition from primary to secondary school.

Time: 20–25 minutes

Materials: Flipchart or paper, markers

Step 1: Brainstorm Changes (5 min)

Ask parents and caregivers:

- What changes happen when a child moves from primary to secondary school?

Write responses such as:

- More subjects and homework.
- New teachers.
- New friendships.
- Travel or boarding/ living away with relatives.
- Greater independence.

Step 2: Supporting the Transition (10 min)

Discuss how parents and caregivers can support adolescents:

Examples:

- Talk about expectations and routines.
- Help organise school materials and schedules.
- Check in regularly about how they are feeling.

Step 3: Engage in joint problem solving (5-10 min)

Explain to parents and caregivers the importance of setting aside time to talk with their adolescents about any concerns they may have. Encourage them to listen openly and work together with their adolescent to find simple, practical ways to address these concerns.

Examples:

- Worries about making new friends
- Concerns about living away from home
- Feeling nervous about new teachers or subjects

Facilitator tip: Remind caregivers to listen without judgement, acknowledge their adolescent's feelings, and focus on finding solutions together rather than giving immediate advice.

Step 4: Reflection (5–10 min)

Ask parents and caregivers:

- What is one way you can help your child feel more confident about starting secondary school?

Key message for parents and caregivers: Support from parents and caregivers helps adolescents adjust to new school environments and stay engaged in learning.

Activity 11

Supporting Adolescence Skill 2: Strengthening Independent Study Skills

Purpose: To help parents and caregivers create a simple study routine with their adolescents.

Time: 20–25 minutes

Materials: Paper and pens (optional)

Steps

1. Discuss Study Challenges (5 min)

Ask parents and caregivers:

- What makes it difficult for children to study at home?

Examples may include:

- Distractions.
- Lack of routine.
- Lack of quiet/focused space.
- Household responsibilities.

2. Plan a Study Routine (10 min)

Introduce the idea of short, regular study times.

Parents and caregivers plan:

- A regular time for study (after dinner, before TV/gadget, etc.).
- A quiet space or a quiet time if possible.
- One small learning goal.

Step 3: Encouragement (5–10 min)

Discuss how parents and caregivers can support study:

- Encourage effort rather than perfection.
- Praise persistence.
- Help break tasks into smaller steps.

Key message for parents and caregivers: Small routines help adolescents build independence and responsibility for learning.

Activity 12

Supporting Adolescence Skill 3: Extending Life Skills and Responsibilities

Purpose: To support parents and caregivers to teach life skills at home.

Time: 20–25 minutes

Materials: Flipchart or paper

Step

1. Identify Everyday Skills (5 min)

Help parents and caregivers identify life skills adolescents can learn through daily family and community activities.

Ask parents and caregivers:

- What tasks do your children help with at home?
- What do they enjoy?
- What do they find hard?
- Are boys and girls given the same opportunities to learn and practise life skills? Why or why not?

2. Life Skills Mapping (10 min)

Discuss what skills these tasks build:

Example:

Task	Skill
Cooking	Planning and Responsibility
Shopping	Budgeting and Decision-Making
Chores	Teamwork and Accountability
Gardening	Time Management, Teamwork

3. Take-Home Commitment (5–10 min)

Parents and caregivers choose one responsibility they will teach or share with their adolescent this week.

Key message for parents and caregivers: Practical responsibilities help young people build confidence, independence, and resilience.

Activity 13

Supporting Adolescence Skill 4: Encouraging Multiple Pathways and Lifelong Learning

Purpose: To help parents, caregivers, and adolescents explore different learning and livelihood pathways through interactive, play-based activities that build confidence, creativity, and problem-solving.

Participants: Parents/caregivers and adolescents (15+)

Time: 50–60 minutes

Steps

1: “Act It Out”: Learning by Doing (10 minutes)

Explain that people learn in many ways, not just in classrooms, but also through doing, practising, and experimenting.

Divide participants into small groups. Give each group a role or activity to act out (e.g. builder, shopkeeper, farmer, mechanic, teacher, entrepreneur).

Ask groups to:

- Act out the role without speaking
- Let others guess what they are doing

Group reflection:

- What skills did you see?
- How do people learn these skills? (school, practice, observation, mentoring)

Step 2: “Pathways Game”: Exploring Options (15 minutes)

Create four corners of the room (or spaces outside), each representing a pathway:

- Education
- Technical/Trade
- Business/Entrepreneurship
- Community/Creative/Digital

Ask participants to move to the space that interests them most. In each group, discuss:

- What skills are needed?
- How can someone learn these skills?
- What opportunities exist in your community?

Repeat this a few times so participants have an opportunity to ‘visit’ and discuss multiple pathways.

Step 3: “Dream to Action Challenge” (20 minutes)

In family pairs/groups, ask adolescents to share a dream, interest, or goal.

Together, families:

- Draw or map the goal (on paper or in the air if no materials)
- Identify:
 - Skills needed
 - Ways to learn (school, practice, mentoring, online, community)
 - One local opportunity

Step 4: “What If?” Problem-Solving Game (10 minutes)

Present simple challenges:

- “What if there is no training centre nearby?”
- “What if money is limited?”
- “What if the adolescent is unsure what they want?”

Groups respond with quick ideas or solutions, exploring alternatives.

Key Message: There are always different ways to learn and move forward.

Step 5: Being a “Door-Opener” at Home (5 minutes)

Ask parents and caregivers to share one action they will take to support their adolescent (e.g. ask questions, explore options, connect with someone).

Key Message: Adolescents learn in many ways, through doing, creating, and exploring. When parents and caregivers support different pathways and encourage hands-on learning, they help young people build skills, confidence, and real opportunities for the future.

Annexes

1. Multi-sectoral Integration

This annex provides guidance on how parenting and education messages can be reinforced across multiple sectors and community actors. Children’s learning and development are shaped not only in schools but also through interactions with families, communities, and services such as health, social protection, and community programmes. Coordinated efforts across these sectors can help ensure that parents and caregivers receive consistent messages on supporting children’s learning, development, and school participation.

In addition to in-person services, digital communication platforms such as SMS, WhatsApp, and Facebook can be used to reinforce key parenting messages at scale. These channels can provide reminders, practical tips, and prompts that encourage parents and caregivers to practice positive learning and caregiving behaviours at home.

The tables below show ways to integrate education and parenting guidance across different sectors. This helps programmes work together and avoid giving fragmented or conflicting advice. By coordinating messages and activities across different platforms, implementers can strengthen support for parents and caregivers and create more consistent learning environments for children.

The table also identifies key sectors and actors who work with families, the platforms they use to reach parents and caregivers, and practical tips for coordination at the community level. It highlights parenting and learning-support skills across different ages, showing how services can support children’s learning and development throughout the life course.

Facilitators can use this annex to:

- identify opportunities for collaboration across sectors
- align parenting and education messages across services
- strengthen referral pathways and coordination between actors
- ensure parents and caregivers receive consistent guidance on supporting children’s learning at home and in the community.

Table M5.1: Multi-Sectoral Integration for Education and Learning Support

Sector / Actors	Delivery Platform	Coordination Tips for Implementers (Pacific Context) to Support Parents and Caregivers	Parenting Skills Reinforced (Across Ages)
Health Services (nurses, midwives, community health workers)	Clinics, well-child visits, immunisation days, outreach sessions, post-natal classes	Reinforce early learning, developmental milestones, and school readiness messages; coordinate referrals with schools and disability services; promote attendance at both health and education services	Parents as first teachers; play-based learning; storytelling and talking; recognising developmental delays; school readiness; supporting independent study skills
Schools, Teachers & Education Providers	Classrooms, PTAs, parent-teacher meetings, literacy classes, libraries, catch-up programmes	Align school messaging with parenting sessions; support caregivers to reinforce learning at home; coordinate around attendance, inclusion, and transitions (primary to secondary); provide guidance on study skills and career pathways	Parental engagement in schooling; reading with children; supporting attendance; inclusive education; independent study skills; transition planning; career exploration; lifelong learning
Child Protection & Social Services (social workers, counsellors, case workers)	Parenting groups, home visits, community sessions	Promote positive, non-violent communication; support safe learning environments; coordinate support for vulnerable families; reinforce education as protection during crises	Positive discipline; safe home learning environments; emotional support during crises; maintaining routines; supporting children at risk of exclusion

Community & Faith-Based Organisations (community leaders, faith leaders, elders)	Church gatherings, community meetings, peer parent groups, radio sessions	Promote storytelling, cultural learning, and positive norms around school attendance; support families during transitions; coordinate with schools and health actors for consistent messaging	Storytelling and cultural identity; valuing education for every child; regular attendance; transition to secondary school; career planning support
Social Protection & Employment Actors	Cash transfer meetings, livelihoods groups, vocational centres, employment services, outreach campaigns	Support parents to plan time and resources for schooling; provide information on vocational pathways and employment options; coordinate with schools during key transition stages	Resource planning for schooling; career guidance; exploring strengths and interests; supporting multiple learning pathways
Disability & Psychosocial Support Services	Community outreach, centre-based support, youth centres, emergency response activities	Support identification of additional learning needs; reinforce social-emotional learning and wellbeing; coordinate messaging on maintaining routines during disruptions and crises	Inclusive education; recognising learning needs; social-emotional learning; continuing education during crises; identity and wellbeing

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’s learning, education, and development**.

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 providing further guidance, 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 caregiving practices that support children’s learning and engagement in education.

Table M5.2: Programmes for Education and Learning Support

Programme or Guidance	Skill
<p>Name: Early childhood education curriculum – Te Kura Api’i Tamariki Potiki Organization: Ministry of Education Country or Countries: Cook Islands Date of programme: 2011 Short description or link to the module: Early childhood curriculum for children from birth to school entry, focusing on individualized, holistic learning deeply rooted in Cook Islands Māori language, culture, and community values. It promotes inquiry-based play, nurturing, and social development, with strong links between the home, community, and the learning environment</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Lifecourse Skill 1: Parental Engagement in Learning and Schooling</p> <p>Best Practices Across the Lifecourse Skill 2: Play-Based and Everyday Learning</p> <p>Best Practices Across the Lifecourse Skill 4: Promote Well-being, social and emotional learning</p> <p>Early Childhood Skill 2: Play Is Children’s First Classroom</p>
<p>Name: The Parent Support Programme (PSP) Organization: Ministry of Education and Training Country or Countries: Vanuatu Date of programme: 2022 Short description or link to the module: A community-based initiative aiming to improve early childhood care and education (ECCE) by training parents and caregivers to support learning at home. It focuses on child development, health, safety, and positive discipline for children from birth to eight years old</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Lifecourse Skill 1: Parental Engagement in Learning and Schooling</p> <p>Best Practices Across the Lifecourse Skill 2: Play-Based and Everyday Learning</p> <p>Middle Childhood Skill 2: Reading with your child</p>
<p>Name: TuleP Organization: World Bank and Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports Country or Countries: Tuvalu Date of programme: 2020-2025 Short description or link to the module: The project aims to improve early childhood education, strengthen literacy in local languages, enhance teaching standards</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Lifecourse Skill 2: Play-Based and Everyday Learning</p> <p>Early Childhood Skill 2: Play Is Children’s First Classroom</p>

<p>from preschool to secondary levels, and increase parental and community engagement.</p>	
<p>Name: ULUAKI FAIAKO Early Intervention Program (EIP) Organization: Uluaki Faiako Country or Countries: Tonga Short description or link to the module: An Early Intervention Program (EIP) for children from birth to 5 years old with disabilities or developmental delays. The program offers home-visiting services to support families and improve child development, often focusing on communication and feeding, with a strong family-centered approach.</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Lifecourse Skill 3: Education Is for Every Child</p> <p>Middle Childhood Skill 4: Equity and Inclusion: Learning Through Strengths</p>
<p>Name: Nuangan Kasih - Positive Parenting Programme Facilitator Manual Organisation: Parenting for Lifelong Health Country or Countries: Malaysia - Global Date of Programme: 2021 Short Description or link: https://parentingforlifelonghealth.canto.com/v/PLHProducts/s/TVOSB?viewIndex=1&column=document&id=eqp8jk1dg16fb414vdqo33gr6j&origin=classic</p>	<p>Early Childhood Skill 4: School Readiness</p>
<p>Name: Pacific Early Age Readiness and Learning (PEARL) programme Organization: World Bank, Global Partnership for Education Country or Countries: 5 Pacific countries, with parent engagement components in Tonga and Tuvalu Date of programme: 2014 Short description or link to the module: This programme focused on improving school readiness and early grade literacy in Pacific Island countries. It supports evidence-based policies, teacher training, and community-based play activities for children aged 3–5, focusing on Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and others</p>	<p>Best Practices Across the Lifecourse Skill 2: Play-Based and Everyday Learning</p> <p>Early Childhood Skill 2: Play Is Children’s First Classroom</p> <p>Middle Childhood Skill 2: Reading with your child</p> <p>Early Childhood Skill 4: School Readiness</p>

<p>Name: Pikinini Kisim Organization: Multiple including Care International Country or Countries: Papua New Guinea Date of programme: 2018-2020 Short description or link to the module: This programme is aimed at improving elementary education quality and literacy/numeracy. It strengthens teaching skills, focuses on girls' education/retention, and supports early childhood education through in-service training, resources, and community engagement.</p>	<p>Middle Childhood Skill 2: Reading with your child</p>
<p>Name: Tuning in to Teens Organization: Tuning in to Kids Country or countries: Global resource Short description: Tuning in to teens is a 6 session structured program for parents of children 10-18 with a strong focus on building parent's skills to support the development of emotional intelligence in their children. Aiming to support better family communication and supporting adolescents to engage more effectively with learning.</p>	<p>Adolescent Skill 3: Extending Life Skills and Responsibilities</p>

3. Facilitator Checklists

This checklist is designed to support facilitators in preparing for and delivering the **education and learning 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 learning and development messages**.
- reflect on what worked well and identify areas for improvement.

Facilitators can use this checklist as a reminder when preparing and delivering sessions. It helps maintain consistent quality and supports positive learning experiences for caregivers.

Table M5.3: Facilitator Checklist for Education and Learning Support

Best Practices Across the Life Course

Skill 1: Parental Engagement in Learning and Schooling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote consistent school attendance, punctuality, and preparedness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage daily conversations about learning and regular communication with teachers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the use of everyday household activities as learning opportunities (counting, measuring, sorting, comparing).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote imaginative play and storytelling to build language and creativity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to try new tasks and learn through practice and experience.
Skill 2: Play-Based, Active and Everyday Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide parents and caregivers in talking with children throughout the day about routine activities to build language and understanding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote regular reading, storytelling, or shared book time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage singing songs, reciting rhymes, and playing simple word or memory games to strengthen literacy skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the importance of daily one-on-one play time to support bonding and learning.
Skill 3: Education Is For Every Child
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote equal access to education and learning opportunities for girls and boys.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage inclusion of children of all abilities in learning activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on identifying learning needs and accessing appropriate support services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce positive messaging about diversity, inclusion, and respect within educational settings.
Skill 4: Well being, Social and Emotional Learning and Identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support parents and caregivers in helping children identify, name, and express emotions constructively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model calm communication and conflict resolution strategies during disagreements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce praise for effort, persistence, improvement, and kindness rather than outcomes alone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage parents and caregivers to foster pride in culture, language, identity, and individual strengths.

Early Childhood (0-5 years)

Skill 1: Parents and Caregivers are Children's First Teachers

- Encourage parents and caregivers to talk, sing, and interact with their child daily.
- Promote including children in everyday routines while explaining actions and activities.
- Remind parents and caregivers that babies learn from day 1, so it's important to sing, talk and engage with their baby even if they don't seem to respond.
- Reinforce the use of home language and cultural practices in daily life.
- Support responsive parenting and caregiving by recognising and responding to children's cues and communication attempts.

Skill 2: Play Is Children's First Classroom

- Promote daily opportunities for safe, active, and imaginative play.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to play alongside children using toys or household items.
- Model asking open-ended questions to build curiosity and problem-solving skills.
- Support pretend play and storytelling to strengthen language and creativity.

Skill 3: Reading and Storytelling

- Encourage daily reading or storytelling.
- Promote songs, rhymes, and chants in the home language.
- Guide parents and caregivers to talk about pictures, characters, and events in stories.
- Encourage children to retell stories or act them out to build confidence and comprehension.

Skill 4: School Readiness

- Support establishing predictable daily routines (eating, sleeping, dressing).
- Promote teaching social skills such as sharing, turn-taking, and listening.
- Guide parents and caregivers in helping children name and manage emotions.
- Encourage curiosity through exploring new activities and asking questions.

Skill 5: Helping Every Child Thrive

- Encourage parents and caregivers to notice and celebrate children's strengths and achievements.
- Promote awareness of age-appropriate developmental milestones.
- Guide parents and caregivers to seek advice early if concerned about development.
- Encourage sharing developmental observations with teachers, health workers, or specialists when appropriate.

Middle Childhood (6–10 years)

Skill 1: Continuing to Learn Through Play

- Encourage parents to include simple, regular play activities in daily routines.
- Show parents simple play activities and explain how they build problem-solving, creativity, and social skills.
- Promote following the child’s interests to make play meaningful and engaging.
- Support parents to balance guidance with child-led play, allowing space for exploration and independence

Skill 2: Reading With Your Child

- Encourage regular shared reading and discussion of stories, characters, and events.
- Model asking questions to strengthen comprehension and critical thinking.
- Promote short periods of independent reading appropriate to the child’s level.
- Support reading in the home language and exploring topics of interest.

Skill 3: Support Regular School Attendance

- Reinforce the importance of daily attendance unless the child is unwell.
- Promote consistent bedtime and morning routines to support school readiness.
- Encourage regular communication with teachers about attendance or learning concerns.
- Guide parents and caregivers in identifying and addressing barriers to attendance (e.g., transport, health, school materials).

Skill 4: Equity and Inclusion: Learning Through Strengths

- Encourage parents and caregivers to recognise and build on each child’s strengths.
- Promote equal participation in learning regardless of gender or ability.
- Support collaboration with teachers to adapt learning when needed.
- Reinforce positive conversations about diversity, differences, and inclusion.

Skill 5: Schools and Safe Places: Continuing Education After a Crisis

- Guide parents and caregivers in supporting children’s safe return to school after crises or emergencies.
- Encourage open conversations about feelings and experiences.
- Promote communication with teachers regarding emotional or academic needs.
- Reinforce the value of routines and familiar activities in rebuilding confidence.

Skill 6: Teaching Independent Study Skills

- Promote setting up a quiet, organised study space.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to guide children in planning and prioritising tasks.
- Support gradual independence in completing homework.
- Reinforce praising effort, responsibility, and consistent study habits.

Skill 7: Life Skills and Responsibilities

- Encourage assigning age-appropriate chores and responsibilities.
- Promote teaching basic money skills (saving, budgeting, spending wisely).
- Encourage time management for schoolwork, activities, and play.
- Model and teach problem-solving, planning, and decision-making skills.

Adolescence (11–18 Years)

Skill 1: From Primary to Secondary: Guiding Your Child’s Next Steps

- Explain the developmental changes that occur during adolescence (independence, identity, peer influence).
- Discuss practical ways parents and caregivers can stay involved during the transition to secondary school.
- Encourage regular conversations about school experiences, challenges, and goals.
- Promote partnership with teachers, schools, and learning providers.

Skill 2: Strengthening Independent Study Skills

- Discuss how parents and caregivers can gradually shift responsibility for learning to adolescents.
- Encourage establishing a consistent study routine and quiet study space.
- Promote goal setting and planning skills (short-term and long-term).
- Support parents and caregivers to monitor progress without controlling or micromanaging.
- Reinforce praising effort, persistence, and improvement.

Skill 3: Extending Life Skills and Responsibilities

- Encourage assigning meaningful household responsibilities.
- Promote teaching financial literacy (saving, budgeting, responsible spending).
- Discuss time management for balancing study, work, family, and social life.
- Support development of decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Reinforce accountability and follow-through on commitments.

Skill 4: Encouraging Multiple Pathways and Lifelong Learning

- Promote the value of academic, vocational, cultural, and community-based learning pathways.
- Reinforce respect for diverse strengths, talents, and ambitions.
- Encourage resilience when plans change or setbacks occur.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highlight the importance of lifelong learning beyond formal schooling. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support families to maintain strong cultural identity and values during educational transitions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remind parents and caregivers that adolescents also continue to learn through play and free time is an opportunity to learn and develop key life skills. |

4. Supporting Literacy and Numeracy at Home

These simple, low-cost activities help parents and caregivers support children’s literacy and numeracy skills across the life course. Adapt activities based on the child’s age and development.

Across All Ages: Build Confidence and Motivation

Use everyday moments to talk, read, count, and learn:

- Praise effort, not just correct answers
- Encourage curiosity and exploration
- Create a calm, positive learning environment

For Young Children (0–5 years)

Focus: language, early literacy, and early numeracy through play and interaction

- **Talk, Listen, and Explore:** Talk about what your child sees and does; respond to sounds and questions; use songs and stories daily.
- **Enjoy Books and Pictures:** Look at picture books together; describe images; repeat simple words.
- **Build Early Literacy Through Play:** Ask simple questions; encourage pointing, naming, and repeating; connect stories to daily life.
- **Support Early Writing:** Encourage drawing and scribbling; introduce shapes and simple letters; start with the letters in their name.
- **Introduce Early Numeracy:** Count everyday objects; sort items; use simple comparisons (big/small, more/less).

For Children (6–10 years)

Focus: reading, comprehension, writing, and practical numeracy skills

- **Make Reading a Daily Habit:** Set regular reading time; encourage reading aloud; use any available materials.
- **Ask Questions and Build Understanding:** Ask who/what/where/why questions; encourage prediction and retelling.

- **Strengthen Word and Language Skills:** Play word games; practise sounds and syllables; learn new words.
- **Develop Writing Skills:** Encourage writing words, lists, and short sentences; connect writing to daily life.
- **Build Numeracy in Daily Life:** Count, measure, and compare; use money, cooking, and shopping to practise maths.

For Adolescents (11–18 years)

Focus: comprehension, critical thinking, communication, and applied numeracy

- **Encourage Reading for Meaning and Interest:** Support reading for school and personal interest (stories, news); discuss ideas and opinions.
- **Strengthen Communication and Critical Thinking:** Ask open-ended questions; encourage adolescents to explain their thinking and express views.
- **Support Functional Writing Skills:** Practise writing for real-life purposes (messages, forms, plans, goals). Encourage journaling, storytelling, or creative expression.
- **Apply Numeracy to Real Life:** Practise budgeting, saving, and planning expenses. Use real-life tasks (travel planning, cooking, small business activities) to apply maths.
- **Promote Independent Learning Skills:** Help adolescents plan study time, set goals, and manage tasks. Encourage problem-solving and persistence.

Key Message for Caregivers: Children and young people learn best through everyday interactions. Talking, reading, writing, and using numbers in daily life builds strong foundations for lifelong learning.

