

ENHANCING PARENTAL SKILLS



CO-FUNDED PROJECT "Baby's Dowry"



REPUBLIC
OF CYPRUS



European Union
Fund for European Aid to the Most
Deprived of the European Union



SOCIAL WELFARE
SERVICES

This Project is co-funded by the **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) of the European Union and the Republic of Cyprus** within the framework of the Operational Programme of Cyprus for the "Basic Food and/or Material Assistance to the most deprived, for the period 2014-2020.



Description of the Project:

The Republic of Cyprus Social Welfare Services implement the Project “Baby’s Dowry”, within the framework of the “Food and/or Basic Material Assistance to the most deprived”, Operational Program of Cyprus, which is co-funded by the European Union’s Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, for the 2014-2020 financial period.

The beneficiaries will receive “Baby’s Dowry”, a pack with specified items suitable for babies, and will also take part in Accompanying Measures. Attending a lecture on Accompanying Measures is mandatory in order for the beneficiaries to receive the pack.

Accompanying Measures aim to:

- **Enhance parental skills.**
- **Help families become better equipped to overcome any possible challenges**
- **Inform families who will benefit from the Project, about other government Schemes/Projects, making it possible for them to get involved in the community and enter the labour market.**

Having a baby:

Having a baby is an important part of people’s lives. Parents have to take on a new role and assume other kind of responsibilities in order to help their child develop intellectually and physically, and raise it until it becomes an adult.

When a child is born, a lot of things change in the life of a couple, firstly, because they become parents and secondly, because during the first years of its life, the child is totally dependent on its parents. It is important for a child to grow in a stable environment, which covers its basic needs, but also its other needs as well (e.g. emotional, intellectual etc.). A parent should be able to cover the basic needs of a child, such as to provide shelter, food, clothing, footwear, etc. from the very beginning.

At the same time, parents should love their child, listen to it carefully, and make it feel safe enough to confide to them. The child should be encouraged to make friends, take part in sports and leisure activities, in order to develop a positive sense of self, become more creative and more sociable.

POSITIVE PARENTAL SKILLS

A child's best interest should be a priority for the parents and they should provide it with the best care in a safe environment without any kind of violence. Parents should practise positive reinforcement and should use reward and praise to motivate their child to improve his/her behaviour. Good parental skills can have a positive impact on the child's development.

BEHAVIOURS FOR POSITIVE PARENTAL ROLES

Baby care basics

- **Be attentive to a crying baby**

Crying is the only means that your child has in order to communicate with you and show you whether he/she is hungry, in pain or just wants to be held.

- **Regular visits to the pediatrician and medical care.**

It is important to take your child to a pediatrician or to a Maternity Centre on a regular basis as to ensure his/her normal physical and emotional development.

- **Sleeping**

It is important for a baby to sleep sufficient hours as sleeping is important and beneficial for a baby's development.

- **Personal care/ bath**

The baby should be bathed on a daily basis, as bathing is not only good for personal hygiene purposes but it is also good for better blood circulation. The water temperature, suitable for a bath, should be 36-37 degree Celsius.

- **Feeding/breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding an infant is important as the attachment formed between the baby and the mother, contributes to the emotional growth of the baby that also has an impact in other areas, such as his/her physical growth.

- **Provision of clothing/footwear**

A baby should be dressed according to the weather and climatic conditions.



Ensuring the safety of a child

- Parents should ensure that their children are protected from any kind of danger. This includes protection from adults, or other children or even self-destructive behaviour.
- Parents should acknowledge potential dangers in the house (e.g a turned on oven), and take all necessary precautions.

Emotional development

- Parents should ensure that the emotional needs of their children are met, in order for their children to experience a sense of uniqueness and a positive sense of who they are. Ensuring the emotional needs of a child is of major importance, as the child is able to have caring, stable and affectionate relationships with adults who are important in his/her life and who show sensitivity to his/her needs.
- Parents should hug, be sensitive towards their children's needs, treat them with affection and accept their child for who he/she is. They should praise them when needed, and encourage them to believe in themselves. Children should also be encouraged to form bonds with adults who love them and want to be part of their life.

Guidance and setting limits

A child should be encouraged to exert self-control and be autonomous, and this can only be accomplished through guidance and setting of limits.

- **Setting limits**

When parents set limits, children can develop a sense of safety, for themselves and other, and this can help them build their self-esteem. Setting limits should be set according to a child's age and his/her abilities.

- **Be firm**

Before setting a limit, you have to be sure about why you are setting it and discuss it with your partner. Talk to your child and agree on limits in advance.

- **Be consistent**

Parents should be consistent in setting limits and should maintain them so that their child realises how important they are.

- **Consequences**

Consequences should be agreed upon with the child in advance and should always be relevant to a specific behavior or action and not general.. Consequences should be simple and age-appropriate, and grow in severity according to the unwanted behavior, be enforced steadily, calmly with respect and without anger.

Stability

- A child should grow in a stable environment, in order to form a safe, nurturing bond with his/her parents.

Stimulants

- Through encouragement and mental stimulation, the child can grow, learn, develop and integrate socially.
- This sort of encouragement is provided to the child through dialogue/feedback, active listening, rewarding positive behaviour and positive reinforcement so that the child can participate in games and make friends.



PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF A CHILD

- **Employment of the parents**

When parents have a job, it is good for the child's social and emotional behaviour as children have greater exposure to new social experiences, which can contribute to their development.

- **Extended family to provide family support**

The extended family is an important part of a child's life, as it can provide stability and continuity. It can help a child grow as an individual, it can shape his/her character and it can be empowering and uplifting. The family is a miniature of the wider society and it can help the child socialise and integrate.

Childcare in approved childcare facilities (in-home care, nursery schools)

Attending a day care centre can be beneficial for a child as he/she can learn many things, such as:

- **Things about him/herself!** How to take care of his/her body and himself/herself and how to express his/her feelings in a positive way.
- **Accepted social behaviour:** It has to do with the ability of the child to make friends, to share things with other children and also care about people and have empathy. The child will learn more about his/her rights and obligations and be respectful towards people. The child will also realise when he/she has done something not acceptable and take responsibility for his/her actions.
- **How to express himself/herself:** A child will be able to enrich his/her vocabulary and say things with the right pronunciation. He/she will also be able to exploit his/her imagination and develop his/her physical skills as well as his/her mental skills (e.g. bilateral coordination skills, hand eye coordination)!
- **Show interest in learning things:** It is important for a child to show interest about everything that goes on in his/her “own little world”; to ask questions, to flip through the pages of a book, to look at pictures, to use technology in a way that is appropriate for his/her age.
- **Form friendships** with same-age children, something that can make the child feel safer and it gives the child a more well-rounded sense of social skills. Additionally, the child has someone to imitate especially when playing a game.



HOW DOES THE FAMILY BENEFIT FROM THE PARENTS' EMPLOYMENT

When a person enters the labour market, it can be beneficial for the whole family as it can help the family integrate in the society, it can improve the family's life and the dynamic between its members. Having a job can help a person provide the means to his/her family and it also provides the family with financial independence and a feeling of safety. At the same time, salaries can cover material needs (such as clothing, bills, entertainment) and families do not have the need to depend on assistance benefits.

Vocational education and training is beneficial as people can acquire the necessary skills to do a job. The skills that a person acquires can help him/her cope with the changing demands of the labor market and help him/her find a satisfying job in order to meet his/her needs.

There are more benefits to consider when parents have a job :

- They have a feeling of content as they are given the opportunity to do something new. Additionally, they have the opportunity to meet new people, learn more about themselves, develop a stronger sense of self-esteem and learn to respect others. They also learn to take initiatives at work and this can give a boost to their self-confidence.
- They are given the opportunity to learn how to be patient, to be meticulous, to be systematic and work hard to achieve their goals.
- They develop a sense of duty, they put effort in working with other people, and they follow the rules of the team they may work with; qualities that are necessary and make them feel part of the society
- Their social life becomes better and they become more active and sensitive to matters about social problems. People who have a job, have a better life, enjoy a life with dignity and are generally appreciated by other people. They feel active members of the society, and they contribute to the whole.

Having a job and taking all the benefits mentioned above into consideration, can be a good thing for the whole family as the children's well-being is promoted.

HOW TO FIND A JOB OR TAKE PART IN A TRAINING COURSE

Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance:

- Social Welfare Services: www.mlsi.gov.cy/sws
- Department of Labour: www.mlsi.gov.cy

Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus:

www.hrdauth.org.cy

Nursing Services, Department of Health Care Team, Department of Midwives

