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# WELCOME TO ABC!

The focus of ABC is the best interests of the child. The contents are based on the values expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and upon research into the cornerstones of building relationships with our children.

The material and contents have been shaped to a great extent by parents themselves, who take on what works for them in particular. ABC is also meant for other significant adults in a child's life.

The sessions are intended to give parents an opportunity to sift through all the information out there about parenthood and decide what kind of parents they want to be. They do this partly by talking things over with each other and partly by gaining access to research into child development and parenthood.

We hope ABC will provide support in the most fun, rewarding, and sometimes challenging job in the world: to be a parent.

Caption:

OH MY DARLING, OH MY  
DARLING





# SESSION 1 - SHOW LOVE



**CAPTION:  
YOU'RE THE GREATEST KID IN THE WORLD**

# THE ABC GOAL

The overall goal of ABC is to promote positive child development. As long as children live at home, the relationship to their parents has the greatest impact on their development. Good family relationships work like a shield, protecting children from the stresses they can be subjected to.

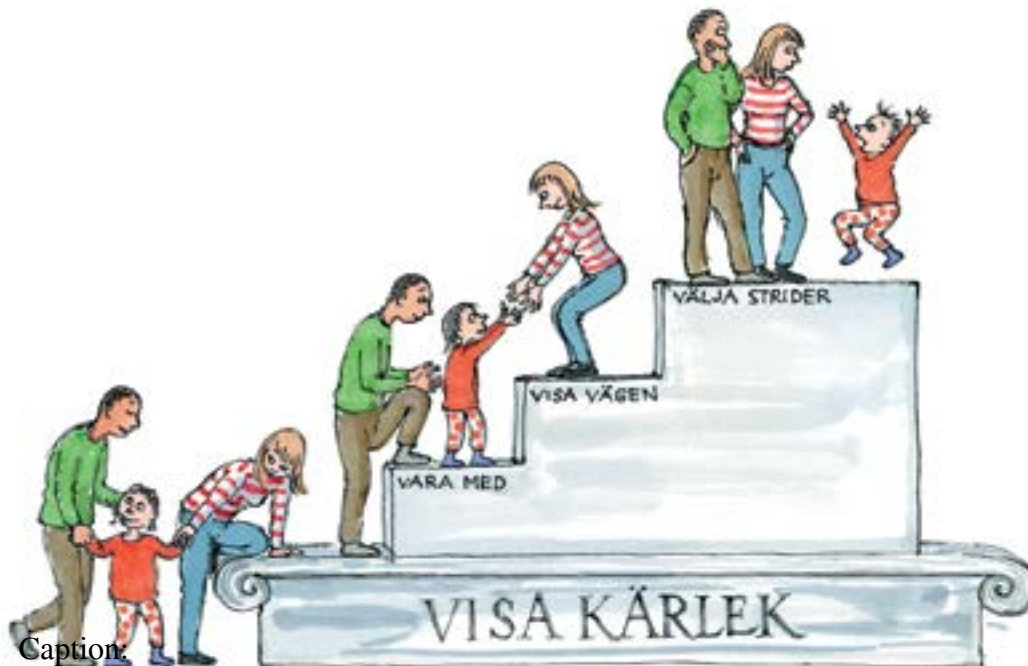
The contents of ABC are based on discussions on four themes:

Show love - What kind of parent do we want to be? What can we do to make our close relationships work?

Be there - How do we affect each other in our daily interactions? How can we prevent conflicts with our children?

Lead the way - How can we be role models for our children? How does stress affect parenthood and how can we manage stress and anger?

Pick your battles - How can we reduce nagging in the family? Which battles are essential and which can we choose to let go?



Caption:

PICK YOUR BATTLES  
LEAD THE WAY  
BE THERE  
SHOW LOVE

## MY GOALS

Imagine yourself 20 years from now - how do you want your child to describe you as a parent?



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Is there anything you can do more or less of now so that your child will describe you that way in 20 years?



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# PARENTAL FACTORS

Children are constantly learning new things, and they learn fast! That means new opportunities to learn and relearn, every single day. Two factors that describe how children learn from their parents are the imitation (or role model) principle and the attention principle. These parental factors are the foundation of the contents of every session.

## THE ROLE MODEL PRINCIPLE

Your child does as you do.

Children learn by imitating what others do, especially their parents and siblings. It is often easier to teach children if you show them what to do instead of using words and instructions.



Can you give any examples of how your child does as you do?



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## THE ATTENTION PRINCIPLE

Your child will do more of what you give them attention for.

Children's needs for attention are innate and necessary for their survival since they cannot take care of themselves. Children quickly learn what they have to do to get their parents' attention. If children do not receive enough positive attention, there is a risk that they will seek negative attention instead.

Caption:  
YOU'RE A GREAT BUILDER!  
I'M A GREAT BUILDER!



Your child will do more of what you give them attention for!

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# SHOW LOVE

The foundation of positive child development is that the child feels loved. The sense of being loved improves self-esteem and protects the child from stress. Love and warmth also strengthen the child/parent relationship and prevent conflict in the family.

Caption:  
OH MY DARLING, OH MY DAR-  
LING



What do you do that your child likes?



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## THE FIVE-TO-ONE RULE

For a relationship to work, positive attention must outweigh negative attention. Five times more love is a good rule of thumb in all relationships. But maintaining that balance can be a challenge because we generally find it easier to see what is wrong or not working in our lives.



Five times more positive attention than negative attention is necessary to create balance in the relationship.



Increased conflicts in the relationship may be due to imbalance in the five-to-one ratio and that the child needs more positive attention.

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## FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS

To successfully maintain the five-to-one ratio, you have to focus on what works in your everyday lives.

Caption:  
WHAT A FANTASTIC  
FORT!



▼ Instead of nagging when your child ...

...refuses to share toys

...sits in front of the computer too long

...refuses to eat

...fights with siblings

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▼ You can praise your child when...

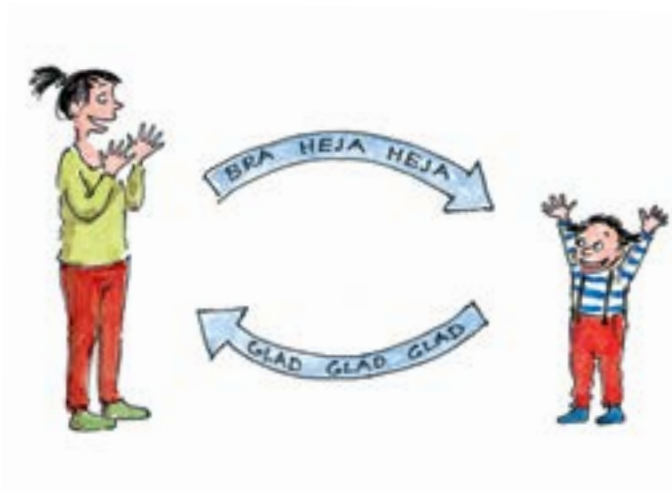
...he or she shares

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## VIRTUOUS CYCLES

The more you do it, the easier it will be to focus on what works and make the effort to keep up the five-to-one ratio in your relationship with your child. This can be really hard when you are going through a period of intense conflict, but that is exactly when it is most important.

Caption:  
WOW! WELL DONE!  
HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY



Positive attention from the parent leads to virtuous cycles.  
The child seeks less negative attention and there will be more opportunities to give praise.

What does your child do that makes you proud?



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# TRY IT AT HOME

## FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS

For one day, try to focus on what works as much as you can.

I want to increase my focus on:



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My takeaways from today's session:



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# SUMMARY - SHOW LOVE

## THE ABC GOAL

The goal of the sessions is to promote positive child development. As long as children live at home, their relationships with their parents are the most important factor in their development.

My goals

It can be useful to look ahead and figure out whether what we are doing now is consistent with the kind of parents we want to be.

## PARENTAL FACTORS

Children constantly learn new things. Two ways of explaining how children learn from their parents are the role model factor and the attention factor.

The role model principle - Your child does as you do.

For instance, children imitate your words, tone of voice, actions in various situations, body language - and your fears.

The attention principle - Your child will do more of what you give them attention for!

Children need love and attention to develop. They quickly learn what they have to do to get their parents' attention. If children do not receive enough positive attention, there is risk that they will seek negative attention instead.

## SHOW LOVE

A child needs to feel loved. This improves self-esteem and protects your child when things are difficult. Love and warmth also reduce conflicts in the family

The five-to-one rule

For a relationship to work, it is important that there is more positive attention than negative attention. Five times more love is a good balance in all relationships. If you are experiencing a great deal of conflict in the relationship, the problem might be that your child needs more positive attention.

Focus on what works

Noticing and paying attention to what works leads to virtuous cycles and less conflict. The child seeks less negative attention and there will be more opportunities to give praise.





# SESSION 2 - BE THERE



# BE THERE

Spending time with your children and doing things together creates the basis for good relationships and togetherness in the family. Studies have also shown that shared activities reduce arguments and conflicts.



Examples of activities to do with your child:



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## CHILD-IN-CHARGE TIME - CEPE

Many parents feel stressed about not having enough time to spend together with their children. But even brief, everyday interludes in which the parent follows the child's initiative have positive effects on the child.

CEPE is an acronym to help you remember things parents can do that are particularly helpful in developing children's language skills and thinking. CEPE leads to even better cooperation between parents and children.

**C**hild in charge - Follow your child's initiative, listen to your child, and let your child be in charge. Avoid asking questions because you may unintentionally direct your child. If you help your child, make sure you do not take over. Let your child manage independently as much as possible.

**E**ncourage your child - This is a time when your child should be allowed to enjoy your undivided attention. Show appreciation and enthusiasm - do something that you as a parent also like.

**P**ut what your child does into words - You will become a sort of commentator, relating what you see. It's a good idea to repeat what your child says - it is a way of confirm the child and show that you are listening.

**E**very day - A short time every day is better than longer times together less often. Plan time together in advance or make it a routine - it will then be more likely to happen.



# THE INTERACTION CHAIN

Sometimes it can be hard to understand why children do what they do. The interaction chain is a tool to help us understand how adults and children affect each other. It is based on simple principles of interaction:

Behavior is affected by what happens before – there is often something that triggers the behavior. There are also particular circumstances that have an effect.

Behavior is also affected by what happens immediately after the behavior – if a behavior has positive consequences, it will usually increase.

Before  
Circumstances.  
Triggers.

► Child's Behavior  
What the child does.

► After  
Consequences  
of the behavior.



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Caption:  
NO!  
SIGH

## PREVENTING CONFLICTS

The best way to manage conflicts is to prevent them. What can the parent do before and after to improve behavior in the store?

Before	The child's behavior	After
What can the parent do before? ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... .....	The child is shopping with the parent.	What can the parent do after? ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... .....

Caption:  
LET'S SEE... FRUIT... 6 APPLES 4 BANANAS AND 1 GRAPEFRUIT



## PREVENTING AND UNDERSTANDING FEAR

Before  
Circumstances.  
Triggers.

▶ Child's Behavior  
What the child does.

▶ After  
Consequences  
of the behavior.

How can we understand why children do what they do?



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What can the parent do before and after to help the child?

<p><b>Before</b></p> <p>What can the parent do before?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>The child's behavior</b></p> <p>The child sleeps alone in her/his room.</p>	<p><b>After</b></p> <p>What can the parent do after?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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# TRY IT AT HOME

## *CEPE*

Suggestions for CEPE activities:



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My takeaways from today's session:



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# SUMMARY - BE THERE

## BE THERE

Spending time with your child will create a better relationship and reduce arguments.

### Child-in-charge time - CEPE

Spending time with your child when you allow him or her to be in charge is good for your child's development. CEPE also leads to better cooperation between parents and children.

**C**hild in charge - **E**ncourage your child - **P**ut what your child does in words - **E**very day.

## THE INTERACTION CHAIN

The interaction chain is a tool to help you understand why children do what they do and how adults and children affect each other. You can also use the interaction chain to see what you can do to help your child by doing things differently before and after

### Before

#### Preparation

Prepare your child for what is going to happen.  
Choose a suitable time for the activity.

### Empowerment

Agree on tasks for your child and plan together.

Give your child time to perform the tasks.

### Positive instructions

Tell your child what he or she should do, not what he or she should stop doing. For instance, "Come sit here beside me" instead of "Stop running around."

### Routines

Create routines - do things the same way every time.

### Positive expectations

Show that you believe your child can do it!

### After

#### Attention

Give your child more attention and praise when it works!



# SESSION 3 - LEAD THE WAY



# ANGER AND ANNOYANCE

All parents get angry at their kids once in a while. This is both entirely natural and understandable. But how you act when you are angry has impact on your child.

Caption:  
STOP WHINING,  
YOU LITTLE BRAT!



What are the drawbacks of expressing your anger?



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## SHORT-TERM PITFALLS



We often repeat what has an effect at the moment.

Examples of short-term pitfalls:



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# LEAD THE WAY

It can be hard to always be a good role model for your children. How we behave in various situations is affected by several things. The comic strip describes how anger and annoyance build up and the consequences of our behavior.



General stress

For example: Money worries, time pressure at work, lack of sleep.

Critical situations

For example: Getting everyone out the door in the morning, fighting between siblings, cooking.

Thoughts and physical reactions

For example: Heart palpitations, tense muscles, rapid breathing. Thoughts like "The kids never listen to a word I say!"

Behavior

For example: Raising your voice, slamming the door, frowning.

Consequences

Example of a short-term pitfall: The children clean up, but the relationship is impaired, which can lead to further conflicts over the long term.

## GENERAL STRESS

Stress and hardships in our life situation in general affect our ability to keep calm in the moment.

Caption:  
I'M EXHAUSTED



What stresses you out?



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Caption:  
THE RED MAN AGAIN!



The more stressed we are, the more likely we are to react with anger and annoyance.

What can you do to lower your stress level?

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## CRITICAL SITUATIONS

Critical situations are situations that lead to anger and annoyance more often than others. When we become aware of our own critical situations, it is easier for us to manage them.

Caption:  
WHAT A MESS!

What are your critical situations?



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What can you do to prevent your critical situations?

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## THOUGHTS AND PHYSICAL REACTIONS

The sooner you interrupt an angry reaction, the easier it will be. That's why it is a good thing to be aware of our own thoughts and physical reactions.

Caption:  
AND NOW I CAN'T FIND MY  
GLASSES EITHER...

CHEW CHEW



Stress and anger make it more difficult to think clearly.



Caption:  
THEY ARE MAKING ME CRAZY!

Physical reactions:

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Typical thoughts:

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# BEHAVIOR AND CONSEQUENCES

Caption:  
YEEELLLLLLLLLL



What do you do when you get annoyed or angry?



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Caption:  
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO YELL  
AND SCREAM ALL THE TIME?

What does your behavior lead to in the moment?

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What does it lead to long-term?

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## LEAD THE WAY - BEHAVIOR

Since our brains do not always work very well when we are angry, there is risk that we will say or do something that we later regret. So, it can be helpful to think in advance about how to manage our anger.

Alternatives to expressing anger in the moment:

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Caption:  
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# TRY IT AT HOME

## TAKE A TIME-OUT

My critical situation:



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This is what I can do:



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My takeaways from today's session:



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# SUMMARY - LEAD THE WAY

## ANGER AND ANNOYANCE

The drawbacks to yelling:

- The role model principle: The child learns to yell.
- The attention principle: The child gets a lot of attention when you argue, which leads to vicious cycles and more fighting.
- The five-to-one rule: The relationship deteriorates. The atmosphere in the family worsens.
- The "cry wolf" effect: Over time, sharp reprimands lose their impact, which can be dangerous in situations where your child needs to listen immediately to avoid danger.
- The escalation effect: An angry reprimand often triggers an angry response.

## LEAD THE WAY

It can be hard to always be a role model for our children, even though we do not want to get angry. What we do is often influenced by several different things.

Examples of these are:

### General stress

When we are stressed, we get angry more easily. Examples of what we can do: Change what can be changed. Lower your standards or accept what cannot be changed. Plan time for yourself, for R&R and exercise.

### Critical situations

Critical situations are situations that lead to anger more often than others. Examples of what we can do: Think about our own critical situations so that we can prepare for them.

### Thoughts and physical reactions

Anger affects our bodies and how we think. It becomes more difficult to think clearly and find solutions to problems. Examples of what we can do: Learn to recognize the early signs of anger – this will make it easier to manage.

### Behavior

There are drawbacks to expressing anger. Examples of what you can do instead: Take a time-out. Anger is an emotion that goes away on its own if you just wait a little while. Wait until later to talk about what made you angry. Work together with your child to come up with solutions.

### Consequences

What feels right and works in the moment is not always good over the long term. ~~1-1~~ the short-term pitfalls.



# SESSION 4 - PICK YOUR BATTLES



**CAPTION:  
GET DOWN RIGHT NOW!  
BE CAREFUL!**

## PICK YOUR BATTLES

Picking your battles is strongly linked to focusing on what works because they are two sides of the same coin. Cutting down on the nagging and reprimands while giving more attention to what works will reduce conflicts in the family over the long term.

Examples of nagging and reprimands you can eliminate:



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**Caption:**  
**NOW YOU HAVE TO GET**  
**A HAIRCUT, PAUL!**  
**NO WAY!**



## NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Sometimes, the effect of reducing nagging and reprimands is that your child will have to take the natural consequences instead.

Examples of natural consequences:



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Caption:  
NO, I HATE THAT HAT!

## CRD

There are some battles you have to fight. CRD describes how you can interact with your child in a way that will reduce the risk of conflict.

**C**onfirm your child's feelings - Show that you understand and put your child's feelings into words.

**R**epeat why - Briefly state the reason, but avoid getting into an argument about it.

**D**istract - Give your child options and praise his or her efforts.

Caption:  
 OH MY, YOU ARE  
 REALLY ANGRY!  
 HOOWWL  
  
 AND SAD!  
 WAH WAH WAAAH  
  
 BUT LOOK - WE'RE  
 GOING TO CATCH  
 THE BUS!  
 CAN WE SIT IN FRONT?



Examples of situations where you can use CRD:



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# ABC - WORKSHOP

How do you think the child or children perceived the situation?



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What did the parent do well?



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What might the parent do differently in the moment?



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What can the parent do to prevent similar situations from occurring?



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# MY GOALS



What I am going to do more or less of today:



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My takeaway from ABC:



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# SUMMARY - PICK YOUR BATTLES

## PICK YOUR BATTLES

When parents sit down together and think about which battles are essential and which can be let go, it gets easier to be consistent, which makes things clearer for the child.

Increasing your focus on what works while reducing nagging and reprimands will eventually lead to less conflict.

### Natural consequences

Sometimes, the effect of reducing nagging and reprimands is that your child will have to take the natural consequences instead. For instance, children will often put on their mittens without being nagged when they realize how cold their hands are without them.

### Things will get worse before they get better

If a parent stops nagging or reprimanding, the child may react more strongly at first in an attempt to get a reaction. If the parent can still resist nagging or reprimanding, the arguments will lessen.

## CRD

There are some battles you have to fight. CRD describes how you can interact with your child in a way that will reduce the risk of conflict.

**C**onfirm your child's feelings - Show that you understand and put your child's feelings into words.

**R**epeat why - Give a brief explanation.

**D**istract - Give your child something else to do and praise that instead.



# FOLLOW-UP SESSION



### SHOW LOVE

Caption:  
YOU'RE THE  
GREATEST KID  
IN THE WORLD



### MEANING/PURPOSE

To show love and warmth to your child in actions. For a relationship to work, the ratio between positive and negative attention should be 5-1.

### EXERCISE

What can you do to maintain the 5-1 balance?

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### THE ROLE MODEL PRINCIPLE



Children learn by imitating what others do, especially their parents and siblings. "Children do not do as we say; they do as we do."

Own examples?

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### THE ATTENTION PRINCIPLE

Caption:  
YOU'RE A  
GREAT  
BUILDER!  
I'M A GREAT  
BUILDER!



Children have a great need for attention, so "your child will do more of what you pay attention to."

Own examples?

.....  
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### BE THERE



### MEANING/PURPOSE

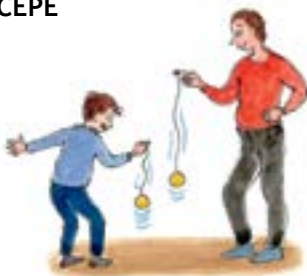
Being there is all about spending time together as a family.

### EXERCISE

Examples of what the whole family can do together?

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### CEPE



CEPE is an approach to play or other interaction with your child. In brief:

The child is in charge.  
Encourage the child.  
Put what your child does into words. Every day.

Examples of CEPE activities:

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### THE INTERACTION CHAIN



Behavior is affected by what happens before. Often, particular circumstances have an effect. There may also be triggers.

Behavior is also affected by what happens immediately after the behavior. If a behavior has positive consequences, it will usually increase.

What can you do to prevent difficulties:

Before?

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After?

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### LEAD THE WAY



### MEANING/PURPOSE

Leading the way is about being a good role model for children even in situations of conflict.

### EXERCISE

What are the drawbacks to expressing anger?

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### GENERAL STRESS

Caption:  
THE RED  
MAN  
AGAIN!



When we are under a lot of stress, we are more likely to react with anger and annoyance.

What can you do to lower your general stress level?

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Caption:  
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Since our brains do not work as well when we are angry, there is risk we will say or do something that we later regret.

What can you do instead of expressing your anger?

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## PICK YOUR BATTLES

Caption:  
GET DOWN RIGHT NOW!  
BE CAREFUL!



### MEANING/PURPOSE

Picking your battles involves  
- among else - deciding in  
advance which battles are  
essential and which you can  
choose to let go.

### EXERCISE

Examples of nagging and reprimands you can eliminate?

- .....
- .....
- .....

### CRD

Caption:  
OH MY, YOU  
ARE REALLY  
ANGRY!  
HOOWWWL



AND SAD!  
WAH WAH WAAAH

BUT LOOK - WE'RE GOING TO  
CATCH THE BUS!  
CAN WE SIT IN FRONT?

CRD describes how you can  
interact with your child in a  
way that will reduce the risk of  
conflict.

How do you pick a battle in a  
CRD way?

- C.....
- R.....
- D.....



# THEME: BROTHERLY AND SISTERLY LOVE



How can you handle fights among siblings in the moment?



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What can you do as a parent to strengthen the sibling relationship and prevent fighting?



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# THEME: TEENAGERS

Caption:

I HAVE CUT SCHOOL, SHOPLIFTED, GOT IN FISTFIGHTS, SMOKED, AND TRIED ALCOHOL. GOOD! UH... THAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT IT, I MEAN...



How can you prevent problems during the teen years?



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How can the contents of ABC be adapted to teenagers?



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# THEME: BOYS AND GIRLS

We have different expectations for boys and girls from the time they are born, even though several studies show there are only minor differences between boys and girls.



Are there things that are more acceptable in girls than in boys - and vice versa?



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Boys and girls sometimes act differently and make different choices. What might be some explanations for that?



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