

Social Policies Empowering Families and Stimulating Better Parenting

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

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ESCWA

Parenting

Family and Parenting

Parenting

“a process of interactions and relationships intended to nourish, protect and guide each new life through its course and development” (Bavolek, 1990)

Family

“people related by marriage, birth, consanguinity or legal adoption, who share a common kitchen and financial resources on a regular basis” (Sharma, 2013)

The quality of parent-child relations influences:

- child's physical and mental wellbeing (including in adulthood) (Weich, Patterson, Shaw, & Stewart-Brown, 2009); (Stewart-Brown, Fletcher, & Wadsworth, 2005);
- risks of substance abuse (Martínez-Loredo et al., 2016);
- risks of antisocial behavior, violence and delinquency (Machteld Hoeve, Dubas, Gerris, Van Der Laan, & Smeenk, 2011), (Machteld Hoeve et al., 2009);
- self-esteem and ability to build fruitful relations with peers (Laible, Carlo, & Roesch, 2004);
- values and aspirations in career, education and in family relations (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003); (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993);
- ...

Why parenting matters...

Some negative phenomena and trends in the Arab region:

- small amount of time parents spend **reading with their children**;
- limited **involvement in schooling** (Oman case in Al-Mahrooqi, Denman, & Al-Maamari, 2016; case of Arab parental involvement in US elementary schools in Moosa, Karabenick, and Adams, 2001, etc.);
- prevalence of **harsh discipline and corporal punishment**;
- high **screen time**: on average 4+ hours a day in the UAE, Turkey and Saudi Arabia for children between 4 and 14 (The National citing Kids Compass survey by Turner*);
 - “[t]he survey found that six out of 10 mothers believed watching television was beneficial to a child because it allowed them to connect with the outside world” (*ibid.*);

*Source: www.thenational.ae/business/technology/screen-out-risks-to-children-1.152859

Why parenting matters...

Some negative phenomena and trends in the Arab region (cont'd):

- high rates of **substance abuse**: in 2016 in MENA region (Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates), years lived with disability (YLD)* rates from opioid dependence were twice higher than global averages (Global Health Metrics, 2017);
- “high prevalence of **conduct disorder** with significant heterogeneity in different countries of the Middle East” (Salmanian, Asadian-Koohestani, & Mohammadi, 2017);
- high prevalence of **mental disorders**: “mental and behavioral disorders account for more than 20% of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) lost among Arab adolescents [15 to 19 years], considerably higher than the global average”.

** years lived with disability is an indicator calculated as the sum of prevalence multiplied by the general public’s assessment of the severity of health loss.*

*** represent the years of healthy life lost to premature mortality and disability*

Why parenting matters... Negative trends in the Arab region

Why parenting matters...

Some negative phenomena and trends in the Arab region (cont'd):

- “high proportion of **overweight and obesity** among adolescents (15-18 years) in most countries studied” (i.e. Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Tunisia in 2013-2014) (Musaiger et al., 2016);

- **nannies / domestic help** taking care of children;

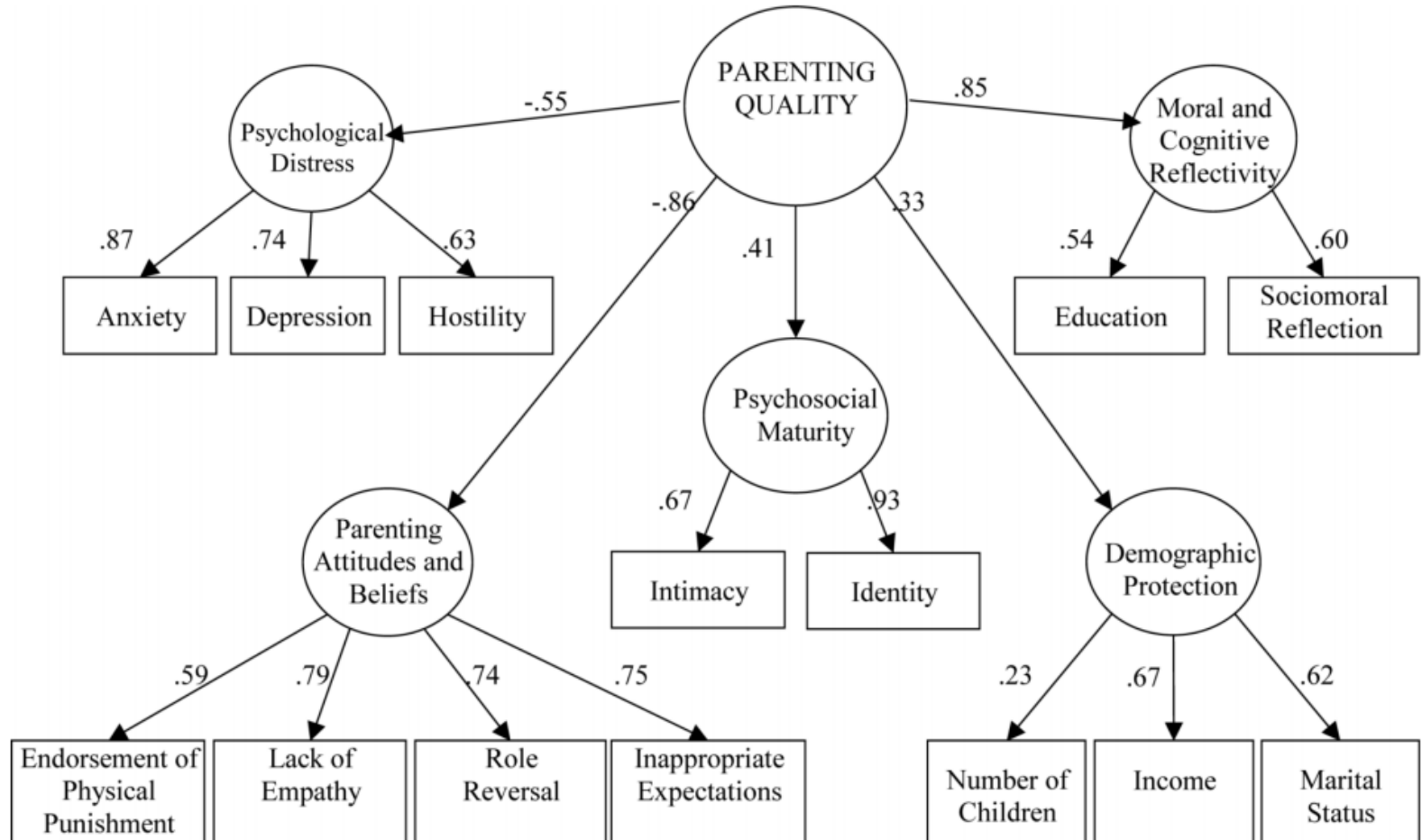
Still face experiment:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0&t=2s

Not implying any causality, we have evidence that some of these trends can be reversed or alleviated by better parenting...

What influences parenting?

What influences parenting?

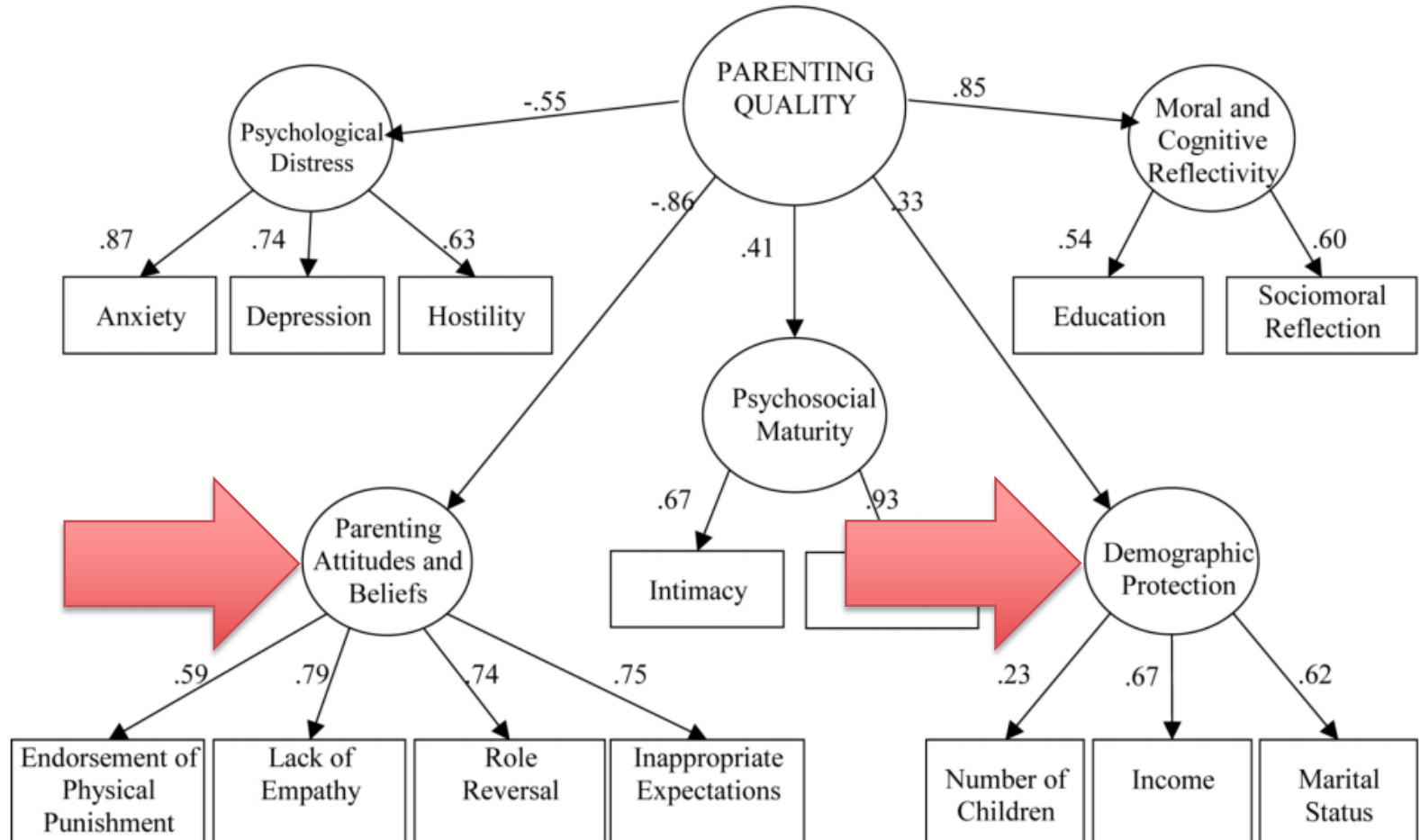


What can we do?

Policy interventions:

- social protection programmes supporting access to education (conditional cash transfer programmes and others);
- other social policies and programmes supporting family formation, parenting and empowering families;

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Conditional cash transfers in the Arab region*:

- transfer cash money to households “on the condition that those households make prespecified investments in the human capital ...” (usually, of a child) (Fiszbein, Schady et al., 2009);
- means-tested (i.e. provided to poor households) or categorical (provided to a population group);
- **common conditionalities:**
 - **health:** medical checkups and vaccinations for children; mothers’ perinatal care;
 - **education:** child’s school enrollment and at least 80 per cent school attendance; school performance;
 - **educational and information events for parents** on health, nutrition, parenting, civic participation, entrepreneurship, etc.

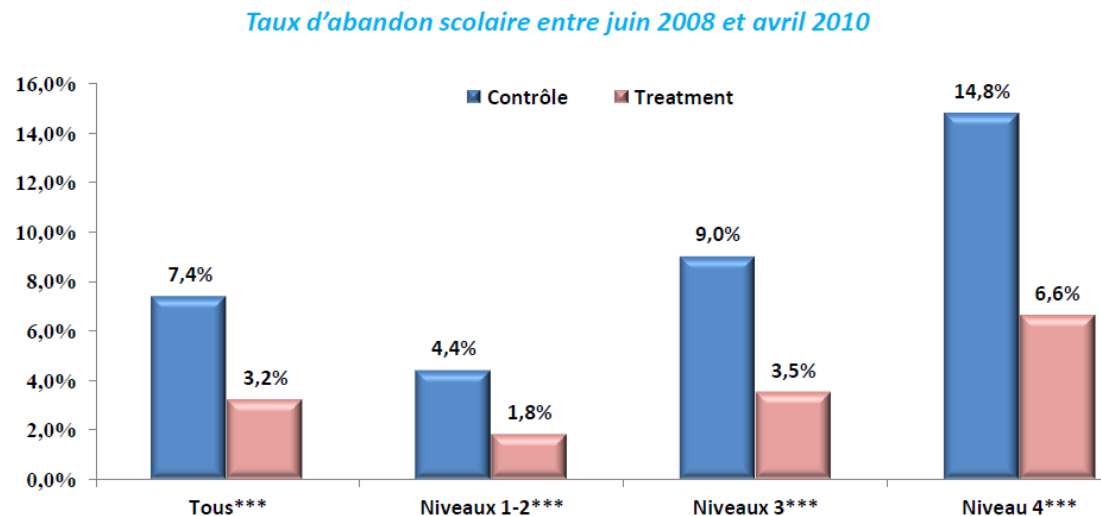
Egypt - Takaful:

- launched in 2015;
- conditionalities of school enrollment for children aged 6-18 and above median attendance for secondary students; health visits and growth monitoring, vaccinations, antenatal and postnatal care for mothers;
- school attendance and health conditionalities **have not been implemented yet;**
- impact evaluation of the programme revealed:
 - increased household monthly expenditures and reduced probability of poverty;
 - no significant impact on school enrollment and private tutoring;
 - **significantly increased spending on school supplies and transportation**

Morocco - Tayssir:

- launched in 2008 to cut school drop outs in poor rural areas;
- impact evaluation of the programme revealed:

- decreased drop out rates at all levels;



- increased re-enrollment of students that previously dropped out;
- some improvement in academic performance.

Source: Presentation of the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training of the Kingdom of Morocco

Yemen – Basic Education Development Project:

- 2nd Basic Education Development Project was launched in 2013 to improve student learning and equitable access to basic education in selected governorates and schools (and in particular – to further girls' education), but was suspended in 2015;
- 1st Basic Education Development Project was implemented in 2007-2012 and achieved the following results:
 - increased number of girls enrolled in grades 1-9 in ten project governorates: from 783,454 in 2009 to 932,761 in 2011/12;
 - maintained number of boys enrolled in grades 1-9 in ten project governorates: 1.1-1.2 million during the project period;
 - improved gender parity index for enrollment: from 0.70 at project start to 0.78 in 2012.

Source: The World Bank, Implementation Completion Report (ICR) Review - Yemen: Basic Education Development Program

Policy interventions

Other social protection programmes supporting access to education:

almost all countries in the Arab region have “a non-contributory social protection programme classified as supporting access to education” (incentivizing school attendance and stimulating improved learning outcomes):

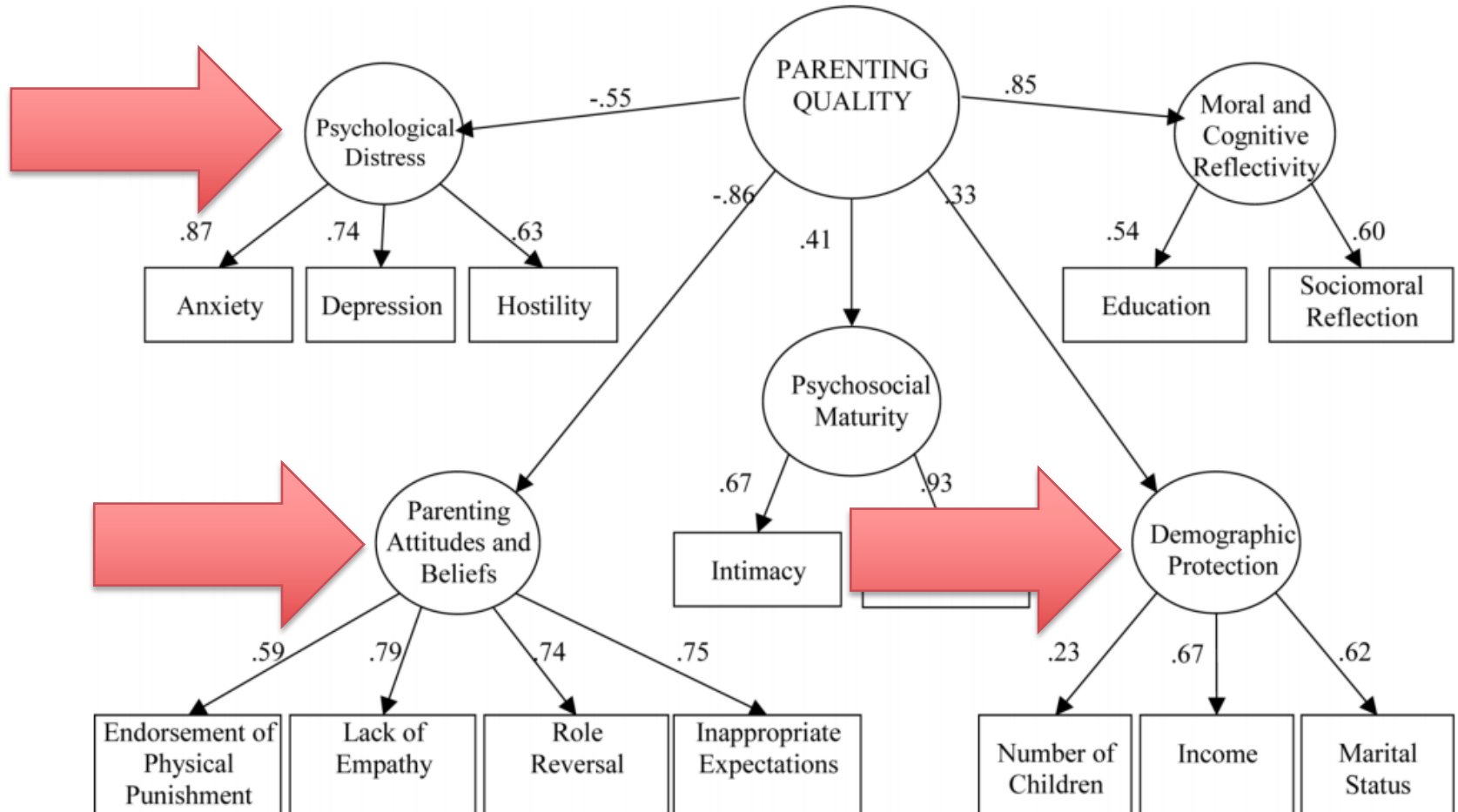
- **school feeding programmes** (Djibouti, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, etc.);
- **in-kind transfers:** providing school materials to reduce education expenditures (Algeria - free school books; Morocco – school materials);
- **educational fee waivers**

Programmes supporting access to education by programme type and country

Number of schemes	Country	Programme Type	Programme Type	Programme Type	Programme Type	Programme Type
More than 4 schemes	Algeria	CCT	CIT	CIT	SFP	EFW
	Morocco	CCT	CCT	SFP	CIT	
	Iran	UCT	SFP	SFP	SFP	
2-3 schemes	Kuwait	CCT	EFW	SFP		
	Tunisia	CCT	CCT	SFP		
	Jordan	CCT	SFP	EFW		
	Djibouti	UCT	SFP	EFW		
	Qatar	CCT	SFP			
	Lebanon	EFW	HCB			
	Egypt	CCT	SFP			
	Oman	CCT				
1 scheme	Saudi Arabia	SFP				
	Sudan	SFP				
	SOP	EFW				
	UAE	EFW				
	Yemen	EFW				

Cash-based transfers: CCT = conditional cash transfers/UCT = unconditional cash transfers
 In-kind transfers: CIT = conditional in-kind transfers/SFP = school feeding programmes
 EFW = educational fee waivers
 HCB = health care benefits

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Social policies and programmes supporting family formation, parenting, and empowering families:

- lone parent cash benefits (Fond d'Entraide Familiale in Morocco targeting divorced poor mothers and their children; Social Insurance Benefits in Qatar targeting among others divorced (non remarried) women, families without a breadwinner, abandoned wives and widows (all without insufficient income));
- housing allowances, cash bonuses and subsidized wedding venues, dowry waiver (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, etc.);
- grants to newborn children (Qatar, ...);
- nutrition assistance and food vouchers;
- day-care centers or choice between cash-for-care benefits and day-care (Austria, Finland, France, Norway, etc.);
- labour legislation (maternity/paternity leave; award schemes at work);
- tax breaks/allowances for parents* (Hong Kong, Lebanon...)

Social policies and programmes supporting family formation, parenting, and empowering families:

- educational campaigns (including media, school meetings), info-letters, brochures, etc.;
- universal or targeted home visiting (health and development checks, counselling and education; positive impact on quality of parenting (USA, UK, Better Parenting Program in Jordan (Unicef), etc.);
- regular screening to monitor child development and anticipatory guidance;
- help lines and other community resources (including counselling (pre-marital, pre- and post-natal, etc.), thematic programmes (Reach Out and Read (US), etc.);
- parent support groups to share information about parenting and child development;
- parent engagement into school activities (meeting teachers, learning education techniques, goal setting and establishing routines ...);
- counselling, education and coaching to address specific issues

Principles of programmes' design

- strategic and comprehensive approach (*National Parenting Strategy in Scotland, Triple P Positive Parenting in Ireland*);
- universal + targeted programmes;
- during all stages of family life-cycle (from pre-marital to child adolescence);
- working on individual, family and community levels;
- engaging both mothers and fathers into parenting, because the support they provide essentially differs (MacHteld Hoeve et al., 2009; Clark, 2009 cited in Al-Mahrooqi, Denman & Al-Maamari, 2016)

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Thank you

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