



GUIDELINE	
Groups for parents	
Scope (Staff):	Community health staff
Scope (Area):	CACH, WACHS

This document should be read in conjunction with this [DISCLAIMER](#)

Aim

The aim of this guideline is to ensure consistency in the delivery of groups for parents and caregivers.

Risk

This guideline aims to reduce the risk of inconsistent service delivery and inefficient use of staff resources in the conduct of groups for parents and caregivers.

Background

Community health staff promote the health, wellbeing and development of children by engaging with parents and establishing a care pathway according to client need.

Community health staff provide parents support, health education and anticipatory guidance about key health and developmental issues in a series of scheduled contacts, through individual contacts and group settings. Research shows that parents who attended parent groups facilitated by community health staff demonstrated increased levels of social support and parenting confidence and high levels of parenting satisfaction.¹⁻³

Community health staff have an important role in facilitating groups to parents in community settings across Western Australia. A consultation undertaken in 2015 in the south-west of Western Australia, showed that parents valued the groups offered, in particular the early parenting group. Benefits cited by parents included the structure of the group which 'offered something to look forward to every week', the social support they provided and information gathered during the sessions.⁴

All parents are offered the Universal group schedule (Appendix A) of four evidence-based groups at specific ages and developmental stages to support optimal child health and development. In addition, a further three Universal Plus groups (Appendix B) are available to those with specific needs. The identified groups are:

Universal

- Early Parenting Group
- Solid Start group
- Triple P – Level 2 Seminar Series
- Kindy Talk

Universal Plus

- Let's Sleep
- Triple P – Level 3 Discussion Group and Level 4 Group
- Circle of Security – Parenting
- Groups to meet a targeted need in local areas

A number of non-government organisations are contracted by CACH or WACHS to deliver Universal and Universal Plus groups in various locations. Community health staff need to be aware of contracted parenting programs within their regions/areas and follow local promotion and engagement practices.

Key Points

- Community health staff facilitating parenting groups must have appropriate facilitation skills.
- All clients will be offered the Universal groups schedule.
- Clients requiring further support are offered the Universal Plus group/s relevant to their need.
- Groups to meet specific targeted needs which are developed locally are to have clearly defined aims, target audience and plans. Prior endorsement by the local manager is required.
- Community health staff will be aware of local resources including external agencies and services offering group programs for parents.
- Groups for parents in rural and remote areas may be presented in alternative formats to cater for clients who are geographically dispersed.
- Clients may attend groups outside of their region/area if desired, available or more convenient.
- Community health staff must adhere to safety and risk principles when planning and delivering groups.
- Clients will be booked into the group according to local processes.

Mandated attendance:

Some parents will be required to attend a group; particularly the Circle of Security-Parenting or Triple P groups, as mandated by the Family Court or Department for Child Protection and Family Support. When this is known in advance, the following strategies may assist in supporting the psychosocial issues these individuals may be experiencing whilst also ensuring the desired outcomes are met for all participants in the group.

- Where possible, triage/assess parents requesting these groups to determine suitability. Providing a one to one session may be a preferred option.
- Consider the use of co- facilitators where available, or identify an experienced clinician to lead the group.

Process

Steps	Additional information
<p>1. Planning</p> <p>Universal groups are to be offered to all parents as part of the Universal contact schedule. Universal Plus group/s will be offered relevant to parent need.</p> <p>Community health staff will communicate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal groups will be planned and scheduled in advance, in collaboration with line manager and colleagues.

Steps	Additional information
<p>the groups to parents verbally at the appropriate contact and distribute the promotional materials available for each group.</p>	
<p>2. Promotion</p> <p>Approved promotional materials can be found on Health Point (refer to 'Useful resources' for more information).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the standardised promotional material for each group. • Display within community health sites or on community noticeboards. Signage placement will enable easy client access.
<p>3. Venue</p> <p>Groups must be provided in venues that are suitable and take into account the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient space for multiple families and their equipment • Meets occupational health and safety requirements (no trip, child safety, hygiene or other hazards) • For safety and injury prevention it is recommended that hot drinks and food are not provided or supported. • Accessible by public transport and sufficient parking • Accessibility to IT systems/ technology when required (laptop, projectors, printers etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When working in venues, community health staff must consider parent, child and staff safety. • Single clinic rooms and small waiting rooms are not suitable for groups. • Venues located in or near community hubs, where multiple service providers operate, can assist to link families with other local support services. • It is recommended that the potential dangers of hot drinks in the presence of children, is discussed with Group participants, to gain their support and understanding.
<p>4. Group delivery</p> <p>Groups will be delivered according to the group package manual, by appropriately trained community health staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply adult learning principles when conducting sessions. Adults bring life experiences and knowledge, are goal and relevancy oriented and self-directed learners. • Offer attendees appropriate handouts.
<p>5. Recording and evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All attendees must be recorded according to local processes. • When attendee details are entered onto an attendance form, this will be kept confidential during the group. • The CHN will enter attendee details from these forms onto the relevant electronic data information systems at the conclusion of the group.

Steps	Additional information
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance forms are an operation tool, not a client record, and therefore should not be retained. These forms will be securely destroyed according to local processes as soon as possible after the relevant client records are updated. Nurses will follow approved CAHS-CH and WACHS processes for the evaluation of groups.

Documentation

Community health staff will document the delivery of groups to parents according to local processes.


References
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Council AHM. National framework for universal child and family health services. Canberra: 2011. Hanna BA, Edgecombe G, Jackson CA, Newman S. The importance of first-time parent groups for new parents. <i>Nursing & Health Sciences</i>. 2002;4(4):209-14. Scott D, Brady S, Glynn P. New mother groups as a social network intervention: consumer and maternal and child health nurse perspectives. <i>Aust J Adv Nurs</i>. 2001;18(4):23-9. Clark K, Beatty S, Fletcher T. Maternal and child health nursing services: perspectives of parents. <i>Australian Journal of Child and Family Health Nursing</i>. 2016;13(1):5.

Related internal policies, procedures and guidelines
<p>The following documents can be accessed in the Community Health Manual: HealthPoint link or Internet link</p>
<p>Drop-in session protocol</p>

Useful resources
<p>Circle of Security - Parenting</p>
<p>Early Parenting Group</p>
<p>Kindy Talk</p>
<p>Let's Sleep</p>
<p>Solid Start</p>

[Triple P](#)

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

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Document Owner:	Nurse Co-Director, Community Health		
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Standards Applicable:	NSQHS Standards:  1.7, 1.8		
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Appendix A – Universal Groups

Early Parenting Group		Universal	0-8 weeks
Aim	The aim of the Early Parenting Group is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance parenting confidence, skills and knowledge by providing evidence-based information in an informal group setting • strengthen parent-child attachment through the promotion of parent-child interaction • create social support and community networking opportunities 		
Target audience and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered to all parents • Age range - newborn to around 12 weeks • 8-15 parents per group – depending on demand • 4-6 consecutive weekly sessions of up to 2 hour duration • Run at Child Health Centre or local community centres 		
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator Guide • Early Parenting Group Invitation • Early Parenting Group attendance record • Early Parenting Group contact list 		
Focus areas	Facilitator Guide includes an overview and planning an Early Parenting Group, along with information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All about child health services and Early Parenting Groups • Where to from here? • Becoming parents – changes and challenges • Getting to know your baby • Sleep and settling • Development, play and safety • Supporting your baby's health • Maternal health and wellbeing 		
Solid Start		Universal	4-5 months
Aim	The aim of the Solid Start group is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent, current, evidence-based information to parents around introducing solid foods. 		
Target audience and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered to parents of 4-5 month old babies, in preparation for solids introduction at around 6 months • 1 workshop of 2 hour duration; run regularly, usually every 6 weeks • 15-20 parents per group - depending on demand or one-to-one format with parents • Run at Child Health Centre or local community centres 		
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator Guide • PowerPoint presentation • Flip chart 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents Handout (low literacy version, print or email)
Focus areas	<p>The Solid Start - Facilitator Guide includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why and when to start solids What to introduce and how Mealtimes and feeding Food and drinks to avoid Food safety Food allergy
Triple P – Level 2 Seminar Series <i>Universal</i> 3-8 years	
Aim	<p>The aim of the Triple P – Level 2 Seminar Series group is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide parents with an overview of positive parenting principles and strategies Show parents how to respond to children’s expression of emotion in order to help children develop emotional regulation skills Show parents how to use positive parenting to teach their children important values and social skills for use throughout life.
Target audience and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents with children aged 3-8 years Parents can self-refer, be referred by community health staff or may be mandated to attend The seminars are delivered over three consecutive weeks, with parents choosing to do one, two or all of the seminars 2 hour duration 10-50 parents per seminar Run at local community centres and primary schools, during school term. <p><i>N.B. Staff must be trained in the Triple P Seminar Series mode</i></p>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator Manual PowerPoint presentation Parent feedback form Parent confirmation letter Certificate – for single sessions or completion of series Newsletter template Seminar Series Tips for Facilitators
Focus areas	<p>The Triple P – Level 2 Seminar Series are stand-alone sessions focused on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Children’s behaviour – the tough part of parenting Raising confident children Raising emotionally resilient children
Kindy Talk <i>Universal</i> 3-4 years	
Aim	<p>The aim of the Kindy Talk is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist parents to prepare their child for school from a health and development perspective Explain the SEHA program increasing the likelihood of CHS 409 return.
Target audience and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents with kindergarten aged children One session, offered to parents in Term 4 or Term 1 Run at primary schools, often presented as part of the school orientation

context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for the Kindy Talk will need to be within the ANF Award working hours and negotiated with the school via the School Level Agreement. 				
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for presentation • PowerPoint presentation • Parent feedback form • Ten top tips for a great start to school 				
Focus areas	<p>Kindy Talk session topics will depend on the time community health staff have negotiated and be guided by the school community. Sessions can include the following:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><u>Essential Topics</u></td> <td><u>Optional Topics</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of community health staff in schools • Student Health Care Plan • School Entry Health Assessment (SEHA) • Vision assessment • Hearing assessment • Healthy growth assessment • Healthy eating (and teeth) • Australian Guide to Healthy Eating • Your child's lunchbox • Physical activity • Immunisation and disease prevention </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head lice • Triple P • Child development – 4 year old developmental milestones • Sleep and rest • Toileting </td> </tr> </table>	<u>Essential Topics</u>	<u>Optional Topics</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of community health staff in schools • Student Health Care Plan • School Entry Health Assessment (SEHA) • Vision assessment • Hearing assessment • Healthy growth assessment • Healthy eating (and teeth) • Australian Guide to Healthy Eating • Your child's lunchbox • Physical activity • Immunisation and disease prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head lice • Triple P • Child development – 4 year old developmental milestones • Sleep and rest • Toileting
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Appendix B – Universal Plus Groups

Let's Sleep		Universal Plus	6-12 months
Aim	<p>The aim of the Let's Sleep group is provide general information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting responsive and sensitive settling strategies with parents, emphasising co-regulation • Supporting and empowering parents to develop a plan to make changes over time • Enhancing parental confidence, skills and knowledge of infant sleep behaviours by providing evidence-based information in a group setting • Exploring realistic and unrealistic expectations of sleep, feeding and awake patterns for infants aged 6 to 12 months • Creating opportunities for parents to share their experiences, ideas and concerns about sleep and settling. 		
Target audience and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents with a child aged 6-12 months, who have sleep and settling issues • Parents can self-refer or be referred by community health staff • One session of 2-2.5 hour duration • Run regularly as per local demand • 8-15 parents per group - depending on demand; or one-to-one format with parents • Run at Child Health Centres or local community centres 		
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator Guide • PowerPoint presentation • Parent Handout – <i>Let's Sleep: helping you with baby's sleep</i> • Invitation flyer 		
Focus areas	<p>The Let's Sleep group provides parents with information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of sleep • Sleep variations and sleep concerns • Sleep, awake and feeding expectations • Sleep environments, sleep associations and settling strategies • Circle of Security and sensitive parenting principles • Attachment, separation and crying • Parental health and wellbeing 		
Triple P – Level 3 Discussion Group or Level 4 Group		Universal Plus	3-8 years
Aim	<p>The aim of the Triple P – Level 3 Discussion Group and the Level 4 Group is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide parents with a broad range of strategies to help manage their child's behaviour in a variety of parenting situations. 		
Target audience and	<p>Level 3 Discussion Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents with a child aged 3-6 years, with a minor behaviour issue 	<p>Level 4 Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents of a child aged 3-8 years, with moderate behaviour issues • 8 week program 	

context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hour x 3 single session presentations (can choose 1 or all sessions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Weeks 1-4: Group ii. Weeks 5-7: Phone call iii. Week 8: Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 x 2 hour groups; 3 x 15-20min phone calls
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents can self-refer, be referred by community health staff or may be mandated to attend • Run at local community centres and primary schools, during school term • 5-15 parents per group <p><i>N.B. Staff must be trained in the Triple P Discussion Group or Group modes</i></p>	
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator Guide and PowerPoint presentation are available • Parent feedback form available for use 	
Focus areas	<p>The Level 3 Discussion Group provides parents with information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Dealing with disobedience ii. Managing fighting and aggression iii. Hassle-free shopping with children. 	<p>The Level 4 Group parents actively participate in a range of exercises to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the causes of child behaviour problems • Set specific goals, and • Use strategies to promote child development, manage misbehaviour and plan for high-risk situations.
Circle of Security – Parenting <i>Universal Plus</i> <i>4 months – 6 years</i>		
Aim	<p>Circle of Security is a parent-reflection program aimed at helping parents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand their child’s emotional world, by learning to read their emotional needs • Support their child’s ability to successfully manage emotions • Enhance the development of their child’s self-esteem • Ensure their child feels secure 	
Target audience and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents with a child aged 4 months to six years, having difficulties connecting with their child, and/or having issues with their child’s behavior • Parents can self-refer, be referred by community health staff or may be mandated to attend • Eight week program, 1 x 1.5-2 hour session each week • 5-15 parents per group • Run at local community centres, during school term <p><i>N.B. Staff must be trained in the Circle of Security-Parenting mode.</i></p>	
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator Guide • DVD • Parent feedback form 	
Focus	<p>Each week corresponds with a chapter from the DVD. The DVD is paused at</p>	

areas	scheduled moments to engage parents in reflective dialogue. Topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome to Circle of Security Parenting• Exploring our children's needs all the way around the Circle• 'Being with' on the Circle• Being with infants on the Circle• The path to security• Exploring our struggles• Rupture and repair in relationships• Summary and celebration
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