

**MODULE IV – EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS FOR IMMIGRANT FATHERS**

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>PART ONE – MESSAGES FROM OUR PARENTS – A PROGRAM FOR FATHERS THAT FOCUSES ON THE TRANSMISSION OF VALUES FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER .....</b>	<b>119</b>
EXERCISE IV-1: The Lessons Stories Teach Us .....	121
EXERCISE IV-2: Which Values Are Universal And Which Are Culturally Specific? .....	124
EXERCISE IV-3: Encountering Systems With Different Values .....	125
<b>PART TWO – PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES WITH A FOCUS ON DISCIPLINE .....</b>	<b>127</b>
EXERCISE IV-4: Canadian Norms For Disciplinary .....	128
EXERCISE IV-5: Culturally Respectful Guidance Strategies .....	130
<b>PART THREE – SATURDAY MORNING PLAY GROUP FOR FATHERS AND PRESCHOOLERS .....</b>	<b>132</b>
EXERCISE IV-6: Creating A Playgroup For Fathers And Children .....	134
<b>PART FOUR – PROGRAM OF FIELDTRIPS FOR FATHERS AND CHILDREN .....</b>	<b>136</b>
EXERCISE IV-7: Choosing Appropriate Field Trip Venues.....	138
EXERCISE IV-8: Planning A Field Trip For Fathers And Children .....	139
EXERCISE IV-9: Details, Details, Details .....	140
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>142</b>

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**MODULE FOUR****EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS FOR IMMIGRANT FATHERS****INTRODUCTION**

*When I became a father, I realized that my family is complete and now I am head of the family. And I realized that I feel proud that there is somebody to carry my name forward. And then I realized that there are responsibilities also with a father. To become a father is not so difficult, but to be a father is difficult. After I became a father I realized how central my child is. I have responsibility towards providing food, shelter and better education. I am proud and happy that I have healthy kids, but also I realize I have responsibilities to make them good, not only right now, but in the future, and I have to try my best to make them very good citizens. And somehow in our place in our country nobody tells you about what a father is...you learn with your child. Every child is an individual and everyone has their own characteristics, and so we learn when we take care of them. When we didn't have any kids, we used to feel sort of a gap was there. Now we have somebody to share with.*

*(New Canadian Father)*

In this module, we will present five examples of programs for parents. These examples evolved from the research we conducted with immigrant fathers from China, Latin America, the former Yugoslavia, and South Asia. In that study, we asked fathers to share with us their thoughts and feelings about being fathers in Canada. We asked them about their beliefs and values, about their expectations for their children, and their thoughts about the role of fathers. We asked them about the differences between fathering in Canada and in their country of origin, and we asked them what would be helpful to them in fulfilling their roles.

Some very strong themes emerged in this study – themes that we have attempted to respect in the development of program ideas. The joy, pride, and deep love of their children were foremost in the interviews. The desire to protect their children, provide guidance and support, and help their children become successful Canadians was a second prominent theme. Balancing the desire to respect and preserve their own heritage, while fostering the success of their children in Canada, was also articulated by the fathers we interviewed. And lastly, the father's role in discipline – in ensuring that their children grow up knowing right from wrong, and being respectful, moral individuals, was a common theme that emerged.

We have tried to design a number of different programs that respect the voices of the fathers we interviewed, and that will provide support, information, and an opportunity for enjoyable experiences between fathers and their children. We ask that you use these program ideas not as recipes, but as starting points for the development of programs that are congruent with the needs assessments that you will be conducting prior to program development.

**PART ONE****MESSAGES FROM OUR PARENTS – A PROGRAM FOR FATHERS THAT FOCUSES ON THE TRANSMISSION OF VALUES FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER**

*Memories from my past of my childhood guide me in being a good father. I just remember how my parents used to take care of me and how, since we were living in a joint (extended) family, I had aunts and uncles and I just remember how our parents settled all those problems as well as how other family members or my cousins had taken care of their children. I teach myself from my memories.*

*(New Canadian Father)*

**RATIONALE FOR THE PROGRAM**

Many of the fathers we interviewed talked about the importance of transmitting the values of their culture, the “lessons from their parents”, to their children who now are submerged in a very different culture.

**GOALS OF THE PROGRAM**

The main goals of the program would be:

- ◆ To provide fathers with an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about the importance of transmission of cultural values.
- ◆ To provide a format for examining the impact of “culture conflict” on children and their families.
- ◆ To assist fathers in formulating ways of reducing the negative impact of culture conflict.
- ◆ To provide a format for celebrating universal and culture specific values related to children and childrearing.

## **PROGRAM STRATEGIES**

The exercises that accompany this module can be used interchangeably as staff training material or as outlines for activities with fathers. Our suggestion would be to go through these exercises first with your staff.

### **1. *Stories, Legends, Myths, and Proverbs***

Stories are an important vehicle for the transmission of cultural values, as they were often created for the very purpose of providing lessons to the children about moral and religious values. A series of story telling workshops could be organized for fathers and children together. With play facilities provided for children, fathers could gather together after the sessions to talk about the values that the stories highlight. Exercise IV-1 provides an example.

A group facilitator could lead the discussion about the values in these stories, compared to prominent values in mainstream culture.

Similar workshops could evolve around using proverbs, fairy tales, songs and nursery rhymes as vehicles for transmission of values.

### **2. *Dealing with Cultural Conflicts***

Lessons from my parents: A discussion group with fathers could focus on encouraging fathers to reveal what lessons were most important to their own parents and grandparents. What would their parents be telling them was most important in regard to raising children?

Values Clarification Sessions: Exercise IV-2 outlines a values clarification activity that could be used with fathers to help identify universal versus culturally specific values.

Following the exercise, discussions with fathers could highlight potential areas of conflict in values between mainstream and culturally specific values. Fathers could be provided with the opportunities to share ideas and strategies for dealing with these conflicts.

### **3. *Encountering “Systems” with Different Values***

Immigrant families often face difficulties in dealing with “officials” from mainstream culture, who have different attitudes towards children and childrearing than their own. The metaphors of the kangaroo, the raven, and the chameleon could be used to help fathers identify their own coping strategies (described in Module 1, Exercise I-11), and discuss the benefits and shortcomings of each. (See Exercise IV-3).

**EXERCISE IV-I****THE LESSONS STORIES TEACH US****RATIONALE:**

The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate how stories, songs, proverbs and nursery rhymes can be used as a springboard for discussions with fathers about their cultural values around parenting.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. If this exercise is to be used for staff training, try to provide a comfortable setting, conducive to relaxing, listening and story telling. When using this as a guideline for an activity with fathers, we suggest that the setting ensure that children can be with the fathers, either listening to the stories or engaged in supervised play nearby. It would be helpful if the children could be occupied in supervised play during the discussion period.
2. Ask that participants bring short stories, rhymes, proverbs, and/or songs that they learned when they were children and that have an important message. This program could be extended to several sessions, depending on the number of fathers participating and the interest in the program. It would probably be wise to limit the number of stories that are shared at each session.
3. For the purpose of this exercise, read the short story in the following handout. In small groups, facilitate the discussion using the following questions as guidelines.
  - ◆ What values are being taught by this story? Participants may refer to the importance of love, persistence, loyalty, and wit.
  - ◆ Are the values evident in this story shared by others in the group?
  - ◆ It might be fun to ask other participants whether they have similar stories with similar values.
  - ◆ Do participants think that the values in this story are evident in Canada?

The facilitator might be able to share a children's story commonly told in Canada, that espouse the same values:

persistence – *The Little Engine that Could*  
loyalty/love – *The Giving Tree*  
wit – *The Fox and the Grapes*



## HANDOUT IV-1

## A STORY WITH A MESSAGE

**THE WOMAN WHO FOLLOWED DEATH**

(INDIA)

(Source: Singelis, T. (Ed.). (1998). *Teaching about culture, ethnicity, & diversity*. Sage: California, p.228.)

Once there lived a young woman who was so loved by her father, and whose wisdom he so respected, that he did the unthinkable: he gave her the right to choose her own husband, believing only she would know who would be a worthy partner. Savitri traveled far and listened to many people. She saw a young man with shining eyes guiding and caring for his old blind father. She heard the stories of his virtue. She knew then who should be her partner and she returned to tell her father. Her father's adviser, however, a holy man, was horrified at her choice. "This young man is indeed a person of great value," he admitted. "But it is written that he will die one year from today. Choose another." Savitri trembled but said, "I have chosen, and whether his life be short or long, I would share it."

For nearly a year, the two lived happily. However, on the eve of their anniversary, her husband suddenly dropped to ground, complaining of a severe headache. Savitri laid him in the shade of a tree, his head on her lap, and watched as her beloved husband's eyes closed and his breathing stopped. Suddenly there appeared a powerful man, his body burned like the sun, though his skin was darker than the deepest night. It was Yama, Lord of the Dead, come for the spirit of her husband. "Indeed you are full of merit if you can see me, child. Happiness awaits your husband in my kingdom," offered Yama. "He has been a man of great virtue." And with that he pulled the spirit of her husband from his body and turned to leave.

Savitri rose and ran after Yama and, though he moved swiftly, she struggled to follow. She called out, "Lord Yama, though it be your duty to take my husband, yet it is my duty to ask you for his life. The Lord of the Dead looked puzzled. "No one can ask for a life back once I have taken it. Go home." Yet Savitri followed, knowing firmly what she wanted and knowing Yama could give it to her if he wished. After many miles Yama turned. "I will not give what you ask—still your directness pleases me. I will grant you a favor—anything but the life of your husband."

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Continued on page 123

Continued from page 122

Savitri thought quickly. “Please restore to my father-in-law his eyesight.” Yama granted this request, but still she followed. “Savitri, you have come far enough.” “Give me the life of my husband,” she repeated. Yama shook his head. “No. Still, I admire your devotion and directness. I will grant you another favor—anything but the life of your husband.” “Grant many more children to my father”. Again, Yama granted her request, but still she followed, scratched and bleeding in her struggle to keep up.

“Savitri, your love must bend to fate. I forbid you to come further. Still, I admire your courage and directness. I will grant you one last favor, but this time ask something for yourself—anything but the life of your husband.” Savitri paused.

*“Then grant many children to me, and let them be the children of my husband whose soul you have taken!”* Yama’s red eyes grew wide and a slow smile spread on his dark face. “Savitri, your wit is as strong as your directness. You have not asked for the life of your husband, yet I cannot grant this wish without returning him to you. You have won your husband’s life.”

And indeed, thereafter, Savitri and her husband were blessed by a long life together of great peace and harmony—and many children.



## EXERCISE IV-2

**WHICH VALUES ARE UNIVERSAL AND WHICH ARE CULTURALLY SPECIFIC?**

*Adapted from: Chud, G. & Fahlman, R. (1995). Honouring diversity within child care and early education. Ministry of Skills, Training, & Labour: British Columbia. Exercise 1.12.*

**RATIONALE:**

The purpose of this exercise is to help fathers become aware of how some values are linked to their cultural backgrounds and have come from the way that they were raised and others may be shared by all cultures.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Divide participants into four groups. Provide each group with a piece of flipchart paper and a felt marker.
2. Each group will be asked to brainstorm a specific set of values and record their answers on the flipchart for display and discussion.
  - ◆ Ask the first group to brainstorm what types of values they believe are universal, shared by all peoples in the world.
  - ◆ Ask the second group to brainstorm what types of values they think are shared by members of any one culture.
  - ◆ Ask the third group to brainstorm what types of values are shared by members of a group (such as a religious group, a sports team, a group of parents).
  - ◆ Ask the fourth group to brainstorm what types of values may be held by individuals, or that are unique to certain people.
3. From this discussion, ask the participants to determine what they feel are the main characteristics of a culture. Possible answers might include:
  - ◆ Culture is learned; it is not innate.
  - ◆ Various aspects of culture are interrelated (your religious beliefs may coincide with your general cultural values).
4. As a group, complete the sentence, “Culture is . . .”. Discuss how we learn culture. What are the ways in which culture is transmitted to our children? Which ways are conscious, as in the behaviours we expect and the guidelines we provide our children? Which ways are perhaps more subconscious, as in the stories we tell, the lives we live as example?





**EXERCISE IV-3****ENCOUNTERING SYSTEMS WITH DIFFERENT VALUES**

*Adapted from Roer Strier, D. (1996). Coping Strategies of Immigrant Parents: Directions for Family Therapy. Family Process 35:363-376.*

**RATIONALE:**

The purpose of this exercise is to help fathers understand different patterns of coping when they believe that their cultural orientation to childrearing differs from the perception of the Canadian norm. (These adaptive strategies were first described in Exercise I-11.)

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Ask fathers to reflect on some of the questions below (either through individual reflection or group discussion, depending on the size of the group and the level of comfort).
  - a) Do you try to protect your children from outside influences (such as television)?
  - b) Do you try to raise your children in the same way that you were raised?
  - c) How important is it that others know of your child's cultural background?
  - d) Would you prefer that your children associate mainly with other people from your own culture?
  - e) Do you want your child to be seen as "Canadian"?
  - f) Do you want your children to speak English quickly?
  - g) Do you want your children to maintain their home language?
  - h) Would you encourage your child to behave, dress, eat and talk like other children outside the home, but when at home, behave according to the expectations of your culture?
  
2. After participants have spent some time sharing their responses to the above questions, present them with three "models" of adapting to a new country.
  - a) **The traditional style** – where parents see their role as the main socializers of the children and who attempt to preserve their culture as much as possible. One of their roles, then, becomes protecting the children from outside influences. The metaphor of the kangaroo, which carries its young in a pouch, can be used as a way of representing the "protection from outside influences".

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Continued on page 126

Continued from page 125

- b) **The rapid assimilation style** – where parents believe that it is in their child’s best interest to assimilate quickly. This may mean learning English quickly, adopting Canadian dress, and foregoing the family’s own customs and traditions and substituting Canadian ones. The raven is a bird that can rapidly adapt to changing environments and continue to thrive, so can be used as a metaphor for this group.
- c) **The bi-cultural style** – where children are encouraged to live in both cultures. Children can behave, dress, eat and talk like the other children outside the home, while at home, the child is expected to behave according to the dictates of the home country. The chameleon, an animal that changes its colour to blend in with its surroundings, can be used as a metaphor for this group.

It is important to stress to parents that there is no right or wrong style, but each has different implications.

- 3. Ask fathers to say which style they seem to fit the best, based in part on their answers to the questions.
- 4. Discuss with fathers the pros and cons of each style. Issues that may emerge might be:
  - a) Rapid assimilation may result in loss of first language but children may feel more comfortable entering school with a strong command of the English language.
  - b) The traditional or uni-cultural approach may result in their being less accepted by other children but could result in a strong sense of pride in their heritage and values.
  - c) The bi-cultural approach may lead to a situation where they don’t feel completely at home in either culture but could result in feeling at home in both.
- 5. Conclude by asking fathers to reflect on their values, and how their adapting strategies are meeting their needs and their children’s needs.



**PART TWO****PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES WITH A FOCUS ON DISCIPLINE**

*I find it difficult to explain to my children that certain actions people do here are not permissible in our culture. Our religion does not give permission for certain freedoms which they see here in this culture.*

*(New Canadian Father)*

*Parents from Taiwan are authoritative so that's why it is easier to control or discipline the children. When you don't treat them as a friend and don't have too much time with the children, it is easier to discipline them as a parent. And there are differences in the roles of fathers in the two places, mainly because of differences in social structure, physical conditions, and different cultural values.*

*(New Canadian Father)*

These quotes are samples of the many expressions of concern around the role of the father as the provider of guidance and discipline. Discipline is a common concern for all parents and has been the topic of parent workshops in various parent education formats for decades. However, many of the traditional parent education training programs have been criticized for being ethnocentric and inconsiderate of cultural differences. Rather than re-inventing programs designed to heighten parent awareness of effective guidance practice, we propose two approaches. First, we believe it is important to provide fathers with information about Canadian law and norms regarding disciplinary practices with children. Second, we will provide staff with some ideas and questions that will help them decide whether parent education material that is readily available is suitable for the population they are working with.

**EXERCISE IV-4****CANADIAN NORMS FOR DISCIPLINE****RATIONALE:**

The purpose of this exercise is to help staff acquaint fathers with Canadian laws and norms regarding the discipline of children.

Section 43 of the criminal code relates to the use of “force that is reasonable under the circumstances” with children. All families in Canada are guided by this legislation. As there are differences in the approaches to physical punishment among families in Canada, it is important to familiarize newcomers with these expectations. Our intention would be to begin with this information, and then progress to discussions and workshops around guidance. As the following excerpt suggests, new Canadian fathers are struggling with these issues.

*I would say I haven't got any help from anywhere in raising my children. . . . When it comes to guide the children in this different environment, I haven't got any help from anywhere.*

*(New Canadian Father)*

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Ask participants to read the Criminal Code Section 43 (see Handout IV-4).
2. After reading this section, request that participants try to reword the statement in simple language.
3. Ask participants to give examples of “force that is reasonable under the circumstances” and what might be beyond reasonable force.
4. Try to arrive at general descriptors of ‘reasonable force’.
5. Provide participants with examples of ‘reasonable force’ from other countries. For example, in Scandinavia it is against the law to hit your child.



**HANDOUT IV-4**

**SECTION 43 OF THE CRIMINAL CODE.**

**CORRECTION OF CHILD  
BY FORCE.**

43. Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.

[R.S. c.C-34, s.43.]

**EXERCISE IV-5****CULTURALLY RESPECTFUL GUIDANCE STRATEGIES****RATIONALE:**

The purpose of this exercise is to assist staff in ensuring that material, workshops and discussions about the guidance of children are respectful of cultural differences. We have deliberately not used the term “culturally appropriate” because what is considered appropriate guidance by child development experts in North America may indeed not be appropriate to all cultures. Even within Canada, there are huge differences in perceptions of what constitutes appropriate and reasonable guidance and discipline.

**INSTRUCTIONS:*****Prior to the workshop:***

Ask staff to do a bit of research. Divide the staff into small groups and ask each group to search for material on one of the following topics:

- ◆ *Nobody’s Perfect* (parenting program developed and distributed by Health Canada).
- ◆ *Challenging Behaviors* (publication of the Canadian Child Care Federation).
- ◆ Positive guidance techniques.
- ◆ Guidance techniques based on behavioral modification.
- ◆ Parent training material by Barbara Coloroso.

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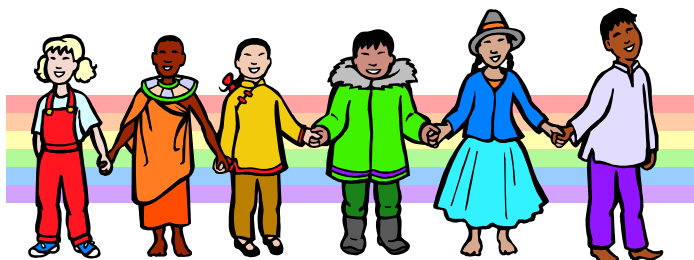
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Continued from page 130

*At the workshop:*

1. Ask each group to present a summary of their findings.
2. In small groups, critique the material reviewed, using the following questions as guidelines.
  - ◆ What parent levels of education would these materials be appropriate for? How would you adapt it for parents with more or less formal education? What would the impact on parents be if presented with a material at a level that was too low or a level that was too high?
  - ◆ Based on the specific population with which you are working, can you think of elements of this material that would be offensive, strange, or simply wouldn't work? How would you adapt (or would you?) this material to ensure its cultural appropriateness.
3. Providing staff with the following example may help illustrate the above point:

*Natural consequences (an approach to discipline common in North America) can be a helpful guidance technique for impacting many kinds of children's behavior. For example, if a child dawdles for too long in the morning, they may be late for kindergarten, and miss their favorite activity. This technique may be effective because the consequence of the child's behavior is felt immediately. However, natural consequence would be less effective in relation to parents' expectation to uphold certain traditions. Failure to observe these traditions would likely not result in an immediate "natural" consequence.*



**PART THREE****SATURDAY MORNING PLAY GROUP FOR FATHERS AND PRESCHOOLERS****RATIONALE FOR THE PROGRAM**

In our work with fathers, we have found that many of them have agreed to take responsibility for their children on Saturday morning while their wives go grocery shopping and run errands. Sometimes, fathers have also agreed to look after their children at this time to provide some social time for their wives. However, many of the fathers indicated that they don't know what to do with their children during this time and that the children simply watch Saturday morning cartoons. The fathers indicated that they would like to spend meaningful time with their children.

This Saturday morning play group program idea is in response to this need to help fathers spend time with their children in a community context that is affordable, easy to access and enjoyable for all. It can also serve to provide social interaction and support for fathers.

**GOALS FOR THE PROGRAM**

The main goals of the program would be:

- ◆ To provide fathers and preschoolers with opportunities to play together.
- ◆ To help fathers become aware of the types of activities their children might enjoy.
- ◆ To provide fathers with social interaction and support through spending time with other fathers and their children.



## **PROGRAM STRATEGIES**

The following exercises could be used either as training exercises for staff prior to setting up a Saturday morning playgroup for fathers and preschoolers or with the fathers themselves in determining the appropriate directions for the program.

### **1. *Determining the Needs Within a Community***

Before setting up a program anywhere, it is important to determine whether this is something the families in a community are interested in. Community workers need to be able to assess the needs in a community as well as the interest levels of fathers. As well, it will be important to determine if there is available space that is suitable for fathers and children together, that is easily accessible for families, and that is affordable for your program. Fathers may not be particularly comfortable transporting their children, especially if the children are very young and families are required to use public transportation.

Refer to Module Three for the process of conducting a community needs assessment.

### **2. *Creating a Program for Children and Fathers***

Exercise IV-6 provides staff with a model of a playgroup which can be adapted to meet the specific interests and needs of immigrant fathers in your community.

**EXERCISE IV-6****CREATING A PLAYGROUP FOR FATHERS AND CHILDREN****RATIONALE:**

The object of this exercise is to provide participants with an example of a play group program, which they can adapt and revise according to the needs and interests of the fathers, the space available, and the budget.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Ask the participants to read the handout describing the Mosaic Centre Saturday Morning Playgroup.
2. In small groups, ask participants to develop an alternative program based on the same concept of fathers and children playing together, and an opportunity for fathers to sit and talk with other fathers, while the children are engaged in supervised play.
3. The following factors should be considered in the development:
  - ◆ Needs and interests of fathers (based on your needs assessment).  
Space and facilities available.
  - ◆ Staff considerations.
  - ◆ Budget.
  - ◆ Safety.



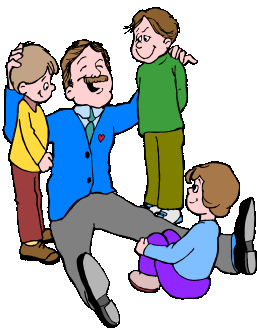
**HANDOUT IV-6****DADS AND KIDS PLAYGROUP****- A SAMPLE DESCRIPTION**

This description for a Dads and Kids Playgroup is adapted from the Mosaic Centre, a program at the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society in Calgary, Alberta. The purpose of the program is to provide time for fathers and children to play together, and then to provide time for fathers to be involved in a discussion. The topics and focus of each morning, both in terms of the activities and the discussion, will vary according to needs, interest, and the facilities available.

A needs assessment conducted at the Mosaic Centre indicated that parents were having difficulty finding the time and the money to have fun with the children. Saturday is a day when many fathers look after the children, while mothers have ‘time off’ for leisure or errands. We know that many immigrant families do not have the space at home, or toys and equipment, for recreational and play activities with their children. Financial restraints often make it difficult to join community activities such as skating, art lessons, or swimming. Further, many immigrant fathers told us that in their home country, their role did not include sharing play and recreation times. This is in direct contrast with the findings of sociological studies in Canada which describe the mother’s role as a caregiving one, and the father’s role as a partner in play. Generally this means that mothers are engaged in cooking, cleaning, and bathing the children while the father is the one who rough-houses on the floor with the children. Whether by choice or circumstance, when men undertake this new aspect of the fathering role, it is important to offer them support.

The Mosaic Centre is located in downtown Calgary, on direct transportation routes. There is a well equipped multi-age playroom, as well as an open space for large motor activities, comfortable spaces for adults to sit and talk, and a kitchen for preparation of snacks. The Saturday Morning Playgroup is run using monthly themes such as seasons, art, music, or Canadian holidays. When the parents and children first arrive they are involved together in various activities. Arts and crafts, music and dancing are some examples. Snacks are provided and then children move to the playroom for supervised play, while parents relax, drink coffee, and become engaged in discussion. Often, these discussions are informal but, as a result of these discussions, issues of common concern emerge. These may lead to more formal workshops with guest speakers or facilitators.

Similar frameworks have been developed for fathers of children with special needs and for fathers of children in early childhood settings. (Gregory, R., 1997). This model has worked well in attracting immigrant fathers and their children to the Mosaic Centre. Fathers have appreciated the choice and the range of activities, and the opportunity to socialize with other fathers. The opportunity to engage in recreational activities at low or no cost, is certainly an important factor.



**PART FOUR****A PROGRAM OF FIELD TRIPS FOR FATHERS AND CHILDREN****RATIONALE FOR THE PROGRAM**

Field trips can be an important opportunity for learning, recreation and socialization. Preschool children learn best in hands-on active situations where they can explore and discover for themselves. Field trips provide opportunities for children to learn about the world around them. Through a series of field trips to different locations in the city, fathers can become familiar with city landmarks, services, and recreational facilities. Consider, for example, the everyday travel on public transit. Imagine what it would be like to travel by rapid transit if you couldn't read the directional signs or the instructions for purchasing tickets. Participating in field trips with a local guide will make it easier to travel alone the next time. Participating in a Canada Day picnic, attending the local children's festival, or going with a group to an interactive children's art presentation helps newcomers become more familiar and comfortable with local culture. A tour of local services such as employment offices, libraries, health care and dental clinics, with first language guides, will also facilitate adaptation to life in Canada.

Our interviews with new Canadian fathers suggested that fathers spend a fair bit of time in recreation with their children, but mostly at home or very near to home. Field trips to places like the zoo, a leisure centre, or a skating rink may provide new ideas and opportunities to families.

One of the benefits of field trips is the opportunity to make new acquaintances and develop social networks with people in similar situations. Ideas for field trips will be as diverse as the fathers you are working with and the opportunities available in your town or city. Field trips need not be elaborate or expensive. An outing to the Farmer's Market, a nature walk in the park, or a tour of factory outlets could be fun and informative.

### **GOALS FOR THE PROGRAM**

The goals of the program could be:

- ◆ To familiarize newcomers to landmarks in their city.
- ◆ To familiarize newcomers with recreational opportunities in their city.
- ◆ To provide developmentally appropriate learning and recreational opportunities for children.
- ◆ To provide opportunities for fun and meaningful time together for fathers and children.
- ◆ To provide opportunities for fathers to meet new acquaintances and network.

### **PROGRAM STRATEGIES**

Before embarking on a program of field trip, it is important to determine whether the need and interest is there. Review your needs assessment data with staff. Remember, however, that responses in a needs assessment may be limited by a lack of knowledge about possibilities. Therefore, it may be necessary to test an idea with potential participants subsequent to the needs assessment. In the Mosaic Centre Program, program facilitators deduced the appropriateness of field trips; there was not an explicit request for this activity. However, these field trips are now an extremely successful component of the Mosaic Centre.

Our data from the interviews with new Canadian fathers indicated a broad range of father-child time together. Some fathers spent most of the day with their children while their wives worked; others had limited time in the afternoon or evenings. Many had time on weekends. Field trips can vary in time of day and week as well as in length, so it is important to consider the time factor at the beginning of the planning stage. Season also has an effect on the planning. While we hope that we can garnish enthusiasm and appreciation for our great Canadian winters, weather can be an obstacle for newcomers, especially if they come from warm climates. Make sure that children have appropriate clothing and equipment for outings. Tobogganing can be lots of fun but without snowpants, it may simply be cold.

Choosing appropriate field trip sites can be an enjoyable planning exercise for staff. Exercises IV-7, IV-8, and IV-9 provide a guide for choosing sites and planning.

**EXERCISE IV-7****CHOOSING APPROPRIATE FIELD TRIP VENUES****RATIONALE:**

The purpose of this exercise is to help staff become aware of the field trip opportunities in the city.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Provide participants (this could be staff and fathers together at a planning session) with the following sources:
  - ◆ A city map.
  - ◆ A telephone book (yellow pages).
  - ◆ Pamphlets and promotional materials from the tourist information bureau.
  - ◆ A directory of community agencies.
  
2. In groups of two or three, spend some time reviewing the material and brainstorming sites for field trips.
  
3. For each possible site, answer the following questions:
  - ◆ What would be the potential benefit for fathers and children?
  - ◆ What are the costs associated with this site?
  - ◆ When is the site open (times, days, and seasons)?
  - ◆ Where is the site located in the city?
  
4. Have participants categorize the sites. We suggest categories such as:
  - ◆ Field trips with no admission price.
  - ◆ Warm indoor winter activities.
  - ◆ Outdoor activities (divided by season).
  - ◆ Trips for weekend days only.
  - ◆ Trips that are predominantly informative/educational (i.e. museum) vs. trips that are predominantly recreational.
  
5. Ask staff to select a series of potential field trips that would be suitable for their organization and their population of fathers and children.

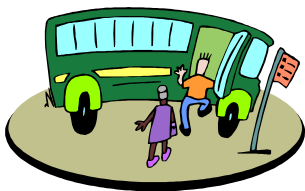


**EXERCISE IV-8****PLANNING A FIELD TRIP FOR FATHERS AND CHILDREN****RATIONALE:**

Field trips require significant up-front planning in order to ensure the enjoyment and safety of all involved. This exercise will take participants through some of the considerations for planning a successful field trip..

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Before choosing any field trip, it is important to consider staff, budget, and transportation issues. Participants may choose to follow the same decision-making process that was outlined in Exercise IV-6 for the Dads and Kids Playgroup.
2. Make a pre-trip visit to the site. This could include only a member of the staff or staff and some interested fathers together. Following are some points to make note of during the pre-visit:
  - ◆ Transportation.
    - route (can you get there by public transportation or would you need to rent a van)
    - cost
    - travel time
    - safety
  - ◆ How much adult supervision would be required (a guideline would be one adult for three preschoolers)?
  - ◆ Are there any potential dangers for the children (busy roads to cross, broken glass on the playground, unsafe playground equipment)?
  - ◆ Facilities..
    - accessible washrooms
    - food services
    - shade or shelter from sun and weather
    - first aid
    - accessibility for strollers
    - telephone
  - ◆ Program.
    - suitable for preschool children and fathers
    - cost
    - time needed for visit (structure versus non-structured)
  - ◆ The feel of the place - was it fun? Welcoming to children?
3. Based on your experiences at the site, make a recommendation regarding the appropriateness and desirability of a field trip to this site.

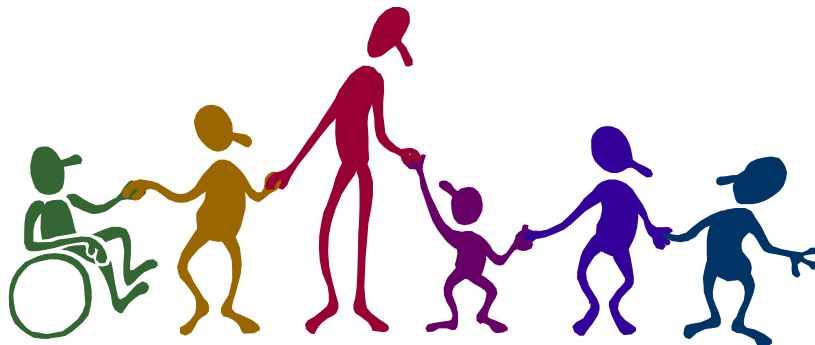


**EXERCISE IV-9****DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS****RATIONALE:**

The best intentions may go amuck for lack of detailed planning! This exercise will help field trip planners ensure that key details have been covered. But don't rely only on this guide; use your own head as well! Some special considerations can help make new Canadians feel welcome as they explore their new surroundings.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Ask staff to brainstorm a planning checklist. Some examples may include:
  - ◆ Advertising in first language.
  - ◆ Clear instructions on where and when to meet.
  - ◆ Checklist for fathers of what to bring (coats, hats, sunscreen, sandwiches, drinks, etc.).
  - ◆ Cash required.
  - ◆ Time required.
  
2. If the field trip is to an historic site or important landmark, it would seem important to provide the fathers with a brief explanation of the significance or importance of the site, in first language if required.
  
3. What other details might be important to consider with your particular group?
  
4. Develop an evaluation instrument to ensure that you get feedback from the participants.





## **CONCLUSION**

This module has included a few examples of possible program ideas for fathers and children together. The range of possibilities is endless and facilitators should not be constrained by the ideas presented here. The important aspects to consider are the needs of the fathers, children, and families in the population groups with which you are working. Sensitivity to their issues, their concerns, and their interests is extremely important.

As you plan programs, try to bring together the learnings from the other modules in this manual: sensitivity to the role of fathers both in home countries and in Canada, needs assessments, and evaluation components to determine the viability and effectiveness of programs.

When working with families new to Canada, it is important to be able to move outside of our own perspectives and cultural frameworks in order to attempt to understand the difficulties which families face and to be appreciative of the tremendous strengths they possess. The programs which are most successful are those which are respectful of these strengths and work to support families as they continue to build their capacities.

We wish you the very best as you develop programs to support new Canadian fathers!

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