

WHO Guideline on parenting interventions to:

# Prevent maltreatment and enhance parent-child relationships with children aged 0-17 years

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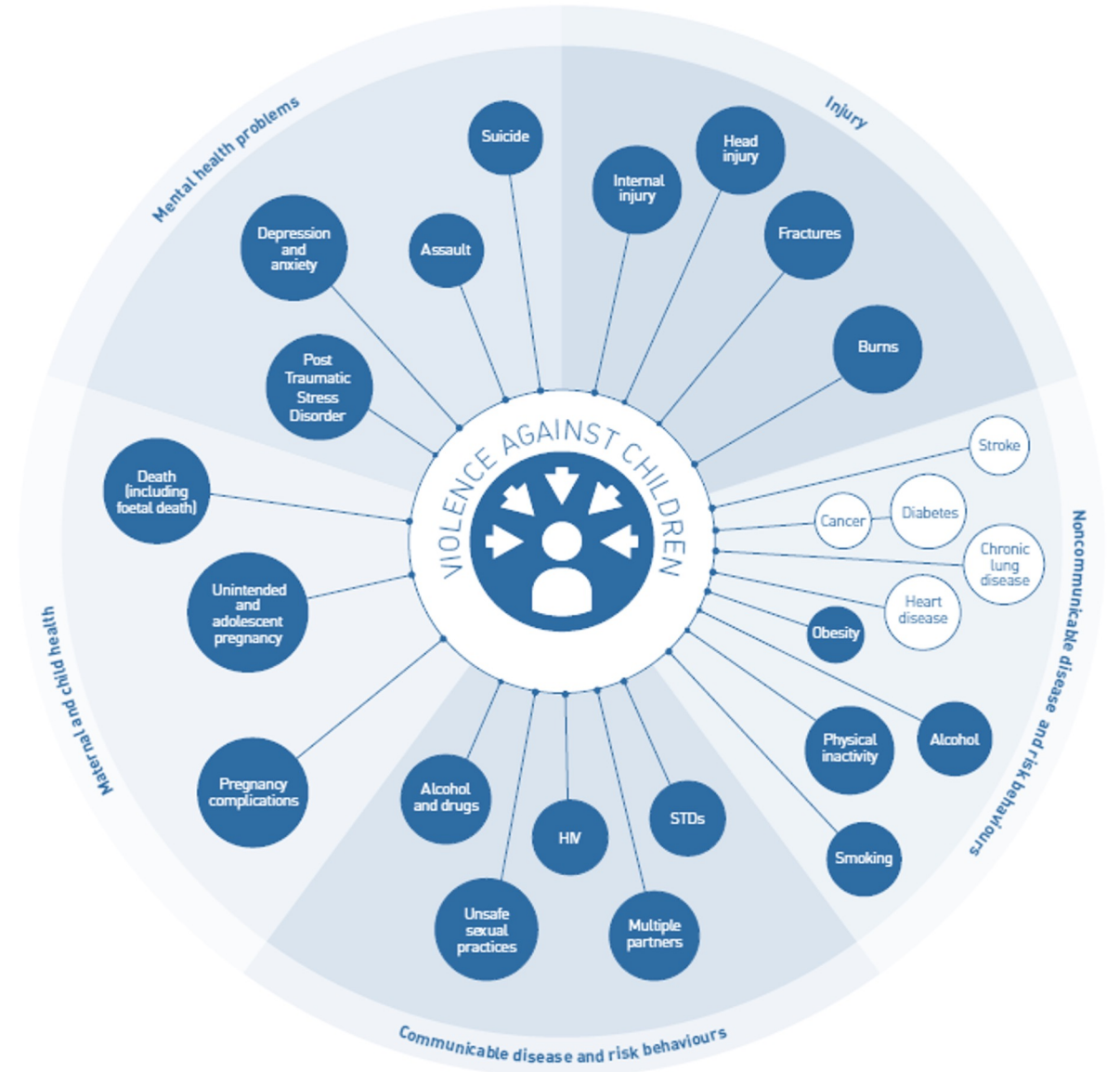
# Why parenting?

## Harsh or violent parenting carries adverse effects in many spheres of well-being:

- Injuries, disabilities and death
- Poor mental health
- Poor child development and health
- High-risk behaviours
- Communicable and non-communicable diseases
- Maternal health problems
- Inter-generational transmission of violence & offending, including intimate partner violence

These wide-ranging outcomes of poor parenting are hugely costly to multiple systems

WHO/ UNICEF: INSPIRE (2016)



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Web Annex. GRADE evidence profiles  
and evidence to decision tables



<https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/violence-prevention/parenting-guidelines>

# Parenting interventions described

- Aim to improve parent-child interaction and quality of parenting
  - Structured interventions directed at parents/caregivers
  - Focus on developing new skills and behaviours – not didactic instruction
  - Parents learn and practice applying new skills to their own child and family context
  - Often manualized – to ensure consistency and fidelity
- Can be universal, selective or indicated
- Delivery can be to groups or single families
- Delivery channels can be centre-based, home based, online, or a mix
- Delivery staff can be professional or para-professional
- Can be combined with other components (e.g. household income support)



# Essential components of effective parenting interventions

## Non-violent discipline techniques:

- Ignoring negative attention-seeking child behaviours
- Pointing out natural consequences and applying logical consequences
- Using time out

## Proactive parenting techniques

- Setting clear rules
- Monitoring child behaviour
- Giving positive and direct commands to children

## Positive reinforcement:

- Praising and rewarding appropriate child behaviours

## Parental self-management skills

- Emotion regulation
- Problem solving
- Communication and spouse/partner support

## Improving parent-child relationships

- Child-led play
- Empathy building

# Essential components of effective parenting interventions

## Non-violent discipline techniques:

- Ignoring negative attention-seeking child behaviours
- Pointing out natural consequences and consequences
- Using time out

## Proactive

- Setting
- Monitor
- Giving positive feedback to children

**Practice!  
Practice!  
Practice!**

...ing  
communication and spouse/partner support

## Improving parent-child relationships

- Child-led play
- Empathy building

# Outcomes

## **Prioritized outcomes** assessed across all reviews

- Child maltreatment
- Harsh and negative parenting
- Positive parenting skills and behaviour
- Child externalizing/behavioural problems
- Child internalizing problems
- Parental mental health
- Parental stress

## **Non-prioritized outcomes** assessed across all reviews

- Intimate partner violence
- Parental self-efficacy
- Positive parenting knowledge, attitudes and beliefs
- Parental attitudes to corporal punishment

# Recommendations

1

In LMICs, evidence-based parenting interventions should be made readily accessible to all parents or caregivers of children aged 2-17 years, in group-based or individualized formats, delivered through a variety of stakeholders, including government organizations such as health, education or social services, and non-government organizations.

2

Globally, evidence-based parenting interventions informed by social learning theory should be made readily accessible to all parents or caregivers of children aged 2-10 years, in group-based or individualized formats, delivered through a variety of stakeholders, including government organizations such as health, education or social services, and non-government organizations.





# Recommendations

## 3

In LMICs, evidence-based parenting interventions should be made readily accessible to all parents and caregivers of adolescents aged 10-17 years, in group-based or individualized formats that consider the specific needs of adolescents and parents of adolescents, delivered through a variety of stakeholders, including government organizations such as health, education or social services, and non-government organizations.

## 4

In humanitarian settings within LMICs, evidence-based parenting interventions or broader evidence-based interventions with a parenting component should be made readily accessible to all parents and caregivers of children aged 0-17 years, in group-based or individualized formats that consider the impact on recipients' mental health.



# Recommendations

## 5 Following the 2020 WHO guideline Improving early childhood development (ECD), to improve ECD:

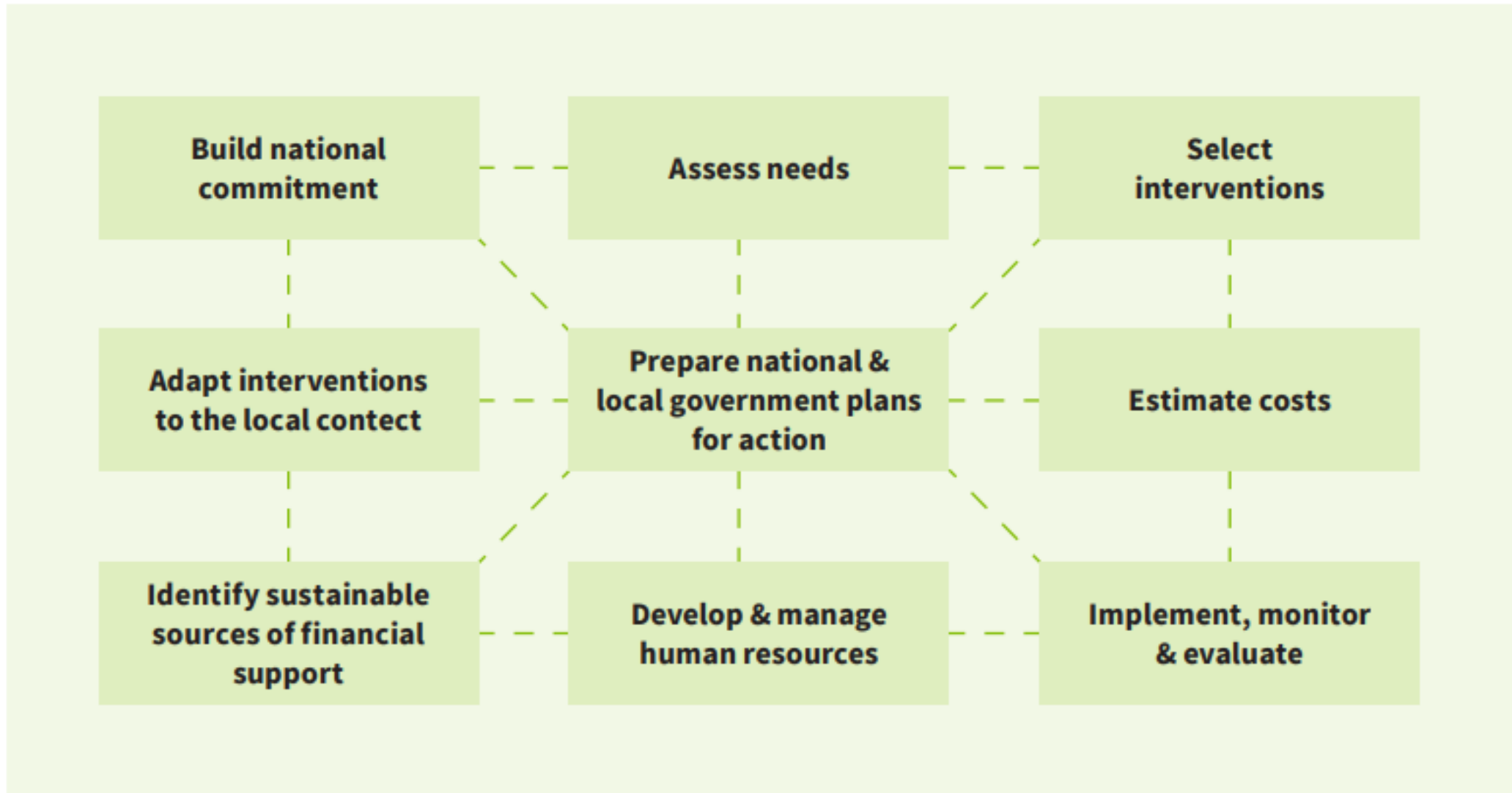
- All infants and children should receive responsive care during the first 3 years of life; parents and other caregivers should be supported to provide responsive care;
- All infants and children should have early learning activities with their parents and other caregivers during the first 3 years of life; parents and other caregivers should be supported to engage in early learning with their infants and children;
- Support for responsive care and early learning should be included as part of interventions for optimal nutrition of infants and young children, and
- Psychosocial interventions to support maternal mental health should be integrated into early childhood health and development services.



# Key content for each recommendation

- Justification
- Meta-analyzed effect sizes on:
  - Increasing positive parenting behaviours
  - Reducing child maltreatment and harsh parenting
  - Reducing child behavioural and mental health problems
  - Reducing parental mental health problems and stress
- Assessment against WHO-INTEGRATE implementation criteria including:
  - Health equity
  - Equality, and non-discrimination
  - Human rights and socio-cultural acceptability
- Implementation considerations
- Research priorities

# Guideline adaptation and implementation



# Accessing the guidelines and underlying reviews

- The guidelines: core document and web annex
- The underlying evidence reviews
  - [Backhaus S, Gardner F, Schafer M, Melendez-Torres GJ, Knerr W, Lachman JM. Parenting interventions to prevent child maltreatment and enhance parent-child relationships with children aged 0-17 years. Report of the systematic reviews of evidence.](#)
  - [Gardner F, Shenderovich Y, McCoy A, Schafer M, Martin M, Janowski R et al. Parenting interventions to prevent child maltreatment and enhance parent-child relationships with children aged 0-17 years. Report of the reviews for the WHO-INTEGRATE framework.](#)



The screenshot shows the WHO website interface. At the top left is the WHO logo and name. A navigation bar contains a home icon and links for Health Topics, Countries, Newsroom, Emergencies, Data, and About WHO. The main heading reads: "WHO guidelines on parenting interventions to prevent maltreatment and enhance parent-child relationships with children aged 0-17 years". Below this is a short introductory paragraph about child maltreatment and the purpose of the guidelines.

<https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/violence-prevention/parenting-guidelines>

**Thank you, and for more information please visit the  
guidelines web page**

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**World Health  
Organization**