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Note: An asterisk * before the Lesson denotes the Lesson is a Nurturing Parenting® Core Competency

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In the Nurturing Skills™ for Families Program, professionals have the flexibility of tailoring a specific Nurturing Parenting® Program to meet the assessed parenting needs of families while maintaining the fidelity of the philosophy and model of Nurturing Parenting®.

Nurturing Skills™ for Families is an innovative program designed to empower parents and parent educators in creating customized, competency based parenting programs to meet the specific needs of families. It consists of 80 lessons, each lasting between sixty to ninety minutes. The lessons are taken from the evidenced-based Nurturing Parenting® Programs for Prenatal, Parents and Their Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers, Parents and Their School Age Children, Parent & Adolescent, It's All About Being a Teen, Foster and Adoptive Parents and Developmentally Delayed and Special Needs Families. Based on the assessed needs of the family, parents and parent educators work together and select competency based lessons from the curriculum to form a parenting program that is customized to meet the specific needs of the families. Lessons can be taught in a home setting, in a group setting, or in a combination group and home setting.

Competency-based lessons are designed to help adults acquire specific knowledge and skills that will improve their overall parenting. The competencies are measured in personal and family life style patterns, and in parenting knowledge, beliefs, and performance rating scales.

Nurturing Parenting® is a proven approach for the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. Parents and their children learn new beliefs, knowledge and skills that improve their overall level of functioning in nurturing parenting.

The Differences Between the Nurturing Parenting® and Nurturing Skills™ for Families Programs

The Nurturing Parenting® Programs

The Nurturing Parenting® Programs are evidenced based programs that have proven effectiveness in treating and preventing the recurrence of child abuse and neglect. The Programs are designed to be family based with a highly structured series of sequenced lessons. To maximize the potential in achieving the results of years of research with the Nurturing Parenting® Program, fidelity to the program content, sequence of lessons, program length and manner of implementation should be followed rigorously. Deviation from the tested design jeopardizes the expected results achieved from the established research. The Nurturing Parenting® Programs work best with families identified as abusive and/or neglecting.

The strength of the Nurturing Parenting® Programs is that skills and competencies are taught to all families in a predetermined sequenced manner. The Nurturing Parenting® Programs are recognized for their effectiveness in preventing the recurrence of child abuse and neglect.

Nurturing Skills™ for Families Program

Nurturing Skills™ for Families (NSF) is a program designed to provide flexibility in meeting the specific parenting needs of families. NSF is a compilation of 80 lessons that are presented in the **Lesson Guide for Parents** and 85 lessons presented in the **Lesson Guide for Children**. The goal underlying the NSF is to tailor make specific parenting programs designed to meet the needs of individual families thereby increasing parents' commitment and participation. Parents and Parent Educators work together in creating "family specific parenting programs." The NSF program maintains the fidelity of the evidence based Nurturing Parenting® model, yet offers flexibility.

The parent lessons of the curriculum are presented "menu style" in two formats:

1. **Format 1: Lessons by Parenting Competency Area.** In this format, the lessons are grouped into **18 parenting competency areas**. Examples of the competency areas include

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discipline, growth and development of children, alternatives to spanking, developing empathy, etc. Within the competency areas are the **Core Competency Lessons** and **Supplemental Lessons**.

The Core Competency Lessons form the foundation of the basic skills of Nurturing Parenting® and are identified in the Lesson Guide by an asterisk (*). The Supplemental Lessons serve as resources for families with specific needs that often interfere or compete with nurturing parenting practices. The unique parenting needs of **Prenatal Parents, Foster and Adoptive Parents** and **Parents with Special Learning Needs** are also presented in the Lesson Guide. Additional information is presented on *pages* viii and ix

2. **Format 2: Lesson by the Five Nurturing Parenting® Constructs of the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2)**. Instruction and assessment in Nurturing Parenting are based on five parenting patterns, or constructs, that represent abusive and neglecting parenting behaviors. In this format, lessons are listed under the parenting construct they are designed to remediate. These parenting constructs, described in detail on *page iii*, provide the basis of assessment using the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2) and the Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS).

In Nurturing Skills™ for Families, parenting programs are created by selecting the lessons in the Lesson Guide that meet the needs of the families. The parent educator and parents work together in a cooperative manner in creating a **Family Nurturing Plan (FNP)** that determines the number and sequence of the lessons, the length of the program, and the delivery of the instruction (home-based, group-based or a combination of both formats). The philosophy behind Nurturing Skills™ for Families is that instruction is designed to meet the individual parenting needs of families.

Benefits of Using Nurturing Skills™ for Families

1. Parent educators work cooperatively with the parents in creating tailor-made parenting programs to **meet the specific needs of the families**.
2. Each **lesson** can last **60 to 90 minutes** and can be offered in one-to-one home visitation setting, a group setting with other parents with similar parenting needs, or in combination home and group settings.
3. The **Lesson Guide for Parents** presents the lessons in two formats: a) Parenting Competency Areas and b) Nurturing Parenting® Constructs. The Nurturing Parenting® Constructs are the five parenting subscales generated from the administration of the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2). See *pages vi and vii* for more information.
4. The **Parent Handbook** presents parenting information that is designed to match the content in the Lesson Guide. A shortened and simplified version of the parent handbook called the **Nurturing Parenting® Easy Reader Handbook** is available for low literacy parents and is compatible with the NSF. See *page vi* for more information.
5. **Core and Supplemental Parenting Lessons**. **Core Parenting Lessons** contain the basic competencies that help parents and children learn the fundamental principles and practices of Nurturing Parenting®. Core lessons represent the basic and essential information and skills that all parents need to demonstrate Nurturing Parenting on a high and consistent level. **Supplemental Parenting Lessons** are designed to meet the specific needs of some of the families. Information on possessive and violent relationships, drug and alcohol dependency, effects of second-hand smoke, are some of the topics that may need to be addressed by families experiencing these issues.

6. The **Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2)** and the **Nurturing Skills™ Competency Scale (NSCS)** are pre and posttest measurements designed to be used with the NSF Lesson Guide and Parent Handbooks. Pre and post assessments are designed to provide parents and parent educators the opportunity to measure parenting competencies and deficiencies. See pages *vi and vii*.
7. Parent educators and parents work together in creating a parenting program. Using the information generated from the pre assessments, a **Family Nurturing Plan** is developed as a joint effort thereby increasing the parents' commitment and participation. The post assessments are designed to ensure parents have learned the skills and are using them.
8. The **Lesson Guide for Children** provides comparable instructional lessons that address the issues of Nurturing Parenting at an age appropriate developmental level. **Eight-five (85) lessons** are presented in specific categories for young children 3 to 8 years and older children 9 to 12 years that allow educators to create a program that supports the program for parents. The categories are: Hello Time, Circle/Rap Time, Art Time, Puppet Power, Big Motor and Game Time. Educators match the content being taught to the parents with the lessons in the Lesson Guide for Children.
9. The Nurturing Skills™ for Families (NSF) curriculum can be utilized to create specific programs for **Prenatal Parents**, **Foster and Adoptive Parents**, and **Parents with Special Learning Needs**.
10. Topics included in the NSF curriculum extend beyond traditional parenting instruction. Such topics include spirituality, cultural traditions, drug abuse and parenting, etc. Parent educators have the **flexibility to add additional topics** not presented in the Lesson Guide.

Abusive and Neglecting Parenting Patterns

The Nurturing Parenting® philosophy and lessons are developed from years of extensive research based on the assessment of high-risk parenting beliefs and behaviors. The **Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2)**, an inventory to assess high risk parenting beliefs, has shown that parents charged with child abuse and neglect express significantly more abusive parenting beliefs than non-abusive parents. These differences are found in five constructs that contribute to the maltreatment of children:

1. Inappropriate Developmental Expectations of Children
2. Lacking an Empathic Ability to Respond to Children's Needs in a Caring Manner
3. Disciplining Children through the use of Physical Punishment
4. Reversing Parent-Child Family Roles
5. Oppressing Children's Power and Independence

These constructs form the basis of the lessons, skills and competencies in the Nurturing Skills™ for Families curriculum by focusing on the following educational objectives:

1. Building Self-Worth through Appropriate Expectations of Children's Growth and Development
2. Developing Empathy and Sense of Caring in Parents and Children
3. Utilizing Positive, Non-violent Discipline Practices and Techniques
4. Having Appropriate Family Role Expectations through Self-Awareness
5. Empowering Adults and Children through the Development of their Personal Power

Based on the assessed parenting needs of each family, a **Family Nurturing Plan (FNP)** is created in a cooperative manner between the parents and parent educators that forms the basis of the family's parenting program.

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Developing a Family Specific Nurturing Parenting® Program

- Step 1 Assessment is an important aspect of the Nurturing Skills curriculum. Administer the **Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2)** and the **Nurturing Skills™ Competency Scale (NSCS)** to each participant at the pre level (beginning) of your program. Utilize the online scoring programs available from Family Development Resources to score the AAPI-2 and NSCS. The online scoring programs are available at www.nurturingparenting.com.
- Step 2 **Meet with each family individually** and review the information. Summarize their parenting strengths and deficiencies. Utilize the profiles that are generated from the AAPI and the NSCS. Ask the parents for their impressions and suggestions regarding skills they need to work on.
- Step 3 Using the **Family Nurturing Plan (FNP)** create a parenting program with the parents.
- Complete the front page of the Family Nurturing Plan gathering basic demographic information.
 - On pages 2 to 5 of the FNP is the **Index of Parenting Competencies**. This form allows you and the parents to select the lessons to meet the family's specific parenting needs.
 - Note that on the Index of Parenting Skills, the lessons are presented by Competency Area, and by Construct as measured by the AAPI-2. Select the Lessons that you and the parents agree will help build their competencies. Place the date in the Selected Lessons column. Use the data from the pre-test and from conversations with the parents to guide your selection. It is recommended that Lessons 1.1 to 1.4 be taught first, as these lessons are designed to build trust and communication.
 - The lessons with the asterisk (*) represent the Core Competency skills and knowledge necessary for Nurturing Parenting® to become the consistent pattern of parenting practices in the family. Parents need to demonstrate competency in these areas.
 - When selection of the lessons is completed, mention that this is “the family's working program” and that lessons can be added or dropped to meet the needs of the parents.
 - Identify the manner in which the lessons will be delivered (home, group or a combination of home and group). Having parent input will increase the likelihood of their participation.
- Step 4 The **Lesson Guide for Parents** contains all the lessons presented in the Family Nurturing Plan. Core Lessons are identified with an asterisk (*). The remaining lessons are supplemental lessons that are designed to meet the specific needs of some of the families. Both the Core Lessons and Supplemental Lessons provide a comprehensive curriculum for building Nurturing Parenting Skills™ in families.
- Step 5 The **Parent Handbook** and the **Easy Reader Handbook** present the content taught in the Lesson Guide. The Easy Reader version presents nurturing parenting knowledge and skills in 37 chapters in a simplified and illustrated manner. The Easy Reader Handbook is appropriate for parents with difficulty reading as well as low functioning parents. The Family Nurturing Plan lists the pages in the Parent Handbook and Easy Reader Parent Handbook that correspond to the individual core competency lessons.

Implementing The Nurturing Skills™ Program

How to Use the Lesson Guides and Family Nurturing Plan

1. Complete all assessments, the **Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2)** and the **Nurturing Skills™ Competency Scale (NSCS)** prior to beginning your instruction. The data generated from the inventories form the basis of the program you and the parents are creating.

Start your program in **Competency Area One: Getting Started and Assessment**. Complete Lessons 1.1 to 1.4 for all families. These Lessons begin building trust with the family.

2. The lessons in **Competency Area Two: Nurturing Parenting® Philosophy** provide the parents with a basic understanding of the philosophy of Nurturing Parenting®. It's a good idea for the participants to understand the basic philosophy of Nurturing Parenting® before learning various strategies and skills.
4. Upon completion of the selected lessons in Competency Areas One and Two, begin teaching the lessons that have been selected on the **Index of Parenting Competencies** located in the **Family Nurturing Plan**. You can offer any lesson in any of the Competency Areas at any time. Primary attention should be given to the **Core Competency Lessons**. The Core Lessons form the foundation of Nurturing Parenting®.
5. The Family Nurturing Plan is a comprehensive document that measures the progress parents are making in developing their competencies in Nurturing Parenting®. The FNP lists the competencies for all the Core Competency Lessons, home practice assignments, review items that appear on the Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS), and discussion questions that build parents knowledge and proper use of the new skills. Directions with the FNP guide you in the proper use of this form.
6. Because the Nurturing Skills™ curriculum allows you to develop programs to meet individual family needs, you may want to combine **families with similar needs to form a group**. Group-based programs allow you to maximize your teaching power, are more cost effective, provide the parents with a social experience and a time away from the kids, allow their children to socialize with other children, and provide parents opportunities to learn from other parents.
7. If you are involving children in either a group or home-based program, the **Lesson Guide for Children** provides 85 lessons to facilitate instruction. The reader is referred to the Lesson Guide for Children for more information on designing and implementing proper programs.

Before You Begin

Group-Based Setting

If you are implementing your program in a group-based setting, here are a few suggestions:

1. Select a co-facilitator to work with you. Two heads are better than one and in case of sickness or emergency leave for one facilitator, the program can go on.
2. It is critical that the co-facilitators have a compatible working chemistry. You and your colleague will be modeling the workings of a good relationship.
3. Share the activities or alternate the leadership of the lessons.

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4. If you choose to involve children, have a separate class. Do not combine parents and children in the same class. The distractions will be too great to facilitate learning. The **Lesson Guide for Children** will assist you in creating a Children's Program that is compatible with the Parents' Program.

Home-Based Setting

If you are implementing your program in a home setting, you will notice that some activities in the Lesson Guide are written as if you are facilitating a group. Simply substitute the word "individual" for "group".

1. There are 80 lessons. Each lesson fits nicely in a sixty to ninety minute time frame.
2. Invite the grandparents of the children to participate if appropriate. Some relationships between the mother and father of the child have already broken up. Make sure you are well informed about custody issues.
3. In joint custody issues, invite the couple to learn together, or conduct separate home visits. Don't ignore those who play an active role in the parenting responsibilities.
4. Feel free to add your own lessons to your program. Remember, you are creating your own program utilizing the lessons and activities taken from the Nurturing Parenting Programs. Add the lessons that are necessary for the families you are working with.

Program Staff

1. Two Lead Teachers serve as Co-Facilitators for the group-based Parent's Program.
2. Two Lead Teachers serve as Co-Facilitators for the Children's Program. Depending on the age and number of children, additional volunteers will be needed to help out in the Children's Program.
3. One trained staff member is generally sufficient to implement the curricula with the families in their home.

Instructional Materials

1. **Lesson Guide for the Parents** consists of 80 individual lessons. Each lesson can take approximately 60 to 90 minutes to teach depending on the number of people attending the class and their intellectual capabilities. The lessons are presented by Parenting Competency Area and by Parenting Construct.
2. **Parent Handbook** consists of parenting techniques, worksheets, and home practice assignments.
3. **Easy Reader Parent Handbook** is an illustrated, simplified version of the Parent Handbook designed especially for use with low functioning and functionally illiterate parents
4. **Lesson Guide for Children** is the compliment curriculum for preschool and school-age children.
5. **Family Nurturing Plan** allows parents and parent educators to work cooperatively in tailoring a specific parenting program that meets the families assessed needs.
6. **Instructional DVDs** provide instruction in Nurturing Parenting practices.

Program Assessment

Pre and Posttest Assessment: Data are generated from two inventories:

The **Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI)** is a norm referenced inventory designed to assess beliefs in five specific parenting areas (Constructs) that are known to contribute to the maltreatment of children:

- Construct A: Inappropriate Expectations;**
- Construct B: Lack of Empathy;**
- Construct C: Belief in the use of Physical Punishment;**
- Construct D: Reversing Parent-Child Family Roles; and**
- Construct E: Oppressing Children's Power and Independence.**

Data generated from the completion of the AAPI-2 allows parents and parent educators to measure parenting strengths and deficiencies. Lessons are listed in the **Index of Parenting Competencies** and in the **Lesson Guide for Parents** by Parenting Competency Areas and by AAPI-2 Constructs. Select the Lessons that best assist the parents in building their Nurturing Parenting knowledge and skills.

Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS) is a criterion-referenced inventory designed to provide specific information that will allow you and the parents to create a meaningful parenting program. When parents complete the NSCS, "grades" are generated in each of the subscales:

- A. About Me** - demographic data about the individual.
- B. About My Childhood** - information about childhood experiences.
- C. About My Spouse (Partner)** - information about the partner and the quality of the relationship.
- D. About My Children and Family** - information about the children and quality of the family life.
- E. Knowledge of Parenting Practices** - knowledge based questions that assess how much parents know about Nurturing Parenting skills.
- F. Utilization of Nurturing Skills** - a rating scale that assesses the frequency parents utilize Nurturing Parenting skills.

Upon completion of the NSCS, parents receive a "nurturing report card" that addresses the parent's strengths and areas that need improvement. Suggestions on the NSCS are provided for improvement.

Process Evaluation Data: Information is gathered while the families are attending the program. This information is called "process evaluation" and will be used to monitor the families' success. Process evaluation includes:

- Attendance in classes
- Participation in the session activities
- Session Evaluation Forms
- Completion of Home Practice Assignments

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Ongoing process evaluation data are gathered throughout the program. The functional purpose of the process data is to keep both the parent educator and parent aware of the progress being made toward achieving competency.

Program Materials - Instructional Items

- For group programs, you will need a **flip chart or black/white board**. For home-based programs, bring along a **clipboard** with paper to facilitate the lessons.
- Each parent should have their own **Parent Handbook** or **Easy Reader Handbook**. Parents need to bring the Handbook to each class.
- The **Nurturing Book for Babies and Children (NBBC)** is also a good book for parents to have. The Nurturing Book serves as a guide for parents to engage their children in age-appropriate activities and infant and child massage.
- **Magic markers, pens/pencils, white and colored sheets of paper.**
- **Video Player.** The instructional A/V programs are presented in DVD format. You will need the appropriate equipment.
- **CD Player.** The visualizations used in the program are available on CD. If you choose not to use the recorded visualizations, the text of the visualizations is presented in the Lesson Guide for you to read.

Program Implementation Tips

- Greet each parent and child with a handshake whether you are conducting a group or home session.
- Before the start of each session, check in with the parents and get updated on their week's events.
- The Parent Handbook each parent receives will also serve as your text. Make sure you read the chapters that coordinate with the lesson's content prior to the start of each session.
- View each of the DVD's prior to the start of each session.
- Practice each session you are implementing. NEVER go into a session unprepared.
- Make sure all the pre-and post program data are collected.
- Ensure all the Process Evaluation Data are being collected which includes Session Evaluation comments.
- Make sure you know how to operate your A/V equipment and that the equipment is in working order. You will need a flip chart and markers for all group sessions or a clipboard and paper for home sessions.
- Above all, be respectful, treat parents and family members with dignity and have fun.

Working with Prenatal Parents, Foster and Adoptive Parent, and Parents with Special Learning Needs

Prenatal Parents. The unique conditions and characteristics of expectant parents are presented in a series of lessons in **Competency Area 16** of the **Lesson Guide for Parents**. Accompanying information is also presented in the Parent Handbook. The lessons focus on the parent's expectations of the child, issues related to the pregnancy, the culture of the family, the significance of the child's gender and name, and other issues related to the impact of the pregnancy on the quality of life for the parents and family. These lessons can be taught anytime during the course of your program. However, if the pregnancy has a significant negative impact on the partner relationship, addressing some of these issues early may allow parents to direct their interest and energy on the parenting issues.

Foster and Adoptive Parents. Competency Area 17 presents a number of lessons that address the uniquenesses foster and adoptive parents face. Lessons deal with the practical issues of foster parenting such as visitation meetings, integrating the foster child into the foster family, attachment, and working with the birth family towards re-integration while dealing with issues of loss and detachment. Lessons also address the issues of being adoptive parents including custody, integration into an existing family, issues the adoptive children face and questions they have about their adoption and birth parents. Personal issues are also presented in lessons that challenge the parents to examine their own needs and their desire in fostering and/or adopting children.

Parents with Special Learning Needs. There are many challenges working with parents who are developmentally disabled. The information in **Competency Area 18** addresses these issues. The article is written by *Dr. Alexander Tymchuck* and *Linda Andron, MSW* from *UCLA*. Understanding these issues is the first step in creating parenting instruction that will build their parenting and child rearing skills. Family Development Resources has published the Nurturing Parenting **Easy Reader Handbook** which is an illustrated and simplified instructional resource specifically for low functioning and functionally illiterate parents. The Easy Reader contains **37 chapters** of parenting strategies and skills that make up the core competencies of Nurturing Parenting.

A Word About Training

Family Development Resource, Inc. offers training workshops that provide program facilitators with the basic philosophy and strategies for implementing the Family Nurturing Skills™ curriculum, and Nurturing Parenting Program. It is recommended that professionals attend a Facilitators Training Workshop. For more information about Facilitator Training Workshops, log on to www.nurturingparenting.com or contact Family Nurturing Center at: info@nurturingparenting.com.

The Nurturing Skills™ for Families Lesson Guide for Parents allows you to create your own program to meet the individual and group needs of the parents you are working with. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at fdr@nurturingparenting.com or call us at 800-688-5822 MST.