



GOOD HEALTH; SAFETY AND SECURITY

Nurturing Care Framework

LUNCHTIME CONVERSATION REFLECTION

Sikunye seeks to equip and support churches to care for families in the First Thousand Days (FTD). This reflection is part of a range of Lunchtime Conversations hosted by Sikunye, aimed at equipping churches to understand the nurturing care framework.

Listen to audio recording [here](#)

Watch the video recording [here](#)



(WHO, 2018)

WHAT IS NURTURING CARE?

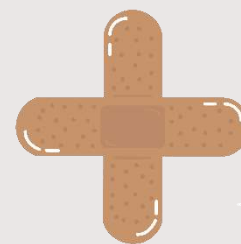
Nurturing care is what all children need to thrive. It is defined as a stable environment that is sensitive to children's *health* and *nutritional* needs, and that provides *protection from harm*, opportunities for *early learning*, and *interactions that are responsive*, emotionally supportive, and developmentally stimulating. These environments offer acceptance and a sense of belonging and connection demonstrated through an active and constant relationship with the child or adolescent (Berry & Malek, p52. 2017).¹

WHAT IS GOOD HEALTH?

Good health refers to the health and well-being of children and their caregivers. Why both? We know that the physical and mental health of caregivers can affect their ability to care for their child. Good health includes:

- Family planning
- HIV testing, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV
- Essential new-born care including kangaroo care for small babies
- Immunization of mother and child

- Growth monitoring and counselling
- Promotion of health and well-being including health care seeking behaviour
- Prevention and treatment of childhood illness and caregiver physical and mental health problems
- Care for children with developmental difficulties or disabilities
- Prevention and stopping of smoking, alcohol and substance use
- Support for caregivers' mental health
- Antenatal and childbirth care



There are various aspects to achieve good health – both mentally and physically. It may be daunting to say to mom “be healthy” but when you look at this list you can encourage mom in one aspect of being healthy at a time – that if achieved she will be taking a step to her and baby having good health. These actions will depend on the mom/caregivers' physical and mental well-being. So, nurturing care therefore means we need to pay attention to the health and well-being of caregivers as well as children.

WHAT IS SAFETY AND SECURITY?

Young children cannot protect themselves and are vulnerable to unanticipated danger, physical pain, and emotional stress. This includes:

- Provision of safe water and sanitation
- Birth registration
- Good hygiene practices – at home, at work and in the community
- Prevention and reduction of indoor and outdoor air pollution & clean environments free of hazardous chemicals
- Safe family and play spaces - young children, once they are mobile, can touch and swallow objects that can harm them,
- Prevention of violence by intimate partners and in families, as well as referring to services for addressing it
- Social care services (e.g. SASSA) - extreme poverty and low income pose serious risks that have to be mitigated by financial / social assistance
- Supporting family care and foster care over institutional care



WHAT THE LOCAL CHURCH CAN DO?

Some ideas that we as the local church and individuals can do to encourage good healthy and support parents in protecting their children from harm:

- Implement a **Child Protection Policy** as a church, and
- **Create safe environments** that are physically safe and emotionally safe
- Talk about health and safety with families
- Being a **role model** for a safe environment, that a parent can come and feel safe (their safe space) and in turn the parents become the “safe place” for their children
- **Affirm in mom/dad** what you see her/him doing well, build their confidence, get them to talk more to their child, and identify enjoyable activities that the caregiver and child can do together
- We are not qualified healthcare professionals, but we could **refer or accompany** mom to the clinic / her healthcare provider there are concerns,
- Encourage **health seeking behaviours** and that during pregnancy, every positive action mom takes has a positive impact on herself and her growing baby, See the *Road to Health Booklet*.
- **Pray** for and with parents, for protection and when their children are sick,

“My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body.”

PROVERBS 4: 20 – 22

USEFUL RESOURCES TO GROW YOUR UNDERSTANDING TO PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH & SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Resource on Sikunye website- [Caring for Families](#) the [Lockdown toolkit](#) see: Information on the building blocks for children to thrive in life
- [Connect Network](#) on [child protection](#)
- [Viva](#) – child protection resources
- [Ezrah](#) – child protection resources
- [Useful Contacts](#)

ⁱ World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, World Bank Group (2018) *Nurturing care for early childhood development: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential*. Geneva: World Health Organisation. Retrieved from: [9789241514064-eng.pdf \(who.int\)](#)