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TRAINER'S MANUAL

A Curriculum for the Study of
Early Childhood Development



Hands to Hearts
INTERNATIONAL

*“All children have the right to affection, love and understanding”
UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child*

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Hands to Hearts

INTERNATIONAL

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MISSION

Hands to Hearts International (HHI) is a US based non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of vulnerable children and economically disadvantaged women around the globe.

HISTORY

HHI was founded by Laura Peterson in 2004 to reach the world's neediest children - at the most important developmental time, zero to five years old - with the most cost effective, replicable form of prevention available. The mission of HHI is founded on two intertwining principles: To empower women and to nurture children.

PROGRAM

HHI offers a new model of excellence in care for vulnerable children. HHI's simple, cost effective and highly replicable tools and resources build the capacity of organizations and caregivers to improve early childhood development for children surviving in orphanages, foster care, refugee communities, and severely impoverished or conflict-ridden communities. Through HHI's support and training, caregivers improve their capacity to nurture a child's language, social, cognitive and physical skills, and most importantly enhance attachment and bonding.

The impact of HHI's trainings have been profound, HHI partners report that:

- in orphanage care, vulnerable children were less likely to die
- children were sick less often, were healthier faster, and needed less medicine;
- children gained more weight and were easier to soothe; and,
- caregivers were more nurturing, practiced better hygiene, took greater pride in their work and overall reported being happier with their jobs.

"Ensuring optimal conditions for a child's early years is one of the best investments that a country can make if it is to compete in a global economy based on the strength of its human capital."

UNICEF

CREATION OF THIS TRAINER'S MANUAL

This manual represents the culmination of our experiences and learning we had over years of providing HHI's early childhood development trainings in India and Uganda. During this time, our local HHI Trainers led hundreds of trainings for thousands of women who cared for tens-of-thousands of vulnerable children. We collected outcome data from every program HHI served, and obtained feedback from every woman who participated in HHI training. Our local HHI Trainers worked in partnership with Portland State University to combine knowledge and expertise to create a culturally adaptable and globally applicable training on the importance of early childhood development that will improve the knowledge and skills of parents, caregivers and teachers.

HHI's training is revolutionary in a variety of ways. First, it is designed to empower caregivers to use their direct actions to better their child's development. All other early child development training tools focus mostly on listing developmental milestones and do not empower adults on the difference they can make in their day-to-day nurturing, care and interactions. Secondly, the curriculum was consciously created to be culturally neutral. This curriculum can be translated into any language, and is applicable to caregivers in any culture or country. Certified HHI Trainers learn to infuse HHI's Training with local language, games, songs, dance, and stories to be true to their culture. Finally, HHI empowers people to act, regardless of their circumstances.

OBJECTIVES

- To strengthen the love and bonding between caregivers and children
- To improve caregivers' understanding of child development
- To teach caregivers the importance of early childhood development
- To empower caregivers to use their interactions to promote healthy development, regardless of resources or even literacy
- To promote the best development possible for all children
- To improve child health

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About This Trainer's Manual	2
Agenda for Two Day Training	4
Games and Activities to Use During HHI Trainings	5

Modules

Module 1: Introduction to Early Childhood Development	6-14
Module 2: Physical Development	15-27
Module 3: Cognitive Development	29-40
Module 4: Language Development	41-50
Module 5: Social and Emotional Development	51-62
Module 6: Baby Cues	63-69
Module 7: Baby Massage	71-79
Module 8: Health , Hygiene, Nutrition & Sanitation	81-90

Conclusion	91
------------	----

Supplemental Resources

Ideas for Using Puppets	92
Images of Brain Growth	93
Images of Connections in the Brain	94
Brain Development in the Early Years	95

Assessment Tools

Pre and Post Test of Knowledge	96
Participant Evaluation	97
Three Month Follow-Up Survey	98

HHI Training Information Form	99
-------------------------------	----

Acknowledgements	100
------------------	-----

Resources	100-101
-----------	---------

ABOUT THIS TRAINER'S MANUAL

This Manual is designed to be used by Certified Hands to Hearts International (HHI) Trainers. These professionals are leaders in their own communities who have been trained by HHI Experts in a basic knowledge of early childhood development (ECD) and they have learned how to apply this training within their communities and countries, using culturally relevant examples, games, songs, dance and stories. HHI Certified Trainers are able to engage and empower a wide variety of caregivers and they know how to include children in the training to make the lessons meaningful, practical and fun.

Key Points

Key points are provided after each section of the curriculum; these are the big ideas that we have identified as most important for your audience to understand and take away from this experience for their ongoing work with children. These key points are included in the Trainee's Booklet, and they would be a good focus for your review activities.

Games and Activities

Games and Activities are suggested in every section. These are only examples to help you start thinking of the games and activities from your audience's culture and their community that you already know and are familiar with, as well as to inspire you to be creative about inventing or seeking out new ones. Every Trainer should create their own selection of games and activities from which to choose when planning your trainings. Select games and activities based on the participants with whom you are working, their work or living situations, the environment you are in, and the domain of development about which you have been teaching.

Another consideration when selecting your activities will be the age and level of development of the children. Some activities will be better suited to babies and toddlers, while others will clearly work better with older children. Many activities can be either simplified or made more challenging in order to be played with either younger or older children. Modify games and activities to meet the needs of each particular audience and the children they care for.

If children are present during your training, invite them to join the games or activities, as well as the songs and dances that you will be teaching the participants. Including the children will further reinforce the connection between play and supporting development, and it will be good practice for the participants to think about how activities can be modified to meet the interests, ages, and developmental needs of the children with whom they work.

You will notice that many of the games and activities suggested will support development in more than one domain. For example, overcoming an obstacle during a race supports cognitive development - thinking about how to solve a problem - as well as physical development. Activities that involve each participant telling some news or information

to the group supports language development, but also social and emotional development, because each participant has a chance to be special and important, and all of the participants may feel more connected as a group because they have shared personal stories or information with each other. Whatever activities you choose to use in your training, be sure to point out to the participants that by playing with children they will be significantly impacting their development across all of the domains.

** In this manual, for the sake of ease of reading, the reference to a child may be “he” or “she”. All references to a child are to be considered as gender neutral.

MODULE 1:

INTRODUCTION TO EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Total Lesson = 60 - 90 minutes

Introductions & Game

- Trainer introduces self
- Ask all participants to say their names, and share something about themselves.
- Opening Game or Activity
- Introduce lesson - the importance of parents in the lives of children.

Pre & Post Test Questions

- When you hold your baby in your arms and sing to her, rock her, and make eye contact, you are supporting their language, physical, social/emotional, and brain development.
TRUE
FALSE
- Play activities help to promote a child's healthy growth and development.
TRUE
FALSE
- Daily interactions and love from the care-giver are not required for healthy child development.
TRUE
FALSE

Engage

- How many children do you have?
- Why have you come to this training today?
- What is your favorite thing about being a parent?
- What is your least favorite thing about being a parent?
- Discuss the word "parent" and how it can mean more than just a biological mother or father. (This might be more or less important of a conversation depending on the culture).
- Thank participants for sharing.

Lead Lesson for Each Sub-Topic, Cover Activity or Discussion and Key Points

- Introduction to Early Childhood Development
- Connections Across the Domain
- Variations in Individual Development
- Brain development during early childhood
- Importance of Observation

- When to be Concerned About a Child's Development
- Play - Context for Supporting Development

Trainer Resources

Games and Activities to incorporate into this module – developed by you, the Trainer.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Trainer Tips/Hints

Keep participants engaged, use small group discussions, ask questions, play games, have them act out or role play.

Completion

Thank participants for their time and praise them for the positive actions they are taking to support their babies and children.

INTRODUCTION – EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

You probably already know a great deal about children and their development from working with them. Many of the things that are described here will be clear to you if you've had experience. However, there are some things about children's development that you would not know or notice unless you are looking for them.

The goal of this curriculum is to go through each domain of development – physical, cognitive, language, and affective (social/emotional), and review by age what you can expect of children in each domain. Each milestone listed is followed by a suggestion of what you, as a caregiver, can do to support children's development. Following this, we will include some thoughts on the impact of good nutrition, health and hygiene practices on child development.

The overall purpose of this curriculum is for you to gain a deep understanding of how important you are to the lives of children. The experiences of children from birth through age 5 are critical for all aspects of their development, and your knowledge, and actions based on that knowledge, can give children the healthy start that they need. You have a major impact on children, and we hope that this curriculum will support you in making their lives better.

CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS

Most of the expectations for development, and the things you can do to support development, relate to more than one domain of development. So despite the fact that this curriculum is divided into four domains, remember that all of them are connected, and development in one domain is closely linked to development in other domains.

As an example, when a group of four-year olds are playing catch with a ball, they are interacting socially and taking turns; they are cognitively exploring the concepts of rules; they are exploring language in giving directions and having conversations; and they are exercising their physical dexterity.

Imagine yourself holding a baby in your arms, singing to her and swaying gently in time to the music. Her senses will be taking in lots of information - your touch, the movement, the sound of your voice, and the change in sound as you sing a new song. In the cognitive domain, her brain is thinking about all of these things, remembering them, and connecting this experience to those she's had before. Her language development is also being supported by hearing the words of the song, and recognizing that they have a different sound and feel than other sounds she hears around her. Physically, she is aware of the swaying movement, how this feels to her body, and that it is connected to the rhythm of the music. This gentle swaying and the soothing quality of the music calm her. Being held, feeling your touch, and hearing your familiar voice make her feel safe and secure; her affective development is nurtured. So just by engaging her in this one activity, you are supporting her development across all of the developmental domains.

Child development really needs to be looked at holistically – we talk about the whole child because of these connections across domains. Looking at each domain helps us to understand in more depth the particulars about each one, but as caregivers we cannot lose sight of the whole child.

Key Points of Connections Across the Domain

- The domains of development are all connected, and development in one domain is closely linked to development in other domains.
- By engaging in one activity with children, you can support development across all of the developmental domains.
- Looking at each domain helps us understand in more depth the particulars about each one, but we cannot lose sight of the whole child.

VARIATIONS IN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Although we have organized this curriculum in a way that tells you about children's development at various ages, it is important to remember that each child is unique, and her development will happen on her own individual timetable. What we've included here is meant to give you an approximate idea of when to expect to see certain things happening, and to give you an idea about in what order they will generally happen. There can be considerable variation in the timing of development between two perfectly normal, typically developing children. One infant may be walking at nine months, another not until sixteen months. One two-year old may just be beginning to use a few words, another may be speaking in full sentences. One four-year old may be very sociable and engage in cooperative play, while another may have difficulty interacting with others and prefer solitary play. It may help to think of certain developmental milestones occurring within a typical age range rather than at a certain age. And while it's important to have high expectations based on what is possible for a certain age, it's also important to be accepting of individual differences and variations in development.

For all children, having good, consistent, loving care and having many opportunities to interact with their caregivers, to play and to explore the world around them will increase the likelihood that they will develop to their full potential, whatever the timing of that development may be.

Key Points of Variations in Individual Development

- Each child is unique, and her development will happen on her own individual timetable.
- Studying child development will give you an approximate idea of when to expect certain things to happen, and give you an idea about what order they will generally happen in.



MODULE 5:

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Total Lesson= 60 - 90 minutes

Introductions & Game

- Trainer introduces self
- Ask all participants to say their names, and share something about themselves, such as “How many children they have?” or “Why have they come today?”
- Lead a game that is socially or emotionally active.
- Introduce lesson - the importance of Social and Emotional Development in babies and children

Pre & Post Test Questions

- Parents or care-givers quarrelling or fighting in front of a child does not affect the child.
TRUE
FALSE
- Children vary greatly in terms of their personality traits.
TRUE
FALSE
- Babies do not have emotions
TRUE
FALSE
- Love, care and responsiveness by the parents or care-givers greatly support the development of healthy attachment, bonding and trust.
TRUE
FALSE

Engage

- What kinds of feelings do babies have?
- How do babies express their emotions to you?
- Thank participants for sharing

Read Overview of Social and Emotional Development

Lead Lesson on Social and Emotional Development

Review Key Points



Trainer Resources - Games

Games and activities that support children's social and emotional development are ones that help children feel good about themselves, or ones that encourage or require social interaction and cooperation. Some examples are:

- Games that focus on the child's interests. For example, having children, in turns, share something special that happened to them the previous day (you can do this by creating a game called "Headline News," for example).
- Games that require cooperation between two or more children. For example, clapping games where two children have to coordinate their movements.
- Games that focus attention on the child, such as games where the child covers her face and the caregiver says "Where's...?" and then say the child's name. "There she is!" You can also do games or activities that involve playing with or counting children's toes or identifying parts of the child's face.

Games and Activities to incorporate into this module – developed by you, the Trainer.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Facilitator Tips/Hints

- Keep participants engaged, use small group discussions, ask questions, play games.
- Reflect on the game you played at beginning of class, what emotions or feelings did the game cause in you? Could a baby play that game? What games can babies play?
- Ask participants to discuss in small groups how they are already supporting their child's social and emotional development. Help them identify some of the things they do everyday.

Completion

Thank participants for their time and praise them for the positive actions they are taking to support their babies and children.



OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Affective development has to do with the development of children's social, emotional, and personality characteristics, as well as the development of the self concept. Affective development is closely tied to cognitive development, as much of the child's development as a social person is dependent on how they process and think about themselves and others. Young children also begin to understand their own emotions, as well as others' emotions.

The relationship between social and emotional development and cognitive development is complex. Cognitive development affects how children think about and interpret the experiences that support their social and emotional development. Social and emotional development affects the ways that children either engage in or avoid the experiences that support cognitive development.

So, these domains of development are closely related. Think the relationship between social and emotional development and cognitive development is this way. A car represents the cognitive abilities, and gas as the affect (social emotional factor). Even if a child is capable of thinking and doing something, without the motivation, interest, or positive self concept, he may not use his abilities. Similarly, the child may have motivation, interest, and a socially supportive situation, but without the cognitive abilities, he may not be able to act. Either way, the car does not run!

It can be quite a confusing world to the young child, and affective development is critical. How children feel about the world, their experiences and themselves provides the basis from which children initiate and respond to the world. Particularly in infancy, young children form attachments to those who care for them, and these attachments and other relationships with both adults and other children provide the basis for later affective development and permit them to have healthy relationships, as well as to feel good about themselves.

Adults play a major role in supporting young children's affective development. One of the key ways in which adults play a role has to do with building relationships with each child. When young children have their needs responded to in a consistent and predictable way by their caregivers, they learn to trust in them and develop an attachment to them. Young children need to develop these core attachments in order to build a solid foundation for later affective development. Children who do not form at least one secure attachment with a nurturing and consistent caregiver can suffer from what is called attachment disorder. This will have a negative impact on their development across all of the domains. Clearly, their affective development will be affected by their inability to form and maintain loving, caring relationships with others. They will also have difficulty developing all of the social and emotional skills that are generally learned in the context of those relationships. Because children with attachment disorder are less motivated to reach out and communicate to others, participate in activities, and be curious about and



explore their environment, it is likely that their cognitive and language development will suffer. And finally, children who do not form attachments are at risk of suffering from what is called failure to thrive, which means that even though they are receiving adequate nutrition, their physical growth and development may be delayed or stop altogether. So you can see how important it is for caregivers to nurture trust and attachment in even the youngest babies, and to work to build and maintain loving, caring relationships with all of the children.

Infants 4-8 months

Babies will enjoy having many opportunities to watch people and activities in their environment.

What you can do: As much as possible, keep the baby in a safe place that is close to you and where the action is so she can see and feel like she is a part of what is going on.

Babies will show emotions, such as smiling or laughing or becoming visibly upset.

What you can do: Respond to these shows of emotion positively, as they are a sign of healthy emotional development. Help the baby name his feelings: "You are so happy about that!" or "Oh, my, you seem so sad when that happens."

Through gestures and expressions babies begin to initiate interactions more often.

What you can do: Respond positively to these attempts by babies to engage you in social interactions and build relationships with you.

Babies are learning the difference between their caregivers, other children, familiar people and strangers. Initially, babies will be friendly to strangers, but later may not want to be held by or left with them. This is known as "stranger anxiety".

What you can do: Whenever possible, have a familiar caregiver help the baby with his routine care. Introduce new people gently and in the presence of a familiar, trusted caregiver, and give the baby time to become comfortable with a new person and approach that person on his own. Be aware that stranger anxiety is a normal stage of development and is also a sign of healthy attachment. The baby is not being silly or naughty; for him the fear is real. In time he will get used to a new person and begin to be more friendly to them.

Babies will respond differently to different facial expressions.

What you can do: When you are talking, telling a story, or singing to the babies, use a variety of somewhat exaggerated, but not too scary, facial expressions.

Babies continue to want to be held and cuddled. They may try to let you know they want this by holding their arms out to you.

What you can do: Continue to spend time holding, massaging and cuddling each baby. When you are caring for a group of babies, it may make more sense to sit down and have them come sit in your lap or by your side than to hold one while the others cry at your feet! If you are busy and can not pick up the baby, reassure him that he's been heard: "I hear you want me



to pick you up, but right now I am feeding this other baby. I will be able to hold you when I'm finished." Even when you're unable to help a baby immediately, you are being responsive to him when you show that you've heard him.

Babies begin to develop a sense of self as separate from other people.

What you can do: Continue to appreciate the unique qualities of each baby. Make a little special time for each baby to have your undivided attention. Refer to each baby by her name when you are talking to her or about her. When you take the time to make each baby feel special, making individual comments about them and what they are doing, it helps the baby to feel good about herself.

Babies will establish full attachment with caregivers who consistently meet their physical and emotional needs.

What you can do: Meeting the baby's needs in a consistent and reliable manner will help him to develop trust in you and will support this attachment, which is very important to his health and his development across domains.

Two-year olds

The two-year old likes things to be predictable, for example, things are done the same way and in the same order each time, and things are placed right where they belong.

What you can do: Try to have predictable, established routines and a special place for all of her things. If you need to do things differently once in a while, she may not like it, but it will be easier for her if it is the exception rather than the rule.

The two-year old focuses intensely on her own desires and may find it hard to take turns or share toys.

What you can do: Try to have enough toys or play objects for everyone so no one has to wait with nothing to play with. Be understanding and acknowledge her feelings: "You really want the ball. It's hard to wait. While you're waiting, let's find something else for you to play with."

The two-year old may throw even more temper tantrums when things don't go her way and she becomes frustrated.

What you can do: Be more patient than you ever thought you could be! Don't try to reason with her, but don't allow her to have what she wants, either, or you will see more and more tantrums. Let her calm down, and be firm but kind as you redirect her to another activity.

The two-year old may still resort to physical aggression, but will be more likely to use her words when she is frustrated or angry.

What you can do: Intervene to keep other children safe, and help the child find an acceptable way to ask for what she wants, or teach her the words to express her frustration.

Although the two-year old observes other children and gets ideas from what they are doing, she will usually prefer to play alone or with an adult.

What you can do: Allow some time for children to play on their own, in a place where they



won't be disturbed but can still see other children playing.

The two-year old wants toys and other play objects to only be for her. She may offer them to another child, but then she might be sad if they actually take it from her.

What you can do: Try to have enough toys and play objects for everyone, including several of the same items if possible.

The two-year old will show her independence by saying “no” to everything.

What you can do: This can become frustrating, but relax and know that this is an important step towards the child thinking and acting more independently and becoming her own person. Give her lots of choices, for example to play with one toy or another, to wear one shirt or the other, to eat now or in five minutes, but when you need her to do something that is not a choice be clear about that too. Say: “You’re telling me you don’t want to do this, but it’s not really a choice. Shall I help you... or can you do it by yourself?”

The two-year old enjoys helping you and, in her play, she may imitate the things she sees you doing.

What you can do: When possible, let her be your helper, and have some play objects that resemble the things you use in your day-to-day activities, for example some old pots or dishes that will not break, or a little broom.

The two-year old will begin to show caring and concern for others. She is beginning to understand how other people are feeling. She is, in fact, beginning to be able to read other children’s cues, which is a big step toward developing empathy.

What you can do: Respond positively whenever a child shows caring or empathy. Help her name the other person’s feelings (sad, hurt, frustrated) and comment on what a good friend she is to be so concerned.

Five-year olds

The five-year old continues to be caring toward other children and may feel protective of those who are smaller or younger.

What you can do: Give the child opportunities to help with younger children or children in distress.

The five-year old may seek less comfort and support but still needs it from adults.

What you can do: Be attentive to the child who may be reluctant to ask for comfort or help.

The five-year old is generally responsive to adult requests and most of the time follows directions.

What you can do: Have the child help with simple tasks, and give clear directions.



LESSON - BREASTFEEDING/NUTRITION

Ask questions about current attitudes/behaviors regarding breastfeeding/nutrition.

Nutrition for the Mother

A mother's nutrition during pregnancy is very important for the baby to develop physically and mentally healthy, the mother must be aware of several important nutrition-related issues.

The pregnant mother should consume more in terms of quantity and quality since she is supporting the life of the new child. Her diet should contain sources of protein (either animal or quality vegetable sources like beans and lentils) along with plenty of the normal staple (be it rice, wheat, millet or corn).

To prevent maternal anemia, premature delivery and low birth weight deliveries, pregnant mothers must consume at least 90 iron/folate tablets during the course of the pregnancy. She should receive supplies iron pills as part of her pre-natal check-ups. This will result in a stronger and healthier baby.

Iodine deficiency in the mother is the leading cause of weak mental development in children. If there is insufficient iodine in the local diet, the best source is iodized salt. During pre-natal visits the health worker should ascertain whether the mother is consuming sufficient iodine.

Nutrition for the Baby

Breast milk is the best food for the baby, from the moment of birth for at least first two years of child's life, maybe longer. Breastfeeding should begin immediately, within the first hour if possible. The breast milk might be yellow and sticky at first. This yellow, sticky milk is full of nutrients that help your child to survive and makes them healthier and stronger. Breast feeding will help your baby to fight against sickness and disease. Breast milk should be the only food for the first 6 months of life. Nearly all women should be able to breast feed; they may just need a little help at first. Breasts should be washed before and after breastfeeding. It is important for mothers to also eat nutritious foods with protein, while pregnant and especially when breastfeeding. A mother who eats healthy will help her child to be healthy as well.

At around 6 months of age, children should start receiving supplemental food and clean drinking water in addition to breast milk. Children should start off being fed soft porridge and smashed fruits and vegetables and will need to be fed multiple times per day. In addition to breast milk, these healthy foods are necessary for your baby to grow properly and develop healthy brains.

(continued)