

Findings of study of Parental Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) related to Early Childhood Development.

Maewo Island, Penama Province.

August 18-28, 2014.



Rationale, Objectives and Focus

- There is limited information and evidence based on caregiving and child-rearing practices related to early childhood development and support for early learning;
- To systematically assess the level of knowledge, the prevailing attitudes and current practices of parents related to early childhood development and children's school readiness;
- To what extent are parents currently involved in early learning activities with their child?;
- To identify parental behaviors related to infant feeding, nutrition and child protection;
- Focus of study on 3 themes paramount to healthy child development;

- Nutrition and Health
- Early learning opportunities
- Child protection



Methodology

1. Research design

Aims to understand what parents do, to support young children's nutrition, health and early learning opportunities in addition to ensuring child protection.



2. Sample

Maewo: 47 villages and 780 households (HH). Data was collected from a geographically stratified **sample of 247 HH** (32% of total HHs and 65% of the villages on the island).

3. Instrument

2 versions of KAP Questionnaire – 0-3 yrs and 3-5 yrs.



Findings on Health and Nutrition

1. **Sources of information on infant feeding** – 80% mothers from health clinic, community worker or parenting program (type and quality of child feeding not known), 42% from their mother, 34% husbands 30% midwives, 24% others.
2. **Early Initiation on breastfeeding** – 98% breastfeed in the first hour after birth. 99% of mothers breastfed their children.
3. **Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months** – 96% of infants receive breast milk and other liquids, during first 6 months. Very few infants were exclusively breastfed.
4. **Introducing complementary food** – complimentary food were introduced between 3-10 months
5. **Continuation of breastfeeding to age 2** – 36% planned to breast feed until their child was 2 year or older.



Findings on Health and Nutrition

6. **Responsive feeding practices** (caregiver responsiveness to child and belief that they can self-regulate. Hence infants and children should be fed slowly and patiently and encouraged to eat NOT forced to eat) – Only 20% of mothers performed most or all of responsive feeding behavior.

7. **Dietary Diversity** – Most children eat three meals a day but only very few children met the minimum requirement of four or more food categories. 84% of parents report that they allow children to eat sweets to keep them happy.

(Nutritionists developed indicators to reflect a diet that enhances linear growth since child's height is a strong correlate to cognitive development).



Findings on Early Learning opportunities

1. **Parental support for learning** – about 64% of HHs engaged in 4 or more early learning and school readiness activities in the last 3 days (storytelling, playing, going outside home, counting or drawing, with **singing** being the most common early learning activity at home).
2. **Is child's gender or age associated with parental support for learning?** – No, however, parents of infants/toddlers engage in different types of activities compared to parents of pre-school aged children. (singing and playing for infants and toddlers and singing, storytelling and counting or drawing with pre-school aged children)
3. **Is socio economic status associated with parental support for learning?** Number of HH assets relatively low and showed that number of HH assets was not significantly correlated with parents engagement in early learning activities in the home.
4. **Is geographic location related to parental support for learning?** – study showed geographical differences between the 4 regions (North, South, East and West) with parents in the North more likely to engage in learning activities with their child.



Findings on Early Learning opportunities

5. **Father's support for learning** – Fathers are typically less involved than mothers in early learning activities in the home. Most likely activities fathers are likely to engage in are; playing and storytelling.

6. **Children's school readiness** – Children's scores on school readiness milestones were significantly and positively correlated with the child's age. Parents FGD, showed that families perceive that families play a major role and responsible for children's school readiness

7. **Kindy participation** – study showed that nearly all 5 year olds attended a kindergarten. 86% of household participated in raising funds for their local kindies. 13% of mothers reported that kindy is too far from their home so their children do not go to a kindy. 5% cited financial constraint.

8. **Transition to primary school** – All families plan to send their children to primary school. However, only 57% plan on sending their children to primary at the age of 6 years, the right age for grade 1 enrolment (42% - 7 years, 1 % - 8 years).



Findings on Child Protection

1. **Leaving children in inadequate care** – 54% of mothers reported that regular activities outside home involved leaving child in the care of someone else. 55% reported leaving the child alone for more than 1 hour, and 50% mothers reported leaving their child in care of another child, less than 10 years.
2. **Child injuries** – 21% reported their child had been seriously injured. Most related to machete or knife (73%). 31% children reported to be seriously burnt.
3. **Child discipline** – The most common discipline strategy when a child did something wrong is spanking or slapping (88% for 3-5 years, and 68% for 0-2 yrs)



Key findings and recommendations

Recommendations

- Communicate to parents using parenting programs that would improve parents knowledge of the benefits of kindergarten and importance of play based learning.
- Focus on parenting intervention that include education and communication strategies on **nutrition** and inform parents about the health and cognitive benefits associated with optimal breastfeeding practices and a diverse diet for children.
- Parenting intervention on **play** should focus on teaching parents to stimulate children through play through utilizing the diverse supply of innovative homemade toys and other readily available items in the home.
- Parenting intervention should focus on improving knowledge, attitude and practices related to child nutrition, child-caregiver play and positive discipline.
- Establish book lending libraries and family literacy programs.
- Build on music education to enhance school readiness.
- Engage fathers in parenting interventions and maximize father involvement during early childhood.



Tankiu tumas!

