

# 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!

