



Rotherham **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust

# **Evaluation Report** **Play/Praise Group**

**(June- July 2003)**

**(in conjunction with All Pakistan's  
Women's Association)**

**Report Compiled by:**

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## **Overview**

The Play/Praise Group was organised in conjunction with the All Pakistan Women's Association (A.P.W.A.), a Rotherham based advocacy, education and support agency for Pakistani women. It was delivered by two of the service providers within the Sure Start Rotherham Central Programme; Natasha Chowdhary, Primary Mental Health Worker, S.T.E.P.S. Community Mental Health Team (Children and Young People) and Pippa Ankers, Parent 2 Parent; a local voluntary organisation offering parenting support services.

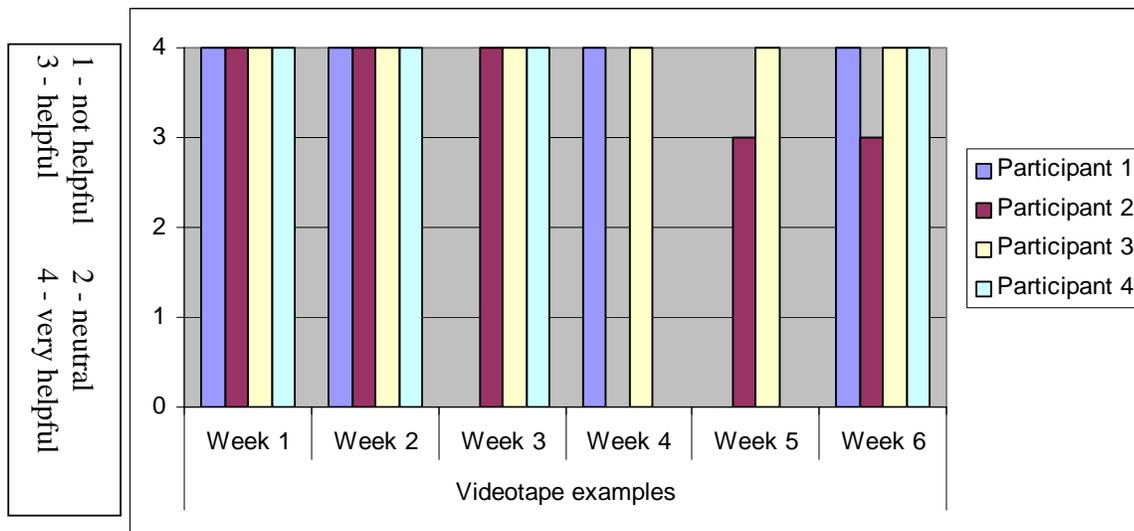
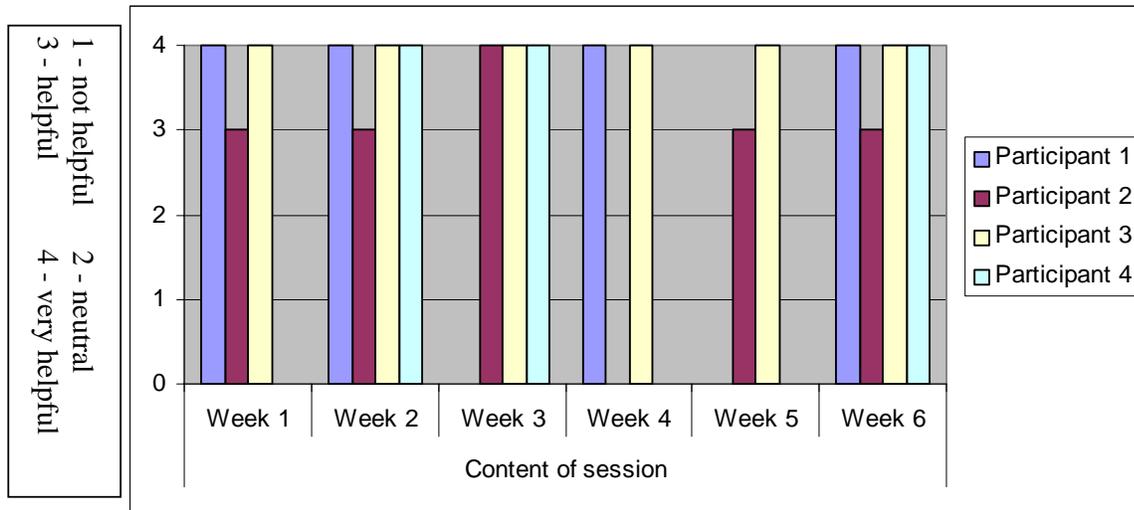
The six-session group consisted of skills teaching, discussion and home practice, focussing on techniques and exercises included from the 'Incredible Years (Webster-Stratten) Parenting Programme.'

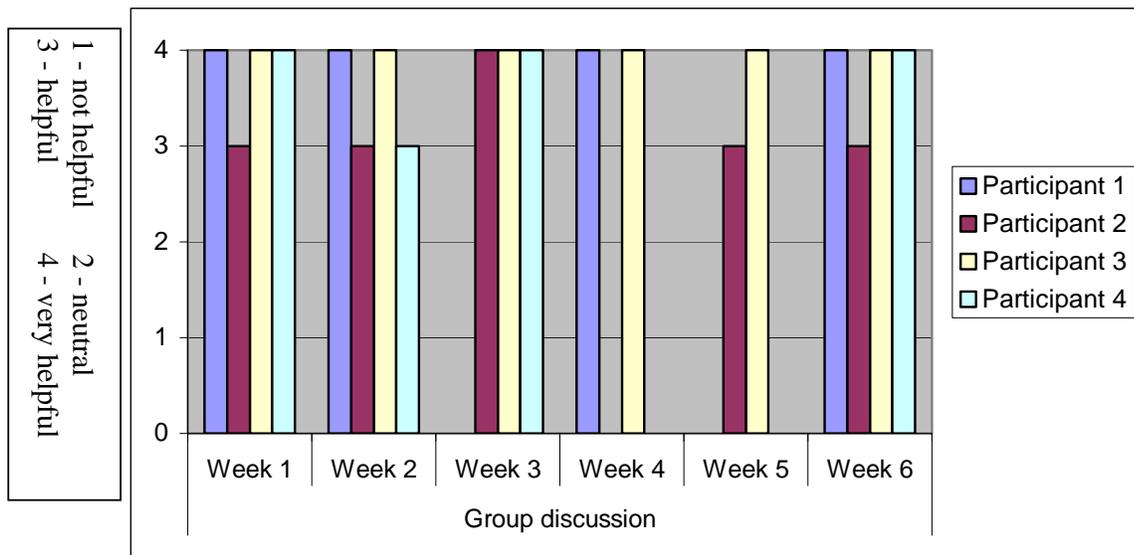
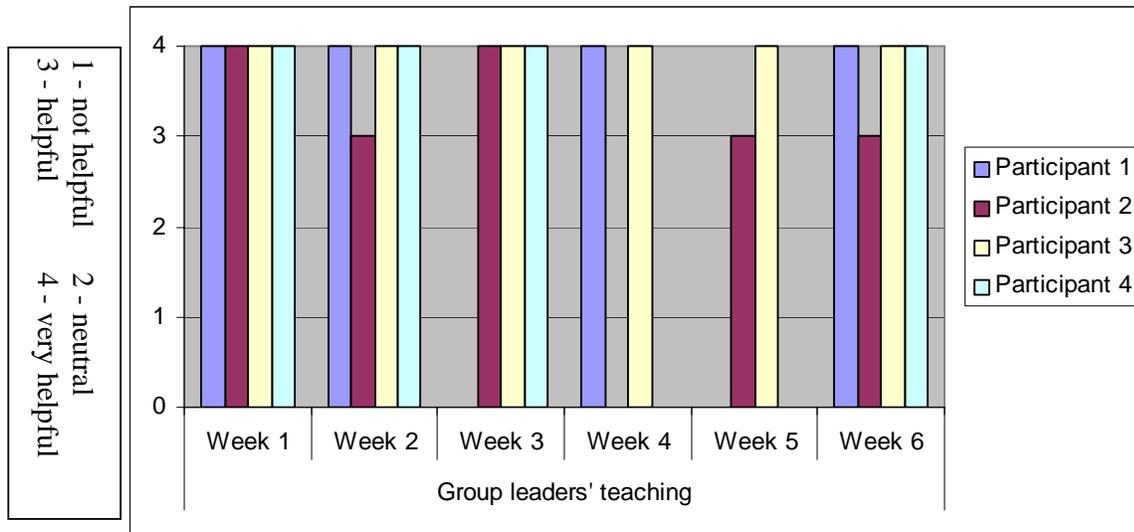
Although six women attended the group, only four women attended four or more sessions. These women agreed to participate in the evaluation of the group. The group has been evaluated by considering the participants' Incredible Years Parent Program Weekly Evaluation questionnaires. The participants were interviewed at the end of the group and Incredible Years Group Evaluation questionnaire was also completed by the participants at the end of the group.

## **Weekly Evaluations**

Participants were asked to rate the sessions by considering the helpfulness of the content of the session, the videotape examples, the group leaders, and the group

discussion. The results have been illustrated on the graphs below. Although, there are gaps in attendance, overall the participants have indicated that they have found the group very helpful, particularly the use of videotape examples within the group.





**Follow-up Interviews**

The participants were followed up two to four weeks after the end of the group to be interviewed about their views of attending the Play/Praise group and their learning.

The participants were interviewed in Urdu and their responses have been translated.

Themes have been identified from the interviews and these are included below illustrated by example verbatim extracts from the interviews

### **Learning and Implementing**

The participants indicated that they had found the content applicable and useful to them and indicated this by giving examples of their use of the skills learnt.

*'As long as I have started this course, everyday I have taken half an hour especially with my daughter, who is young, with her I play games or read a book and before I didn't.....I didn't take time for them'*

*'It was good, I did know more about play'*

*'My boy, he's not messing about as much, its (behaviour) is coming on, it's like half and half, (changes in) swearing, kicking and spitting'*

*'.....this course, especially if you have young children it's really helpful'*

*'I have got how to handle my children. I have understood their nature.....there have been a lot of changes after the course'*

*'it was helpful in my understanding of what was happening with my child'*

*'I really liked the course'*

### **Communication and Culture**

The participants indicated that perhaps the group may be more appropriate in an Asian language and made some intrinsic links to how the group could be more culturally appropriate and competent.

*'The biggest thing for me was interpreting, you should get that type of person you don't have to double pay.....in our community you don't find an English person, I am*

*not saying get lots of interpreters, its better to have another language other than English'*

*'For the women who don't know English, older women who have not gone to school, for them, I think Punjabi or Urdu especially, because they understand that. In our group there were two or three ladies and in explaining to them, in that time we could have seen something else, in that time you have to explain to them'*

*'there are cultural differences.....the ways (of parenting) are completely different'*  
*'the course.....its in English, and people hesitate like me, who has a problem with speaking or accent, then it becomes difficult to understand'*

*'.....the people here's tradition and our tradition, the people here's ways of playing with their child is different from ours, even so it depends on the mother'*

*'One thing that was missing was that the teachers were both English and for me to understand English, the whole of English is difficult. It would have been better to have some who could explain in Urdu to translate, that would have been better for me, but at the moment I have learnt a lot'*

### **Skills, Teaching and Improvements**

The participants identified several areas of the course they learned from and where they could see improvements.

*'I liked all of that, but the video clips weren't clear, I didn't understand them, some I did but there were some where I didn't know what had happened and what hadn't'*  
*'video - it was very helpful for me'*

*'the videotape - it needs a little adjustment.....the way it was done, in such a short period they would show you, then turn it off, I don't think everyone can judge that, what is going on'*

*'the tutors were good'*

### **Group Leaders' Evaluation**

The findings of the evaluation undertaken by Hena Sabir would reflect that the group overall went well. However, it felt, at times, that several factors prevented us from maximising the potential of the group, which we consider are useful learning points for future groups. From our perspective, these factors related largely to two principle themes; firstly, the level of awareness among group members of the personal commitment required of themselves and secondly, cultural accessibility of the programme itself. These themes are discussed below in more detail.

### **Personal commitment required of course participants undertaking the Incredible Years Parenting Programme**

The Incredible Years Parenting Programme requires a reasonably high level of personal commitment from its group members to attend all of the sessions and practice ideas presented and discussed in the group between sessions. It is important to get this message across in the recruitment stage. Our first objective was to inform the workers at A.P.W.A. about the expectations of course participants in the group in the planning and preparation stage, since they would be recruiting the women. In addition to discussions with Zenab Rasool, Co-ordinator, A.P.W.A., we had two planning meetings with Catherine Walley, Family Worker, A.P.W.A. with this aim in

mind, in addition to the practicalities of how the group would be run and what equipment would be required.

We then held an introductory session for parents to attend prior to the course commencing to give parents the opportunity to come and hear about what the course entailed before committing themselves to it. This session was advertised by word of mouth by the workers at A.P.W.A. but there were unfortunately limited numbers (approximately 5-6) who attended this session. The reasons for this are unclear; however, there was a bus strike on the day of the session, which may have had some impact upon numbers.

Unfortunately, some of the group members who turned up to the group arrived, seemingly not fully aware of the personal commitment this programme would require of them. Subsequently, at times and for various reasons, some group members appeared to struggle to sustain this level of personal commitment. At times, this made it difficult to progress the programme without adequate learning having been consolidated between sessions. Variation in patterns of attendance also affected the group process, which is an integral and crucial element to the effectiveness of these groups. This was further compromised by some of the group members arriving very late for a session, or leaving half way through the session, due to other commitments.

This made it difficult to progress the content of the sessions without sufficient numbers to begin a session or to prevent others from being too far behind by the time they arrived. We realised that we needed to invest time further time with the workers at A.P.W.A. to increase their understanding of the programme and the personal

commitment required of group members, to increase their effectiveness in how they promoted the group with their women. We considered that further thought could be given to adapting the leaflet which we developed to advertise the group; however, discussions with the workers from A.P.W.A. found that word of mouth would probably be the most effective form of publicity.

It also occurred to us that perhaps other, less intensive forms of parenting advice and information may be more appropriate for some of the women who use A.P.W.A.'s services, in a 'taster' format, for example, on age-appropriate play with young children.

### **Cultural accessibility of the programme**

As this group was a pilot for using with parents from non-eurocentric cultural backgrounds, we were not sure, at the start of the group, how it would translate culturally. Several areas of learning were generated during the course of the group. The first thing to state is that although the group of women were all recruited by A.P.W.A., within the group itself, there were variations in country of origin, first language, generation and levels of experience of 'mainstream' British culture. The themes outlined below need to be considered with this in mind. Within the group itself there were differences between the beliefs of individual members about child-rearing and family life, for example, the levels of interaction between parents and children, but at the same time, some commonality about expectations, for example in relation to gender roles in the family.

## Venue

It was originally planned that we would use the Multicultural Centre as the venue, as this was a venue, which was readily used by and familiar to the women themselves. This was altered prior to the group beginning due to the concern about potential disruption caused by other activities running in the centre at the same time. The venue was therefore changed to Wharncliffe Community Centre, across the road from the Multicultural centre, which was easily accessible to the women who used A.P.W.A. and seemed to be well accepted by the women themselves, despite our own reservations about the physical presentation of the venue.

## Language

In the planning stage of the group, we had discussed with the workers from A.P.W.A. the need for an interpreter, and they had agreed to provide us with a bilingual worker if necessary. At the beginning of the course, we asked the group members if they would like an interpreter present at the sessions. After some discussion, they decided that they would not, as the group members whose English was the least advanced, stated they perceived this as an opportunity to improve their English skills. In hindsight, I think it would have been more helpful to arrange this as a matter of course, which is something to consider for future groups. In this sense, the language issue did seem to slow down the pace of the programme, which is quite compact and meant that other group members stepped in to translate when necessary.

### Values and belief systems

In addition to the language difference we also came across differences in relation to the values and beliefs held by group members in relation to parenting, parent-child interaction, gender roles and family life which needed further exploration and discussion time in the group. This made for a very interesting discussion in the group and may have been further utilised had the programme allowed more time for this. In practice, allowing time for this meant that we were not able to adequately cover the content of the programme, which is again a learning point for future groups. I would suggest that we would need a minimum of 8 weeks to cover the programme adequately.

### Course materials

In relation to the materials accompanying the programme, parents were offered a version of the accompanying book on audio-tape in English, which was declined; the book being the preferred option. The book seemed to be highly valued by the women as a resource in its own right. Feedback from the evaluation would lead me to wonder how useful some of the women perceived the weekly handouts as reference guides, which are intended to reinforce the concepts taught and discussed in the sessions. An audio-tape of the content of the programme in their first language may possibly have been a more useful tool to reinforce the concepts learned.

I note from the evaluation that some of the women thought that the video clips were too short. The video clips in the programme are intentionally short to enable

discussion around ‘snap shots’ of parent and child interaction. However, with this group, this may have been made more difficult by the language barrier and differences in family patterns of communication as referred to earlier, as this needed space for acknowledging. With this particular group, I recall having had more discussion after each video clip in exploring the point the clip was trying to illustrate, when these points challenged some of the women’s belief systems about child rearing and what they considered to be ‘good parenting.’ It would seem to be more relevant to a group such as this if we could film our own videos with snap-shots of the kind of parent-child interaction similar to those promoted by the programme, in the women’s first language.

#### Parent incentives

Parents attending these groups are normally offered a gift as a reward when they manage to try a piece of homework in the home setting with their child. These gifts are usually inexpensive items such as a small ornament, an item of make-up or toiletries. The women in this group did not seem to want to take a gift when it was offered to them, one of them commenting that the course itself and us ourselves was enough of a gift to them. We reflected upon this after this comment had been made, and wondered whether this was related to the relatively higher value of education and learning in Asian culture, particularly as one of the women referred to us as ‘tutors.’ This was despite our continued and best efforts to present ourselves as ‘enablers’ rather than ‘experts’.

## **Differences in styles of group leaders**

In addition to being a pilot for an Incredible Years Parenting Group with A.P.W.A., this was also a pilot in relation to different providers from the Sure Start programme running a group together. This was an enriching and enlightening experience and highlighted differences in the approaches of the group leaders, for example, in relation to the use of break times and the rigidity of the boundaries of the group. Fortunately, the strength of our working relationship enabled us to discuss these differences openly and come to some agreement upon a shared style of working, so as to present a united sense of leadership for the group. This is another learning point to bear in mind for group leaders of future groups, that space is allowed in the preparation stage to discuss individual styles of group leadership and how they may complement yet support one another.

## **Conclusions**

Having highlighted the areas of the group which would benefit from further consideration in relation to planning and delivery, it is clear from the evaluation and from our own observations as group leaders that the parents found positive benefits from attending the group. The majority of the women who attended the group did try out some of the ideas and exercises discussed in the programme, and as a result, reported having experienced positive changes in their relationships with their children and with their children's behaviour. This prevails, despite our own frustrations as group leaders about levels of attendance and participation. It was also evident that coming together in this way to discuss issues related to parenting was a new

experience for all of the women. Despite some initial reservations among some of the women about the perceived stigma of attending a parenting group, the feedback we got from the women seems to indicate that this group had actually had a very empowering effect on them. From our experiences of this pilot group, making some changes to the planning and delivery of the group will maximise the potential of this programme in this setting.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of the evaluation undertaken with the women who attended this pilot group and of our own reflections as group leaders, we would make the following recommendations:

1. That time is invested in further raising the awareness among the workers at A.P.W.A. in relation to the Incredible Years Programme
2. That consideration is given to resourcing a project to create accompanying course materials in Urdu/ Punjabi in relation to the concepts promoted by the Incredible Years Programme, using local families (for example, filmed pieces of parent-child interaction, the book translated onto an audio-taped). This may need consideration of legal issues related to copyright.
3. That interpreters are provided as a matter of course for any future groups where any of the members' first language is not English.

4. That places on the next Incredible Years Training Programme are ring-fenced for bilingual workers.
5. That consideration is given to alternative parent incentives for the group, for example, Indian sweets or supermarket vouchers.
6. That the leaflet advertising the group is adapted and includes comments about the group from parents who attended the pilot group, with their permission.
7. That prior to the delivery of another group, a taster session is advertised well in advance to make potential participants aware of the content and process of the group and the personal commitment that will be required of them.
8. That consideration is given to offering other less intensive forms of parent advice and information to women who use A.P.W.A.'s services in addition to the Incredible Years Parenting Programme, by other Sure Start Central providers, for example, taster sessions on topics such as age-appropriate play.