THINKING HEALTHY PROGRAMME
PEER DELIVERED PLUS (THPP+)

Reference Manual for Peer Volunteers
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Chapter 1: Introduction to Thinking Healthy Programme Peer Delivered Plus (THPP+)

A mother plays a significant role during her child’s early years. She is primarily responsible for her child’s physical and emotional wellbeing. In order to perform her motherhood responsibilities effectively it is important for her to be healthy and well and have the support of her family. Thinking Healthy Programme Peer Delivered plus (THPP+) is an extension of the Thinking Healthy Programme Peer Delivered (THPP), which is Cognitive Behaviour Therapy based psychosocial intervention for mothers experiencing perinatal depression, delivered through Peer Volunteers (PV). PVs are local lay women who share similar life experiences and the sociodemographic characteristics of the target mothers and work voluntarily as delivery agents of the THPP.

All mothers who have been receiving THPP are offered THPP+. It consists of 18 group sessions; the first six sessions are delivered on a monthly basis and the remaining 12 sessions are delivered bimonthly until three years postnatal. Each group session is expected to last for one and half hour. The sessions are delivered by the PVs who were trained to deliver the THPP. They are supervised by the THPP Supervisors each month at their local primary health care centre called Basic Health Unit.

1.1 Aims of group session
The THPP+ is aimed to improve mothers’ psychosocial wellbeing through;

- Reinforcing health-related messages and activities
- Enhancing mother-child interaction
- Improving mother’s social support
- Learning from each other’s experiences

1.2 Factors significant to the success of THPP+ group sessions
Elements essential to the success of THPP+ group sessions are;

- Ensuring positive and supportive environment for the participants
- Mothers’ full participation
- Adherence to group participation rules

1.2.1 Ensuring positive and supportive environment for the participants
PVs will be trained to promote a supportive and positive environment through reinforcing following factors;

- Treating all participants of the group equally and fairly
- Showing respect and tolerance towards each other
- Encouraging participants to actively participate in the group
- Discouraging sub-groups within the group
- Keeping motivational attitude through engaging participants in useful discussions and activities
- Appreciating any attempts by the participants to improve their wellbeing
- Using group energisers when needed (see box 1 for some examples of energisers)

**Box 1: Group Energisers**

**Valuing one’s work:** Women’s work is very demanding; therefore, it needs to be recognised. Ask the group participants to list their day to day responsibilities and note them on the chart to help them appreciate their contribution to their households.

**Recognizing one’s qualities:** It is important to recognise and appreciate one’s qualities. The PV will ask each participant in the group to share at least their two positive qualities and make a list of all the qualities mentioned to help them recognise their strengths and feel confident about it.

**Engaging in pleasurable activities:** Engaging in pleasurable activities can be both interesting and motivating. The PV will ask the mothers to stand in a circle, with one woman holding the ball. The woman holding the ball, state what she likes doing in her spare time and then throw the ball to another woman. This process will be repeated until all participants get the chance to share their interests. This activity will help the participants to learn from each other and feel motivated to engage in pleasurable/healthy activities.

**1.2.2 Mothers’ full participation**

The mothers will be able gain the most from the programme if they will actively participate in the groups. PVs will encourage the mothers to attend the groups. If a mother is reluctant to attend on her own or has child commitment issues, she will be encouraged to bring along her friend/family member and her child. Moreover, to make mothers feel at ease PVs will explain that these groups are co-facilitated by the Lady Health Workers. They are culturally appropriate and relevant to their needs and are beneficial for both the mother and her child. The PVs will also encourage the mothers to contribute in group activities and discussions actively. This will help the mothers to share their concerns, explore likely solutions and gain confidence. If a mother is not able to attend two consecutive groups, the PV will pay visit to her house and explain the activities and key messages delivered during the group session to keep her on board. She will also motivate her to attend the next group.
1.2.3 Adherence to the group participation rules

The PVs will set the group participation rules in consultation with the group. The ground rules established need to be recorded on the flip chart and pasted on the wall, as a continuous reminder to the participants. The ground rules given below are highly significant:

- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Showing respect and kindness
- Avoiding being judgemental
- Keeping positive approach
- Waiting for one’s turn to speak
- Showing interest and contributing in group discussions
- Maintaining punctual in attending the group

1.3 What will happen in the groups

Before the group session, the PVs will remind the mothers to attend the group and will ensure that the group venue is appropriate and the room has adequate and comfortable furnishing.

On the day, the PVs will warmly greet women in the group. When the group is assembled, the PV will thank the women for coming to the group. It is important to acknowledge that participants have come to attend the group despite all their work commitments, which demonstrates their commitment towards their and their children’s wellbeing.

Group sessions will focus on one of the three areas significant to the mother’s health i.e. mother’s personal health, mother-child interaction and mother’s relationship with significant others. During each group session the PV will decide the area she will be focusing on and will use different techniques i.e. narratives, games and activities to engage the group, impart information and generate discussions.

1.3.1 Use of narratives in the THPP+

The manual has in total 18 stories focusing on different aspects of mothers’ physical and emotional wellbeing, their relationship with their infants and significant family members. They are included in chapter 2 of this manual. These stories have typical scenarios from the life of a rural mother with young children and the problems she experienced following the birth of her baby girl and how her local PV supported her in tackling these issues. The stories facilitate discussions and help to explore likely solutions to participants’ own issues, without them being too explicit about their personal life circumstances in group setting. The PV in these stories encourages the mother to take steps which could be beneficial both for her and for her child such as eating a balanced diet, breastfeeding her child and paying attention to her child’s intellectual and emotional development through playfully interactions. These stories help to generate discussion to gain better insight into their own problems, to share life experiences and suggest ways of dealing with day to day issues.
1.3.2 Use of games in the THPP+

The games consisted of three packs of cards with health messages (see appendix 1-3). They are played in an interesting manner, to generate group interest and enthusiasm while revising the key messages of the THPP. These card games are:

- Learning through play – mother’s personal health
- Learning through play – mother’s relationship with people around her
- Learning through play – mother child interaction

These card games are played by the whole group. A pack of cards is placed in the middle of the group, each participant will pick one card up and will read health related message on it such as I drink at least 7 glasses of water each day, I do share my concerns with the people I trust, I help my child recognise shapes and colours. She will than ask the rest of the group if they are practising the healthy activities written on the card; if not she will inquiry potential barriers and how they can be overcome. The group will try to encourage each other to practise healthy behaviour to improve their overall wellbeing.

The card game will also be used to set group tasks for their homework. The group through mutual discussion will set a task (homework) to practise between the groups. These tasks will be noted on the homework sheet (see appendix) and given to mothers as a reminder to continue practising healthy activities between sessions. The PV in the following session will discuss with the group how far they been able to meet their set task and will appreciate the group for any effort made towards achieving it.

1.3.3 Use of playful activities to improve the child’s physical and emotional health

In addition to the narratives and games, during each session the PVs will practically demonstrate some activities. The examples of activities are given in chapter 3 of this manual. These activities are age specific (for children between the ages of one month to three years) and are aimed to improve mother-child interaction and the child’s sensory-motor, cognitive and emotional development. Activities will be selected based on the ages of children of the participant mothers’ in the group. The PVs will explain to the group how engaging in any particular activity will benefit the child and will encourage the mother to practise it during group sessions with her child. However, if a mother does not feel comfortable practising it in the group, she should not be forced.

1.3.4 Sharing experiences

In addition to the stories, games and demonstration of activities the group participants will be encouraged to share their own experiences, skills and expertise within the group. It is anticipated that this will help the group participants to recognise their own strengths and learn from each experience.
Chapter 2: Health and Well-being Stories

The PV will introduce the characters of the stories to the group before narrating stories to the group. There are five main characters, a PV called Razia, a mother called Rashida, her husband Amjad, baby girl Noor and mother-in-law Kalsoom baji. These characters are introduced below.

2.1 Introduction to characters

2.1.1 Peer Volunteer – Razia

Razia is a PV, she has been married for the last 15 years and has four children. Her youngest is seven years old. She lives with her husband, children and her mother-in-law. Razia has 10 years of schooling, she wanted to continue her studies but her life circumstances did not allow her to do so. When she learnt about the THPP she felt that it is a good opportunity, as she always wanted to do something for the betterment of women in her village. She discussed it with her husband and mother-in-law, who happily agreed to it. They knew that Razia is a sensible woman. They believed that her involvement would benefit other mothers and she would be able to manage both her domestic and work responsibilities. Razia has all the qualities of a PV. She has a motherhood experience, she is trustworthy, literate and held good reputation in the village. Razia received training for the THPP and is currently delivering it to the mothers in her village.

2.1.2 Mother – Rashida

Rashida is a 26 years old mother of two, a 3 years old boy named Munna and a 2 years old girl named Gurriya. She is married for the last four years and lives with her husband and his parents and siblings. Her husband worked in a garment factory near his village and has long working hours. Rashida’s mother-in-law experiences long term health problems, she has arthritis and diabetes which prevent her from doing the housework, therefore Rashida has the full responsibility of taking care of her home and children.

Recently Rashida found that she is pregnant, as her pregnancy progressed she started to lose weight and felt lethargic all the time. Despite her condition she tried her best to take care of her children and family, however, she was ignoring her personal health. During her last trimester she started experiencing aches and pains. At night, she experienced worrying thoughts about her and her unborn child. She was getting concerned how she would manage her domestic responsibilities after her third child would be born. In the morning she used to wake up feeling tired. She struggled to do household chores and without getting any rest.
during the day she felt exhausted at night. Her physical health had a considerable impact on her mood. She became easily irritable and tearful. Rashida’s condition was also impacting her social functioning; she tended to stay alone and refused to share her problems with anyone. As a result, her family were unable to understand what was wrong with Rashida. Her mother-in-law thought that someone has cast an evil eye on her. She took her to spiritual healer but it did not help her. Rashida’s husband was losing his patience with her and he was spending most of his time outside home. Her husband’s changed attitude towards her was making her feel more saddened. She often got irritable and expressed her angry through shouting at her children, which she used to regret later.

Rashida gave birth to baby girl named Noor. Rashida’s Lady Health Worker (LHW) told her to take extra care of the Noor as she was underweight. Before Noor’s birth Rashida was hoping that it would be a boy, birth of a baby girl made Rashida feel unhappy. She was thinking that she had disappointed her whole family by giving birth to a girl, which made her feel guilty and devalued as a daughter-in-law.

After the delivery, Rashida became even busier with her domestic responsibilities. She kept herself busy with work and did not speak much about her problems. She was also worried for not feeling affectionate towards Noor. She also felt that her milk might be insufficient for Noor and was planning on starting bottle milk. Her mother-in-law asked her sister to come and stay with them for a while to help Rashida out. Despite that help Rashida felt detached and her low mood persisted along with experiencing loss of appetite, insomnia and aches and pains. Rashida’s LHW realized that Rashida needed help so she introduced her to Razia. Razia has now been working with Rashida for over six months.

2.1.3 Daughter – Noor
Noor is Rashida’s third child. Noor was underweight when she was born, therefore Rashida’s lady health workers suggested her to pay extra attention and care to Noor.

2.1.4 Husband – Amjad
Amjad is Rashida’s husband. He works in the factory near his village and has long working hours. He is always tired when he comes home and often goes to bed straight after dinner without spending any quality time with his wife or children.

2.1.4 Mother-in-law – Kalsoom Baji
Baji Kalsoom is Rashida’s mother-in-law, who lives with her. She experiences ill health due to old age, diabetes and arthritis.
2.2 Stories: Mother’s personal health

2.2.1 Importance of healthy diet and iron tablets

When Razia started working with Rashida as her PV, Rashida was in her seventh month of pregnancy and was feeling weak and anxious at that time. As she developed a trusting relationship with Razia, Rashida told her that she had lost her appetite and was skipping at least one meal each day. Razia remembered telling her that eating right is one of the best things a pregnant mother can do to help her baby grow and develop healthy. Razia also found that Rashida was not taking iron tablets despite her health worker’s advice because she was misinformed by her friend that iron tablets could harm her unborn child. Razia explained to Rashida that food like liver and spinach which are high in iron are considered healthy, likewise iron in the form of tablets is also beneficial for both mother and her child. Razia told her that if a pregnant mother has iron deficiency, it can affect her child’s health; her child may be born with low birth weight, making him/her vulnerable to health problems, and could even lead to long-term health problems. However, appropriate amount of iron in the blood not only keeps the child physically healthy but also increases his/her intellectual and cognitive abilities. It also helps making blood in the mother’s body, fight illnesses, and reduces anxiety and problems like fatigue, weakness and dizziness.

It’s been now been eight months since Razia started working with Rashida. Rashida’s daughter Noor is now six months old. During her visits to Rashida’s house, she always encouraged Rashida’s mother-in-law and sister-in-law to join the session. Razia continued to reinforce the importance of a healthy diet to Rashida. She reminded them that eating healthy during pregnancy is important, but it is equally important after child birth. Mothers during this period can experience exhaustion and changes in mood. Fortunately, eating the right foods can combat these conditions. Superfoods that fight depression and fatigue are the best foods for new mothers e.g. milk, yogurt, egg, chicken, fish, mutton, beans, fruits and vegetables along with taking iron tablets. She told them that a balanced diet doesn’t mean expensive food; it could be anything easily available like seasonal fruits and home grown vegetables. Razia further emphasized that breastfeeding is very demanding on a mother’s energy levels, therefore her diet should be taken care of because she is the primary source of nourishment for her baby.

Razia involvement with Rashida’s family was proving beneficial as the family realized the importance of Rashida having a balanced diet and they are making efforts to ensure that she eats well. This resulted in better health for both Rashida and baby Noor.

**Group Activity:** Ask the group members which things can be included in healthy diet and why a healthy diet and iron tablets are important for Rashida.
2.2.2 Importance of taking a rest
Whenever Razia went to Rashida’s place she always found her busy in household activities. Razia being a mother herself, was aware of the day-to-day responsibilities of a mother such as cleaning, cooking, washing and taking care of family members. She knew it is a fulltime job, from which a mother could not take leave. She was also aware of the importance of resting for a mother after childbirth. She knew that a nap during the day and a full night’s sleep can keep the mother healthy and prevents her from exhaustion, body aches and feeling weak.

Considering the importance of resting for a new mother, it was crucial for Rashida to take some time out off her daily tasks for herself. This could be achieved through sharing the workload with her family members and/or arranging the chores according to their urgency, for example more important chores such as cooking or cleaning etc. could be done first and other chores such as washing clothes etc. could be delegated to other family members if possible or postponed for later (once or twice a week), so that some time could be spared for rest.

Razia stressed the importance of seeking help from her family members in completing the household chores for a new mother. Razia believed that if Rashida would politely ask her family, they would give her a helping hand. There is a common saying: a job shared is a job halved. This applies to day to day responsibilities which if shared will be a lesser burden on a new mother. Similarly, it is important to have six to seven hours sleep at night because when a person sleeps her body restores energy. However, for a new mother to sleep peacefully throughout the night is almost impossible as often the baby can disturb sleep, so a mother should try not to miss the opportunity for resting whenever possible, for instance when the baby is sleeping during the day.

Rashida listened to her carefully and said that she will try to rest as she has realized the significance of slow down during this crucial time. She told her that her mother-in-law and sister-in-law are kind to her and will hopefully help her if she asks them. Razia praised her and concluded the session by saying that nothing is impossible to a willing heart.

Group activity:
Discuss with the group why they think is important for a new mother to have rest intervals during the day and how this can be made possible?
2.2.3 Timely medical check-ups can benefit both mother and child

With time, Rashida’s family members started to appreciate Razia for her support and suggestions. Whenever Razia visited them, Kalsoom baji used to welcome her happily, she was aware that Razia was working for the betterment of their family.

One day when Razia asked Rashida about the routine check-ups, she said that she was not attending them. On further exploration Razia found that Rashida was afraid that the doctor might give her some bad news relating to her health. Razia assured her that the purpose of routine check-up is not to make the mother anxious rather to make sure that the mother and her child are in good health. If the routine check-up indicates any complication this will give the family an opportunity to intervene before matters become chronic or complicated. It is a common saying that a stitch in time saves nine. While Razia and Rashida were chatting, Amjad came back from work. Razia advised him to take Rashida to the doctor for a check-up and reinforced that this is important for the mother and baby’s health and could also save their family from any potential mishap.

Further stressing the matter Razia said that many people are still unaware of the importance of vaccination. When a mother or her child are vaccinated, they get protected from life threatening illness. She added that if a lady health worker suggests vaccinated then it does not mean that she has any hidden agenda; it is for the mother and child’s wellbeing. Kalsoom baji, who was also present, said that there were no such facilities in her youth but now these services are available not taking advantages of them would be a huge mistake. Kalsoom baji assured Razia that Rashida will go for her check-ups and will follow the instructions of her doctor.

Group Activity:

Ask the group why they think routine check-ups and having vaccinations are necessary? And what are the risks involved in not having routine check-ups or vaccinations?
2.2.4 Importance of hobbies

When Razia initially started working with Rashida, she found Rashida unappreciative of her visits. However, as their relationship developed she started to trust her and found her role useful. Rashida started listening to her with interest and felt comfortable to share her personal issues, consequently she felt a positive change in her health.

One day Razia asked Rashida about her hobbies; activities she likes to do in her spare time or things she finds interesting. After thinking for a minute Rashida said that she used to enjoy hand embroidery. Razia asked her if she still likes to do embroidery, she responded by saying all leisure time activities are meant to be done before marriage. Afterwards there is often no spare time left for any hobbies.

Razia told her that getting married doesn’t mean that one should not engage in simple pleasurable activities such as doing embroidery or similar past-times. Razia told Rashida that her hobby is so interesting and useful, she could beautify her and her children’s clothes. Razia further added that when a mother makes any effort for her child, she is expressing her love towards him/her, which strengthens their relationship. Mothers who have stronger relationship with their children have better physical and mental health. Razia encouraged Rashida to ask Amjad to bring her embroidery threads and the cloth and to spare some time to pursue her hobby.

Group Activity

Ask the group about their hobbies and to what extent they can spare their time to pursue them.
2.2.5  Spacing between pregnancies ensure happy and healthy family life

Rashida felt that she spent almost all of her time taking care of her children and family members. She thought if she would become pregnant again, she would not be able to give same level of attention to her children or to look after her elderly mother-in-law or to breastfeed Noor. She felt that this would be unfair on her children and to the rest of her family along with being detrimental to her own health. She was becoming more and more preoccupied with the apprehension of getting pregnant again but she did not discuss it with Amjad or Kalsoom baji.

Noor was 6 months old and it was time to start introducing her to solid food. This meant that she could not rely on exclusive breast feeding as a natural contraceptive method and needed some other contraception to avoid getting pregnant. When Razia visited Rashida, she hesitantly, discussed the matter with her. Razia praised her for being sensible and told her that she is happy to know that Razia cares for her family and for her own health. Razia told her that she should discuss it with Amjad or Kalsoom baji and make them understand how important it is for the entire family not just for herself. Razia was hopeful that Rashida’s family would understand her viewpoint. She advised her to talk to her lady health worker so that she could guide her in the best possible way. Razia said that if anyone in her family has any doubts or queries than she could also ask her lady health worker to talk to them.

**Group Activity**

Ask the group if Rashida is justified thinking about having contraception to avoid getting pregnant again so soon, what she can do about it and how it can benefit her family?
2.2.6 Every cloud has a silver lining

When Razia went to visit Rashida, she found her in good spirits. Rashida told Razia that Amjad got a permanent job with an increment in his pay. Razia congratulated her warmly and told her that one should not forget that there are always good and bad times. If someone is going through a difficult period in his/her life, it won’t last forever. We have been blessed with the immeasurable power to make positive changes in our lives. Rashida smiled and agreed, she told Razia that she wanted her children to study in reputable institutions, in order to have a better future.

Razia praised her aspirations and encouraged her to share her wishes with Amjad. Razia told her that it is also important to understand that a child’s learning starts as soon as he/she is born. Home environment and social surroundings greatly influence a child. An environment full of love, care and support surpasses the family’s social status (rich or poor). Children raised in these environments are proven to be healthier and intelligent compared to those raised in hostile environment. A mother is a child’s prime caregiver, she feeds her child, takes care by paying attention to his/her physical and emotional needs and engages in playful activities, no matter what her life circumstances are. There is a well-known proverb which states paradise lies at the feet of a mother. This is to acknowledge a mother’s hard work to make her child feel secure and confident. This in turn helps the child to perform well in all areas of his/her life and to deal better with challenges of adult life.

Razia further stressed that for a mother to take care of her family, she needs to look after herself regardless of life hardships. A mother failing to do so, can over the period of time, impacts her health adversely, making it impossible for her to look after her family. Rashida promised Razia that she will take care of her health no matter what her circumstances are, so that she remains well enough to provide good care to her children.

Group Activity

Ask the group their understanding of the proverb ‘paradise lies at the feet of a mother’. Ask them how a mother can look after herself despite all her domestic responsibilities and life challenges and why her health is important for her family.
2.3 Stories: Mother’s relationship with her child

2.3.1 Learning through play (After birth)

One day when Razia went to visit Rashida, she saw that Rashida was busy doing her household chores and baby Noor was lying sucking her thumb, unattended on the side of the courtyard. Rashida told Razia that usually she was so busy during the day that she could not find time to hold Noor, other than when she was feeding her. Razia told her that this is a crucial time to build a strong bond with Noor. She told her that the first step of bonding is breastfeeding, which is the best gift a mother can give to her child. She knew that Rashida was breastfeeding Noor and praised her for doing so. She told her that it would be good for Noor if while feeding she holds her affectionately, caresses her and smiles at her. When mothers interact playfully with their babies such as talking, singing a lullaby, or playing fun games such as peek-a-boo, they learn a lot from these activities. Many people think that it is enough if babies are fed and kept reasonably clean. This is only part of what is needed. A child starts learning right from his/her birth onward and needs continuous love, care and attention of his parents and the other family members. Razia stressed that instead of leaving the baby unattended, a mother should give as much attention as possible and should interact playfully with him/her time to time. These playful activities can be incorporated into a baby’s routine activities. For example, a mother can interact affectionately through making eye contact, smiling, running her fingers through baby’s hair, holding his/her hands, singing nursery rhymes or simply talking while feeding, massaging or a bathing her baby.

However, a mother to provide good quality time to her child, needs the support of her family. Family members should help the mother in household tasks so that she can spend quality time with her child. It is also important for other family members especially the father to interact playfully with the baby to develop a bond with him/her from an early age. Children who receive love and attention from both their parents and other family members, are generally healthier both physically and emotionally, compared those who do not receive same level of care.

Group activity

Ask the group what is the appropriate age to start engaging in playful activities with the children. Moreover, what are the traditional ways of interacting and playing games with babies and young children.
2.3.2 A child is a God’s gift to parents

After Noor’s birth, Razia whenever she visits Rashida, found her worrying over something. Razia tried to ask her several times but Rashida was hesitant to share her issue. After a few visits, she finally disclosed to Razia that she thought that Amjad and Kalsoom baji were not happy over the birth of Noor as they were expecting a boy.

Razia listened to Rashida patiently then explained to her that there are several things over which humans have no control one being the gender of a baby as it is predetermined. Therefore, it is extremely unfair and completely irrational to blame the mother for giving birth to a girl. It is also important to remember that a child, whether a male or a female, is a God’s gift to parents. Our religion has clearly specified that daughters are God’s blessings and it will be a sin to believe otherwise. Razia further added that daughters hold their parents dear to their heart and are always concerned about their wellbeing, so how can any parent not want a daughter.

Finally, Razia said that it is the responsibility of the parents to look after their children irrespective of their gender. A mother can fulfil her responsibilities only when she is well and supported by her family. Kalsoom baji was listening to their conversation from the other room. She came and affectionately hugged Rashida. She said that despite the fact that we are women, we tend to celebrate the birth of sons more, which is wrong. We need to remember that daughters are not burden to our families rather they are the God’s blessing. Rashida felt relieved to hear Kalsoom baji’s comforting words. She further realised the importance of sharing one concerns with someone trustworthy rather than getting upset about it.

**Group activity**

Ask the group if families embrace the birth of a boy or a girl equally, if not how it can be changed.
2.3.3 Cleanliness contributes to healthy and happy family!

No matter how careful a mother is, at taking care of her children, there is always the risk of them getting unwell. Once, when Razia went to Rashida’s house she found that Noor had severe diarrhoea and Rashida had done nothing about it, as she was waiting for Amjad to come back from work to accompany her to doctors.

Razia told Rashida that diarrhoea in children should be taken very seriously as essential minerals and water drain off from the body which could be life threatening. She advised her to give ORS to Noor without wasting any further time. Rashida asked her brother-in-law to bring ORS and she prepared the drink according to the instructions written on the pack. Razia immediately started giving ORS to Noor and advised Rashida to take her to the doctor as soon as Amjad would come home.

Razia further informed Rashida about the importance of hygiene and cleanliness to reduce the risk of getting unwell and to prevent germs spreading in the house. She told Razia that all edibles such as fruits and vegetables should be thoroughly washed, the dining area and daily utensils should always also be kept clean, and one should always wash hands before preparing, serving and having a meal. These simple steps can help children to stay healthy and when children are healthy it is very rewarding for a mother.

Razia further stressed that it is very important for a person to take care of personal hygiene for his/her overall wellbeing e.g. regularly washing hands throughout the day, brushing teeth in the morning and before going to bed, taking showers regularly and wearing clean clothes can not only make the person stay healthy but also feel good about oneself. Our religion has also highlighted the significance of cleanliness by considering it essential to one’s faith. Therefore, we should all try our best to keep ourselves and our surroundings clean. Children who grow up in a clean environment not only stay healthy but also take the habit of cleanliness to their adult lives.

**Group activity**

Ask the group what steps they can take to ensure clean environment for themselves and their children.
2.3.4 A doubt can influence one’s judgement
Rashida used to hear from her mother and relatives that a child can easily catch an evil eye and therefore a mother should be extra careful in this matter. She used to worry a lot about it. After Noor’s birth she became preoccupied with the fear of anyone casting an evil eye on Noor and this resulted in her withdrawal from her family and friends.

One day her friend insisted that she attends her neighbour’s wedding ceremony. She reluctantly agreed and on her return, she felt that Noor had fever. The first thought that came to her mind was that Noor has got an evil eye. Consequently, she engaged herself in various remedies to counter its harmful effects, like burning red chillies and using amulets, but all went in vain and Noor’s fever stayed high. The next day, Razia came to their house and found that Noor was unwell. She found Rashida busy in trying her own remedies instead of taking Noor to the doctor. Rashida told Razia that someone has cast an evil eye on Noor which has made her unwell. Razia politely told Rashida that there could be other reasons for Noor getting unwell and it could be a mere coincidence that it happened after she went to the marriage ceremony. She added that it is not right to automatically assume that it is an evil eye. A sensible person is one who tries to think of every possible reason for a situation or an incident. She said that it is quite possible that Noor has got a viral infection, as she is seeing many children in the neighbourhood with similar symptoms. She stressed that it is very important for Noor to take some medication to bring her fever down and to take her to doctor for further check-up.

Razia took Noor to the doctor with Rashida. After examining Noor, the doctor told her that Noor had a sore throat which caused fever. The doctor prescribed some medication for Noor. Rashida thanked Razia and promised her that in the future, she will not let doubts overpower her judgement. Rather she would try her best to assess the situation rationally and act sensibly.

Group activity
Ask the group how true Rashida was in assuming that Noor’s ill health was because of an evil eye and what could be the likely causes of a child becoming unwell and what interventions are required?
2.3.5 Learning through play (2-6 months)

Rashida’s health was getting better with time. She realized that if she wanted to take care of her children and her family then she would have to take care of herself. Taking care of one’s self includes eating a balanced diet, taking rest, spending some time engaging in pleasurable activities, sharing household tasks with family members, going for routine check-ups and sharing any worries or tensions with one’s husband or any other trustworthy person and actively pursuing for likely solutions to day to day issues.

During one of her visits, Razia told Rashida that a child’s healthy upbringing includes fulfilling his/her physical and emotional needs. To fulfil a child’s physical needs a mother ensures safety, feeds well and keeps the environment clean and comfortable. Taking care of a child’s emotional and intellectual needs includes providing a stimulating environment for the child through engaging in different playful activities. She told Rashida that she should interact playfully with her child, for example reading and singing with her, showing her colourful toys and objects, clapping or making noises etc. to help her become familiar with different sounds and colours. There is ample evidence to indicate that simple interactive games facilitate the intellectual and emotional development of the child.

Razia further informed Rashida that babies of this age would like to hold things in their hands, so if objects of different textures like a hard ball or a soft doll will be given to Noor, she will feel the difference in their textures. Moreover, showing mirror to Noor would help her to identify one’s self. Razia told Rashida that if she would give Noor care, love and attention, it will give her the head-start in life, will boost her self-confidence and intelligence and would increase the likelihood of her overall wellbeing in her adult life.

Group activity

Ask the group what games they play with their children and what benefits it could have on them?
2.3.6 Learning through play (1 year)

Today, it was Noor’s first birthday and her presence were making everyone in the house cheerful. Razia was pleased to see both Rashida and Noor healthy and happy. Rashida’s good health meant that she could look after her family and children well. Rashida started to value her physical and emotional health, she was eating well and if she had any worries she spoke to Kalsoom baji or Amjad or Razia. They all meant well and always helped her to find ways of overcoming her problem.

Noor started taking her first steps and was trying to say some words. Like with any one year old, communication was becoming more two-way now, if Rashida asked her something she always tried to respond. Razia informed Rashida that at this age it is very important to provide play and learning material to encourage a child’s exploration and to stimulate his/her curiosity. For example, if colourful objects were shown to Noor she would become familiar with them. She told Rashida that while talking to Noor she should be pointing at different objects such as the table, tress, picture, glass, sky etc or at different colours such as green grass, red ball etc. This would help Noor to associate names with objects and to recognise colours.

Noor was also making an attempt to do things for herself, such as eating with her fingers. Razia told Rashida that at this age children’s eye and hand co-ordination gets better and they start to handle small objects using their fingers. One does not have to buy fancy toys, rather use things available at home to play interesting games. For example, children like to put things in containers and dump them out again so it would be good to give them pots and pans, which can be nested inside one another. They are also interested in energetic games, which helps to strengthen their arms and legs.

Razia further suggested that children of this age enjoy the company of other children, so it would be good if Rashida would either invite parents with young children or take Noor to their houses, to give her the chance to play with them. All these activities would help in Noor’s intellectual development and would also strengthen her bond with her mother.

Group activity

Ask the group how they help their one year old to learn and how this helps them?
2.3.7 Learning through play (2-3 years)

Razia always felt pleased to see Rashida’s happy and healthy family. Noor was getting all the love and attention of her family and grew into a clever and healthy two years old toddler. Rashida herself was in good health and spirits and managing her domestic responsibilities without any trouble. Razia used to praise Rashida a lot for all her effort towards the wellbeing of her family.

Razia kept on reminding Rashida that when parents provide a warm, responsive, and supportive home environment to their children, they grow up to be confident and successful adults. Razia told Rashida that for two years old children, it is good to provide consistent and predictable routine and foster independence by letting them try things on their own and by giving them options. This is also the age when their fine motor skills are rapidly developing. It is therefore important to play games which improve their motor skills for example giving them the opportunity to draw with a chalk or a pencil, or use objects of various sizes to stack them, or use tongs to put objects from one container into another.

Razia also told Rashida that this is the age when children start to recognise numbers, shapes and letters of the alphabet so it is a good time to buy colourful books to help them learn. Everyday household objects and activities can also be used for learning purposes. For example, a mother when climbing steps, walking or cutting vegetables or making chapattis can count them with her child or help him/her learn. Likewise, shapes cut out of the empty card boxes or objects such as square picture, round plate can be used to help the child become familiar with shapes.

Rashida listened to Razia and said that she was right, but a lot of time was needed to engage in all these activities and she didn’t have that much spare time. Razia agreed that a mother has so many responsibilities that it is hard to find some time, but it is important to recognise that spending quality time with your child is essential for their bonding. Razia further added that many of these activities can be incorporated into day to day tasks such as while feeding, bathing or massaging a child.

Amjad was there as well, and he said that he was not aware of the importance of playful activities for a child’s intellectual and sensory motor development. He thought that feeding and keeping the child clean is all what is needed. He said that he wanted to have a good relationship with her children and therefore he would also engage in playful activities with Noor and would also support Rashida in doing the same.

Group activity

Ask group which activities they think will help the intellectual development of their children, in addition to those mentioned in the story.
2.4 Stories: Mother’s relationship with people around her

2.4.1 Sharing one’s inner feeling and concerns

Razia knew that women in her community felt a bit reluctant to express their feelings because they feared it might offend someone or might lead to an argument. There were women in her neighbourhood who were experiencing marital problems, but they were suffering in silence. Razia felt it was very important to express one’s concerns and feelings in a manner, that doesn’t offend anyone, otherwise pent-up feelings can impact one’s health.

Razia also experienced mental distress a few years ago, her family had financial difficulties. With three young children, a sister-in-law of marriageable age and elderly parents-in-law it was very challenging for her. Razia was quite young and naïve at that time. She felt overwhelmed not knowing how to deal with all the problems. What she needed at that time was a trustworthy and sincere friend with whom she could share her problems.

One day when she went to her neighbour’s house, she met Imam’s wife there. Imam’s wife was a wise lady, just by looking at Razia, she could tell that Razia was under a lot of stress. When she was alone in the room with Razia she gently asked her if everything was alright. There was so much affection in her voice that Razia burst into tears. She knew that Imam’s wife was a trustworthy woman and would maintain confidentiality. She told her some of the issues she was experiencing. Just by saying what was on her mind and knowing that she was listening empathically made her feel better. Imam’s wife advised Razia that the relationship between a husband and a wife should be like good friends and they need to feel comfortable sharing matters with each other. Imam’s wife further stressed that sharing one’s true feeling with one’s spouse strengthens their relationship. There is not always a solution for problems but by telling one’s problems and being listened to with empathy can make half the worries go away. There is a local saying that when you share your happiness it gets doubled and when you share your sorrows they get halved.

Razia now gives the same advice to all mothers in her community. She tells them that if they are experiencing any problems it is best to share them with either their husband or a trustworthy friend rather than suffering in silence. If they will keep their worries to themselves, it will be detrimental to their health and their ill health could impact the wellbeing of their entire family.

**Group activity**

Ask the group if they have someone trustworthy they share their concerns and what are the advantages/disadvantages of sharing one’s feelings and issues.
2.4.2 Significance of a peaceful home environment

Once when Razia went to visit Rashida, she felt tension in the house. Kalsoom baji did not greet her warmly as she always did and Rashida was looking a bit gloomy. Rashida told her that this morning, her son and her sister-in-law’s son had a fight, which ended up in an argument between her and her sister-in-law. Rashida felt that her sister-in-law’s son was in the wrong and despite this her mother-in-law scolded her son. This made Rashida very upset and she was not willing to talk to anyone in her family.

Razia told Rashida that it is the adults’ responsibility to keep their home environment peaceful and to be good role models to their children. If children will see adults in their family arguing they will adopt similar behaviour. Razia said that she has witnessed families where adults show aggressive behaviour and when their children behave likewise, they scold them. Razia said that this is wrong, if they want their children to behave differently, they should first learn to express their feeling without getting angry and solve their issues without arguing. For instance, in this case Rashida needs to explain to her mother-in-law and sister-in-law that arguing between family members can make the matters worse. It is their responsibility to keep home environment peaceful by being kind to each other. Furthermore, adults should be fair to all children in the family and should assertively condemn wrong behaviour.

Razia further added that there are so many situations in our lives, over which we have little or no control, but then there are other situations which can be made better by thinking or behaving differently. For example, instead of being argumentative we should try to solve disagreements peacefully to keep our home environment happy and loving.

Group activity

Ask the group the impact of home environment on children and a role mother can play to keep her family happy and peaceful.
2.4.3 Spreading the good word

Razia was no less than a sincere friend to Rashida, she used to listen to her caringly, give her suggestions and always encourage her to take steps to improve her wellbeing. Rashida used to admire Razia’s work, knowing that many women in their community are benefiting from it. She often wondered if she could be as helpful to others as Razia. Razia praised her noble thinking and said that we can help others by sharing our learning and giving good suggestions.

Rashida always felt that Razia’s information was very meaningful and proved beneficial for her. She decided that she would pass on that information to her friends, in similar situation, so that they could also benefit from it. Now she never misses the opportunity to give advice to those who need it. Only yesterday when she went to visit her friend Parveen, she found her very distressed. On probing Parveen told her that she was five months pregnant and she has not told anyone in her family. Parveen’s family was experiencing financial issues and with already five children, she felt that the new baby would add to their family’s problems.

Rashida told her that her emotional and physical health is very important during pregnancy. She needed to tell her family about her pregnancy so that she gets their support. Rashida said that if she would not look after herself it would impact her and baby’s health, which would then add to their family’s problem. She added that for her physical health it is important to have good diet, rest properly and have regular medical check-ups. For emotional health it is important to share issues and concerns with the trusted member of her family or friend so that they can help her to overcome her worries.

Rashida gave Parveen THPP Health Calendar and advised her to follow the health charts. She further advised her that following the child birth, she should exclusively breastfeed her child, as this is a natural method of contraception and once the child starts on solid food she should speak to her lady health workers for other contraceptive methods to avoid getting pregnant. Parveen thanked Rashida and said that she would try her best to follow her suggestions and would further seek her advice if needed.

**Group Activity**

Ask the group if they share with others, what they learn by coming to these groups, and how it is benefitting them and others.
2.4.4 Benefits of coming in the group

Rashida was a bit reluctant to attend group sessions, she was worried that women, in the group, might be intrusive about her personal issues or it might impinge on her domestic responsibilities. However, once she started attending groups, she found that her apprehensions were wrong. Women were kind and empathetic towards each other and gave valuable suggestions. She also realised that attending groups once a month for couple of hours was easily manageable.

Rashida used to attend groups regularly and at times she also encouraged her neighbours to come along her. Women in the group used to share and learn from each other experiences. Before attending these groups, Rashida used to think that she is the only one experiencing stress and tension but after listening to other women, she realised that there are many women who are going through similar circumstances. She understood for sure that mothers after child birth go through a challenging period which can impact their emotional and physical health, they therefore need extra care and attention. Those mothers who receive good support can overcome anxiety and depression much more quickly and regain their confidence to fulfil their motherhood responsibilities.

Attending the groups also helped Rashida to form friendships in her village, which improved her social life. She felt supported, knowing that she has friends she could rely on. Furthermore, the opportunity to express herself and being valued for her contribution in the group - along with enhanced knowledge of mother and child health related issues boosted her confidence.

Group activity:

Ask the participants how they have benefitted coming to the group sessions and how they can be improved.
Chapter 3: Use of playful activities to enhance the child’s physical and emotional health

The first few years of a child’s life are very important for his/her physical, emotional and intellectual development. If a child is not given appropriate nourishment, care, love and attention, it can impact his/her long-term wellbeing.

3.1 Starting a child on solid food

For a child to grow healthy physically, proper nourishment is essential from the day a child is born. During the first six months, exclusive breastfeeding is highly recommended. Following that a mother should start introducing solid food to her child, while continuing breast feeding until the child is two years old. Starting solids is an essential step in the child’s development.

3.1.1 Things to remember when starting solids;

- Feed a child with love and care. It will increase the child’s appetite and will develop the mother-child bond.
- Be patient and full of praise while feeding the child. This will contribute significantly towards a child’s physical and emotional development.
- Force feeding a child is not a good practise.
- Some of the suggested food for six to eight months old children include: cereal and grains (such as rice, oat barley), fruits, vegetables, protein (such as turkey, chicken) and dairy products (such as plain yogurt).

3.1.2 General rules of starting solids;

Below are some general rules of feeding a child. It is important that the PV should explain these rules to the group.

- Introducing a child to a solid food should start when a child is around six months old.
- Start slowly, preparing a very small amount of whatever food you have chosen to begin with.
- Wash your hands before starting to prepare child’s meal and when feeding.
- Always use clean utensils for preparing and serving a meal to the child.
- Feed the child solid food four to five times a day followed by breastmilk. There should be regular intervals between meals.
- The food should be of the right consistency, not too thin or too thick.
- The quantity of the food should be appropriate to the child’s age.
• The quality of food is very important. A home cooked fresh food is the best option. Examples of good food for a child are mashed potato, fruits, vegetables, rice, chicken, and lentils.

• Snacks available in the market such as chips, biscuits, sweets and fizzy drinks should be avoided. They have high quantity of sugar, salt and preservatives which is not good for children and can make them unwell. These items are a waste of money.

• As a child grows older
  o Encourage the child to eat himself/herself under adult’s supervision. This will improve child’s hand-mouth coordination and will enhance his/her confidence.
  o Increase the quantity and variety of the child’s diet to make sure that he/she is receiving all nutrients, essential for healthy development
  o Encourage a child to have meals with the family. This will make his/her bond stronger with the family.

3.2 Learning through playful activities
Just like providing a child with essential nutrients is important, so is engaging with the child through playful activities. A child begins to learn about environment and master new skills soon after birth. At this age learning is through seeing, hearing and moving. For example, recognising sounds, objects and faces, responding to external stimulus, reaching out to grab objects, crawling, walking, talking etc. Playing is one of the most important thing parents can do with their child. The time they spend playing together gives their child lots of different ways and times to learn. Play also helps a child to:

• feel loved, happy and safe
• connect and refine pathways in the brain
• develop social skills, language and communication
• learn about caring for others and the environment
• develop physical skills
• build confidence

Given below are examples of activities for children between the ages of one month to three years. These examples are aimed to improve the child’s physical health, mother-child interaction and the child’s sensorimotor, cognitive and intellectual development.

During the sessions the PV will select age appropriate activities and will explain the benefits they have on the child to the group. Following that they will encourage the mother to demonstrate the activity in the group with her child. It is important that the PV not do the activities directly with the child as connecting with her will interfere the child making the connection with the mother. Instead, teach or coach the mother through the activity with the child.
3.2.1 Play activities for 0-5 months old

**Activity 1: Copying sounds and actions**
- Ask the parents to copy the sounds and action of the child such as making faces or clapping. If the child does not respond, make this activity more interesting through making different sounds like “oooo”, “aan”, “hoon”, “haan” etc and let the child follow.
- Tell the mother that children take time to learn, so don’t panic and keep repeating this activity. When the child responds, ask the mother to praise.

**Benefits:** Children enjoy making new sounds, and respond to someone’s voice with more sounds, and they copy sounds they hear. This activity is beneficial for mother-child bonding, child’s emotional and social development and will help the child to learn to pay attention to external stimuli.

**Activity 2: Smiling and talking to the child**
- Tell mothers that the child listens and tries to understand sounds and expressions from day one.
- Ask the mother to get the attention of the child by calling his/her name with affection and when the child responds smile and talk to him/her.
- Praise the child and keep repeating this activity.

**Benefits:** Even a new-born sees face and hear voices. This activity is beneficial for mother-child bonding, will sharpen the child’s listening and comprehending skills, help him/her to learn new words, and will facilitate brain development.

**Activity 3: Singing lullabies and telling stories**
- Tell the mother that the child responds to external stimuli from day one. Therefore, it is important to provide an enriched environment where he/she is exposed to different sounds, words and playful interactions.
- The family can sing a lullaby, a song, read a story or recite religious verses etc.
- Give the family suggestions on making this activity more interesting, e.g. by using different vocal and facial expressions along with hand movements.

**Benefits:** This activity is beneficial for mother-child bonding, will sharpen the child’s listening and comprehending skills and will help develop his/her intellectual abilities.
Activity 4: Caressing and cuddling the child with love
- Advise the mother that caressing, massaging and cuddling the child can be done daily while changing his/her clothes, giving bath etc.
- Praise the mother and ask her to keep practicing it.

**Benefits:** This activity is beneficial in helping develop a bond, imparting a sense of security and love and building his/her confidence.

Activity 5: Maintaining the focus through colourful objects
- Ask the mother to use any colourful object to get the child’s attention. Once the child is able to focus on the object, move it slowly in different directions.
- Praise the child and keep repeating this activity by using variety of colourful objects.
- To scaffold this activity, let the child reach and grab the object. Mothers’ can also name various colours/objects.

**Benefits:** This activity will sharpen the child skills in recognising different shapes, size and colour of the objects and to focus his/her attention on any particular object.

Activity 6: To stimulate the sense of hearing
- For this activity, homemade rattles can be used for example stones in a tightly closed bottle or a spoon and plate.
- Ask the mother to shake the rattle in front of the child to get attention and observe if the child follows the sound of the rattle.
- Tell the mother to praise and fondle the child if the child is attracted to the sound.
- If mothers face any problems during this activity, for example, if the child puts rattle in mouth instead of playing with it, take the rattle out of the child’s mouth gently and bring the child’s attention to the rattle by shaking it.

**Benefits:** This activity will sharpen the child skills to recognise and pay attention to the different voices and learn to grab objects.
Activity 7: Giving the child objects of various textures to hold

- Ask mother to give the child objects of different textures such as soft and hard to grab and see the child’s reaction.
- If the child puts anything in mouth instead of just grabbing, guide the mother to be patient as children often explore things through putting them in their mouth.
- Ask parents to use different colours and shapes to make this activity interesting.
- Praise the child and keep repeating this activity.

**Benefits:** This activity will improve the child’s skills to recognise different textures, they will learn to grab things and will improve his/her physical and intellectual abilities.
3.2.2 Play activities for 6-12 months old

Activity 1: Peek a Boo
- Ask the mother to hide her face with her hands or under a piece of cloth, then slowly move her hands to show her face to the child. Mother can call the child’s name or make different sounds to get attention.
- Guide the mother to scaffold this activity according to the child’s age. For instance, she can hide child’s favourite toy under a cloth and ask him/her to find it. If the child has started crawling, family members can do the same activity by hiding behind a door and ask the child find them.

Benefits: Children enjoy playing peek-a-boo. Through this activity, the child will learn that things even when not visible, does not mean that they have disappeared.

Activity 2: Building vocabulary through daily chores
- Mother can teach the child names of different body parts and objects through pointing at them and naming them.
- If the child is not learning ask the mother to repeat this activity - as children can take time in learning new things.
- Ask mother how she feels doing this activity.
- PV should observe this activity and praise the mother.
- If the child learns the words, scaffold the activity and try to teach him two words sentences like “give water “.

Benefits: Even though children cannot yet speak, they understand and begin to connect the name of objects with them. This activity will stimulate the child’s brain and will help him/her learn new words and their use.

Activity 3: Practice of crawling
- Ask the parents if they allow their children to play on floor. Ask them to select a clean and safe place for the child to sit.
- Place attractive object on the floor and encourage the child to crawl towards it.
- Ask the mother to follow the child’s lead and praise if the child tries.
- If the child is not taking interest in that toy, mother can get his/her attention by clapping her hands.
• In the case of any difficulty, solve the problem e.g. if the child is not comfortable, make the area more comfortable for the child to sit and crawl.
• To scaffold the activity mother can help the child to stand/walk according to his/her age by putting the toy at a height reachable for the child, such as on a table or chair and ask the child to try to pick it.

**Benefits:** This activity will enhance the child’s sensory motor coordination, help him/her learn to crawl and to reach out to grab objects.

**Activity 4: Showing mirror for self-recognition**
• Ask mother to show the child a mirror
• Guide the mother to make this activity more interesting by pointing and naming different parts of the child’s body e.g. nose, eyes, hair, hands, etc.
• Help problem solve, for example: if looking into the mirror scares the child, the mother should hug the child and tell him, ‘Look mummy is here with you. Don’t be scared’.

**Benefits:** This activity will help the child to recognize one’s self, helps in cognitive development, and makes the child happy.

3.2.3 Play activities for 12-18 months old

**Activity 1: Identifying different objects by their names and colours**
• Ask the mother to put different objects like plastic/steel glasses, spoon, plates or lids of different boxes and bottles in front of child.
• The mother will then ask her child to pick an object e.g. spoons and put them on one side and glasses on the other side.
• If the child cannot do it, the mother will demonstrate the activity by first grouping things and keep saying their names to help the child recognise them and then encourage the child to do the same.
• If there is any difficulty during the activity, for example, if the child starts striking the spoon and glass, ask the mother to be patient and let the child do this for some time.
• Praise the child if he/she follows the instructions. She can praise the child verbally by saying “wow! You have done really well” or can show her appreciation through giving her child a hug.
• The PV should praise the mother for doing this activity and tell her how she can scaffold this activity. This activity can be done according to the colours and textures of the objects.

**Benefits:** This activity teaches the child to group the objects on the bases of their similarity and difference.
Activity 2: Stacking
- The mother is encouraged to use objects available at home such as unbreakable cups or plates of various sizes. They are placed in front of the child and shown how to be stacked.
- If a child is unsuccessful, the mother will demonstrate the activity again with patience and then encourage the child to copy her.
- To scaffold this activity, various objects and ways to stacking can be used.

Benefits: Children like to stack things up until they fall down. Through this activity, the child will learn to arrange things according to their sizes. It will improve his/her sensory motor and intellectual abilities.

Activity 3: Recognition of colours and things through pictures and nature.
- Ask the mother to show pictures from any children’s magazine or book and tell the child the names of objects in that picture.
- Ask the child to repeat the names of the objects by pointing at them.
- If the child does not remember, then tell the child again.
- A similar activity can be done by indicating objects in the surrounding for example tree, goat, car, birds, etc.

Benefits: Child will learn to recognize different objects and colours. Child will also start taking interest in books.

Activity 4: To encourage the child to approach toy by walking
- During this activity a child is encouraged to walk in order to reach to a toy or any object of his/her interest.
- If child has just learned to walk or if child falls while walking then don’t keep the toy too far from the child’s reach.
- Ensure the play area is clean and safe.
- If there is an older child in house, he/she can also be asked to get involved. A thread can be tied to toy and pulled by an older child while younger one follows.
- To scaffold this activity, keep child’s favourite toy at different places for him to go and get it.

Benefits: When children learn a new game or skill, and receive praise from their family members, they repeat it over and over again and feel happy and confident. This activity will enhance the child’s muscular strengthen, his/her walking ability and will help in improving his/her self-confidence.
Activity 5: Throwing and catching the ball

- The child will be encouraged to catch the ball gently thrown towards him/her.
- If there is any difficulty, identify and help problem solve. For example, if the child is not taking interest, ask parents to engage other children in the activity to make it more interesting for the child.
- Guide the mother that she can use balls of different colours and sizes to make this activity more interesting and useful for the child.
- Guide the family so that they can scaffold this activity. For example, throwing the ball from different directions. Initially the child may crawl to get the ball but later may catch.

**Benefits:** Through this activity the child will strengthen his/her muscles and will learn to reach and grab things.

3.2.4 Play activities for 19-24 months old

**Activity 1: Scribbling**

- Ask the mother to give the child anything to write on e.g. paper, slate and a pencil or a chalk and then encourages the child draw freely to make it an enjoyable activity.
- Do not force the child to write correctly or draw properly. Let the child do whatever he/she wants.
- When the child starts playing this activity, praise and love him.
- Suggest parents to scaffold this activity e.g. as the child grows, encourage him to draw some new shapes like circles or rectangles.

**Benefits:** This activity will help the child in writing, enhance cognitive learning and creative skills.

**Activity 2: Searching for hidden objects**

- Ask mother to place three containers e.g. bowls, glass or cup and hide a toy under any one container. Then ask the child to tell where the toy is?
- If the child finds the hidden toy then praise and encourage child.

**Benefits:** Searching for hidden things will help in memorizing things. This activity will help in the child’s cognitive development and will increase his/her memory.
Activity 3: Learning through daily activity
- The mother will give two pots to the child and ask him/her to pour water from one pot to another. Praises the child if he/she manages to do so.
- Child can similarly be involved in other activities, for example folding clothes and laying the table.

**Benefits:** Children enjoy playing with simple, homemade toys. They do not need store-bought toys. It will improve child’s sensory motor activities and will make him/her feel confident to do simple chores.

Activity 4: Grouping similar objects
- Ask mother to put different objects like plastic/steel glasses, spoons, plates, lids and bottles in front of child.
- Ask the mother to instruct her child to put e.g. the spoons on one side and glasses on the other side.
- If the child is not understanding the mother’s instructions, PV should tell the mother to demonstrate the activity and to first group things herself and keep saying their names.

**Benefits:** Through this activity child will learn to differentiate and arrange objects according to their texture, shapes, colour and use.

Activity 5: Making things out of play dough
- Give the child play dough and let him/her make objects out of it.
- While the child is making objects, talk to him/her. For instance, the mother can ask the child, ‘what are you doing, what have you made?’
- The mother can encourage the child to describe what he/she has made and can make stories around it.
- The mother can ask the child to place objects from smallest to largest, or in similar groups.
- The mother should keep an encouraging attitude and let the child use his/her imaginations to create objects.

**Benefits:** This activity will provide the opportunity to play creatively and imaginatively and explore new concepts.
3.2.5 Play activities for 2 to 2 ½ years old

Activity 1: Using tongs or tweezers to pick small items
- Give the child a tong or a tweezer and a bowl of small items. Items can be small vegetables (such as okra or green beans), fruit (such as grapes or berries) or any other small items in the house.
- Ask the child to pick items one by one, either with a tong or a tweezer depending on the size of item and place them in another bowl.
- The mother should keep an encouraging attitude all the time, praising the child when he/she can pick an item.
- For scaffolding, use items that can be more challenging for the child such as pomegranate seeds or peas.

Benefits: This activity will improve fine motor skills and will facilitate child’s ability to learn hand-writing.

Activity 2: Sorting shapes
- Take coloured card paper and cut different shapes out of it e.g circle, triangle, square etc. If coloured card paper is not available you can use empty boxes of tea, biscuits, etc. to cut shapes. Another option is using small items of different shapes in the house such as buttons, empty matchboxes.
- While cutting, tell the child which shape you have cut and how they are different.
- Give the child some containers and ask him/her to place similar shapes in each container.
- Give the child lots of encouragement and praise. If the child is struggling to recognise the shapes you can reduce the type of shapes and/or demonstrate the activity to the child.
- These shapes can also be used to make things e.g. a square with a triangle on top can be a house, a stick with a small circle on top can be a lollypop or squares lined up with small circles underneath can be a train. Let the child imagine and make things.
- For scaffolding, increase the type of shapes e.g. rectangle, heart, star, etc.

Benefits: This activity will help the children to learn about different shapes and numbers.
Activity 3: Jigsaw puzzle
- Ask the mother to cut any available picture in three parts and show the child how to arrange the picture.
- Mother will then encourage the child to do the same. Let the child spend some time arranging the jigsaw pieces. Help the child if he/she is struggling.
- If the child is successful ask the mother to praise the child by clapping.
- For scaffolding, mother can ask the child to arrange more complicated pictures.

Benefits: Through this activity, child will enhance visual perception, improves memory and develops critical thinking

Activity 4: Help child to learn counting through play
- Ask mothers to place different objects available at home, like bottle lids, spoons, toys, etc. in front of the child and count them. The child can be encouraged to count as well.
- Tell mothers that these activities can also be done while changing child’s clothes. For example, mother can say, while buttoning first button of shirt, ‘here we button one, now two and three’ and so on.
- Counting can also be done while going up and down the stairs. Counting on fingers is also a way of doing this activity.

Benefits: This activity will enhance the child’s cognitive abilities, will help him/her learn counting and will help in developing mathematical skills later in school.
3.2.6 Play activities for 2 ½ to 3 years old

Activity 1: Learning to recognise alphabets

- Most children begin recognizing alphabets between the ages of 2 and 3
- Ask the mother to show colourful alphabet picture books to the child. Point to an alphabet and say it clearly e.g. ‘this is A’.
- The mother will then point at the alphabet and ask the child which alphabet it is. If the child says it correctly, mother will give him/her lots of appreciation by clapping her hands and making encouraging comments.
- If the child cannot recall that alphabet, the mother will repeat politely.
- Remember to keep this as a fun activity, as this will help the child to learn better. If the child is not interested, it is best to let it go for a while.
- Suggest parents to scaffold this activity, by helping the child to learn words starting with that alphabet (e.g. A is for apple, ant and angel). Also encourage the child to recognise colours, shapes, animals, and other objects in the book.

**Benefits:** This activity will help the child to recognise and name alphabets and associate words starting with them.

Activity 2: Group Play

- Ask the mother to encourage her child to play with other children.
- This can be done by providing him/her with the right opportunities to be in the company of other children such as by inviting children to her house or visiting family or friends who have children.
- Give mother some examples of the group play such as racing, hopscotch, hide and seek, playing dolls’ houses, playing ball games, talking to each other on toy telephone, etc

**Benefits:** Group play helps the child to learn social skills such as sharing, taking turns, cooperating with other children and respecting other’s right.
Activity 3: Imaginative play

- Ask the mother to allow the child to engage in make-believe play where a child can pretend to be anyone he/she wants to be, it could be doctor, firefighter, police officer, prince, princess, teacher, a parent, superhero etc.
- Some examples of imaginative play include playing with other children pretending to be; policeman-thieves, teacher-students, doctor-patients or a superhero on a mission to save the world.
- Ask the mother to allow the child to use old cloths and other objects in the house to create make belief setting.

**Benefits:** Enhances imaginative thinking, helps to act out wishes and provide outlet for emotional expression

Activity 4: Challenging activities

- Inform the mother that the challenging activities could be fun and helps the child to learn at the same time.
- Some examples of challenging activities are given below. Other siblings could be encouraged to join in to make it more fun.

  o Rolling the cap: Ask the mother to encourage the child to roll out different bottle’s cap to see which cap goes to the furthest. The mother can take turns to make it more fun.

  o Lid activity: Take plastic lids, draw a big circle on the ground and ask your child to throw one lid at a time so that it falls in the circle. You can take turns and count the number of lids that landed in the circle.

  o Skittle games: Ask the mother to take 10 empty bottles, half fill them with sand, mud or lentils, to be used as skittles. Encourage the child to help with this activity. Put them at a distance from each other in a triangle. Now stand few yards away and roll the ball to hit the bottles. You can take turns and count the number of bottles which have fallen.
o Bottle and cap games: Ask the mother to take five different bottles with five matching caps. Lay out the separated bottles and caps, then ask the child to match the correct cap to the correct bottle, as quickly as possible. Time the child as he/she will do this activity. The mother can take turns to make it more fun.

**Benefits:** It improves motor skills, coordination, speed and balance, and also teaches patience, problem solving, overcoming failure, and perseverance.

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**Activity 5: Planting seeds**

- Take 2 or 3 small pots and some soil. Let the child place the soil in the pots until soil is almost to the top.
- Ask the child to place seeds in soil and then gently push some soil on top of the seeds. Plant a few seeds in each pot, in case one (or two) don’t make it.
- Gently mist the soil using a spray bottle and place pots on the window sill. Tell the child that seeds need water and light to grow.
- Let the child take care by watering them daily and waiting for them to grow.

**Benefits:** This activity will help the child to learn about the growth process, being patient as he/she wait for the seeds to grow and will gain responsibility while taking care of the plants.
Appendices
Appendix 1: Card game one

Learning through play

Mother’s personal health

Thinking Healthy Programme Peer Delivered (THPP+)

I drink at least seven glasses of water each day.

I sleep for at least six to seven hours each night.

I take at least two meals every day.

I eat at least two to three fruit or vegetables each day.

I make sure to go to doctor for check-up if I am not well.

I take brief naps during the day.

I think my health is important for my family.
I have my meals even when I am upset about anything.

I make sure to have a glass of milk or yogurt drink once a day.

I trust my God will help me out and do not let worriers overpower me.

I try to deal with my issues on my own.

I make sure to have regular prenatal check-ups.

I take iron tablets regularly to make sure my child is born healthy.

I try to get some time out to engage in activities I enjoy.

I praise myself for being a good mother.
Appendix 2: Card game two

Learning through play

Mother-Child Interaction

Thinking Healthy Programme Peer Delivered (THPP+)

I will exclusively breastfeed my child for the first six months

I will make sure that my child receive all routine vaccinations

I sing nursery rhyme to my child

I like to massage my child

I ensure that my husband spend quality time with our child
I encourage my family members to participate in child care

I take care of my hygiene to make sure that me and my child stays healthy

I enjoy engaging in playful activities with my child

I show my child colourful objects

I take care of my child’s hygiene

I take care of my child’s diet

I engage in playful activities with my child for his/her intellectual and cognitive development

I make cloths for my child in my spare time
I pray for my child’s good health

I give my child ORS in case he/she has diarrhoea

I strongly believe that my child should be getting my first milk (colostrum) as soon as he/she is born.

I make sure to take my child to doctors if he/she becomes unwell

I help my child become familiar with different objects

I play games with my child to help his/her sensory motor development
## Appendix 3: Card game three

### Learning through play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother’s relationship with people around her</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinking Healthy Programme Peer Delivered (THPP+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my concerns with a trustworthy friend or a family member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that sharing one’s problems can lighten the burden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like attending monthly group sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk to my family members to help me look for solutions to my problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go out to meet my friends and relatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask my family members to help me with the house chores.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I like to entertain guests.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
I like spending time with my family.

I discuss matters with my husband to look for best solutions.

I try to help others.

If I am angry over something I try to express my feelings without being argumentative or aggressive.

I believe that it is important for the family members to treat one another with kindness and respect to ensure the peace and harmony of the house.

I do not criticise others.

I acknowledge and appreciate when my family members support me.
Appendix 4: Card game Four
Appendix 5: Homework Sheet

Thinking Healthy Programme Peer Delivered Plus (THPP+)

Homework Sheet

Name of Mother: __________________________ Name of PV: ______________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother’s personal health and social support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Image of a mother with a tablet computer]</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s health and development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Image of a family with a book]</td>
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