



Working with parents to strengthen parenting skills

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Centro per la
Salute del
Bambino

- **CSB** is a **non-profit organization** founded in **1999** and based in Italy. Its mission is to ensure the **best opportunities for early development** to all children, with a focus on disadvantaged families and communities.
- This mission is carried out through **advocacy, training, research and implementation** of programs for parents and their children and for professionals dealing with families in **health, education, cultural and social sectors**.



What do children need in order to **develop their full potential**

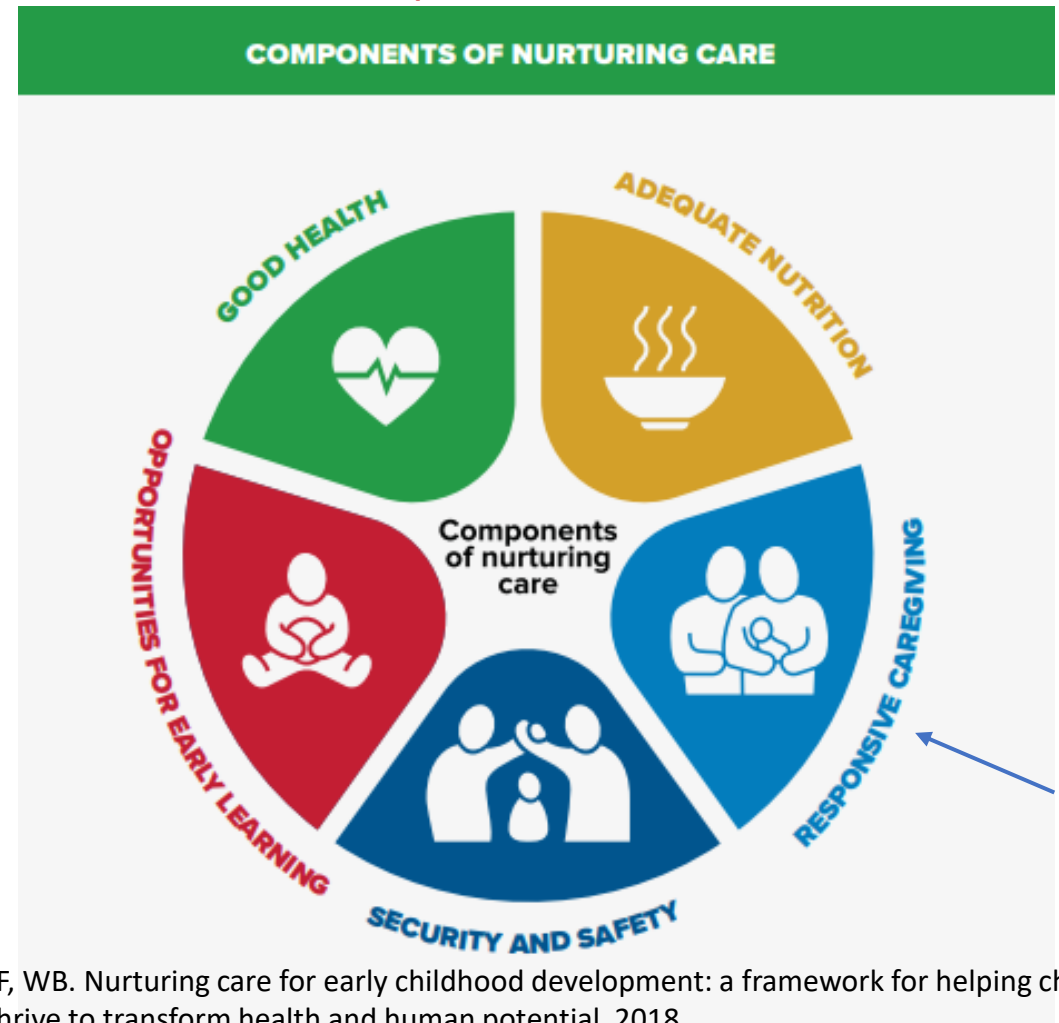
- The child's brain development depends on positive interactions with caregivers.
- **What parents and carers do makes a real difference** to children's development.
- There are a range of **quality activities** that parents undertake with pre-school children which are associated with better **cognitive and social/behavioural skills**.



Responsive caregiving is one of the most important components that children need to reach their full potential

It refers to the ability of the caregiver to *notice, understand and respond* to child's signals.

Responsive caregiving can be enhanced **by creating opportunities** for caregivers to experience *nurturing interactions* with their children.



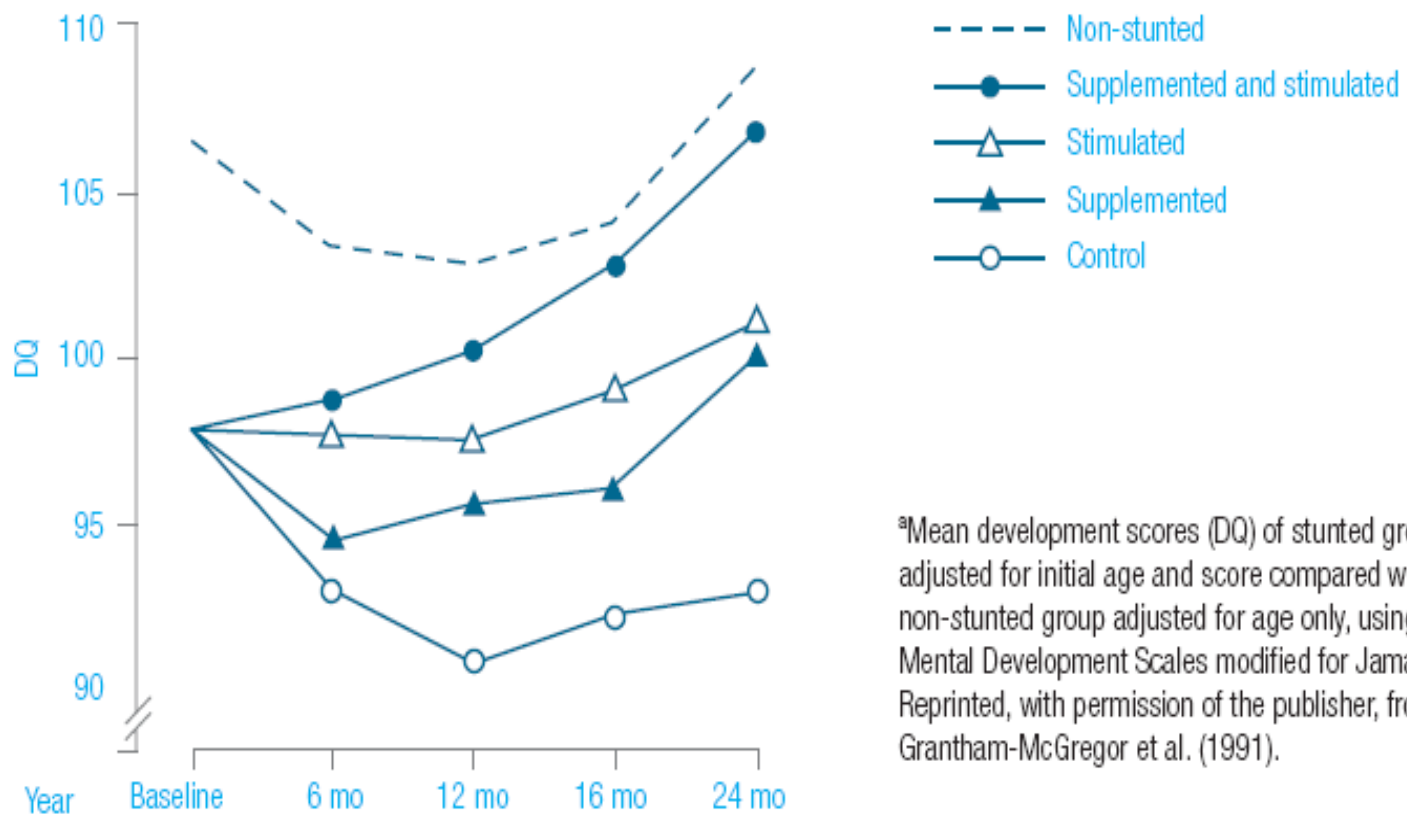
WHO, UNICEF, WB. Nurturing care for early childhood development: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential, 2018.

English version: <https://csbonlus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Nurturing-care-framework-FINAL.pdf>

For more info: <https://nurturing-care.org/>

The effects of responsive caregiving: short term effects of interventions for malnourished children comparing nutrition supplementation + stimulation: stimulation further increases developmental score

Figure 5.1: Effects of combined nutritional supplementation and psychosocial stimulation on stunted children in a 2-year intervention study in Jamaica.^a



^aMean development scores (DQ) of stunted groups adjusted for initial age and score compared with a non-stunted group adjusted for age only, using Griffiths Mental Development Scales modified for Jamaica. Reprinted, with permission of the publisher, from Grantham-McGregor et al. (1991).

Long term effects

The effects of the promotion of mother child interactions between 9 and 24 months of age are still evident

After 15 years differences between supplemented and stimulated children and only supplemented were evident in the following areas:

- IQ
- Vocabulary
- Reading and comprehension



Source Walker S et al., 2005

CSB promotes practices that have been shown to be **vectors of positive, responsive caregiving**

- **Talking, singing and cuddling during pregnancy and after birth**
- **Early bonding at birth and skin-to-skin care**
- **Breastfeeding and Responsive feeding**
- **Reading together** (Nati per Leggere)
- **Experiencing sound and music together** (Nati per la Musica)
- **Play together** with simple things (Giocare «con niente»)



The effects of educational poverty

Educational poverty is a *lack of opportunities to learn, experiment, develop and freely nourish capacities, talents and aspirations* (Save the Children Italia, 2014).

It coincides substantially but not completely with economic poverty. For young children, **educational poverty reduces the ability to grow and thrive within a nurturing environment** – it implies lack of access to early care, learning opportunities, and safe and responsive relationships, services and communities (World Health Organization *et al.*, 2018).

Addressing the challenge of educational poverty
and supporting responsive caregiving:
the *Un Villaggio per Crescere* project (1)

- **Universal, area-based approach**
- **Open access and proactive strategies** for outreach and retention
- **Joint participation of parents and children from birth to age 6**
- **Evidence-based activities** (easily replicable within the **home environment**) for child development and responsive caregiving
- Facilitation of activities by **professional educators**



Addressing the challenge of educational poverty
and supporting responsive caregiving:
the *Un Villaggio per Crescere* project (2)

- **Inter-sectoral collaboration** (health, education, social services, libraries) through co-planning, co-location and multi-professional training
- Involvement of **all community actors** (public services, commercial, non-profit, religious, etc.) for ownership, shared values and sustainability



Un Villaggio per Crescere: the proposed activities



Shared
reading



Gardening and
environmental
awareness



Appropriate use
of technologies



Play – tactile
and motor
experiences



Discovery and
exploration of
the community



Touching and
massage (in the
first 6 months)



Sounds
and music
experiences



Creativity
and artistic
expressions



Social events,
parties and
networking



- Specific activities dedicated to increase father's engagement
- Specific workshops dedicated to strengthen financial literacy skills





Un Villaggio per Crescere: state of the art

- **11 centers** operating in disadvantaged areas, mainly in urban peripheries (1st project, funded in 2018)
- **17 new centers** opened in 2021 (2nd project) through a co-financing scheme
- **Over 50 partners** including municipalities, schools, NGOs, professional associations
- Funding: **Con i Bambini** Social Enterprise – Fund to fight educational poverty; **Generali THSN** and **Generali Italia**
- **External independent** evaluation



Un Villaggio per Crescere: mixed-method evaluation

- **Parents feel more aware of children's developmental needs** and empowered in their parental role
- Most families have introduced or strengthened activities such as reading, play and music in their family routines
- **Caregivers feel more supported by community services and other families**



How to effectively support families and respond to their needs: the creation of an integrated system of services

The project will contribute to/facilitate the establishment of a **0-6 integrated system** where **health, education, social and cultural services** gradually integrate their work and plans so that families are accompanied from the third trimester of pregnancy in a coordinated way



CSB and Caritas

- National agreement signed in 2021 in order to support with joint efforts families and their children, increase the outreach capacity, work on advocacy
- Local collaborations (e.g. with the Village of Palermo and Trieste) which translates into sending families to Village Centers and in donations of clothes/toys from «Village families» to «Caritas families»
- Local collaborations with «empori solidali»

Thank you!



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