



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services

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**PARENTING TEENS FOR CAMBODIANS
A Model Curriculum**

by Julianne Duncan , Ph.D.

originally produced for
Harborview Medical Center
Community House Calls Program
Cambodian Girl's Group

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FOR CAMBODIANS

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PARENTING TEENS FOR CAMBODIANS

Wind blew and rain poured in the evening darkness but inside the Southwest Family Center in the Delridge neighborhood of Seattle parents and young children were gathering while teens worked at reception desks and other jobs. The parents of the teens were bringing their young children in to the child care center, their school age children to the library branch for tutoring and were meeting for their own class -- Parenting Teens for Cambodians. These were the parents of the girls in the Cambodian Girl's Group of Harborview Community House Calls Program. They studied parenting classes together for eight weeks during the fall of 1996. The class was repeated with the parents of the new girls entering the program during July/August 1997 and a follow-up shorter class was offered for the same group of parents during January/February, 1998.

The classes were designed

- to help the mothers and fathers acquire skills and knowledge to help them improve their relations with their teen children, and
- to develop a model curriculum that could be used for others teaching classes to the parents of Cambodian teens.

The parenting classes were part of a program for Cambodian teen girls providing tutoring, mentoring, job training and support groups. Having both parents and girls meeting during the same time period was helpful for the parents to learn more about their daughters' ideas and helpful to us in testing the curriculum to see what elements worked best.

This model curriculum is based on our experiences with this class. We thank the parents and children as well as the staff working with the girls. Many of their ideas have become part of the series.

BACKGROUND

During the 1970s Cambodia became a sideshow in the Cold War with China, the Soviet block and the United States and allies influencing groups within Cambodia and supporting various warring factions. In 1975 the group supported by the Maoist Chinese, the Khmer Rouge, gained control and instituted a radical program of reform that left millions dead and the social structure in shambles. The Cambodian families who are now living in Seattle and other parts of the United States are survivors of the war and the radical social experiment instituted by the victors. Most lived in Cambodia during the period of Khmer Rouge control and saw their families destroyed. Virtually all families experienced the death of many members; some parents watched all their children die and were unable to save them. Even those who survived were often prevented from living together with children removed from families and raised separately so they could be educated "purely," untainted by the values of the traditional society.

When escape became possible, families lived for up to several years in refugee camps in Thailand before resettlement in the United States or other countries or return to Cambodia. Families now here are composed of older adults who were educated in prewar Cambodia, younger adults who entered adulthood during the Khmer Rouge regime or in refugee camps and children who were born in refugee camps or in the United States.

All parents carry the emotional scars of their war and escape experience. For many families, their children are so precious to them they cannot deny the children anything. For others, the parents are depressed and cannot provide enough attention and structure for their children. Often the parents are grateful for life and cannot understand their children who take everything for granted and appear to appreciate nothing. Family conflict is frightening to parents who have survived the destruction of their families and society. Yet here,

when they need them most, the traditional supporting institutions are weakened or unavailable. Elders are dead or living far away. Schools are a mystery. Religion is not as pervasive a part of life.

In the United States, parents of teens from most economic and social backgrounds need parenting classes to help them understand and cope with their children's difficult years. Frequently they turn to resources offered by schools, colleges and medical institutions. Most immigrant parents experience some dissonance when adjusting for cultural differences between themselves and their children. Cambodian and other refugee families also need help but find classes taught in English and based on American cultural assumptions of limited help.

To help address this need, this curriculum is designed with Cambodian parents in mind. It has been developed as part of a parenting class held during the fall of 1996 for the parents of the girls participating in the Harborview Medical Center Cambodian Girl's Group. Although it is written in English, the curriculum is designed to be taught in Cambodian either by a Cambodian-speaking teacher or through an interpreter.

IDEAL FAMILY IN CAMBODIA AND UNITED STATES

Cambodian adults who are attending parenting classes have an unexamined ideal in their minds against which they are comparing themselves and their children. When their children do not measure up to the ideal, they feel uncomfortable. When advice given in class contrasts with the ideal, it is difficult for them to follow the advice. Of course, real people of any ethnic group can never be as good as the ideal they strive for. However, as teachers, we are more successful when we frame our lessons in such a way that the parents are able to understand our teaching within their own cultural context.

IDEAL PARENT IN CAMBODIA

Good parents provide their children with the necessities of life such as food, shelter, medical care, and education. They want to provide luxuries whenever possible. They observe the child and try to give them what they have noticed that the child likes. This is especially easy to observe with food; parents try to provide freshly cooked food for the children when they come home from school and try to cook what they notice that the children like. Parents feel sad when they cannot provide everything a child asks for and feel happy when they have given the child something that makes the child happy.

Parents want to provide an orderly household in which all members have harmonious relations with each other. Parents watch their children and give them good advice when they see they need it. If a parent sees a child not behaving correctly, the parent will explain what is proper, sometimes using another child's behavior as an example for the misbehaving child to follow. One of the major responsibilities of a parent is giving good advice to their children, thereby leading them to good behavior and harmony with others.

IDEAL CHILD

A good child listens to parents and does what the parents say to do offering no discussion or argument. Elders are always assumed to know better than youngsters by virtue of their greater experience. Children should do well at school and should help in the home according to their age and ability. Parents' responsibility is to assure that children have the opportunity to attend school. It is good fortune if it is the child's destiny to show special talent for schoolwork, music, domestic skills and so on.

Older children watch over younger ones and younger children respect older ones in the same way that parents and children care for and respect each other. In large families, an older child will be given responsibility for a younger child and will become the young sibling's major caretaker, providing a lifelong special bond.

Activities that enhance household harmony and togetherness are prized and rewarded. Parents are happy when children want to stay home.

IDEALS IN THE UNITED STATES

Children raised in the United States enter schools where they are taught and rewarded for behaviors that sometimes contrast with the ideal that their Cambodian-raised parents have in mind.

In American schools, children are taught to think about and challenge the statements of their classmates and teachers. They are rewarded for speaking up in class and giving different points of view. They should listen to teachers but are expected to speak up if they disagree and to explain their reasoning. Self-sufficiency is encouraged and as children get older they are admired for providing first luxuries and later necessities for themselves through working and handling money. Parents are proud of their children's efforts to achieve independence.

Children are taught these skills from their first school entry. However, Americans believe the teenage years to be a time in which all children challenge their parents and other authority figures as they establish their independent identity. Independence is prized highly and assertiveness is valued over harmony if both cannot be achieved. Americans believe that family harmony can be reestablished when the child reaches the later teens after they have had time to achieve independence.

American culture through schools and media also teaches that each child has an independent relationship with parents and other authorities. Thus, the Cambodian ideal in which older children are responsible for younger ones contrasts with the American cultural norms the children are learning outside the home.

American parents expect to be advocates for their children in school and other activities. They visit schools frequently and are often looking for advantages for their children. Even when children are very young, parents search for new experiences for their children in an effort to instill in the child a sense of confidence and independence.

CAMBODIAN STRATEGIES OF CHILD RAISING

In prewar Cambodia, children learned the correct way to behave mainly through being told or shown what to do. During early years children were nurtured and catered to by parents, grandparents and older siblings. As they entered school age they could be told what to do and began to be given responsibilities. By early teens, children were responsible for major home responsibilities if they were not in school. Parents typically told or showed children what to do and typically children complied. The threat of spanking was always in the background but was used rarely in the ideal family.

In addition to specific instruction and advice from parents, children learned through stories told by elders in the home, through moral education in the schools, through dance/drama plays shown by traveling troupes or presented at holidays and through sermons given by Buddhist monks at religious ceremonies.

If instruction and good advice from parents was not sufficient to guide a child, grandparents or other adult family members, school teachers or Buddhist monks would talk to a child. Often their advice would begin with telling the child how much the parents love the child and giving the child examples of what the parents have done to sacrifice themselves for the child. Therefore, the child should also show love and appreciation by improving behavior and reestablishing harmony in the home.

If children still behaved badly, they would be sent to live with another family member who might have more success reaching the child. Boys might be sent to live in the temple where the monks some of whom were known for their special skill at reaching wayward children would educate them. Going to live in the temple or with other family members was not seen by the parent or child as a punishment but more in the nature of an attempt to try to find the best situation for the child.

KEY PROBLEMS THAT OCCUR IN THE UNITED STATES

Parents who are providing the necessities for their children as well as as many luxuries as possible and are providing their children with good advice believe that they are fulfilling their responsibilities as parents. They expect their children to comply. When their children disobey or argue they are surprised. Independent behavior was not common in their families as they were growing up and they do not have a traditional skill-set to deal with it.

Parents often experience their children's non-compliance and arguments as disrespect and disobedience. They may feel deeply hurt by their children's ingratitude. The hurt they feel may take them by surprise and they may react in anger. It is not unusual for families to experience severe conflict even violence when the Cambodian cultural expectations of the parents is not matched by the more Americanized cultural expectations of the children. The problems are exacerbated when the traditional helpers -- elders, teachers, monks -- are not available to help reestablish communication between the parents and children and family harmony cannot be restored.

CLASSES FOR CAMBODIAN PARENTS OF TEENS

In designing a curriculum to help Cambodian parents raising their teen children in the United States, it is necessary to incorporate the ideals they have as well as giving them tools to cope with the different life their children experience. To be effective, a series of classes must include elements to do four things:

- Nurture the parents, recognizing their good intentions
- Give them tools to improve communication with their children
- Give them knowledge of American customs so they understand their children's experience
- Give them skills to restructure their children's difficult behavior.

NURTURING PARENTS

Parents are doing the best they can under difficult circumstances. If they are experiencing family conflict, they will learn better how to cope with it if their efforts to do a good job can be recognized. Learning ways that their traditional ideal can be used in new circumstances will be more comfortable than learning entirely new behavior. If they are hurt and angry about their children's behavior their classmates and their teachers may recognize their feelings. The class will be most effective if the parents see it as a supportive and comforting environment.

COMMUNICATION

In families in which conflict is escalating during the teen years of the children, improving communication among family members is essential. Parents, as noted above, expect children to listen to them; they do not expect to listen to children. Yet, in the United States children expect to be listened to and to have their ideas taken seriously. Both children and parents get hurt feelings when they are not listened to. In Cambodia, older

family members or others would be available to talk to each side to explain the other's point of view to help reestablish family harmony.

The structure of the parenting class can help parents learn some communication techniques and can be the conduit for some communication between children and parents. If possible, conducting a parenting class at the same time as a class or group for the children is best since the teachers can actually talk to the children and convey the children's point of view to the parents and the reverse as well.

KNOWLEDGE

Parents whose first language is not English and who were raised in different circumstances need some knowledge about the environment their children experience so they can do a better job guiding them. Further, they need knowledge of the various systems that can provide help when they have problems.

Cultural Differences

Parents need to identify some of the cultural norms their children are learning so that they can better understand their children's behavior. When parents understand that their children are being taught to speak up and to act and think independently in school, they will be less surprised when their children act this way at home.

Schools

Parents need more knowledge of the ways that middle and high schools operate. Most parents know something about reading their child's report card but need more explanation of the reports. School counselors are the key people to talk to when they are concerned about their child's schooling but parents often do not know who to contact or how to go about it. Even parents whose English is good are sometimes baffled by schools.

Since most parents have high hopes for their children and want them to be able to attend college or university, they need and want more information about how to help their children with college and financial aid.

Legal System

The system of police involvement in family disputes, child protective services, court systems for family problems and juvenile criminal matters are complex. Families who are involved with the legal system in any way need information and support. Parents who speak less English than their children especially need information so that the children are not able to manipulate and hold more power than the parents.

Dating and Sexuality

In the United States, children are maturing physically at a much younger age than was usual in Cambodia before the war. In Cambodia the age of physical maturity for girls was about 16 or 17 and the age of marriage was 18 to 20. Of course, during the starvation times under the Khmer Rouge physical maturity was severely delayed. In the United States because of improved nutrition and medical care, the age of physical maturity for girls is about 12 to 14 and the usual age of marriage is 18 to 25 depending on education. In addition to differences in physical development, teens are exposed to media and to social pressure in schools. When their parents are not aware of the physical and emotional difficulties their children face, the children cannot benefit from their families' advice and guidance.

RESTRUCTURING CHILD'S DIFFICULT BEHAVIOR

Restructuring the “bad” or difficult behavior of children, especially teens, is the essence of what most parents want when they come to a parenting class. Teaching parents how to restructure or change their children’s behavior is best done in the context of the other three aspects of the parenting class but is a clear and easily taught series of steps which the parents can practice during the sessions. The steps are outlined in the next section.

STEPS TOWARD RESTRUCTURING CHILD'S DIFFICULT BEHAVIOR

Changing conflictual and difficult behavior of children can be accomplished in three steps that the teachers can begin introducing during the first parenting class.

STEP ONE: CREATE ORDER AND HARMONY IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD

1. Be consistent with your child or children. Expect the same behavior from each child as age allows.
2. Notice something good about each child and discuss that with your spouse or another adult in the child’s hearing.
3. Praise your child for some behavior or characteristic that you like.
4. Schedule a quiet study time each day for all your children. If children have no school work, they can read a book. Insist on at least one hour with no TV, telephone, radio and so on.
5. Plan some pleasant activity with each child or with the whole family. This can be as simple as going to the market with you or walking together to the beach.

If there is one child who is more troublesome than the others, make sure that you find something good to notice and praise about that child and give that child more pleasant attention. If your children get jealous and begin to fight and compete for attention, praise them privately and give each child special attention.

STEP TWO: CHANGE DIFFICULT BEHAVIOR USING POSITIVE MEANS: POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

“Positive Reinforcement” is a concept that has no exact translation in Cambodian and is actually an awkward term in English. Nevertheless, it is the best way to express the concept. Before teaching the class make sure all instructors agree on what Cambodian vocabulary to use.

1. Parents plan together and identify some difficulty with one child or all your children that you want to correct. Practice on a small non-controversial behavior until you learn this skill.
2. Both parents discuss with child the behavior change you want. Be careful to set a positive, pleasant tone; do not express anger.
3. Notice and praise even tiny steps toward improvement.
4. When a child forgets to do the correct behavior:
 - (a) gently remind child of requested behavior,
 - (b) have them comply,
 - (c) praise compliance.

During class, it may be useful to demonstrate what you want parents to do and help them think of a simple behavior to practice on at home. For example, parents may practice on having the children turn off the lights when they leave a room or bringing their dishes to the sink after eating. These are very clear, simple

behaviors in which parents and children quickly see improvement if there is any. When parents know how to do this step they can then apply it to other behaviors that are more serious.

This method of behavior change is most effective when used in combination with traditional Cambodian efforts to improve children's behavior as noted above. While the parents are practicing Positive Reinforcement with the child, a grandparent, a family counselor or other family helper can talk to the child about how much their parents love them and how it hurts the parents when the child behaves improperly.

Using Positive Reinforcement is very effective with Cambodian families and is consistent with advice given by Buddhist monks and other cultural helpers. The hardest part for parents is to be clear and limited in the behaviors they try to change; it is important to do one thing at a time.

STEP THREE: RESTRUCTURING BEHAVIOR WHEN POSITIVE MEANS ARE NOT ENOUGH: PUNISHMENT

It is important to discuss the idea of punishment before teaching these steps. Punishment as a means to teach and guide the child must be distinguished from that which is a display of the parent's anger. In this class, punishment is used to guide and change a child's behavior. Parents need to use other means to cope with their anger. All parents feel anger at their children sometimes but punishing children while angry is not helpful to the goal of guiding the children toward good behavior.

1. Parents discuss together what problem they want to solve with the child.
2. Parents agree on what punishment they will set if the child does not comply. Punishments should be fair and reasonable for the child's age.

In Cambodia spanking by hand or using a small switch was an appropriate punishment. It will be necessary to discuss other possibilities that parents may use instead. For teens, "grounding" or not being permitted to go out or visit friends for a period of time is common in the United States. Not being allowed to use the phone or TV for a period of time is also an American punishment for teens. For younger children, having "time out" by being sent to a bedroom or sitting quietly in a chair for a short time while other children continue to play is used as punishment.

3. Parents talk to child about problem behavior, being very clear about what behavior you want—make a rule.
4. Tell child the good behavior is important to you and why.
5. Tell the child what punishment will happen if she violates your rule. In all discussions with child, keep a positive tone; do not display anger.
6. Watch your child's behavior closely.
7. Praise even tiny efforts to comply.
8. If violation occurs, calmly invoke punishment. If possible, do not display anger.
9. At end of punishment, set a positive tone by saying it is time to try again, that you hope the child will comply next time.

During the class, the step on how to use punishment is difficult for Cambodian parents. Some parents think that something is not a punishment unless it hurts physically; it is necessary to remind them that the goal is to improve the child's behavior whether you call the activity punishment or something else. Other Cambodian parents have great difficulty depriving their children of luxuries or privileges since providing these things equates with being a good parent. Punishment is a complex subject for Cambodians raising

children in the United States and it may be difficult for the members of the classes to decide on punishments that they feel comfortable using.

CAMBODIAN LEARNING STYLE

In planning classes for Cambodian parents, it is useful to know something of the ways in which knowledge was passed on in traditional society. Parents can learn more easily if skills and information are taught in a manner that is familiar.

In the best situation classes will be taught in Cambodian, with all members speaking the same language. If a non-Cambodian speaker is teaching through an interpreter, it is important to have discussions with the interpreter before the class and allow plenty of time for translation. Many words and concepts have no simple or direct Cambodian equivalent and discussions between teacher and class members may be needed to clarify meaning.

If a class is among mixed ethnic groups questions of translation and differences of cultural concept are multiplied. It will be necessary for the instructor to spend much more time creating a supportive atmosphere if the class members have different ethnic backgrounds.

Many Cambodian adults who have resettled in the United States are not literate in either English or Cambodian. Even those who are literate in Cambodian will not have been accustomed to getting most of their knowledge through reading. Most information was passed on orally: informally through conversation, stories or proverbs or formally through dance/drama and religious instruction. People are concrete and exact in their approach and often learn better through demonstration. Adults are dignified and respectful in a class and expect to learn from the teacher rather than participating in thinking of solutions.

Some of the American teaching styles used in adult education are uncomfortable for Cambodian adults. American teachers are sometimes less formal than the class members expect. Role playing may be embarrassing and undignified. Extensive class discussion may be thought of as a waste of time since the class members are there to learn from the teacher. Some adults are reluctant to ask questions in part because doing so would be a reflection on the teacher's explanation. Final evaluations need to be simple and phrased in such a way that negative criticism of the instructor can be avoided.

The series of classes outlined in the next section incorporates the suggestions given above. Of course each teacher and each class are different. Use these ideas to design your own curriculum for your own situation.

PARENTING TEENS FOR CAMBODIANS

Lesson Plans for Eight Weeks of Classes

This section of the curriculum provides eight lesson plans that include the information presented in the first half. The model arranges for classes to last two hours and to incorporate a variety of information and learning styles each week. The order of the classes takes the participants from easier to harder lessons always trying to maintain an atmosphere of comfort for adult Cambodian participants.

If possible, offer the class in combination with classes or support groups for the teens. Both groups can be working toward improving family harmony. The teachers or leaders of each side can help communication between them.

Goals of the Class Series:

- To nurture the parents; to provide them a sense of comfort so that they are relaxed and can more easily learn.
- To help parents improve communication between themselves and their teens.
- To provide parents information which they need to guide their children.
- To give the parents skills to change or restructure their teens' difficult behavior.

Each class is designed to follow the same order and include the same elements so that as participants begin to learn harder subjects they have the familiarity of the structure to provide comfort. Classes are designed with formal openings and closings to assist participants in separating friendly chat from class work. American adult education tends to be more informal than Cambodian participants are comfortable with; formal beginning and endings can help bridge the conceptual gap if an American is teaching the class.

The series is designed with a written pre-test and post-test so that instructors can determine whether their methods were effective at improving communication and increasing knowledge. Some instructors may decide to dispense with the written evaluation and use their own observations and parents statements during the class. Since most of the participants are illiterate in English and Cambodian any written scale used should be simple.

Each class includes some time to introduce the subject matter in the context of Cambodian culture especially through stories and proverbs but also through discussions of similarities and differences between Cambodian and American culture. Many of the traditional ways that Cambodians guided their children can be adjusted and used in the United States. Finally, each class is designed with "Homework," an exercise that will lead to the next class or practice newly taught skills. By observing the students' degree of success with homework exercises, the teacher can tell whether subject matter or teaching style should be adjusted.

As with any other subject, we are all learning as we go. If anyone use this model curriculum, we would be grateful to hear about your experience.

Class One
WE MUST ALL HELP EACH OTHER

Goals: Create a feeling of comfort and mutual help.
Place the class in a familiar cultural context.
Have parents become familiar with the plan and structure of the class.
Hear parent concerns, requests for subjects to be covered during the series.

Supplies: VCR
Film of *Tom-Teav* (A classic Cambodian story)
Copies of the pre-test and pencils (if applicable)

Formal greeting to begin class

30 minutes Introductions: ask for names, how many children, special requests for help.
Teacher discusses how we are all the same; everybody has trouble with his or her teens.

15 minutes Teacher explain that the goal of class is to improve family harmony. Tell the members that they are good parents because they are trying to learn more.
Their children are young and may not yet appreciate the parents' sacrifice.

45 minutes Show 20-25 minutes of *Tom-Teav*.
Let parents tell the highlights of the rest of the story with its tragic ending.
Discussion: Why are we showing this film? To show that tragedy occurred in Cambodia even before the war and parents could benefit from parenting class there too.

15 minutes Tell what we plan to do in this class for eight weeks to reach our goal of improving family harmony.

15 minutes Evaluation—pre-test

10 minutes Review—what did we learn today:
* We must help each other.
* We are good parents.
* Parents in Cambodia had to learn how to be more effective parents.
* We can learn some things to make child raising easier in the United States.

15 minutes Homework—what to do for next week:
* Talk to child about school. Ask for name and location of school, favorite class and teacher, hardest class.
* Think of a Cambodian proverb about education.

Formal closing

Class Two EDUCATION

“The more you study, the more success you will have.” (Cambodian proverb)

Goals: Continue supportive atmosphere for parents.
Give information on Seattle area high and middle schools.
Give information on college and university.
Tell parents specific things they can do to support their children’s education.

Supplies: Enlarged report card to use for display
Samples of college application forms and financial aid forms

15 minutes Greetings and conversation. Class members get a snack and drink.

Formal greeting to begin class. Thank the members who came on time.

15 minutes Check in on homework—what did they learn about their child’s school.

15 minutes Discuss Cambodian proverbs about education in general or use the one titling this lesson. American and Cambodian cultures are similar in valuing education for all children and both believe education improves a child’s future.

30 minutes Discuss Middle and High Schools:
* Show parents how to read a report card. Point out the comment section where it shows that children are expected to speak up in class.
* Discuss the role of the child’s school counselor and how to contact her.
* Explain the importance of homework for students.

30 minutes Discuss College and Universities:
* Explain that there are many careers that require only one or two years of education beyond high school
* Show financial aid forms and discuss how to apply.

10 minutes Review—what did we learn today:
* Education is similarly valued in the United States and Cambodia.
* The school counselor is the person to contact if we are worried about our child’s behavior or education.
* Our children can qualify to attend any college or university regardless of cost.

15 minutes Homework—what to do for next week (choose any one of the following):
* Provide a quiet time and place for your children to study. Make sure there is good light and a table. Insist on at least one hour with no TV or telephone.
* Get your child’s report card and look at it. If you need help, come to class early next time with the report card.
* Find out the name of your daughter’s counselor and make an appointment.
* Encourage your child to attend one after school activity.
* Open a savings account in a bank to save money for your child’s college education.

Formal closing

Class Three

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

“When you speak in anger, your words do not go far; When you speak sweetly, you reach your goal.”
(Cambodian proverb)

Goals: Continue supportive atmosphere.
Discuss differences between teens in Cambodia and United States.
Teach Positive Reinforcement.

15 minutes Greeting and conversation. Everyone get a snack and drink.

Formal greeting to begin instruction. Express thanks to those who came on time.

15 minutes Check in about homework—which activity did parent choose and how did it go.

15 minutes Discuss the Cambodian proverb that titles this lesson. Remind the parents that our goal is to improve family harmony when we guide or discipline our children.

30 minutes Explain some important differences between teens in Cambodia and the United States:

- * In the United States children are taught from the beginning of school to discuss everything; Americans expect teens to be rebellious and to establish independence. In Cambodia, children are expected to defer to elders in all situations.
- * In the United States children must be told they are loved; they do not know it from how you act. In Cambodia, a grandparent or other family helper tells your child what you do for and that this shows them how much you love them.

60 minutes Positive Reinforcement is the most effective way to change problem behavior. Using the steps outlined on pages 6 and 7, teach the four steps of Positive Reinforcement. It will be useful to demonstrate what you mean. Allow extra time if teaching with an interpreter to determine how to explain Positive Reinforcement since it does not translate exactly.

15 minutes Review—what did we learn this week:

- * Children learn most through praise and kindness.
- * Children raised in the United States have been taught to discuss everything and will also argue and act independently at home.
- * Positive Reinforcement will help improve our child’s behavior.

15 minutes Homework—what to do for next two weeks (next week we have guest speakers so will not have time to teach a new skill):

- * Choose one small change you want your children to make. Use the four steps of Positive Reinforcement to make the change.
- * For the following week, choose a more important problem, and combine Positive Reinforcement with traditional Cambodian way of having a grandparent or other family helper talk to your child about the problem.

Formal closing

Class Four **WHO CAN HELP YOU**

Goals: Continue supportive atmosphere.
Check in and provide support for parents who tried Positive Reinforcement.
Provide information about legal system so parents will know what to do if problems occur.

15 minutes Greetings, eat and drink.

Formal Opening of Class

15 minutes Check in and discussion of homework--trying Positive Reinforcement. Remind parents to continue practicing the skill next week while adding Cambodian style problem solving.

1 hour,

15 minutes Introduce guest speakers from Seattle or King County police, from Public Defender's office or other systems:

- * Based on the initial requests of parents at your first and second classes, determine whom your students need to hear from. Parents may not be aware of the need to understand the legal system so may not request speakers. If they do not request this help, it may be nevertheless necessary to include them.
- * Prepare your speakers for speaking through an interpreter if they have not done so often.
- * Be prepared to ask questions yourself if your students are too shy or respectful to do so.

10 minutes Review—what did we learn today:

- * We know the best way to contact and use the services of the police.
- * If our family is involved with the courts, a lawyer will help us.

10 minutes Homework—what to do for next week:

- * Use Positive Reinforcement method in combination with traditional Cambodian method of having an elder or other family helper discuss problem behavior with child.

Formal Closing

Class Five
USING PUNISHMENT TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR

Goals: Continue supportive atmosphere.
Discuss use of positive reinforcement practice.
Discuss the use of punishment to improve child's behavior.

15 minutes Greetings, eat and drink.

Supplies: Handout on Child Protective Services

Formal opening

30 minutes Check in on homework--use of Positive Reinforcement combined with traditional Cambodian method of counseling with an elder.

30 minutes Discussion of the idea of "Punishment" and the reason parents use punishment with children:

- * Distinguish the use of punishment or spanking because the parent is angry from the use of punishment that will be effective at changing child's behavior. Give handout on Child Protective Services so parents know what behaviors are prohibited in the United States.
- * Discussion of Buddhist belief and advice about violence and displays of anger.
- * Discuss alternative methods of punishment that do not use violence.
- * Remind parents that we often feel anger at our children but we want to avoid punishing our children when we are angry because it will not help our children.
- * Remind parents that children raised in the United States will never be as respectful as children raised in Cambodia because they are taught the opposite in school.

60 minutes Practice changing child's behavior using punishment: using the nine steps outlined on pages 7 and 8 take an example from one of the parents and outline with the class how to use punishment to improve their child's behavior.

It will probably be necessary to demonstrate this skill and discuss the dialog in detail. It is difficult for Cambodian parents to think of "grounding" or loss of privileges as punishment. Allow enough time for this skill to be taught. If teaching through an interpreter, allow extra time before class to discuss the concepts and vocabulary. Since most parents also have younger children, a discussion of appropriate punishment for younger children may also be necessary.

10 minutes Review—what did we learn this week:

- * Punishment is a tool for improving child's behavior, not a time to vent anger.
- * Punishment is best used in combination with Positive Reinforcement and traditional Cambodian method of talking with an elder.

10 minutes Homework—what to do for next week:

- * Parents discuss together what punishment they will use if it is necessary to punish their children.

Formal Closing.

Class Six
THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY PROBLEMS ON CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

Goals: Praise and support parents who are trying new skills with children.
To show the effects of family problems on children.
To use a film to show examples of ideas presented in earlier classes.

Supplies: VCR
Film, *Children of Mahant Dorai*
Handout—Agencies with Khmer staff in King County

15 minutes Greetings, eating and drinking.

Formal opening

30 minutes Check in on homework—what punishments do parents plan to use when necessary.

45 minutes Show film. Film is 38 minutes long. Some parts are in English and must be translated to parents so viewing time is longer.

30 minutes Discussion of film—key points to highlight:
* Father is praising young children but doing so in order to criticize Bun.
* Parents are not aware of their children's pressures in school and among friends.
* The children did not understand the family situation until someone explained it to them in a sympathetic way.
* Everyone needs to ask for help from relatives, friends or from agencies who can help.

10 minutes Handout—Agencies with Khmer Staff in King County

10 minutes Class business:
* Remind parents that you are asking their children what the children want them to know and will report back next week.
* Discuss the final class to see if parents want to invite the whole family and have a potluck party for their graduation ceremony.

5 minutes Review—what we learned today:
* It is not easy being a parent for children growing up in the United States.
* Drinking and other family problems are common; we need to get help.
* We are good parents because we keep trying to improve.

5 minutes Homework—what to do for next week:
* Ask your children what is common in their school about dating and going to parties.
* Think about how this is different in the United States than in Cambodia

Formal closing

[Editor's Note: information on the film discussed in Class Six—

Children of the Mahant Dorai

Year: 1992

Format: VHS Videotape with Two Workbooks

Length: 45 minutes

Topic: Alcohol

Language: English with Khmer (Cambodian language) Subtitles

Target Audience: Cambodian Families; Elementary and Junior High School Students

Availability:

Khmer Health Advocates, Inc.,

545 Prospect Avenue

West Hartford, CT 06105

800-50-KHMER

This videotape depicts a Cambodian family that abuses alcohol to ease their pain and problems resulting from the Mahant Dorai (time of great destruction). Issues concerning peer pressure, alcoholism, children of alcoholics, and expressing feelings are addressed in a set of comprehensive discussion questions.]

Class Seven
DATING AND SEXUALITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND CAMBODIA

Goals: Praise parents who continue attending class and trying new skills.
Tell parents what their children want them to know about.
Discuss American compared to Cambodian customs of dating and marriage.
Emphasize the health concerns associated with sexuality.

15 minutes Greetings, food and drink.

Formal opening

15 minutes Check in on homework—what did the children tell parents about dating and parties at their school.

30 minutes Report back on what their children wanted them to know about.

30 minutes Discussion of similarities and differences between Cambodians and Americans regarding age of marriage, practices of dating or choosing spouse, pressures on teens to be sexually active in the United States.

30 minutes Explain the physical differences between their children and similar aged children in Cambodia in the past.

Because of good nutrition and medical care, children, especially girls, are maturing sexually at a much younger age than was the case in Cambodia. Therefore, children have adult hormones and sexual maturity but the brain and decision-making capacity of children. In Cambodia, marriage in late teens coincided with the onset of sexual maturity and with the brain capacity to make adult decisions. In the United States, sexual maturity arrives as early as age 12 and marriage may be delayed until mid-20s or later.

30 minutes Discussion of groups held by Planned Parenthood and other organizations for parents and children together to teach young teens about sexuality.

10 minutes Review—what we learned today:
* Parents need to become aware of their children’s experiences.
* Sexual development in the United States is different than in Cambodia.
* Teens need information about their development in order to remain healthy.

10 minutes Homework—what to do for next week:
* Bring whole family.
* Bring food for potluck.
* Plan to have fun at graduation ceremony.

Formal closing

Class Eight GRADUATION

Goals: Complete formal class evaluations--post-test.
Praise parents for attending class and learning new information.
Have fun party for families participating in class.

15-30 minutes Complete evaluation forms.

30-60 minutes Formal graduation ceremony:

- * Speeches of thanks by class members for those who made class possible.
- * Speeches by any guests.
- * Congratulations to parents for attending class.
- * Presentation of Certificates.
- * Presentation of Special honors (i.e. perfect attendance, etc.).
- * Thanking ceremony from teens to parents (if class is conducted as part of a group for teens).

Formal ending of class

Eating, Music, Dancing, Fun