



Effective non-violent discipline strategies for our children and students: Developing effective psychological approaches in Timor Leste

2-5 pm, Monday 6 August, 2012

Training Room, Alola Foundation, Rua Bispo de Medeiros, Mascarenhas, Dili

Lessons from developmental psychology

- Developmental psychologists study human growth and childhood experiences that lead wellbeing and healthy adjustment versus adjustment problems
- Child behavior problems (e.g., conduct disorder, oppositional –defiant disorder) are defined by abnormal development and behavior (e.g., violence, stealing, hostility)
- Child behavior problems are influenced by multiple factors – temperament, nutrition, socialisation, family (parents, siblings), school, peers, disasters, trauma.
- Tend to arise in early childhood and at the start of adolescence. The earlier problems arise and the longer they last – the more they can reduce healthy child development and cause problems
 - Child behavior problems have cross- cultural similarities in negative emotional states, elevated cortisol (stress hormones), adverse brain development, leading to antisocial personality and health and social problems
 - What is different in Timor Leste and Australia? Large families & siblings, collective culture, rights, opportunities.



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Parent Education

- Parent education and family therapy are effective strategies for reducing child problems
- Effective parent discipline - sets clear rules & demands, uses moderate consequences, teaches problem solving and skills, encourages opportunities, rewards good behaviour
- The Triple P approach is used in many countries and translated into multiple languages
- Triple P offers five levels of intervention intensity depending on the problem – television programs, brochures with solutions to common problems, brief advice and support, increasingly intensive consultations for solutions to more serious problems
- Effective parent education is shown to reduce violence toward children, child behavior problems and the development of violence and mental health problems

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School of Psychology, Faculty of Health, Deakin University Australia
Geelong Waterfront Campus, Locked Bag 20000, Geelong VIC 3220
Tel +613 5227 8278 john.toumbourou@deakin.edu.au www.deakin.edu.au

School Adjustment

- Child adjustment to school refers to liking school, feeling good about school and actively participating. This is influenced by both child and school characteristics
- Child behavior problems prior to school can make school adjustment more difficult
- Child behavior problems can start at school due to negative experiences with teachers, peers, community, academic failure and punitive discipline
- What is different in Timor Leste and Australia? Fewer options, large school cohorts.

School Discipline Practices

- School discipline practices are one of many influences on child adjustment to school and can also influence child behavior problems



- Discipline that uses punishment can seem effective at gaining compliance but it increase hostile and negative emotions and dislike
- Effective discipline respects child rights, sets clear rules and consistent consequences
- “Catch them being good” refers to teacher practices that emphasise and reward good behaviour (positive discipline)
- Teacher training can enhance effective discipline and improve school adjustment

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Good Behaviour Game

- An example of an effective discipline technique that can be readily taught and implemented in even large classrooms. Typically used in early primary school
- Teachers receive two half day training sessions and supervision
- Starts with teachers helping students to list the class rules
- The rules are written in positive language and may use pictures around the class
- Teachers place children in teams mixing disruptive and non-disruptive students
- Teams receive a number of cards (ten), with their goal being to obtain a reward by retaining their cards at the end of short classroom sessions
- The teacher removes a card when a rule is broken by a group member (e.g., leaving one's seat, talking out of turn, disruptive behaviour). Teams and students receive compliments for following the agreed rules.
- Winning teams receive small rewards directly after each game, then weekly and monthly
- The game encourages children to work together to manage their own behavior and to help their peers, a process that builds concern, co-operation and understanding
- The Good Behaviour Game increases positive peer behavior, reduces violent behaviour

<http://bit.ly/goodbehaviourgame>

Presenter: *Dr. John Toumbourou, PhD, Professor and Chair in Psychology, School of Psychology, and Associate Dean, Faculty of Health, Deakin University Australia. Executive Member of the Asian Psychological Association.* john.toumbourou@deakin.edu.au

Host: Many Hands International www.manyhands.org.au - kim.dunphy@manyhands.org.au