



COMPASSIONATE CHILD-REARING

CLASS 4

PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Instructor's Guide

Class Meeting 4

Independence and Individuation: Emotions Hunger vs. Love

Schedule of Activities


1. Ask parents to review Questions 1- 4 on pages 10 and 11 in the Parents' Workbook. Encourage them to describe any examples or personal stories they feel like sharing with others in the class.
2. Discuss participants' practical concerns involved in choosing a reliable day-care center or babysitter. Talk about the age at which an infant can be introduced to a sitter or involved in regular day-care.

(Reference: *Raising Happiness: 10 Simple Steps for More Joyful Kids and Happier Parents*, “Step 9: Rig Their Environment for Happiness” with resource notes by Christine Carter, PhD, 2010)

3. Discuss going back to work—dealing with guilt and other pressures.

(Reference: [“Returning to Work After Maternity Leave: 5 Emotions & How to Cope”](#)
Updated: February 25, 2016)

4. Discuss weaning—when and how to accomplish this step.



(References: “[When and how to stop breastfeeding](#)” Mayo Clinic- Infant and Toddler Health and “[Weaning: Tips for breast-feeding mothers](#)” Baby Center Medical Advisory Board January 2016)

5. Ask for ideas and suggestions from participants regarding how they have handled separation experiences with their infant or toddler.

15-Minute Break

6. Introduce concept of emotional hunger and describe how it can be distinguished from behaviors that express real affection and love.
7. Show [excerpts from *Hunger vs. Love* and *Invisible Child Abuse*](#)
8. Have an open discussion of how participants responded to the video clip, *Hunger vs. Love*
9. Describe “non-contingent,” “non-attuned” or intrusive responding described in [Parenting from the Inside Out](#) as examples of immature or emotionally hungry responses from parents. Contrast these responses with attuned responses on the part of parents.
10. Begin a discussion of how to repair disruptions in attuned interactions with children.
11. Distribute **HANDOUT:** [Psychology Today Blog: Emotional Hunger vs Love](#)

Handout for Class Meeting 4:
[Psychology Today Blog: Emotional Hunger vs. Love](#)



Guidelines for Group Process and Topics for Discussion

Child-Care Baby-Sitting

The issue of day-care and what the experts say. Many studies have concluded that professional day-care, when carefully structured, has no negative or psychological effects.

Furthermore, one study found that children at day-care centers were more social, while babies at home tended to cry more.

Where to look - friends, high school, colleges, churches, nursing schools, baby-sitter agencies, and senior citizen clubs have reference lists.

Things to consider in selecting a **baby-sitter**:

- Warmth, sensitivity, and other positive qualities.
- Does the sitter have the same view of children as the parents?
- Do the parents like the sitter? Does the sitter enjoy being with the child?
- Ask for references from other parents.

Things to consider in selecting **day-care centers**:

- Maturity, warmth, sensitivity, and other positive qualities of adults.
- The adult-child ratio (one adult for every four children or one adult for every two infants).
- Opportunity for children to explore.
- The curriculum or planned activities.
- Teacher-parent relationships.
- Provision for the sick child
- References from other parents.



Xerox copies of pages 150-160 in *Raising Happiness* and talk about the four factors to consider when looking for child-care:

- Safety and basic cleanliness,
- The quality of the connection between the caregivers and the children.
- Does the environment foster lots of positive emotions? Are the care givers warm, nurturing and happy themselves?
- Play: how much time do the children spend playing versus sitting in front of the television?

Parental Guilt - Going Back to Work

Will the baby suffer from the parents' absence? Does the parent who is returning to work, (usually the mother) feel as if they are "losing out" on significant moments with their baby or toddler by going back to work? Describe the emotions of separation anxiety, excitement about being back at work, guilt about leaving their baby in someone else's hands, feelings of being overwhelmed by "two jobs," symptoms of sleep deprivation, Some mothers feel guilty for going back to work because they feel that the child needs her special care. Others may feel that their baby should be cared for in the same way that they were cared for. For example, they may be reluctant to put the child into a day-care center if their parents took care of them alone.

Refer to "[Returning to Work After Maternity Leave: 5 Emotions & How to Cope](#)" and/or Xerox the article as a HANDOUT.

Emphasize that the quality of time parents spend with their baby or toddler matters a great deal. Discuss what the words "quality of time" implies. What does it mean to be "fully present" when interacting with your infant or toddler? The quality of time spent with a child cannot be beneficial if the mother doesn't want to be there. The feeling of being burdened by the baby is transmitted to the child. It is better to take breaks from caring for the child to ease the burdened feeling, rather than continue to feel oppressed or resentful.



The Quality of Home Care

Discuss the type of care parents feel that they are providing for their child. Talk about parents' attitudes toward their child.

Other questions to consider: Why did the couple decide to have a baby at this point in their marriage? What kind of future do they envision for their child? What kind of person do they visualize their child becoming as he or she grows to adulthood?

Weaning

How to gradually wean the child from the breast or the bottle.

References:

- See suggestions in “[When and how to stop breastfeeding](#)” Baby Center Medical Advisory Board, Jan. 2016
- Also “[Weaning: Tips for breast-feeding mothers](#)” Mayo Clinic Infant and toddler health.

Ask participants who have older children to describe how they weaned their baby or toddler. What worked best for them?

Discuss how to wean the toddler from the last night bottle. Experts suggest that a night bottle can be given up at approximately 18 months, following the period of most intense reactions to separation. How to tell the baby what you are going to do first—stress that he/she is going to be a big boy or girl, etc. Give him/her milk in a cup before bed.



Reaction of the Child to Being Weaned

In separating from the mother's breast, a child feels a break or disruption in the fantasy of oneness with the mother, feels anxious, fears abandonment, can't control satisfactions as easily, and may have to wait longer for feeding.

The child has more need to suck and may become very dependent on pacifiers. The child may cling more to the mother, seem depressed or dazed. He/she may be angry and wish to get even with the mother for refusing him/her the bottle or breast. A mother needs to be sensitive to these fears and angry reactions—they are normal.

Other Signs of Separation Anxiety at Later Stages

Toddlers - Characteristics: toddlers like to touch base with mother in the midst of exploring, some have temper tantrums when mother leaves, others may refuse to look at mother when she returns. When separations occur, 3- and 4-year old may begin wetting the bed again, or increase their whining or bids for attention, or refuse to eat certain foods or to go to bed.

In playing with a toddler, parents need to give lots of separation experiences through play, e.g., peek-a-boo; when the child throws away toys, bring them back; make a game of hiding a toy from a child and having it reappear. Parents need to be honest with the child about leaving and tell him/her where they are going and when they will be back. Even a young child can be reassured by the parent's tone of voice.



Sharing Child-Rearing Functions with Fathers

Fathers make good “mothers.” The stereotypic view of men as not being as good with children as women is generally incorrect. Men are just as nurturing as women. The experience of child-rearing can be shared by breaking out of the traditional view of the father as disciplinarian.


Discuss ways to overcome traditional attitudes about parents and a new baby. Other topics that parents may bring up include jealousy of one parent about the other parent’s involvement with the new baby, anxieties and feelings of inadequacy, and the myth of unconditional love.

Emotional Hunger vs. Love

Sometimes the feelings parents have toward their children lead to behaviors that make the child feel good; however, at other times they feel anxious, lonely, worried, or depressed and turn to their children for comfort and affection—to make themselves feel good.

Parents who do not receive enough nurturing or consistent care as children often turn to their own children to try to get from them what they missed in their childhood. Some parents feel a need to fulfill themselves in this way through their children only infrequently; others are aware of looking to their children for affection whenever they are anxious or stressed.

In *Parenting from the Inside Out*, Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzell wrote, “Continual intensity of a parent’s focus on his child could actually be experienced as quite intrusive by the child. Within parent-child relationships there are cycling needs for connection and separation. It is important for parents to be sensitive to times when the child needs solitude as well as joining. The attuned parent respects the natural oscillating rhythms of



the child's need for (real) connection, (feeling felt) then solitude, and then connection again. We are not designed to be in alignment all of the time. Attuned relationships give respect to the rhythm of these changing needs.” (p. 68)

15-MINUTE BREAK

View Video Excerpts:

View excerpts from [*Hunger Vs Love and Invisible Child Abuse*](#) (20 minutes)

Open discussion of parents' reactions to videotape excerpts. The concept of emotional hunger is one that parents have found to be valuable in clarifying the emotions that would lead to the formation of an anxious attachment between them and their baby, and differentiating these feelings from those that would lead to a secure attachment.

Focus the discussion on Question 1–3 from pages 13-14 in [Parents' Workbook](#):

Talk about the behaviors that express emotional hunger:

(**Reference:** PsychologyToday Blog “[Emotional Hunger Vs Love](#)”)

- Overprotecting the child
- Living vicariously through the child's accomplishments
- Lack of respect for the child's boundaries -- intrusiveness
- Over-concern with the child's appearance