



An Eco-system of Support: Implementation of Children's Group Work Programme with Marriage and Parenting Support Programmes for Families

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Introduction to Allkin Families for Life @ Community



- Provides **family life education through** the delivery of **evidence-based & research-driven programmes**, with the aim to **raise strong & resilient families** in Singapore.

Parenting Programmes

Marriage Programmes

Families for Life @ Community is an initiative by the Ministry of Social & Family Development (MSF).



Practice Research Background



Challenges associated with
implementing in-person
programmes



High interests
but low take-up

Programme
location & timing

High attrition
rates



Practice Research Background



Key Barrier to Parents' Participation Caregiving demands

Past Participation Trends (2023-2024)

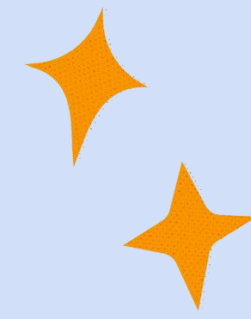
- **5 couples** had to **miss out** on some segments of the programme in order to **settle** their **children's caregiving needs** (ie. lunch, manage tantrums) which affected their programme participation.
- **3 couples** had to **withdraw** because marriage programme timing **did not fit with** their **child's schedule**.



- Past studies (Jukes et al., 2022; Mendez et al., 2009) highlight **competing child caregiving demands** as **key barrier** to participating in parenting programmes.
 - For instance, parents face additional challenges, including **lack of childcare during programme sessions, preventing consistent participation** (Mendez et al., 2009)



Practice Research Background



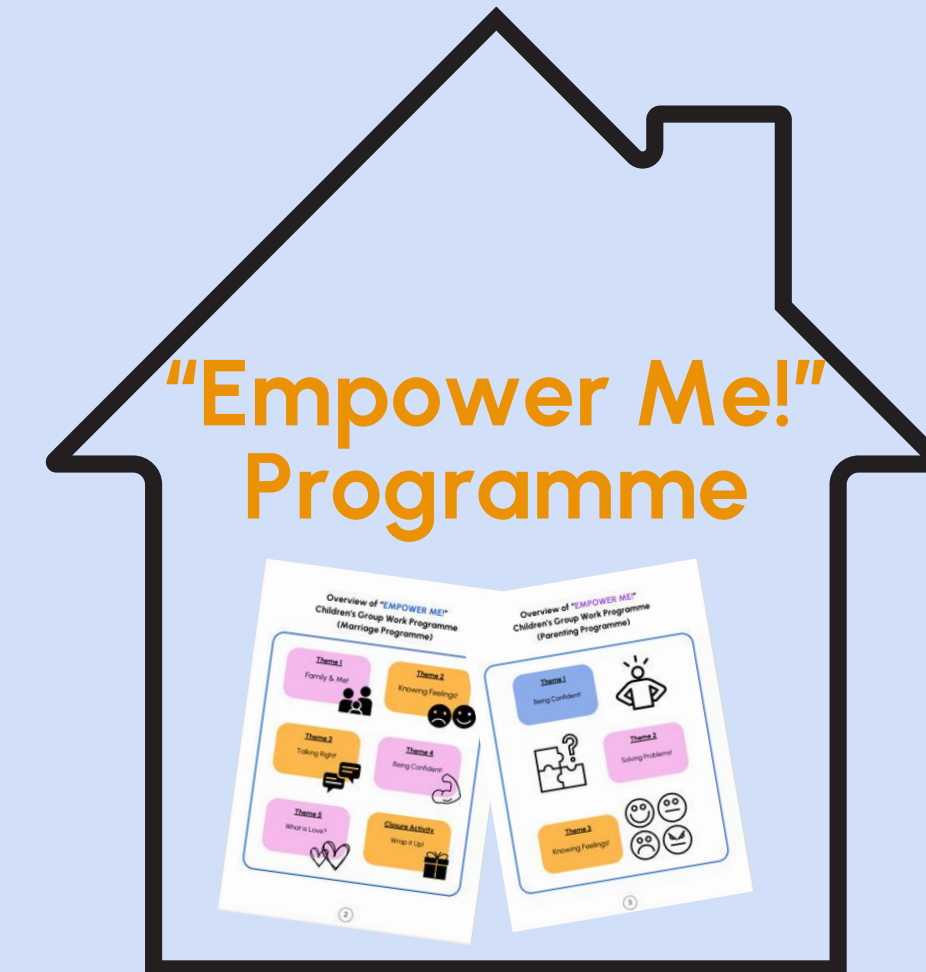
Support from Literature

Inclusion of Child Engagement Support

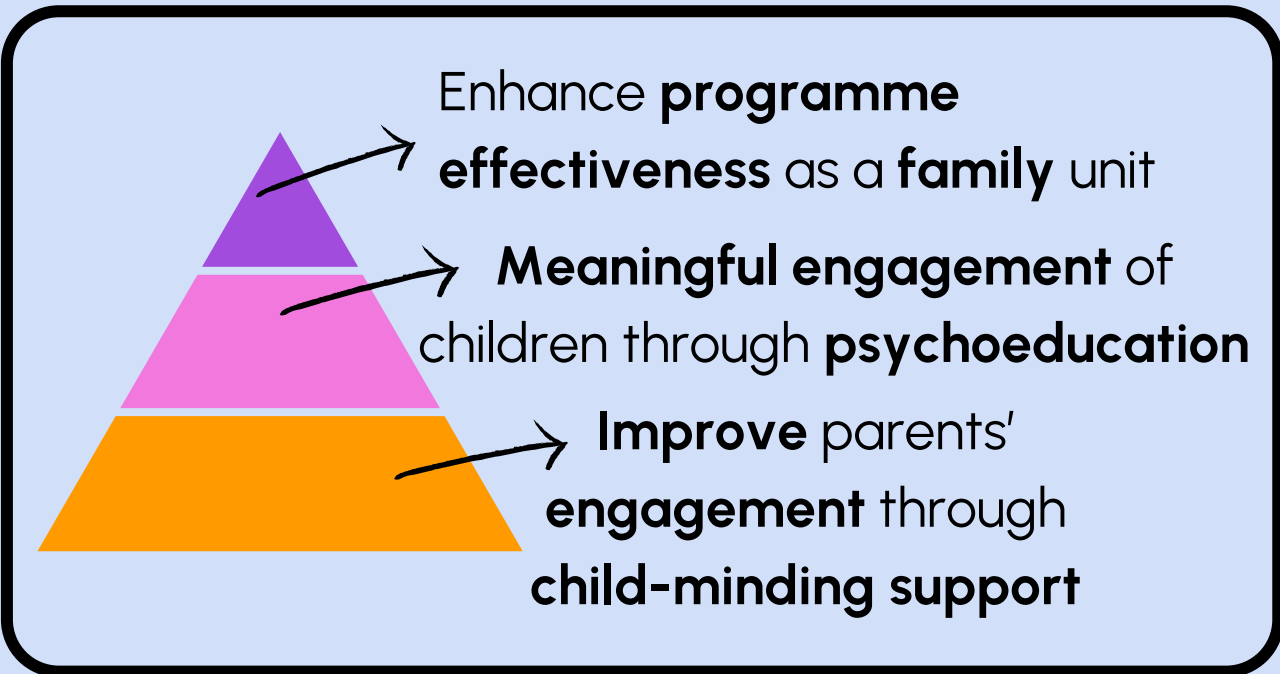
- Parents experience **reduced stress knowing** their **children** are in a **safe environment**, allowing them to **focus on learning, enhancing programme effectiveness** (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016).

Parent-child Engagement

- **Combined parent-child engagement is more effective** than parent-only engagement for **reducing behavior problems and improving social skills** (Burney et al., 2024).



Objectives

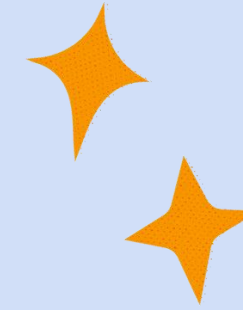


What is it?

- A complementary **closed-group psychoeducational programme**
 - For **children** between the **age of 5 to 9 years old**
- **Adopting age-appropriate & child-centric approach** to **teaching social skills & family values - aligned with content covered** in FFLC parenting & marriage support programmes



Research Questions & Methodology



Research Questions

- How does **access** to “Empower Me! programme” influence **parents’ participation** levels and **engagement** in their **respective** parenting/marriage **programme** activities?
- How do **parents** perceive the **overall effectiveness** of the programme in **improving** their **parent-child relational** dynamics?
- How **satisfied** are **parents** with the **content** and **delivery** of **psychoeducational activities** through “Empower Me!”?

Quantitative Approach

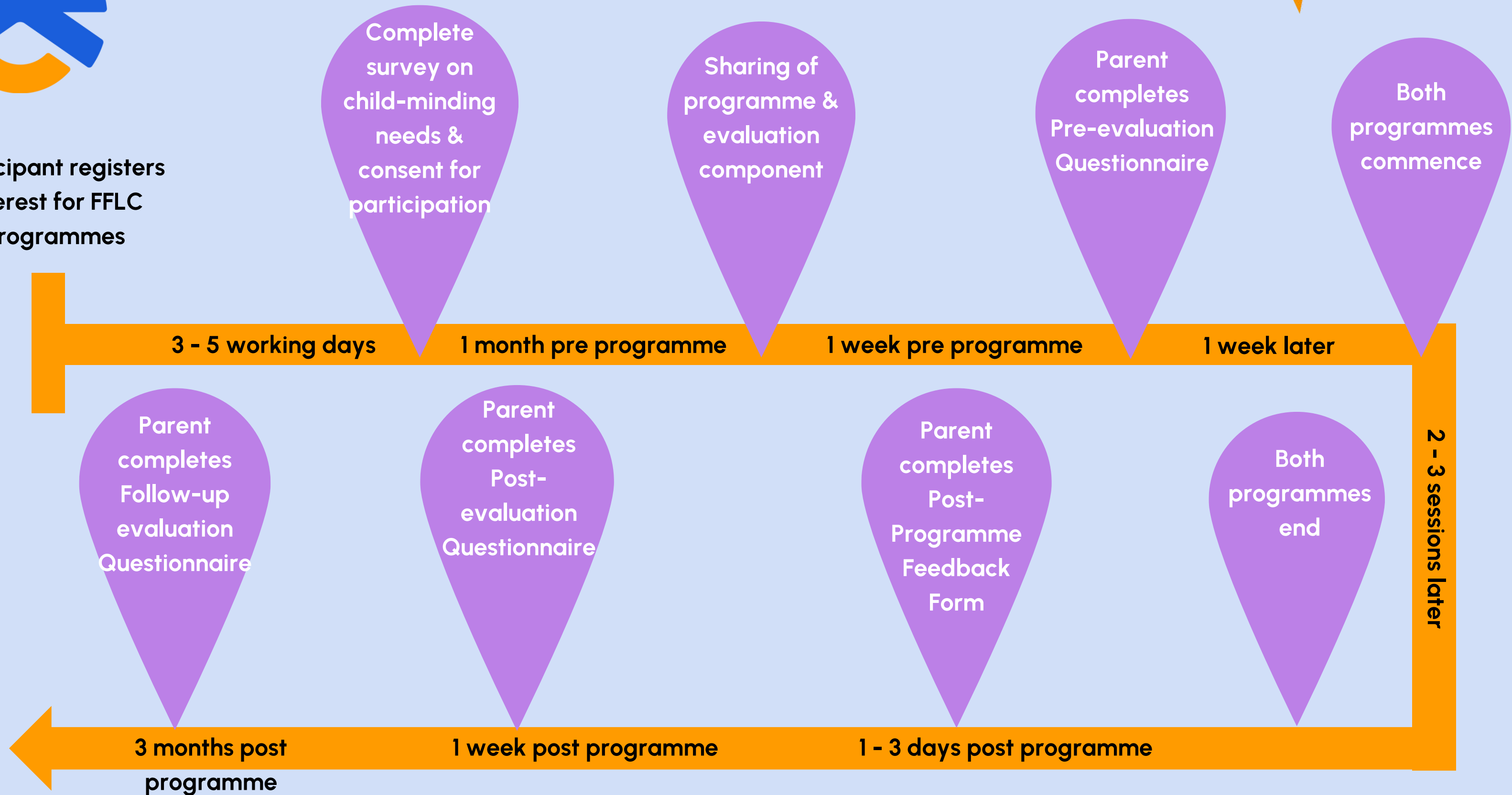


- **Needs Survey (Pre-Programme) (n = 17)**
 - Assess participants’ **need** for **alternative caregiving arrangement**, **existing child-minding options** and preferred session topics
- **Attendance Tracking of Parents and Children’s Participation** in respective programmes
- **Child-Parent Relationship Scale (Pianta, 1992) (Pre & Post-Programme) (n = 6)**
 - 30-item questionnaire assessing parent’s perception of their **relational conflict & closeness** with their children. Sample Questions include:
 - “I share an affectionate, warm relationship with my child”
 - “My child and I always seem to be struggling with each other”
- **Parents’ Feedback Form (Post-Programme) (n = 8)**
 - Self-developed to assess parents’ **overall satisfaction** with “Empower Me!” programme’s content and structure (includes closed- and open-ended questions)



Data Collection Process

Participant registers interest for FFLC programmes



**The timeline may vary depending on participant's time of registration for our programmes.*

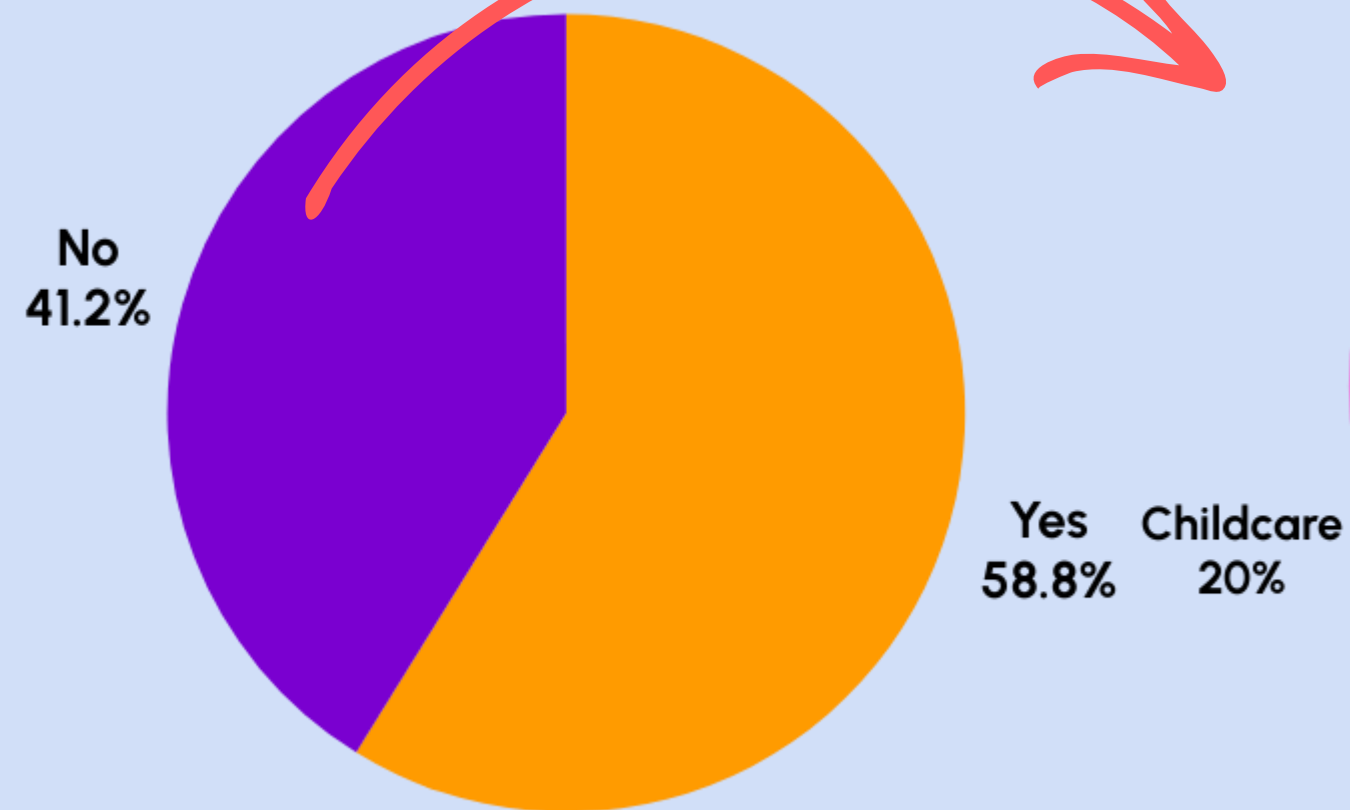


Practice Research Findings

Needs Assessment

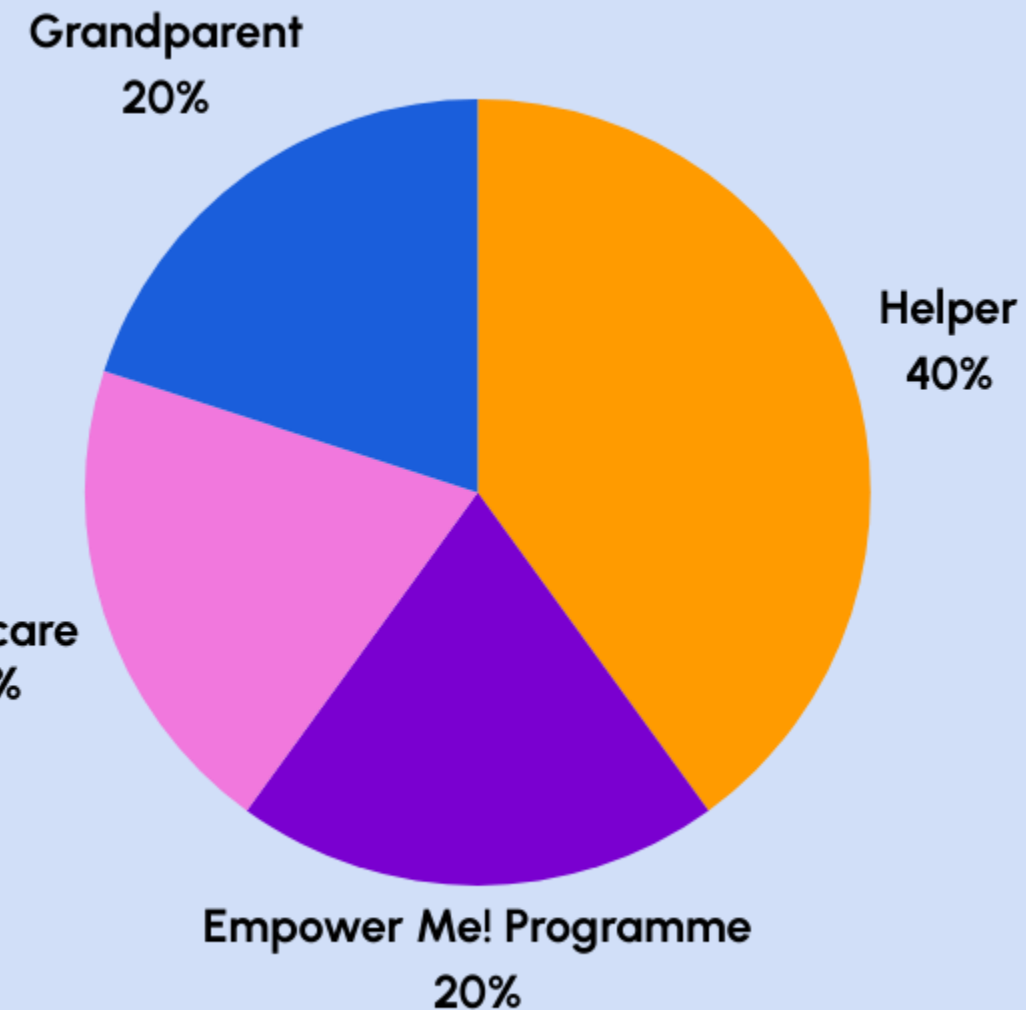


Need for Alternative Caregiving Support



n = 17 respondents

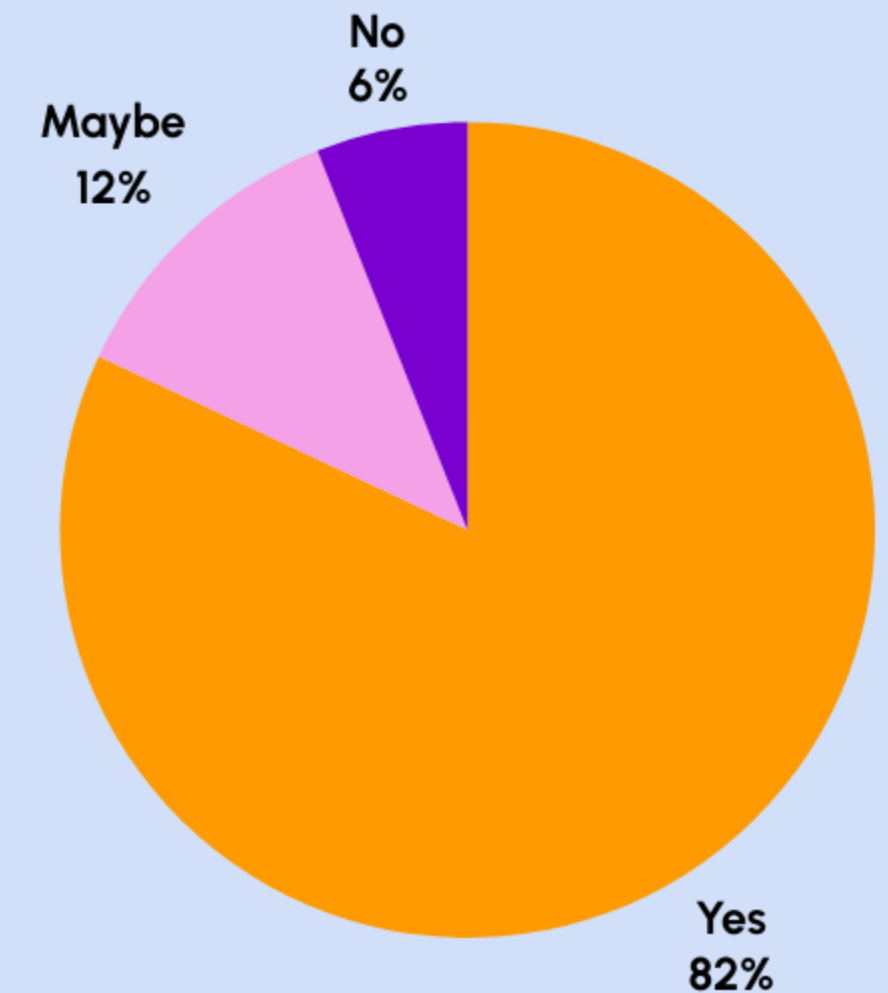
Existing Caregiving Arrangements



n = 10 respondents

*For participants who indicated need for alternative caregiving support

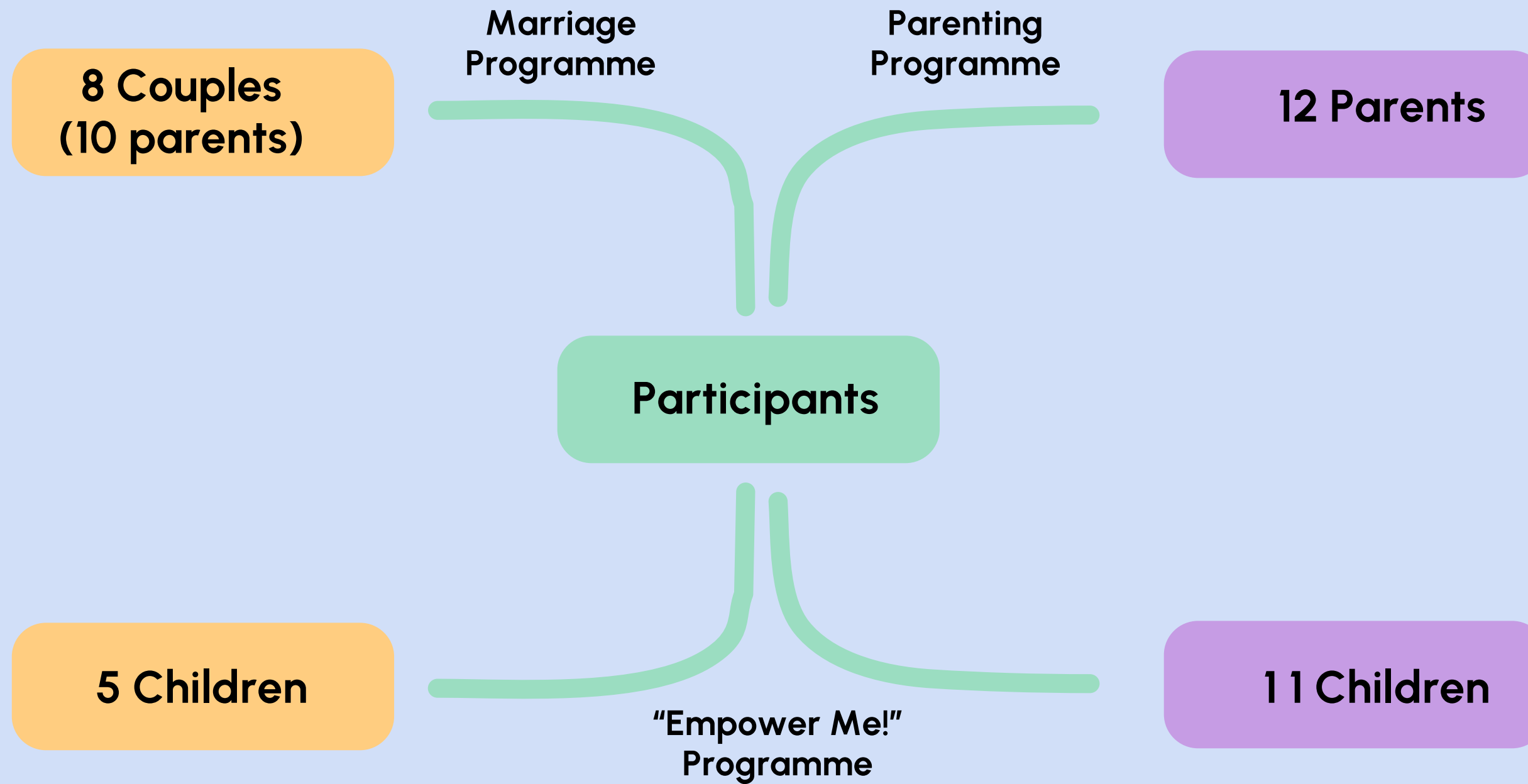
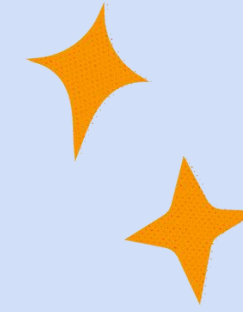
Perceived Helpfulness of Children's Programme



n = 17 respondents



Practice Research Findings





Practice Research Findings & Discussion



Full
Attendance

- **6 parents** (3 families) with children enrolled in the Empower Me! programme attended the **full marriage programme**
- **10 parents** (8 families) with children enrolled in the 'Empower Me!' programme attended the **full parenting programme**

“Appreciate the staff looking after my gal well so that **me n my husband can have a piece of mind when we attend the marriage workshop.** Think my gal learnt some family activities too.”

-Parent from Marriage Programme



Increased Participation Rates & Engagement

- Research indicates that **logistical barriers**, such as **childcare**, often prevent parents from **engaging** in educational and support programmes (Rostad et al., 2017).
 - By **alleviating concerns** related to **childcare**, parents are **more likely to commit** to attending these programmes and can **better focus** on their **personal growth**. This aligns with findings emphasizing the **importance of addressing parental needs to enhance programme effectiveness** (Jukes et al., 2024).





Practice Research Findings & Discussion



“ Trainers were warm, patient and inviting. **Children enjoyed the programme!** Thank you for the effort!
-Parent from Marriage Programme ”

Meaningful Engagement of Children

“ Overall is good. **Child can understand the angry level and what they can do when they feel angry/sad.**
-Parent from Parenting Programme ”

Unintended Finding:
• Parents also **brought younger siblings to sessions**

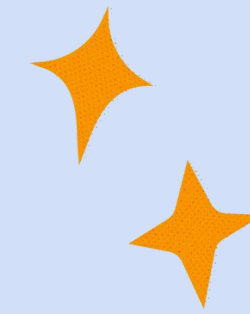


Value of Professional Support

- **Psychoeducation** provides **structured, evidence-based support** that is crucial in helping children navigate their emotions.
- While informal caregiving support from family members can be beneficial, professional support provides structured **guidance** that is **often more effective** in **supporting children to articulate their feelings** and **develop resilience**.
 - Research indicates that psychoeducational interventions can significantly enhance emotional regulation and interpersonal skills in children (LeCroy & McCullough Cosgrove, 2016).



Practice Research Findings & Discussion

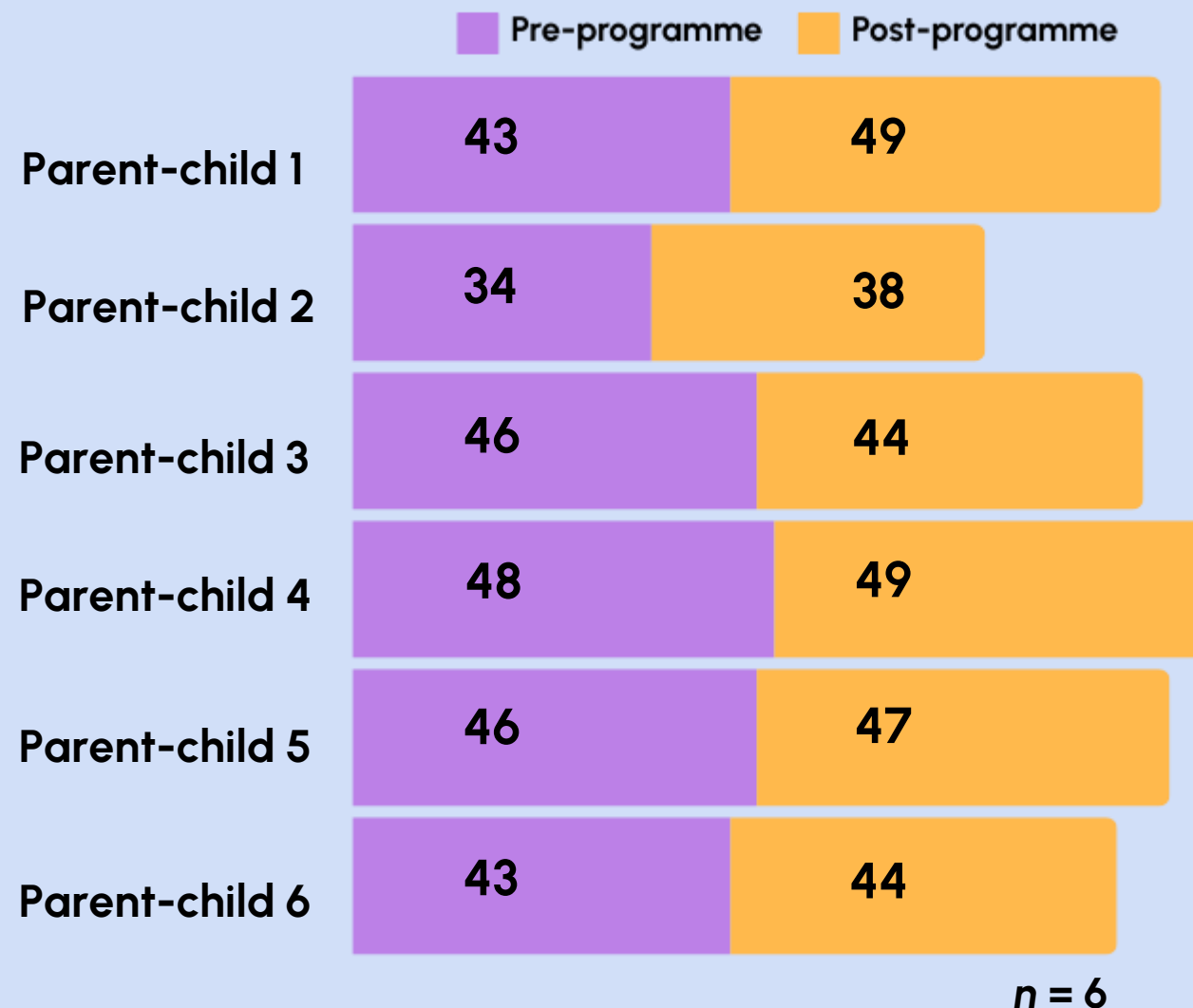


Parents-Reported Improvement in Parent-Child Relationship

- **5 parents** reported experiencing **improvements** in the **closeness** of their **relationships** with their **children**.



Level of Closeness (Positive Aspect)

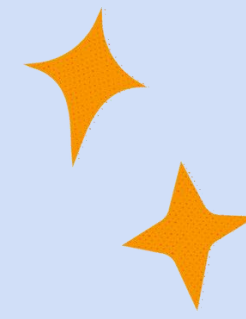


Creating an Eco-System of Support for Families

- **Engaging parents and children in concurrent programmes** promotes **shared learning** experiences, **facilitating improved parent-child connections** and **relationship satisfaction** (Kane et al., 2007).
- The **synergy** between the **Children's "Empower Me!" with Marriage Support, and Parenting Programmes for Parents** creates a **comprehensive support ecosystem** that **fosters collaboration among parents, children and practitioners**.
 - A study by Jordán-Quintero et al., (2022) highlights that **programmes incorporating multiple family members** facilitate a **stronger network of support**, which is crucial for the overall well-being of children.
 - This multi-faceted approach not only **strengthens familial bonds** but also **empowers parents** by **reinforcing** their **role** as **primary caregivers**.



Implications & Recommendations



Creating an Eco-System of Support for Families

Programme Planning

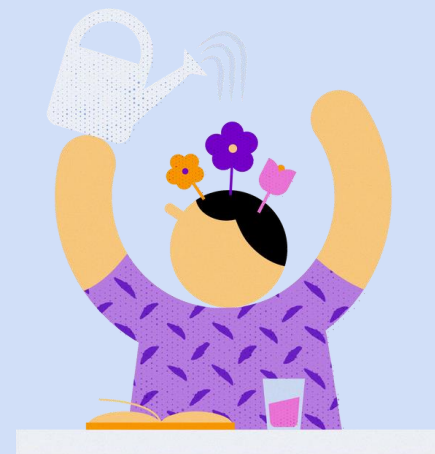
- Sustainability of Programme
 - Consideration of group size & age range
 - Consideration of facilitating factors & potential barriers
 - Resourcing



"Empower Me!" Programme

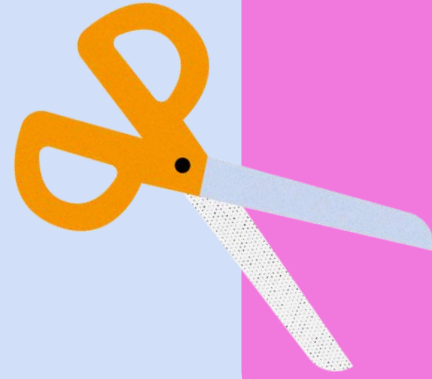
Programme Evaluation

- Shift approach towards evaluation
- Further monitoring of attrition rate
- Involving children's voices





Challenges & Limitations



Programme
Recruitment

Manpower
constraints

Late registration affecting
logistics preparation for
programme

Factors affecting
effectiveness of programme
evaluation (i.e. low responses
& programme length)



Support for children
who are not eligible for
programme, especially
siblings



Reflections on Process & Progress



Lived experience of a practitioner-researcher, translating process to outcomes

Value of child engagement component with parenting programmes

Perceived needs versus Actual needs





Thank you!



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