



# Nobody's Perfect Parenting Manitoba

Provincial Office

Virtual group ideas – ongoing (updated July 18/2020)

Here is a list of ideas for your on-line groups:

*Remember: Parent groups on line help parents to feel connected and normalizes their feelings.*

- Guidelines were issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada. [See here.](#)

## CHECK INS:

- be trauma informed as a group facilitator – create safety on video calls.
- Have participants to choose to not use the video and they can control what name appears on their box. Check ins – use chat box first. It's safer for people at first. ie) ask people to write their name and where they are from, or the names of their children etc.
- Then you can move to a video/audio check in. ie) Tell us your name and what quality you have that starts with your same letter "My name is Antoinette, I am Adaptable". (Facilitator will call on people one by one)
- photos of landscapes. Ask participants to pick one that resonates with them and tell us why.

## ENERGIZERS:

- ask participants to get a piece of paper and pen. Facilitator describes an object and they have to draw it as they hear it. Then they can show on the video if they want. People liked this one. It was fun, made people focus, etc. Variation, they could use play dough. Drop off the recipe to the parents' house and encourage them to make it with their children. Then on the call, assign each one (using the private chat) a cartoon character to make while on the call. Then at the end of the call, each shares and the rest have to guess what it is.
- **Other ideas** like scavenger hunts work well – finding items around the house. Use riddles or clues for items.
- Sing songs together with their children.
- Energizer...Where in the world is.... Have participants put their screen on gallery view. Facilitator starts and says, where in the world is "Bev". Everyone points on their screen where she shows up. It will be different for most. ☹️. Then "Bev" asks about another participant and makes the round until all have had a turn. This activity creates laughter and it also highlights that everyone sees something different. You could use this with parents as a topic starter for many different things, such as what you and your partner see, may be two different things.

## USING SMALL GROUPS:

- Zoom has breakout room function to create small group discussions. There are short tutorial videos to learn how to navigate it. [\(view here\)](#)
- Break your group into 2 using the tool, then give a question for the group to discuss using the discussion box provided. You can pop in and out of the groups to monitor. Afterwards, there is even a countdown timer to help people navigate their discussions. It very user friendly, both as a participant and facilitator! It even works if you are on your phone. So you can still use small group discussions as one of your tools! So awesome 😊
- Small group brainstorm:
- Using Google Docs – before the group, create a brainstorm sheet for participants to use as a flip chart. Have discussion questions already on the doc. Before breaking into rooms, use the chat function and tell participants to open their doc. (group 1 will have #1 and so on). Break people into rooms and let them discuss topic. See samples we did here:

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- Brainstorm link Group 1  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/12uYmdc\\_f2k7c2wsa2j4VqmgmBaFd1dfW9Oqf6VEihx8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/12uYmdc_f2k7c2wsa2j4VqmgmBaFd1dfW9Oqf6VEihx8/edit?usp=sharing)
- Brainstorm link Group 2 <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HvSsY-Z3nmcsJCFfyEI8zYHvzRdGisUcSO1c4vCH6Y/edit?usp=sharing>
- This was a great tool to use. It was easy to access and then the facilitator can pop on too and moderate.
- There are many google docs tutorials to help you. This one is short. [https://youtu.be/s6V\\_h43-BIY](https://youtu.be/s6V_h43-BIY)
- Small group activity using white board:
- Would you rather – use the sticker function to have people vote either #1 or #2. Sample questions we used as an energizer:
- Would you rather:
  - Would you rather spend the day at the lake or surfing the web?
  - Would you rather go on a sight-seeing vacation or a relaxing vacation?
  - Would you rather free Starbucks for life or free McDonalds for life?
  - Would you rather be fluent in all languages or master all musical instruments?
  - Would you rather get stuck in an elevator or get stuck on a broken ski lift?
  - Would you rather have a personal 5-star chef or 24/7 chauffeur service?
  - Would you rather watch a movie or read a book?
  - Would you rather be famous or the best friend of someone famous?
  - Would you rather win the lottery or live twice as long?
  - Would you rather have a pause button in your life or have a rewind button?

#### ACTIVITIES:

##### MIND:

- Read a book on line to them, then they go outside for a treasure hunt to find the things in the story
- Encourage children to put up pictures in windows, then go and find certain pic.
- Going on a Bear hunt! Read the story, then go outside in the community
- Important to remind parents is HOW we use screen time is important for our children, and to maintain balance. Be a good role model to our children.
- When they are on the screen all of the time, what is losing out?? ( Physical hugs, touches etc and face to face interactions connections with others.)
- Ideas on outdoor literacy:
  - put nature things on a tray, discuss what they are, count them then remove one and ask what's missing
  - take pages of books apart, laminate them and post them outside (can use a clothes line or a fence) tell the story, then hide pictures and have children put pieces back together and re tell the story.
  - Story Walks – stick pictures along fences etc
  - Scavenger hunts – ie) find a twig that is in the shape of Y, or find something that is the same color as your shoes..... Make pictures of the things you find. Create stick people
  - Paint rocks to re tell stories, hide them for others to find
  - Shadow Walks – create faces with nature on your shadow and take a picture
  - Expand parent/child interaction in your parent groups. ie) drop off materials to make a wand and then have the children sing (on the zoom call) twinkle twinkle with the parents ☺
  - Make characters out of the fingers of gloves to help tell stories



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## PARENTS:

- Activity bags for families.
- Include self-care items for parents too, not just craft play items.
- Sacred Tree Activity (see appendix) is adapted from the [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba, Na-gah mo Waabishkizi Ojijaak Bimise Keetwaatino: Singing White Crane Flying North: Gathering a Bundle for Indigenous Evaluation \(March 2018\)](#) This activity can be done in three stages. First do the trunk. It helps to gain information on what topics parents would like and helps with the program overall planning. Then do the leaves and apples, then the roots. This helps to discuss Family history and growth to work on. The air gives information on personal growth and evaluation on the program itself. There are many ways this activity could be adapted. You could use it with parents, children and even facilitators or co-workers. Many people felt it was a great reflective tool to use.
- Using activities like these are easy to do on line. Use a powerpoint and have parents create their own with simply using paper and markers/pen. You can choose to ask them to share as much or as little as they want with the others.
- Active listening game: Sometimes being on screens we get distracted. This activity is a great way to get your participants focused:
- Last letter – pick a topic ie) parenting. In a round (pass off to....) each person says a word or statement. The next person has to start their word with the last letter of the previous word. ie) potty training – next person then says Great

## BODY:

- Encourage physical activity for both parent and child
- Encourage them to go outside, look at windows

## CLOSINGS:

- Ask everyone to write in the chat one new tool they are leaving the call with. Using the chat helps with time management if you are running later, or you can have people chat by you asking them one at a time too.
- Remember to use a closing. It helps to end the session using the ELC (apply) and helps you gauge what people have taken away from the session.
- **Quick closing:** use a poll to ask a simple reflection question and have participants 'vote' . Polls have to be created before your zoom call. It's handy though when you are running out of time, and need to 'close that circle' 😊

## OTHER ITEMS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN RUNNING A GROUP:

- Parents might be worried about others around the room listening into calls. Encourage people to wear headphones/earphones.
- Create your agreements as usual, you may have to remind people of the 'external' room listeners.
- TIP: you can use the white board function (it has a text tool) as your flip chart. You can invite others to draw/type on it too if you want.
- When cameras are off, it's hard to read your group. Use the chat function often to check in with people. Have a co-host/facilitator helps with the group management for those things

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- Challenge – bad internet connections create problems for people to participate fully. Suggest following up video sessions with a closed chat group using Facebook private page, or group text to continue conversations etc
- BE PARTICIPANT CENTRED! Ask them what they need and want. ( Perhaps it's just an opportunity once a week to chat about self- care and stress etc)
- You can Incorporate visuals and even small youtube videos on the topics the parents wanted, then pose a few open ended questions using the ELC for them to discuss
- Focus on creating interactions with them instead of 'teachable moments' NPP strengths is getting parents to support each other. Focus on who they are and what strengths they have. It's the human connection that is important right now. Normalizing
- Offer a new parent/child activity every week for them to do too. You can mail the parents, parent kits prior to the NPP group, or just use the tip sheets!
- Send parents quiet activity ideas for their children to do prior to the meeting (for them to use during the video session)
- End the video calls with parent /child rhyme time together! Children love to see each other too.

NPP Manitoba