



CASTLE

CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND BY
LABOUR MIGRATION ●●●●

**Children left behind
by labour migration**

DID PARENTS GO ABROAD AND CHILDREN STAY AT HOME?

Answers for parents



BROCHURE FOR PARENTS INVOLVED IN LABOR MIGRATION IN THE EU COUNTRIES

The project "CASTLE:
Children out of sight: supporting Moldovan and Ukrainian
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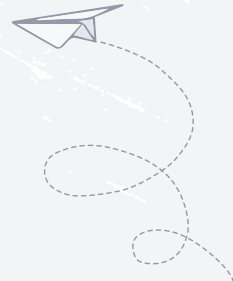
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INTRODUCTION

Any changes in the way we live require some effort to overcome difficulties and adapt to them. Each of us has the resources necessary for this, the difference is that the time and opportunities to use these resources are different for everyone. The decision to go to work abroad is a responsible step. It is necessary to prepare your child for changes in his or her life, to think about how to establish communication with him or her at a distance.

This brochure is intended primarily for parents who are planning to go abroad to work and those who have already left. At the same time, the brochure is a kind of pocket guide that every parent in a transnational family needs.

The brochure outlines the questions most often asked by parents. Typically, they are interested in how to connect with their children and maintain relationships with them before and after their departure. This brochure provides concise, practical answers that will help parents maintain and develop optimal relationships «without borders» with their children. We are convinced that the distance that temporarily separates family members should not become an insurmountable obstacle to successful communication with children.

Definition

We call **transnational families** in which at least one of the parents has gone abroad and the child has stayed at home.

Brochure «Children neglected as a result of labor migration. Parents went abroad and children stayed at home? Answers for Parents» was created within the framework of the project «CASTLE - Children out of sight: Supporting Moldovan and Ukrainian transnational families involved in external labor migration in the EU», co-funded by the European Union, contracted by the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) through the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) - ICMPD/2021/MPF-357-004.

1. WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE UPCOMING DEPARTURE?

Tell your child about your intention to leave in advance. Otherwise, he or she **may feel unnecessary, unwanted, guilty, or even abandoned.**

Usually, the connection between the parent and the child is disrupted. The child will withdraw, refuse to communicate, stop trusting the parents and, worse, become aggressive.

Do not leave secretly when your child is asleep or away. The shock he or she experiences can affect his or her health.

From conversations with children...

«I asked my mom to wake me up at night when she was leaving. It doesn't matter that I have to go to school tomorrow. I want to say goodbye to her.»

«When my mom left for the first time, I felt that everything was not okay. No matter how many questions I asked her, she kept telling me that none of it was true. I couldn't sleep, I was worried and afraid to even think that I would wake up and my mom would not be there. This thought made me nervous and inattentive. I gathered my strength and asked my mom to tell me the truth. She admitted that she was afraid I would do something bad if she said she wanted to leave. We hugged each other, and then I realized that my mom needed my support as well.»



Age specifics and developmental needs of the child:

AGE	AGE SPECIFICS	NEEDS
0–3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops strong attachment to close people and distrust of strangers; • successfully acquires communication skills; • understands gestures and words; • shows a desire to learn about the world around him/her; • shows a desire to control (often says «no»). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prefers stability in care and habits; • reliable connections; • is well aware that there is always a loving adult nearby; • love, protection and flexibility.
3–7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is developing and loves to play; • is inquisitive and asks a lot of questions; • loves games that require imagination; • becomes more independent; • exploring the world outside the family; • establishes connections with other children; • is aware of the boundaries set by adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prefers stability in care and habits; • builds self-discipline on the basis of unchanging rules; • the desire to be with both parents and each of them separately; • love, protection and flexibility. • wants to be sure that the separation from parents is not his/her fault.
7–11 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commit to other people (teachers, coaches, etc.) is developed; • increasing responsibility for their actions; • a sense of duty, of belonging to the school and to one’s class, emerges; • expresses emotions and feelings vividly, and has not yet developed the ability to restrain him/herself; • shows interest in forbidden and unknown things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help from parents in preparing homework; • assistance in establishing new connections and developing diverse interests; • a desire to spend time with both parents and each of them separately; • more open communication with both parents; • need for protection and affection; • wants to be sure that the separation from parents is not his/her fault.

11–14 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the desire for independence is evident; • physical and sexual development; • interest in relationships with people of the opposite sex; • the desire to establish him/herself in the company of peers; • confrontation, opposition to the world of adults; • mood swings, shifts from enthusiasm to depression, from shyness to aggression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-affirmation; • freedom of action; • the need for recognition; • support and encouragement; • the need for protection and affection; • understanding and flexibility on the part of parents in matters of relationships with friends; • more open communication with both parents; • wants to be sure that the separation from parents is not his/her fault;
14–18 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an uncompromising and active fighter for the realization of his/her own desires; • an openly defiant style of behavior with adults; • creates own system of values based on the principles of justice and equality; • the impression that he/she feels at home in the group (company) and thus can confidently stand up to adults; • the desire to isolate oneself from the family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-affirmation; • freedom of action; • the need for recognition; • positive examples; • strong, appropriate and fair guidance; • understanding and flexibility on the part of parents in matters of relationships with friends; • shares feelings, desires, and expectations with the parent who is leaving; • the need for professional self-affirmation.

2. WHEN, HOW AND WHAT TO TELL A CHILD ABOUT YOUR INTENTION TO LEAVE?

The timing of the conversation is just as important as its content.

When to start talking about leaving?

- In advance to help the child get used to the changes.
- When you have enough information about your future work abroad.
- When it became clear what your next steps would be.
- When you can offer your child alternative options for who they will stay with after you leave.
- When you feel ready to answer the child's question and deal with their first reaction.
- When the child's mood and general well-being do not cause concern.

Avoid:

- Expressing your desire to leave in front of your child just to see how he or she will react.
- Talking about your departure with your child without having a well-thought-out plan.

What to say to a child?

- Tell your child about the real reasons for your departure - the need to work abroad. Speak in words that your child can understand.
- Explain to him/her the needs of the family, which are important to everyone.
- Formulate a specific goal so that all family members feel that they are participating in its achievement.

Avoid, for example, the following expressions: «...I'm leaving for your/our future», «...I'm leaving to make life better for all of us». Children do not understand such explanations, they are too abstract for them. They do not give confidence and do not inspire trust.

It's better to say: «We need... (specifically), this will provide us with... , and for this we need about... (amount of money). That's why one of us has to go abroad, because we can earn more there than at home.».

Parents say...

"Before leaving, each family must decide on a goal. The husband and wife should agree on who is going to work to achieve the goal. If you need to repair the roof of the house, it is better to tell your child directly: "Your mom/dad has to leave because the roof is leaking and needs to be replaced."

"We have three children. We tell them that: "We would like better conditions and that's why we borrowed money and bought a bathroom and plumbing. We don't have enough money to pay back the debt, so one of us has to go to work."

3. HOW CAN I UNDERSTAND THE EMOTIONS OF A CHILD WHO HAS LEARNED ABOUT THE UPCOMING DEPARTURE OF PARENTS?

Telling a child about a parent's departure for work abroad is tantamount to a separation. The child's reaction may be different: denial, anger, sadness, fear, anxiety, indifference, joy.

To understand what your child is feeling, try talking about your plans with other adults in their presence. Even if the child is young, this will help them prepare for the change.

When you tell your child about your intention to leave, it may seem that he or she does not hear you, is not attentive, takes everything as a joke, does not believe you, and says:

- "No, I don't want to!" For some time, the child will avoid communicating with you and seek solitude.



What should you do? This is a denial reaction, take it for granted. Give the child time and freedom, but do not let him or her out of your sight. Go to him/her, hug, touch his/her shoulder. Do not try to make the child understand the reasons for your departure.

- The child may experience fits of rage or resentment towards the parent who is leaving or the person who is staying, anger at the situation, life, society, etc.

What should you do? Accept and try to understand the child's emotions and feelings. Be there when his/her emotions come out, even if his/her behavior seems strange.

- Some children get very upset. They begin to think that they are not loved, that they have been abandoned. Some cannot imagine life without a parent who has to leave, they want nothing, they lose interest in absolutely everything.

What should you do? Accept and empathize with the child's sadness. Tell your child that you love him or her. Tell your child that distance will not make your love for him or her less. Show your child that he or she is important to you.

- Some children are frightened and anxious, scared: "What do I do now?", "How do I solve...?", "What if something happens to me?", "What will I do with my younger brothers/sisters?", "Will mom and dad be okay?", "What if mom and dad don't come back?", "What if mom and dad can't come home?".

What should you do? Talk to the child about what is bothering him/her, about his/her anxieties, find out how he/she feels: "I see that something is bothering you," "I see that you are scared." The child's fears may disappear in the course of the conversation. Together with the child, find solutions to the problems that have arisen. Listen carefully and answer any questions your child may have about how they will live in your absence.

- Some children may remain indifferent to their parents' message. This may be a child's peculiarity that manifests itself in other situations. But it can also be a defensive reaction or an attempt to hide other emotions, such as anger, sadness, or rage.

What should you do? First, you cannot leave the child in this state. Be sensitive to the silent signals that the child gives. Only through a calm discussion, without interfering with the child's personal world, can you help him or her see things differently.

- Some children may be excited that their mom or dad is going to work abroad. The child experiences the illusion of happiness, not realizing the reality and the need to adapt to change.

What should you do? Accept the child's emotions as they are, without trying to interpret them.

Avoid:

- ironizing about the child's experiences, for example: "Well, now your eyes are wet, you haven't noticed me before, and now there's a whole waterfall of tears."
- demanding that the child explain why he or she is angry, sad, angry, frightened.
- promises to your child about when you will arrive on vacation, especially if you do not have a contract and do not know what your work schedule will be. In any case, reassure your child that you will definitely return.

Signs and types of child reactions depending on age

AGE	SIGNS AND REACTIONS OF THE CHILD
0-3 years	Crying too much, irritable, feeding problems, restless sleep.
3-7 years	Irritable, fussy, nervous, angry, refuses to eat, etc.
7-11 years old	Irritable, nervous, angry, withdrawn, loss of interest in anything, enuresis, sleep disorder.
11-14 years old	Sad, angry, aggressive, excessive isolation, running away from home, self-harm.
14-18 years old	Sadness, isolation, resentment, alcohol consumption, smoking.

4. WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD SAYS: "DON'T GO!"?

Якщо дитина каже «Не їдь!» одразу після того, як дізнається про ваш намір
If a child says "Don't go!" immediately after learning about your intention to leave, this is the first reaction of denial of new information and changes. As a rule, children under 10-11 years old will say "NO".

If the child says “Don’t go!” and often cries even after you have explained the reasons for leaving, told him or her what your relationship will be like and how your life will change, and you have discussed it, then you should answer some questions:

- What makes a child strongly disagree with my leaving?
- Maybe he/she is too small?
- Maybe he/she is really very attached to me and I should reconsider my plans?
- Maybe it’s better to postpone my departure until I feel that the child is ready for it?
- What if the child is trying to tell me with the protest that he/she won’t feel safe without me?

Avoid:

- go, even if the child does not understand you.
- explanations to a crying child: “I am leaving for your sake”. He/she will decide that separation from you was his/her fault.
- to leave if the child is not ready for it psychologically and emotionally.
- to leave secretly, hoping that “time heals.”
- manipulating the child and accusing him or her of canceling the trip.
- “shopping” the child’s understanding with promises to fulfill his or her wishes, for example: “You want a big radio-controlled car, don’t you? I can’t buy it here. I will earn money there and buy it for you as a present.”

If you plan to leave and have a good reason, you can always do so. You both need time to understand each other.

5. HOW CAN I PREPARE MY CHILD FOR MY DEPARTURE?

Before you leave, talk to your child and make sure that they have overcome emotional distress and are comfortable with the idea of you going to work. This is a good time to start building a long-distance relationship. Tell your child that many things will remain the same - customs, conversations, guidelines, activities, things, people. The child will continue to go to his/her kindergarten/school, play and meet with the same friends, and continue to attend clubs and other activities in which he/she has participated.

Communication

Talk to your child about how you will keep in touch from a distance. Let your child suggest options. Involve all family members in the conversation. Find the most effective method of communication that is accessible to everyone. Choose it together:

- Means of communication (Skype, Viber, Telegram, WhatsApp, telephone, social networks, etc.);
- How often you will communicate;
- Topics for conversation.

Encourage your child to teach his or her grandparents how to use communication devices.

School

Tell your child that you want to establish a schedule of communication with the teacher/teacher/classroom teacher/teachers so that you can keep up with his/her schoolwork (academic performance, behavior, relationships with friends, etc.) and be able to help him/her.

Budget

It is advisable to discuss financial issues with older children both when one parent has left and when both have left. Emphasize that you will be able to send money when you have the opportunity to save some of your earnings. Do not promise gifts, expensive items, or other material benefits. Don't promise to send packages every month.

Money for out-of-pocket expenses

- The younger the child, the less money they receive. At first, these are symbolic amounts.
- A 6-8-year-old child should be explained what money is, what its value is, and how to manage it.
- By the age of 9-10, children need to be taught to spend their pocket money wisely, not only impulsively, but also taking into account the cost-quality ratio.
- From the age of 13-14, a child is able to save money for future purchases and expenses.

Household chores

Discuss with your child his or her role in household chores. Keep in mind that a long-distance relationship based on trust and respect does not imply that the responsibilities of an adult should be assigned to a child.

To the attention of parents!

- A child cannot replace you in household chores.
- They have age-appropriate tasks and responsibilities (studying, taking care of their personal belongings, keeping things tidy, making their bed, caring for indoor plants or flowers in the garden, etc.)
- A child can help and support you within the limits of their abilities, but not at the expense of their rights (setting the table and cleaning the dishes, washing, ironing and folding laundry, reading stories to the younger ones, taking care of pets).
- Consider the needs and emotions of the child.

Independence of the child

Parents need to give their children the opportunity to become independent. This involves the development of certain social skills, effective communication, the ability to cope with problems and resolve conflicts, and make decisions.

The child's society

Before you leave, find out who your child is friends with. Meet his/her friends, show them your appreciation and respect. Talk to your child about the free time he or she spends with them and how to host them. Find out how to contact your child's friends and their parents.

6. WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE I LEAVE?

Before you leave, regardless of whether both parents are leaving or just one of them, you will have a lot of important things to do.

If only one of the parents leaves and the child remains in the custody of the other parent:

- Analyze the child's relationship with the remaining parent - how well they understand each other, how they communicate, how they solve problems and conflicts.
- You need to be sure that their relationship is not "toxic" and that there is no possibility of violence.
- Make sure he/she can manage the household.
- Analyze to what extent he/she will cope with caring for the child, how he/she will participate in the child's school life.
- When only the mother goes, and the father cannot cope with childcare, such as hygiene, health, nutrition, you need to ask for help from grandmothers, sisters, cousins, etc.
- If the father goes away and the mother is unable to cope with some household chores (e.g., chopping wood, plowing the garden, moving furniture), she can ask her grandparents, brothers, cousins, etc. for help.



Carefully analyze the situation when you leave your child in the care of a cohabitant:

- Is his/her relationship with the child based on trust, care, protection and safety?
- if the child wants to stay with him/her, it is necessary to formalize custody.
- If in doubt, it is better to choose a caregiver who you fully trust and who guarantees the child's safety.

If both parents go abroad, it is very important:

1. Choose a person under whose care the child will remain during the absence of the parents.
2. Apply for child custody.
3. Establish the child's place of residence. Will the child stay at home with the caregiver or live with the caregiver?
4. If the child stays in the parental home, make a list of people who can be contacted if the child is in a socially dangerous situation or is subjected to violence, as well as in case of emergencies and accidents.
5. Clearly state who can help and how. Explain how and where to call and how to ask for help. Model situations with your child to reinforce this skill.
6. Talk to these people and make sure they will respond to the child's call.
7. Check the serviceability of the door lock, gate lock, technical devices and electrical appliances, and the heating system in the house. Make sure that everything works without risk to the child's life and health.

Contact with teachers

It is important that you talk about your decision with the caregiver/class teacher or a teacher whom the child trusts before you leave.

Notify the director of the educational institution that you are going to work abroad and your child will remain in the care of the other parent or caregiver/legal representative.

Contact with experts in the community

Notify your family doctor of your upcoming departure and tell him or her who will be taking care of the child. Ask the family doctor to prepare information for the caregiver about the child's health and related needs. Make sure that the child's medical records are with the family doctor.

Notify the local child welfare authorities, the local police officer, and the social worker of your upcoming departure and in whose care the child will remain.

7. HOW DO I CHOOSE A PERSON TO TAKE CARE OF MY CHILD?

If both parents are traveling abroad, decide together with your child under whose care he or she will remain during your absence.

Selection criteria

The person in whose care the child will be left can be trusted to behave appropriately and to show empathy and love;

1. The child and this person have known each other for a long time;
2. The child agrees to remain under the care of this person;
3. The future caregiver and his/her children have a good relationship with your child;
4. The child will be provided with proper attention and care, understanding and empathy;
5. A person will be able to talk to a child not only about food and school..

What is the role of this person?

Discuss and decide together with your spouse what the caregiver 's responsibilities and the child's responsibilities will be. It is very important that the «contract» is concluded before you leave. This will help to avoid dissatisfaction and complaints.

Important recommendations

- Explain to your child that going to work abroad does not relieve you of parental responsibility for everything that happens, and no matter how hard it is, YOU remain a parent. No matter how good a caregiver is, they cannot replace parents.
- It is not necessary for the child to address the caregiver as a parent.
- Explain to the caregiver that they should not think that they are replacing the child's parents.
- Excessive control and custody, high demands on the caregiver do not mean that the child is properly cared for.
- Talk to the caregiver about respecting the child's personal space. A child has the right to secrets, a personal diary, and personal belongings.

- Ask the caregiver to remember that it is important to talk to the child about his or her parents to meet the child's emotional needs. Have the caregiver talk to the child like this:

“Parents are always with you. They love you from a distance, think about you and protect you. Your calmness and confidence gives them peace of mind.”

Ask the caregiver not to justify your departure by the need to provide the child with a better life. This makes the child feel guilty about the parent's departure.

8. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH A CHILD FROM A DISTANCE?

Communication is the foundation of all relationships. It becomes a bridge that brings together children and parents who are far apart, uniting families at a distance. Communication is more than just questions and answers. Thoughts, emotions and feelings, needs and desires are expressed through words, gestures, looks, and facial expressions.

High-quality and regular communication with a child, despite the distance, helps parents and children to be present in each other's lives and gives them confidence in the future.

It is not the time spent with the child that matters, but how it is used. Kind and wise words of support from parents are the core of communication for the benefit of the child's emotional and physical health.

Listen to yourself and listen to your children for your own and their benefit!

9. WHAT MEANS OF COMMUNICATION CAN I USE?

Talk to your child whenever he or she needs it, especially during the adaptation period.

Use all available means to communicate with your child: Skype, Viber, Telegram, WhatsApp, phone, social media, and letters.

Avoid using social media to:

- control the child;
- scolding the child;
- express dissatisfaction, irritation, anger;
- publicly shame a child, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

From conversations with children:

“Thanks to modern technology: Skype, Viber, Telegram, it was as if our mother was right next to us, we could see her face, her smile, and where she lived. Every evening we would discuss the previous day, what happened and how.”



10. WHAT TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT FROM A DISTANCE?

When communicating with your child, try to get rid of habits that worsen the relationship between parents and children.

- Don't talk to your child about duty, sacrifice, a lot of work, and the need to survive. Involving a child in the sphere of adult responsibility only exposes him or her to stress and brings uncertainty into his or her life.
- Avoid generalizations, reproaches related to the behavior of the child you are concerned about, for example. “You always ...”, “You never ...”, “... neither study, nor help in the house, you do nothing!”.
- Do not criticize your child, for example: “You are lazy!”, “You are insensitive!”.
- Avoid shouting, do not raise your voice.
- Do not blame, insult, threaten, or humiliate your child, especially in front of strangers, for example: “You never answer when I call you. Why did I buy this phone then?”, “If you behave like this, why should I come home to have the whole village say that you are disgracing me?”

- Avoid inappropriate irony.
- Don't think about your own problems when a child tells you something.
- Don't interrupt a child, for example: "Come on, everything will work out. Tell me what you did with..." This shows him or her that you have little interest in his/her life. Let him/her speak her mind.
- Avoid being pushy in the conversation, especially when discussing certain topics with you. Wait patiently until the child feels that the time is right.
- Do not criticize her choice of friends, clothes, hairstyle, or music preferences. Using tactful and patient words and arguments, you can tell her that some of her decisions are wrong or dangerous. The child will certainly understand.
- In communicating with children, five key words are crucial: to be, to feel, to see, to speak, and to listen.

11. HOW CAN I UNDERSTAND MY CHILD'S PROBLEMS FROM A DISTANCE?

Parents often forget that a child is not an adult, and they put an unbearable burden of demands on their shoulders that they are unable to cope with. A child, just like an adult, has his or her own problems, emotions, experiences, and experiences. It is the duty of parents, whether close or distant, to understand what is happening to the child.

How does the child feel?

Emotions are just as natural for a child as they are for an adult. Their reactions and behavior are an extension of their inner world. If you want to understand your child, ask yourself more often what he or she is feeling right now. And look for the answer.

What does the child tell me?

Some children are able to express thoughts and emotions. Others hide these emotions. They painfully endure separation from their parents and behave strangely: they refuse to communicate, skip classes, run away from home, and participate in risky activities.

Any strange behavior, especially one that is systematic, has a reason. Most likely, it is unreacted emotions or a hidden unfulfilled need.

Avoid the question “Why are you doing this?”. You will not get an answer because in most cases the child does not realize why he or she did it. If you insist, the child will feel obliged to answer and will find a reason that is far from the truth..

What do I want to say to my child?

When you don't understand a child's behavior, you have to make a choice between words that express love and words that are destructive. Most often, parents get angry not because they don't love their children and want to hurt them, but because they don't know what to do or how to deal with their emotions. Nerves and stress make it difficult to perceive facts calmly and act constructively, taking into account the future.

Why do I demand this from my child?

Before you demand something from your child, forbid him or her to do something, or deny him or her something, which will make him or her feel misunderstood, ask yourself a question:

“Why do I demand this from the child? What makes me fulfill or reject the child's request? What exactly makes me do this? Is it social norms, my upbringing, a traditional approach, a desire for personal comfort, or common sense? Is my answer the right one for the child?”.

12. HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD ADAPT AFTER I LEAVE?

What and how to tell a child during the adaptation period?

- Try to stay calm.
- Communicate daily, and if necessary, twice a day.
- Keep your promises and follow through on agreements. If you forget to call on the agreed day and time or miss a Skype “meeting,” your child will be upset and anxious.
- Show that you understand the child's feelings and emotions. Accept their emotions, do not deny them.
- Listen carefully! Try to find out what really bothers his/her.
- Summarize what he/she says from time to time to show her that you understand: “Are you saying that you don't feel like going to school right now, that

you are still upset? You are not used to living at Aunt X's yet?", "If I understand correctly, you are worried that you will not be able to cope with household chores because we are not at home...?"

- Speak to your child calmly and confidently.
- Constantly remind her that changes in your life do not mean a breakup.
- Advise your child to continue with his or her normal activities.
- Advise her not to lose touch with her friends.
- Help her solve household issues, conflicts with her brothers, etc.
- Help her with her homework.
- Help me plan my day and make decisions.
- Share your child's small joys with them, even if they seem insignificant.
- Be there for your child when they are in trouble, such as a bad grade, a fight with a friend, etc.
- Don't remind your child that you left for him or her and their future.
- Tell her what you think of her and that you love her, regardless of her behavior or performance.

How to help a child express emotions in words?

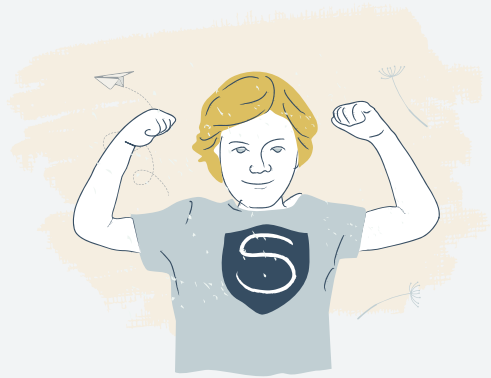
Often, when a child experiences strong emotions (angry, sad, indignant), we want these feelings to disappear as soon as possible or to prevent them from occurring at all. Coping with negative emotions is sometimes difficult for adults as well.

Try not to solve problems instead of the child, do not try to make him/her not feel what he/she feels.

It is better to give your child the opportunity to learn that he or she can cope with the emotions he or she is experiencing. First, you need to identify what emotions the child is experiencing, name them, and try to explain to the child what you feel, see, and understand about what is happening to him or her on an emotional level. Secondly, try to help the child find the right solution, say that you are confident that he or she will cope with the situation. In this way, you will help your child express his or her emotions, and he or she will learn to cope with them adequately.

13. HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPBRINGING OF A CHILD FROM A DISTANCE?

How to develop a child's sense of self-respect?



A sense of self-worth and self-respect is a strength that helps to withstand life's difficulties.

SIGNS OF SELF-ESTEEM	SIGNS OF LOW OR NO SELF-ESTEEM
<p>A child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He makes a commitment: «I can do it.» • He behaves independently - «I'll figure it out.» • He/she is proud of his/her achievements: «I feel important.» • Agrees to solve new problems - «Why not try?» • Honestly and openly expresses positive and negative emotions - «I'm upset that you're talking to me like that.» • Offers help and support to others - «How can I help?» • He is looking for a way out of any situation. • He sees difficulties and changes as an impetus for development. 	<p>A child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfied with herself - «I don't like myself.» • He does not take responsibility - «I am not capable of anything.» • Avoids new tasks - «I don't think I can do it.» • He believes that he is not loved or appreciated - «No one needs me.» • He/she blames others for his/her failures - «With a father like that, how can I do it?» • Very sensitive, painfully reacts to losses, failures, comments, insults. • Does not accept difficulties and does not cope with them. • Easily influenced by others - «A friend said that smoking calms you down.» • He feels indifferent. • He may be aggressive, physically or verbally.

What can you do? A lot of things!

- Show your child that you trust him or her.
- Give your child age-appropriate tasks.
- Involve your child in the decision-making process.
- Support your child, even when they make mistakes
- Discuss with your child what they would like to do and achieve.
- Help your child find a solution to the problem.
- Ask your child to express his or her point of view and opinion.
- Be direct, sincere, and affectionate.
- Be a positive example.

How can you make your child disciplined from a distance?

No child will be able to live up to their parents' expectations if they are constantly punished. A child who is scolded, criticized, and called names will see only his or her own shortcomings and mistakes, not realizing his or her positive qualities. A child needs the attention and praise of parents to realize that he or she is capable of achieving success.

Discipline does not mean punishment.

- Disciplining a child means promoting balanced and healthy growth and development emotionally and socially.
- The secret of discipline is to draw attention to examples of behavior worthy of emulation.
- Effective discipline teaches a child positive behavior and is not a method of "subjugating" a child to adult-imposed rules.
- Distance is not an obstacle to participation in teaching a child to discipline.

Do not discipline the child:

- Attempts to achieve obedience and respectful behavior with gifts and promises.
- Depriving a child of a gift as a punishment will in no way lead to discipline and learning the rules of behavior. On the contrary, the spirit of contradiction and negativism will awaken in the child.

- Providing a comfortable childhood does not eliminate the feeling of guilt towards the child.
- Trying to please a child in everything is not a sign of love, but rather an inability to teach a child discipline.
- Avoid “hunting” for the child’s mistakes! Give up the idea that a child can be forced to change behavior under the influence of guilt or humiliation!
- Punishment in the form of refusal to communicate, unwillingness to listen and try to understand what happened makes a child helpless.
- Threats and scolding that humiliate a child and make him or her feel that he or she is not capable of anything will not change the child’s undesirable behavior, but will only increase his or her sense of worthlessness.
- Punishing your child for your own feelings makes them feel guilty, for example: “You’re a bad child, you’re making mommy feel bad.”
- Constant reproaches and harsh remarks make a child feel unloved.
- Do not ask the child: “Why are you behaving like this?” The child perceives the question “why?” as judgment or criticism.
- Do not deprive your child of pleasant surprises for the holidays as a punishment.

The rules and the consequences of their observance/non-observance should be discussed with children.

To clarify the child’s unacceptable behavior, instead of calling the child names, for example: “You are a rascal”, it is better to ask: “What happened?”, “How did it happen?”, “How do you feel after what happened?”.

In case of non-compliance with the rules or a problem:

- Focus on a specific situation. Discuss the issue that is bothering you now, today, without any connection to other examples of past behavior.
- Tell me how you feel about the child’s behavior, both positive and negative.
- Make sure the child understands you. “What do you think?”, “What do you say?”. If he or she does not understand you very well, while remaining calm, explain again in other words.

Agree with your child on the next steps to solve the problem or correct the situation.

How can I participate in my child's school life?

- Find out the requirements of the teacher/lecturer
- Be interested in the content of the school program
- Identify the needs of the child
- Discover your child's interests
- Develop a homework plan with your child
- Manage your child's homework activities
- Participate in the implementation of projects
- Spend your free time with your child.

How can I participate in my child's social life?

- Support your child's decisions
- Pay attention to the child's daily life
- Support your child's desire to participate in community life
- Develop together.

14. HOW DO I DISCUSS SOME SENSITIVE TOPICS WITH MY CHILD?

Sensitive topics include conversations about death, parental divorce, and sexuality.

How do you talk about death?

Children between the ages of 3 and 8 often talk about death. This phenomenon should be presented to them in as natural a way as possible, using examples from nature that they understand, such as the life cycle of a plant. Older children can be explained more specifically. Depending on what faith you belong to, you can also tell your child about the afterlife. It is important to explain how burial takes place and what its meaning is.

When, how, and what to tell a child about his or her parents' divorce?

It is better to talk to your child before the divorce rather than informing him or her after the fact, by phone or Skype. We recommend that both parents be present and participate in the conversation. It is important that the parents do not blame each other in front of the child and avoid violence and aggressive language.

Talking about sexuality

Start the conversation with the correct names of human body parts. When a child is shown the head, eyes, arms, and tummy at an early age, do not forget about the other parts of the body, which we call the private area. Draw her attention to the fact that the intimate part of the body is covered by panties, and no one except her mother or a doctor can take off the panties and touch it.

As the child grows up, you need to explain the differences between boys and girls, talk about menstruation and puberty, and about contraception as a reliable means of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Discuss the changes that occur during puberty with your child in advance. Reassure him/her that these changes in his/her body are natural and that you will be there to support him/her.

My child has already started sexual activity, what should I do?

Don't back down! It's never too late to have an open and positive dialog with your child about sexuality. If you believe that it is better to wait for true love and a stable relationship to begin sexual activity, you can still be true to this idea, even if your child has already had sexual experience. Stay positive. Reassure your child that you love him or her, you are just concerned about some of his or her actions and want to prevent unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.

My teenage child is in a "toxic" relationship. What should I do?

Typical signs of a potential aggressor:

- He tries to quickly achieve reciprocity with gifts and compliments: "You're the most beautiful/intelligent girl. I can't live without you. You are everything to me."
- He tries to protect his/her partner from communicating with family and friends: "How can you communicate with them? It's not your level... They are against our relationship... We don't need anyone..."

- He is jealous: "You are beautiful enough for me. Why are you wearing makeup? Who are you trying to seduce...?"
- Controlling. Demands that the partner spend time only with him/her, pay attention only to him/her, controls actions, relationships, behavior, expenses, every step of the way.
- He shows violence in various situations, saying: "I'm nervous because my love for you is driving me crazy... When we get married, I will calm down...".
- Exerts pressure to have sex as soon as possible, hoping to keep him/her, even if he/she says it is too soon or that he/she is not ready.
- He criticizes, insults, and slanders the former partner, and makes excessive demands on the current partner.
- The whole world revolves around him/her and his/her needs. Disregards the wishes/opinions of others.
- Posing as a victim
- Does not take responsibility for his/her mistakes.

If your son or daughter tells you about some of these signs:

- Discuss this carefully and calmly, and get the child's opinion about this behavior.
- Explain that this is a "toxic" relationship in which he/she is subjected to control, pressure, manipulation, which can lead to violence.
- Convince his/her to end the relationship. Support your child and show understanding.

15. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT THAT MY CHILD IS BEING ABUSED?

The task of parents:

- be alert to signals and messages that suggest that the child does not feel safe;
- teach children to recognize the signs of “toxic” relationships between them and the remaining parent, between them and a caregiver, between children (siblings, classmates), between a teacher and a child, between friends/loved ones;
- teach the child what to do in such situations and whom to contact.



SIGNS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST A CHILD:

- the child looks tired and sleepy;
- neglects personal hygiene;
- specific bodily injuries (bruises, scratches on the skin, bite marks, fingerprints, belt marks, burns from cigarettes, irons, etc.);
- is often ill;
- looks sad;
- sudden changes in behavior and mood;
- inadequate reactions of fear, anger, anxiety, and depression;
- difficulties in expressing and controlling emotions;
- behavior that reveals a desire to avoid contact and hide.
- a decline in academic performance;
- unmotivated absences from school;
- running away from home;
- the desire to conceal the cause of the injury;
- Loneliness, lack of friends;
- negativism, aggressiveness;
- anti-social behavior;
- self-harm - inflicting wounds, burns, etc;
- nightmares, fears;
- the desire to completely hide the whole body;
- a tendency to revenge;
- suicide attempts.

What should you do?

- If you can, go home and try to solve the problem on the spot.
- If you cannot return home, call the classroom teacher, social worker, police officer, or family doctor to investigate the incident.

16. WHAT TO DO IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS?

You can choose one of the options for resolving the conflict:

Concession

This is a decision that shows the child that you are ready to accept his or her request on the principle of “The main thing is that you are happy!”. The decision is right when you realize that you were wrong or mistaken. If you do this all the time, you run the risk of finding yourself in a situation where a small child gets everything he or she wants through manipulation.

Struggle or rivalry

This is a solution when you never give in to the child and act on the principle: “I am always right, I am a parent, you are my child, not vice versa!” You are the winner in the conflict. Some children will find it appropriate to back down and suddenly become obedient and submissive. Others will prefer to resist, fight the “tyrant” and “tyranny” and eventually carry this discontent into adulthood.

Evasion

This is the decision to do nothing, not to try to resist difficulties, to leave everything as it is, to let the conflict take its course. This method is useful only when it is important for passions to calm down. If this approach becomes the rule, the child may come to believe that you don’t care about your relationship. As a result, you run the risk of losing emotional contact with him or her.

Compromise

This is a decision when both you and the child step back and choose alternatives that allow you to satisfy your interests equally.

Cooperation or win-win strategy

This is a solution that allows both parties to respect the interests of both parties and preserve their relationship. The confrontation between “me against you” and “you against me” simply does not exist, there is “Me and you against this problem!”

If your child has a conflict with other children - siblings, children of a caregiver, or classmates - it is your responsibility to teach your child how to solve this problem constructively.

17. HOW DO I KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE PERSON IN WHOSE CARE MY CHILD IS?

To contact a parent or caregiver, use the same communication tools as you use to contact your child.

When talking about topics related to children, we should assume that a child remains a child always and in any situation, and an adult is a person who instructs them, cares for them, guides them, and is an example to follow.

You should constantly take an interest in particularly important aspects of the child’s life.

In conversations with a parent or caregiver:

- be patient, don’t get bored with constant checks, and don’t emphasize your importance because you are sending money;
- show understanding, do not criticize or judge;
- Be friendly, listen to them. Look for solutions together;
- Ask open-ended questions, and try not to make the other person feel like they are reporting to you;
- remain calm when discussing controversial issues or conflicts, understand the situation before accusing;
- ask the caregiver to consult you before making decisions about your child;
- Be grateful to the caregiver, express your gratitude and materially appreciate his or her work and care.

If you feel or notice that the parent or caregiver is not following the agreements reached, if the child feels uncomfortable, anxious, or tense, talk about it immediately!

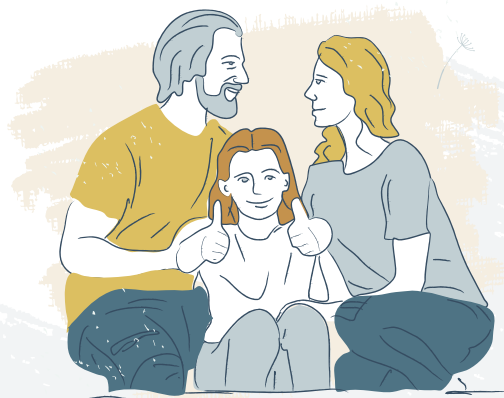
18. HOW CAN WE PLAN THE FUTURE TOGETHER?

Plan the near future with your child

- Discuss with your child your plans for coming home on vacation.
- Discuss with the parent/ caregiver and the child the possibility of bringing the child to the country where you work for a vacation. This will help strengthen your relationship and introduce your child to your work. The child will have the opportunity to meet new people, visit interesting places, and learn about the traditions of another country. All this contributes to his or her development. Plan future joint activities with your child so that they look forward to seeing you.
- Choose a task related to a future event and work together to find ways to achieve it during each meeting with your child.

Plan for the remote future with your child

- If you are planning a family reunion, find the necessary information about what you need to do. Family reunification can take place both at home and abroad. Discuss it with your child, get his or her opinion, and ask where he or she would like to live in the future.
- Start a conversation about what profession he/she would like to choose. Think together about how he/she will get his/her education.



INSTEAD OF AN EPILOGUE

The Code of Relations between an Adult and a Child

A child is a personality in the process of formation: I respect them;

The child is curious: I talk to him or her;

The child is surprised: I am helping in his or her search for beauty;

A child craves self-affirmation: I help him or her to know himself or herself; a child is looking for a role model: I provide him or her with one;

The child opens his or her body: I show him or her that health is strength;

The child doubts himself: I appreciate what he or she does;

The child strives for independence: I teach him or her responsibility;

The child knows only himself or herself: I teach him or her everything else;

A child needs an ideal: I help him or her give meaning to his or her lives.

(George Grinda)

For support or other details

Research findings on how transnational families ensure the rights of children left behind through digital communication

[Access and learn more](#)

Website of the Research Center for the Study of Transnational Families (CASTLE) based at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Languages: Romanian and English

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Page of the Research Center for the Study of Transnational Families - CASTLE on Facebook

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About the CASTLE project

THE PROJECT "CASTLE: CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND BY LABOUR MIGRATION: SUPPORTING MOLDOVAN AND UKRAINIAN TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES IN THE EU" IS CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION, CONTRACTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR MIGRATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT (ICMPD) THROUGH THE MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP FACILITY (MPF) – ICMPD/2021/MPF-357-004.

THE PROJECT IS BEING IMPLEMENTED BY THE BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TERRE DES HOMMES ROMANIA, TERRE DES HOMMES MOLDOVA, TERRE DES HOMMES UKRAINE, THE UKRAINIAN INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH NAMED AFTER OLEKSANDR YAREMENKO AND THE ACADEMY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES OF MOLDOVA.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THIS PROJECT IS TO SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE IN IMPROVING THEIR CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS, AS WELL AS THEIR MIGRATION AND MOBILITY POLICIES, WITH A FOCUS ON THE SOCIAL AND LEGAL IMPACT OF LABOR MIGRATION ON TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES.

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Terre des hommes

Допомога дітям.



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