



RAISING FINANCIALLY FIT KIDS

TRAINING TECHNIQUES

■ MODULE DESCRIPTION

Raising Financially Fit Kids is a 60-90 minute interactive program designed for parents of children of all ages. Parents will explore their own financial habits and skills, and learn techniques to teach their children sound financial management skills.

At the heart of teaching children about money are the financial behaviors of the parents. This program assumes that parents are the primary teachers of their children when it comes to money. Therefore, the majority of the program focuses on their financial skills, habits and values. If married couples are among the participants, have them work together on all the activities. If there are single parents, put them in small groups. Remember that adults learn best when they are given the opportunity to engage in extended conversations about things that matter. Use the collective knowledge of the group to guide the session, especially if YOU are not a parent. Allow participants time to talk amongst themselves, comparing and sharing lessons learned, tips and challenges.

Be sure to have a lot of information regarding FFSC programs, particularly parenting and financial education programs, and use every opportunity to invite the parents to additional sessions.

If internet is available in the training room, be prepared to show parents some of the sites on their resource handout.

■ LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this program, participants will be able to:

- Assess their own level of financial fitness.
- Develop communication skills with their spouse and children.
- Recognize the impact of advertising on children and educate their children to avoid being influenced by it.
- Implement age-appropriate financial practices for their children.

■ REFERENCES

- Bodnar, J. 1999. *Kiplinger's Dollars & Sense for Kids*. Washington, DC: Kiplinger Books.
- Gandel, S. "Everything You Know About Kids and Money is Wrong: Classes that Teach Kids about Money are Failing. Here's What Parents and Teachers Must do Now." CNNMoney.com, July 18, 2006
- Godfrey, N. S. and T. Richards. 2004. *Money Still Doesn't Grow on Trees: A Parent's Guide to Raising Financially Responsible Teenagers and Young Adults*. Rodale Press.
- Jonathan, J. 2002. *Yes you can! Raise Financially Aware Kids*. Kansas City, MO: Stowers Innovations, Inc.
- Schor, J.B. 2004. *Born to Buy*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- www.creditunion.coop ("Thrive by Five" Teaching your Preschooler about Spending and Saving)
- www.itsahabit.com (Sammy the Rabbit Savings Site for Kids)
- www.jumpstartcoalition.org (excellent resources for all ages)
- www.kidsmoney.org (Financial Site for Parents and Children)
- www.moneyinstructor.com
- www.ffsp.navy.mil (Navy Fleet and Family Support Center)
- www.ny.frb.org (Comic-style Financial Education Resources)
- www.parentware.org ("Family Bank" Allowance Tracking Software)
- www.pbskids.org (PBS Kids site loaded with financial information)
- www.practicalmoneyskills.com (Financial Literacy Tools for All Ages)
- www.media-awareness.ca (Media Awareness Website)

■ MODULE PREPARATION

Handouts:

- A Basic Assessment
- Your Fiscal Fitness Report Card
- The Financial Planning Worksheet (Optional)
- Financial Values Clarification Exercise
- Cash Conversation
- Parent Resources for Financially Fit Kids
 - Growing Financially Fit Children
 - Resources for Raising Financially Fit Kids
 - Concepts for Parents of Toddlers and Preschoolers
 - Setting an Allowance
 - Chart Your Savings
 - Coupon Savings
 - Vacation Budget
 - Setting up a Matching Grant
 - Making a Shopping List
 - Gift Giving
 - Yearly Gifts
 - Setting Up a Personal Budget
 - Wants and Needs
 - The Cost of Cool

Materials (varies depending on activities chosen):

- Pencils and Pens
- Name Tags

■ SUMMARY OF OPTIONAL PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES

- **A Basic Assessment:** Parents discuss their good and bad money habits and “design” a financially healthy child.
- **Your Fiscal Fitness Report Card:** Parents give themselves a grade for their financial habits and skills.
- **Financial Values Clarification:** A communication exercise for couples.

■ CURRICULUM OUTLINE

1. Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)
 - a. Four Steps to Financially Fit Kids
 - i. Our Money, Ourselves: Explore Your Own Money Values and Habits
 - ii. Let’s Talk: Developing Effective Communication Skills
 - iii. Growing the Financially Fit Child: Allowances, Saving and Spending, Basic Budgeting
 - iv. Life-Long Learning
2. Our Money, Ourselves: Taking a Hard Look at How You Manage Your Money (10 – 30 minutes)
 - a. Optional Participant Activity: A Basic Assessment
 - b. Look in the Mirror
 - c. Optional Participant Activity: Your Fiscal Fitness Report Card
 - d. Change Your Behavior
3. Let’s Talk: Developing Effective Communication Skills (10 – 30 minutes)
 - a. How We Talk to Each Other
 - b. Optional Participant Activity: Financial Values Clarification
 - c. How We Talk to the Kids
 - d. How the Kids Talk to Us

- e. How Kids Talk to Kids
 - f. How Advertising Talks to All of Us
4. Growing the Financially Fit Child (15 minutes)
- a. You Can't Manage It if you Don't Have It: Allowances
 - b. Saving, Spending and Sharing
 - c. Kid's Budgeting
5. Foster a Love for Life-long Learning (5 minutes)
- a. Use Available Resources
 - b. Websites

■ INSTRUCTOR TECHNIQUES BY SLIDE NUMBER



Optional Participant Activity: A Basic Assessment

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: “A Basic Assessment” Handout, pens and pencils

Procedure: In this exercise, parents explore their good and bad habits with money, and then envision the “perfect” financial child. Each person can work individually or you can use this exercise as an introductory exercise and have participants pair up. You could also have couples pair up with other couples. Each individual or group will write down what they have done right, what they wish they had done, and mistakes they have made with their money. When all have finished, ask for volunteers to read some of what they wrote. When all have had a chance to contribute, ask the individuals or groups to go back to the handout and complete the next section entitled, “Characteristics of the Financially Healthy Child”. Ask participants to look at what they wrote at the top of the form and use what they wrote to “design” the financially healthy child—what would that child act like? What habits and skills would they have? What financial values would they hold? When the groups have finished, ask for volunteers to present their “perfect financial child”. Keep track of answers on the board or newsprint; you will have the opportunity to refer back to this and reinforce these traits throughout the program. This exercise gives participants a chance to articulate the own mistakes and regrets, and also

to build on their successes, using both to begin to envision the behaviors they would like to instill in their children.

Optional Participant Activity: Your Fiscal Fitness Report Card

Time: 5 minutes

Materials: Handout “Your Fiscal Fitness Report Card”

After conducting the Basic Assessment you can move right in to the Fiscal Fitness Report Card. Give individuals or couples 5 or 10 minutes to complete the report card and give themselves a grade. Encourage discussion among couples and groups. When discussions are occurring, ask the groups leading questions – what type of budgeting system do you use? How are you investing right now? Are you in the TSP? Why did you choose that? Etc. Commend the parents for being honest and looking at what behaviors they may need to change and for considering new avenues to proceed. Assure them that there are many resources to help them and their children get on or stay on the right financial track.

For those participants who do not currently have a budgeting system, offer them a copy of the Financial Planning Worksheet and invite them to visit their CFS or FFSC Financial Educator.



Distribute the handout “Cash Conversation” to participants, and explain that it shows various opportunities for starting up a conversation about money.



Optional Participant Activity: Financial Values Clarification

Time: 10 – 15 minutes

Materials: Handout “Financial Values Clarification”, pens and pencils

Procedure: Have couples work together on this exercise, each filling out their own sheet. For those who are single, they can complete it on their own. If they have a partner at home, they should bring a copy for them to complete. When all have had a chance to complete the form,

give them time to discuss and compare answers. For the singles, they can group together and discuss their answers. After 10 to 15 minutes, call the group back together and ask if there were any surprises in the exercise. Ask them what the exercise reveals about financial values. Ask them to rate their financial communication skills and look for suggestions on some ways to improve communication. This is also an excellent time to discuss needs vs. wants. Explain that not only do they need to have good communication skills with their spouse, but also with their children, and their children will learn best by observing their parents' behavior.

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Distribute the “Parent Resources for Financially Fit Kids” handout package. Explain that the package includes the tips and hints as well as the age-appropriate forms that you are about to discuss. Suggested resources are also included in the package.

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If there are parents of toddlers and preschoolers in the group, ask them what type of events or activities in their normal life would present a good time to raise the concepts listed in this resource. For example, when talking about a parent working they can explain concept #4. When their children see them donating money (church, scouts, etc.) they can mention concept #16. When the mail is delivered or the garbage collected they can talk about concept #17.

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There are any number of ways to conclude this program. If classroom internet is available, you could demonstrate some of the websites listed on the handout. An excellent option is the “Don’t Buy It” game on the pbskids.org website, a game for children that teaches them to recognize advertisement placements. Not only would this game educate the parents, but they will get to see an excellent educational website in action.

Another great online option is the italladdsup.org website. Go to the “Budget Odyssey” game, a short game teaching about what income and fixed and variable expenses are, or choose another game. Remember two things when demonstrating games: 1) you must be completely prepared, so practice, and 2) even though you are demonstrating activities, chances

are you will be educating the parents at the same time. Be sensitive to that reality and respond as appropriate.

Another possible option for ending the program is to have the parents commit in writing to their “next step” for growing a financially healthy child. Is their next step something that has to do with their own behavior? Do they need to work on improving their own “fiscal fitness” grade? Ask them specifically how they plan to accomplish that. Will they work on their financial communication? Start an allowance system? Introduce their children to some educational websites? Shut off the TV? Ask for specifics and get them to write their “next step” down on their handouts or a 3 x 5 card. You could even have them submit the goal to you in writing, along with their home address or e-mail. In 30 days you could send it back to them, reminding them that they made this important commitment and you hope they are following through, wishing them well, and offering any further assistance that FFSC can provide.