

# Ideas for Sharing Information from This Book

Most of the information in this book will be useful to health workers and village rehabilitation workers who see many children with disabilities. Some of the information will also be useful for the family of a child with disabilities. However, a family with one child with disabilities will usually not need this whole book. It has information about so many different disabilities, that parents may have difficulty finding the information that applies to their child.

Also, learning from a book is often not the best way to learn something. A lot of methods, aids, and exercises can be learned more easily from other persons, through watching and through guided practice. But after a village worker has taught parents how to do certain exercises, or shown them an example of a homemade aid, **printed instruction sheets with clear drawings can be a big help.** Sometimes they can make the difference between whether the recommendations are followed at home, or not.

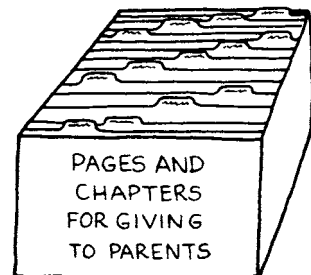
There are certain pages or parts of this book that you may want to give to families after you explain and teach to them selected exercises or activities. For example, to the family of a girl with arthritis, you may want to give some of the “Exercise Instruction Sheets” at the end of Chapter 42, and the “Medicines for Pain” information on p. 134. You may also want to give them pages from Chapter 16 on arthritis, and to mark the exercises and activities that are important to their child.

To the family of a young child with developmental delays, you may want to give pages from the chapters on child development and early stimulation activities (Chapters 34 and 35). For a more advanced child you could give the family material from the chapters on self-care (Chapters 36 to 39).

Depending on the interest and reading ability of the family, you may want to give them a whole chapter (or chapters) about their child’s disability. For example, the chapters on cerebral palsy (Chapter 9) or hearing loss (Chapter 31). An older child with paralysis from a back injury might appreciate having a copy of the chapter on spinal cord injury. Letting him and his family take home the chapters on pressure sores and urine and bowel control could even save his life! His family may also want to take home plans for making a low-cost wheelchair, to see if the carpenter and blacksmith in their village could make one.

In Project PROJIMO in Mexico, the village rehabilitation team keeps a big file box with copies of the different pages and chapters that they have found most useful for giving to families. (In fact, the exercise sheets at the end of Chapter 42 were originally prepared separately to give to families. Later, we decided to include them in this book.)

If you have a computer and internet access, you can freely download and print pages you need from our website: [www.hesperian.org](http://www.hesperian.org)



**Suggestion:** Keep a file of pages, chapters, and information sheets to give to families.

## Marking the information that applies to the child

On any page or chapter that you give to parents, some of the information or suggestions will apply more than others to their child.

We suggest that you circle the activities or suggestions that would be most helpful to the child in his present condition or level of development. You could also put an "X" through anything that should not be done or might be harmful for that child.

Here is an example. If the child has spasticity and is beginning to sit, the first 3 activities on p. 307 can help her to improve balance and to develop controlled body movement. So circle these. The next 3 activities will still be too difficult and could increase spasticity. Put an "X" through these so the family does not do them.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 307

To help your child gain balance sitting, first sit her on your knees facing you. Later, you can sit her facing out so that she can see what is going on around her.

Hold her loosely so her body can adapt to leaning.

Slowly lift one knee to lean her gently to one side. Then the other, so that she learns to bend her body to stay seated.

You can do the same thing with the child sitting on a log.

As he gets better balance, move your hands down to his hips and then thighs, so that he depends less on your support.

Give him something to hold so that he learns to use his body and not his arms to keep his balance.

With an older child who has difficulty with balance, you can do the same thing on a 'tilt board'.

Or you can do the same on a large ball.

At first let her catch herself with her arms.

Later, see how long she can do it holding her hands together. Make it a game.

Tilt it to one side and the other and also forward and back.

**Note:** You can also do these exercises by sitting the child on a table and gently pushing him backward, sideways, and forward. But **it is better to tip what he is sitting on.**

**Pushing him** causes him to 'catch himself' from falling with his arms.

**Tilting him** causes him to use his body to keep his balance, which is a more advanced skill.

Making copies of pages can be costly. Or you may have to go a long way for them. Also, there will be times when you want to give a family written suggestions or drawings that you have not copied in advance.

Perhaps some of the children or young people who are at the village center, either for rehabilitation or as learners-and-workers, can help trace drawings from the book. If they have some artistic skill, they can make the drawings larger, or make the child in the drawing look like the child that they are to be used with.\*



Minerva, a girl with polio who is working and learning at PROJIMO, helps adapt drawings from this book to the needs of specific children.

\*Ideas for drawing and for copying drawings at larger size are in Chapter 12 of *Helping Health Workers Learn*, (see p. 637).

If someone prepares a set of large drawings in advance, perhaps a child with disabilities who visits the village center can trace the drawings of exercises he needs to do at home. Giving the child this responsibility from the start makes it more likely that he will do the exercises at home.

If you make your own hand-out sheets (instead of just copying pages of this book) you can use the local language and villagers' way of saying things. You can also adapt the drawings to the hair style and dress that people feel at home with.

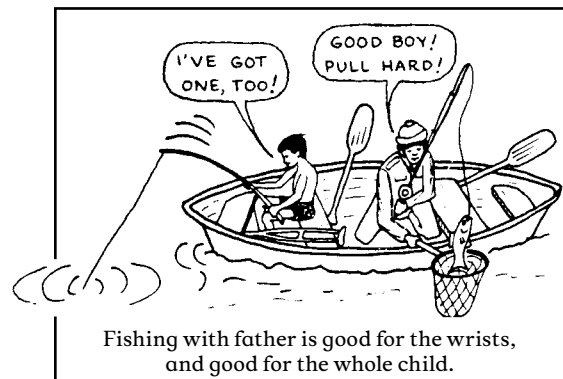
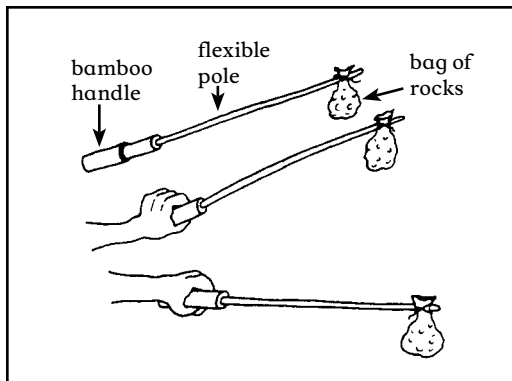
Whatever you do, try to keep both your language and drawings simple and clear. Avoid unfamiliar words.



Also, try to think of ways of adapting exercises or activities to the local situation.

For example, suppose you live in a fishing village, and want to make copies of a drawing showing an aid for strengthening the wrist. Instead of just copying a method like this from a book,

you might add a drawing like this one. This will encourage parents to think of ways to do exercises that involve their child in the life and action of their community.



**Remember:** Written pages and drawings can be a big help, but they should not be a substitute for teaching and showing. To help a family understand activities or exercises that are needed:

1. First show and explain.
2. Guide them in doing it until they do it right and understand why.
3. Then, give them the instruction sheet and explain the main points.

These steps are explained with examples and drawings on p. 382.

As much as you can, try not to use this book for giving exact instructions on how to do things. Instead, encourage everyone to use it as a source of ideas, in order to figure out better ways to help their children lead fuller lives and manage better in their communities.

REMEMBER. . .

One of the best ways to share information from this book is to:

1. **SHOW** other people how to do things.

Village rehabilitation workers and family members learn in an outdoor class. Here they practice a hip-stretching exercise. Behind them, drawings on the blackboard show which muscles are stretched.



2. Then help them **LEARN BY DOING** it themselves—under your guidance.

Teaching a village health worker how to stretch a tight heel cord (see p. 83.)



3. And to help them remember, give them a **DRAWING** or **INSTRUCTION SHEET**.

EXERCISES 383

**STRETCHING EXERCISE—TO HELP YOUR CHILD PUT HER FOOT DOWN FLAT (TO CORRECT A "TIPTOE" CONTRACTURE)**

**PROBLEM**  
The muscles at the back of the lower leg (calf muscles) that hold the foot "up", are too short and tight. It is this reason the child cannot put her foot flat on the ground!

**EXERCISE SAFE!**

Use your hand to hold up the knee so that it does not bend backward.

Use your arm to hold the foot in position flat to the ground. Do not force the foot upward.

Push up on the floor.

While you push up on the floor, keep your hand on the arch of the foot like this. (This helps prevent a dislocation of the foot—a common complication of stretching exercises.)

Hold the foot like this. Then pull the heel down hard.

Hold the foot like this. Then pull the heel down hard.

Pull down on the heel and push up on the foot, firmly and steadily with a counting slowly to 25. Relax, then do it again. Repeat this exercise 10 to 20 times—in the morning, at noon, and in the evening.

**WARNING:** Pushing here can injure the knee or cause it to bend backward especially if the upper leg is weak.

WRONG

Pushing like this can hurt or dislocate the foot instead of stretching the heel—especially if the foot is paralyzed or very weak.

WRONG

**IMPORTANT:** Try to help people to understand not only what to do, but also why. Perhaps you can hold classes using information from this book. Try to combine hands-on practice with discussion of principles and reasons.