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## Parenting education: which intervention model to use?

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### Abstract

This paper displays a panorama of diverse parenting education models used internationally. The paper reviews these parenting education models by using a general analysis framework: 'Intentions Mediations Tools Effects' (IMTE) designed by Sellenet & Weil-Barais (2008). This framework, which we describe in detail in our paper, has allowed us to make comparative analysis of the parenting education models we present here. We conclude the paper with a synopsis of different aspects of each parenting education model in relation to the analysis framework we have used. In this final section, we also discuss the normativity issue in educational programs in general.

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### 1. Parenting education: A recent development which has an ancient history

It has been widely accepted that the family milieu plays a significant role in children's development (see the synthesis offered by Pourtois & Desmet, 1989; Montandon & Saprú, 2002). In psychology, the ecological theories of development (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1986) have placed emphasis on the role played by the microsystem which is composed of persons who take care of the child, as well as the interaction of this microsystem with other systems in which it is situated. It has been demonstrated that the way in which parents exercise their roles has an impact on the child's development and his/her school success (Tazouti, Flieller & Vrignaud, 2005 ; Dearing et al., 2006 ; Lahaye, Pourtois & Desmet, 2007 ; Spoth, Randall & Shin, 2008).

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A great deal of research has attempted to identify characteristics of different intervention methods and approaches used by parents that induce favorable child development not only at physical, but also at cognitive, emotional and social levels (e.g. Barocas et al. 1991; Steinberg et al., 1992; Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007). The idea of training parents explicitly by using 'best practices' emerged in the United States in the 1970s. These parenting practices were based on scientific observation and stressed that certain types of parenting practices were more favorable for child development. The concepts of parenting and parenting education took shape in this particular context during a period when behaviorism reigned supreme. This theoretical framework, which employed stimulation and reinforcement methods through which children were used as subjects, was severely criticized and called into question. It was during this period that the term "program" referring to parenting education practices came into use.

Although initially parenting education programs concerned mainly 'at risk' families, today the interest in parenting education programs is widespread on a global scale (Pourtois & Desmet, 1997). This growing interest is related to the bewilderment that today's human societies are experiencing, and it is the consequence of the internationalization of communication and technological developments. In the face of emerging and evolving situations, families often feel helpless and their immediate environments do not always offer models to provide them with satisfactory answers. Moreover, internationalization asserts some values that are perceived as righteous (e.g. gender equality, respect for the child etc.) and societies adapt to reconcile new ways of thinking. At present, parenting education programs seem to be the remedy to these individual or societal changes and demands. Today, as well as answering some common needs concerning all families, parenting education programs aim to respond to the specific needs of disabled children, intellectually-gifted children, children with behavioral disorders, and children with specific diseases, without excluding the needs of families with abusive, deficient or pathogenic parents.

A range of terms is used to refer to this field of social practices which aim to optimize conditions for the healthy development of children through the involvement and interventions of parents. In France, Pourtois (1984) and Terrisse (1997) introduced the term 'Parenting Education' (*Fr. Education Parental*). Durning (1995), alternatively, suggested the term 'Parenting Training' (*Fr. Formation Parental*). We opted for the term 'Parenting Awareness' (*Fr. Sensibilization Parental*) considering parenting support practices as a means of raising awareness in parents rather than educating them in something they are capable of doing on their own using their own personal skills and resources (Ailincăi & Weil-Barais, 2006).

The disparities in terminology are in fact due to diverse intentions (objectives) such as: a) to help parents to fulfill their educational potential by developing a sense of competence and by making best use of the resources in their environment (Terrisse, 1997); b) to increase awareness of parents by improving their ability to understand; c) to help parents acquire know-how skills; d) to anticipate consequences of parental behavior (Durning, 1995) and so forth. These terms also refer to quite different conceptualizations. Indeed this field of practice is situated in the tension between training and self-development that requires an active involvement of participants in their development and does not only refer to the actions exercised by trainers/educators.

The situation concerning parenting education in France is particular. Unlike the North American context, French universities have scarcely invested in practices in social sciences, thus research in this area is not well-established. In addition, the notion of the parenting education 'program', which is widespread in English-speaking countries, is not well received in France. The concept of 'parenting education program' is often associated with the idea of deficiency in parenting skills and normative ideas in educational practices. In France, parenting education exists in rather singular forms as part of association activities such as the *École des Parents et des Éducateurs* and the *Maison Verte* (Mozère, 2000).

Initially, the assessment of the impact of parenting education programs was rather holistic. Today, assessment procedures are replaced by studies that aim to identify factors influencing the effectiveness of such programs, both in terms of intervention practices and the people involved (Cunningham et al., 2000; Sanders & Woolley, 2005; St.Pierre, Ricciuti & Rimdzius, 2005; Webster-Stratton, 2005; Hindman et al., 2008; Mendez, 2010).

Today the emphasis is more on the question of identifying factors influencing the quality of these programs. It should be noted that, in addition to technical factors (e.g. duration and frequency of interventions, intervention tools/techniques used etc.), factors inherent in human relations such as mediation are now taken into account (Gross et al., 2003; Pourtois & Desmet, 2004).

## **2. Description of the IMTE general analysis framework**

In this paper, we present an overview of various parenting education models. All of these models, either training or education ones, are viewed under the label "parenting education". Our overview is based on a general analysis framework developed by Sellenet and Weil-Barais (2008) which is called 'Intentions Mediations Tools Effects' (henceforth IMTE). IMTE is used to describe educational intervention systems by looking into the intentions, the mediation types and tools used and, finally, the effects the interventions have produced (Sellenet & Weil-Barais, 2008).

### *2.1. Intentions*

The initial intentions of parenting education program designers are manifold: to inform (e.g. about child development, intra-family conflicts, family assistance, etc.); to prevent problems (e.g. bedwetting, eating disorders, aggression, learning disabilities etc.); to prevent risk behavior (e.g. addiction and drug abuse); to help parents cope with difficulties (e.g. especially in the case of atypical children); to support parents in parental duties; to improve family relationships or to modify parenting behavior (e.g. especially in the case of abusive parents).

For the last decade, 'change' in parenting education has constituted the key element. The issue of 'change' was addressed in particular during the sessions of the International Association of Training and Research in Family Education (IATRFE) (2005). This issue, which appeared to be resistance to change on the part of parents, prompted researchers to wonder about the real needs of parents and the type of support they might need (Pourtois & Desmet, 1997).

### *2.2. Mediation*

Mediation refers to the strategies and human resources deployed to achieve intentions. The concept of mediation used in parenting education presumes that consideration be given to parents (e.g. their views, intentions, expectations, interests, values etc.). That is to say, there is a preliminary negotiation of the objectives and the means to achieve them, which was not intended in the programs inspired by behaviorism. In fact, mediation is a suitable concept to describe an intervention method which grants a central place to the participants (to the actors) and bases its interventions on the quality of interactions.

The parenting education models that we have consulted use many different forms of mediation such as: home visits by trained professionals during which parents are invited to explain and discuss their problems in order to find a solution; meetings with more experienced parents; discussion sessions between parents in the presence of a facilitator; role plays; educational games and so forth.

Besides these presential types of mediation, there are also mediation forms at a distance such as call services, television series on parenting and so forth. Since the arrival of the Internet, innovative forms of mediation have also been developed (e.g. online chats, discussion forums, training platforms etc.). Through these tools, parents have developed different forms of mediation initiated by, and used, among parents themselves. The creation of these parent-initiated forms of mediation suggests that parenting education is eluding the influence of institutions.

### 2.3. Tools

Tools relate to materials and material means that are used in training. Today, there are diverse forms of tools that continue to increase with the onset of the Information and Communication Technologies in Education (ICTE). In addition to traditional written materials (e.g. informational texts, tip sheets or exercises, case reports with their resolutions etc.), drawings, comic strips and films featuring different situations are also used as tools. CD-ROMs have also been developed with hyperlinks allowing users to move back and forth between consultation of explicit situations with pictures, explanations or advice.

### 2.4. Effects

The effects refer to the outcome obtained from the parenting education intervention. In general, the effects of parenting education interventions are assessed in relation to the original intentions, although there is not necessarily a one to one relationship between the two. For example, facilitators generally expect to see from the effects a change in parents' experiences and their ability to act in an appropriate way. What questions the levers of change, however, is that evaluations suggest that parents can learn without changing their behavior.

In general, the specification of the expected effects at the planning stage is at the heart of the evaluation process of parenting education interventions. Identifying indicators of these effects is essential, however not to the extent of influencing the practices themselves, which is always a risk in education. Indeed, the best way to obtain something is not always to require it, since demanding it could provoke resistance from the participants who might feel deprived of their free will, or even feel their personal identity and culture is being attacked (e.g. especially in the case of parents with different cultural backgrounds).

## 3. Characterizations of some parenting education models

The parenting education models we present here differ from one another depending on: a) the type of parent commitment (i.e. voluntary, incentive, imposition); b) the child's age (i.e. perinatal period, infancy, childhood, adolescence) and c) the child's particularities (i.e. typical children or children with sensory or mental disabilities, gifted children, etc.). We believe that using an analysis framework to present parenting education models would be enlightening, since relevant literature does not provide us with an explicit description of standards that could be used in analyzing such programs.

As we noted in the introduction, parenting education models are numerous. In our presentation, we have made a review of research studies retaining only the studies that: a) are the most cited and most known to French scholars; b) have worked at a relatively large scale and have undergone external evaluation; and c) respect cultural diversity in so far as possible. These selection criteria have excluded programs that are under construction and without validation. We also excluded practices that have not been the object of research. In this paper, we have presented the parenting education models in chronological order in order to facilitate the identification of their evolution.

### 3.1. Parent Management Training Oregon Model - PMTO

The Parent Management Training Oregon (PMTO) model was introduced by Gerald Patterson and his colleagues at the Oregon Social Learning Center (OSLC) (Patterson, Cobb & Ray, 1973; Patterson, 1976, 2005). The PMTO model has been supported by more than thirty years of research on families with children and adolescents with severe conduct problems. The model uses clinical approaches and aims to prevent behavioral problems in children by enhancing knowledge, skills and confidence of parents.

Patterson and his colleagues identified five key parenting skills that have a positive impact on improving children's conduct problems:

- Encouragement: parents teach children new behaviors through the use of praise and incentives (not punishment);
- Limit setting: parents respond to the child's negative behavior by setting limits without having recourse to physical interventions;
- Monitoring and supervision: parents check the impact of their intervention on their child's behavior (at home and outside the home);
- Family problem solving: parents ensure that decisions are taken collectively, within the family;
- Positive parent involvement: parents give their children positive attention, genuine interest and caring.

The PMTO program interventions are aimed at helping parents with children between 3 to 18 years of age to build skills through the use of diverse activities (e.g. problem solving, role play, discussion activities etc.) (see Table 1). This model is based on the idea that parents present reference models for their children. Therefore the interventions in this model are designed to teach parents positive attitudes and behavior (e.g. not to smoke, to respond calmly, to observe before acting, not to hit etc.) that children are likely to imitate. The emphasis is put on the importance of the educational contract that regulates parent-child relationships. The solution proposed to problems assumes the consideration of such a contract, therefore helping its improvement. This program and the ideas underlying it were sources of inspiration for other major programs.

Table 1. Analysis of PMTO using IMTE

	Intentions	Mediation	Tools	Effects
Parent Management Training, Patterson, 1973, USA <a href="http://www.oslc.org">http://www.oslc.org</a>	Helping parents to use five core parenting skills	Human mediation (e.g. direct observation, interviews, listening to family problems, problem solving, role-playing, behavioral counseling, etc.)	Questionnaires	Improvement of parenting skills

### 3.2. Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)

The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) was developed in Australia by Matt Sanders 25 years ago. The model has since been implemented in a dozen countries around the world and is now recognized internationally. This parenting skills learning program is designed to: 1) help parents learn effective management strategies to deal with diverse problems concerning the development and behavior of their children from early childhood to adolescence; 2) help parents learn new ways of interacting with their children and expressing their thoughts and feelings; 3) promote positive interactive routines that help children learn and help reduce parental stress.

The approach consists of improving parents' knowledge and skills so that they are able to better address the needs of their children and increase their confidence in their parenting skills. The intervention method used in this model draws on behavioral techniques. The approach is both explicit and practical enabling the effective management of problems encountered with children.

The Triple P model assumes that differing needs of parents necessitate different methods of assistance with varying degrees of intensity (Sanders et al, 2000). The program is based on a multi-level framework, which incorporates five levels of intervention of increasing strength (see Table 2). The interventions are implemented in a progressive intensity depending on the nature of the problem addressed. Thus, depending on the level, intervention strategies can range from provision of information (e.g. via tip sheets, videos and media-based parenting information etc.), to targeted interventions conducted by professionals who already have contact with families (e.g. public health nurses, childcare personnel, practitioners and home visitors). Interventions can also vary from a simple information session (e.g. a briefing) to participation in a community program. The highest

level of intervention provides intensive parent training which includes problem-solving activities and discussions related to particular difficulties encountered within the family (e.g. parental conflict, depression, violence, stress, etc.). Families can enter the Triple P system at any level. Upon completion of a particular level, they are not required to move on to a subsequent level.

Triple P draws upon diverse theories such as social learning, cognitive-behavioral theory and theories of development. The model also draws upon research conducted on risk and protective factors associated with the development of behavioral problems in children. According to the proponents of this program, parents' ability to use the techniques taught at the onset of problems in children would guarantee the effectiveness of the program which has indeed been demonstrated through twenty-five years of research and evaluation (Sanders, 2003; Sanders, Markie-Dadds & Turner, 2003; Matsumoto, Sofronoff & Sanders, 2010). In France, the *Parasole* association offers training for parents and professionals using Triple P.

Table 2. Analysis of Triple P using IMTE

	Intentions	Mediation	Tools	Effects
Positive Parenting Program, Sanders, 1980, Australia www.triplep.net	Level 1: Informing parents about resources available to help them in their role as parents; encouraging parents to participate in prevention of developmental disorders of the child and to join a training program	Instrumented mediation (e.g. information campaigns on parenting, radio broadcasts etc.) and human mediation (e.g. telephone conversations etc.)	Television, print, electronic mailing, telephoning	Program membership
	Level 2: Preparing parents to cope with daily problems (e.g. eating problems, toilet training, bedtime problems etc.)	Human mediation [e.g. group seminars; individual consultations (20 minutes) by phone or face to face with a clinician etc.].	tip sheets, videos, leaflets	Improvement of parenting skills (e.g. solving everyday problems etc.)
	Level 3: Preparing parents to deal with specific problems (e.g. anger, rivalry among children etc.)	Human mediation (e.g. consultation with practitioners, telephone counseling, monitoring the evolution of the family etc.)	tip sheets, videos	Improvement of parenting skills (e.g. solving specific problems etc.)
	Level 4: Preparing parents to deal with behavioral problems (e.g. aggression, rejection etc.)	Human mediation (e.g. individual and collective - observation and reflection on parenting, written self-assessment etc.)	Videos, written documents	Improvement of parenting skills and maintenance of parental motivation
	Level 5: Supporting families whose children have behavioral problems caused by dysfunctional family situation (e.g. parental depression, parental stress and parental conflict etc.)	Face-to-face human mediation (e.g. therapeutic interaction, analysis of progress, discussions etc)	Written documents	Improvement of the ability to manage mood swings and stress; obtaining spouse support (e.g. for parents at risk of abusing their children)

### 3.3. *The Incredible Years: Parents and Children Training Series*

The Incredible Years is a comprehensive program developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton (1981) for parents and teachers. The program has been translated into several languages and used in different countries (e.g. Korea,



New Zealand, Great Britain and Norway). It aims to develop and strengthen parenting skills so that parents are able to understand their children and deal with their conduct problems (from birth to adolescence). Interventions are guided by a conception of development that emphasizes the important role of risk and protective factors related to people and their environment in a systemic perspective.

The training of parents consists of a series of interventions that focus on strengthening parenting skills (e.g. monitoring, positive discipline, confidence etc.). Real life situations are used to help parents acquire socially-acceptable parenting behavior (e.g. setting limits verbally rather than spanking etc.).

The program consists of sub-groups which are organized according to the age of children: infants and toddlers (0-3 years), early childhood/preschool (3-6 years), school age (6-12 years), advanced parent program and parenting training focusing on children's education (4-12 years) (see Table 3).

According to the research conducted by the Webster-Stratton research team, young children with high rates of aggressive behavior are at greater risk of conduct problems such as dropout, delinquency, substance abuse and violence. This is why the main goal of parenting training is to prevent and reduce the frequency of aggressive behavior and opposition. By way of example, we indicate some short-term goals regarding parenting skills:

- Improve the quality of care provided to children;
- Reduce physical and verbal violence towards children;
- Improve communicative and emotion management skills of parents ;
- Increase family involvement in educational networks;
- Help parents and teachers work together to improve educational settings;
- Increase parents' involvement in their children's education;
- Reinforce appropriate behaviors and social skills through games (e.g. taking turns, sharing, supporting, complimenting, etc.).
- Teach strategies of self-control;
- Increase the capacity to recognize, monitor and communicate emotions;
- Stimulate academic achievement, reading and interest in school;
- Reduce inappropriate behavior (e.g. expressions of contempt, aggressive behavior, peer rejection, bullying, stealing, lying, etc.)
- Increase self-esteem and self-confidence.

Each series in the program includes a variety of tools such as a huge handbook containing an assortment of situations that provide parents with examples and advice with the help of videos showing parenting skills that are favorable for child development, tip sheets and discussion materials, stickers, refrigerator notes mentioning things not to forget, posters with the program structure and target skills.

Parents involved in the Incredible Years programs are grouped according to the age level of their children and take part in group-work activities which help parents exchange ideas and participate in discussions in the presence of an expert. The expert ensures that parents are attentive to the know-how necessary for the proper development of their child (e.g. providing the child with physical, tactile and visual stimulation). The development of parents' know-how skills is guaranteed by exercises and activities of increasing complexity. The progress in the program depends on the successful completion of these activities and a particular emphasis is given to the observation of the children's behavior. The aspects related to sociability as well as self-control are valued from the perspective of social welfare and personal development.



Table 3. Analysis of The Incredible Years using IMTE

	Intentions	Mediation	Tools	Effects
Incredible Years, Webster-Stratton, 1981, USA <a href="http://www.incredibleyears.com">http://www.incredibleyears.com</a>	<p>Basic Training: Babies and very young children (0-3 years). Getting to know your baby ; understanding how to help babies feel loved and secure ; understanding how to encourage baby's development</p> <p>Basic Training: Early childhood (3-6 years) Establishing rules and promoting accountability; learning to manage misbehavior; helping children learn to calm and self-control etc.</p> <p>Basic training: School age (6-12yrs). Using praise incentives effectively; Introducing rules and routines and promoting responsibilities</p> <p>Advanced Training: (4-12 years). Improving interpersonal and problem solving skills; managing anger; giving and getting help</p>	<p>Human mediation both collective (e.g. group work, brainstorming, debates etc.) and individual (e.g. home visits) Instrumented mediation (e.g. DVDs, conversation card games, manuals, posters, tip cards, stickers etc.).</p>	<p>Books, DVDs, conversation card games, manuals, posters, tip cards, stickers etc.</p>	<p>Positive change in the quality of relationships between parent - child and children with their peers.</p>

### 3.4. Helping the Noncompliant Child - HNC

Helping the Noncompliant Child - HNC is a program designed and developed in 1993 by Robert McMahon and Rex Forehand (2003) in the United States (see Table 4). The program concerns parents and their 3-8 year old children with non-compliance and/or conduct problems. The long-term objectives of the program are to prevent juvenile delinquency problems resulting from adaptation problems at school. The short-term and intermediary objectives are to: 1) help parents modify their parenting styles in order to break out of coercive parenting styles and adopt practices based on negotiation (e.g. prosocial interaction); 2) improve parenting skills; 3) increase children's prosocial behaviors and reduce conduct problem.

Each program is composed of about ten sessions. Sessions are conducted with individual families. Both parents and children participate in these 60 to 90-minute weekly sessions in the presence of an expert or two who are educated in psychology. The presence of experts allows the effective implementation of role-play activities (e.g. one expert plays the parent's role, while the other expert the child's). Through these sessions, at the beginning, the know-how parenting skills are explicitly taught from demonstrations and role plays and later by using direct practice in real situations with the child at home.

The evaluation criteria for the short-term objectives of the program concern assessment of know-how practices within the family milieu. The evaluation criteria for intermediary and long-term objectives (with the help of longitudinal studies which can last between 2 months to 14 years after the intervention ends) concern the assessment of the transfer and the use of the mother's acquired parenting skills with her other children, the child's self-esteem, school learning, and parent-child relations. Using these abovementioned indicators, different aspects of the concerned person's development are assessed.

Table 4. Analysis of HNC using IMTE

	Intentions	Mediation	Tools	Effects
Helping the Noncompliant Child), McMahon & Forehand, 1981, USA	<p>Establishing positive prosocial interactive styles ; Improving parenting skills</p>	<p>Human mediation (e.g. parent-child interaction mediated by one or two facilitators, games, monitoring progress etc.)</p>	<p>Video cassette, trainer's manual, books for parents</p>	<p>Decreased conduct disorders in children; Parents' improved perception of their children</p>

### 3.5. Parenting Wisely

Parenting Wisely is a self-administered parenting education program. Computer based activities (e.g. DVDs, CDs, CD-ROMs and online applications) are used interactively to train parents. Donald A. Gordon (1979, 1998) originally designed and used the program in the United States (see Table 5). The Parenting Wisely program concerns mainly socially deprived and at risk families who have children from 9 to 18 years of age. Most of these families do not ask for any mental health therapy or parenting education programs to treat their children's conduct problems. A version of the program also offers parenting education for parents with young children (from the ages of 3 to 9).

This program was translated into French, adapted and distributed in Quebec and in France (both the manual and CD-ROM) under the name '*Etre Parent Aujourd'hui*' (Eng. Parenting Today) (Gordon, Terrisse & Pithon, 2003). The program offers parenting training on parent-child interactions with the solutions to problems with the help of an interactive CD/DVD with comprehensive critiques and explanations. The information included in the CD/DVD aims to help parents understand the advantages and disadvantages of permissive and authoritarian parenting styles. The message is to find the balance between the two parenting styles. The program draws on 'constructivist' theories and aims to help parents learn about the skills to develop in their children. The CD focuses on three general components that are postulated to help develop parenting skills:

- 'Knowledge' on the psychological development of children and the adolescents;
- 'Know-how' skills on how to act and solve problems in specific situations, due in part to this knowledge, but also out of habit. The skills learned are: how to assign responsibilities at home to each member of the family; how to effectively implement discipline avoiding repeated shouts and threats; how to develop educational contracts (from preadolescence) through which the child learns to express, negotiate and defend his interests while agreeing to the 'fact rules' designed with all members of the family;
- 'Being-skills' such as 'acceptance' of children, understanding and 'active listening' to the other.

Each component of parenting skills is illustrated using short video extracts of films that serve as examples. Basic definitions are given in a glossary. Parents and teachers are provided with hyperlinks to have quick access to different sections. Practical training exercises are also provided to assess the acquisition and application of these skills.

The theoretical viewpoints that influenced the creation of this parenting training CD are as follows: Social learning theories (Patterson, 1986; Mahoney and Patterson, 1992; Bandura, 1997); cognitive-behavioral theories developed by Beck (1976), Alexander and Parsons (1973); and current systemic that emphasizes the importance of relationships within and outside the family (Minuchin, 1974).

Studies conducted in the United States on the effects of this program have shown that the parents were satisfied that their knowledge of basic educational principles had improved. Furthermore, they maintained that they had more control on their parenting skills and could implement these skills in problematic family situations.

Table 5. Analysis of Parenting Wisely using IMTE

	Intentions	Mediation	Tools	Effects
Parenting Wisely, Gordon, 1998, USA	Improving knowledge, know-how skills and know how to be of parents and children (e.g. attitudes and ability to adapt new situations etc.)	Human mediation (e.g. interviews, role-playing, coaching etc.) and instrumented mediation (e.g. problem solving, performing exercises using tools etc.)	CD-ROMs, films, questionnaires	Improvement of parenting skills, mental state of the mothers, and intra-family relations (e.g. reduced conflicts and domestic violence), and child behavior (e.g. reduced criminal acts)

### 3.6. Krousar

The Krousar parenting education program was designed and developed in Cambodia by the E & D team (Child and Child Development) and the association Krousar Yoeung (created in 2002). The project was set up at the request of the Cambodian Government following a preliminary investigation into the "practices, beliefs, and values concerning parenting of young children in Cambodia". Parenting education was a new theme in a country that had experienced a destructive dictatorship. The preliminary investigations revealed that Cambodian parents suffered greatly from a lack of healthy parenting models that they could identify themselves with. In Cambodia, most adults between 25 and 35 years of age witnessed the destruction of their own family during the years of the Pol Pot regime. Therefore, they had difficulties in fulfilling the healthy parenting roles that are primordial in their children's education. In addition, the economic difficulties families were facing contributed to the weakening of the family milieu.

TV, as mass media, was selected as the main means to raise awareness in parenting skills (see Table 6). For this purpose, a television series entitled Krousar (meaning family), which depicted the parent-child relationship in a contemporary Cambodian family setting, was produced. Trained facilitators, through the distribution of the videotapes of the Krousar TV series and the use of role-playing, family debates and so forth, implemented parenting education in all Cambodian villages. The E&D project (2004) noted that television was a perfect tool which could reach a broad audience. It was also a perfect tool for transmission of norms and model behaviors and addressing various concerns without shocking parents in Cambodia. The topics covered took parents' beliefs and values into account concerning child rearing. The following are examples of some of the topics covered:

- parent-child relationships, parenting roles and attitudes;
- development and needs of the child (health care and hygiene, early intervention, early childhood developmental needs) and nutrition;
- behavioral control, discipline, parent-child communication;
- importance of play and everyday learning.

The "Krousar" series mobilized families around a common interest, the well-being of their children, and enabled exchanges and discussions in distant villages and between other communities in Cambodia. With the project entitled "Parenting and mothering support in rural areas of Cambodia," group sessions, along with more individualized support through home visits, were implemented. These individualized support activities were sometimes in the form of role-plays, card games and/or toy-making workshops. The project involved 106 facilitators and 847 families and continued in 2004 with rebroadcasting of the "Krousar" television series. In this phase, new activities and discussions between facilitators and families were introduced.

Table 6. Analysis of Krousar using IMTE

	Intentions	Mediation	Tools	Effects
Krousar, 2002, Cambodia	Promoting physical, psychological and moral development of children in Cambodia	Human mediation (e.g. discussion, role play, home visits) and instrumented mediation (e.g. watching movies)	Television series, games	Creation of a dynamic community around children, improvement of school success of young children and parenting skills of mothers

### 3.7. Parenting Awareness Model (PAM)

PAM is an intensive one-session intervention which was designed to sensitize ordinary volunteer parents in the context of doctoral research carried out by Rodica Ailincăi (2005). The initial model was implemented and evaluated in the context of a science museum, *Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie (CSI)*, in Paris.

Overall, this model is designed for parents who supervise their young children in the discovery of knowledge. It aims to help parents assess their supervision practices and let these evolve according to the needs of the child.

Initially, PAM intended to sensitize parents towards the use of most favorable behavior in the discovery of scientific knowledge in a science museum (PAM--science museum setting/science learning). Subsequently, the model was used in French Guiana. In French Guiana, the model was adapted to a home setting where parents helped their children do their homework (PAM--home setting/school content knowledge). Currently, PAM is used in French Polynesia to sensitize parents to support their children in learning the Tahitian language (PAM—Home setting/language learning).

What characterizes PAM is its effectiveness and strong impact on initiating behavior-change in parents in a very short period of time (an hour approximately). This one-hour session consists of moments of watching some short films of one-to-two minutes each (between two and five short films), followed by a panel discussion for about 50 minutes.

The discussions are organized by a facilitator and focus on parenting supervision practices viewed in films, which contrast greatly in terms of the parenting intervention styles used. The films were inspired by the actual parenting practices of the parents involved in these sessions (who were observed prior to the parenting education sessions) and the films were produced by using professional actors/actresses.

The educational challenge is to make parents aware of their own behavior with their children and to make them observe the influence their behaviors have on the actions of their children. In order to help parents identify the most effective intervention style based on the objective they have, discussions are oriented towards the analysis of non-verbal actions and verbal reactions of the children. This intervention model is based on the interactionist theory (Vygotsky, 1985; Bruner, 1983), cognitive-behavioral theory (Beck, 1976), eco-systemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1980).

Table 7. Analysis of PAM using IMTE

	Intentions	Mediation	Tools	Effects
General characteristics	Modifying the forms of supervision	Discussion between parents organized by a facilitator Duration: 1 h Group size: 5-10 people	Films with typical interaction sequences	Improved awareness of the importance of parental supervision and the relationship between the parent's behavior and the child's reaction; Decreased directive approach; Improved quality of exchanges (joint attention); Diversification of activities
Specific characteristics	Context - science museum setting /science learning (for children aged 3 to 5 years) - home setting/school content knowledge - home setting/language learning	<u>Principles of the discussion</u> Relationship between parenting and the child's behavior; Non-normativity; Sharing the floor; <u>Procedure</u> : watching a movie to initiate the debate; discussion between parents, mediated by a facilitator; <u>Role of the debate facilitator</u> : differentiation, identification and assessment of the discussion; not allowed to give any opinion or advice; managing turn-taking between the participants	Scenarios designed from existing interactive styles, contrasting (favorable/unfavorable) Duration: 3'20" Characters: actors	EVALUATION of expected effects Comparison of parent-child interactions before and after participation in the discussion session using the following criteria: - Content of dialogic exchanges - Interactive style of parents - Structure of exchanges - Objectives of tasks - Level of distanciation
Preliminary studies	Study of 'spontaneous' parent supervision in a science museum exhibition context	Non	Evaluation of films (three contrasting groups)	Identification of interactive styles Development and evaluation of films in terms of their clarity

Different evaluations of PAM have illustrated that the behaviors of the participant parents had a marked evolution and that they adopted more individualized parenting styles after attending the PAM sessions. One of the strengths of PAM is the total absence of normativity in the parenting intervention sessions, which in other contexts proved to have been faced with resistance from parents. The other positive aspect of PAM is the presence of the parents' actual parenting behaviors in the films which helped the parents to identify themselves. The panel discussions helped the parents discover the most favorable parenting intervention style without feeling that they were being judged (even if the parenting behavior they observed in the film was identical to theirs).

#### **4. Summary and discussion**

The aim of this article was to present some parenting education models by using a general analysis framework (the IMTE model – Intentions, Mediation, Tools, Effects - Sellenet & Weil-Barais, 2008) in order to identify the general characteristics of each of these models and differentiate between their similarities and differences.

We note that in these models the intentions, although very different, are usually quite well defined. The theoretical foundations used in these models are diverse. They can be pragmatic such as in the 'Helping the Noncompliant Child' model which is based on the analysis of the relationship between parents' parenting styles and the aggressive behavior in children. Parenting education models may also be based on ideological and moral grounds such as respect for others, equality, democracy and so forth. They can also have foundations in which they integrate cognitive and epistemological dimension as in PAM.

All (of the aforementioned) parenting intervention models more or less include a mediation instrument, although its nature and the specific methods of intervention are not always explained explicitly. The specification of the expected effects in operational terms is what is most lacking in the program descriptions of the aforementioned parenting education models. However, this specification is essential to evaluate the methods of intervention.

In recent debates in parenting education, the question of the normativity of mediation tools has often been at the center of criticism. During the presentations about PAM, in different congress, researchers were often questioned about the model's normativity (as if norms must necessarily be absent from any form of training). In PAM, the mediation is non-normative. The paradoxical aspect of PAM is that the intentions can be at times normative and non-normative. They can be normative in the sense that the parenting education interventions target parenting supervision skills required in the specific area of knowledge (e.g. science teaching, language teaching etc). They can also be non-normative because the parents have the flexibility to adapt their parenting supervision according to the needs of their children (e.g. parents need to have an analytic point of view to differentiate between different supervision styles and choose the one that they think is the best in their case). In fact, there is no education without norms and standards. From our point of view, the debate would be more explicit if all educators accept that there are norms to follow because education would not be possible without the sharing of norms and standards. Standards differ from one domain/context to another and we believe that such standards should be taken into account. The educational competence of any parent, like any other educator, should be naturally linked to related fields of knowledge and practices. Whatever the field (e.g. sanitary health, nutrition, social relations, reading, science, etc.) there are social and scientific norms. It seems to us that it is the ability of parents to share these norms with their children which lies at the heart of parenting education.

Generally, in the case of education, the key concern is the strategies and tools provided for the individuals so that they can take ownership of the standards. In a totalitarian system, they are imposed and it is recognized that individuals challenge these norms. Democratic systems offer an approach that we have adopted: conflicting information, debate and ultimately singular choices by individuals. From our perspective, it is important that parents volunteer to participate in such parenting education programs and they progress regarding the personal intentions they set for themselves such as to be 'good teachers' so that their children can succeed in society. We believe that it is possible to help parents interact with their children in a favourable way in order to prevent

parents from inventing their own methods of parenting which could not always be adapted to their children's needs. In the cases when the parents' methods do not succeed, there is a risk that they withdraw from the relationship with their child.

In our opinion, the aim of parenting education should not be to minimize the creative potential of the parents; on the contrary, it should aim to help them use it better. It should be recognized that today both parents and educators are facing new situations (e.g. change of status and social roles, change in family structures, access to new types of media, etc.), and that society has a role to play in helping parents to educate their children. This comes down to the assumption that education is not a natural process and that it requires specific competence to be incorporated by educators. The informal nature of parenting education does not exclude the need for the acquisition of specific skills. However, there has not yet been research evidence to show a direct correlation between parents' involvement in their children's education and the academic achievement of children (Fan & Chen, 2001).

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