



FEE KIT

FAMILY • EQUALITY • EARLY

Virtual kit for educational staff
working with 0-5 years old

Welcome Document

Complete kit in french on:
www.trousse-fée.ca

UQTR



Université du Québec
à Trois-Rivières

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This document can be consulted on the FEE Kit website:

www.trousse-fee.ca

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About the FEE Kit

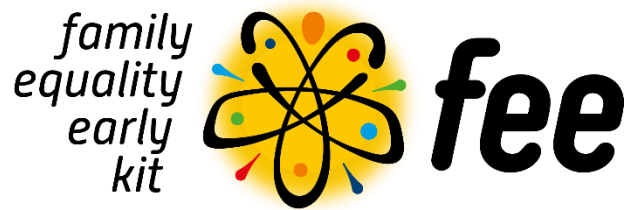
The FEE Kit is a free tool intended to help educators identify and address domestic violence exposure among children attending educational childcare services.

It is an initiative of the Quebec Ministère de la Famille as part of its specific action plan to prevent high-risk domestic violence and increase victim safety, which is supported by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

The kit was developed by teams from the Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDF), the Service de la formation continue and the Service des technologies de l'information at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR). In addition to the Ministère de la Famille, a number of other Quebec government bodies contributed to the kit's development, including the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux (MSSS), the Secrétariat à la condition féminine (SCF), the Ministère de la justice (Justice), and the Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales (DPCP).

In addition, illustrator Isabelle Charbonneau accurately portrayed the images in the fun material for children 0 to 5 years old.

1.2 The FEE Kit's strong and meaningful name



This name reflects several underlying intentions:

Family

To consider domestic violence from a family perspective, as having an impact on parenting.

- The term “parent” is deliberately used throughout the kit.
- Educators provide a living environment for toddlers and their caregivers, who may be mothers, fathers, step-parents, foster parents, etc.

Equality

To assert the principles of equality in relationships, regardless of their form (heterosexual, homosexual), by focusing on both preventive interventions for all children and specific interventions for children suspected of having been exposed to domestic violence.

- Domestic violence can occur in a wide variety of relationships and contexts (by women toward men, by men toward women, in the LGBTQ+ community, within diverse cultural realities).
- Recognizing these realities is not meant to diminish the proven severity of violence committed by men against women.

Early

To promote understanding how the child perceives the dynamics of domestic violence and, more specifically, to better illustrate each child's specific experience.

1.3 Exposure to domestic violence

- All children and adolescents who live in a family with a domestic violence dynamic are considered to be exposed to domestic violence regardless of whether or not they have seen or heard instances of domestic violence, whether the violence was committed against a parent or step-parent, or whether it occurred before, during or after separation.
- Fear is an emotional experience that children feel long before they develop the language skills to describe their experience. Children live it and feel it.
- Parents tend to underestimate the impact and consequences domestic violence exposure has on children. They rarely think about shielding their children from exposure to this type of violence.
- Conjuality (the relationship between partners) and parenting (the relationship between parents and children) must not be dissociated in the context of domestic violence. These two spheres influence each other and can contribute to the dynamics of domestic violence.
- Toddlers who are exposed to domestic violence have been living in tense family environments for a long time. They are less developmentally advanced and are more persistently impacted than other children who have experienced a traumatic event but live in a calm, peaceful and supportive family environment.

1.4 Self-reflection questionnaire

The subject of domestic violence brings out all kinds of concerns and fears. Considering toddlers' exposure to domestic violence leads us to question our own experiences—past or present—related to domestic violence. We are all confronted with different personal issues outside of our jobs. It is important to receive the support we need. If you answer “yes” to one or more of these questions, we invite you to make use of the tools that follow and seek the support you need¹.

- Do I feel or have I ever felt fear in a conjugal relationship?
- Am I afraid or have I ever been afraid of retaliation against myself or my child if I stand up for myself or leave a conjugal relationship?
- Have I ever, or do I think I have ever, said, “it’s only an argument, it will pass; as long as it doesn’t lead to physical abuse”?
- In my current or a previous relationship, do I or did I feel isolated (for example, lose contact with people I was previously close with)?

1.5 Definition of domestic violence

Domestic violence is characterized by a series of repetitive acts that usually increase in intensity and frequency. Experts call this progression, “the escalation of violence.” For the abuser, it occurs in a cycle defined by phases of mounting tension, assault, justification, and reconciliation and calm. For the victim, these phases correspond with fear, anger, a feeling of responsibility for the violence and, finally, hope that the situation will improve. The phases may not all be always present and do not always occur in this exact order.

Domestic violence encompasses verbal, psychological, physical, sexual and financial abuse. It is not the result of a loss of control, but rather a means chosen to dominate the other person and assert power over them. It can be experienced in a marital, extramarital or romantic relationship, and at any age. Domestic violence creates a climate of perpetual tension, fear and danger within the family. This environment affects the child, the parents and those around them.

¹ SOS violence conjugale: <https://sosviolenceconjugale.ca/en/explore-your-situation>

1.6 Roles of educators and ECPs

You have specific roles and responsibilities when it comes to situations that expose a child to domestic violence and preventing such situations.

The Special Commission on the Rights of the Child and Youth Protection (CSDEPJ, *Laurent Commission*, 2021) calls us to consider a child's environment (e.g., services, legal proceedings) like **circles of benevolence**. Benevolence is defined as a “disposition to do good, desire to promote the happiness of others” (Oxford English Dictionary). According to the Special Commission (CSDEPJ, *Laurent Commission*, 2021), benevolence encourages collective action based on the needs and rights of all children. Educational childcare is a circle of benevolence. This environment in which children spend time provides a unique opportunity to **observe**, prevent, **respond**, and **build alliances** with the people around him/her.

As an educator, you are an integral part of the circle. In fact, you are at the forefront of understanding the child's needs and addressing them, and share this responsibility with the child's parents.

2. RESPONSE PROTOCOL

The Response Protocol (Appendix A) is a tool intended to help educators and home educational childcare providers (ECPs) respond to and follow up on situations involving domestic violence in accordance with domestic violence best practices. The response protocol sets out three important roles for educators: I observe, I respond, and I build alliances. It does not consist of a linear, step-by-step process, but rather roles that educators and ECPs play at all times. These three roles fall under two main components: Prevention and Concern.

Support from the educational childcare centre's management or the home educational childcare coordinating office

The home educational childcare coordinating office (CO) has a role to play in helping home ECPs detect child abuse. The CO must support and accompany ECPs upon request in applying the framework and guidelines of the CO or management of the childcare centre involved. This support can make a real difference in complex situations such as when a child has been exposed to domestic violence.

3. I OBSERVE

This role refers to the “**Observing**” competency, one of the nine essential competencies of educators and ECPs. Observation is a crucial step in the educational intervention process, as is educational action.

The **convergence of signs in both the child and the parents** signals the presence or imminent risk of domestic violence.

3.1 I OBSERVE – Introduction

3.1.1 The cycle of domestic violence

- The cycle of domestic violence generally tends to recur and intensify over time.
- The pace between the phases may change. The progression of the cycle may speed up or slow down depending on the phase and the type of relationship.
- The phases may also vary. In some relationships, one or more phases may be more or less present than others.
- Different combinations of phases are therefore possible.
- Children who are exposed to domestic violence also go through the various phases of the cycle. They suffer the consequences and must cope with the effects of domestic violence.
- They experience distress, fear, shame, anger, powerlessness and hope for change. These emotions shift as the dynamics of domestic violence unfold. The cycle leads them to feel confused and experience mixed emotions toward one or both of their parents.
- They also often carry the secret of domestic violence in the family.

Here are a few elements that characterize each of the four phases of the cycle of domestic violence based on the child's experience and the parents' roles.

A. Climate of tension

- **The family**
 - The family walks on eggshells.
 - The climate of tension breeds fear and makes everyone feel unsafe. It can result in despising looks, silent treatment, ignoring someone, and impatience.
- **The child**
 - The toddler is on high alert, fearing the outbreak of violence.
 - He/she becomes isolated.
- **The parent who commits domestic violence**
 - This parent displays outbursts of anger and oppressive silence.
 - He/she makes disparaging remarks about his/her partner and gives him/her despising looks to show that he/she does not matter. He/she may speak ill of their partner's parenting as well as the child (e.g., criticizing, belittling or insulting the child).

- **The parent who experiences domestic violence**
 - This parent feels insecure: he/she is worried and anxious, doubts himself/herself, and fears making mistakes.
 - He/she alters his/her behaviour to avoid upsetting the other parent.
 - He/she seeks to improve the mood.
 - He/she avoids triggering violence.
 - He/she watches what he/she does.
 - He/she focuses on the needs of the partner rather than their own and those of the child.

B. Assault

- **The child**
 - The child is terrified. Fear increases abruptly.
 - He/she hears the violence.
 - He/she sees his/her parent being assaulted and the fear in their eyes.
 - He/she suffers consequences.
 - He/she adopts strategies and roles to deal with the violence.
 - He/she may hide or step in between his/her parents.
 - He/she wants the violence to stop.
 - He/she is unhappy because one parent is trying to turn him/her against the other parent.
 - The child may feel disoriented when a parent walks away from the relationship. He/she feels freed from the violence, but also misses the abusive parent. He/she feels torn between staying with the abusive parent, who is not abusive toward him/her, and being sympathetic to the parent who experiences the violence. He/she feels the need to be protected by the abused parent.
- **The parent who experiences domestic violence**
 - This parent's emotions and reactions to suffering are numerous: humiliation, sadness, a sense of injustice, anger, animosity, disappointment, apprehension, fear, helplessness.
 - His/her physical and mental health are impaired. He/she must protect himself/herself and, in many cases, his/her child too.
 - He/she feels humiliated in his/her parenting role. He/she is blamed and discredited by his/her partner.

- **The parent who commits domestic violence**
 - This parent abuses his/her partner.
 - He/she may also be abusive toward his/her child.
 - He/she may use his/her relationship with his/her child to attack his/her partner.
 - These actions point to a controlling relationship.
 - He/she displays dominance and superiority over other family members. The relationship is to his/her advantage.

C. Justification

- **The child**
 - The child feels responsible even though he/she doesn't really know what triggered the outbreak.
 - He/she may think that becoming a better child will make the violence stop.
 - Some children may deny or excuse their abusive parent's violent behaviour, while others try to protect their abused parent. They may normalize the violence even when reporting clear acts of abuse.
 - He/she may develop a negative image of the abused parent: they lack self-confidence, are not very assertive, are afraid and are withdrawn.
- **The parent who experiences domestic violence**
 - This parent feels responsible for exposing his/her child to domestic violence and for not being able to protect him/her.
 - He/she feels responsible for the abuse he/she experiences: he/she tries to understand the partner's explanations, helps the partner change, forgives the partner, feels guilty.
 - He/she does this to try to regain some balance after the assault phase.
 - When the cycle repeats itself, he/she further doubts his/her own perceptions.
- **The parent who commits domestic violence**
 - This parent provides various reasons to justify his/her violent behaviour.
 - He/she blames his/her partner for his/her own actions.
 - He/she may minimize the importance of his/her violent actions.
 - He/she shifts responsibility to the other parent and the child.
 - At this point, he/she may admit his/her faults in order to maintain control and preserve the relationship.

D. Reconciliation

- **The child**

- He/she hopes that this change will last and that there will be no more violence.
- If the parents broke up in a previous phase, the child may ask the abused parent to reunite with the abusive parent. "Daddy is nice now. I want to see him. I miss him, Mommy." The child may thus have an influence on decisions that are not his/her responsibility.
- He/she may also feel torn about his/her feelings toward the abusive parent. The child may react to the parent's attempts to be close again by refusing and keeping his/her distance. The parent may interpret this reaction as rejection, which can trigger a new cycle of violence.

- **The parent who experiences domestic violence**

- This parent is hopeful. He/she gives the other parent another chance and believes that this episode of violence will be the last. He/she wants to be a caring parent for his/her child.
- He/she recognizes the other parent's efforts and believes people can change. He/she offers to help the other parent to preserve the relationship.
- He/she tries to understand, which can lead him/her to minimize the gravity of the situation and to forgive.
- He/she sees the benefits of pursuing the relationship.

- **The parent who commits domestic violence**

- This parent expresses a great deal of remorse to both his/her partner and his/her child. He/she may ask for forgiveness or talk about therapy or suicide.
- He/she tells the child that he/she wants to be a good parent and take care of the other parent.
- He/she makes promises: he/she will get his/her act together, not do it again, change.
- He/she expresses a desire to continue the relationship; he/she is caring.

3.1.2 The escalation of violence

1. The escalation of violence is a chain of increasingly violent reactions.
2. Many studies have shown that children perceive gradual increases in the frequency, intensity and severity of violence.
3. Children perceive psychological and verbal abuse before physical abuse.
4. When the violence intensifies, children tend to blame themselves and feel more and more threatened.
5. Domestic violence is often wrongly defined as solely physical abuse.

3.1.3 Types of violence

Domestic violence is not necessarily an escalation of violent behaviour that begins with verbal abuse, develops into psychological abuse, and culminates with physical abuse. This is sometimes, but not always, the case.

Verbal abuse

- Instills insecurity or fear and sets the stage for physical abuse.
- Prevents the parent experiencing abuse from escaping the relationship.
- Is the most trivialized form of violence.

Psychological abuse

- Destroys self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Sows doubt in the mind of the abused parent and the child regarding who is responsible for the violence.
- Is often subtle at first and difficult for the abused parent and those around them to detect.
- Can be mistaken for proof of love.
- Increases the abused parent's social isolation, which increases their vulnerability to different types of violence and more severe abuse.
- Frequently begins or increases during pregnancy.

Financial abuse

- Leads to financial dependence.
- Often goes hand in hand with physical, psychological or verbal abuse.

Physical abuse

- Asserts the abusive parent's dominance.
- Can be passed off as an accident.
- Is the most visible, known and publicized form of violence.
- Violates the victim's bodily integrity.
- Some victims consent to sexual relations in the hope of keeping the peace in the family. The consequences then go beyond sexuality itself.
- The dominance and humiliation this type of violence causes go on to hinder parental availability.

The 9 forms of exposure to domestic violence (Holden, 2003)

1. In the womb (e.g., *the pregnant mother lives in a climate of terror, abuse can affect fetal development*).
2. When a child steps in to stop the violence.
3. When a child is a victim during a violent episode.
4. When a child takes part in assaulting the parent who experiences domestic violence.
5. When a child witnesses a violent episode.
6. When a child overhears a violent episode.
7. When a child observes the initial effects of a violent episode (e.g., *the abused parent cries, has bruises*).
8. When a child experiences the aftermath of domestic violence (e.g., *the abused parent is depressed, the parents separate*).
9. When a child hears about domestic violence between his/her parents (e.g., *from a spouse, a brother or a sister*).

Other factors to consider include:

A. The child's age

- The younger the child is, the less cognitive abilities he/she has to understand and reflect on the violence he/she has been exposed to. The child is not equipped to deal with this stress. The impact is therefore greater.
- The age factor is all the more important because domestic violence is often more severe during pregnancy and early parenthood.
- Preschool children are twice as likely to be exposed to domestic violence as older children. They also spend more time at home.
- Exposure to domestic violence has longer-term consequences for young children than older children. The developmental needs of young children are significantly more impaired than those of older children. Those children who were the most frequently exposed to domestic violence between birth and the age of 3 are the ones who exhibit the most aggressive behaviours around the age of 8.
- Studies that have investigated exposure to domestic violence among children aged 6 to 12 have shown that 64% of the children were first exposed to domestic violence before the age of 3. Only 12% were first exposed after the age of 6.

B. A radar that no longer detects

- The parent who experiences domestic violence lives in an environment characterized by threats and fear. Fear is traditionally an important alarm signal. But in this context, fear ceases to act as an alarm. It becomes a new normal, a way to survive. The abused parent's tolerance threshold increases. He/she becomes helpless, dependent and fragile as he/she struggles to react to events. The flood of emotions he/she experiences has a paralyzing effect. He/she doubts his/her understanding of the situation. His/her psychological and physical safety is threatened.
- Each cycle of violence further reduces his/her self-esteem. He/she becomes more and more withdrawn. The longer the abuse continues, the more he/she feels responsible and incompetent. Control and violence become normal. He/she may lose his/her dignity, and his/her personality may change: "I didn't know who I was anymore. I had to completely rebuild myself from the inside out."
- He/she begins to think that he/she deserves what's happening, that he/she can't have a better life.

3.2 I OBSERVE – Detection

I observe the consequences of exposure to domestic violence on the child's developmental needs.



Use the Domestic Violence Exposure Detection Tool – children aged 18 months and under (Appendix B), the Domestic Violence Exposure Detection Tool – children aged 19 to 47 months (Appendix C) or the Domestic Violence Exposure Detection Tool – children aged 4 and 5 (Appendix D).

This role does not involve assessment. It implies being sensitive to all the children and vigilant about their well-being. These attitudes facilitate detection, which will then lead you to focus your attention on specific signs.

Follow-up on the family situation

It is imperative that the evolution of the family situation of children that have been identified as being exposed to domestic violence continue to be documented using the domestic violence exposure detection tools provided. When a specialized partner is involved, the educator or ECP is not responsible for performing this follow-up.



Awareness of diverse family realities

The following questions will help you to have a more nuanced view of the child's observations.

Blended families

Family and social relationships – Ability to show sympathy and compassion

Does the child exhibit behaviours that are consistent with being free to love all family members (e.g., the child hugs the person who picks him/her up, or speaks freely about the activities he/she does)? Does the child claim to be under great pressure to report to one parent what is going on with the other parent?

The educator or educational childcare provider's (ECP's) role is not to determine whether the situation involves exposure to domestic violence, high-conflict separation or parental alienation, but rather to observe whether any family issues are cause for concern.

Families from culturally diverse backgrounds

Health – Physical well-being

Are there other types of abuse or neglect?

Corporal punishment may be used unreservedly in one's country of origin.

However, it is not an appropriate method of upbringing, and no research has shown that it has any positive impact. Corporal punishment may qualify as an unreasonable method of upbringing under the Youth Protection Act.

Education – Cognitive and language development

Do language barriers cause the child to have trouble understanding what is expected of him/her in the childcare setting at his/her age?

Is the child's cognitive development significantly delayed?

Emotional and behavioural development – Self-care skills

Has the child been exposed to traumatic events (e.g., war)?

Identity – Self-presentation

Do the child's peers discriminate against him/her because of his/her ethnocultural background?

Are standards for men and women associated with a dominant/dominated dynamic in his/her country of origin?

Family and social relationships

Has the child been to daycare before?

Do family members have different standards when it comes to how to relate to others as compared to their host country (e.g., avoiding eye contact)?

3.3 I OBSERVE – Cheat Sheet

I pay attention to the signs of domestic violence among the parents (both the one who commits it and the one who experiences it)



Use the Signs of Domestic Violence Checklist (Appendix E).

We recognize that the window of opportunity to gauge family relationships is small and that observations often become more limited with time. It's usually through the child's perspective that you get to know the parents.



Awareness of diverse family realities

Blended families

The “is a primary caregiver” checklist item does not apply

Do the blended family members’ relationships involve controlling behaviours?

- The partner asks his/her spouse to choose between him/her and the child.
- The partner imposes his/her presence on the parent and the child.
- He/she denigrates or humiliates his/her partner’s child.

Families from culturally diverse backgrounds

Regarding the parent who experiences domestic violence

What do you notice in terms of parental isolation?

- Note: The parent may be more dependent on his/her partner for reasons including economic or language barriers, disadvantaged social status and later integration in the job market.

What do you notice about this parent’s justification for the abuse he/she experiences (his/her perception of acceptable conflict resolution)?

- Note: Immigrant mothers are often more tolerant of domestic violence for a variety of reasons (e.g., cultural heritage, difficulties related to the context of immigration, socio-economic precariousness).
- Note: Many immigrant mothers are not familiar with the concept of domestic violence. There may have been no laws in place or resources available to deal with this issue in their country of origin.

Regarding the parent who commits domestic violence

How is violence interpreted in conjugal relationships?

- Note: In some cultures, domestic violence may be considered necessary to preserve the integrity of the man and his family, as well as the patriarchal hierarchy. According to Gill (2004), the man may be perceived as almighty and immune to any outside intervention.

Immigrant fathers from these cultures may perceive any change in familial gender roles as a loss of power become more abusive as a result.

How are conflicts resolved?

- Note: Some immigrants that originate from countries in which there are extreme forms of political conflict may see violence as a normal way of dealing with conflict (Kim & Zane, 2004).

Regarding the environment

How do loved ones, friends and community members view domestic violence?

- Note: Loved ones who push an abused parent to stay with his/her abusive partner can contribute to the normalization of domestic violence.

LGBTQ+ families

Regarding the parent who experiences domestic violence

Pay particular attention to the level of isolation that LGBTQ+ families may suffer because of the stigma that exists around sexual orientation and gender. Some families have little or no contact with their families of origin, and their social network may be very limited.

3.4 I OBSERVE – Dangerousness

I take into account the danger factors related to the family context



Use the Dangerousness Assessment Checklist (Appendix G).

3.4.1 The breakup: A pivotal moment

In many families, domestic violence continues long after the breakup

Separation can even trigger the escalation of violence and be a predictor of homicide, femicide or filicide (the murder of a child by his/her parent) (a danger factor). When a parent chooses to break up, he/she makes the decision to put an end to the relationship in an attempt to regain control of his/her life and provide a safe place for his/her child.

Shelters for women who have experienced domestic violence are essential to ensure the safety of these women and their children.

Separation is a pivotal stage. It leads to increased tension. Violence can then erupt, increase or continue.

The abusive parent tries to take back control. The risk of psychological and physical abuse may therefore increase. The abusive parent refuses to acknowledge that his/her partner is a free, independent, and equal being who is entitled to end the relationship.

A “war” may be waged through various legal proceedings. The child may be exploited to hurt the parent who is experiencing domestic violence. Moreover, parents who experience domestic violence report they fear losing custody of their child if they separate and the child being left alone with the abusive parent.

When the abused parent walks away from the relationship, he/she finds himself/herself alone and powerless.

The fact that he/she has experienced abuse has major consequences (e.g., significant impacts on his/her mental and physical health). He/she must deal with a child who is also suffering as a result of the situation. Some members of his/her social network may show polarized allegiances, which leads to a weakening of the social fabric around him/her. He/she may also suffer from attacks on his/her reputation by the other parent, which may sow doubts among the people around him/her.

During the relationship, the parent received mainly emotional support from loved ones and friends. When the relationship ends, he/she needs different and more concrete support. He/she may need material support, housing for himself/herself and his/her child, etc. Following the breakup, he/she may reconnect with certain people who had distanced themselves during the relationship or create new connections. A parent who does not have a social network he/she can rely on when regaining his/her footing is at greater risk of returning to the relationship.

4. I RESPOND

4.1 I RESPOND – Introduction

4.1.1 A portrait of children aged 0 to 5 who have been exposed to domestic violence

- According to Stipanivic & Lacharité (2020), the high rate and rapid progression of exposure to domestic violence that is observed among children aged 0 to 5 is of concern given how vulnerable children are at this age and the fact that other studies have shown that children who have been exposed to domestic violence are at greater risk of being physically abused by their parents.
- This is not a rare phenomenon. The frequency of this has been increasing steadily for several years.

4.1.2 The vulnerability of toddlers who have been exposed to domestic violence

- Toddlers are highly vulnerable. They are unable to ask for what they need. Children under the age of 3 can't put into words the violence they experience. They express themselves in bits and pieces. But it's important to remember that toddlers communicate without words—a lot, in fact. They do so through their actions, their behaviours, their reactions in their relationships, as well as their tastes and interests.
- They have very few means of disclosing when they have been abused. They are stuck with a family secret. It is up to the adults around them to see, to hear what they are trying to say and to speak up for them to make sure their voice is heard.
- Many professionals, including home ECPs and educators in childcare centres, say they feel ill-equipped to take action when they find a child has been exposed to domestic violence, take the right action, and refer families to the right resources depending on their needs.

4.1.3 The child's perception

When a child is asked about domestic violence in general, he/she will most often indicate either that both parents are responsible or, on the contrary, that neither parent is responsible. When a child is asked more directly about the context surrounding a violent episode, he/she will more specifically identify a parent who commits domestic violence and a parent who experiences it, often the man toward the woman. This distinction is more pronounced when referring to more serious violent events.

When a child is exposed to domestic violence, he/she tries to understand what is going on. He/she interprets the violence as a loss of control on the part of the parent who commits it (even though it's more a matter of taking control), anger ("He/she can't help it and gets very angry, he/she doesn't know what he/she is doing anymore," or "I'm afraid to be angry after seeing what Daddy's anger can do"), or characteristics that are unique to the abusive parent ("Because my dad, he's mean, he's jealous, because he doesn't feel joy like we do").

The child's interpretation of the violence and his/her understanding of his/her role within the family influence the extent of the impact he/she experiences following exposure to domestic violence. For example, a child who wrongly attributes responsibility for violence that occurs between his/her parents to his/her social difficulties will tend to blame himself/herself for the situation. In this case, the impacts of exposure to domestic violence will be amplified.

All children protect their parents, even when there is a high level of violence in their living environment. We must bear this in mind when taking action.

4.2 I RESPOND – Prevention

This component is not time-limited. It applies to all children in the care of the educational childcare centres. The proposed actions are part of standard activity planning for toddlers.

Educational childcare centres are ideal places to work on beliefs and attitudes toward violence. They help children develop benevolence, tolerance, and equality in relationships.

The educational intervention process aims to support the children's day-to-day development and ensure their health and safety. It's not intended to correct behaviours. Note that the term "intervention" is used in a broad and non-specialized sense (this warning is provided in accordance with the program *Accueillir la petite enfance : programme éducatif pour les services de garde éducatifs à l'enfance* [Welcoming early childhood: Educational Program for Educational Childcare] [2019]).

4.2.1 I offer a space where toddlers can express themselves freely, develop, and lessen the consequences of exposure to domestic violence

4.2.1.1 Support the development of the protective factors set out in the FEE Kit around the child

- **Protective factors related to the child's health**

- The toddler: is in good overall health.
- is within the standard weight and height ranges for his/her age.
- is not suffering from a chronic disease and receives health care as needed.
- has access to adequate nutrition and activities (e.g., stimulation exercises), and sufficient fine and gross motor skills to support his/her physical development.

- **Protective factors related to the child's education**

The toddler:

- is offered a range of opportunities that enable him/her to learn in a variety of ways
- plays with other children, has access to books, develops interests and participates in games.
- develops various means of communication.

- **Protective factors related to the child's emotional and behavioural development, and his/her self-care skills**

The toddler:

- builds secure attachment relationships.
- adapts to change and shows age-appropriate emotional management.
- develops independence, but is able to ask for help when needed.
- usually tolerates limits and rules.

- **Protective factors related to the child's identity and self-perception**

The toddler:

- has fairly good self-perception.
- has some knowledge of his/her family and personal history.
- shows a sense of belonging to his/her family, culture and significant environments, such as the daycare setting.
- has adequate hygiene and clothing (e.g., clothing suitable for the weather).

- **Protective factors related to family and social relationships**

The toddler:

- is able to establish stable and harmonious relationships with his/her parents, family, educators, and peers.
- adopts an age-appropriate role.
- demonstrates altruism and social skills.

4.2.1.2 Support the development of a secure attachment relationship between the child and the educator or ECP

When the educator or ECP behaves in a way that is predictable, sensitive and comforting, this helps the child establish a secure connection with them. These types of behaviours should be shown more often and for a longer period to children who have been exposed to domestic violence than to other children.

- **Comfort the child**

- Avoid leaving a child to cry, which could lead to feelings of insecurity. Contrary to popular belief, responding to a child's cries does not make him/her fussy.
- Place a rocking chair in the child's space to offer them closeness.

- **Reinforce children's sense of security in the educational childcare centre**

- Set a schedule and routines that are stable but can be adjusted to meet the needs of the toddler and the group.
- Develop different types of routines, e.g., regulation, connection, play (Grisé-Bolduc, 2020).
- Announce upcoming events during transitions.

- **Adapt your responses to specific attachment issues**

These are brief recommendations. Specialized training on specific attachment responses can provide more information.

- Insecure ambivalent attachment style: Respond in a way that signals to the child that his/her needs have been heard and acknowledged. Support the child's return to exploration (e.g., initiate a game and then retreat to encourage a return to play in the environment).
- Insecure avoidant attachment style: Respond in a way that recognizes the child's need for closeness despite the fact that he/she exhibits avoidant behaviours (e.g., offer support).

- Disorganized controlling attachment style – punitive or caregiving type: Promote clear roles, explicitly explain to the child what is expected of him/her and what the educator or ECP is responsible for, and use a warm tone of voice (e.g., “I’ll take care of...,” “Rest assured that I’ll take care of it,” “You can count on me. For your part, please...”).

Make a distinction between the level of empathy that is expected of a child (e.g., put his/her hand on another child’s back to try to comfort him/her, and offer solutions) in the case of a role reversal (e.g., the toddler wants to take care of the educator or ECP and is not able to go back and play even when he/she is invited to do so by the adult).

4.2.1.3 Support the development of the child’s emotional regulation skills

Emotional regulation refers to how the child interprets what he/she experiences and expresses his/her emotions.

- **Empathy**
 - Demonstrate empathy during a tantrum (e.g., “*I know. Whew, it’s hard. I’m here for you.*”) rather than trying to stop the behaviour.
- **Closeness**
 - Offer the child more closeness and support.
- **Emotion**
 - Reflect the emotions experienced by toddlers of all ages. Even if the child is not old enough to understand the words used, this reflection provides a sense of security that promotes the identification and expression of emotions. It also helps the child feel he/she can talk about what he/she is experiencing.

4.2.1.4 Foster positive self-perception in relation to others

- **Value each child’s own strengths**
 - E.g., talking to an adult, waiting for his/her turn, anticipating events, remaining calm, staying focused on a game.
- **Build up the child’s self-esteem, and encourage him/her to learn, express himself/herself and develop relationships with others**
 - E.g., highlight what the child has done well, encourage him/her to comment positively on his/her own achievements.
 - Let the child make simple choices in his/her daily life.
- **Help the child to learn prosocial behaviours**
 - E.g., sharing, cooperating, consoling, helping, being empathetic.

4.2.2 I carry out educational interventions with children.

4.2.2.1 Encourage participation in fun prevention activities related to exposure to domestic violence

Carrying out the activities suggested below fosters an environment in which exposure to various forms of violence within the family, including domestic violence, may be disclosed. Educators and ECPs can then easily switch between the “*I respond – Prevention*” and “*I respond – Concern*” roles.



Use *Topino Forest – Story time!* (Appendix I).

Topino Forest — Story time! is a story for toddlers that focuses on the dangers associated with exposure to domestic violence rather than depicting the violence directly. A child who has been exposed to domestic violence between parents may experience the same sense of danger in other situations, especially when they are intense and recur, e.g., violence between adults other than the child’s parents, abuse inflicted by a parent on another child, violence between older children. The purpose of the story is to explore ways to protect oneself in the event of this type of danger.

- We suggest you read the story (once or several times) to your whole group, although it can also be read to children individually. You can even leave the story accessible for the children to consult on their own during the day.
- Topino Forest tells the story of three main characters, Preeunk Skunk, Bunny Verony and Squirrel Rimerel, who hear screams and see signs of danger. They manage to ask for help so they are safe and out of danger.
- Preeunk Skunk embodies a toddler who is afraid, hypervigilant, on the lookout, and can sometimes take on a saviour role in the family.
- Bunny Verony represents a toddler who is angry, tries to intervene and puts himself in danger by taking on a protector role in the family. Of course, just like a child, Bunny Verony is tiny and cannot face the danger alone.
- Squirrel Rimerel embodies a toddler who feels sad and keeps it bottled up. His behaviour (stuffing his mouth with pebbles) may seem a bit crazy, but it captures children’s imaginations and gives them a more concrete idea of the impact holding in uncomfortable emotions can have. It’s a lot to carry!



Use *Topino Forest – Let’s talk!* (Appendix H).

Topino Forest – Let’s talk! is the discussion tool related to the story. It includes suggestions for imitations, actions and scenarios that can be used to practise how to protect oneself in dangerous situations, such as exposure to domestic violence. The discussion can be divided into several parts spread over multiple days to keep the group’s attention. Again, we suggest that you first have a discussion with the whole group. You can then revisit parts of the discussion on an individual basis with a child whose situation concerns you.



Use *Topino Forest – Let’s memorize!* (Appendix J).

Topino Forest – Let’s memorize! is a memory game featuring key illustrations from the story that are related to childhood exposure to domestic violence. We have included a table that explains the meaning of each illustration. The explanations can be used to fuel the conversation during your discussion with the children.

4.2.2.2 Promote the development of egalitarian relationships regardless of the child’s gender

- Encourage respectful, non-sexist education.
- Assign tasks and responsibilities without regard to traditional gender roles (e.g., rotate tasks so that girls get to move heavy objects too and boys also perform cleaning tasks).
- Positively reinforce characteristics and behaviours usually attributed to the other sex (e.g., emphasize boys’ ability to focus and the quality of their vocabulary, as well as girls’ strength).
- Encourage children—boys and girls—to express their emotions and have the same expectations regarding this expression for all the children.



Awareness of diverse family realities

Blended families

How can I exhibit benevolence, openness and diversity in my environment?

- Provide children and parents with content (e.g., books, posters) that addresses various family realities (family separation, family blending).
- Avoid comments that foster a conflict of loyalty (e.g., ask the child where he/she prefers to live).

Families from culturally diverse backgrounds

How can I exhibit benevolence, openness and diversity in my environment?

By raising awareness of how diverse cultural communities are

- Expose children to objects, themes and traditions from various cultures, including those of children attending daycare.
- Arrange spaces and materials to include objects (clothing, utensils, etc.) as well as books or images from other cultures.
- Play music from other countries.
- Plan group activities to increase awareness of cultural diversity.

By promoting the toddler's integration in his/her childcare environment

- Ensure that educators or ECPs are aware of how to integrate the child in the group and that support is available for this purpose.
- Allow for a transition period during which the parent can stay with the child.
- Learn how to pronounce the child's name properly and, if possible, a few words in his/her mother tongue.
- Ensure the child knows the routine, so that he/she can anticipate the different stages of the day.
- Encourage the child to communicate—verbally or otherwise—using actions, bodily expression and objects that are on hand.
- Use pictographs or another pedagogical tool such as a picture book to help the child associate French words with images.

LGBTQ+ families

How can I exhibit benevolence, openness and diversity in my environment?

- Provide children and parents with content (e.g., books, posters) that addresses various family realities (homoparenting, transparenting).
- Plan educational activities that reflect the diversity of family realities (e.g., adapting Mother's Day or Father's Day to Parent's Day).

4.3 I RESPOND – Concern

I intervene with a child who has been exposed or is at risk of exposure to domestic violence

This role refers to the competency related to the planning and organization of educational actions, which is one of the nine essential competencies of educators and ECPs.

(Référentiel de compétences des éducatrices et des éducateurs de la petite enfance [competency framework for early childhood educators] [in French])

4.3.1 I carry out specific interventions with the child who verbalizes situations of exposure to domestic violence.

- Interventions may be carried out individually or in a group.
- The group context is an important intervention tool.
 - It can be used to raise questions or encourage the expression of support among the children (e.g., “Do you sometimes... too?” or “How can we comfort [child’s name]? Can we give him/her a hug? Can we lend him/her a special stuffed animal for the day?”).

Respect the child’s rhythm

Every child is different. Some are real open books (so avoid interrupting them), while others are rather withdrawn. A child may need time to open up about certain aspects of his/her family situation.

- Your role is not to find evidence and act as an “investigator” but to listen to the child without forcing him/her to talk.

Support the child

A child who confides in you must deal with a wide range of emotions and consequences that are not always easy to manage.

- Reassure the child that he/she has made the right decision by choosing to talk about it.
- Incorporate various actions to demonstrate you support the child.

Believe the child

Tell the child that you believe him/her.
Pay attention to your tone of voice.

Examples:

“Thank you very much for talking to me about this. It’s important.”

“I believe what you’re telling me, and I know it’s true.”

Ask open-ended questions

Ask open-ended questions to establish a dialogue with the child without acting like an “investigator” (let alone trying to find evidence). Asking questions allows the child to open up about what he/she is holding inside.

- The questions should aim to get the child to describe details about the context, among other things.
- Use wording such as “Tell me about your family / Daddy / Mommy / [person’s name].”
- Use open-ended questions that begin with “what” and “how” rather than “why”.

Examples:

“What’s happening in your heart?”

“What do you do during a big fight?”

“How did it go when you arrived at this new house?” (out-of-home care situation)

Normalize the expression of the child’s emotions and needs

Toddlers express their emotions mainly through their behaviours. They need to have the link between their behaviours, their needs and their emotions explained to them.

Examples:

- *“It’s normal that you don’t like when [parent’s name] does [name the situation]. You need to be safe.”*
- *“You must have a lot of anger inside. It seems like that’s what you’re trying to say when you [name the behaviour].”*
- *“I understand that you’re experiencing fear; you need to protect yourself.”*
- *“You’re right to feel sad; your body acts in a way...”*

Take a stand against violence

Ensure safety

The educator or ECP must not only take a stand, but also teach the child **protective measures**. A child who physically or verbally takes a stand during an episode of domestic violence puts his/her physical and psychological safety at risk. The child must learn to protect himself/herself.

- The educator or ECP must tell the child that violence in any form is unacceptable and focus on the violent behaviour, not the parent, otherwise the intervention may accentuate the conflict of loyalty.
- The educator or ECP must make it clear to the child that he/she is not responsible for the domestic violence, and that he/she should not blame himself/herself. Children protect their parents despite what they may experience alongside them. It takes children time to open up and be empathetic to their own suffering, which is sometimes well hidden behind behavioural reactions.

Encourage the child who has been exposed to domestic violence to participate in fun activities

- Use the fun activities (*Appendices H, I, J*) to support the child in various ways, for example, by encouraging him/her to indicate which character he/she identifies with, practise protective measures, or express himself/herself.



What to avoid

- Avoid making promises you can't keep (e.g., if the child asks you to keep the domestic violence he/she witnessed a secret).
- Avoid discussing the situation with colleagues in front of children. A toddler who is old enough to understand could repeat phrases he/she overheard, which could compromise his/her own safety.
- Avoid getting overwhelmed by your own emotions (e.g., by expressing anger toward the abusive parent). Acknowledge your own emotions and seek support.
- Avoid reinforcing feelings of guilt (e.g., "*What might you have done to make your parent act like this?*")
- Avoid taking a position by suggesting that the parents break up (e.g., "*Your mom should leave.*")
- Avoid making judgments (e.g., "*Your parents aren't very nice.*")
- Avoid justifying violent actions (e.g., "*It hasn't been easy for your parent lately.*").

5. I BUILD ALLIANCES

5.1 I BUILD ALLIANCES – Introduction

I build alliances to promote the child's development and physical/psychological safety.

Children aged 0 to 5 are extremely vulnerable. They need you to build bridges with their parents.

This role refers to the competency related to maintaining partnerships and collaborating with others, which is one of the nine essential competencies of educators and ECPs.

Objectives

- Connect with those close to the child and put the focus on the child's needs.
- Promote the child's safety.

Things to consider when meeting with parents

- Base your discussion with parents on observed facts.
- You can ask a colleague from the educational childcare centre or the coordinating office to sit in on the meeting.

5.2 I BUILD ALLIANCES – Parents

5.2.1 I meet with the parents to establish a dialogue based on their child's developmental needs

Ensure safety

Never discuss your concerns about domestic violence in the presence of both parents. The safety of the parent who experiences domestic violence, as well as that of the child, could be threatened.

Avoid being exploited by the abusive parent against the child and the abused parent. It is important to focus on your observations and the child's needs. The abusive parent may try to influence your perception, lie, create conflict, or resort to manipulation, which would further isolate the parent experiencing domestic violence and the child. Avoid recommending that the parents break up.

This meeting could reveal other indicators of domestic violence and make the signs already present more visible.

Establishing a relationship with both parents from the outset (when the child is enrolled) is crucial. It enables you to know them better and to better perceive changes in their behaviour along the way.

During the meeting, the signs previously observed in the child and the parents may be:

- **Invalidated**
 - The observations may seem to be explained by other things.
 - Remain vigilant.
- **Maintained, with no additional elements**
 - Schedule another meeting with the parent(s) to discuss the child's developmental needs.
 - Continue to monitor the family situation using the tools in the FEE Kit.
- **Proven valid**
 - Assess the dangerousness of the situation.
 - Monitor the consequences of the child's exposure to domestic violence and the signs of domestic violence among the parents.

Show concern for the child's well-being to build trust with both parents

Use the resources your educational childcare centre has available to address the child's concerns and strengths (e.g., educational portrait; the Personal, Family and Community Help Program's Ecosystem Analysis Framework, Carrick, developmental checklist).

If the abusive parent is willing to talk about domestic violence with the educational childcare centre staff, bear in mind:

- Protecting the child who has been exposed to domestic violence and the abused parent is always the main priority. Be careful not to share information about the abused parent.
- The abusive parent's main motivation is often a desire to be better for their child.
- Focusing on the toddler's needs often reduces tension. Explain to the abusive parent how exposure to domestic violence impacts his/her child.
- Refer the parent to resources, including organizations that specifically work with perpetrators of violence. Referrals are important to take action against domestic violence.

Available resources (in French)

- Educators and ECPs must abide by court orders pertaining to parent-child contact. In the event of serious concerns for a child's safety or regarding non-compliance with an order, the educational childcare centre must contact emergency services and report the situation to the Director of Youth Protection (DYP).

5.2.2 I meet with the parent who is a victim or potential victim of domestic violence

This step is key and can help the parent become more aware of the situation.

Ensure safety

Avoid giving parents documents related to the FEE Kit.

Adopt appropriate attitudes and behaviours with the parent

Here are some guidelines regarding appropriate attitudes and behaviours to adopt when communicating with a parent who is experiencing domestic violence.

Building circles of benevolence around the parent who is experiencing domestic violence promotes the toddler's physical and psychological safety.

- **Identify and understand the parent's resistance**

- The parent's reaction may seem incomprehensible to the educator trying to help him/her. He/she may be resistant to anyone trying to interfere in his/her relationship.
- Understanding that some facets of his/her reaction are protective or coping strategies to deal with the abuse he/she has experienced enables us to remain empathetic toward him/her.
- Resistance should be explored in accordance with how vulnerable the family is.

A. Anger and aggression

- Talking about his/her experience can be a source of threat and fear. The parent may try to keep the domestic violence he/she experiences a secret. He/she may also express his/her fears through aggressive behaviour.
- *"It's none of your business! Why do you even care?"*

B. Guilt

- The fact that the parent feels responsible for the domestic violence he/she experiences and his/her child has been exposed to may cause him/her to turn inwards and become withdrawn when asked about the situation.

C. Shame

- Shame makes you want to curl up and die. It is a painful feeling of humiliation and being inferior to others.
- *"I feel ashamed I was so naive."*
- *"You may feel ashamed that you experienced abuse in a conjugal relationship, but know that it's not your fault."*

D. Denial

- The parent may not recognize his/her partner's abusive behaviour. He/she may be unaware that he/she is experiencing domestic violence. Recognizing domestic violence is part of the process of getting help. The parent may feel that he/she is worthless and thus protect himself/herself by portraying a good self-image. He/she may alter, normalize, or deny certain events.

E. Avoidance

- The parent may not be ready to acknowledge his/her situation. He/she prefers to avoid talking about it, rather than having to ask himself/herself tough questions.

F. Hope

- The parent is hopeful that the situation will change, that the abusive behaviour will stop, and that the relationship will return to what it once was. Domestic violence is unique because it occurs within an emotional and intimate relationship.
- *"It's normal to have believed in your partner's goodwill, and hoped that things would improve."*
- **Believe the parent**
 - When a parent confides in you, it means that they trust you. It is therefore important to believe what they say. A parent who experiences domestic violence feels shame and guilt.
 - "I believe you."
 - "You are showing great courage in talking about your family."
 - "Thank you for trusting in me and opening up about what you are going through."
 - "I don't think you're crazy."
 - Avoid using words that cast doubt on what the parent has said. It is important that you believe the person who is confiding in you.
 - "Come on, that can't be!"
 - "Are you sure that's what he/she said?"
 - The attitudes and behaviours a person displays in public—like an abusive partner exhibiting a sympathetic attitude—may be very different from how the person is in private. Domestic violence is a form of control over one's partner. It is therefore not uncommon for it to be committed only in private.

- **Empower the parent**

- It's important that you help the parent make up his/her own mind about the situation. Avoid imposing your perception of the situation.
- The parent who experiences domestic violence has the abusive partner's perception of the situation forced on him/her. He/she often assimilates this perception. It is hard for him/her to see the violence for what it is.
- He/she must come to his/her own conclusions, at his/her own pace.
- "There are resources available that can help you, but it's up to you."
- "I'm worried about you, but I understand if you don't want to file a complaint right now."
- It is important to view repeat breakups as part of the process. They provide opportunities for the parent to project himself/herself into a different future. Each breakup cuts one string that ties him/her to the abusive parent.

- **Normalize the parent's emotional experience**

- This attitude demonstrates empathy toward the parent. Your ability to recognize and understand what the parent is feeling throughout the intervention process is essential. Empathy and respect help to maintain a trusting relationship with the parent.
- "I'm sorry you're going through this."
- "You're right to be sad or angry."
- "I'm sure you have good reasons to feel [uncomfortable, scared, hurt, etc.] about/by the situation."
- "Your emotional reactions are normal and legitimate."
- "It's normal to feel shame or fear. I assure you that this is what most parents who experience domestic violence feel."
- You can also normalize the parent's mixed feelings about the relationship. "I can imagine how you might perceive your partner as gentle and generous sometimes, and mean and violent other times."

- **Actively listen to the parent**

- This attitude makes the parent feel understood and not judged. It helps the parent feel worthy of respect. Active listening can be practised by adopting various non-verbal attitudes: looking at the parent, being in physical proximity to him/her (avoid talking to him/her from across the room, for example), nodding when he/she speaks.

For example, you could repeat the parent's own words. Be sure to adapt your language so that your words reflect the parent's reality as much as possible.

"You did the right thing by talking to me about it. I'm here to listen and help you."

- **Take a stand against violence and help the parent recognize the abuse**

Your positioning regarding violence must be clear and unequivocal.

You may feel pity or compassion toward the parent.

An anecdote from an educator: [TRANSLATION] *“You know, the poor mom, she’s young. We met with her so many times. We tried to remedy the situation and give her a chance. But, eventually, we had no choice but to report it.”*

Since domestic violence can negatively impact a child’s safety and development, it is important to avoid justifying or normalizing the behaviour of the abused parent. Although the abusive parent is also responsible for ensuring the child’s safety, it’s usually left to the abused parent to take steps to protect the child.

Do not use these emotions to justify the parent’s behaviour.

- *“Your partner shouldn’t have acted that way with you, no matter what the situation was.”*
- *“Your reactions are normal. What’s not is what you are going through.”*
- *“There’s no good reason to be violent. Violent behaviour is always wrong, even when it’s committed by someone you love.”*
- *“All forms of violence are unacceptable, including psychological and physical violence.”*

- **Understand and explore the parent’s fears**

The parent may fear many things, including threats, retaliation, consequences for his/her family, the escalation of violence, attacks on his/her reputation, judgment from those around him/her, or public rejection.

- *“It’s physically and mentally exhausting to experience such stress.”*
- *“I understand that you’re afraid.”*
- *“Your fears are legitimate and are real indicators that you are experiencing violence.”*

- **Support the parent**

Preventing the abused parent from isolating himself/herself improves his/her safety and that of his/her child. When you see signs of domestic violence, but the abused parent denies it or refuses to talk about it or take action to protect his/her child or himself/herself, it’s important to remain there for him/her by offering your support or reminding him/her that you are here to help.

In this way, you let the parent know that support is available if needed. Next time, the parent will remember that he/she can come to you for help. He/she will feel less alone and stronger, and it will be easier for him/her to take action.

You can also invite the parent to confide in others who can listen and support him/her.

“You’re not the only one going through this kind of situation. It’s normal not to feel good about it.”

- **Ask open-ended questions**

We often feel fearful or uneasy about interfering in a part of the parent’s life that doesn’t concern us. We are afraid of being inappropriate, or pushing or offending the parent. Even though these fears are normal and legitimate, they must not be an obstacle to intervention. Asking these questions will invite the parent to open up about his/her experience. Use open-ended questions that start with “*what*” rather than “*why*”. Use phrases like “Tell me about [your family, etc.].” Ask the parent when he/she is alone, so that he/she can express himself/herself freely. Explore the abused parent’s feelings toward the abusive parent.

Many parents who have experienced domestic violence have stated that they would have liked to have been asked questions about their relationship such as whether their partner controlled, hit, belittled or humiliated them. Having someone address situations of domestic violence directly and clearly would have prompted them to think about their relationship, challenge it, seek support, or leave.

- **Address concerns about the child with the parent**

These types of interventions can help increase the abused parent’s awareness about how exposure to domestic violence impacts his/her child’s development. Use the appropriate detection tool to support dialogue about how domestic violence impacts the child. Use other elements from the FEE Kit (e.g., the types of violence, the cycle of domestic violence, the forms of exposure to domestic violence).

Help the parent who is experiencing domestic violence ensure his/her own and his/her child’s physical and psychological safety. Use the *Signs of Domestic Violence Checklist (Appendix E)* and the *Dangerousness Assessment Checklist (Appendix G)*.

If necessary, share your concerns with the parent who is experiencing domestic violence. Note: Don’t be afraid to ask specific questions about the context of the domestic violence.

Examples:

- “Are you experiencing fear in your relationship right now?”
- “Do you feel pressured to act in a certain way in your relationship?”
- “Are you afraid of retaliation?”

- **Consider the specific characteristics of men who experience domestic violence**

It is more difficult to identify when fathers experience domestic violence because men they are more likely to remain silent, rarely ask for help, and tend to normalize the consequences of the abuse they experience. They also face gender bias and may perceive there are no resources adapted to their situation.

The attitudes you adopt when intervening with them must take into account that they:

- feel guilt, failure, and humiliation;
- fear being ridiculed by those around them and existing resources;
- fear being wrongly suspected of being the party committing the violence;
- refuse to be identified as “victims” since society still dictates that men must be strong and not show vulnerability; and
- feel lonely and isolated.



Attitudes to avoid

There are several common attitudes that should be avoided when dealing with a parent who is experiencing domestic violence because they are harmful and can increase the level of pressure the parent.

- Avoid making judgments: “You’re very patient,” or “If I were you, I would...”
- Avoid minimizing, ridiculing, condoning or normalizing the violence the parent has experienced and the child has been exposed to, regardless of the type of violence and the circumstances, such as “Don’t mind him/her.” The perpetrator is responsible for his/her own violent behaviour.
- Avoid encouraging the parent to understand violent acts: “He/she went through a lot when he/she was a kid. He/she can’t help but do the same to you.”

- Avoid encouraging him/her to stay with the abusive partner: “Think twice before leaving; separations are always difficult and complicated.”
- Avoid making decisions for them: “I’m taking you to a shelter.”
- Avoid recommending a breakup: “You really should leave him/her; it doesn’t make any sense.”

The parent should not feel any pressure to leave his/her partner. The risk of violence increases when the relationship is broken off, especially when a mother leaves an abusive partner. It is strongly recommended that the parent consult support resources (SOS violence conjugale, shelters, health and social services centres) to prepare beforehand, for example using protective measures.

- Avoid reinforcing feelings of guilt: “What might you have done to make him/her act like this?”
- Avoid making promises you can’t keep. You have an obligation to report the situation if you have doubts about the child’s safety or development, even if the parent asks you not to tell anyone. The parent must take action to protect his/her child.
- Avoid getting overwhelmed by your own emotions (e.g., by expressing anger toward the abusive parent). You need to take a firm stand against violence without being overwhelmed by your own emotions.
- Avoid discussing domestic violence in front of the abusive parent, or providing him/her with any information about domestic violence without being asked to do so.
- Avoid being exploited by the abusive parent against the child and the abused parent. He/she may try to influence your perception, lie, create conflict, or resort to manipulation, which would further isolate the parent experiencing domestic violence and the child. It is important to focus on your observations and the child’s needs.
- Avoid recommending marital and family counselling.

In addition:

The unique context of domestic violence: The intimate relationship

Domestic violence is unique because it occurs within an emotional and intimate relationship.

The view from within the relationship is very different than the view from outside it.

When you look from outside, you see the violent behaviours and their impact in a very different way than the family members who have evolved together in the relationship do.

The abused parent perceives that his/her conjugal relationship is, or can be, safe. It's an important driver for maintaining such a relationship. Early on, the abused parent determined the relationship had positive aspects and benefits. These aspects and benefits are what lead him/her to continue the relationship during the honeymoon phase. He/she perceives that he/she will suffer a significant loss by breaking off the relationship.

He/she knew his/her partner in a more appealing light before. This leads him/her to be hopeful about the relationship and helps him/her to maintain it. This link can fuel violence when the abusive parent says that he/she has the right to impose himself/herself and control the partner and the child.

What do I gain by staying in this relationship? What will I lose if I leave?

Stereotypes: The opposite of equality

The Government of Quebec refers to equality in terms of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men must become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they were born male or female (Government of Quebec/SCF, 2021).

Domestic violence is the opposite of equality. It is the taking of control by one person over another. Gender stereotypes contribute to domestic violence. Stereotypes can be recognized by certain formulations that reduce a gender to specific characteristics, such as "Girls are...", "Boys want...", "Women will..." and "Men don't...".

"Stereotypes impose limitations on the people they target, assign them roles that do not necessarily suit to them and make it harder for them to be their true selves." (Government of Quebec). Gender stereotypes keep men and women in separate worlds.

Educational childcare centres play a crucial role in addressing stereotypes that contribute to the perpetuation of domestic violence because they have a responsibility to treat all children equality regardless of their gender.

It's easy to say you're fighting gender stereotypes, but at what level is your daily commitment?

Regardless of gender...

- Are your expectations about expressing feelings or empathy the same?
- Do you encourage all children to learn how to take care of the younger children?
- Do you share family responsibilities with your partner (e.g., managing the family agenda, cooking, helping with homework)?
- Do you greet all the children the same way (e.g., with hugs or energy and actions)?
- Are the same tasks assigned to each child?

5.3 I BUILD ALLIANCES – Resources

5.3.1 I refer the parent(s) to available specialized services

A. Ensure safety

Avoid recommending mediation or marital and family counselling. Instead, use phrases such as “There are resources that can support you through all this.”

B. Contact a specialized domestic violence resource

In the event of an emergency, contact the police.

C. Accompany the parent who experiences domestic violence

- Follow up on referrals provided to the parent (e.g., “Were you able to find time to contact the resources we discussed?”)
- If necessary, stay with the parent when they contact the resource (e.g., a shelter).
- The challenge is to ensure continued support.

Many families in which domestic violence is present already have intervention plans and services in place for other types of issues (e.g., behaviour issues the child has, learning difficulties, socio-economic difficulties). The link between domestic violence and these difficulties is not always considered.

D. Prepare a list of local resources

- Prepare a **list of local resources** that offer services for parents who experience or commit domestic violence, services for children, support for parenting roles, and services related to the diverse family realities.

- Create partnerships with specialized domestic violence resources.
 - These resources provide follow-up without the parent needing to rely on their emergency shelter services.
 - They also offer professional support for educators or ECPs.
 - These resources can intervene with children.
- Highlight the connections that have been developed with organizations to help build a trusting relationship with the parent.
- This list should be prepared by the educational childcare centre's management or the CO.
- Post this list in the educational childcare centre.

E. Work with partners

Your participation in intersectoral collaborative work is crucial. Your role remains the same: share your direct observations and promote the child's needs.

Although the specialized resources are responsible for addressing the domestic violence and its consequences, all partners involved (parents, stakeholders and organizations) are responsible for ensuring the child's safety, well-being and optimal development. Try to ensure everyone has the same understanding: adopt a common interpretation of the needs of the child and his/her family, the risks they face, and the forms of protection they may benefit from (AIDES initiative).

Work together so that all partners clarify their contributions and define their responsibilities in relation to the actions to be taken with the child and his/her family (AIDES initiative). Parents must allow you to share information about them with a partner. However, it is always possible to receive information from a third party without parental consent. In such a case, you are not allowed to pass on the information you obtain.

5.4 I BUILD ALLIANCES – DYP

I contact the Director of Youth Protection (DYP) when signs indicate that security or development of the child could be in danger.



See to the Reporting Protocol (Appendix K) for details.



*If the situation requires **immediate action**, contact emergency services (**9-1-1**).*

The Quebec Ministère de la Famille does not recommend informing the parent that the educator or ECP has filed a report. The DYP ensures the confidentiality of reports received. However, they have no control over the conditions in which a person files a report or a parent's suspicions as to the reporter's identity.

Educators' reporting obligations

The DYP alone cannot create a circle of benevolence around a child. It is affected by a number of issues beyond the cases it deals with (negative perception, overloaded workers, the trauma of parents who received services when they were children, ethnocultural families' fear about and misunderstanding of the law, an inability to ensure cultural security for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, etc.).

[TRANSLATION] "For too many families in vulnerable situations, reporting to the DYP is their gateway to services" (CSDEPJ, 2021). It has been shown that prevention in connection with the various issues that affect children, their relationships with their parents, contemporary family realities and domestic violence is more effective than intervention by youth protection services authorities. On the other hand, in some cases, intervention by the DYP may be the only option to protect a child.

Educators in educational childcare centres, educational childcare providers (ECPs), as well as the educational childcare coordinating office (CO) and its staff, have a legal obligation to report a situation that may compromise a child's safety or development, regardless of the form of abuse: exposure to domestic violence, physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, etc.

"Every professional who, by the very nature of his profession, provides care or any other form of assistance to children and who, in the practice of his profession, has reasonable grounds to believe that the security or development of a child is or may be considered to be in danger within the meaning of section 38 or 38.1, must bring the situation to the attention of the director without delay. The same obligation is incumbent upon any employee of an institution, any teacher, any person working in a childcare establishment or any policeman who, in the performance of his duties, has reasonable grounds to believe that the security or development of a child is or may be considered to be in danger within the meaning of the said provisions." (*Youth Protection Act* [YPA], s.39).

In other words, if a child tells you that his/her parent hit him/her or that he/she has seen one parent hit the other, if you notice an unusual bruise on the child's body or witness physical abuse, you must report it, even if the parent tells you that they are getting help and/or that you feel that they are taking the necessary steps to put an end to the situation. It's up to the DYP to assess whether the measures in place are adequate.

Youth Protection Act (YPA)

The YPA is the law that applies to children (and teenagers) whose security or development is or may be considered to be in danger. This is a special act.

According to the Government of Quebec and the MSSS (2022), the YPA identifies exposure to domestic and family violence as a form of psychological ill-treatment that can endanger a child's security or development. Any professional who provides care or any other form of assistance to a child is required to report to the DYP a situation involving a child being exposed to domestic or family violence. When in doubt about the presence of such a situation, the professional must consult the DYP.

The report

The DYP (or rather, the staff who represents the director) can intervene to ensure the protection of a child only if the child's situation has been brought to the director's attention. In the absence of a report, the DYP simply does not have the authority to act.

1. When should I file a report?

To report a situation to the DYP, you do not have to be absolutely sure that a child is in need of protection. When your own observations or what the child says or tells you give you reasonable grounds to believe that his/her security or development is or may be in danger, you must report the situation to the DYP immediately in accordance with the requirements of the YPA.

Reports can be filed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

2. If in doubt, call!

You may be concerned about a child but not sure whether you should report it. In such case, you can contact the DYP, who will be able to answer your questions and guide you on how to proceed.

If you have filed a report and other events arise, the situation continues or, worse, the situation deteriorates, you need to file another report.

3. The criteria used to assess reports

You don't need to worry about these criteria when submitting a report. They are provided as a reference to help you better understand the reasoning behind a decision to accept or reject a report.

The YPA provides that “[f]or the purposes of section 38.2, any decision relating to a report for a situation of exposure to domestic violence must, in particular, take into consideration the following factors:

- the consequences for the child of exposure to such violence;
- the acknowledgment of the consequences for the child by the perpetrator of the violence and the means taken by the perpetrator to prevent other situations of exposure to violence, if applicable;
- the measures taken by the parent who is not the perpetrator of the violence to protect the child from exposure to such violence and the obstacles to such measures caused by the perpetrator of the violence, if applicable;
- the local resources’ ability to support the parents in carrying out their responsibilities; and
- the order, condition or measure, whether civil or criminal in nature, concerning the security or development of the child.

4. Confidentiality

Is the reporter’s identity confidential?

The YPA protects the act of making a report. No one may disclose or be compelled to disclose the identity of the person who made a report (YPA, s.44). Anyone who chooses to identify themselves can be certain that their identity will not be disclosed without their consent.

Nevertheless, an educational childcare centre is a community-based environment. The YPA’s guarantee of confidentiality does not prevent a parent from deducing that you are the one who filed the report.

It is possible to submit a report as a team. One person discloses the observations made in the educational childcare centre, and all individuals who assist that person with the performance of their duties can thus report relevant information aimed at ensuring a child’s protection (YPA, s.40).

Can I be prosecuted for making a report?

The YPA ensures that no legal action can be taken against a person who has provided information in good faith (YPA, s.40).

5. The interest of the child above all

The YPA applies to all children residing in Quebec. No ideological or other consideration, including one based on a concept of honour, can justify endangering a child’s security or development. For example, parents cannot claim that the domestic violence their children witnessed is justified by religious beliefs.

However, all stakeholders agree on the importance of fostering an intercultural approach that is based on listening and respecting people's values, culture and differences (CSDEPJ, 2021).

6. DIVERSE FAMILY REALITIES

6.1 LGBTQ+ families

This section sheds light on the main factors that make children whose parents are part of the LGBTQ+ community more vulnerable to domestic violence exposure.

- **Sexual orientation** refers to the emotional, affective and physical attraction that a person feels for people of one or both sexes; it applies to homosexual (lesbian, gay), bisexual and heterosexual orientations.
- **Gender identity** is a notion that refers to a person's private and personal experience of one's gender, whether or not it corresponds to one's birth-assigned sex. It is the feeling of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or at some point in the gender continuum. A person is defined as **transgender** when his/her gender identity does not match his/her biological birth-assigned sex.
- **Homoparentality** refers to all family situations in which at least one adult self-identifying as a homosexual is a parent to at least one child.
- **Transparenting** refers to all family situations in which at least one parent is transgender. As Greenbaum (2015) explains, a trans person may become a parent before or after starting a transition process. Transparental families may also be perceived as heteroparental or homoparental families. Trans parents who consider their family to be homoparental (or whose family is socially perceived that way) face double minority status.
- The acronym **LGBTQ+** is intended to be inclusive of all realities of sexual diversity and gender plurality including, but not limited to, the realities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, Two-Spirit, pansexual, agender, and non-binary individuals.

Gender and sexual diversity glossary (website: alix.interligne.co/en)

10%

In 2016, 10% of same-sex couples lived with at least one child. Nearly half of the homoparental families surveyed had a child under the age of 5 (Government of Quebec & MFA, 2020).

Marginalization

According to recent research, people from the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to be involved in domestic violence than heterosexual partners. However, the INSPQ stresses that these findings must be interpreted carefully, as very few members of this community (and especially those who identify as male) report experiencing assault.

Family diversity

The trajectories and types of homoparental and transparental families are extremely varied. For example, a child may have been conceived in a previous heterosexual relationship or with assisted reproduction services in the current relationship or may have been adopted by the homoparental or transparental family.



Exposure to domestic violence

The consequences of exposure to domestic violence are the same for all children, regardless of whether or not they grow up in an LGBTQ+ family.

However, exposure to domestic violence can prolong the marginalization that children in LGBTQ+ families are already more likely to experience.

Vulnerability factors

Vulnerability factors maintain, trigger, or increase the severity of, domestic violence. In addition, they hinder parents' ability to seek help.

A significant portion of the **vulnerability factors** that apply to LGBTQ+ families are linked to the psychological pressure these families experience because of they belong to a stigmatized and marginalized minority group. This situation can have significant psychological impacts that weaken the conjugal relationship and reduce the partners' propensity to seek help.

While all forms of violence can be observed within the various family realities of LGBTQ+ families, some of them may present themselves or intensify in different ways.

Examples:

- *Denigration for behaviours, attitudes or traits that are perceived as effeminate in gay men.*

- *Threats to reveal a partner's sexual orientation or gender (heterosexist control).*
- *Physical abuse in the form of neglecting medical care, such as the administration of antiretroviral drugs for an HIV-positive partner, or restricting access to hormone control for a partner in gender transition.*

6.2 Families from culturally diverse backgrounds

This section sheds light on some of the factors that make children living in families from culturally diverse backgrounds more vulnerable to domestic violence exposure.

- **First-generation immigrants**
In first-generation immigrant families, all members (the parents and children) were born outside Canada.
- **Second-generation immigrants**
In second-generation immigrant families, the children were born in Canada and at least one parent was born outside Canada.
- **Third-generation immigrants**
In third-or-later-generation immigrant families, all members (the parent and children) were born in Canada.
- **Mixed families**
Mixed families include parents who belong to different ethnic or cultural communities.

41.4%

In 2019, the Table de concertation des organisations au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (a round table of organizations that serve refugees and immigrants) (TRCI) published a report about immigrant families in Quebec and their toddlers. The report revealed that 41.4% of immigrant parents don't know where to turn to find the information they need about child development or parenting (Laurent, 2019). Increasing access to resources is key to prevent childhood exposure to domestic violence.

Over-representation

Women who are temporary residents and their children are over-represented in emergency shelters and support centres.

Exposure to domestic violence
+
Vulnerability factors
=
Increased impact
on the child's developmental needs

Exposure to domestic violence

The consequences of exposure to domestic violence are very similar for children from ethnocultural communities and children whose parents were born in Quebec.

Exposure to domestic violence in the host country can create continued stress, which makes the consequences of previous trauma last longer.

We must fight our tendency to want to determine whether a child's difficulties are attributable to immigration-related consequences or exposure to domestic violence. These elements influence each other and need to be addressed.

Vulnerability factors

Vulnerability factors maintain, trigger, or increase the severity of, domestic violence. In addition, they hinder parents' ability to seek help.

The immigration context alone (e.g., language barriers, precarious socio-economic and occupational situation, sponsorship [which may exacerbate inequalities within the couple]) makes parents—especially women—more vulnerable, and thus increases their risk of experiencing domestic violence. **While cultural differences (e.g., the values and beliefs specific to one's country of origin) may contribute to this increase in risk, they cannot explain the presence of domestic violence.**

While all **forms of violence** can be observed within the various ethnocultural realities of families from culturally diverse backgrounds, some of them may present themselves or intensify in different ways.

Examples:

- *If the abusive partner's family members experienced violence, they may perpetuate staying silent about violent behaviour by becoming complicit and may arrange marriages and exert pressure to keep the partners together.*
- *Sexual violence committed by other men in the husband's inner circle, such as friends.*
- *The severity of physical abuse.*
- *The mother's family receives threats if she leaves her abusive husband.*

The following **vulnerability factors** can increase the abusive parent's coercive control.

Examples:

Forbidding the abused parent to leave home or use the telephone, or depriving him/her and the child of social contact.

Certain social conditions encourage this type of control, such as limiting access to childcare depending on one's immigration status, which generally prevents mothers from entering the labour market.

Vulnerability factors, including discrimination, can materialize at any time and increase violent behaviour. It is therefore wrong to believe that domestic violence coincides exclusively with one's arrival in the host country; it can occur several years after arrival.

Exposure to violence can lead to a greater propensity to engage in violent behaviour. For example, men who have been exposed to socio-political violence in their home country are at greater risk of being abusive in their conjugal relationship in their host country.

Ethnocultural diversity

Ethnocultural diversity within families can lead to an increase in marital conflicts (e.g., values-based conflict) as well as family instability, especially in the context of a separation (e.g., fear that the immigrant spouse will return to his/her country of origin with the child).

6.3 Blended families

This section sheds light on some of the factors that make children living in blended families more vulnerable to domestic violence.

The trajectories and types of blended families are extremely varied. Family blending can apply a wide range of family realities (e.g., LGBTQ+ families, ethnoculturally diverse families).

In the context of exposure to domestic violence, family blending is usually preceded by separation and a period of single-parenthood. The violence may be tied to a previous relationship and continue in the form of post-separation domestic violence.

The term “blended family” refers to a couple who live under the same roof and have children, at least one of whom is the biological or adopted child of one of the partners from a previous relationship.

Multiparenting

The fact that blended families incorporate individuals other than the mother, the father and the child in the family equation creates the need to introduce the concept of **multiparenting** (Saint-Jacques, Drapeau & Parent, 2009).

Children in blended families interact with a greater number of adults who take responsibility for their well-being. Similarly, decisions pertaining to these children require consensus or compromise by a larger number of adults.

There are two main types of blended families:

1- Simple

In simple blended families, only one of the partners who live together has at least one child from a previous relationship and the couple have no children of their own.

2- Complex

There are three subtypes of complex blended families.

- One of the partners has at least one child from a previous relationship and the couple have at least one child of their own.
- Each of the partners has at least one child from a previous relationship and the couple have no children of their own.
- Each of the partners has at least one child from a previous relationship and the couple have at least one child of their own.

10.7%

Approximately 10.7% of blended families include at least one child aged 0 to 4 (MFA, 2014).

3 or 4 years

In the case of common-law unions, separation occurs when the child has a median age of 3 or 4 years old (MFA).

Exposure to domestic violence

+

Vulnerability factors

=

Increased impact

on the child's developmental needs

Exposure to domestic violence

The consequences of exposure to domestic violence are the same for all children, regardless of whether or not they grow up in a blended family.

However, exposure to domestic violence can intensify stressful situations that are already more likely to occur in blended families (a child's reaction to a breakup, changes in custody arrangements, a conflict of loyalty, etc.).

Vulnerability factors

Vulnerability factors maintain, trigger, or increase the severity of, domestic violence. They are linked to the fact that blended families experience more intense stress than intact families do, and the children are exposed to this stress.

- Blended family members have experienced a greater number of family transitions.

Examples:

- The child goes through a period of single parenting with his/her parent.
- The child moves one or more times with his/her parent.
- The child lives with a step-parent on a part-time, then full-time, basis.
- The child must build relationships with a greater number of people.

(Saint-Jacques & Drapeau, 2009)

- Saint-Jacques et al. (2001) found that the young people from blended families who child protection services worked with differed from their peers belonging to other family structures in terms of their ability to adapt to different situations, their exposure to domestic violence, and their experience with relationship discontinuity.

Deleury-Beaudoin (2002) reported that analyses show it is the young people who had experienced the failure of at least one family recomposition who exhibited the most behavioural problems, and those who had experienced three recompositions had the lowest adaptation scores. According to Saint-Jacques, Drapeau & Parent (2009), these findings highlight the fact that successive transitions (and their associated processes) are linked to adaptation problems.

- Economic precariousness may result following separation.
- The post-separation context is marked by numerous conflicts: arguments between the parents and negative coparenting.
- A new partner arrives, which can exacerbate post-separation violence.
- Better communication skills are needed: a blended family requires more constructive and meaningful communication from the parental figures than a nuclear family does.
- The parent-child relationship is strong and outlived the parent's conjugal relationship, which can lead to alliances being formed and increase tensions or conflicts.

Example:

When there is a disagreement, the parent sides with his/her child over the other members of the blended family.

- Values, expectations and roles must be redefined in the blended family.
- The role of step-parents:

Step-parents are perceived more negatively than parents.

A 2010 report (Final Report, 2010) highlighted the fact that a study conducted by Claxton-Oldfield (2008) found step-parents are often perceived as being less affectionate and less kind than parents despite exhibiting the exact same behaviour.

A step-parent's responsibilities are less understood. The step-parent-child relationship is new. Negative interaction patterns (e.g., the use of aversive behaviours such as crying, guilt induction, withdrawal and violence) may be carried over from the previous relationship (Saint-Jacques & Drapeau, 2009).

To learn more about the different roles step-parents play, visit www.famillesrecomposees.com (in French).

7. CONCLUSION

The unique and special bond that educators and ECPs build with young children is a key element of our social fabric. Their daily observations and their understanding of child development enable them to detect the slightest change in children and offer them opportunities to express themselves, as well as support in dealing with the challenges they face. These elements make the child better able to protect himself/herself from danger.

Educators and ECPs know that toddlers express themselves through play, and share with the children's parents a sincere concern for the children's well-being. The special bond childcare staff have with the children enables them to observe, respond and build alliances.

The FEE Kit is designed to support educators and ECPs in their various roles by providing them with guidelines and tools pertaining to childhood exposure to domestic violence.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Response Protocol Overview



Prevention component for all children

Concern component for a child exposed or at risk of exposure to domestic violence

NOTE: The activities in the Concern component should not be construed as a linear three-step process, but rather a set of activities that must be repeated, and that build on each other over time.



The activities in the Concern component should continue even after a report is made to the Director of Youth Protection.

I respond

Express themselves freely, develop, and lessen the consequences of exposure to domestic violence.

- Support the development of the protective factors set out in the FEE Kit around the child.

I carry out educational interventions with children.

- Encourage participation in fun prevention activities related to the various areas related to exposure to domestic violence.



Fun Material

- Promote the development of egalitarian relationships regardless of the child's gender.

I observe

I observe the consequences of exposure to domestic violence on the child's developmental needs.

Domestic violence exposure detection tools for children



- 18 months and under
- 19 to 47 months
- 4 and 5 years old

I pay attention to the signs of domestic violence among the parents.



Signs of Domestic Violence Checklist
Cheat Sheet: Domestic Violence Is Not...

I take into account the danger factors related to the family context.



Dangerousness Assessment Checklist – for exposure to domestic violence

I respond

I carry out educational interventions with the child who verbalizes situations of exposure to domestic violence.

- Encourage participation in fun interventions with the child exposed to domestic violence.



Fun Material

- Support the child.
- Believe the child.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Normalize the expression of the child's emotions and needs.
- Take a stand against violence.
- Respect the child's rhythm.

I build alliances

I meet with the parents to establish a dialog based on their child's developmental needs.

- Show concern for the child's well-being to build trust with both parents.
- This meeting could reveal other indicators of domestic violence and make the signs already present more visible.

I meet with the parent who is a victim or potential victim of domestic violence.

- Adopt appropriate attitudes and behaviours with the parent.
- Address concerns about the child with the parent.

I refer the parent(s) to available specialized services.

I contact the DYP when signs indicate that the security or development of the child could be in danger.



Domestic Violence Reporting Protocol – for toddlers

- Use the information gathered with the tools proposed under the role I observe.

8-1-1
9-1-1

Specialized organizations for families and children

Specialized domestic violence resources

Organizations offering services adapted to different family and cultural realities

Director of Youth Protection

Content developed by Mélanie Bélanger, Carl Lacharité, Marc Ludvik, Julie Lefebvre, Annie Stipanovic and Marleen Baker, from the Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDF), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with the Quebec Ministère de la Famille.

APPENDIX B

Domestic Violence Exposure Detection Tool



Objective

This detection tool summarizes possible impacts exposure to domestic violence can have on a child's developmental needs.

Sources of information

- Direct observations of the children and families
- Comments made by a child and their family members
- Any other relevant sources (e.g., a child's educational record, observations reported by another professional, other sources)

Users

This checklist is intended for all educators and home educational childcare providers (ECP) who work with children aged 18 months or under and have concerns about the well-being, safety and a child they take care of.

Note

- These signs can be due to circumstances other than exposure to domestic violence.
- None of these signs can be taken as an irrefutable indication of exposure to domestic violence.
- A child or family will not exhibit all the signs mentioned.
- The key is the coexistence of signs.
- **This document should be used in combination with the other components of the FEE Kit.**

Date



The subsections of this tool reflect the areas defined under the Child's Development Needs (N) axis in the Ecosystem Analysis Framework used in the FEE Kit.

IMPORTANT MARKERS of the signs to observe

Intensity

Disproportionately strong behaviour for specific stimuli

Frequency

Repetition of behaviour

Duration

Period over which the behaviour continues

Strangeness

Discrepancy with the standard

Health

Physical well-being

Regarding sleep disturbance

- | | | | |
|---|-------|--|-------|
| ☐ Excessive need for sleep when at the educational childcare service (ECS) | | ☐ Frequent waking | |
| | | Short periods of sleep | |
| ☐ Significant difficulty falling asleep despite an educator or ECP being present | | | |
| | | | |

Regarding physical problems

- ☐ Significant physical problems related to a state of severe stress e.g., state of physical discomfort resulting in frequent crying, nausea, allergies and skin conditions (more intense/frequent allergic reactions, skin problems), onset of asthma attacks or exacerbation of asthmatic condition
-
-
-
-

Continued on page 2

Education

Cognitive and language development

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Absenteeism from the ECS: frequent absences, the reasons for the absences seem strange
☐ Difficulty concentrating: unable to engage in age-appropriate games
☐ Delayed acquisition of language and cognitive skills: makes few sounds or says few simple words, shows little interest in his/her environment | ☐ Significant difficulty collaborating (seems troubled) during routines and transitions despite support from the educator or ECP e.g., shows great frustration when changing tasks
☐ Difficulty following instructions e.g., from 9 months, does not understand when told "no" |
|---|---|

Emotional and behavioural development

Appropriate expression of feelings, and psychological health

Self-care skills

Development of autonomy and social skills

These two areas are combined because observing and responding to these needs naturally go hand in hand.

Emotional consequences

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Expression of more negative emotions (seems in a bad mood, whines a lot) and fewer positive emotions (laughs, babbles or makes sounds that convey pleasure or joy)
☐ Little pride or satisfaction in successes (when playing) e.g., clapping hands and exclamations of joy
☐ Feeling of fear or terror (excessive whining, tantrums, or crying)
☐ Little reaction to positive facial expressions e.g., smiles little when the educator or ECP speaks positively to him/her | ☐ Greater emotional reactivity than peers (low tolerance for frustration, rapid mood changes): excessive and frequent crying, irritability, tantrums
☐ Withdrawal e.g., indifference, loss of interest in play, refusal to mingle with other children
☐ Lots of aggressive behaviour toward peers, educators or ECP: yelling, hitting, biting, pushing, destroying things, being cruel to animals |
|---|--|

Attachment relationship

These signs can be observed at various times, but especially when the child is experiencing distress

e.g., conflict with a friend, spilling a plate, refusal

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Difficulty being consoled: is not able to calm down easily when a familiar person (educator or ECP) picks him/her up
☐ Contradictory behaviour e.g., comes close to the educator or ECP, then freezes or backs off
☐ Very familiar behaviour with adults he/she doesn't know e.g., does not show different reactions to a familiar or an unfamiliar person, does not show reserve toward an unfamiliar person | ☐ Little or no manifestation of joy when his/her parent arrives at the ECS
☐ Persistent difficulty being away from his/her attachment figures e.g., protests strongly at being separated from his/her parent or the educator or ECP, constant need for reassurance
☐ Little or no manifestation of distress signals e.g., makes few sounds expressing distress or discomfort |
|--|---|

Continued on page 3

children
aged
18 months
and under



These three areas are combined because observing and responding to these needs naturally go hand in hand.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| ☐ | Signs of hypervigilance: constantly on the lookout, eyes "wide open", jerky breathing and inhibited arm or leg movement, seems suspicious in the presence of others and plays little, may perceive certain gestures as threatening
e.g., cries intensely when a higher tone of voice is used with an energetic group | ☐ | No pleasure in receiving physical affection from significant people even though they are familiar people |
| ☐ | Little pleasure in interacting with his/her parent or an educator or ECP even though they are familiar people (little demonstration of affection and spontaneous interest) | ☐ | Agitation, even with familiar people
e.g., wiggles, can't stay calm |
| | | ☐ | Little interest in other children
e.g., does not watch them, does not smile |
| | | ☐ | Lack of prerequisites for learning the prosocial behaviours that are associated with a group dynamic
e.g., does not offer or take toys when someone invites him/her to trade, does not try to approach a child in distress |

[illegible]

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APPENDIX C

Domestic Violence Exposure Detection Tool



Objective

This detection tool offers summarizes possible impacts exposure to domestic violence can have on a child's developmental needs.

Sources of information

- Direct observations of the children and families
- Comments made by a child and their family members
- Any other relevant sources (e.g., a child's educational record, observations reported by another professional, other sources)

Users

This checklist is intended for all educators and home educational childcare providers (ECP) who work with children aged 19 to 47 months and have concerns about the well-being, safety and development of a child they take care of.

Note

- These signs can be due to circumstances other than exposure to domestic violence.
- None of these signs can be taken as an irrefutable indication of exposure to domestic violence.
- A child or family will not exhibit all the signs mentioned.
- The key is the coexistence of signs.
- **This document should be used in combination with the other components of the FEE Kit.**

Date



The subsections of this tool reflect the areas defined under the Child's Development Needs (N) axis in the Ecosystem Analysis Framework used in the FEE Kit.

IMPORTANT MARKERS of the signs to observe

Intensity

Disproportionately strong behaviour for specific stimuli

Duration

Period over which the behaviour continues

Frequency

Repetition of behaviour

Strangeness

Discrepancy with the standard

Health

Physical well-being

Regarding sleep disturbance

- | | | | |
|--|-------|---|-------|
| ☐ Nightmares
Wakes up crying | | ☐ Excessive need for sleep
when at the educational
childcare service (ECS) | |
| ☐ Fear of the dark
May refuse to go to sleep
in a dark room despite the presence of
an educator or ECP | | ☐ Significant difficulty falling
asleep despite an educator or
ECP being present | |
| | | ☐ Frequent waking
Short periods of sleep | |

Regarding physical problems

- ☐ Significant physical problems related to a state of severe stress e.g., headaches, stomachaches, nausea, allergies and skin conditions (more intense/frequent allergic reactions, skin problems), onset of asthma attacks or exacerbation of asthmatic condition

Continued on page 2

Education

Cognitive and language development

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Absenteeism from the ECS: frequent absences, the reasons for the absences seem strange | ☐ Delayed acquisition of language and cognitive skills: significant difficulty for adults to understand the child's words and intentions |
| ☐ Difficulty concentrating: unable to engage in age-appropriate games e.g., during free play, organized group activities, story time, shows | ☐ Significant difficulty collaborating (seems troubled) during routines and transitions despite support from the educator or ECP |
| ☐ Problems learning daily living skills: shows little interest in his/her environment (people, toys, etc.) and in developing autonomy e.g., getting dressed | ☐ Difficulty following instructions e.g., "Show me your shoes." "Bring me your cup." |

Emotional and behavioural development

Appropriate expression of feelings, and psychological health

These two areas are combined because observing and responding to these needs naturally go hand in hand.

Self-care skills

Development of autonomy and social skills

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Disruption of play: seems troubled by games that involve situations of violence between the characters or depicts stories where the characters share a living environment (such as a family, a pack or a herd) and are assaulted by one of them or assault each other | ☐ Delay in the achievement of key development stages e.g., learning to walk, toilet training |
| | ☐ Regression: toilet training, language e.g., baby talk |

Emotional consequences

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Expression of more negative emotions (seems in a bad mood, whines a lot) and fewer positive emotions (laughs, babbles or makes sounds that convey pleasure or joy) | ☐ Greater emotional reactivity than peers (low tolerance for frustration, rapid mood changes): excessive and frequent crying, irritability, tantrums |
| ☐ Little pride or satisfaction in successes (tasks, activities) e.g., clapping hands and exclamations of joy | ☐ Emotional regulation issues: fails to contain and express emotions, even with the help of an educator or ECP |
| ☐ Feeling of fear or terror (excessive whining, tantrums, or crying) | ☐ Withdrawal e.g., loss of interest in play, refusal to mingle with other children |
| ☐ Inconsistent emotional reactions: does not seem joyful when another child or an educator or ECP laughs, does not show concern for a child who is angry or cries | ☐ Lots of aggressive behaviour toward peers, educators or ECP: yelling, hitting, biting, pushing, destroying things, being cruel to animals |

Continued on page 3

Domestic Violence Exposure Detection Tool



Attachment relationship

These signs can be observed at various times, but especially when the child is experiencing of distress

e.g., conflict with a friend, spilling a plate, refusal

☐ Difficulty being consoled
e.g., pushes the educator or ECP away

☐ Contradictory behaviour
e.g., comes close to the educator or ECP, then freezes or backs off

☐ Very familiar behaviour with adults he/she does not know
e.g., wants to approach them for comfort

☐ Attempts to take charge of the environment: constantly concerned about the well-being of other children or of the educator or ECP
e.g., wants to take care of the educator or ECP, wants to take charge of peer care
It is important to distinguish this behaviour from the empathy that is expected with peers.

☐ Persistent difficulty being away from his/her attachment figures

e.g., finds it difficult to be away from his/her parent upon arrival at the ECS or from his/her educator or ECP during the day, constantly needs to be reassured

☐ Little or no manifestation of distress signals

e.g., bumps into something and continues as if nothing happened

☐ Level of autonomy too high for his/her age: often takes care of himself/herself and rarely asks for help

Identity

Awareness of being different from others and of being appreciated

Self-care skills

Self-perception: appearance, behaviours, strengths and weaknesses, impression made on others

These two areas are combined because observing and responding to these needs naturally go hand in hand.

☐ Low self-esteem
e.g., may hit himself/herself when he/she is wrong or say he/her is bad

☐ Difficulty asserting his/her rights and needs with peers

☐ Conflict of loyalty: avoids talking about his/her family or a specific family member
e.g., refuses to look at family photos

☐ Signs of hypervigilance: constantly on the lookout, eyes "wide open", jerky breathing and inhibited arm or leg movement, seems suspicious in the presence of others and plays little, may perceive certain gestures as threatening
e.g., cries intensely when a higher tone of voice is used with an energetic group

Continued on page 4

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Family and social relationships

Ability to show sympathy and compassion

The child says things that hint at the cycle of domestic violence

- ☐ Talks of family conflicts or violence (loud yelling, arguing, hitting, a parent crying), then of moments of family pleasure (hope, calm)



- ☐ Little pleasure in interacting with his/her parent or an educator or ECP, even though they are familiar people (little display of affection and spontaneous interest)
- ☐ No pleasure in receiving physical affection from significant people, even though they are familiar people
- ☐ Refusal to accept the authority of the educator or ECP
e.g., refuses to follow the rules required for group living

Relationships with peers

- ☐ Little interest in other children
- ☐ Difficulty in learning the prosocial behaviours that are associated with a group dynamic: sharing, cooperating, consoling, helping, being empathetic
e.g., offering a toy to a crying child, reaching out to others to share toys, helping the educator or ECP
- ☐ Little concern for the well-being of others
e.g., does not do little favours, does not want to help friends, does not pay attention when another child cries
- ☐ Distrust of others
e.g., steps back as soon as a peer tries to approach him/her

Content developed by Mélanie Bélanger, Carl Lacharité, Marc Ludvik, Julie Lefebvre, Annie Stipanovic and Marleen Baker, from the *Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille* [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDF), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with the Québec Ministère de la Famille.

APPENDIX D

Domestic Violence Exposure Detection Tool



Objective

This detection tool offers summarizes possible impacts exposure to domestic violence can have on a child's developmental needs.

Sources of information

- Direct observations of the children and families
- Comments made by a child and their family members
- Any other relevant sources (e.g., a child's educational record, observations reported by another professional, other sources)

Users

This checklist is intended for all educators and home educational childcare providers (ECP) who work with children aged 19 to 47 months and have concerns about the well-being, safety and development of a child they take care of.

Note

- These signs can be due to circumstances other than exposure to domestic violence.
- None of these signs can be taken as an irrefutable indication of exposure to domestic violence.
- A child or family will not exhibit all the signs mentioned.
- The key is the coexistence of signs.
- **This document should be used in combination with the other components of the FEE Kit.**

Date



The subsections of this tool reflect the areas defined under the Child's Development Needs (N) axis in the Ecosystem Analysis Framework used in the FEE Kit.

IMPORTANT MARKERS of the signs to observe

Intensity

Disproportionately strong behaviour for specific stimuli

Duration

Period over which the behaviour continues

Frequency

Repetition of behaviour

Strangeness

Discrepancy with the standard

Health

Physical well-being

Regarding sleep disturbance

- | | | | |
|--|-------|---|-------|
| ☐ Nightmares
Wakes up crying | | ☐ Excessive need for sleep
when at the educational
childcare service (ECS) | |
| ☐ Fear of the dark
May refuse to go to sleep
in a dark room despite the presence of
an educator or ECP | | ☐ Significant difficulty falling
asleep despite an educator or
ECP being present | |

Regarding physical problems

- ☐ Significant physical problems related to a state of severe stress e.g., headaches, stomachaches, nausea, allergies and skin conditions (more intense/frequent allergic reactions, skin problems), onset of asthma attacks or exacerbation of asthmatic condition

Continued on page 2

Education

Cognitive and language development

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Absenteeism from the ECS: frequent absences, the reasons for the absences seem strange
☐ Difficulty concentrating: unable to engage in age-appropriate games e.g., during learning activities, free play, structured games, story time
☐ Problems learning daily living skills e.g., is not able to get dressed and undressed with minimal assistance, does not particularly enjoy helping with chores such as setting the table or putting away clothes | ☐ Delayed acquisition of language and cognitive skills: significant difficulty for adults to understand the child's words, difficulty remembering instructions that require more than two steps, does not understand explanations and instructions that include more complex terms, has difficulty explaining what others are going through e.g., the characters in a story
☐ Significant difficulty collaborating (seems troubled) during routines and transitions despite support from the educator or ECP
☐ Difficulty following instructions e.g., "Get dressed to go outside." "Put your game away and come to the table." |
|---|--|

Emotional and behavioural development

Appropriate expression of feelings, and psychological health

Self-care skills

Development of autonomy and social skills

These two areas are combined because observing and responding to these needs naturally go hand in hand.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Disruption of play: seems troubled by games that involve situations of violence between the characters or depicts stories where the characters share a living environment (such as a family, a pack or a herd) and are assaulted by one of them or assault each other | ☐ Delay in the achievement of key development stages e.g., toilet training
☐ Regression: toilet training, language e.g., baby talk |
|--|---|

Emotional consequences

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Expression of more negative emotions (seems in a bad mood, whines a lot) and fewer positive emotions (laughs, babbles or makes sounds that convey pleasure or joy)
☐ Little pride or satisfaction in successes (tasks, activities) e.g., "Wow! Look, [name of the educator or ECP], I did it!"
☐ Feeling of fear or terror (excessive whining, tantrums, or crying) e.g., novelty, anticipation of going home
☐ Inconsistent emotional reactions: does not seem joyful when another child or an educator or ECP laughs, does not show concern for a child who is angry or cries
☐ Higher level of agitation than peers
☐ Tics or nervous gestures | ☐ Emotional regulation issues: fails to contain emotions and express emotions, even with the help an educator or ECP
☐ Withdrawal e.g., frequent sulking, lack of motivation, loss of interest in play, refusal to mingle with other children
☐ Lots of aggressive behaviour toward peers, educators or ECP: yelling, hitting, biting, pushing, destroying things, being cruel to animals
☐ Takes little care to avoid harming others, does not feel guilty after exhibiting an aggressive behaviour
☐ Greater emotional reactivity than peers (low tolerance for frustration, rapid mood changes): excessive and frequent crying, irritability, tantrums |
|--|--|

Domestic Violence Exposure Detection Tool



Attachment relationship

These signs can be observed at various times, but especially when the child is experiencing of distress

e.g., conflict with a friend, spilling a plate, refusal

☐ Difficulty being consoled
e.g., pushes the educator or ECP away

☐ Contradictory behaviour
e.g., comes close to the educator or ECP, then freezes or backs away

☐ Very familiar behaviour with adults he/she does not know
e.g., wants to approach them for comfort

☐ Attempts to take charge of the environment: constantly concerned about the well-being of other children or of the educator or ECP
e.g., wants to take care of the educator or ECP, wants to take charge of peer care

It is important to distinguish this behaviour from the empathy that is expected with peers

☐ Attempts to take charge of the environment using orders, threats or punishments

☐ Expectations that others will do as he/she says, without delay

☐ Persistent difficulty being away from his/her attachment figures
e.g., finds it difficult to be away from his/her parent upon arrival at the ECS or from his/her educator or ECP during the day, constantly needs to be reassured

☐ Little or no manifestation of distress signals
e.g., bumps into something and continues as if nothing happened

☐ Level of autonomy too high for his/her age: often takes care of himself/herself and rarely asks for help

Identity

Awareness of being different from others and of being appreciated

These two areas are combined because observing and responding to these needs naturally go hand in hand.

Self-care skills

Self-perception: appearance, behaviours, strengths and weaknesses, impression made on others

☐ Low self-esteem
e.g., may hit himself/herself when he/she is wrong, says that he/she is bad

☐ Difficulty asserting his/her rights and needs with peers
e.g., does not argue to get what he/she wants, knows little about his/her tastes

☐ Conflict of loyalty: avoids talking about his/her family or a specific family member
e.g., refuses to look at family photos

☐ Signs of hypervigilance: constantly on the lookout, eyes "wide open", jerky breathing and inhibited arm or leg movement, seems suspicious in the presence of others and plays little, may perceive certain gestures as threatening
e.g., jumps if a peer makes a sudden gesture, puts his/her hands on his/her ears when a higher tone is used with an energetic group

☐ Lack of energy
e.g., sluggish, falls asleep during activities

☐ Tries to exhibit perfect behaviour
e.g., refrains from expressing negative emotions, always seeks to please others

☐ Association of representations of men and women with being dominant/dominated
e.g., devalues girls, perceives boys an evil

Continued on page 4

Family and social relationships

Ability to show sympathy and compassion

The child says things that hint at the cycle of domestic violence

- ☐ Talks of family conflicts or violence (loud yelling, arguing, hitting, a parent crying), then of moments of family pleasure (hope, calm)



- ☐ Parentification indicators: the child has behaviours, thoughts and emotions that should be the parent's responsibility
- ☐ Situations in which he/she protect or is protected by a sibling
- ☐ Little pleasure in interacting with his/her parent or an educator or ECP, even though they are familiar people (little display of affection and spontaneous interest)
- ☐ No pleasure in receiving physical affection from significant people, even though they are familiar people
- ☐ Refusal to accept the authority of the educator or ECP
e.g., refuses to follow the rules required for group living
- ☐ Significant dependence on one or more parents, as if he/she were "clinging" to them
- ☐ Delayed acquisition of conflict resolution skills
e.g., apologizing, finding solutions to reach a compromise

Relationships with peers

- ☐ Little interest in other children
- ☐ Difficulty in learning the prosocial behaviours that are associated with a group dynamic: sharing, cooperating, consoling, helping, being empathetic
e.g., turns wrestling games into aggressive gestures
- ☐ Little concern for the well-being of others
e.g., does not do little favours, does not want to help friends, does not pay attention when another child cries
- ☐ Distrust of others
e.g., steps back as soon as a peer tries to approach him/her
- ☐ Frequent exclusion by other children
- ☐ Errors in the interpretation of signals in his/her relationships
This can lead to a feeling of being unduly rejected and that "everything is always against him/her"

Content developed by Mélanie Bélanger, Carl Lacharité, Marc Ludvik, Julie Lefebvre, Annie Stipanovic and Marleen Baker, from the *Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille* [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDF), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with the Québec Ministère de la Famille.

APPENDIX E

Checklist

Signs of Domestic Violence



Objective

This checklist summarizes the signs of domestic violence in both the parent who is experiencing it and the parent who is committing it.

Sources of information

- Direct observation of the family
- Comments made by a child and their family members
- Any other relevant sources (e.g., a child's educational record, observations reported by another professional, other sources)

Users

This checklist is intended for all educators and home educational childcare providers (ECP) who work with children aged 5 or under and have concerns about the well-being, safety and development of a child they take care of.

Note

- These signs can be due to circumstances other than domestic violence.
- None of these signs can be taken as an irrefutable indication of domestic violence.
- A family will not exhibit all the signs mentioned.
- The key is the coexistence of signs.
- **This document should be used in combination with the other components of the FEE Kit.**

Date

In the parent who commits domestic violence

☐ **Speaks in a way that hints at psychological abuse**

The parent blames his/her partner for difficulties in their relationship or with the child, or adopts a sanctimonious attitude. The parent belittles and denigrate his/her partner.

☐ **Involves the educators or ECP in the relationship in some way**

The parent attempts to discredit the other parent and influence the perceptions the educational childcare service (ECS) has of them.

The parent may suggest that he/she is experiencing domestic violence and display a victimizing attitude by accusing the other parent.

This behaviour serves to mask the real situation and maintain control. To distinguish the parent who is actually experiencing the violence from the one who is committing it, it's important to observe whether this behaviour is accompanied by multiple attempts to control the other parent. If so, this may reveal a victimization tactic.

The parent seeks information about the other parent.

The parent denigrates the ECS: he/she vehemently disagrees with the use of democratic educational methods, has sexist beliefs, and promotes values that are based on gender stereotypes.

☐ **Promotes authoritarian educational values**

The parent calls for using an authoritative method of intervention in which the educator or ECP imposes activities and demands absolute respect from the child.

☐ **Displays attitudes that minimize violent behaviour**

The parent normalizes violence, regardless of its form, with his/her partner and child. The parent justifies his/her behaviour for various reasons.

☐ **Switches between hypercontrol and disengagement**

Hypercontrol: the parent raises his/her voice and uses profanity to impose what he/she wants.

Disengagement: The parent does not get involved in the solutions proposed by the educator or ECP.

☐ **Engages in harassing behaviour**

The parent comes to the daycare when he/she does not have custody, or tries to contact the child when they are outside.

The parent does not comply with court orders.

☐ **Has impulsive reactions**

"We never know what kind of response we're going to get." The parent is unpredictable. He/she has difficulty adapting to and tolerating refusal, disagreements and limits. "He blows a gasket." The parent has a hostile attitude.

Continued on reverse

In the parent who experiences domestic violence

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>☐ Speaks in a way that hints at psychological abuse
 <i>"My boyfriend belittles me all the time, my girlfriend bashes me, my husband stops me from doing lots of things, my spouse calls me crazy, my wife always tells me that I'm just an incompetent father, my boyfriend thinks I should..."</i></p> <p>☐ Often has physical health problems
 Violence is disguised by accidents:
 <i>"I went to the hospital because I fell down the stairs."</i> The parent has bruises or severe fatigue, or feels chronic pain.</p> <p>☐ Feels embarrassed or avoids talking about his/her partner
 The parent switches topics or clams up (looks down, suddenly walks away) when you talk about his/her partner.</p> <p>☐ Has difficulty asserting himself/herself and making decisions
 The parent always says he/she needs to talk to his/her partner before making a decision. It may be possible to observe that the parent expresses decisions that are not his/her own.
 The parent speaks little during meetings, and his/her partner speaks for him/her.
 The educator or ECP is unable to meet with the parent alone.</p> | <p>☐ Is isolated
 The family has a very small social network (family, friends, community resources). The parent says that his/her partner doesn't get along well with his/her family and that he/she had to move away.</p> <p>☐ Justifies his/her partner's and child's behaviour
 The parent justifies his/her partner's violent behaviour on the grounds of work overload, behavioural problems with the children, financial difficulties, history of abuse. He/she refers to the benefits of maintaining the relationship despite the violent behaviour.</p> <p>☐ Shows signs of emotional disturbance
 The parent cries easily and may appear disconnected, zombie-like, or in a state of alert. The parent may take responsibility for their situation: <i>"I'm the one who's not able to take care of my partner and child properly."</i></p> <p>☐ Is a primary caregiver
 This parent is usually the one who drops the child off and picks them up from daycare, ensures the child's needs are met, and takes care of day-to-day tasks.</p> <p>☐ Evokes threats of physical assault or violence
 The parent clearly confides: <i>"The kid almost got hit by a plate yesterday."</i>
 <i>"He pushed me down the stairs."</i>
 <i>"She punched the wall."</i></p> |
|--|--|

In a child exposed to domestic violence

Refer to the **detection tools**.

In the environment

- ☐ **Instability within the family and the environment**
- ☐ **Regular changes of partners**
- ☐ **Frequent moves**

Content developed by Mélanie Bélanger, Carl Lacharité, Marc Ludvik, Julie Lefebvre, Annie Stipanovic and Marleen Baker, from the *Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille* [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDF), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with the Quebec Ministère de la Famille.

APPENDIX F

Domestic Violence Is Not...

Cheat Sheet



it's not a loss of control

It's attitudes and actions that are aimed at **controlling** and **dominating** the partner, and that are associated with a greater risk of violence.

it's not a secure emotional relationship

Domestic violence is completely opposite of the values of cooperation, empathy, support, commitment and reciprocity that are normally expected in a conjugal relationship.

it's not only one type of violence

It can include **verbal abuse**, e.g., screaming, swearing at the partner

psychological abuse, e.g., mocking or belittling, proxy violence [harm a child or a pet to affect the parent], cyberviolence

economic abuse, e.g., preventing the parent from having a job or having a say in money matters

sexual abuse, e.g., sexual assault

or **physical abuse**, e.g., breaking the partner's things, throwing objects, pushing, hitting

it's not just a problem experienced by the couple

The child is directly or indirectly exposed to domestic violence in various ways.

e.g., the child steps in to stop the violence, is assaulted during an episode of violence, takes part in assaulting the parent who is experiencing the acts of violence, hears an episode of violence, or observes the consequences of violence.



it's not something that happens to a certain type of person

Women are the primary victims of domestic violence and the ones who suffer the **most severe forms of domestic violence**.

However, domestic violence has no gender. It can be committed by a woman against a man, within LGBTQ+ couples, and in various forms of relationship (romantic, extramarital, post-separation) regardless of the socio-economic level.

it's not an argument

It's a cycle that generally tends to **recur** and **intensify** over time (climate of tension, assault, justification, reconciliation), with major consequences for the person who experiences domestic violence.

it's not a private problem

It's a **social problem**. e.g., intergenerational transmission of violence, and consequences for mental health, employment, income, social integration.



The cycle of domestic violence

it's not a situation that necessarily ends when the relationship is over

It's very important to consider that domestic violence may intensify **after the separation**.

The risk of violence is **exacerbated** when the relationship is broken off, especially when a woman leaves an abusive partner.

it's not situational violence

Situational violence involves resorting to violence to manage conflict.

The intention is not to control or dominate the other person. It can occur when spouses have recurring difficulty communicating with one another and managing their conflicts. Themes relating to children are important sources of escalation.

e.g., care, values, educational methods

Content developed by Mélanie Bélanger, Carl Lacharité, Marc Ludvik, Julie Lefebvre, Annie Stipanovic and Marleen Baker, from the *Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille* [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDF), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with the Québec Ministère de la Famille.

APPENDIX G



Dangerousness Assessment Checklist



Objective

This checklist summarizes the indicators of dangerousness in the context of children's exposure to domestic violence.

Sources of information

- Direct observations of the children and families
- Comments made by a child and their family members
- Any other relevant sources (e.g., previous family records, observations reported by another professional, other sources)

Users

This checklist is intended for all educators and home educational childcare providers (ECP) who work with children aged 5 or under and have concerns about the well-being, safety and development of a child they take care of.

Note

- This document should not be included in the child's educational record.
- This document does not constitute an exhaustive list that directly supports a report. **This document should be used in combination with the other components of the FEE Kit.**
- The role of educators is not to carry out an assessment of dangerousness, but to record information that is brought to their attention.

Date

What to look for

Child's behaviour

- ☐ Parent physically or verbally during episodes of domestic violence.
- ☐ The child is used as a shield during altercations between parents.
- ☐ The child suffers other types of abuse, including physical abuse.
- ☐ The child has injuries (bruises, fractures, burns, etc.)
- ☐ The parents strongly are insistent in justifying the child's injuries. The reasons given change or seem far-fetched.
- ☐ The relationship with the abusive parent is highly conflictual.
- ☐ The child is present at home during police interventions.
- ☐ The child seems to lack basic care, e.g., diaper changes, milk/food.

Pregnancy

- ☐ The mother is pregnant and experiences domestic violence. Domestic violence can take many forms during pregnancy, such as hitting the woman's belly, threatening to harm the unborn baby, criticizing the pregnant mother's physical changes.

Separation

- ☐ Discredits the other parent so that the educator adopts him/her perception of the situation.

Separation

- ☐ Openly discredits the other parent's parenting skills by criticizing and belittling him/her.
- ☐ Instrumentalizes the child (uses them to affect the parent who is experiencing domestic violence).
- ☐ Does not accept separation and feels abandonment, rejection, loss, that the other parent failed him/her.
- ☐ Believes that the other parent has destroyed the family.
- ☐ Does not accept the presence of the parent's new partner in the child's life.
- ☐ Engages in various legal proceedings against the other parent.
- ☐ Has lost hope that the relationship can be restored.
- ☐ Harbours thoughts of revenge toward the other parent.
- ☐ Talks bitterly about the financial losses associated with the breakup.
- ☐ Demands updates about or photos of the child beyond what is reasonable.
- ☐ Imposes educational strategies that often reflect strong authoritarian educational values while the child is not in his/her custody.
- ☐ Does not bring the child back at the time scheduled to exchange custody.

Continued on reverse

This checklist has been developed using the writings of Drouin, Lindsay, Dubé, Trépanier and Blanchette (2012) and Drouin (2016), as well as the literature review carried out as part of the FEE Kit, in order to take into account parental reality and the presence of children.

What to look for in the parent who commits domestic violence

Parent's behaviour

- ☐ Feeling of persecution
Subjective impression that family members and friends have malicious intentions toward him/her, or could deliberately harm him/her and take actions "against him/her".
- ☐ Justification of and avoidance of accountability for violent behaviour
- ☐ Contempt, even rage, when talking about the other parent
- ☐ Desire for revenge
- ☐ Impulsive reactions
- ☐ Lack of sensitivity or compassion
- ☐ Lack of collaboration with the educational childcare services

Jealousy/Possessiveness

- ☐ The parent is jealous and reacts vehemently if his/her partner is approached by other men or women

Harassment

- ☐ Tries to keep tabs on the partner, follows him/her
- ☐ Finds ways to impose his/her presence on the partner
- ☐ Looks for excuses to contact the other parent
- ☐ Does not respect access rights to the child
- ☐ Imposes his/her presence when the child is in the custody of the parent who experiences domestic violence

Risk of suicide

- ☐ Depression, suicidal thoughts or recent suicide attempts

Control

- ☐ Isolation of the parent who experiences domestic violence
- ☐ Controlling the relationships and activities of his/her spouse
- ☐ Cyberviolence (e.g., geolocation)
- ☐ Feeling of loss of control over educational methods and parenting practices
When the parent who suffers domestic violence claims autonomy over educational values or parenting practices, his/her partner may increase their violent behaviour.
- ☐ Control of the child and his/her activities, use of unreasonable methods of upbringing with the child

Prior history

- ☐ Criminal history
- ☐ History of domestic violence in previous relationships

Escalation of domestic violence

- ☐ Change in frequency and severity of violent behaviour
- ☐ Threats of death, suicide or infanticide
- ☐ Assault with a weapon
- ☐ Attempted murder

Other

- ☐ Access to firearms
- ☐ Abandonment of therapy
- ☐ Worsening of alcohol or drug use
- ☐ Family members' and friends attitude towards domestic violence and exposing children to it contribute to increasing the violent behaviour of the parent who commits domestic violence (by justifying, normalizing or covering it up).

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APPENDIX H

Fun Material

Topino forest



Use

For children aged 3 and over.

Reminder

This type of activity fosters an environment for disclosing various forms of violence within the family, including exposure to domestic violence.

Story time!



Use

Group

The educator or ECP reads the story to the group.

Individual

The story is made available to children, who can consult it on their own.

Note

1. Conte-Texte_et_images.pdf

This file has been designed to produce a printed version (double-sided, in colour) of the story.

2. Conte-Images_seules.pdf

This file can be used to display the story's images on a tablet or a computer.

3. Conte-Texte_seul.pdf

This file supplements the previous one. It can be used to read the story while presenting the images on another medium.

Topino forest

Let's talk!

Use

Group

The educator or ECP leads the discussion with the group.

Individual

The educator or ECP chats with a specific child, whose developmental needs are being impacted.

They can use the **images from the memory game** to facilitate the chat.

Chat ideas

1. Who was your favourite character?

ACTION TIME

Take the time to imitate certain characters.

For example:

- Let's imitate Preeunk Skunk's expression of fear.
- Let's imitate Bunny Verony's expression of anger.
- Let's imitate Squirrel Rimerel's expression of sadness and his big jowls.

2. Was there a situation in the story that impacted or surprised you? Or a situation that scared you?

ACTION TIME

Imitate loud noises.

- Have you ever heard loud noises? In your home? Near you?
- Loud, scary noises, like the ones the characters in the story heard?
- Have you ever heard loud screams? At home? In other places?
- Have you ever been scared? If so, where? In your home? In the car?
- Have you ever been afraid, but didn't really understand what was going on?

ACTION TIME

Imitate a pebble falling on a foot (Scene 5).

- Have you ever seen people get hurt? Or having big boo-boos?

Topino forest

Let's talk!

3. In the story, how do the characters protect themselves?

Importance of understanding and practising protective measures.

Briefly summarize the escalation of the danger. "Remember, there were the screams, the small pebbles, the loud noises, the large pebbles. It got more and more dangerous."

If you find yourself in a situation where there is danger, such as people who are arguing loudly, throwing objects or hitting each other, how could you protect yourself?

A) Move away

Like Preeunk Skunk who suggested walking away from danger (Scene 5).

ACTION TIME

Imagine a dangerous situation all the children have to flee from.

Idea: In the room, form a small circle and place an object representing a pebble (the danger) in the centre. The educator or ECP makes a fort with their hands. Everyone must step back to get away from the danger.

B) Hide

Like Ziraga Frog hiding at the bottom of the pond. (Scene 7)

ACTION TIME

Imagine a dangerous situation all the children have to hide from.

Idea: In the room, arrange various accessories (e.g., blankets, stuffed animals, blocks) so that the children can hide. The educator or ECP makes a fort with their hands. Everyone must hide.

- Is there a place to hide in your house?
- Can you protect yourself by hiding at home?
- Where are the safe places to hide (e.g., in your room, in your bed under the blankets)?

C) Talk

Like Squirrel Rimerel (Scene 10) who felt relieved to finally be able to speak.

ACTION TIME

Imagine a game that invites the children to express themselves about good and bad secrets.

Idea: In the room, ask the children to perform a motor action (e.g., stand up) if the secret is a good one and to remain seated when it's a bad one. "Good secrets make you feel happy and relaxed knowing that the other person will feel the same." "Bad secrets make you feel sad, embarrassed, unhappy."

You might be afraid of hurting someone by telling the secret, but it's important to speak up.

The educator or ECP tell a secret and asks: "Is it a good secret or a bad secret?"

Examples of good secrets:

- "I don't want Mom to know I made her a present for her birthday."
- "Tomorrow, Dad will make Mom's favourite dinner. But shhh! Don't tell her."

Examples of bad secrets:

- A friend breaks a toy and asks you not to tell the educator.
- A grown-up asks you not to talk about something they've done wrong.
- "Mommy doesn't want us to tell anyone what's going on at home."

Whom can you talk to when something makes you sad, angry or scared?

Whom can you tell bad secrets to? At daycare? In your family?

Maybe your aunt or your grandpa? Or a family friend?

D) Ask for help

Like when the group called Spruce the Moose (Scene 9).

ACTION TIME

Practise calling 9-1-1 emergency services (children aged 4 and older).

Idea: Explain what 9-1-1 emergency services are, find a phone in the room and practise dialling the phone number and providing the required information (give them your name, explain the danger, and give them your address).

Topino forest

Let's memorize!

Use

Group

The educator or ECP leads a round of the memory game with the group. Once all the images have been matched, the meanings presented below can be shared with the group.

Individual

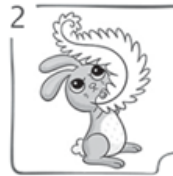
The memory game is made available to children, who can play it on their own.

Instructions

1. Show the children the images before arranging them face down.
2. Ask the children to take turns turning over two cards.
 - If a child finds two identical images, they keep the pair. Move on to the next child.
 - If a child turns over two different images, they put them back face down.
3. Move on to the next child.
4. The game is over when all the images have been matched.
5. The number of pairs used may vary depending on the number of children in the group.



- 1 Preeunk Skunk** (Scene 2)
- Fear (hypervigilance, on the lookout)
 - Eyes wide open
 - Role: life-saver



- 2 Bunny Verony** (Scenes 3 and 5)
- Anger
 - Role: protector
e.g.: He puts himself in danger trying to protect Squirrel by using a fern leaf as a shield.



- 3 Squirrel Rimerel** (Scene 4)
- Sadness, helplessness
 - Bottles up emotions, things that "weigh" heavy



- 4 Ziraga Frog** (Scene 6)
- Protective measure: hiding



- 5 Spruce the Moose** (Scene 8)
- In charge of security
 - Asking for help
 - Protection in case of emergency



- 6 FEE** (Scene 1)
- Character through which we witness the experiences of the other characters



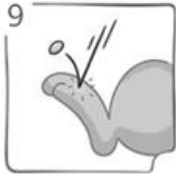
- 7 Small pebbles falling from the sky** (Scene 4)
- Climate of tension characteristic of the cycle of domestic violence



- 8 Larger pebbles falling from the sky** (Scene 5)
- Intensification of the climate of tension, fear and danger, or of the cycle of domestic violence

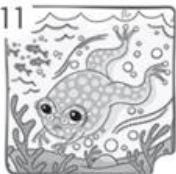
Topino forest

Let's memorize!



9 The pebble that hit Bunny Verony's paw (Scene 5)

- Assault as part of the cycle of domestic violence
- An injury



11 The bottom of the pond (Scene 7)

- Protective measure: hiding in a quiet place



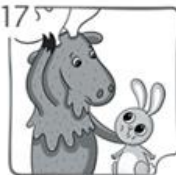
13 Squirrel spitting out pebbles (Scene 10)

- Sense of freedom when "what's heavy inside" is finally let out, relaxed feeling



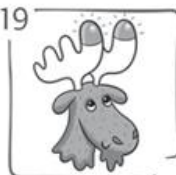
15 Bunny and Preeunk grabbing Squirrel to get away from danger (Scene 5)

- Protective measure: moving away from danger
- Accepting help



17 Spruce leaning toward Bunny (Scene 9)

- The child who feels responsible for or guilty about the violence.
- Adult intervention to relieve the child from this feeling.



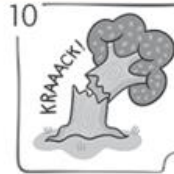
19 The antlers in "emergency" mode (Scene 9)

- Police flashing lights
- Danger, emergency



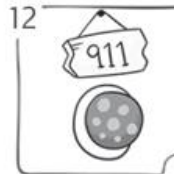
21 Squirrel Rimerel crying in a corner (Scene 10)

- Sadness



10 The broken tree (Scene 7)

- Consequences of assault (noise, impact of domestic violence on the environment)



12 9-1-1 (Scene 8)

- Protective measure: asking for help, calling 9-1-1 emergency services



14 The peaceful sunny landscape

- Reconciliation, honeymoon phase, lull, characteristic of the cycle of domestic violence



16 The hug that brings all the characters together (Scene 11)

- Comfort, the importance of helping each other and having a group of friends



18 The wounded heart (Squirrel) (Scene 4)

- The emotional impact of violence (sadness, fear, anger)



20 Preeunk Skunk walking on eggshells (Scene 3)

- Climate of tension characteristic of the cycle of violence

APPENDIX I

Topino forest

Story time!



Scene I



Every day, FEE visits a random part of the world to meet its inhabitants.

Today, as FEE is soaring over the Topino area, a large green swath of land appears on the horizon. It's a forest!

FEE heads down to visit Topino Forest.

Content developed by Mélanie Bélanger, Carl Lacharité, Marc Ludvik, Julie Lefebvre, Annie Stipanovic and Marleen Baker from the *Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille* [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDF), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with the Quebec Ministère de la Famille.

Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!



Scene 2



FEE explores the forest. In the shadows of the trees, nature often holds secrets. In order to discover its treasures, you must take the time to observe carefully. FEE sees bushes loaded with red berries that the birds are fond of. At the foot of great ferns stand small white star-shaped flowers. FEE stops in front of a gigantic tree. There is a hole at the height of the lowest branches. Out of curiosity, FEE approaches it to look inside. Surprise! Two eyes are staring back at her.

A head comes out of the hole. "Hi! I'm Preeunk Skunk." Preeunk climbs down from the tree to talk with FEE.

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Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!

Scene 3



Preeunk tells FEE about some of the good times she's had in Topino Forest.

Aaaaaah! Suddenly, a scream rings out in the distance. Preeunk stays quiet and signals to FEE to do the same. A few seconds pass.

Raaaaah! Another scream. It comes from far across the forest. "I don't like it when they scream," says Preeunk. FEE asks if that happens a lot. Preeunk hesitates, then replies: "Sometimes."

Someone approaches them from behind. FEE and Preeunk turn around to see Bunny Verony walking confidently towards where the screams came from. As he passes them, he informs them: "I'm going to the far end of the forest. Someone might need my help."

Boom! Just then, a loud thud sound shakes the earth as if a heavy object had fallen to the ground.

Seconds later, dozens of crows, chickadees and starlings go screeching across the sky.

They fly away from where the loud noises came from.

Preeunk turns to FEE and says: "I'm going with Bunny. I'm afraid he might get into trouble." FEE goes with them.

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Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!

Scene 4



Preeunk, Bunny and FEE approach a stand of white birch trees and come upon a rather unusual sight. Small pebbles are falling from the sky. That's not normal.

But that's not all: Squirrel Rimerel is running all over picking up the falling pebbles and stuffing them in his cheeks. Now that's weird!

Rah-aaaaah! The screams are becoming more and more hysterical. But Squirrel doesn't seem to notice. He is totally focused on the pebbles. Bunny wants to make himself useful. He walks up to Squirrel and asks: "Are you okay? Do you want me to help you?" With his mouth full of pebbles, Squirrel Rimerel points to his heart and answers: "I hawa who-who heew."

Bunny, who didn't understand what Squirrel said, remains silent, and Squirrel scurries off to collect more pebbles.



To be pronounced like your mouth is full:

"I have a boo-boo here."

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Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!

Scene 5



Preeunk looks worriedly at the sky. More and more pebbles are falling, and some of them are pretty big. The situation is becoming dangerous.

Whack! A pebble hits Bunny's paw. "Ouch!" he yells. That hurt!" Bunny grabs a large fern leaf to shield himself from the pebbles. He watches the sky and stays close to Squirrel Rimerel to protect him.

Raaaw! Another scream.

There are more and more large pebbles falling from the sky. Preeunk decides she must do something. She goes over to Squirrel and tells him that they need to leave so they don't get hurt by a large pebble. Squirrel replies: "No-oh. I hawa who-who heew."

Preeunk turns to Bunny and says: "Help me! We need to go. Grab Squirrel's arm."

They get a hold of Squirrel and carry him away. Squirrel keeps saying: "I gnog hung. Dayw mow!"



To be pronounced like your mouth is full:

"No, no. I have a boo-boo here."

"I'm not done. There's more!"

Content developed by Mélanie Bélanger, Carl Lacharité, Marc Ludvik, Julie Lefebvre, Annie Stipanovic and Marleen Baker from the *Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille* [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDF), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with the Quebec Ministère de la Famille.

Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!



Scene 6



The group walks for a few minutes. When they reach the pond, Preeunk suggests they take a break. They sit at the foot of a tree. Bunny asks Preeunk: "Is it over? Is it safe now?"

Boom! Before she can reply, they hear danger from afar. And despite the distance, they feel the ground tremble. Preeunk shakes her head no: "Oh, no! It's not over yet. But the danger is far away."

Then she adds: "I don't know what we should do. We can stay here for a while, but..." **Pop! Pop!**

They see bubbles bursting in the middle of the pond. **Pop! Pop!**

"What is it?", worries Preeunk. Bunny gets up to see where the bubbles are coming from. Preeunk and Squirrel do the same.

Two large bulging eyes appear on the surface of the water. Then, a frog's head slowly breaks the surface. The frog opens her big mouth and says: "Hellooooo! My name is Ziraga Frog."

FEE, Preeunk and Bunny reply: "Hello!"

Squirrel follows suit and mumbles: "Hewwo!"



To be pronounced like your mouth is full:

"Hello!"

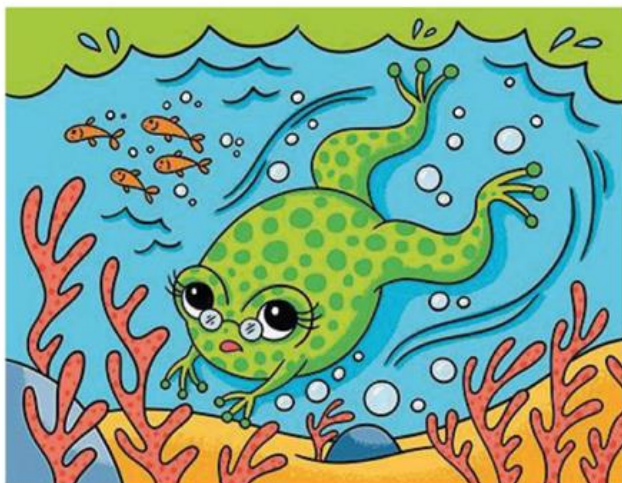
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Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!

Scene 7



Ziraga Frog approaches the group.

"I heard what you were saying. You know, it's not the first time this kind of thing happens at the far end of the forest. When it does, I dive to the bottom of the pond. I hide and wait. The danger always comes to an end."

Bunny is upset. "But *we* can't go to the bottom of the pond!"

FEE reassures him: "We can look for another place to hide."

Craaack! They hear a powerful cracking sound. It stops them in their tracks. It's the sound of a tree snapping. It's very alarming.

Craaack! Another tree snaps.

Ziraga retreats a little and says: "Oh my! You must get help. Go to the **9-I-I** den. Hurry! Hurry! I'm going back to the bottom of the pond."

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Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!



Scene 8



The group hurries off to the 9-1-1 den.

Preeunk walks up to the door and stretches out her arm to press the “9-1-1” buttons. Footsteps echo. A huge rack of antlers appears in the doorway. It’s Spruce the Moose. He’s the head of forest security. “Hello there! What can I do for you?” asks Spruce in a deep voice.

“We heard screams and loud noises coming from the far end of the forest,” explains Preeunk.

“Pebbles are falling from the sky. And we heard trees snapping. We’re really scared.”

Bunny approaches and adds: “I think it’s my fault!”

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Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!

Scene 9



Spruce signals Bunny to stop. He leans toward him and says in a compassionate voice: "It's not your fault. I can assure you that you're not the one who triggered all these dangers."

Spruce then turns to the group and says: "Very well. I'll take care of it. Go wait for me by the pond. You'll be safe there." He puts his antlers in "emergency" mode before hurrying off into the forest.

Content developed by Mélanie Bélanger, Carl Lacharité, Marc Ludvik, Julie Lefebvre, Annie Stipanich and Marleen Baker from the *Centre d'études Interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille* [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDEF), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with the Quebec Ministère de la Famille.
Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!

Scene 10



The group sits by the pond and waits for Spruce to return.

Everyone is quiet. There is no more screaming or noise coming from the far end of the forest. That's good. Still, Squirrel Rimerel is sad.

"Oh, look! The birds are coming back!" says FEE. Everyone looks up to the sky. Through the branches, they can see small flocks of birds returning to their nests.

"Ah! That's a good sign," says Preeunk.

Bunny asks, "Is it over? Is it safe now?"

"Yes, I think it's over," replies Preeunk. There's no more danger!"

Upon hearing those words, Squirrel starts spitting out the pebbles he had in his mouth. With his mouth now empty, he says:

"Thank you for helping me, my friends. I can finally speak and be understood."

Content developed by Mélanie Bélanger, Carl Lacharité, Marc Ludvik, Julie Lefebvre, Annie Stipanovic and Marleen Baker from the *Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille* [Centre for interdisciplinary studies on child and family development] (CEIDF), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with the Quebec Ministère de la Famille.

Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

Topino forest

Story time!



Scene 11



After a hectic day, everyone is now safe.

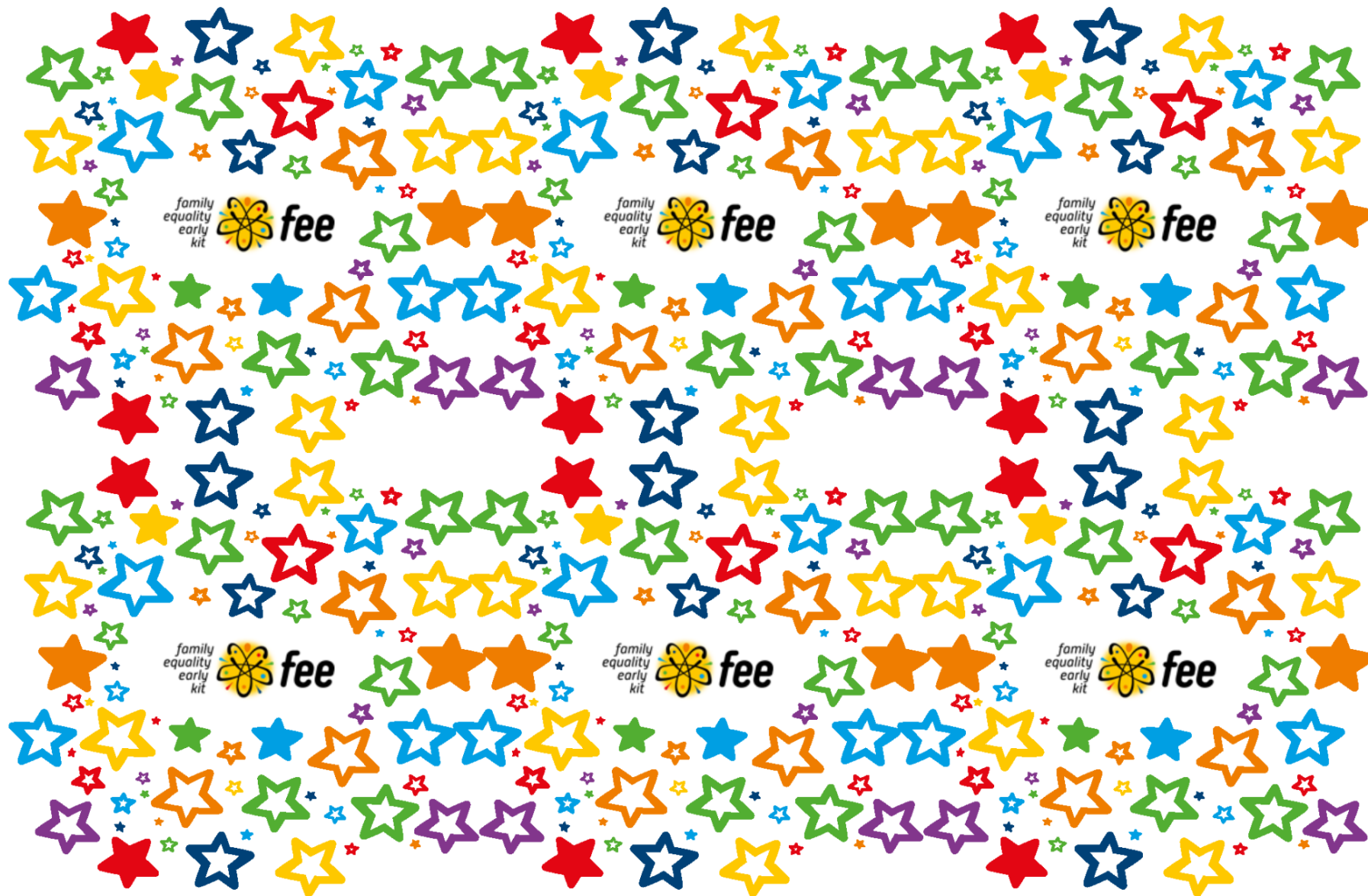
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Illustrations by Isabelle Charbonneau.

APPENDIX J

1/7 Topino forest

Let's memorize!





family
equality
early
kit



fee

family
equality
early
kit



fee

family
equality
early
kit



fee

family
equality
early
kit



fee

family
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early
kit



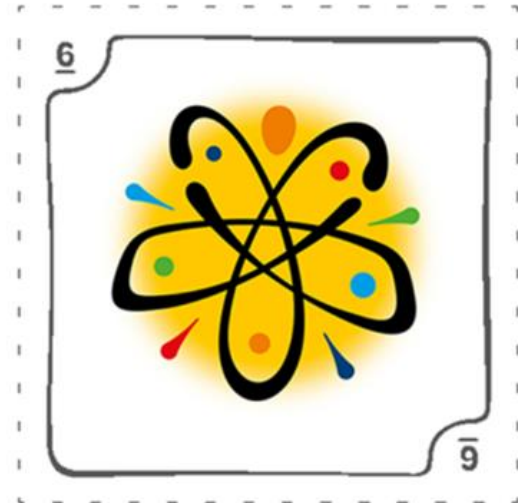
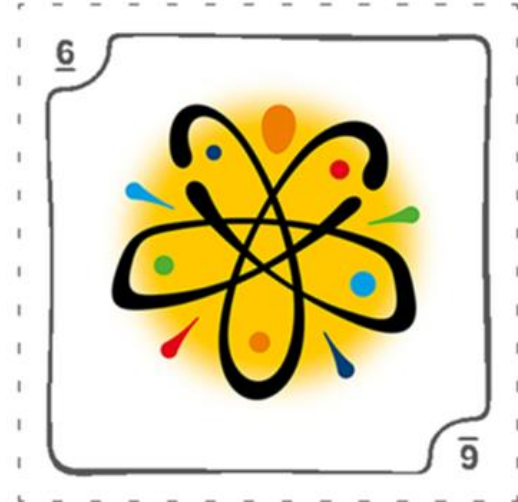
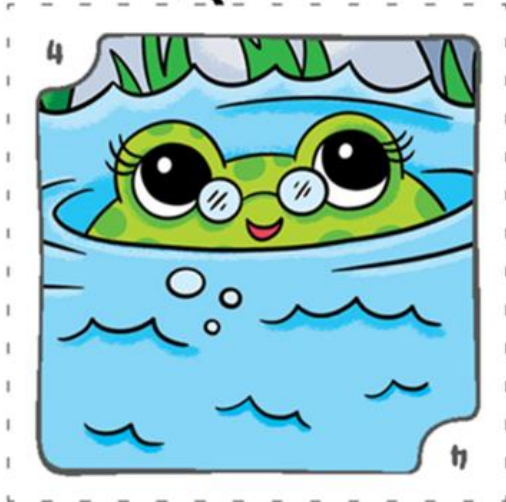
fee

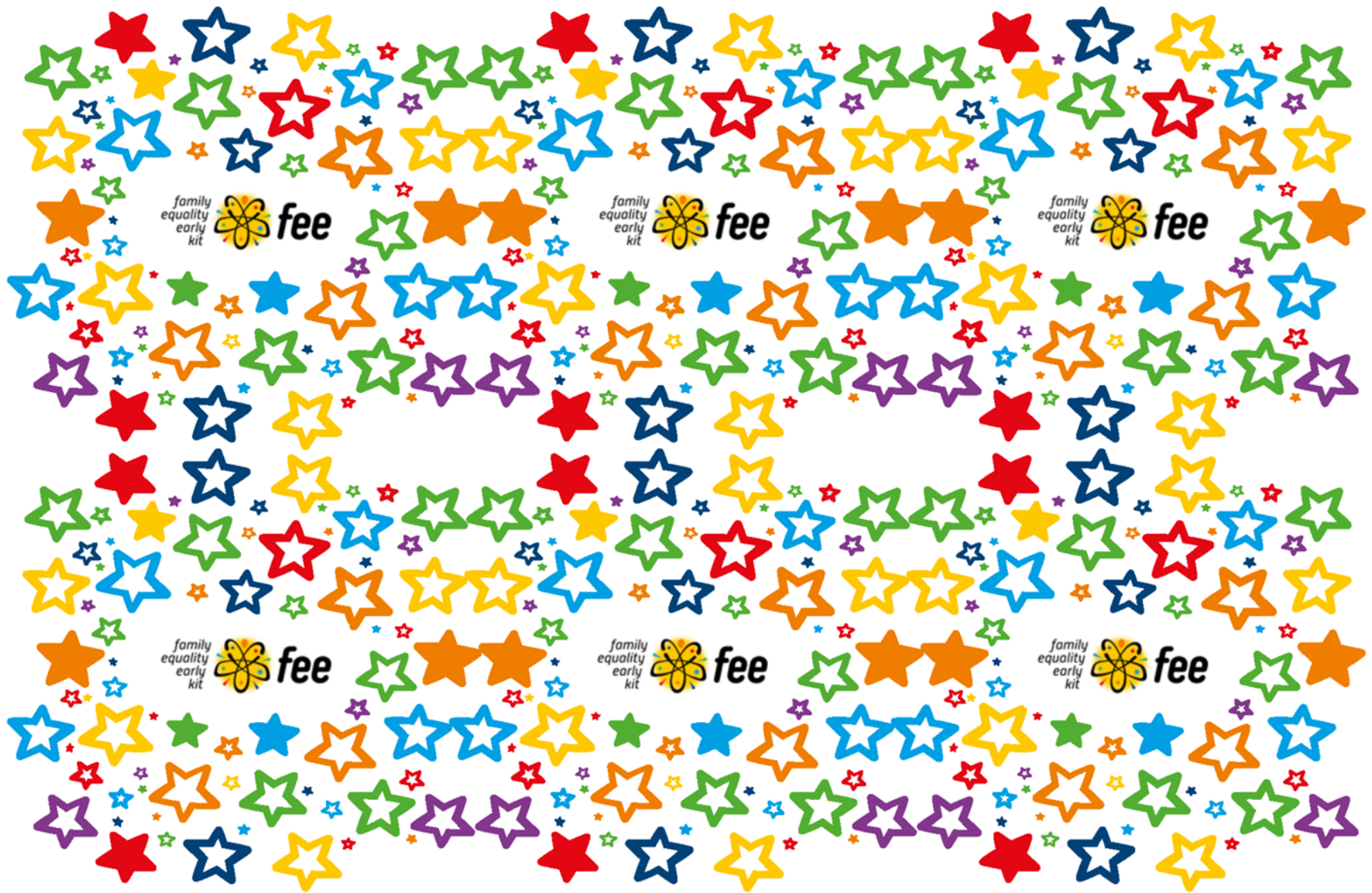


fee

2/7 Topino forest

Let's memorize!





family
equality
early
kit



fee

family
equality
early
kit



fee

family
equality
early
kit



fee

family
equality
early
kit



fee

family
equality
early
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fee

family
equality
early
kit

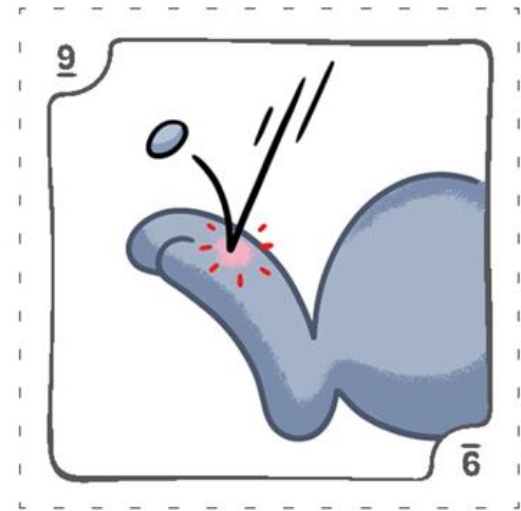
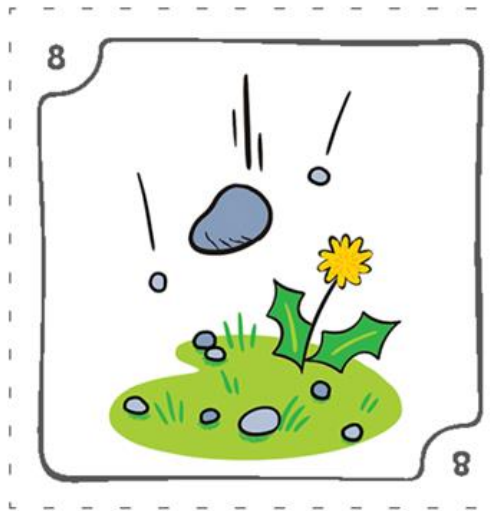
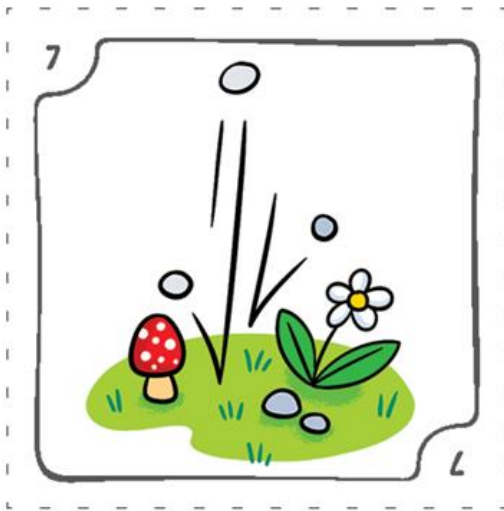
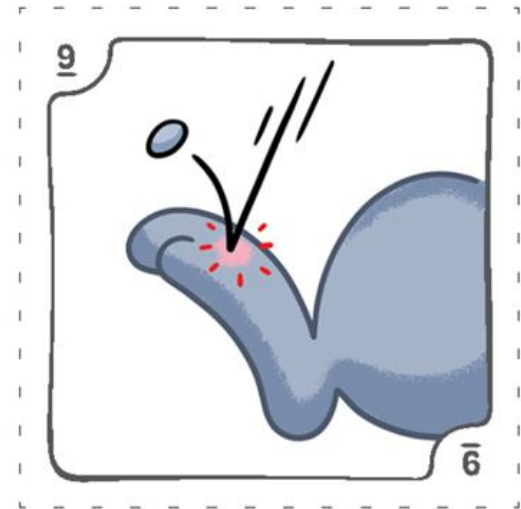
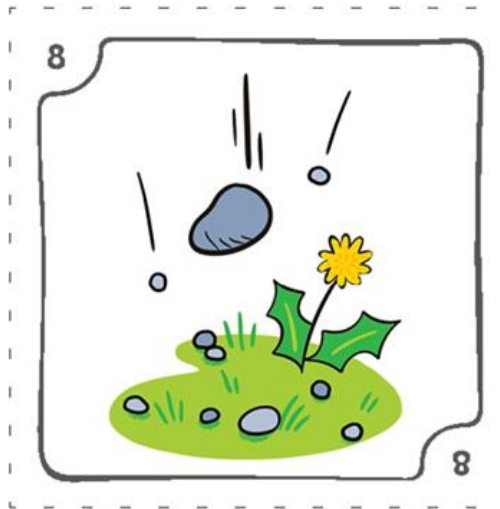
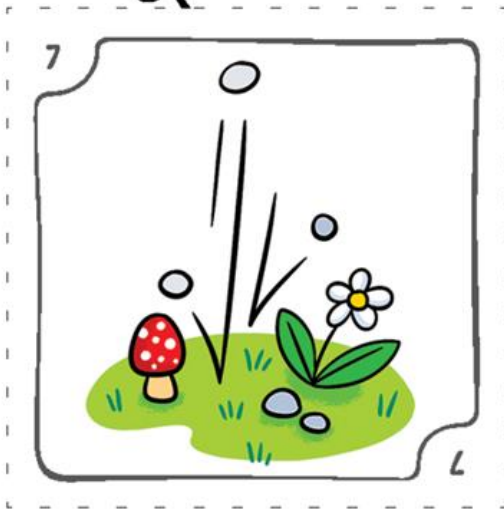


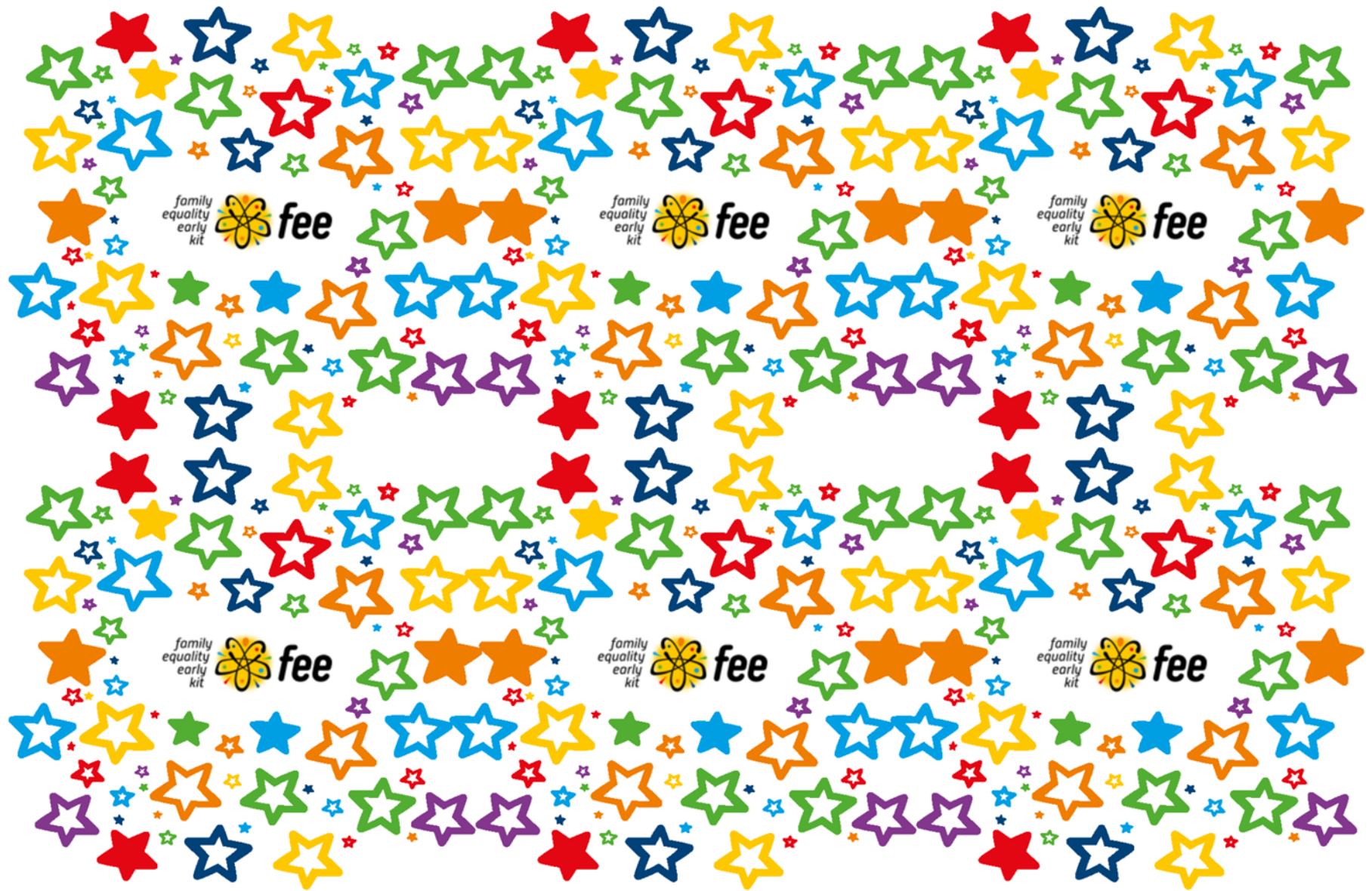
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3/7 ✂ Topino forest

Let's memorize!

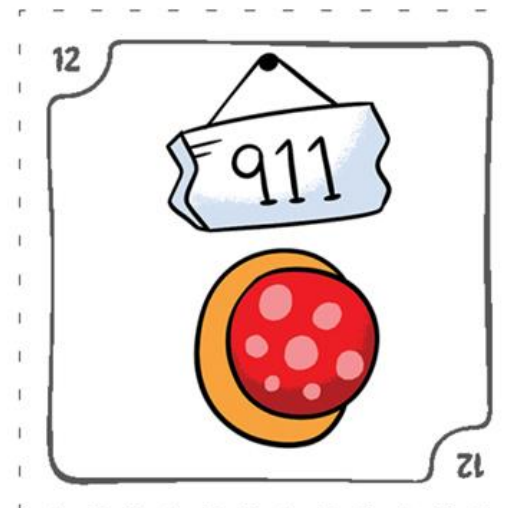
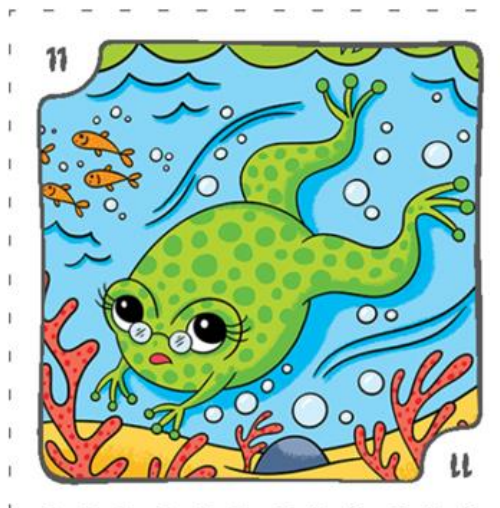
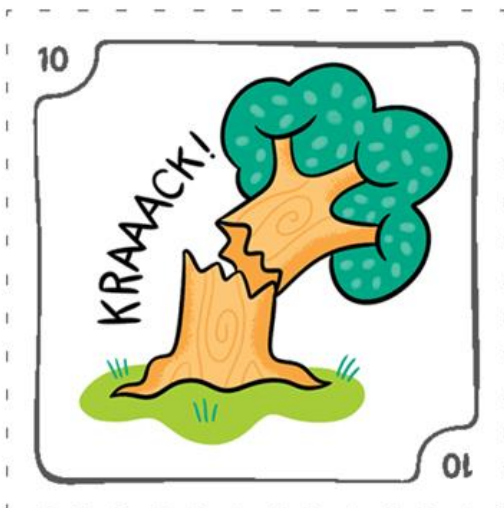
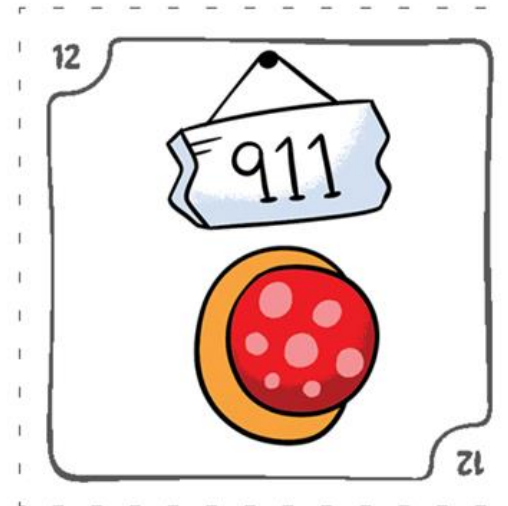
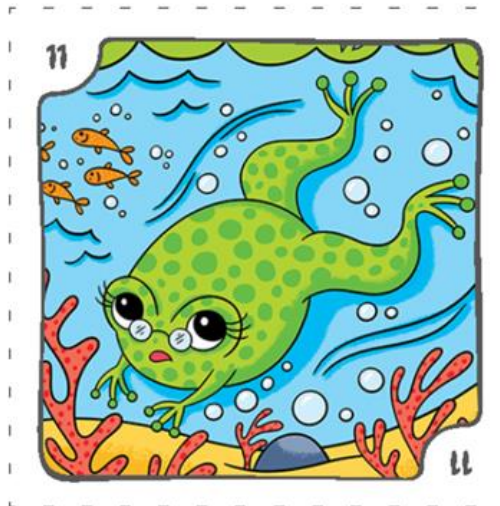
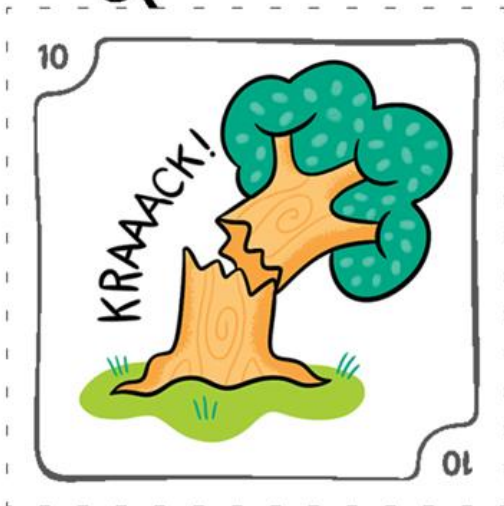


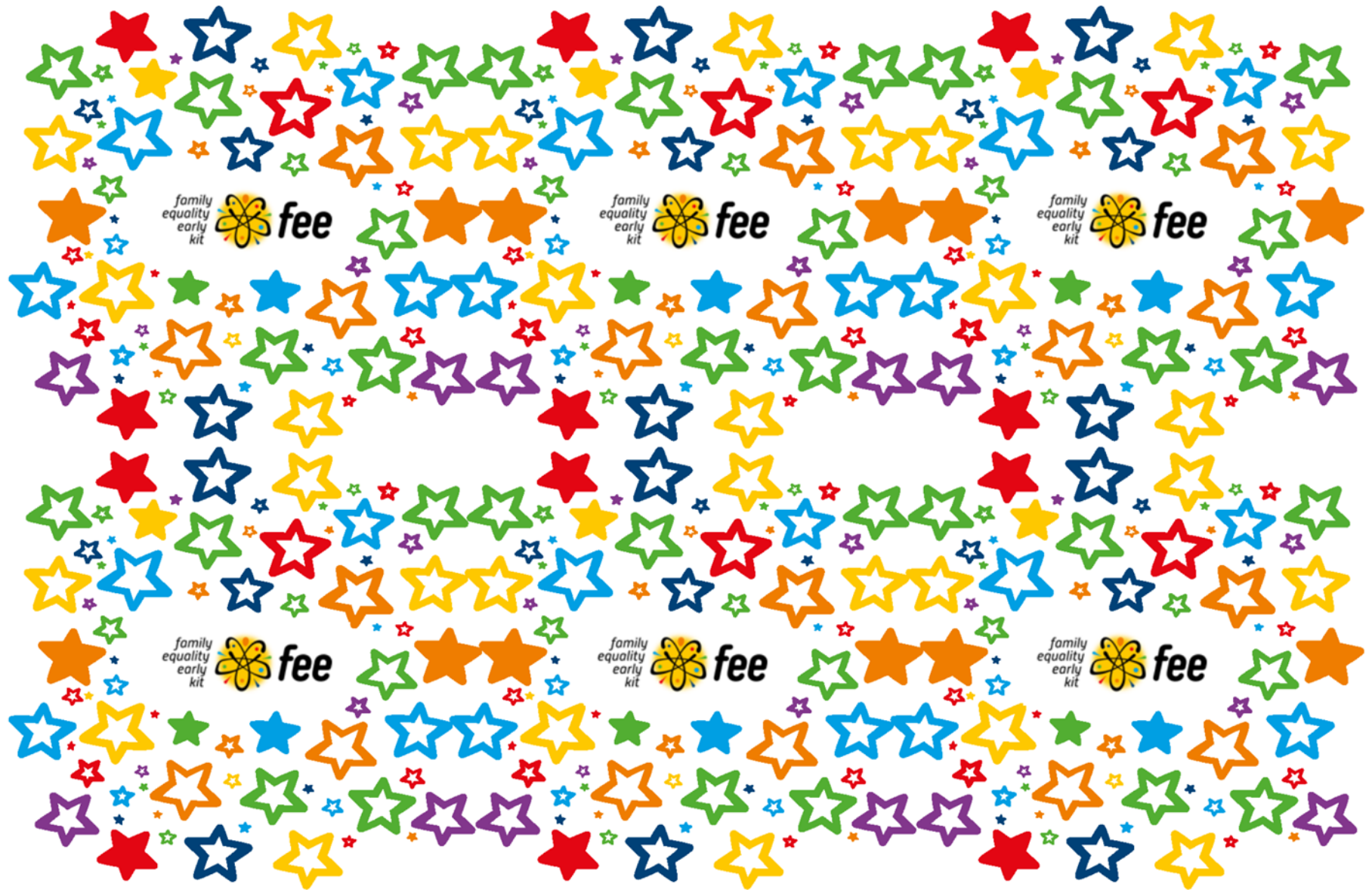


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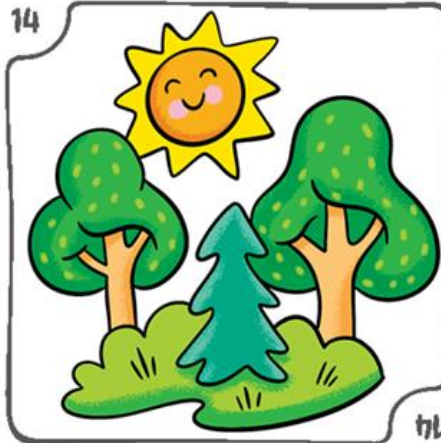
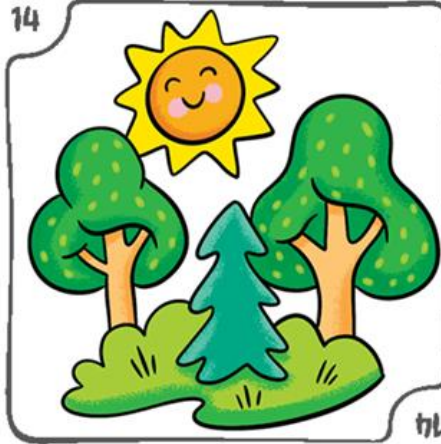
Let's memorize!

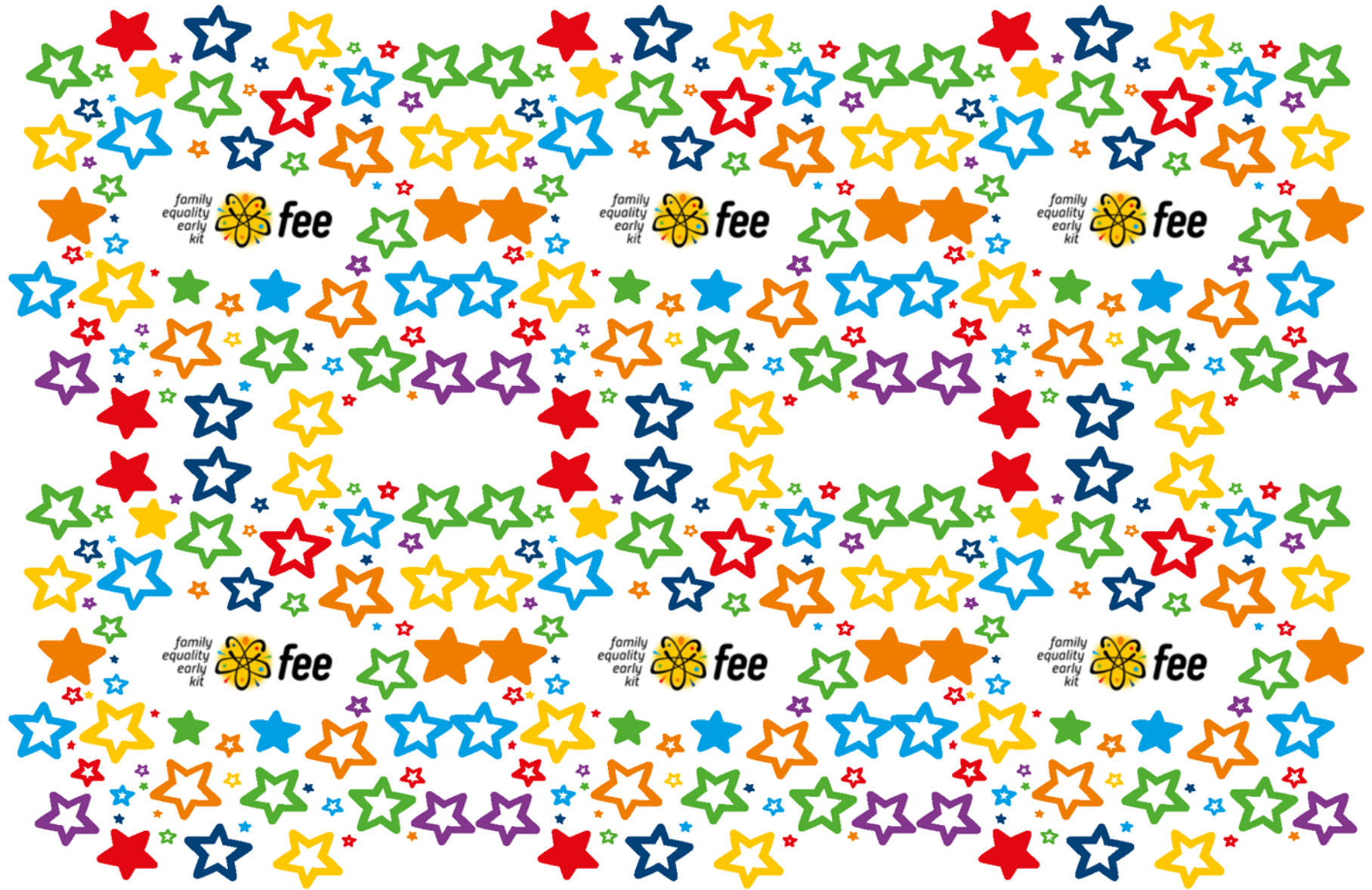




5/7 Topino forest

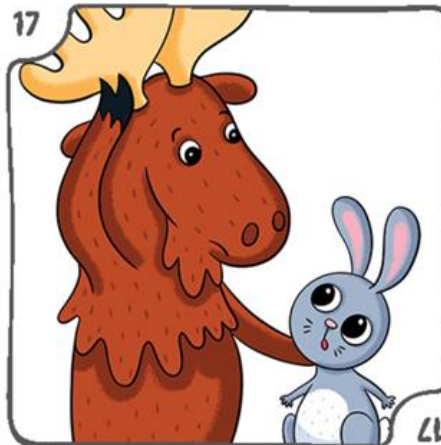
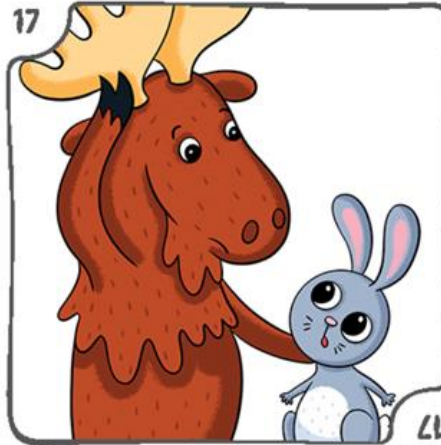
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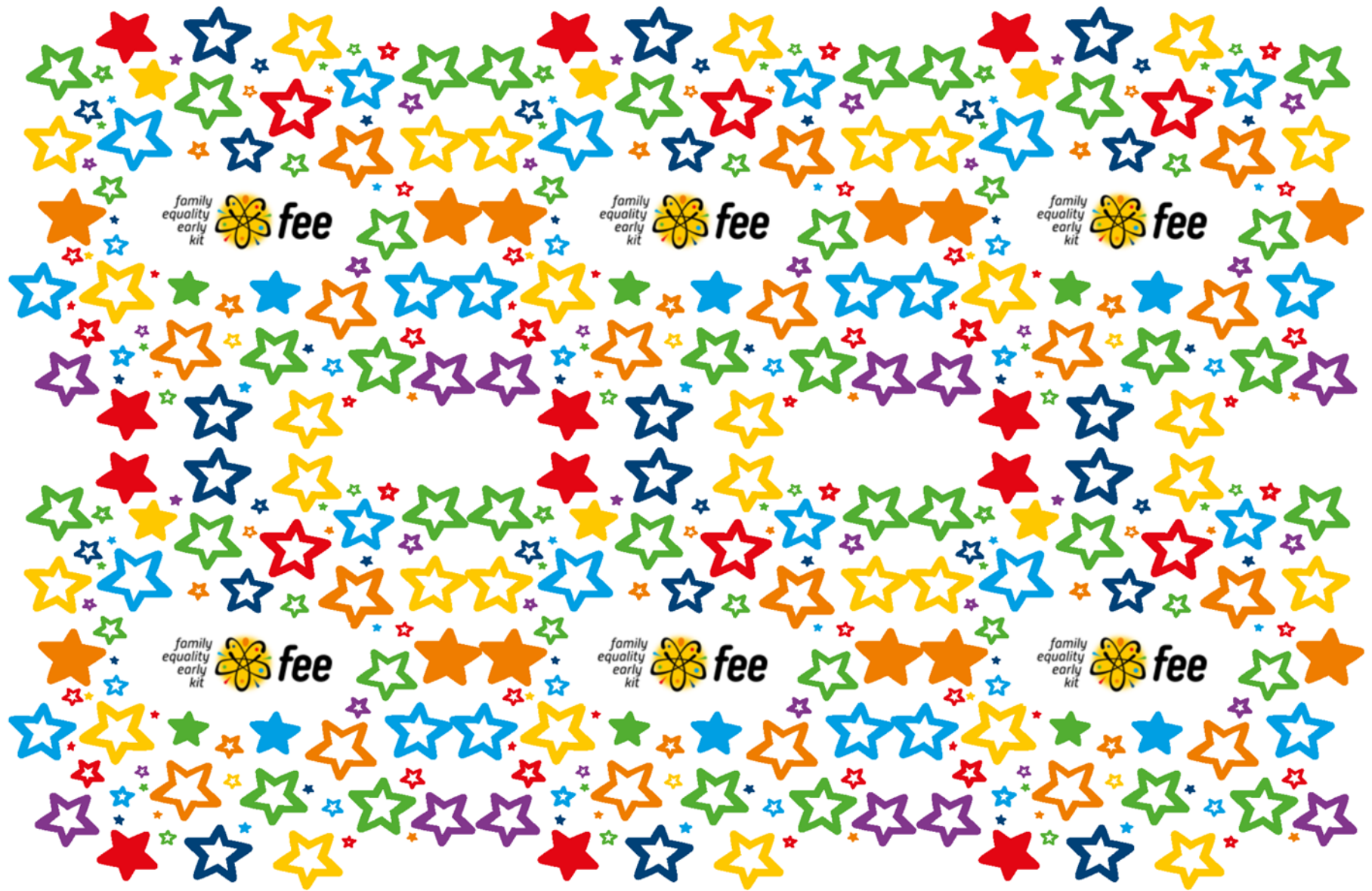




6/7 Topino forest

Let's memorize!





7/7 & Topino forest

Let's memorize!

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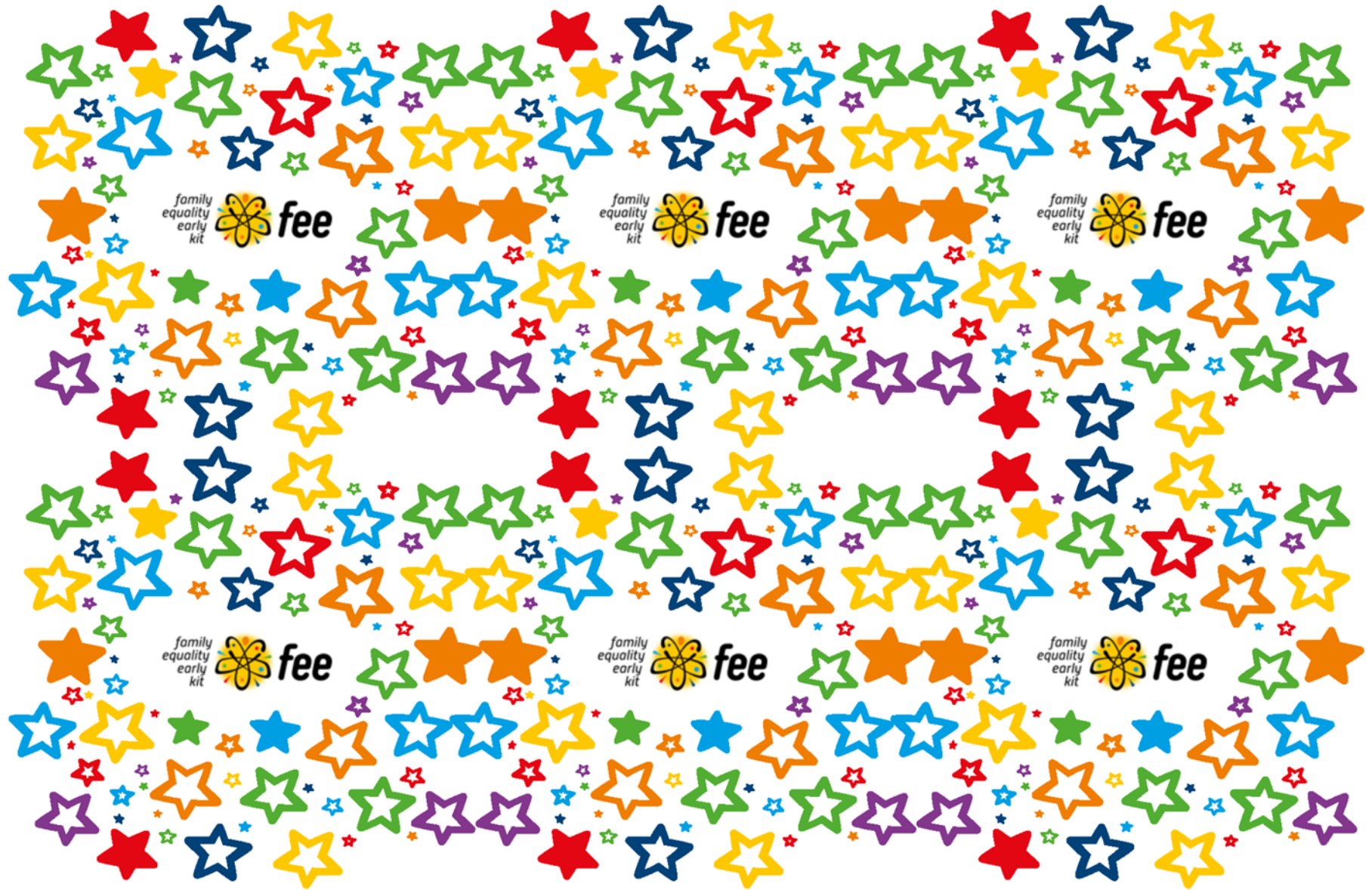


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12



APPENDIX K

Domestic Violence Reporting Protocol

for
toddlers



IMMEDIATELY



Immediately report the situation to the Director of Youth Protection (DYP) in your region by phone or in person.

EMERGENCY



If the situation requires **immediate action**, contact emergency services.

Information to provide when making a report

Background information

You

Identify yourself (as a person or a team).

This information is **confidential**. It is necessary in order to inform you whether the report gets accepted or not.

This feedback is provided only to the reporter.

The facts

What are the facts about the child's exposure to domestic violence?

Use the statements and observations recorded in the **I observe** tools.

Pay close attention to the risk factors for dangerousness using the **Dangerousness Assessment Checklist**.

The child

Provide the information needed to identify the child you are reporting about.

The consequences

What are the consequences of the child's exposure to domestic violence?

Use the completed **detection tool(s)**.

NOTE

- ☐ Keep a written record of the process:
 - date of the report
 - name of the person contacted at the DYPThis information will enable you to **follow up** on the report.

- ☐ Although making a report remains an **individual obligation**, your educational childcare service (ECS) or educational childcare coordinating office (CO) can assist you.

Additional information if available

What steps has the educational childcare service taken so far with the child and parents?

What facts are available about the perpetrator of domestic violence?

- Does this person recognize the consequences it has on the child?
- Are steps being taken to prevent further exposure to domestic violence?

What facts are available about the parent who experiences domestic violence?

- What actions has this parent taken to protect the child from domestic violence exposure?

Are there any other facts of concern to the educators or the person in charge of the educational childcare provider (ECP)?

Continued on reverse



First steps taken by the Director of Youth Protection

Source: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/childhood/services-youth-difficulty-families/youth-protection/steps-taken-by-the-dyp-when-a-situation-is-reported>

Stages of the report

The DYP must inform you whether the report is accepted or not. If you do not hear back, do not hesitate to contact the person you filed the report with.

If the report is accepted

An **assessment** of the family situation will be carried out.

If the report is not accepted

The family may or may not be notified of the report by the DYP.

The information you shared will remain in the child's file for **two years**. If there are multiple reports, it makes it possible to accumulate facts and assess the situation fairly.

If new facts come to light or the family situation deteriorates, it is important to make a new report.

Assessment

The family is kept informed of the report. The DYP assesses whether or not the child's **security** or **development** is in danger and, if applicable, if protective measures are required.

The child's security or development is in danger

The DYP continues its intervention to support the family.

The child's security or development is not in danger

If a need for services is identified, the DYP will refer the family to the appropriate resources (e.g., CISSS or CIUSSS services)

REMINDER

- ☐ Understand your reporting **obligations**.
- ☐ Support the family and the DYP with the measures put in place **if the ECS made aware of them**.
- ☐ Overcome barriers to reporting (e.g., minimization of domestic violence, feelings of uncertainty or guilt).
- ☐ Remember the reasons for reporting: the well-being, needs, and psychological and physical safety of a toddler.
- ☐ Remember that in the event of a report, **confidentiality** is upheld by the DYP.
- ☐ Consider different forms of exposure to domestic violence when reporting.

To find the contact information of the DYP in your region



Government of Quebec website

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/childhood/services-youth-difficulty-families/youth-protection/reporting-a-situation-to-the-director-of-youth-protection/contact-information-of-the-dyp>



On page 22 of the publication entitled *Filing a report with the DYP is already protecting a child - When and how to file a report?*

This document can be downloaded at:

<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-000897>

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