## Topic: Parenting and Children

**Let's get started…**Do you have strong opinions about raising children?  What are some of the important values you want to teach your children?

### Background:

Every country and every culture develops patterns of parenting and raising children that reflect the values of that country, the country's religion(s), and the country's culture. Parents give their children advice, often the same advice their parents gave them. Parents set rules for behavior, and guidelines for their children to follow.  Parents use various techniques to enforce their rules, ideas, and beliefs.  What is acceptable for parents to do in one country may not be acceptable in another country.  Moving to a new country can cause confusion and difficulty when these different views conflict. Laws about the family and family relationships, including parenting and children, differ from one country to another.

When moving to a new country, not understanding the laws or rules in the new country can cause problems.  What is acceptable behavior for children may differ in different countries.

**In pairs for 5 minutes, ask and answer these questions:**

- What are some of the joys and challenges of raising children in any culture?

- What are some of the joys and challenges of raising children in your country?

- What were some of the joys and difficulties of being a child in your culture?

- How does child rearing differ in the U.S. compared with your country?

- What are some of the joys and difficulties raising children in the U.S.?

**Share your partner's answers with the group.**

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## Discussion Questions:

What is some advice you would give other people from your country, about raising children in the United States?

What is the best advice your parents ever gave you? Did you follow the advice? Why or why not?

What were you like as a toddler, as a young child, as a teenager?

What were your children like as toddlers, young children, or teenagers?

What are some of your fondest memories from your childhood?

What are some things you wish you could change about your childhood?

In your native country, do people live with their parents until they get married?

In your native country, do people live with their parents after they get married?

In your native country, are children expected to go into the same business or career as their parents? What if a child wants to go into a different career, profession, or business? What happens? Does this cause conflict? How is the conflict resolved?

Do you think all people should follow the religion of their parents, or do you think people should have the freedom to choose a different religion? Why or why not?

In your native country, do children need the approval or consent of their parents before they can marry? What are some advantages and disadvantages of your country's system?

In your native country, do young men and young women have the same opportunities for education, independence, freedom to move about and explore? What are the differences? Do people accept these differences, or do some people have different opinions? What happens when there are conflicts?

How are differences of opinion between young people and their parents handled in your native country?

In your culture/native country, at what age do children leave their parents' home and set up an independent household?

In your native country/culture, do young people want to be like their parents, or do they have more independent natures? How is this handled in your culture?

In your native country/culture, what role do extended family members, neighbors, and other community members play, in raising, guiding, or disciplining children and young people? Do you agree with these roles? What would you like to change, if anything?

**New words and Idioms:** raising children; values; develop; patterns of parenting; reflect values; behavior; guidelines; various; techniques; enforce; child rearing; independent household ; "chip off the old block;" "cutting the apron strings;" "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree;" "home is where the heart is;" "you can't go home again;" "it runs in the family;" "blood is thicker than water;"