

**SET UP A
CIRCLES OF SUPPORT
GROUP TO HELP CHILDREN
STAY IN SCHOOL**



INTRODUCTION

Very often the schooling of children is interrupted when a parent or caregiver gets ill or dies. When children are at school it is possible for school convenors to play an important role in identifying which children are in need of support. In the same way, neighbourhood agents are in a good position to notice children's living conditions, to find out which children are experiencing problems and what their needs are.

This session has been written as a guide for facilitators. It provides an outline of a process that participants, with the help of a facilitator, can work through in order to do the following:

1. Understand what children in your community may need.
2. Learn more about what a Circles of Support group is and how it can help children.
3. Know what steps you need to take to set up a Circles of Support group.

This process has been divided into three steps:

- **Step 1:**

Use the Circles of Support poster and game (page 22)

In this step, participants use the poster and game to think of as many ways as possible to help children to stay in school.

- **Step 2:**

Find out how to set up a Circles of Support group to help children stay in school (page 23)

In this step, participants will read the pamphlet **Setting up a Circles of Support group** to find out what steps they should follow to set up their own group.

- **Step 3:**

Find other people to join your Circles of Support group (page 24)

In this step, participants look at how to choose other people to join a Circles of Support group. They will also practise filling in **Information Sheet 2** from the Circles of Support diary.

At different stages in this session you will see a box called **Main teaching points**. The points that are written here are the most important messages that you should be thinking about and discussing with participants in this session.



STEP 1

Use the Circles of Support poster and game

Who is involved: neighbourhood agents and school convenors

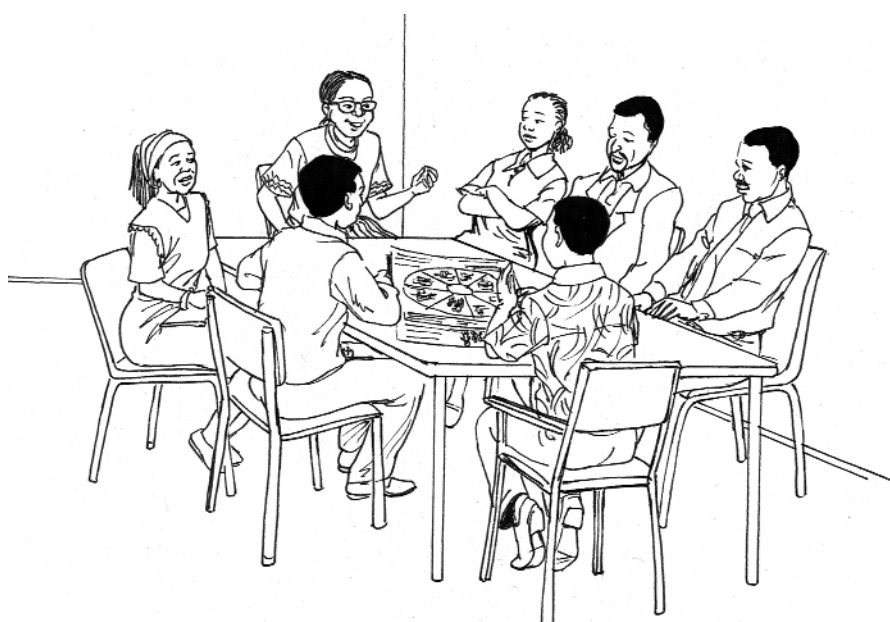
What you need: Circles of Support poster, Circles of Support game and cards (pictures that show examples of actions to help children) — a set for each group, blank cards

TIME
60
mins

In this step participants will use the Circles of Support poster for ideas of ways to help children at home and at school.

Activity

1. Ask participants to brainstorm or think of as many ideas as possible to help children in need. Tell them not to think too carefully about their ideas, but to say them as they think them.
2. Stick the poster up on a wall where everyone can see it. Give participants time to look at the poster.
3. Ask participants to work in small groups. Hand out the Circles of Support game cards. Tell participants that these pictures show actions from the poster and other actions too. Ask each group to choose 4 to 6 examples of actions (pictures) that they think would be most important to do for children in their community.
4. Give participants blank cards so that they can draw any other actions that are missing from the game.
5. Ask them to arrange the actions as parts or segments of the circle on the poster.
6. Give each group the chance to say what actions they chose and why they chose them.



STEP 2

Find out how to set up a Circles of Support group to help children stay in school

Who is involved: neighbourhood agents and school convenors

What you need: pamphlet **Setting up a Circles of Support group**

In this step, participants will read the pamphlet to find out what steps to take to set up their own Circles of Support group.

TIME
60
mins

Activity

1. In the whole group, ask participants the following question:

? **Why do you think it is better to work in a group to support children than to work alone?**

2. Divide participants into small groups. Hand out copies of the pamphlet **Setting up a Circles of Support group**. Make sure that each participant has a copy.
3. Ask one person from each group to read the pamphlet aloud. Give them enough time to do this. They should not feel rushed. Allow them to ask any questions.
3. In the same small groups, ask participants to think about the qualities that can help them to support children in need. Let them work on their own and do the activity 'Important qualities I have to help children' in the pamphlet. When they have done this, let them tell other members of their small group about the qualities they think they have.



Main teaching points

- Any person who wants to support a child can be part of a Circles of Support group.
- A Circles of Support group should have at least five or six members.
- When a Circles of Support group meets, they can use the Circles of Support poster and game to help think of ways to help children in need.
- All members of a Circles of Support group are volunteers. They need to think carefully about how much time they can give to working in the group.

STEP 3

Find other people to join your Circles of Support group

Who is involved: neighbourhood agents and school convenors

What you need: copies of worksheet — **Members of my Circles of Support group**,
copies of worksheet — **Details of people in my Circles of Support group** (*Information Sheet 1* from the Circles of Support diary)

TIME
60
mins

In this step, participants will look at ways of choosing or finding the right people in their community to be part of a Circles of Support group.

Activity

1. In small groups, ask participants to think about their own situations or communities. Ask them to think about how they would choose or find people who could be part of their Circles of Support group.
2. Hand out copies of the worksheet **Members of my Circles of Support group** on page 25. Ask participants to fill in up to 6 names of people they would ask to be part of a Circles of Support group.
3. Hand out copies of the worksheet **Details of people in my Circles of Support group** on page 26. Ask participants to practise filling in the details on this form. Some groups may have a good idea of who would be part of their Circles of Support group. Others may not. This doesn't matter as long as participants know what the form looks like, what details are important and where it goes in the diary.

**MEMBERS OF MY
CIRCLES OF SUPPORT GROUP**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____



INFORMATION SHEET 1

DETAILS OF PEOPLE IN MY CIRCLES OF SUPPORT GROUP

*This form should be completed and should stay in your diary.
It is a record of all the members of the Circles of Support group.*

Name	Male	Female	Contact number/s	Date joined	Reasons for leaving

Activity

In the whole group, discuss the following questions with participants:

- ***Do you think the idea of Circles of Support would work in your community?***
- ***What do you think other members of the community would think about a Circles of Support group?***
- ***What difficulties do you think you could experience working in a Circles of Support group?***

Main teaching points

- It is impossible to do everything yourself. Anyone who tries to support children on their own will soon find it too much to cope with.
- Working in a group means that everyone does what they can and there is strength in numbers.
- Schools and communities will be able to support children better if Circles of Support groups are set up.