



A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO WORKING WITH PARENTS TO END CHILD MARRIAGE



It is important to nurture and build a strong understanding of the factors behind why child and early marriage may be accepted by parents within communities.

Factors leading to acceptance of child and early marriage practices by parents within communities

- Commitment to age-old norms, traditions and beliefs
- Pressure from within the community
- Economic factors
- Fear of young women acting on their wishes and desires
- Perceived norms around their role as parents – both as a unit and separately



Learning from program implementors and practitioners' experiences from working with parents can help you build on these experiences.

Key insights from programme and practitioner perspectives on working with parents

The practice of bundling of parents with family and other stakeholders in research and evaluation makes it hard to evaluate the effectiveness of working with parents as a strategy to delay child marriage and thus also, if and to which degrees programmes should be tailored to parents

There is lack of conclusive evidence on the effectiveness of working with parents as a strategy to build on

There are challenges in addressing the issue of girls sexuality with parents, due to discomfort, parental permission, different understandings of sexuality and other barriers experienced by practitioners.



The experiences of program implementors and practitioners highlight several challenges when working with parents, revisiting how you work with parents is an important next step to making your work more impactful.

How you as a practitioner can rethink how you work with parents

Acknowledge that parents are in as much need of support as girls and need to be seen separate stakeholders that need tailored approaches to ensure that their voices and motivations are considered and leveraged in programming efforts.

Account for the different roles that each parent plays and going beyond seeing and approaching parents as a single unit but instead enabling a nuanced understanding of the different roles they each play.

Address the relationship between girls and their parents through more focused and context-specific approaches to working with parents.



Examples of positive approaches that you may want to use to pave the way forward

Positive deviant approach
(e.g. through parent networks)

Targeted communication and activities for mothers and fathers
(e.g. through family clubs, tailored sessions, income-generating activities, using socializers and engaging key community members, 'tea-stall' / informal conversations)

Inter-generational dialogues
(e.g. with different sets of community members)

Localisation of terminologies and dialogue
(e.g. through tailored-messaging and using entry-points for dialogue around sensitive topics)

Working with parents is essential – parents are the primary decision makers in the lives of their adolescent daughters. In order to tackle the complexities and challenges that come with working with them, it is important to take an innovative approach to addressing sensitive topics related to child marriage and sexuality.



Read more on tips to start, stop or do differently in our longer piece: 'WORKING WITH PARENTS – RETHINKING PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS' Which you can find in [OUR RESOURCE LIBRARY](#). There you will also find more resources on working with parents or other aspects of Child Marriage.