



**PARENTING JOURNEY**

We help build stronger families.

# Parenting in America

---

**OFFICIAL SAMPLE FACILITATOR CURRICULUM**

**P A R E N T I N G J O U R N E Y ®**

**National Headquarters**

366 Somerville Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143  
(617) 628-8815

**New York Area**

80 Maiden Lane, Suite 606  
New York, NY 10038  
(212) 430-5909

[parentingjourney.org](http://parentingjourney.org) • [facebook.com/theparentingjourney](https://facebook.com/theparentingjourney)

# Contents

---

---

Introduction.....	1-23
Preface	1
Parenting in America Training Program	3
Introduction to Parenting in America	4
Key to This Guide	22
Session 1: Sharing Our Stories of Success and Survival .....	25
Session 2: Our Immigration Experience .....	45
Session 3: Adjusting to Immigration .....	59
Session 4: The Challenges We Face .....	73
Session 5: Our Parenting Values—Past and Present .....	91
Session 6: Constructing the Parent-Child Bridge.....	113
Session 7: Identifying and Meeting Children's Emotional Needs (Part I)	143
Session 8: Identifying and Meeting Children's Emotional Needs (Part II)	129
Session 9: Why Try Practicing New Ways of Parenting?.....	161
Session 10: Exercising New Ways to Parent .....	175
Session 11: Putting Family Agreements into Practice .....	193
Session 12: Graduation .....	207
Session Poster Content .....	221

## SKILLS LEARNED IN THE PARENTING JOURNEY

While the program attends informally to behaviorally focused skills, its emphasis is essentially on relationally based skills. The Parenting Journey explores relationships in a variety of forms. It emphasizes respect, listening with empathy, and recognizing and supporting strengths. The program teaches people to process and solve problems, to make choices and plans, and to be consistent. It helps people recognize and deal with loss, secrets, and fears in a healthy and direct ways. It also enhances resilience and parents' abilities to recognize their strengths and to benefit from using them. People can then prevent adverse effects on children and learn how their own experiences are relevant as they parent.

## MODALITIES

The group uses several different modalities:

- **Parent Workbook:** Parents receive a Parenting Journey parent workbook to record their answers to the questions posed in each session.
- **The Meal:** Nurturing through food and basic comfort can help remove barriers to attendance.
- **Warm-ups:** Warm-up generally consists of balancing questions and welcome time. Sometimes playful activities precede these activities, which bring people together and get them ready for the session.
- **Action-oriented and interactive techniques:** We use letter writing, collage making, line sculpting, games. And we work in pairs and small groups to effectively and cognitively experience the learning.
- **Focused questions:** In each session, facilitators raise a series of questions that elicit self-reflective, interactive, and informative responses: they are conversations rather than lectures.
- **Props:** *Dichos*, handouts, and pictures are used to supplement and stimulate conversations.
- **Strategic self-disclosure:** For each activity, facilitators thoughtfully share preplanned examples from their own lives. They go first to model the exercise for the group. We discuss in detail the proper use of strategic self-disclosure during the training of new Parenting Journey facilitators.

## CURRICULUM SUMMARY

### Sessions 1–2: Developing Confidence

These sessions start with icebreakers and other activities designed to build team spirit. In other words, they help make the parents feel comfortable and united. Mainly, participants complete the group contract and start to hear about each member's immigration experience. They share stories of success and survival. These stories reveal the inner strengths, resources, and values of each participant's native culture.

### Sessions 3–6: Connecting the Past with the Present

These sessions get to the heart of the Parenting in America model. Parents are respectfully led through a series of experiential activities that give them a chance to reflect on their past parenting experiences in their native country and how the immigration experience impacts their lives and their children's lives. Parents also become aware of the power they have to influence and direct this process by choosing the cultural parenting values they want to preserve and what this involves. Parents begin to make connections between the processes of cultural adaptation and to identify various challenges and difficulties they want to overcome.

### **Sessions 7–8: Teaching and Disciplining Our Children**

In these sessions, parents explore special issues so they can practice and implement new parenting techniques by recognizing children's emotional needs. These techniques are geared toward raising emotionally strong children. Parents can also analyze and internalize the advantages and disadvantages of using disciplinary practices in a compassionate, nonjudgmental way, and the impact they have on the parent-child relationship.

### **Sessions 9–11: New Methods of Parenting Are Put into Practice**

Parents explore the importance of making proactive decisions; they learn the process of setting goals and family agreements. They establish a concrete, feasible plan, and they get help to develop strategies for reaching a family agreement.

### **Session 12: Graduation**

Friends and professionals are invited to the Parenting in America graduation ceremony. We celebrate completion of the program, and share various community resources to grow members' support systems.

## STRUCTURE

The Parenting in America format usually includes the following: an informal welcome time, a meal, core activities, and a closing. In each of the 12 Parenting in America sessions, parents experience structure, practice routines, and display respectful behavior within the group. Facilitators discuss how these elements establish consistency which creates a supportive holding environment in which safety and trust can be nurtured. Parents are encouraged to model these behaviors at home to create a structure that can support their children's growth and development. Parents also discuss how modeling rituals and routines at home can help children develop self-regulation and lead to improvements in their children's behavior.

## WEEKLY SESSION FORMAT

### **The Meal**

The meal is a critical aspect of the group, providing actual, as well as symbolic, nurturing to the members. The group facilitator offers the food—nutritious, simple, and inexpensive—which then serves as a model for members who wish to emulate this "family meal." A nicely set table tells our members they are valued, respected, and worth caring for. Sharing a meal together sets a positive tone and changes the event's nature from a remedial improvement effort to a supportive and fun occasion.

## The Agenda

The agenda provides a preview of what will take place in the session.

### Balancing or Commitment Questions

1. Name a new activity you can work on to help you adjust to your life here in the US.
  - What do you want to do?
  - When?
  - With what?
  - How?
  - Where?
  - With whom?
2. What are the challenges you may face in doing this?
3. What will you need to change in your current life in order to work on this new activity?
4. Name a new activity you can work on to be more connected to your own culture.
  - What do you want to do?
  - When?
  - With what?
  - How?
  - Where?
  - With whom?
5. What are the challenges you may face in doing this?
6. What will you need to change in your current life in order to be more connected to your own culture?

The balancing or commitment questions can be found on pg. 80 of the curriculum as well.

### The Session Main Activity or Activities

Each week there is a main activity designed to help parents develop more insight and awareness of their journeys as immigrants, as well as their hardships and successes. We encourage immigrant parents to explore and become aware, in a respectful manner, of the origins of their current parenting practices while also promoting attitudes and behaviors that increase effective parenting: loving, nurturing, teaching, and protecting their children. Doing so also helps fostering skills immigrant parents need while adjusting to their environs.

### The Session Closing Ritual

Each group ends with a structured ritual closing that also offers participants an opportunity to speak about what they learned during the session.

### The Graduation

The group's last ritual is a graduation celebration to which they invite important guests. These

are frequently family members but can also be caseworkers or friends who are resources to the members and proud of their accomplishments. The graduation celebration marks positive change, recognizes strengths, and celebrates new possibilities. Graduation allows participants to make their learning visible to themselves and to those present by answering key reflective questions. In this way the celebration affirms their strengths.