



## Tips for Strengthening Families Program Facilitators

- “Facilitator” is derived from the French word “facile” which means “to make easy.”
- Facilitators do not need to be an expert on the topic being discussed. But the facilitator should be well prepared for the discussion. The facilitator should understand the goals of the program, be familiar with the sessions and think ahead of time about how the sessions might go.
- Stay neutral. As a facilitator, you have considerable power with the group. Be aware of your own strengths, weaknesses, biases and values. Monitor your body language and facial expressions.
- Establish rapport and build trust in the group. Limited disclosure of our successes, mistakes and failures demonstrates that no one is perfect or has all the answers. Remember what participants say and comment on their remarks or observations the following week. Talk informally with families during mealtime.
- Help the group set ground rules and stick to them. When necessary ask the group to help re-establish ground rules.
- Be an active listener. Listening carefully will set a good example for participants.
- Allow for pauses and silences. People sometimes need time to think before they respond. Try counting silently to ten before you rephrase the question.
- Create opportunities for everyone to participate. Try to involve everyone; don’t let anyone take over the conversation.
- Be sensitive to participants who can’t read or have trouble reading. Be prepared to read out loud. Provide extra help to participants where literacy is a concern.
- Don’t allow the group to get stuck on a personal experience or anecdote.
- Keep careful track of time.
- And finally, have a good time! The topics discussed are serious and important for parents and youth. But remember to have fun!