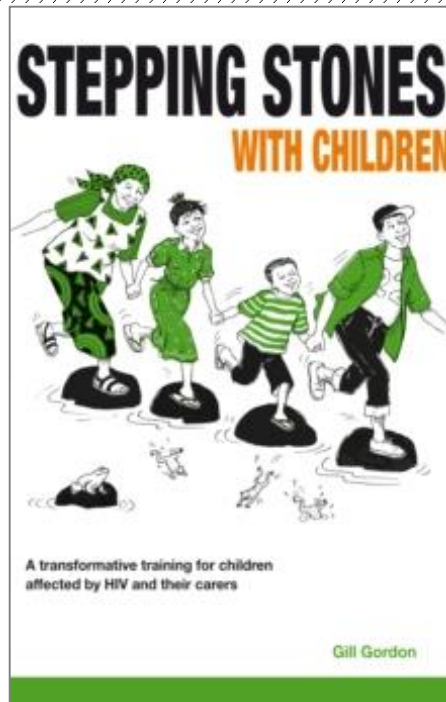


## Handouts for *Stepping Stones with Children*



This *Handout for Stepping Stones with Children* is to be used with the *Stepping Stones with Children* training manual published by Practical Action Publishing, 2016.

You can download this handout for free for use with this training manual from the [www.stepsstonesfeedback.org](http://www.stepsstonesfeedback.org) website.

On this website there are also many other resources to support you with this training manual and the original *Stepping Stones* training manual.

*Stepping Stones* and *Stepping Stones Plus* as well as *Stepping Stones with Children* are both programmes created and supported by Salamander Trust, [www.salamandertrust.net](http://www.salamandertrust.net)

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## **GOING TO SCHOOL**

### **1. Benefits of going to school**

Going to school can provide all children, and particularly vulnerable children, with the benefits of:

- a safe and structured environment;
- a routine, which gives stability in times of change;
- adult supervision and emotional support;
- friendships that last into adulthood.

The learning gained from going to school can give children:

- improved thinking processes, which help them whether they remain in their village or not;
- more and better opportunities for different types of work and further learning, to fulfil their dreams;
- reduced vulnerability to early pregnancy, early marriage, and health problems (including HIV), due to better knowledge, confidence, life-skills, and opportunities;
- better health and opportunities for *their* children.

### **2. Ways caregivers can support their children to attend school and achieve their best**

- Pack food for children to take to school.
- Praise and encourage children's learning, and take an interest in it.
- Help them understand the long-term benefits of education.
- Work with other caregivers and teachers to develop the school.
- Support children to make good choices about sex, drugs, and marriage.
- Support children in protecting each other from sexual abuse.
- Support girls in coping with the challenges of menstruation.
- Teach boys to behave respectfully towards girls.
- Encourage children to be active at school, and to join clubs where they can have fun and build practical and academic skills.
- Support older children to delay new roles, such as mother or wage earner.
- Remind children that girls and boys can do well in all subjects, and find work that interests them.
- Listen to children's concerns about school and find ways of acting on them, for example, if they are being bullied or beaten by teachers.
- Support grieving children to cope with their feelings.
- Try to avoid children dropping out of school due to lack of money or time:
  - For school fees: save in advance; negotiate reduced fees or to pay with labour or farm produce; seek contributions from voluntary organisations or groups.
  - Prioritize spending on education over things that give short-term pleasure.
  - Look after all family members' health (this may include HIV testing), so that children are not needlessly sick, or caring for others who are sick;

- Share work, and caring for the sick, among males and females;
- Set up shared childcare with others, to look after young siblings;
- Ask friends for help.

### 3. Ways that children can get the most out of school

- Be diligent in studying and doing homework.
- Remind yourself of your dreams and why you want to do well at school.
- Work with siblings and friends who also want to do well at school.
- Talk with your caregiver about school and ask for their support.

### 4. Creating a supportive school

Some ideas for creating a more supportive school might include:

- Train one person in the school in counselling;
- Offer to run a session for all teachers about HIV, ways of supporting children, and the importance of confidentiality;
- Provide a space for children who feel unwell to rest while at school;
- Provide different toilets for girls and boys, bins for sanitary materials, and water and soap for washing hands;
- Keep a stock of menstrual pads and spare uniforms for girls who need them;
- Make food available (snacks or a meal);
- Teach all age groups about health, how people get sick, and how to stay healthy, with HIV as one condition among many;
- Give training to specific teachers whose behaviour is problematic ;
- Develop actions to prevent teasing, abuse, and bullying in school;
- Teach about virtues like respect, friendliness, appreciation of strengths and difference and justice;
- Train teachers about positive discipline and stop unkind punishment;
- Teach children their rights and set up a system to report and act on abuse;
- Train teachers not to touch children inappropriately, nor have any form of sexual contact with a child. Ensure sanctions are in place to check inappropriate actions.



Members of the *Stepping Stones* group could advocate for specific actions by meeting with key people from the school and Ministry of Education. Or they could work in partnership with others, such as the parent teachers' association or a local NGO, to try and improve things.