

## Development of Care Group Manual

The Care Group Manual was first utilized in southwestern Guatemala to improve health and development for rural children aged 2–35 months, as well as their caregiver's knowledge and skill of nurturing care by researchers in University of Colorado, USA. The curriculum contains 35 sessions and is designed to perform monthly.

After getting approval to refer the contents in original manual, a group of Chinese experts in the field of pediatrics, developmental pediatrics, early education and child psychology organized by the National Health Commission began to develop the Care Group Manual for Chinese rural children aged 2 to 35 months. They reached a consensus on increasing the frequency from monthly to fortnightly for children aged 2 to 23 month old, and keeping most of the nurturing topics and designing health topics that are more appropriate for Chinese rural children. Afterwards, the Care Group Manual was developed applying the following rules:

- i. Each session should follow the same structure.
- ii. Knowledge and skills towards nurturing care and health should be put forward by authoritative organizations such as WHO, UNICEF, Ministry of Education, National Health Commission or other academies.
- iii. Health topics should be the most necessary and pressing ones for rural children and 0 to 3 years old. And at least half of them should be related to nutrition or feeding.
- iv. Games and activities should be safe, attractive and developmentally appropriate for children. Related toys or materials should be inexpensive and safe.
- v. Replace the English songs and books into Chinese ones.

In total, there are 56 sessions in the Chinese Care Group Manual. 35 nurturing topics and 35 activities in the original manual were kept after adaptation. The experts developed 23 nurturing topics, 56 health topics, and 49 games and activities along with research members. For each health topic, there is a core message with rhyme to help caregivers to remember.

Research members positioned Health class before Nurturing class and Activity because local children cannot easily and immediately calm down after activities in pilot study, which negatively affects the caregivers' attention to learn key messages. Growth monitoring (length, weight, and head circumference) was not included because it has been covered by health management services as part of the National Public Health Service (NPHS). Comparison of the agendas is listed below:

The original manual	The Chinese Care Group Manual
1. Welcome and check-in	1. Welcome and check-in (5 minutes)
2. Nurturing class	2. Health class (5-10 minutes)
3. Information and discussion about child development	3. Nurturing class (5-10 minutes)
4. Health class (5 minutes)	4. Activity (20 minutes)
5. Baby Talk/Language Power and Song (5 minutes)	5. Language power (5 minutes)
6. Goodbye and information for the next visit	6. Closing (2 minutes)
7. Growth monitoring and promotion	

Table 1 Comparison of agenda in two manuals