

EFFECTIVE POPULATION-LEVEL PROMOTION OF POSITIVE PARENTING AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN HIGH- ADVERSITY SETTINGS



In 2019, WHO, UNICEF and Parenting for Lifelong Health identified the need for population-level strategies to deliver and scale-up parenting programs. This need is particularly urgent in forced displacement settings like the Thailand-Myanmar border, where over 2 million migrant and displaced families experience insecurity, poverty, and limited access to essential services.

Being Family | Using film to promote positive parenting and reduce violence against children



Being Family is a film-based intervention co-created with migrant and displaced communities from Myanmar using evidence-based parenting skills from the WHO-UNICEF Parenting for Lifelong Health programs.^[1] This brief reports new results from a cluster randomised trial of *Being Family* with 2,249 caregivers living on the Thailand-Myanmar border. Results show **positive impacts** on **positive and playful parenting, prevention of physical violence against children, and caregiver engagement in early learning activities**. *Being Family* also had **positive impacts** on **parenting knowledge, family functioning, and social support**, and reduced caregivers' **belief in the need for harsh punishment**.

Our 2023 baseline study with 2,249 caregivers from Myanmar found high levels of adversity that increased risk of violence against children.

-  78% of caregivers had no legal status in Thailand
-  73% did not have enough food for their family in the last 30 days
-  44% were forced to hide or flee their homes due to insecurity
-  68% reported using physical violence to discipline their child in the last 30 days

Entertainment-education interventions use the power of storytelling to promote changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. They are a promising approach for delivering parenting support in low-resource, high-adversity settings due to their potential to achieve population-level impacts at scale.

The *Being Family* film intervention was developed in 2022-2023 using a community-engaged co-design process with migrant and displaced communities. The *Being Family* film was produced by local organisation Sermpanya Foundation and made with migrant and displaced people from Myanmar.

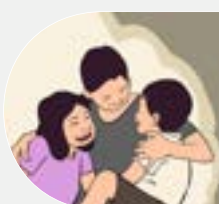
The film features evidence-based and culturally-tailored parenting skills



Positive and
playful
time together



Effective non-
violent
discipline



Positive
family
communication

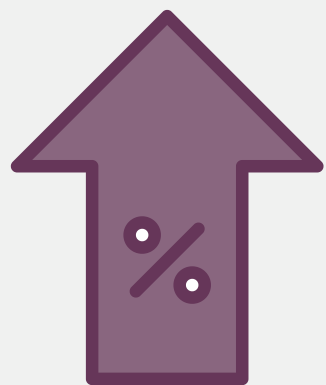


Mindfulness-
based stress
reduction for
caregivers

Results

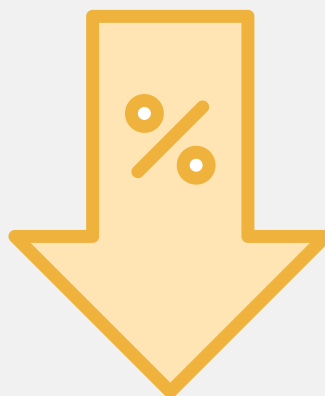
A new randomised control trial with **2,249 caregivers** in **44 communities** on the Thailand-Myanmar border randomly assigned half to receive the *Being Family* intervention and the other half to receive information about locally available services. Families who participated in the community film screenings engaged in a 30-minute audience discussion and received posters summarising key parenting skills from the film.

Results show that caregivers who received the *Being Family* film intervention had **significant improvements** on multiple parenting and family outcomes compared to the control group.



Increase in

positive parenting
caregiver engagement
in early learning activities
parenting knowledge
social support
family functioning



Decrease in

physical violence
belief in the need for
harsh punishment

There were no impacts on psychological violence or exploratory outcomes of educational involvement, coping and stress management, and caregiver and child mental health.

After seeing the film, I realised how to control my mind and then control my hand that was about to beat the child.
- Female caregiver

While watching the film, my daughter said that not only the parents but also children should watch this film ... there should be a chance for children to discuss what they are feeling and what is going on with them.
- Male caregiver

In the past, my father didn't spend much time with us. He was always busy with work, finding jobs for the next day. Now, it's different. When I get home from school before my father goes to work, he asks, "Son, do you have homework? If there's anything you don't understand, come and tell me." So now, if I have any problems, I go and talk to him.
- Adolescent boy

Summary

This study showed, for the first time, that a film intervention can **increase positive and playful parenting and decrease violence against children** in low-resource, insecure contexts like the Thailand-Myanmar border. Using film to improve parenting skills and behaviour has the potential to achieve population-level reductions in violence against children at low cost when delivered at scale.

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