THE NUTS-AND-BOLTS OF CHILD CARE AND SOCIALIZATION: A RESOURCE FOR PARENTS AND CHILD MINDERS

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Abstract

Whereas traditionally, child care and socialization in Botswana was the responsibility of the nuclear family, the extended family kin network, and the community at large, such structures have gradually diminished in size. The philosophy and art of child care and socialization used to be passed from older generations to younger one, usually by way of oral tradition and apprenticeship. However, the present economic activities do not allow time and human resources for the oral transmission of the philosophy and art of child care and socialization across generations. Unfortunately, this happens at a time when there are many challenges in the environment that dictate that guidance on child care receives even more attention than it did a few decades ago. It is therefore necessary that child care and socialization be formally guided. This paper presents what taking care of and socializing children in a manner that enriches rather than compromises their development, maturity and successful integration into the society entails.

The paper is informed by the authors' personal experience of growing up in a Setswana tradition as well as by conceptual and empirical work on child care and development. The paper focuses on three broad areas of a) family environment, b) the community within which the family exists, and c) the child as an individual. The author carefully selects what is considered to be good practices in child care, arguing that the family, the community, and the child him/herself play a key role in successful child socialization and care.

Key words;
Child care, child socialization, parenting, child development.

Background and Introduction

The United Nations (UN) resolution on a World-Fit for Children recognizes the right of every child to be provided with the opportunity to develop his /her maximum potential to be an emotionally, physically, psychologically, and socially healthy individual (Kieling et al., 2011). The family, where children are born, raised, and socialized, plays a critical part in ensuring that every child enjoys the right stipulated by the UN resolution. Besides the family, both the school and the larger social systems also play a part as the growing child's physical and social environment gradually widens as he/she grows up. Later on, as the child gets his/her character defined and adopts a way of being and of relating to others, he/she becomes the third pillar of influence in what she/he becomes.

Unfortunately, the supporting family and community environment for children's healthy development is no longer always guaranteed because of changes in the social structures. Among

these changes is the decreasing size of the kin network that used to surround young parents, mentoring them in child care and socialization and serving as additional adult role models for children (Hoffman, 2010). Parents are spending very little time with children as both mothers and fathers are increasingly in formal employment. Children are frequently left under the care of inexperienced and often very young caretakers. Competing for the little time that parents and children could spend together are technological gargets such as television and cell phones. Unsupervised television watching has taken charge, with children increasingly watching play games rather than engaging in active play with or supervised by a responsible adult. Even as the extended kin network participating in child care and socialization may no longer be there, it has its variant of foster care as many children, especially in societies affected by HIV and AIDS, are orphaned. Children now enroll in school at a very tender age, with some roles that were earlier on played by parents being played by teachers. Like families, communities in which children grow have transformed with safe spaces for children becoming increasingly diminished. As Bernard (1991) asserts, communities' naturally occurring social networks have gradually been destroyed.

In the face of the arguments raised in the foregoing text, it has become obvious that child care and socialization demands a more formalized guidance than parental intuition alone. It is high time we acknowledge that many families are in need of assistance with child care and socialization and that like undertakings such as teaching, nursing, and farming, child care requires that basic knowledge, attitude and skill be formally learned and applied, and that what is learned is continuously updated so as to catch up with emerging realities.

This paper presents the "nuts-and-bolts" of or basic guide for parents and child minders on what taking care of and socializing children in a manner that enriches rather than compromises their development, maturity and successful integration into the society entails. Although the paper targets the family as a caregiving and socializing institution for a growing child, due recognition is given to the fact that no family can claim that it can bracket out the community within which it exists so that it raises the child in a way that only its influence will be reflected in what the child eventually becomes. As it has been argued, raising children who will be responsible citizens requires concerted effort of the family and the community as for instance, we may teach children the "Dos" and "Don'ts" of being, but the message that has the greatest impact on them is what is implicitly communicated through the values and actions of the larger community in which they live (Bernard, 1991).

Methods

The paper is based on a review of empirical work on child care and socialization globally regionally and locally. The literature is augmented by the authors' personal experience of growing up in a Setswana tradition. The author carefully selects good practices in child care both from the literature and Setswana tradition, arguing that the family, the community, and the child him/herself play a key role in successful child care and socialization. The paper therefore focuses on three broad areas of a) the family environment in which the child is born and raised, b) the community within which the family exists, and the child as an individual. Engle, Castle, and Menon (1996) have argued that the child's immediate family, social systems in his/her environment such as schools and community events, and the larger forces such as culture and public policy inform child development and well-being. A deliberate effort is made to present these discussion in a positive language so as to motivate the audience, being parents and child

minders to do the best that they can do for their children without feeling targeted or stereotyped as it may occur when we emphasize on practices that may be labeled "bad parenting."

Guide to Parents and Child Minders

The Family System

The creation of a family environment that supports a healthy development of a child is a process that stars before the child is conceived and continues throughout his/her stages of development. For lack of a better way, four defining periods of development are addressed under the family system namely the pre-conception, pregnancy and immediate post-partum, infancy, and later childhood to adolescence periods.

Pre-conception

There are important factors that parents need to take note of even before the child is conceived (Cluver & Gardner, 2007). It is important that parents (both parents, whether married or unmarried) plan the pregnancy and do all they could to make sure that they are in a stable emotion condition and that the mother is in a good physical condition to support successful pregnancy. A health status review will provide an opportunity for the treatment of any conditions that may compromise pregnancy. The family's health and economic status needs to be considered as well. For instance, the financial situation must be able to provide nutrition and care during pregnancy; the number and ages of siblings or children in the home must be able to accommodate an additional child; and this will of course depend on what the family considers to be an acceptable standard of living. Frequently, child bearing periods overlap with educational advancement. The family must be able to plan for a new baby in such a way that the demands of the parent's educational program and those of child care will each receive fair attention. This prior preparation will make the new baby feel welcomed in the family and develop a positive view about her/himself and people in his/her life.

Pregnancy and Immediate Post-Partum Period

It is important that the woman enjoys good emotional health during pregnancy and that she gets prenatal care including screening for any health problems and immunizations to pass to the unborn baby (Cluver & Gardner, 2007). Early antenatal care will ensure that the health of both the mother and the baby is monitored. Where possible, parents can attend antenatal visits together so that both get prepared for welcoming the baby and learn about the importance of good emotional and physical health of the mother during pregnancy. Especially when it is the first pregnancy, expectant parents may have questions that they need to ask or issues that they need clarification on. Any risks such as the need for interventions for safer birth can be planned so that the mother will be physically and emotionally available to provide love and care to the baby and so that the baby is born without undue hardships that may affect his/her brain and subsequent development.

The woman needs good nutrition and rest during the immediate post-partum period that will support system stabilization from the effects of pregnancy and child birth as well as support breastfeeding. Like the antenatal period, the immediate post-partum periods needs close attention of professionals because the mother's physical and emotional well-being is important not only for herself but also for the baby who needs the mother's love and nurturing to thrive. The father's presence during this period is welcome as it provides him with an opportunity to bond with the child, to appreciate the demands of newborn care, as well as to support the mother and co-participate with her in the baby's care. The father's appreciation of the demands of the newborn on the mother will help ease mother-father communication and shared understanding of

modifications that may be needed in the family's way of life. Professionals are therefore interested in the health of the mother, the health of the baby, baby-mother relationship and bonding, baby-father relationship and bonding, and father-mother collective response to the baby.

Infancy

From an early age, the child needs to be stimulated through being communicated to and a little later, through being played with (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009; Kieling, et al., 2011). Babies can be talked to when they are breastfed, when they are handled, and when they are bathed or dressed, and when they cry. That soft and gentle voice, and that gentle touch or handling assure the child that she/he is in good hands and he/she starts developing trust in those who take care of her/him. Other strategies of cultivating trust is meeting the needs of the baby such as feeding, warm and clean linen, and freedom from discomfort such as pain and fatigue or extremes of temperature. In other words, caretaker sensitivity and responsiveness cultivate trust that goes a long way in building the baby's self-concept necessary for his/her successful interaction with other people. It is important that a child feels the love and warmth of the caretaker; and we need to do that for the sake of the child; we must never feel that we are doing it for another person such as the parent or any person close to the child. A very young child does not have a sense of the labels that we assign to different people that we leave under their care. The child experiences an adult person as someone who will, among other things, make him/her feel cool when he/she feels hot and feed him/her when he/she is hungry.

School Age to Adolescence

Societies have structures such as religions, national values and cultural values that provide a guide to children's character development and the nurturance of reciprocal and cooperative social relations. Botswana National values such as Botho (civility) of vision 2016 that emphasizes positive human relations and "human social development" of Vision 2036 that emphasizes strong families and well-being of children give every child the right to be loved and cared for. Not only does religion foster love and good human relations but it has also been argued to give children and their families a sense of rootedness and coherence, conviction that their lives have meaning and that any negative events are transient (Bernard, 1991). It may therefore pay to have at least one of the parents affiliated to a church or some spiritual support resource in which children can be encouraged to participate and benefit from a value system that supports personal discipline and social cohesion. Children may also get affiliated to a church or Sunday school through other adults if none of the parents has a church affiliation. Religious clubs or groups can complement the family and the school in socializing children into responsible citizens. Religion may therefore be a coping resource as it helps children look forward to positive life experiences. It can be also be a source of hope during times of hardships. However, because religion may be used for people's selfish gains such as exploitation of the inarticulate, parents/adults need to be co-participants with the child so that they can monitor how the church is benefiting their child and take action if the motive seems to be deviating from what they are expecting.

Children need to be socialized into the national and cultural values that incorporate good character or habit of doing good things at a tender age in order that they can internalize such values and carry them through their developmental stages. Socializing children into the values

that will make them successful members of the society and cultural group demands that parents provide them with guidance open and timely feedback on what they do well and what they need to improve. Children with good character are said to exhibit the attributes of conscience or integrity, high self-esteem, empathy, loving the good, self-control, humility, honesty, respect, good conduct, generosity and willingness to help, and cooperativeness. These attributes must be cultivated through word, action, and example as parents and children live their day-to-day lives. When children have love and good intentions for those they interact with such as siblings and other children living in the household, they will feel safe and they will celebrate the success of others as comfortably as they do their own.

Parents need to appreciate that children are growing up and that they are learning how to be and how to do things; and that often that leads them to experimenting and getting into trouble. They must therefore be patient with children, help them up when they make mistakes and help them to realize that mistakes need to be taken as lessons for future encounter with similar situations (Hoffman, 2010). Hoffman cautions parents against hyper or intensive parenting whereby they over-regulate their children's life for fear that such children may have adverse experiences deny the children's differentiation as unique human beings in their own right. Hoffman argues that such over-regulation undermines the development of autonomy and independence and begets parental and child's insecurity. Therefore parents need to refrain from over-prescribing how their children need to be and allow them the autonomy to explore and to grow. Parental role must be that of supporting children by removing, where possible, any obstacles that stand on their way to self-actualization. They must identify children's potentials and support the maturation of such potentials or talents (Hoffman, 2010). It is important, however, that parents or child minders ensure that the environment is safe for children to explore, experiment, and learn.

The Place of Parenting Styles in Child Care and Socialization

Researchers have studied the way parents relate to and manage children and come up with what they refer to as parenting styles based on the predominant and sustained pattern of parental relationship with children (Cheng & Furnham, 2004; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002;). However, because parenting is a process rather than a static entity, being influenced by other factors besides the parent-child interaction which is of cause also affected by environmental circumstances and the child's attributes (Cheng & Furnham, 2004), only parenting behaviors that prior studies have shown to support successful child development will be addressed in this paper. A number of studies have established that parental reinforcement of positive behavior, open display of warmth or affection, involvement in the child's life, monitoring of the child's activities, use of consistent and non-harsh disciple are associated with children's high self-esteem, positive peer relations, good academic performance and fewer behavioral problems. (Abrhiem, 2014; Hirata & Kamakura, 2018; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; McKinney & Renk, 2008).

In order to help their children grow into successful adults, parents are encouraged to be loving, responsive, supportive, with their way of disciplining children firm, consistent and gentle. In addition, parents need to be involved in the lives of their children, monitoring their activities, providing guidance and reinforcement, and encouraging autonomy and independence (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). Two concepts seem to summarize desirable parenting behavior and these are demandingness and responsiveness. Responsiveness describes parental behaviors that

intentionally promote the child's individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion (Darling & Steinberg, 1993) as indicated by the level of communication and reciprocity between the parent and the child, and parental warmth as he or she responds to the needs and demands of the child (Sarwar, 2016).

Demandingness, on the other hand, concerns the parent's ability to guide the child toward responsible and safe behavior through the processes of confrontation and discipline (Sarwar, 2016). Demandingness checks that children are not left to do as they please while at the same time, they are allowed to grow into independent human beings. Parental demandingness needs to recognize the maturity of the child; with the parental control over the child gradually diminishing to give way to the child's own point of view and parent-child dialogues as the child grows. Parents need to assist children to understand reasons behind rules as the child begins to comprehend what is communicated. The traditional order in which parents set the rules and children obeyed without question and without understanding cannot work in the current times characterized by rushed life, diminished social structures participating in guiding children, the need for children to fend for themselves at a much earlier age that it is used to be, advancing technology, and information overload.

Like other aspects of the day-to day lives of individuals, families, and communities, the success of parenting is influenced by factors such as socioeconomic status, culture, health status of the family members, the general family emotional environment, and quality of neighborhood or community in which the family lives. Economic hardship may make parents irritable and more inclined to be harsh in disciplining their children. Poor parents may not be able to monitor their children's activities, and may lack access to physical resources and social networks to support their parenting efforts. A crime prone neighborhood may make parents to be more intrusive in monitoring their children's lifestyle and restrict their autonomy and independence. As such, parents need to do their best given their life circumstances, to balance the life situation of their families such that children get guidance, information, support, material resources, and emotional warmth that help their healthy transition through childhood, and through adolescence to adulthood. They need to be aware of their environmental circumstances, the resources at their disposal including provisions of the public policy, and threats that may catch them unaware so that they can map out a plan to meet the needs of their children. As has been argued, affluence is not always the answer in providing the best environment for children's development. Similarly, children can grow up in poverty and still succeed in reaching their potentials. Sometimes parents must apply their minds and get what they need instead of pointing fingers at the larger social and political systems (Katz, 2003). However, this does not suggest that parents need to be complacent even when they can advocate for supportive policies.

Parents must advocate for policies that support parenting through making provisions for working parents to fulfil both the demands of the work and those of parenting – there is need for parenting friendly policies (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). Policies can encourage networking between parents who feel unduly challenged by parenting and those who have found effective strategies of managing it in order to allow for sharing of experiences and ideas. Parents need training on how to use resources at their disposal and must be proactive in advocating for living conditions that support healthy child development. For instance, they need to advocate for policies that prohibit sale of tobacco and alcohol to children. When parents actively get involved in creating

the best environment for their children, they are actually cultivating resources for their community; and the children will grow into responsible adults and healthy children.

Runcan, Constantineanu, Ielics, and Popa (2012) described communication between parents and children as the engine of relationships that can be instrumental in creating openness and ties between the two parties as well as in influencing the child's development and behavior especially when it is two-way rather than unilateral. Effective communication between parents and children requires availability, listening, understanding, mutual respect, and emotion as well consistency of verbal, para-verbal, and non-verbal messages. Para-verbal message concerns such things at tone of the voice and volume of speech while non-verbal messages concern such cues as facial expression, position, and body movements (Runcan et al.). It is important that the parent uses vocabulary that is appropriate for the developmental age of the child and words that are culturally acceptable. A calm tone makes the child psychologically comfortable and leads to better and faster understanding of the message on his/her part. Angry tone instills fear, panic misunderstanding of the message and blocks the communication process. Mismatch between non-verbal language and words leads to misunderstanding and confusion in the child (Runcan, Constantineanu, Ielics, & Popa, 2012). Good family communication is said to assist children's ability to define themselves and become unique beings as well as to feel comfortable taking own position in relating to other people outside the family. Parents are therefore advised to talk to children rather than preach to them, use polite language, listen attentively to what the child says, as well as to encourage children to open up to express feelings. By doing so, parents can be able to transmit life values that the child can use in his/her present and future life (Runcan, et al., 2012).

Tasking Children with Some Responsibility

Children need to know that activities that support day-to-day life do not just happen; that it is people who make them happen; that there is food on the table because someone made that happen; that the family is under a shelter because someone made it happen; that someone makes the living environment clean. They must learn from a very young age that they are a part of the human system that makes things happen. Involving the child in day-to day activities socializes him/her into being part of the social group. It needs to start as soon as the child can comprehend communication and scaffold with the developmental milestones. Instructing young children to bring the other shoe, to wipe their hands clean, and to drink from a cup check their hearing and comprehension, and enhances their motor development. One sees them even smiling as they realize that they are in tune with the social milieu. As children mature, their involvement may entail setting democratic principles of the family (Conrade & Ho, 2001).

Alvord and Grados (2005) advised that parents engage children in problem solving, encourage them to express positive and negative emotions, and provide them with time to have fun and to enjoy humor. Involving children or allowing them to participate in family chores including taking care of the younger siblings gives them a sense of competence and strength (Bernard, 1991). Involving children may be slowly dying out with paid household care and diminished time for parent-child interaction. However, it is still part of child socialization in many cultures. For instance, many Botswana children participate in household chores such as cleaning, including learning to do their laundry at an early age. Even when there is a home helper, children must be given the responsibility of sharing household chores such as cleaning their rooms, cleaning their eating utensils, and washing their clothes. Parents can be exemplary by also doing some things for themselves rather than leaving everything to a paid worker. Children served by

paid workers tend to believe that they are exempt from doing household chores. Spending some time doing household chores may save a child from bad peer influence.

Allowing Children Free Time to Play
Although the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights has recognized play as a right for every child, because of the increasingly hurried life style, unsafe environments, pressure for academic achievement, and poverty, many children are deprived of play (Ginsburg, Committee on Communication, & Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2007). Play is important in the child's growth and development because through it, children enact what they observe in their everyday life, rehearse communication, unleash their imagination and creativity, let out emotions, and maximize their motor development. Self-directed play is said to provide children with an opportunity to learn working in groups, sharing, negotiating, resolving conflict, practicing assertiveness skill, and ultimately developing a sense of mastery of their environment, confidence, persistence, compassion, and connectedness with others (Ginsburg, Committee on Communication, & Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2007). Through play, children are able to discover their interests and to begin working on what they are passionate about (Ginsburg, Committee on Communication, & Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2007).

It is important that children are provided with time, parental/adult support/supervision, and safe space for play. Parents need to create a supportive environment for children's play and provide them with safe play materials so that they do not reach out for objects or to spaces that can pose risk to them. The concern about safety demands that potentially harmful objects are out of the way, being mindful that children can be unpredictable because they do not reason like adults. They may jump into water, jump from heights, and ignite fires and get involved in accidents that challenge their parents' comprehension. Self-directed play using locally available materials in the home such as toys made from recyclable and safe materials can be cost saving. Parents need to watch their children playing and discover what they enjoy playing with so that they can support their play. For instance, if children enjoy playing with mud, they need to be allowed to explore what they can make out of mud because that is important for their growth and development.

The busy life and advancing technologies leave some children with watching cartoons on television as the main play activity. What we need to note is that watching another child play cannot meet the child's need for play that could be met by the child's active self-directed play. Watching denies the child a chance to do it him/herself to find out what happens if he/she connects D to F. It stifles the child's creativity and imagination. More importantly, we may not know how much damage the television light does to the child eyes. If unsupervised, television watching can expose children to violence and other materials that are only fit for adults. Watching television games renders children to sedentary lifestyle and the risk of obesity (Engel, et al., 2011). It is important that parents limit the time during which children are watching TV because sometimes it even interferes with their school, therefore affecting their academic performance. Parents need to avoid taking what is presented in the media as right and necessary or necessarily tried, tested, and proved to be right for their children (Ginsburg, Commiittee on Communication, & Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2007). They must share their views with children so that the latter learn to select and even start thinking

about what can benefit their own children in the future. The society, schools, and parents are challenged to balance the demands on the child and avoid pushing children beyond their personal comfort limits and allow them free time to play. In fact play has been found to help academic achievement by providing a change in activity. In addition, it has been argued that parental love, role modeling, and guidance are more important in preparing a child for independent and successful adult life than pressure for academic success. (Ginsburg, Commiittee on Communication, & Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2007).

Treating All Children in the Family Fairly

While small families or those with the number of children that the family's economic situation can afford to support are advisable and have become more common than larger families, children from such families often fail to learn to share resources with other children, probably because they feel they have exclusive rights over parental resources. This mentality of exclusive rights over resources may become more pronounced when there are other children staying with the family such as step-children and orphans. Parents may also reason that their own children deserve a better share than those who are not their own. However, unfair treatment of children has impact on both the ill and the better treated children. For the former, the lesson that they get is that they are inferior human being; they internalize that attitude and continue to devalue themselves to the extent that they may even avoid opportunities that others exploit. If they are mature enough, they may get it right that they are given secondary treatment because they are strangers. This further dampens the child's self-concept.

The lesson that those who are given preferential treatment learn is that human beings are not equal and that of course they belong to the superior species. Such children will internalize the attitude and join the parents in discriminating other children. They will also carry that attitude to their future interaction with other human beings – tending to assign labels of good and bad to people and failing to see any grey color or a mix of both bad and good in people. They may even derive gratification from inflicting pain on others. In the final analysis, the children will fail to build a solid community of people and to have successful and non-exploitative social relationships. It is therefore important that parents make an effort to treat children in the family equally. The defense mechanism of "reaction formation" that Sigmund Freud believed operated unconsciously to oppose internal forces of unacceptable behavior may be what rescues some parents from doing what they know is wrong – and that must be a welcome conduit when it comes into operation. When we embrace all the children in the family as equals, equally apportioning the material, time, and emotional resources at our disposal amongst them, we are teaching them to love, to be trustworthy, to feel good about themselves and to be good to other people.

Teaching Children to Love and to Shun Hatred and Violence
Love is the greatest gift that we freely receive from God and that we can freely give to others. It will be counterproductive if we can love our children without teaching them to love because we will be teaching them that we love them but that it ends with them; that it does not even have to pass to their own children. When we are adults, we choose to hate and to do evil. It will only be fair to let our children make that choice also when they know what that means. It will be unfair to teach the children hatred. When we hate people, we know how to live with them and how to live our lives without the hatred holding us hostage. However children may not be able to comprehend the evil thoughts and ill wishes that we expect them to be co-participants in. They

may be unduly disturbed and disappointed by the nasty stories that we tell them about people to who they look upon as heroes or role models in their lives. Therefore parents need to teach their children to love and spare them learning about hatred. Let us learn to be selective about the language and content that we use when we talk to children about our negative experiences, feelings, thoughts, and wishes that we have about people who are significant in our children's lives.

Connections between parents and children allow children to open up and explore areas of their curiosity with parents. Connections may be facilitated by parents and children spending meaningful time together such as during meal times (Arckard, Neumark-Szrainer, Story, & Perry, 2006), playing games together, or discussing school work or the child extra-curriculum school activities. It has been noted that children who are not well connected to their parents tend to fall prey to negative peer influences as they tend to value opinion of peers more than those of their parents (Arckard, Neumark-Szrainer, Story, & Perry, 2006); and that to the degree that the child is not held and bonded, she/he will find some substitute to hold on such as drugs (Bernard, 1991). When parent-child connectivity is there and children value parents' opinion, that could be an opportunity to discuss sensitive topics, which must be done with the parent withholding own judgment until his/her opinion is asked for. Parents need to be extra careful that they communicate appropriately when a child is already engaged in some risky behavior because the behavior itself may spoil the relationship. They need to try and calm down so the child can cooperate (Arckard et al.).

The moral climate of the family is important for child development as it builds children's expectancies about the nature of moral interchanges. The family environment validates children as worthwhile human beings; if children feel they are heard, if they can be allowed to protect their own self-interests, they will understand that no human, including parents, is faultless; they will be able to assert their needs to powerful beings and they will be able to forgive themselves for their failures or wrongdoings (Bernard, 1991). Parents must make an effort to bond with children because to the degree that the child is not held and bonded, she/he will find some substitute to hold on; and this could be drugs. Parents must strive to have fulfilling social relationships with relatives and other adult figures so that they open up more avenues for children to develop significant connections with other adults in their social circles (Arckard, Neumark-Szrainer, Story, Perry, 2006).

The Social System
Although the family plays a critical role in the care and socialization of children, cues that influences what becomes of children extend beyond the family, and children's senses for learning seem to be more acute than those of adults. Besides, parents who make up the family are also part of the larger social system. Parents make key community figure such as political leaders, members of religious organization, members of the civil society, public service, private sector, and grass roots community structures such as village development committees and parent-teachers associations. Therefore parents have a role in making the social system that surrounds the family friendly to children's development.
Schools
It is important that parents take an active part not only in their children's academic work but also in their overall school experience in order that they work with teachers to ensure harmony in what children learn at home and what they learn at school. One opportunity for parents'

participation in their children's education is to be active in parent-teachers fora that schools provide. They need to voice out their expectations about what schools must provide for children at their various stages of development. Alvord and Grados (2005) encouraged school to engage children in activities that build their sense of social responsibility and self-esteem. Allowing children an opportunity to help others such as tutoring enhances a sense of responsibility, self-esteem, and empathy while involving them in daily school activities makes them feel they are contributing to the world and enhances their feelings of self-worth. Children's engagement in extra-curricular activities such as art, music, sports, and clubs help them build pro-social skills and gain recognition of others; and like the family, schools can help children build resources for successful citizenry, talent development, learning from mistakes, and celebrating success (Alvord & Grados, 2005).

Bernard (1991) argued that focusing on academics alone does not help to cultivate a rounded individual capable of being a responsible citizen; that supporting children's development of responsible personhood also contributes to academic success. Children need to learn to be warm, caring and compassionate. Like parents in the home, teachers must role model love and empathy, toward children of diverse backgrounds and academic performance as well as have high expectation for all children. The school experiences must reflect emphasis on national and cultural values that build children into disciplined and responsible citizens such as love, tolerance, compassion, empathy, and self-discipline. Children can be engaged in projects that accommodate their cultural or ethnic background in order that they can develop pride in their ethnic identities (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). For instance, their play may involve utensils that are named in their native language and that are commonly used in their homes. Kotchick and Forehand (2002) asserted that teaching culturally valued behavior requires that there be appropriate resources to support intended learning.

Health care system
Parents need to take advantage of any public health programmes provided for children such as the well child health and growth monitoring during the child's first five years of age that provides, among others, immunizations, attention to threats of growth retardation and any ill health. Health education related to the child may also be provided through home visits and through the media such as radio and television. They can take advantage of any broadcast dialogue with health care professionals so that they can learn as well as share experiences and air concerns (Engel, et al., 2011).
Where the parent is not in a capacity to assert his/her needs, relatives and neighbors need to alert social services to assess the home and refer the family to relevant professional help. Such situations that may compromise healthy development of children include physical or mental illness of the primary caregiver, parental conflict, child developmental disorders, parental alcoholism, family violence, family breakdown, and poverty (Willie, Bettge, Ravens-Siebere, & Bella Study Group, 2008). Families with children who have tested positive for HIV may need to seek professional assistance for help with issues such as status disclosure to children.

Wider Community
As argued earlier on in this paper, children learn how to be not only from the family and the school but also from the environment in which the family or the school exists. Therefore, if parents have good intentions for their children, they must be concerned about what surrounds

their children. Through community leadership such as the political and the tribal administrative systems, families must advocate for community resources that support children's well-being such as play spaces, good housing, good schools, and accessible and quality health care.

Just as the child must feel he/she is useful in a family and in a school, children must feel they are useful in the community. Studies have demonstrated that youth's participation in economic/social activities can lead to high self-esteem, enhanced moral development, increased political activism, and the ability to create and maintain complex social relationships (Bernard, 1991). We could harness the energy in young people and use that to meet their basic need of connecting to others for the experience of life's meaning and purpose. It is reported that in some countries, communities engage the youth in child care, older adult care, tutoring, literacy training, computer literacy training in what they call Youth Services, and others. In Botswana, an opportune programme that children can be engaged in to serve communities is adult literacy or "*thuto ga e golelwe*". Another area that young people can be useful in is capacitating adults' digital literacy so they care able to use the computer and to communicate using mobile devices as well as to benefit from online information. Older children and adolescents can be encouraged to reserve a few hours of their time for voluntary civic participation. Recognizing children as valued social capital has the potential to strengthen intergenerational connections and social cohesion (Bernard, 1991).

Bernard (1991) argued that the greatest enemy of the growing child is poverty that denies children the diversity of resources required for healthy development. Parents must be able to speak up and get in touch with public offices when they realize they do not have the basics of what they need to raise a child. They need not wait to be discovered because that may take long to happen. Like families, communities must model healthy behaviors expected of children. The degree of openness and honesty about behaviors such as drinking communicates to the child the truthfulness and seriousness of what adults tell them. For instance, cultures that teach children when and where drinking is safe and how to drink responsibly have been found to have better child behavior outcomes than those who only focus on forbidding children's drinking. If society accepts drunkenness, children will get a message that it is acceptable to be drunk. If young people's alcohol use is to be reduced, adults must reflect on their pattern of alcohol use. In a nutshell, the way communities live their lives becomes action that speak louder to children than what they hear.

Policies must ensure that all children have a healthy start and that all grow up in a loving and supportive environment, that is free from prejudice and discrimination, and that facilitates actualization of their potentials (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 20000). Such policies must be informed by research that draws together practitioners, community, and academia in order that the knowledge that is generated is relevant for communities. It is important that policies supporting healthy development of children incorporate all types of families including single parent, two parent, those with adopted children, those with foster care children, and those with children with disabilities (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000). Policies geared to healthy development of children must support working parent so they are able to balance the demands of child care and those of employment (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002).

As we take care of and socialize children, we need to be mindful about the environment and instill the culture of environmental protection in both word and action; in homes, in schools, and in the wider community. If we can do that, children will carry the culture to their future generations and we will have a healthier environment. Let us conserve the environment so we

can use resources in it such as trees and domestic animals as teaching aids to support our children's learning and development.

The Child as an Individual
Although it is difficult to separate the child as an individual from what may have been the influence of the family, one needs to acknowledge the fact that the child emerges as a unique entity that though may carry traits and influences of the family, develops own character and personal values. That is probably why two children raised from the same family within a seemingly same environment will be different. A child who is able to modulate his/her emotions and behavior is more likely to be admired by others and to have supportive peer relationships than the one who induces uncertainty such that others may not be able to predict his/her behavior. A child who can take control of own emotions will also elicit positive reactions from parents and teachers and therefore be less likely to be a subject of child mal-treatment (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009). Children who are self-disciplined, considerate about the needs of others, able to control their reaction to events and others in both verbal and non-verbal language tend to elicit positive reaction from parents, teachers, and peers and therefore be less vulnerable to maltreatment than those who lack self-disciplined (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009). Children who are treated well have a positive outlook about life and therefore behave well and treat others well, thus eliciting positive response from their social environment.
Obviously, it could be a challenge for a parent to remain warm, loving and caring when raising a child who is difficult to relate to because of his/her behavior that is a direct opposite of the posture expected of a parent. However, if the parent becomes harsh and unloving to a child, that defeats the purpose of helping the child to grow into an independent and productive person who fits well in his/her society. Frequently, parents encounter such children who are often adopted, fostered or their own biological children. Such children demand patience on the part of the parent, who must try and balance demandingness and responsiveness so that he/he is able subject the child to some degree of control while at the same time accommodating the child and respecting his/her individuality and the right to be who he/she is.

Parents have the responsibility to help children see themselves as both individuals and social beings who do not have absolute freedom but who are members of the society participating in the democratic process of making decisions or rules that apply equally to them as they apply to everybody else (Komalasari, 2012).
We need to welcome the child, be friendly or assume that she/he will be friendly and welcoming to others. We need to treat such children well because in that way, we are teaching them to be human. If we are welcoming and we have interest in the child, she/he may open and may be able to share what makes him/her behave the way he/she does what s toward other people. Children who are rejected by peers tend to draw toward one another because of the hostility that they have in common. They derive a sense of belonging to their group. Let us use whatever resources at our disposal to do the best for our children. We must desist from channeling all our energies to blaming the systems such as schools and the overall policy environment as if we are spectators in the game. When families, schools, and communities commit to working together to support healthy development of children, even challenging children can gradually adopt a socially congruent character (Bernard, 1991).
Limitations

Although an effort has been mad to select literature and to contextualize the discussion to Botswana and similar contexts, the literature is mainly from developed countries. The paper may present a reality that is completely different from what obtains in Botswana and other countries. An empirical work to investigate how society has transformed in Botswana and similar contexts, and the impact that the transformation has had on child care and socialization could provide a basis for a more convincing argument. However, there is still quite a lot that we can learn from the experiences of other contexts so that rather than re-inventing the wheel, we only inflate or deflate it as may be necessary.

Conclusion

A supportive family and community environment that children used to grow in no longer exists; and this is a result of transformation in the social structure that has come with urbanization, and increasing participation of women in formal employment. Children are frequently left under the care of caretakers who are often ill-equipped to provide care and to socialize the child into the norms of the society. Often material resources such as food and housing are also inadequate to support children's healthy development. It has become obvious that child care and socialization demand a more formalized guidance than parental intuition alone. In this paper, the author uses empirical literature and personal reflection to come up with a basic guide for child care and socialization that can be used by those who are raising children during this era of rapid social transformation.

The organizing framework for the discussion is provided by the primary spaces that children occupy. Whereas the paper is meant to be a resource for families, due recognition is given to the fact that the larger social systems also play a major role in shaping the child into what he/she eventually becomes – as the saying goes, "it takes a community to raise a child." The major limitation of this piece or work is that the literature is mainly from developed country and this points to the need for local research on the area that the paper addresses.

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