

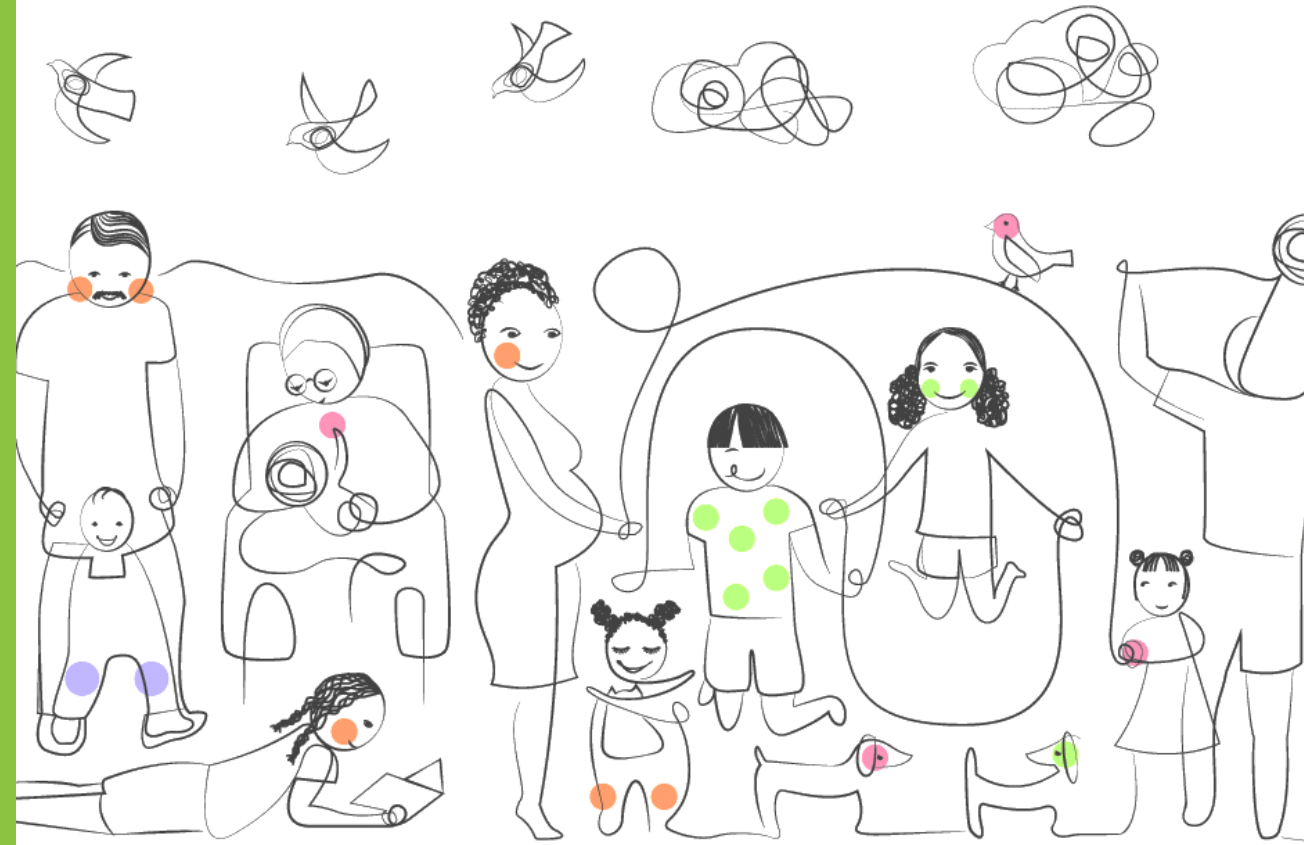
# Engaging children in practice: Who's in the room?

Interactive online session  
Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Presenters: Chris Dolman  
and Clare Klapdor

**Emerging  
Minds.**

**National Workforce  
Centre for Child  
Mental Health**



# Our intentions

- Continue **further explore** practice considerations when deciding whether to meet with children and parents/caregivers separately, together or a combination of both.
- To provide **participants with an opportunity** to contribute to this conversation through submitting questions and comments.
- To **produce a resource** to complement existing practice-based resources.
- To **gather participants' practice knowledge and challenges** to assist us to develop additional practice resources in relation to working with children and families.

# Acknowledgement



We recognise the land on which we meet today and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples, their ancestors, the elders past, present and future from the different First Nations across this country.

We acknowledge the importance of  
connection to  
land,  
culture,  
spirituality,  
ancestry,  
family and community  
for the wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander children and their families.

# Opportunities to contribute



Chat: seen by all participants  
Invitation to offer Acknowledgement of Country



Q&A: submit questions to  
presenters

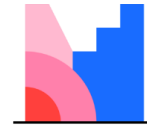


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code **8505 1995**



Post-event short survey

# Engaging children e-learning series



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use the code **8505 1995**



**Engaging children:  
Good beginnings**



**Engaging children:  
Rich pictures**



**Engaging children:  
Shrinking problems**

... to support practitioners' skill development

enable participation

helpful

strengths, skills, know-how,  
values and preferences

accountable

hopeful



# Engaging children e-learning series



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## Engaging children: Good beginnings

A young boy is focused on working on a project, possibly a model or a drawing, on a table.	<b>Laying the groundwork</b> Module One will lay the groundwork for the series, exploring the principles and the structure of the e-learning series and the role of the facilitator in providing a safe and supportive environment.
A young boy is sitting on a bench outdoors, looking towards the camera with a slight smile.	<b>Warm welcomes</b> Module Two welcomes and explains the structure of the series, the role of the facilitator and the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for children.
A woman is sitting on the floor with a young child, playing with colorful blocks and toys.	<b>Who's in the room?</b> Module Three will explore key considerations for discussing whether to meet with children and provide a safe and supportive environment for children.
A young boy is looking thoughtful, with his hand on his chin, as if he is listening or reflecting on something.	<b>Opening the door to the problem</b> Module Four will explore the role of the facilitator in opening the door to the problem and the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for children.
A young girl is smiling at the camera, looking directly at the viewer.	<b>Clarifying confidentiality</b> Module Five will explore the role of the facilitator in clarifying confidentiality and the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for children.
A young boy is standing in a field, looking towards the camera with a slight smile.	<b>Exploring safety</b> Module Six will explore the role of the facilitator in exploring safety and the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for children.
A woman is sitting on the floor with a young child, talking and interacting with them.	<b>Getting it going</b> Module Seven will explore the role of the facilitator in getting it going and the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for children.

# Engaging children e-learning series

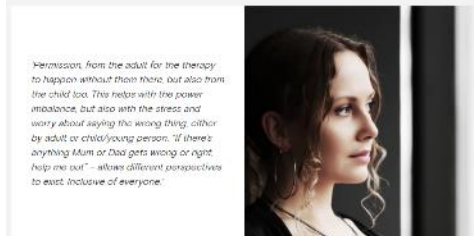


## Reflections by practitioners and child actors



### Practitioner interviews

### Improvised demonstrations



### Parent reflections



## Contributions from course participants

Zan, Adelaide, SA

This module was such a helpful exploration of some of the nuances of collaboratively deciding who is in the room and provides me with many more considerations and an opportunity to think critically about my practice. I have often experienced that parents are deferring to an idea of my expertise and may also believe that their child or young person will be more comfortable seeing me alone. When the child or young person expresses this preference I often go along with it in the name of taking the lead from folks I work with. However this module has made visible to me missed opportunities to be influential and to avoid dilemmas arising later.

I have found that meeting separately, while it may appear at first to create more space for everyone to speak, it can exacerbate a sense of disconnection, can have parents feeling less conscious of or witnessed in their skills of supporting their child and can put a lot of pressure on me to, as Jamie Lee described, be doing some kind of hidden magic. This module will have me setting up those conversations very differently, not just immediately taking up expressed preferences but relying more on curiosity about people's preferences for who's in the room, describing in more detail possibilities for the work and framing questions carefully.

Liz, Brisbane, QLD

I agree that it is useful to have time alone with parents initially so that the child's experiences, development and difficulties can be discussed freely. At the same time this allows some assessment of the parent in terms of their expectations and capacity to be involved in the process. I'm also keen to see the quality of the interaction between parents and their children. In my area of practice one of the key difficulties is involving parents in the therapeutic process.

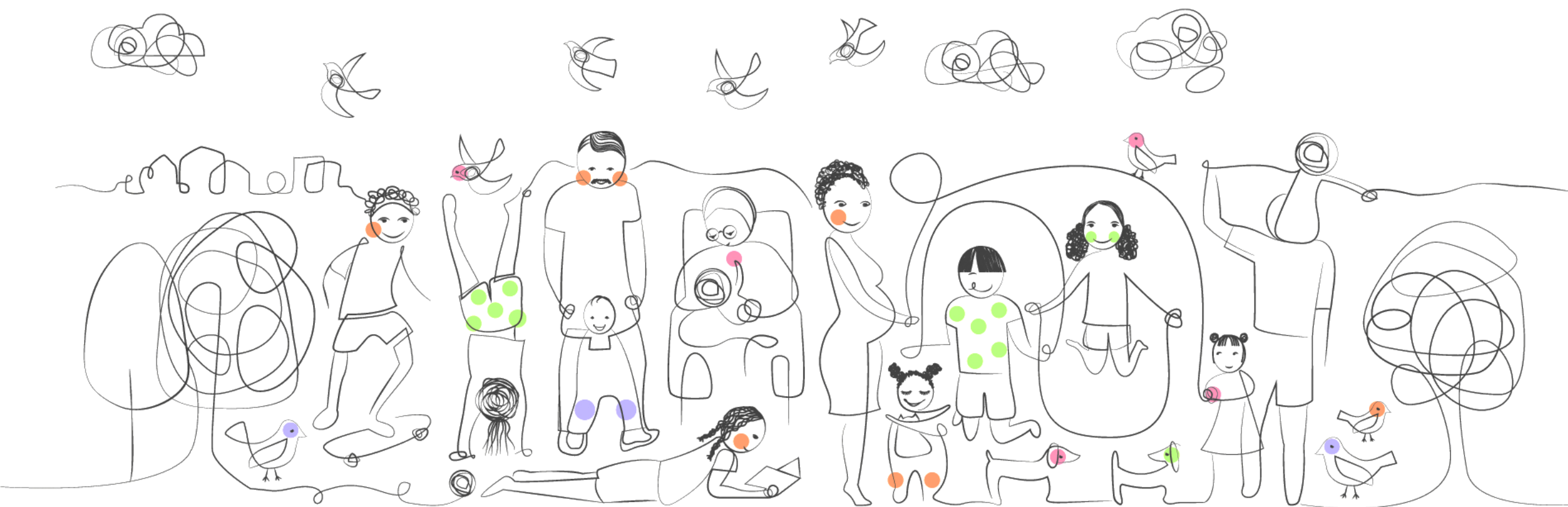
There can be significant barriers including intergenerational trauma, mental and physical health issues, suspicion of services, language and cultural barriers, large families and high levels of concurrent stressors, structural disadvantage and competing demands. All of this can significantly compromise a parent's capacity to be involved in a regular and frequent way. There is an ongoing dilemma of knowing of the importance of parental involvement but at the same knowing that many children would not receive counselling support if eligibility relied on ongoing, regular parental involvement. I'm interested to know how others hold this difficult space when parents due to many reasons can't always be present for their children's attendance in therapy.

Dan, Adelaide, SA

I really appreciated the skilful ways that practitioners negotiated with children and parents about who would be in the room during important conversations. I was interested in Jamie's comments about avoiding locating the skill within the practitioner, rather than the parent. I would have loved to see his conversation with the mother extend to help her see the contribution she makes to the support & care of her son. I wonder how Jamie would have done this and the questions he might have asked?



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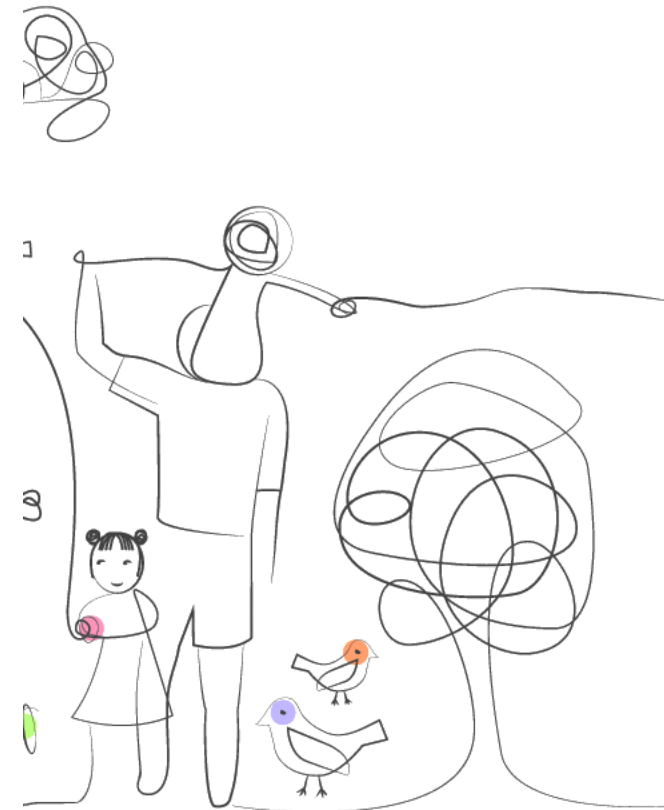




# Engaging children Who's in the room?

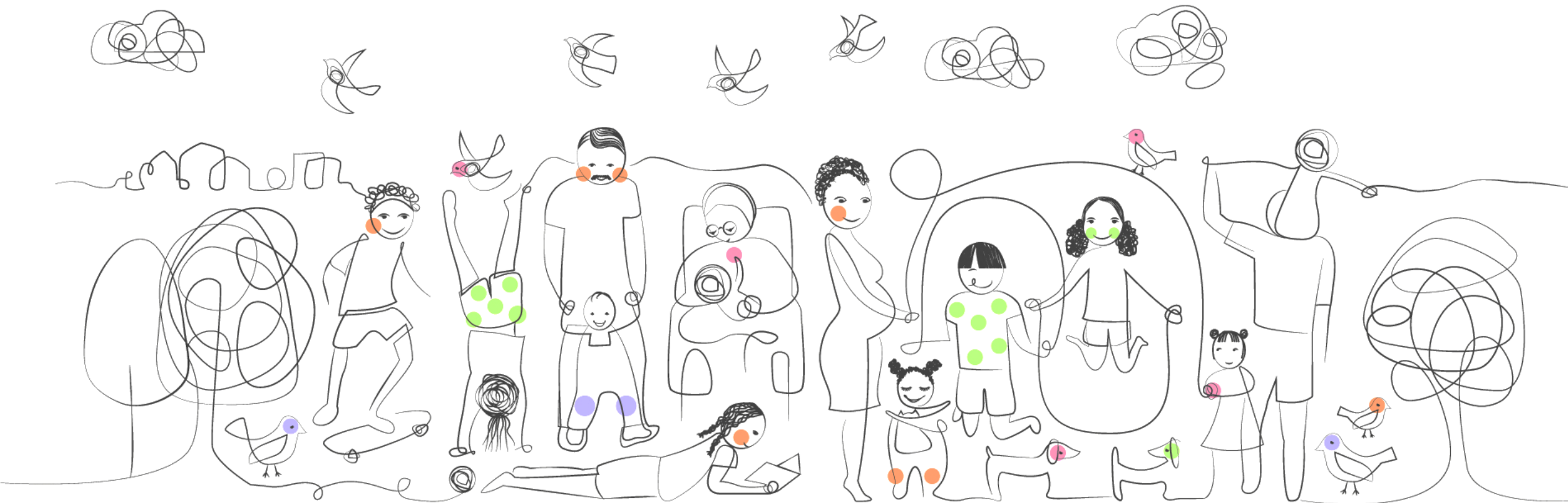
Consulting with children and parents/caregivers separately, together or both.

- Not left to chance.
- Agency context and policies influence possibilities.
- How to include children and parents in the decision?
- Prioritising safety.



Menti Q1:  
What is the approach of  
your service to seeing  
children and parents  
together or separately or  
both?

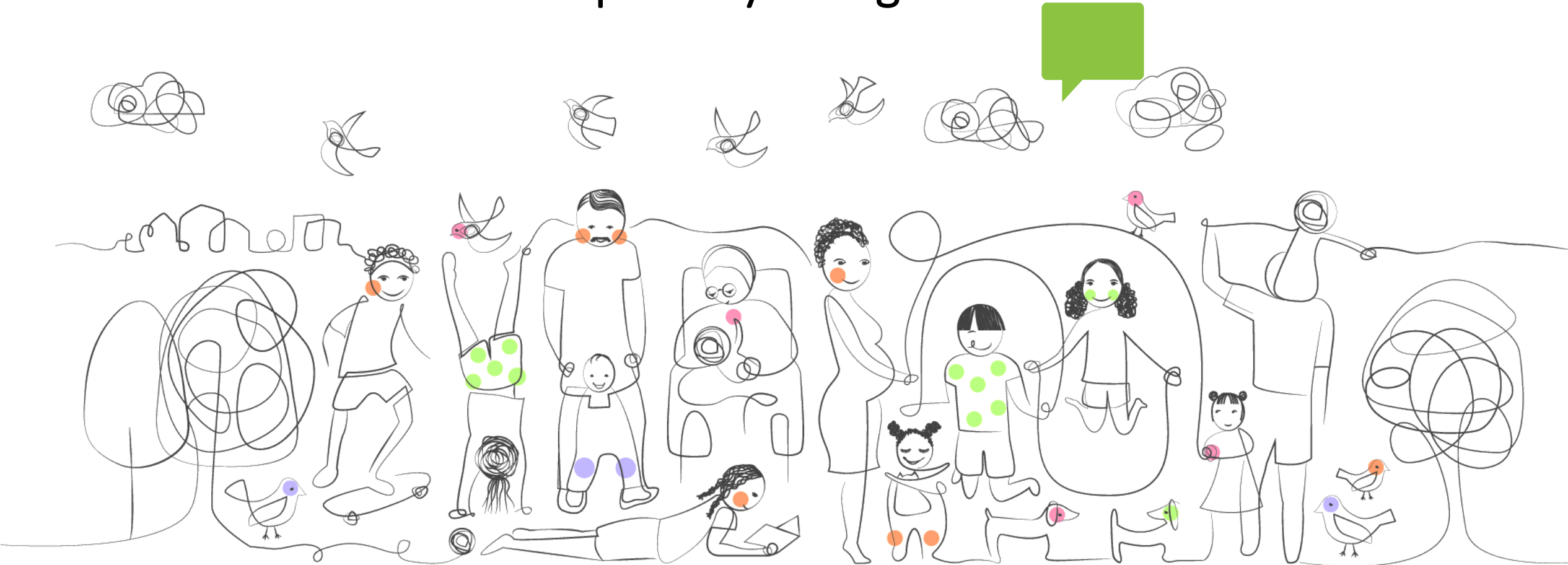
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How do you describe the  
rationale for your approach  
to parents and children?



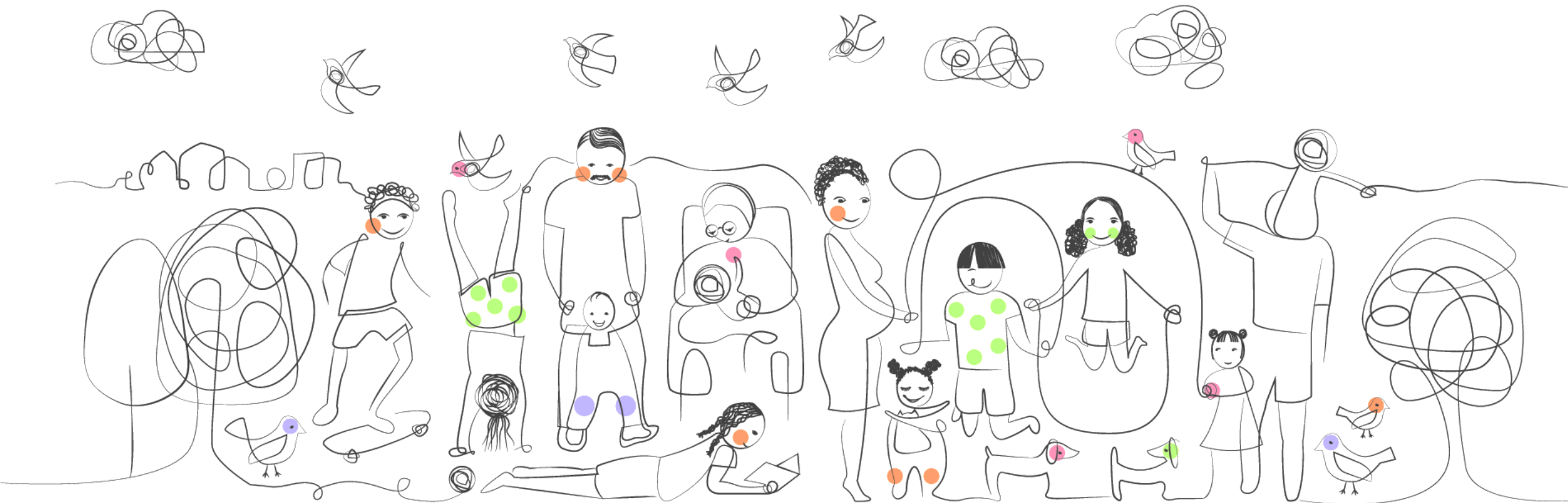
What are some key  
messages you share with  
staff about meeting with  
parents and children  
separately or together?





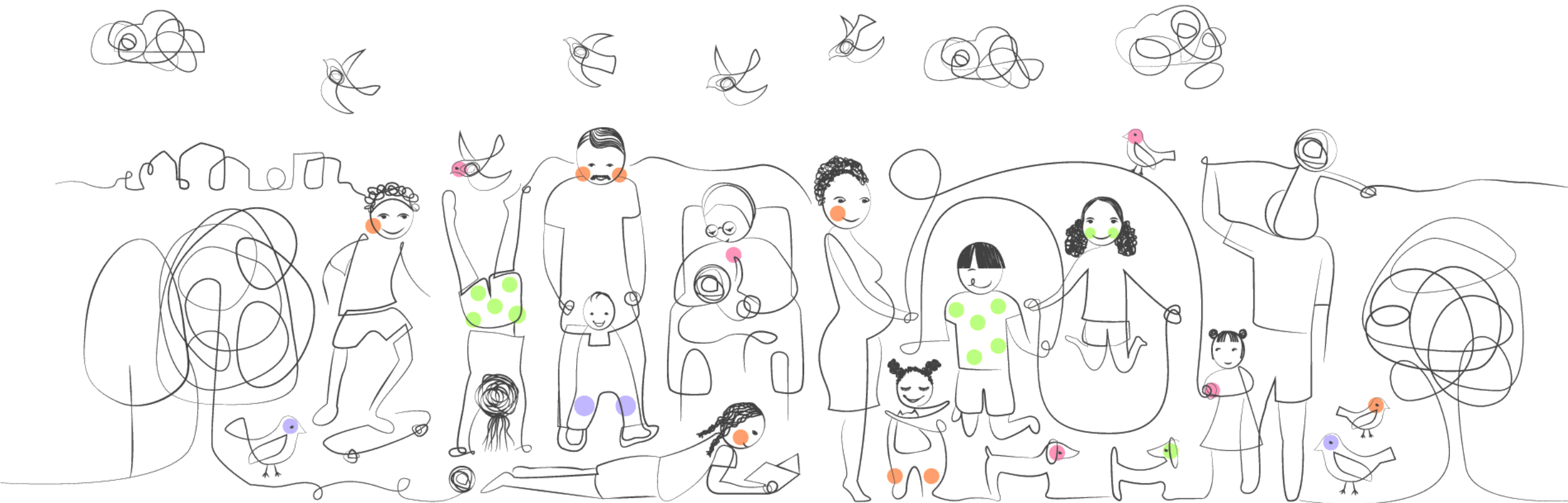
Menti Q2:  
Please rank the most  
persuasive reasons for  
meeting with children  
separately

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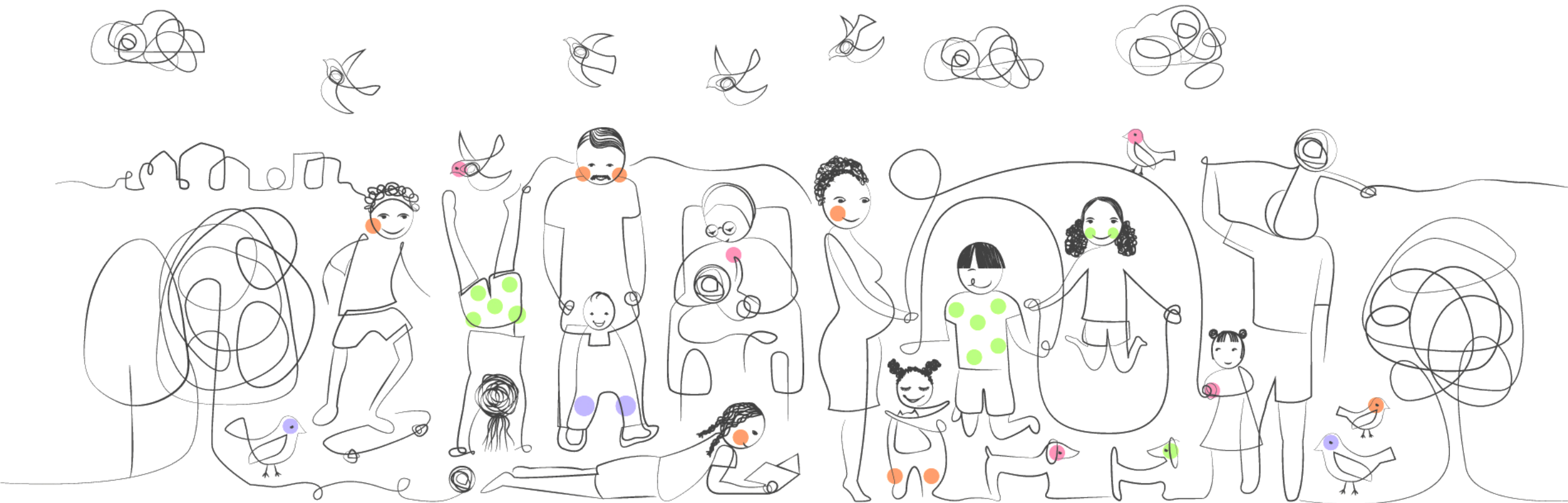
Menti Q3:  
Please rank the most  
persuasive reasons for  
meeting with children and  
parents together.

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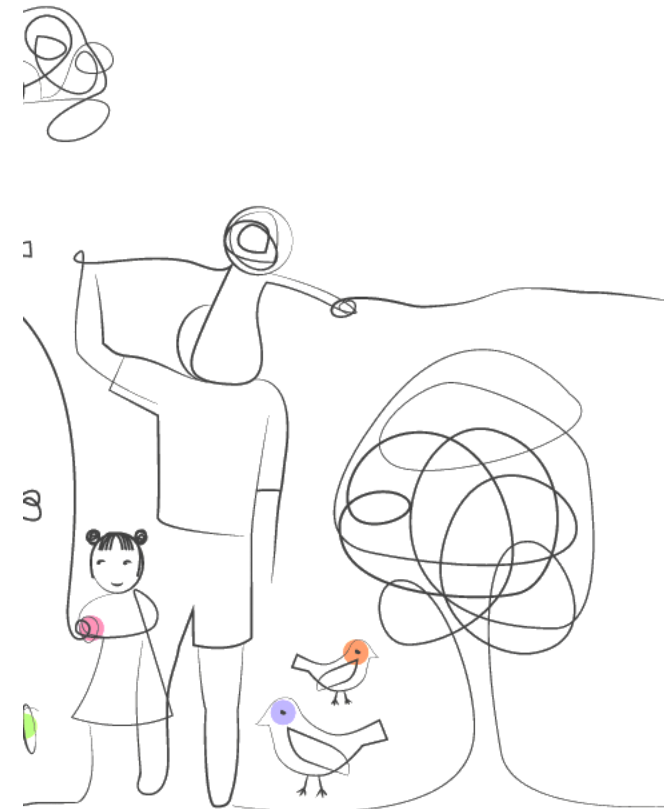
# Menti Q4: What challenges or dilemmas do you face when deciding whether to see children and parents together or separately or both?

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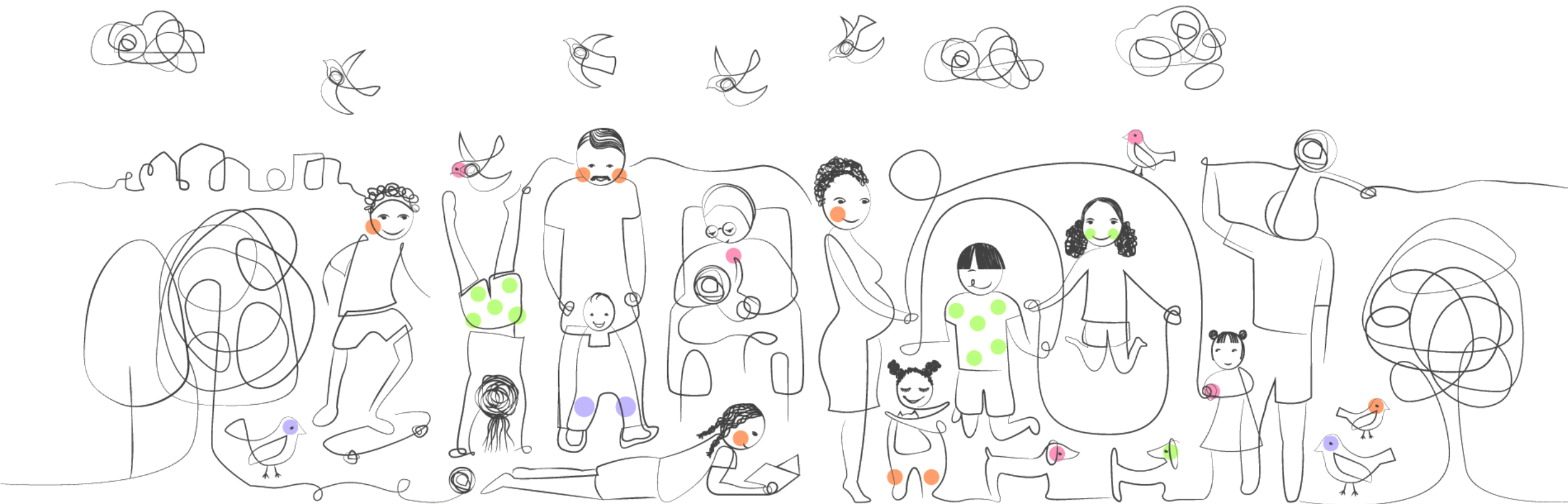
## A parent's perspective:

*"If parents are left out of consultations it might raise guilt issues with the parent. So it's important to involve them in that decision. If you decide to see the child alone, explain the reasons why so your intentions are clear. Of course, the parent may believe that it's best if their child meets with you alone, so they can speak more freely and openly."*





# Q & A Discussion



# Supporting Resources

## e-learning

Engaging children: Good beginnings

<https://emergingminds.com.au/online-course/engaging-children-good-beginnings/>

Engaging children: Rich pictures

<https://emergingminds.com.au/online-course/engaging-children-rich-pictures/>

Engaging children: Shrinking problems

<https://emergingminds.com.au/online-course/engaging-children-rich-pictures/>

Engaging with children

<https://emergingminds.com.au/online-course/engaging-with-children-a-foundation/>

Supporting children who have experienced trauma

<https://emergingminds.com.au/online-course/supporting-children-who-have-experienced-trauma/>

# Supporting Resources

[www.emergingminds.com.au/resources/library/](http://www.emergingminds.com.au/resources/library/)



# Thank you

A recording of today's session and the presenters slides will be emailed to all participants in the coming weeks.

Our next interactive online session will be promoted in the coming weeks. See our eNews [www.emergingminds.com.au/subscribe](http://www.emergingminds.com.au/subscribe)

Special thanks to Clare Klapdor,  
Centacare Catholic Family Services.

Thankyou to all practitioners and Family Partners who contributed to the e-learning courses.

Thankyou for your participation today! Your contributions will shape future content development.

Contact us: [info@emergingminds.com.au](mailto:info@emergingminds.com.au)

