LEADER'S GUIDE:

Education Starts at Home by Maribel Martinez
My children need my support to succeed in school.

DISCUSSION FOCUS:
Setting up home routines and structures.

ACTIVITY GOAL:
Participants will identify the routines that could make their parenting more predictable.

STORY SUMMARY

> *Maribel grew up in Mexico and was unable to finish school because of her family's economic circumstances. Although she doesn't speak English and cannot always help her children understand their homework, Maribel supports her children's achievement in school by attending school meetings, creating time at home to talk about school and homework, and studying alongside her children. Maribel has created a safe, predictable home where her children feel supported in school achievement.*

DISCUSSION GUIDE

GROUP INTRODUCTION: 10 minutes

Today we're going to talk about how predictable routines—like bathtimes and bedtimes, mealtimes, and homework time—can help children feel good and behave well. Children like their home environments to be as predictable as possible. They tend to act out when they're not sure what's expected of them. Parenting is easier if you get children dressed and ready in the same way each morning, do homework and eat meals at the same time each day, and get children ready for bedtime with calm activities like a bath and reading. Routines can help your children thrive at home and in school.

- How do you feel about this topic?
- Do you have experiences related to this topic that you'd like to share before we get started?

READ AND DISCUSS STORY: 15 + 30 minutes

Read the story out loud as a group. Help participants recognize the writer's emotions and coping mechanisms and their own. Go back over important moments in the story and ask the participants about how they've handled similar experiences:

STORY MOMENT	DISCUSSION QUESTION
Maribel has created routines that support her goal to help her children succeed in school.	What are your goals for your children?
Maribel eats and talks with her children after school each day.	How do you create routines to help your children achieve your goals for them?
After eating, Maribel's children do their homework.	How do you create special times for important things like homework, chores or bedtime?
Maribel has organized her work time to accommodate her family time.	What barriers do you face in setting up routines for your family?
Though she is a single mother of three, Maribel describes a calm, orderly household.	How would you like to bring more order to your family life?

JOURNAL TIME: 15-30 minutes

By writing in their journals, participants can more deeply reflect on their experiences and the steps they can take to strengthen themselves and their families. Hand out the "Journal Reflections" worksheet and give participants 15-30 minutes to write. They can share their responses with the group or in pairs, or after the workshop with a counselor, therapist, or peer.

Rise

> **JOURNAL REFLECTIONS:** **Education Starts at Home** by Maribel Martinez
>
> In general, daily routines help children feel calm and safe. Maribel's goal as a parent is to set up a home life that will help her children succeed in school.
>
> Take some time to reflect on how you can set up your home life to help your children behave well and succeed in reaching their goals and yours. Use the questions below to guide your reflections.

1. What is one routine that you consistently follow in your home?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How do you help your children get ready in the morning, go to bed at night, bathe themselves, or clean up the house?

_____

_____

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_____

3. How do you see your children's behavior change when your family goes through times of stress and chaos?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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4. How do you help your family get back on track after disruptions?

_____

_____

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_____

ACTION STEPS

Many parents do not follow as many set routines with their children as they could. Write down 2-3 steps you could take to establish routines that could make your day go more smoothly.

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

A SUPPORTIVE CONNECTION

I plan to get support and encouragement by talking about my reflections and action steps with:

_____

Rise