

ICDP DEVELOPMENTS IN UKRAINE 2025-2026

During 2025–2026, approximately 70 parents participated in parenting groups and meetings based on the principles of the International Child Development Programme (ICDP), organized within the activities of the NGO “Yu TU Family Center”.

The groups were facilitated by ICDP Facilitator Alina Herasymenko in several communities across the Kharkiv region, including the village of Starovirivka, the settlement of Rohan (at the Kharkiv National Agrarian University campus), the city of Kharkiv (Novobavarskyi District, hosted by Yasna Polyana Church), as well as on a regular basis in the village of Vysokyi at the Yu TU Family Center.

It is important to note that the founders of the NGO “Yu TU”, Olena and Viacheslav Bondar, are also ICDP facilitators. Recognizing the importance of supporting parents during the ongoing full-scale war and prolonged psychological strain, they consistently promote the implementation and development of parenting groups, creating safe spaces for dialogue, mutual support, and the strengthening of parenting competencies.

In the context of the ongoing military conflict, many parents experience high levels of anxiety, emotional exhaustion, uncertainty, and stress. Under these circumstances, the ICDP programme has become especially relevant, as it helps strengthen emotional bonds between adults and children, promotes conscious and reflective parenting, and enhances family resilience. This is why Alina Herasymenko conducts parenting groups in frontline and near-frontline communities across the Kharkiv region.

Group Activities in Rohan

In Rohan, the participants were young parents of children under eighteen months of age. Initially, the groups were organized for mothers, and later fathers also joined the programme.

This group demonstrated a high level of motivation, active engagement, and willingness to apply the acquired knowledge in everyday family life. Parents participated enthusiastically in discussions, completed practical exercises, shared personal experiences, and highlighted the practical value of each meeting. Throughout the programme, participants showed a sustained interest in developing positive interaction skills with their children.

Group Activities in Starovirivka

The participants in Starovirivka included mothers, grandmothers, and teachers from the local lyceum, which hosted the meetings.

The group operated under challenging circumstances due to ongoing security threats. On the day before one of the meetings, the community came under shelling, and during several sessions air-raid alerts were announced, requiring participants to move to a shelter.

Parents often arrived at the meetings tired, emotionally overwhelmed, and exhausted. As a result, a significant part of the programme focused on restoring adults' internal resources, stabilizing emotional well-being, and creating an atmosphere of psychological support. Despite the difficulties and persistent sense of danger, participants reported that the meetings became an important source of strength, support, and an opportunity to temporarily shift their attention from distressing experiences to constructive interaction and connection.

Group Activities in Vysokyi

At the Yu TU Family Center in the village of Vysokyi, the parenting groups initially consisted primarily of families receiving support from social services and requiring additional assistance.

The early stages of the programme were accompanied by several challenges related to the participants' life circumstances. However, through regular meetings and consistent support, positive changes gradually became evident. Parents became more engaged, participation increased, and trust within the group strengthened.

Currently, meetings are held once a month, with attendance ranging from 10 to 17 participants. The majority of the group consists of mothers interested in developing conscious and positive parenting skills. Participants actively engage in discussions, openly share their experiences, and strive to build warmer, more respectful, and more supportive relationships with their children.

According to Alina, "one of the most significant outcomes of the groups is the development of a sense of community and mutual support among parents."

Participants have the opportunity to realize that they are not alone in their challenges and concerns. The exchange of experiences, collective problem-solving, and mutual support help reduce feelings of isolation, strengthen confidence in their own parenting resources, and foster the development of new ways of interacting with their children. This is especially important in the context of war, where families face high levels of stress and uncertainty on a daily basis. Participation in the groups contributes to the development of emotional sensitivity, strengthens parent–child relationships, and helps create a more resilient and supportive family environment.”

Group Activities in Dnipro



In addition, for the past three years, ICDP Facilitators Tetiana Oliinyk and Olena Surda have been conducting parenting groups as part of the “Nearby” project at Slobozhanska Primary School in the city of Dnipro.

Approximately 50 participants have taken part in these groups, including parents of students and school staff members. The work is based on the principles of the International Child Development Programme (ICDP), which aims to strengthen parent–child relationships,

enhance adults' emotional sensitivity, and create a supportive environment for children's healthy development.

Over the course of the initiative, the meetings have brought together not only parents but also teachers, creating a shared space for cooperation between families and the educational institution. This format promotes a common understanding of children's needs, supports the development of partnership-based relationships among adults, and strengthens a culture of respectful communication.

One of the important outcomes of the facilitators' work has been the establishment of a Parent Club, which continues to operate as an independent platform for communication, mutual support, and collaborative discussion of current parenting and child development issues. Meetings of the club are organized in response to participants' requests and reflect the actual needs of the parent community.

Participants particularly value the opportunity to discuss their own experiences in an atmosphere of acceptance and support. The group format helps participants recognize that many parenting challenges are shared by other families, reduces feelings of isolation, and contributes to the development of a supportive community of parents willing to help one another.

The topics addressed during the meetings cover a wide range of issues related to parenting, family emotional well-being, child development at different ages, building trusting relationships, overcoming communication difficulties, and maintaining psychological resilience during times of crisis and uncertainty.

Tetiana and Olena note that in the context of ongoing social change, the consequences of war, chronic stress, and emotional strain, parents and educators have an increased need for spaces where they can engage in open dialogue, exchange experiences, and receive support.

According to the facilitators' observations, regular participation in the groups contributes to greater parental confidence, the development of conscious and reflective parenting skills, and increased attentiveness to children's emotional well-being. Parents report that the meetings help them better understand their children, recognize their needs and strengths, and respond more thoughtfully to difficult life situations.

Teachers who have participated in the groups also emphasize the practical value of the ICDP programme for their professional work. The knowledge and skills acquired through the programme help them build more trusting relationships with children, respond more effectively to students' emotional needs, and strengthen cooperation with families.

New publication

In December 2025, an article by Anna Krasina, Head of ICDP Ukraine, was published in the academic journal *Bulletin of Academician Stepan Demianchuk International University of Economics and Humanities. Series: Pedagogy and Psychology* (Вісник Міжнародного економіко-гуманітарного університету імені Академіка Степана Дем'янчука. Серія: Педагогіка та психологія)

Krasina H. V.

Family and Child in Wartime Conditions: Psychosocial Support Based on the International Child Development Programme Model

Annotation

The article presents a theoretical analysis of the psychosocial needs of children, adolescents, and families living in the context of war, and substantiates the potential of the International Child Development Programme (ICDP) as a model of support in crisis conditions. Based on a synthesis of Ukrainian and international studies, the paper demonstrates that a considerable proportion of children exhibit signs of psychological traumatization, anxiety symptoms, impaired self-regulation, and behavioural difficulties. At the same time, families face emotional exhaustion, loss of stability, reduced internal resources, and deterioration of parent–child interaction. The article outlines the key tasks of psychosocial support and emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary approaches that integrate psychological, social, and educational interventions. Particular attention is given to art therapy methods as a flexible tool for emotional stabilization and for restoring the connection between the child and the caregiver. The conceptual foundations of ICDP, grounded in emotionally attuned interaction, sensitive responsiveness, and supportive dialogue, are analyzed. The article concludes that the integration of this model into work with families affected by traumatic events is advisable, given its humanistic orientation, cultural adaptability, and demonstrated potential to enhance the quality of parent–child relationships.

Links to publication:

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7075-5183>

<https://journals.megu.rovno.ua/index.php/ped-psyh/article/view/147>