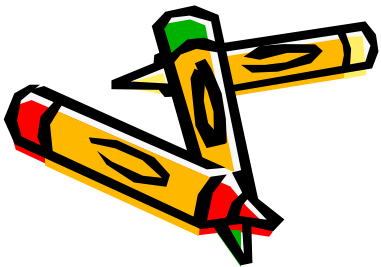
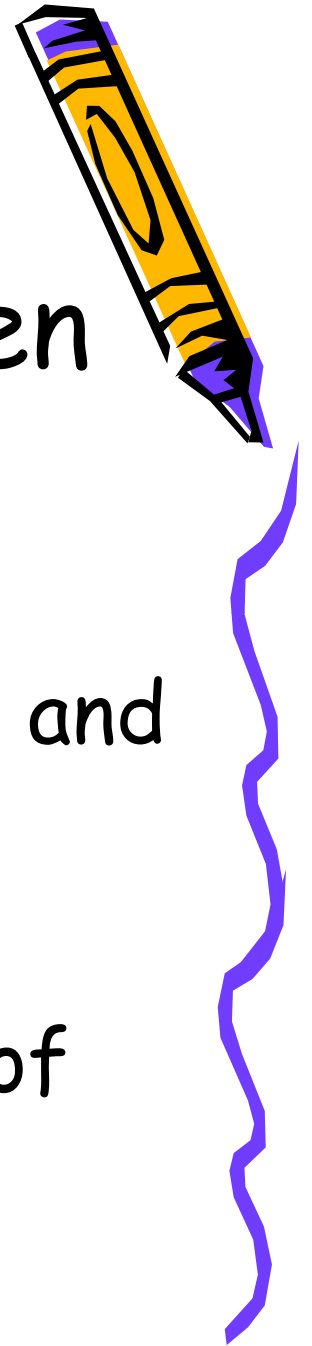




# Talking With Our Children About Difficult Topics



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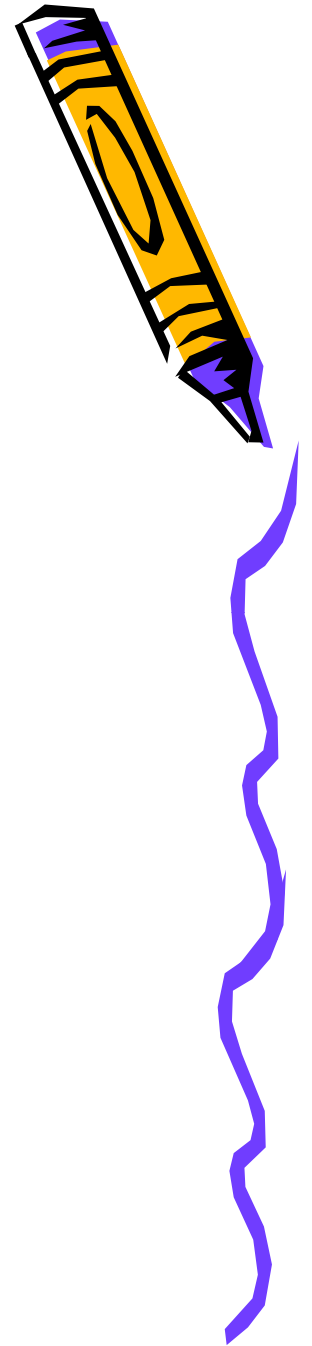
Developing a Framework for Listening and  
Responding

Applying this Framework to the issue of  
poverty in Delhi/India

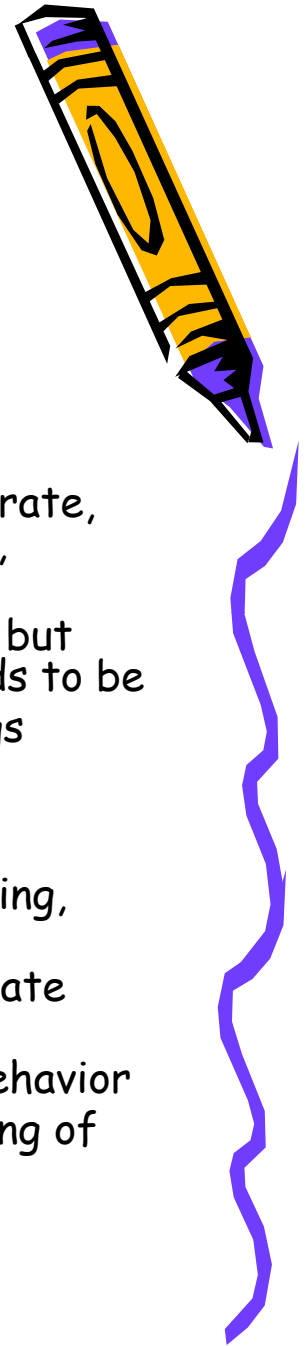


# A Framework

- Developmental considerations
- "Listening" to the questions
- Acknowledging our own comfort or discomfort, beliefs



# Developmental Considerations



## Before Age 3: Cognitive

- Fear of separation begins at around 8 months
- 18 months: no concept of death  
learning "cause and effect" thinking,  
experiencing feelings

## Ages 3-5: Cognitive

- Concrete thinkers
- Limited concept of time: here and now thinkers
- Socializing begins
- Events revolve around me:  
I caused it, will this happen to me?

## Needs: Before age 3

- Connection
- 18 months: beginning to separate, needs routine, predictability, security
- Becoming more independent, but dependent when she/he needs to be
- Needs limits, labeling feelings

## Needs: Ages 3-5

- Encourage exploration, thinking, questioning
- Encourage fantasy but separate fantasy from reality
- Coach socially appropriate behavior
- Needs reassurance, correcting of misperceptions



# Developmental Considerations



## **Ages 6/7**

- Thinking still concrete but becoming more abstract. world is expanding ..curious
- Beginning to comprehend time
- Fascination with death. it is personified, the devil, angel.
- Handicaps are punishment
- Still focused on "me"  
I caused it, will it happen to me?
- (7) Beginning to see things from others point of view  
Parents are "omnipotent", know everything



## **Needs 6/7**

- 6s Love to talk, converse
- 7s Maybe more internal
- 6/7 May worry about death or separation, other fears; need reassurance
- To be active: need to move, play, may act out death
- To have misperceptions clarified



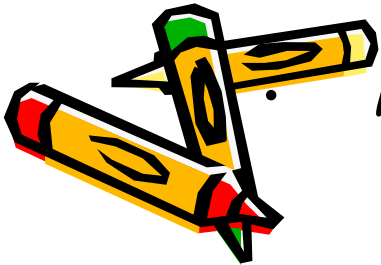
# Developmental Considerations



## **Ages 8-10: Cognitive**

- Moving to more abstract understanding
- Seeks information, learning about the world, exploring contradictions
- "Fairness" big issue
- Becomes more interested in what happens after death
- Understands that death is forever, universal
- Understands meaning of time..

• More social



## **Needs:8-10**

- Information, expanding interest in world, other cultures
- Asking more questions
- Need for autonomy
- May argue about fairness, rules
- May joke about death
- Tell scary stories
- May have a "short sadness span"
- More able to work in groups





# Responding ~ to Children's Questions

*"Starting a two way conversation rather than a question/answer session"*



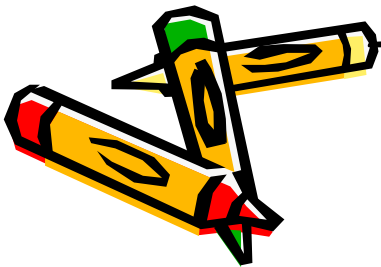
# Guidelines for Responding to Questions



## 1) Listening "underneath" the question

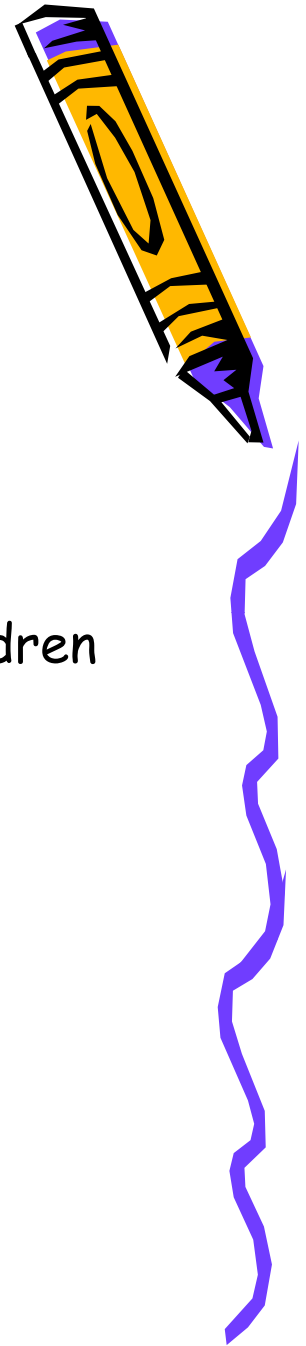
What might this question "mean"?

- *Do they need attention?*
- *Are they searching for reassurance or security?*
- *Do they want information?*
- *Are they fearful?*



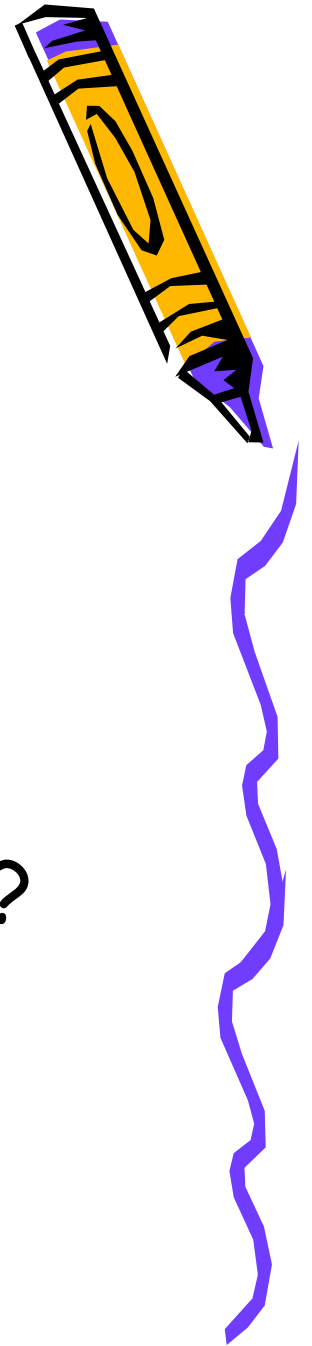
# Guidelines for Responding to Questions

- 2) **Ask questions to understand their thinking**
- 3) **Explore their misperceptions..** Have children explain what they think in their own words.
- 4) **Tell the truth, give accurate age appropriate information**
- 5) **Be honest** about not knowing the answer.



# Children get their cues from US

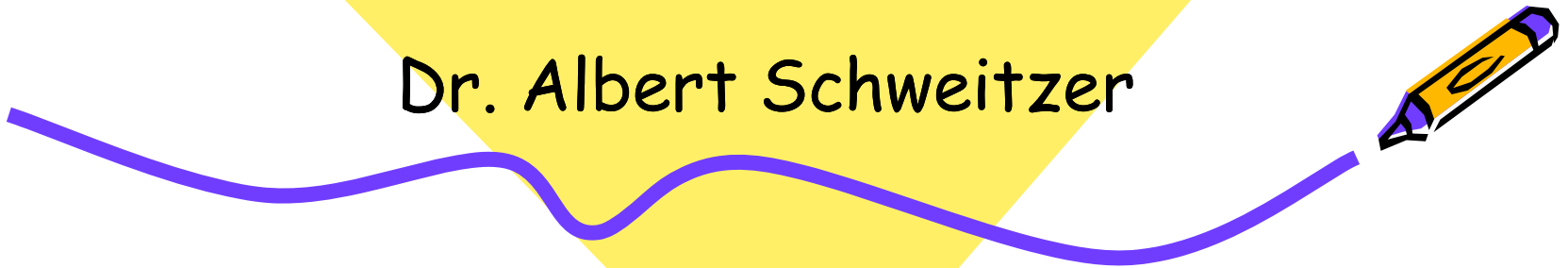
- Acknowledge our own comfort or discomfort
- What do I believe or know about poverty (or sex, death, handicaps)?
- What do we believe as a family ?





"One thing I know: the only ones  
who will be really happy are  
those who will have sought and  
found how to serve."

Dr. Albert Schweitzer



# Responding to Poverty

- *Why caring matters*

**Physically:** positive immune response lowers stress

**Emotionally:** sense that we are capable and we feel empowered, not helpless

**Socially:** increases sense of responsibility, connection and interdependence

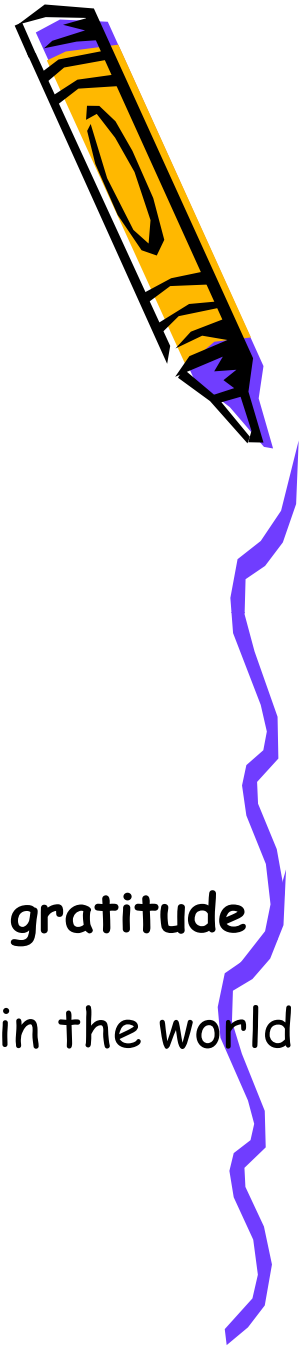
**Increases resilience and happiness**

- *An opportunity*

-For ourselves and our children to develop a sense of **gratitude** and **appreciation** for what we have

-Develop a **different perspective** on how people live in the world

-To see peoples' "humanness"



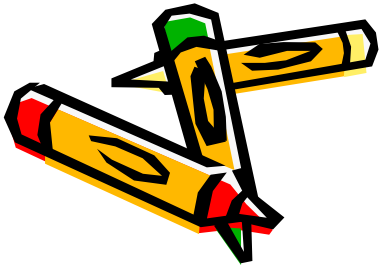
# What We Believe at AES

## Mission Statement :

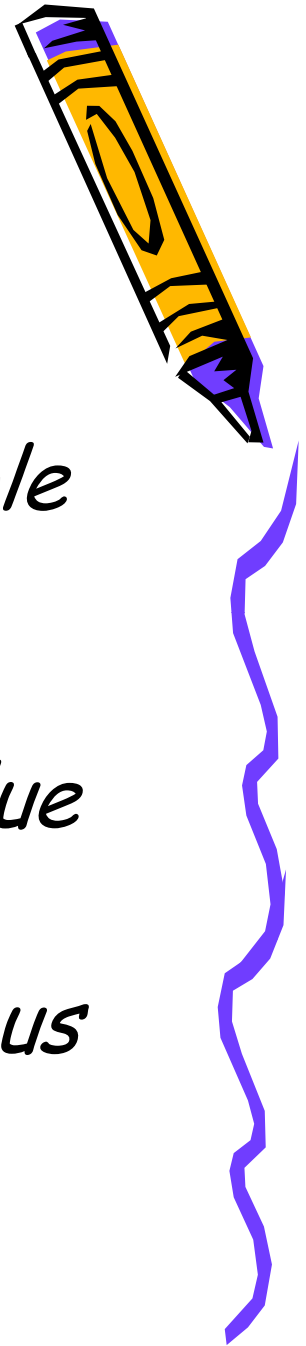
*"..enables students to be responsible global citizens"*

## Values:

- *Each individual has intrinsic value*
- *Diversity enriches us*
- *Service to others strengthens us*



*Service Projects at AES:*



# What can parents and families do?

## Questions and fears:

Using the developmental framework, how will you or have you responded to questions or fears about poverty?

## Taking action: empowering ourselves and our children:

What are you doing or have you thought about doing to help others in Delhi including household staff?

