

# 3

## Talking to parents about child health



# 3

(20 marks)

Raju was born a year ago. His parents Mohan and Kamla migrated to Delhi from Bihar in search of a job some two years back just after their marriage. They are at present employed on a construction site where a multistoreyed housing complex is being built. Mohan constructed a small jhuggi close to the construction site and that is where they live.

Mohan and Kamla are proud of their little son. But they find little time for him and leave him to play with other children of his age close to their work site. Over the past year Raju has kept poor health. Kamla tried to breast feed him for as long as possible but in spite of her best efforts the frequency of breast feeding decreased. Now she breast feeds Raju only at night. During the day Raju eats a few pieces of a roti or bread, in fact, a bit of whatever his parents eat.

Raju had two severe episodes of diarrhoea between the age of six months and nine months. Kamla stopped breast feeding for the time Raju had diarrhoea. She found that Raju drank water very readily but she tried to limit the amount. Raju recovered but was very weak. Then someone suggested that she should shift Raju onto formula prepared by diluting milk powder. Kamla felt that this would help. Raju, however, remained weak and inactive.

?  
One

**Do you think Raju is likely to suffer from nutritional disorders? If yes, which one? Give detailed reasons for your answer.**

Mohan and Kamla now feel that they should take Raju to the local *vaid*. The *vaid* gives them a powdered medicine and a magic charm to tie around Raju's arm. They return home satisfied and do as the *vaid* told them to.

But they find that Raju's condition is not improving. He has become quite listless and cries most of the time. He is also not so active as before. Kamla is all the more worried because she is expecting again. She would then have to provide for two children.

Kamla herself feels tired these days and the manager at the construction site constantly complains about her. She tries her best to work harder but cannot cope.

?  
Two

**Identify the factors which increase the chances of this family suffering from malnutrition. Clearly show the interrelationship between the factors you have identified.**

Mohan's friend Birju is the first to tell him about a health camp being organized some two kms from his work site. At first he decides against going but Birju tells him that the health workers might agree to extend the timings later in the evening. This would be helpful since they would not have to miss their day's work and lose out on the earnings. Mohan and Birju decide to walk to the health camp taking their family members along.

The health worker examines everybody but gives particular attention to Kamla and Raju. She asks Kamla to...

?  
Three

**What would you tell Kamla if you were the health worker? Identify the key messages you would like to communicate.**

Kamla finds the health worker friendly. She is particularly happy that she spent so much time trying to sort out her practical difficulties. Kamla starts thinking about what she could do to improve the health of her family.

Mohan and Kamla begin to try out the suggestions of the health worker. Other people working at the construction site laugh at them. They prefer to trust in the remedies of the *vaid* unlike Mohan and Kamla. In a couple of months they find that Raju's health has begun to improve. He laughs and interacts with them and other children. He does not look disinterested any more.

Kamla has also started feeling better. She realizes that her health has improved because she was willing to change her behaviour and act according to the suggestions given by the health worker. She, however, notices that other people around her are not willing to even go to the health camp. She wonders whether she could do anything about this.

?  
Four

Suppose Kamla comes to you for advice, what ways would you suggest in which Kamla can help to improve the health of the community to which she belongs ?

### GUIDELINES FOR ANSWERING

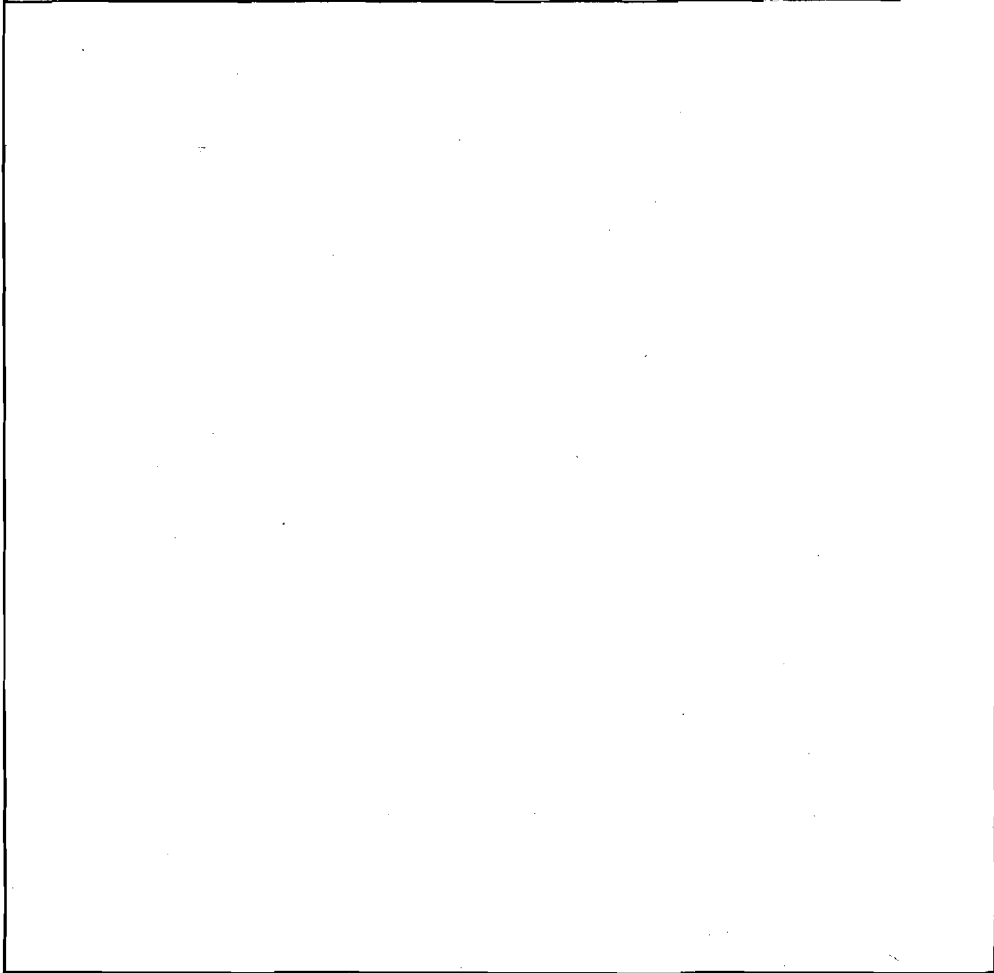
**Step 1.** Read the activity carefully keeping in mind the sequence of events and the four questions asked. Now identify the relevant block(s) and unit(s)

? One ..... ? Two ..... ? Three .....  
? Four .....

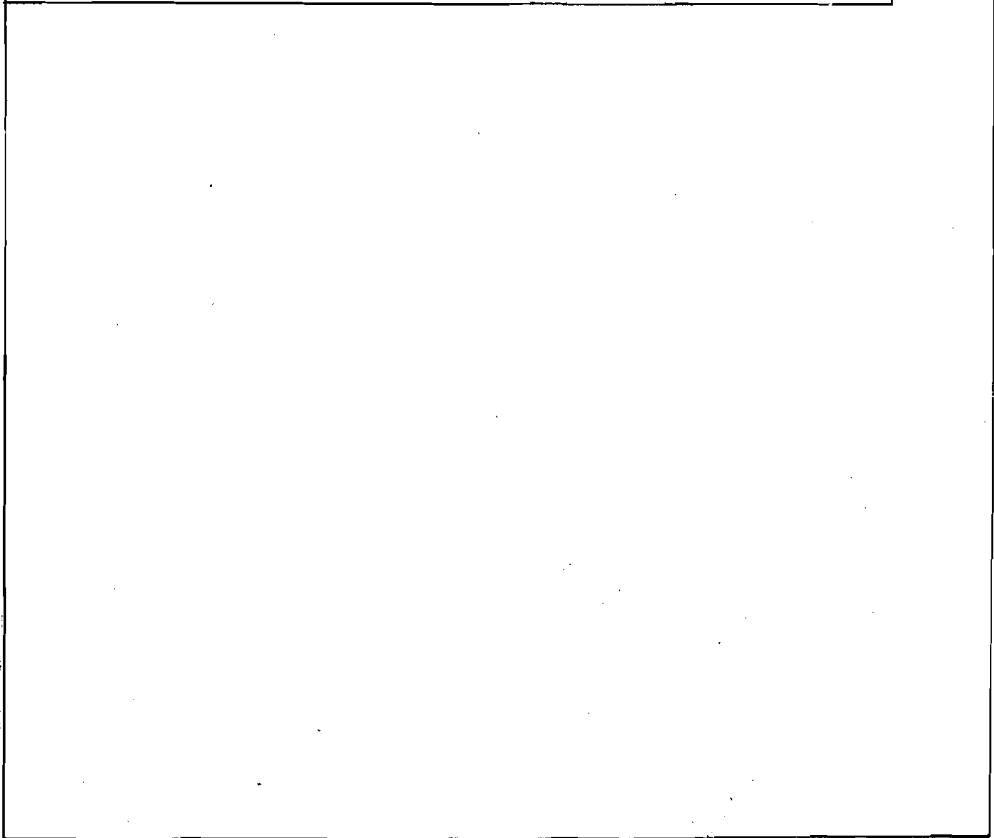
**Step 2.** Next jot down relevant points about the following topics/areas.

Infant feeding—foods to be given during diarrhoea

**Interrelationships between socio-economic factors and malnutrition**



**Precautions to be taken in the case of women who are pregnant and still lactating**



## Ways in which nutrition education can be carried out

**Step 3.** Now read Questions 1 to 4. To answer these questions satisfactorily, you need a good idea of:

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**One**

- Ensuring adequate food intake in infancy, pregnancy and lactation
- Causes of malnutrition

?  
**Two**

- Interrelationship between maternal malnutrition and the health of the child

?  
**Three**

- Identification, prevention and treatment of nutritional deficiency disorders. Use the language which you would use with an illiterate mother

?  
**Four**

- Nutrition education i.e. ways in which important nutrition messages can be communicated to illiterate and possibly disinterested people.

This obviously means studying more than one block thoroughly and thinking about how each aspect relates to several others. Take time to think things through. It will be time well spent.

For Questions 3 and 4 make sure that your suggestions are practical and can be followed by Kamla. Remember the difficulties she is likely to face with regard to money and lack of time.