

# Game F: Hot Potato



## Purpose:

To explore participants' values around children and to open conversation about possible benefits of family planning

## Materials:

- A small ball, potato or another ball-shaped object

## Take Away Messages

- Couples can talk together and make a choice about how many children they want to have and when they want to get pregnant.
- There are benefits to delaying first birth for women, men, and couples.

## Introduction:

Today we are going to begin discussing how couples can talk to each other about having children, and how they can choose when to get pregnant by using family planning.

## How to Play:

- Begin the game by gathering everyone in a circle. Make sure each participant has room to move their arms. Tell participants that we are going to have a conversation about how couples can talk together about having children and how they can choose when and how many children to have.
- Explain that the ball you are holding is a "hot potato" that you don't want to hold for very long. So the point of the game is to pass the "hot potato" to someone else as quickly as possible. But before you can pass the "hot potato" to someone else, you have to say an answer to a question. It is important to pass the ball quickly and not think TOO much about what you are saying.

## Example Round 1 – Who can I talk with about my family and having children?

Say, for example, - "my sister". When someone catches the ball they then need to name a **different** person they can talk with before passing the "hot potato" on. If you can't quickly say someone, pass the potato on to someone else until at least 2 - 3 answers have been given or until no one has something to say.

- **Tell** participants that for the rest of the game, there are no "wrong" or "right" answers, only people's opinions and values. For every round give participants a few minutes to think before passing the ball/potato.

### Discuss:

? Why is it sometimes difficult to talk to our friends and families about how many children we want and when?

- **Recap**– it can be helpful to talk about reproductive health and planning a family with your husband or wife, and with other family members who can support you.

**Round 2 – Reasons to wait before having a first child.** Take the ball back and suggest that the next category is “Reasons to wait before having a first child”. Say, for example, - “to finish school” and toss the ball to someone else. Continue until at least 2 – 3 answers have been given or no one has anything to add. – This may mean giving people more time or second chances.

- **Ask** participants:

What are some other reasons why newly married people might prefer to wait to have children?

Who can affirm their decision?

- **Recap Message for this Round:** Delaying pregnancy until age 18 can improve the wellbeing of the mother and baby, as well as offer girls opportunities for study and economic stability. While others have an interest in your family, the final decision of when to have children and how many is up to you and your spouse.

**Round 3 –** Suggest that the next category is “**Benefits of using family planning.**” Say, for example: - “To decide when to have children” and toss the ball to another person. Continue until at least 2 – 3 answers have been given or no one has anything to add.

- **Recap Message for this Round:** It is important to talk to your spouse about using family planning and deciding how many children to have

### Discuss:

? Have you had conversations about these things with your friends or family? What was your experience? Who would you want to discuss these types of decisions with?

? Would anyone like to share their experience with having this kind of conversation with a friend or family member? How did it go?

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**Round 4 (if there is time)** – Suggest that the next category is “**Reasons to have fewer, well-spaced children.**” Say, for example: - “to be able to have healthy babies and mothers” and toss the ball to someone else. Continue until at least 2 – 3 answers have been given or no one has anything to add. This may mean giving people more time or second chances.

- **Ask** participants:

Was it hard to think of reasons for waiting between pregnancies? Why do you think it was hard?

What are some other reasons why people might want to have fewer children?

- **Recap Message for this Round:** For the health of the baby, the mother and her children, a couple should space their children. After having a baby, wait at least two years to become pregnant again.

## Final Discussion:

- ? What can we do in this community to help people talk about choices around when to have children and whether to use family planning?

- What is one thing you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member?
- **Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**