

Parenting courses for children urged during the school years

By MAGGIE HANNAI
Herald staff writer

A mandatory program for both boys and girls dealing with the growth and development of young children should be included in the Ontario school curriculum says Eric Balkind, principal of Georgetown's Howard Wrigglesworth public school.

Mr. Balkind told the Holy Cross Parents Association at a meeting last week that he has made parenting education his top priority in his personal efforts to help young children. Since today's parents often will not make use of what help is available to ease the burden of being parents, he has turned his attention to the future generation, he said.

The result is his suggestion of a special program to teach adolescents about very young children.

The program should be introduced fairly early, probably in Grades 8, 9, and 10 before the 18-year-olds can start dropping out.

There are a few Family Life courses in existence which include some information on infants and young children, but usually this is introduced at the Grade 12 level. That is leaving it too late, he says.

Family Life studies are usually an enlargement of what was once called Home Economics. Therefore the chances of a boy taking the course are almost nil. This, Mr. Balkind feels, is unfortunate because "boys make up exactly half of any set of parents."

The course should include both the theory of how a child develops as found in current research and studies, and practice in dealing with them as they grow.

The simplest way to give practical experience, he feels, would be to put day care centres into high schools. There is a "crying need" for more day care and no money to operate it.

Since enrollments are declining in many high schools

and it appears that the trend will continue there should be room to set up such a facility without adding to present structures, he says. Adolescents could then see and work with the tots and thus learn much that would help prepare them for their role as future parents.

He points out that many people feel that being a parent is just "doing what comes naturally." The battered child syndrome is an example of what comes naturally to some parents, he says, because usually a child beater was once a beaten child.

The way to overcome some of the frustration that leads to child abuse, he suggests is to educate adolescents in the normal ways of a young child.

A six-month-old infant understands words and is beginning to make sounds. By age 3 the basic adult vocabulary is understood and established, Mr. Balkind says. Parents who listen to their child, answer his questions, and try to explain things to him are enhancing his language development.

Mr. Balkind calls toddlers a "mobile monument to curiosity." He points out that parents of toddlers should know that their curiosity is greater than their self-restraint at the 18-month to two-year-old stage.

They should also realize that the mouth is the natural organ for exploring things and thus they show no discrimination in the objects they pop into their mouths. Parents who are unaware of these facts may well react unwisely to the constant frustration their children induce.

Social development is in its critical stages during the first

four years of a child's life, he says. This is where the child learns to be warm and loving human being or cold and withdrawn depending on the type of environment in which he lives.

The roots of a child's intellect also develop at this age, and parents must realize that each new act a child learns to perform must be practised constantly (sometimes until the parent is driven to distraction) until the child has mastered it. Once it is a part of him, he'll forget it.

Since all this learning is done before kindergarten age parents must realize that home, not the school, is the prime educator, Mr. Balkind says. He adds that the dummies it's that will save the world are not Reading Writing and 'Rithmetic. They are respect, responsibility, and human rights.

Nutrition is an aspect of educating parents that Mr. Balkind feels is neglected too often.

He points out that a child already has all the brain cells he will ever get by the time he is born. If the infant is malnourished during pregnancy the brain is damaged because cells do not form. They will not grow later. He will have to do without.

Yet young mothers only worry about their diet during pregnancy and ignore how the diet they lived on in their formative years will affect what nutrients their bodies possess for them to pass on to their foetuses.

Mr. Balkind told The Herald that the Lester Pearson high school in Burlington began operating a day care centre in the school this fall.

The executive for the Holy Cross Parent's Association for 1977-78 is president Tom Ramautarsingh, first vice-president Gary Kirkpatrick, second vice-president Ann Marie Curtis, secretary Alice Frazer, treasurer Mike Cannon.



The library in Georgetown was the scene of a puppet show during the rainy Saturday afternoon.

Limehouse news

Mrs. A. W. BENTON
Mrs. and Mrs. John Noble attended the funeral of her grandmother, Mrs. Jhonings of Hamilton on Wednesday. She was past ninety years of age.

Congratulations to the Women's Institute fall fair's committee whose display tied for second place at Acton Fall Fair and won first at Milton Fair.

Hev. Dr. C. C. Cochrane, who was minister here prior to twenty-nine years ago preached the 116th anniversary services here on Sunday. He and Mrs. Cochrane were entertained by Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Patterson and the Bentons. The choir provided anthems at both services.

Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Patterson attended the fortieth wedding anniversary reception for Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Patterson at Hockwood on Sunday afternoon.

OBITUARY

Henry Scott, 85

A funeral service was held Sept. 6 for Henry Scott, a long-time resident of Georgetown and district. He was 85.

Mr. Scott was born in Belfast, Ireland. He went to school there and in Brisbane and worked with his father thrashing grain for farmers in the area. For the last 15 years he was an invalid.

He is survived by his wife, Alicia Scott, whom he married June 12, 1922; and a sister, Mrs. Joe (Stella) Watson, of Toronto, the last surviving member of the family. He was a member of the Anglican Church.

Mr. Scott was an accomplished wood carver. Pieces he carved with a jackknife are in the homes of all his relatives.

For the ten years prior to his retirement, Mr. Scott was a mail carrier on RR3 Georgetown.

He was buried at Greenwood Cemetery.

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