

# Education

## Parent Council answers homework questions

**H**omework: so familiar, yet such a source of uncertainty for many parents. Is it enough? Is it too much? How much should I help?

Homework reinforces the classroom lesson. It is a chance for the child to practise skills or to learn independent work. The amount of homework and the time spent per subject will depend on the student's grade level, the teacher, the subject matter and the student's ability.

Some students are able to expedite homework very quickly while others will take a long time. It is difficult to give rules as to how much homework is just the right amount as it varies a lot from child to child. Parents concerned about too much or not enough homework may want to compare experiences with other parents in the same class. Teachers sometimes underestimate or overestimate the time it will take to complete an assignment.

If homework becomes a daily crisis, you may want to discuss the situation with the teacher. A student overwhelmed by the amount of work or confused by the instructions will not benefit much from the assignment.

Families can support homework activities by providing the student with a comfortable place, free of distractions. Parents can ensure the student is organized and schedules a regular part of their day to complete assignments. Establishing a routine helps develop good homework habits and avoid difficulties. When they have no homework, encourage additional review of the concepts, or simply reading, which is always valuable.

How a parent should help will again depend on the student. Parents who show an interest in

their children's homework, projects and test results are sending a message that school is important to the short and long-term well being of the child. Some children need help getting organized, determining the steps of their project or researching information. These are skills that need to be learned and practised. Nothing is more frustrating than having to redo an assignment because the student did not understand directions. Teach your child to make sure he or she knows exactly what the teacher expects, and to seek clarification if necessary. This is also a skill that will be useful all their lives.

Some schools have a homework policy. If the school does not have one, parents could approach their school council to see if it is interested in developing one. The Ministry of Education has a curriculum policy document for each grade and subject area. A companion piece gives examples of student work at different levels of proficiency. Copies are available at schools or from the ministry.

TVOntario's Eureka connects students with teachers live and on-line through the special Ask A Teacher chat feature. Teachers answer homework questions and provide on-line tutorial support Sunday through Thursday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Try it out at [www.tvo.org/eureka/](http://www.tvo.org/eureka/).

There are many web-based resources. If you do not have a computer at home, check out the Internet access at the public library. The Ontario Parent Council has a useful section on homework in the Parent to Parent section, [www.ontarioparentcouncil.org](http://www.ontarioparentcouncil.org)

—Ontario Parent Council

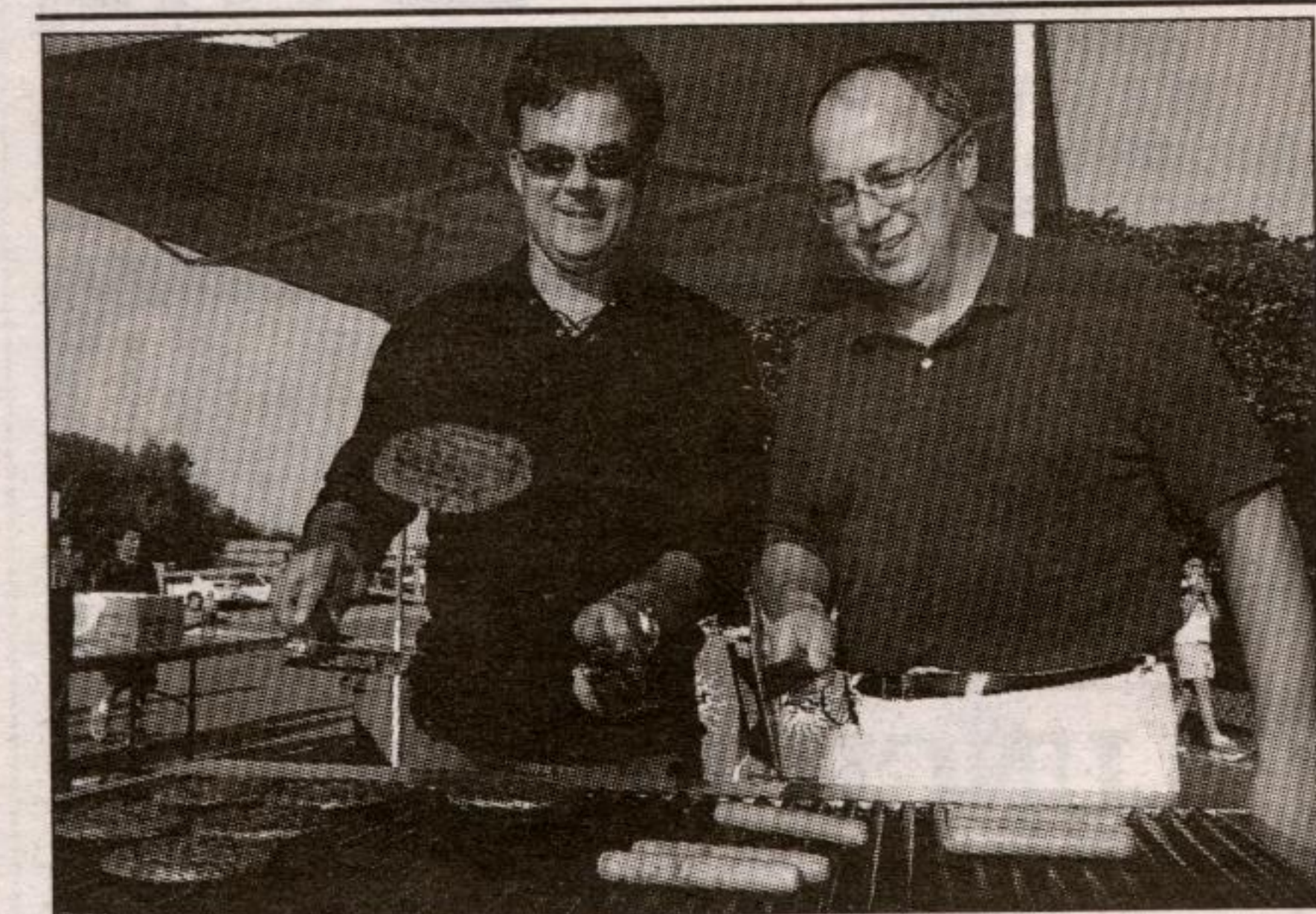
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## New play equipment at Limehouse

New playground equipment at Limehouse School was officially opened during the school's barbecue Thursday evening after the School Council spent months running fund-raising activities to replace equipment that had been deemed unsafe. On hand for the ribbon cutting were, (from left) Warren Harris, Town of Halton Hills Manager of Parks and Cemeteries, Ian Duff of J. C. Duff Gravel (who donated the stone for the base), Limehouse School vice-principal Anne McIntyre, students Jacqueline Tanguay, 7, Liam Butterfield, 6, D.J. Strachan, 4 and Andie Field, 6, as well as School Council chair Alice Strachan.

Photo by Ted Brown



## Holy Cross School cooks up a welcome

M&M Meats owner Brian Northwood and parent volunteer John Halverson (right) took their turn at the barbecue as the Parents' Council at Holy Cross School hosted a welcome back barbecue at the school Thursday. The event gave students and parents an opportunity to meet and greet the teachers and other students.

Photo by Ted Brown

## Literacy North Halton opens door to new students

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