

# Tailor number of activities to each child's personality

From page 16.

How do parents know whether children can handle a slew of extracurricular activities on top of the pressures of school?

Claire Prieur is the family works supervisor with Richmond Hill-based The York Centre for Children, Youth and Families.

She believes the level of activities must be tailored to an individual child's needs.

Just because one child may want to participate in every sport and activity she can sign up for, doesn't mean siblings will, too.

"It's really zeroing in on that particular child," she said. "It really means a parent has to have a good sense of their individual child, really individualizing for that child."

Prieur said organized activities are an important part of children's lives.

They promote teamwork and fitness and help kids explore their talents. They are a great outlet for the extroverted and energetic child.

And signing an introverted, shy child up for one or two activities may help them develop self-confidence.

But Prieur said sometimes children's lives are over-organized. Kids need time for sponta-

neous play, which teaches them to negotiate with others and helps them be creative and autonomous.

"It also sets the stage so they don't have to be a workaholic."

Prieur said children need to know what it feels like to be bored and figure out constructive ways of relieving it.

*'School is their job.*

*They need to be educated and nothing should come in the way to let grades slip. It depends on the child's personality — if they can handle the commitment to the sport and the practices on top of their school work.'*

She thinks last week's attack on the United States may have an impact on very busy families.

"After the New York thing, people are exploring family and relationships more."

Prieur encouraged parents to listen to their children to make

sure the activities they are involved in are positive experiences.

"You hopefully want to hear the child so you have the child in things that have meaning for the child, not something the parents wanted to do as children but didn't."

Barb Annechiarico has two busy children who attend private school in Woodbridge. Her 10-year-old son plays rep soccer, takes swimming lessons and plays hockey.

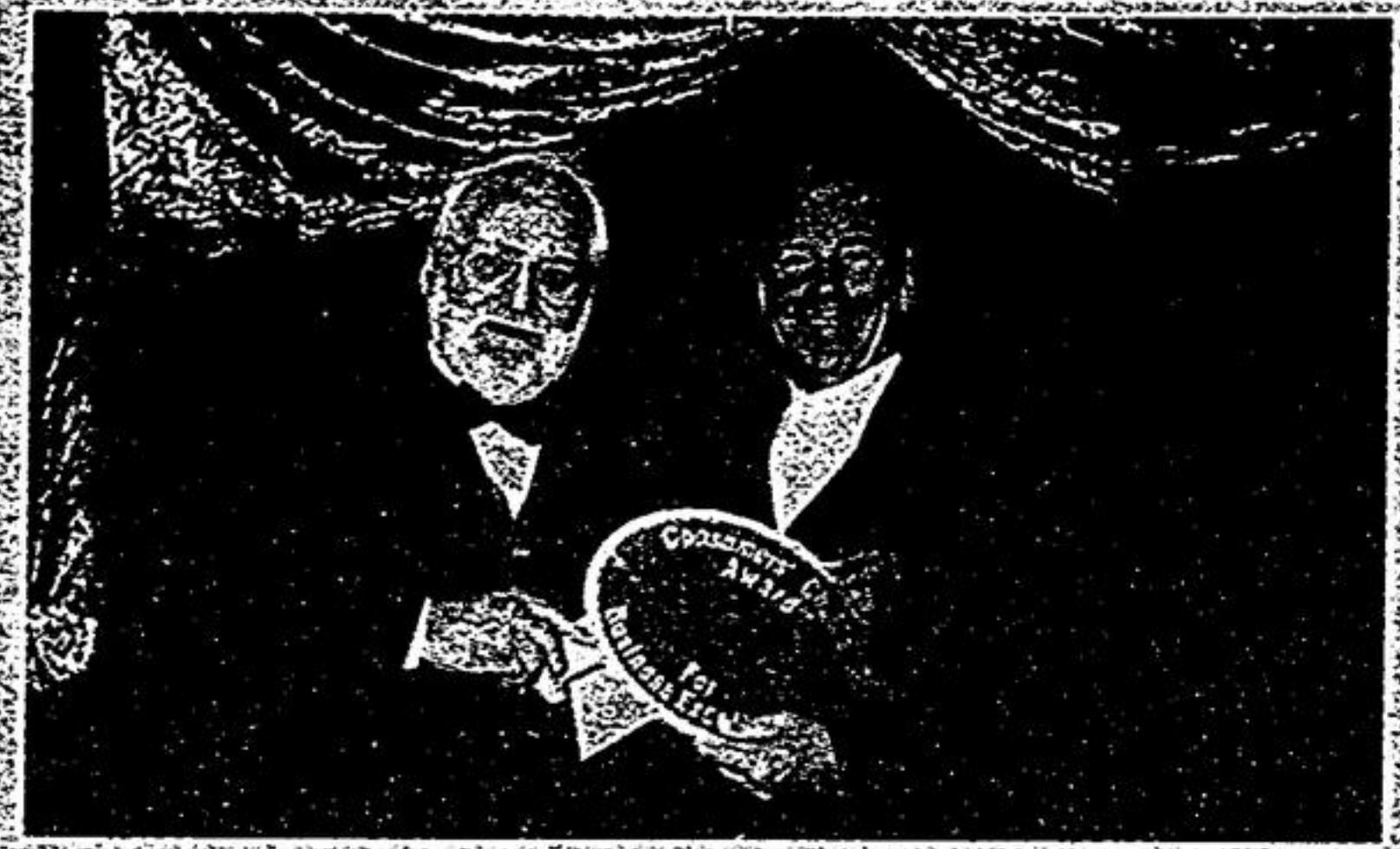
He's also involved in school sports. Her eight-year-old daughter is more of a "social butterfly", although she takes piano and swimming.

Annechiarico said children's activities must be kept in perspective.

"School is their job. They need to be educated and nothing should come in the way to let grades slip. It depends on the child's personality — if they can handle the commitment to the sport and the practices on top of their school work," she said.

"Parents should not think their child is the next superstar. All recreational sports should be fun."

"If it's not, make a change. Children should not be stressed out or overwhelmed. Society needs stronger families, not more superstars."



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Mr. Davison has lived in Uxbridge Township for the last 35 years and he has over 50 years experience in the label printing business.

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