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Parenting Education News

The Newsletter of Parenting Education Saskatchewan

Welcome to the Fall 2006 edition of Parenting Education News...

This newsletter is about change. The Oxford Dictionary defines change as ‘the process of making or becoming different’.

The Fall 2006 edition of the newsletter starts by highlighting how Parenting Education Saskatchewan has become different – different in how support is provided to parent educators and how these changes came to be. For us this was a huge and very exciting change!

Beyond changes to Parenting Education Saskatchewan – woven throughout the newsletter are ways to look at change from various angles. For example, a diagram of change as suggested by human resource consultant, Gwen LePage is a useful tool when working with parents – individually and as a group. The model on Family Involvement created by Dr. William Doherty provides a framework for looking at how the delivery of parent education encompasses many levels, encouraging parent educators to work more effectively together. Stories of change in personal perspective have also been included to round out the concept.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter! All feedback and comments are welcome – tell us what you think of the changes. You can reach the office by phone 306.934.2095 or email, parent.educ@sasktel.net.

Bev Digout, Coordinator

Changes to Parenting Education Saskatchewan

We asked parent educators across the province what their needs as a profession were. The answer to this question and those answers generated through a national study of parent educators conducted by Family Resource Programs of Canada (FRP) (www.frp.ca) were combined and provided the direction for change.

The top three needs:

1. Need to connect and know what other people working in the field are doing.
2. Need for training events - what are they, when are they happening.
3. Need to know what resources are available – ‘how can I stay current and up to date?’.

As a result, the website of Parenting Education Saskatchewan – www.parenteducationsask.ca – has been expanded and updated to meet these needs.

An Online Database – www.parenteducationsask.ca/database.html – lists service providers by health region and area of interest in an easy to use format. Log on and enter your information!

The Trends and Professional Growth section - www.parenteducationsask.ca/trends.html - highlight new and interesting resources and upcoming training opportunities. Training events will occur throughout the year based on consultation with community groups and identified needs.

(continued on page 2)

“It’s not so much that we’re afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it’s that place in between that we fear . . . It’s like being between trapezes. It’s Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There’s nothing to hold on to.”

Marilyn Ferguson



Who is Parenting Education Saskatchewan?

Parenting Education Saskatchewan is a project of Family Service Saskatchewan. The project was created in 1994 as a method to link people working in the field of parent support and education throughout the province. An advisory committee consisting of Klaus Gruber, Family Service Saskatoon, Tom Seeley, SIGN Yorkton, and Mavis McPhee, READSaskatoon guide the project and provide direction. If you are interested in joining this committee please call 306.934.2095.

Check it Out!

www.moralintelligence.com

(continued from page 1)

This newsletter, **Parenting Education News** will continue to be published moving to an online format over the next year.

A **Blog** for parent educators will be developed, linking people working in the field of parent support and education.

These changes are an evolving process. Constant updating and connecting with those working in the field will help facilitate this process. Keep posted!

21 Days to a Different Relationship

Parent and child relationships represent change on a regular basis. Sometimes old patterns of relating create problems. Dr. Michele Borba suggests a 4-step process of concentrating on what is wrong to what is right thereby changing perspective and behaviour.

4 Steps

1. Target 1 - 2 strengths in a child. This process guides the behaviour pattern and helps to identify the unique strengths and talents of a person.

2. The objective is to praise the identified strengths specifically.

3. Cultivate the strength in the child.
4. Focus 21 days on the strength - behaviour changes will occur in 21 days.

The process of 21 days not only reinforces the strengths within the child but also encourages the parent to reflect on a more positive way of relating to their child.

Aristotle: You are what you repeatedly do.

The Story Bin Perspective Builders

There's a Hole In My Sidewalk

Portia Nelson's insightful story of the hole in the sidewalk provides a metaphor of life. Life is like a stroll down a somewhat hazardous sidewalk. The story identifies the key feature required to safely navigate life's sidewalk.

Chapter One

I walk down a street and there's a big hole. I don't see it and fall into it. It's dark and hopeless and it takes me a long time to find my way out. It's not my fault!

Chapter Two

I walk down the same street. There's a big hole and I can see it, but I still fall in. It's dark and hopeless and it takes me a long time to get out. It's still not my fault.

Chapter Three

I walk down a street. There's a big hole. I can see it, but I still fall in. It's become a habit. But I keep my eyes open and get out immediately. It is my fault.

Chapter Four

I walk down a street. There's a big hole. And I walk around it.

Chapter Five

I walk down a different street.

Entitled *Autobiography in Five Short Chapters*. (This version paraphrased)

With the self discipline of a habit you avoid the repetitive holes in the sidewalk of life. You are in charge of you and life goes better. Remember: Pay attention to what you think. Look out for the holes in the sidewalk.

Pre-Teen Problems? Training Parents Works Best, Study Finds

Training adults to have more effective parenting skills is the most potent tool available and should remain the standard of care in treating preadolescent children with serious conduct behavior problems.

That finding comes from a new study that indicates for the first time that the same interventions used to treat boys with conduct problems also can be utilized to help girls with similar problems, said Theodore Beauchaine. He is a University of Washington associate professor of psychology and lead author of the paper appearing in the current issue of the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*.

"You don't treat conduct disorder or delinquency just by treating the child," Beauchaine said. "This study shows that parent training is the most effective tool in dealing with conduct disorder. We compared a great number of variables and there was not a single condition where a treatment without parent training was more effective."

However, Beauchaine said all things being equal, more treatment is better than less and programs that also target children and their teachers also help youngsters with conduct problems.

"Children's behavior also is formed and maintained outside the home. So if you work with parents and teachers, as well as give a child social skills, you are addressing three different areas and have the best chance of improving behavior."

Problem behaviors stemming from conduct disorder and the less severe oppositional defiant disorder are estimated to affect between 4 percent and 5 percent of children in the United States.

Collaborating on the study was Carolyn Webster-Stratton, director of the UW's Parenting Research Clinic and a professor of Family and Child Nursing, who has designed interventions evaluated in this study to help parents, children and teachers improve child problem behavior. The new study combined data from more than 500 children and their families in six randomized clinical trials previously conducted by Webster-Stratton. It was designed to examine proven programs and identify those factors that enhance or negatively affect treatment under specific conditions. In addition, the study sought to identify those children who are most likely to benefit from an intervention since even the most successful programs for conduct problems are effective only for about two-thirds of participants. There were 402 boys and 112 girls in the study ranging in age from 3 to 8½.

The study also found that:

- Those children who also had symptoms of depression or anxiety responded more positively to treatment.
- Impulsive children with concurrent behavior problems and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder responded best to interventions when teacher training was added to parent training.
- Children with younger, rather than older, mothers showed more improvement. This surprising finding may stem from more flexible behavior by younger mothers than older mothers, who may have more children and less patience to deal with disruptive behaviors.
- Children whose parents were less harsh and less critical at the beginning of the project and showed the most improvement in these areas as a result of parent training, tended to respond better to the interventions.

"This study tells us where to put our resources in treating conduct problems," said Beauchaine, "and that we can do the same things with girls as we have been doing for boys. We didn't know this before because there have been so few girls included in previous studies.

"Treating conduct disorder is not something we want to skimp on. Dealing with the conduct disorder is the most expensive mental health problem in this country. Identifying and treating young children when problems first occur is more likely to be successful and cost effective than waiting until these children become adolescents and have a chronic history of antisocial behavior.

"If a young child has a hitting problem, for example, he or she is less likely to grow out of that behavior than most parents think," he said.

The parent training program used in the study taught parents child-directed play skills, effective parenting, communication and problem solving skills, strategies for coping with stress and ways to boost children's social skills and manage aggressive and problematic behaviors. The child training program included teaching youngsters how to follow school rules, doing one's best in school, coping with feelings, problem solving, anger management, making friends and engaging in teamwork. The teacher program included training in building positive relationships with students, strategies to promote parent-teacher collaboration, the importance of positive attention and praise, proactive strategies for preventing problem behavior, limit-setting, classroom management strategies and methods for increasing appropriate social behavior among students.

Co-author of the study was M. Jamila Reid, a researcher in the UW's Parenting Research Clinic. The study was funded in part by the National Institute of Mental Health

Did You Know?

A recent Time/Nickelodeon survey of 991 kids' ages nine to fourteen revealed some troubling facts:

36 percent of the middle schoolers surveyed feel the pressure from peers to smoke marijuana; **36%**

40 percent feel pressure to have sex; **40%**

36 percent feel pressure to shoplift; **36%**

and four out of 10 sixth graders feel pressure to drink. **40%**

Is society changing – are we keeping up with the changes in providing support to parents?

Free Parenting Columns

Sound parenting advice on more than 50 topics is available free of charge in a series of columns written by Robert McCall, Ph.D., a former columnist for *Parents* magazine. These columns, "well suited for newsletters provide clear, concise and accurate information on topics such as dealing with a child's lying, how to toilet train, what to do about nightmares, discipline and finicky eaters, and how to recognize and address grief in children."

These columns are available at www.education.pitt.edu/ocd/family/parentingcolumns.asp

Agency Highlight

Meadow Lake is host to a very successful example of true community development, working hard to create a community that supports parents and their children. The description on page 5 was submitted to the online database of Parenting Education Saskatchewan – www.parenteducationsask.ca – entries are always welcome.

The Big 12 of Parenting...

- Understanding
- Communication
- Discipline
- Fairness
- Trust
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Caring
- Honesty
- Humour
- Spending time together
- Setting the example

Kagan, Powell, Weissbourd & Ziegler (1987)¹ ably describe the richness and complexity of the parent education field.

This description was written in 1987 – have our methods of service delivery changed, has our focus as to who ‘needs’ support changed?

BOUNDARIES Between Parent & Family Education & Family Therapy

The Levels of Family Involvement Model

William Doherty (Professor in the Department of Family Social Sciences, University of Minnesota) presents a model addressing the crucial issues of where to place parent and family education in the spectrum of professional services to families, and how to distinguish between education and therapy in work with families. A 5-level model of involvement with families is offered as an alternative to the dichotomous distinction between education and therapy.

The article in its entirety is available through the office of Parenting Education Saskatchewan – parent.educ@sasktel.net. The five levels as defined by Dr. Doherty are presented here. Careful consideration of the levels helps facilitate the thinking associated with the value of parent support and the continuum of support that is necessary to supporting parents – one level being equally as important as the other. Perhaps this model will lead to a ‘change’ in the way parent educators view themselves and others in this spectrum of providing support.

Level 1: Minimal Emphasis on Family

Interactions with parents are institution centered, not family centered. Families are not regarded as an important area of focus, but parents are dealt with for practical or legal reasons.

Level 2: Information and Advice

Knowledge base:

Content information about families, parenting, and child development.

Personal development:

Openness to engage parents in collaborative ways.

Skills:

1. Communicating information clearly and interestingly.
2. Eliciting questions.
3. Engaging a group of parents in the learning process.
4. Making pertinent and practical recommendations.
5. Providing information on community resources.

Level 3: Feelings and Support

Knowledge base:

Individual and family reactions to stress, and the emotional aspects of group process.

Personal development:

Awareness of one’s own feelings in relation to parents and group process.

Skills:

1. Eliciting expressions of feelings and concerns
2. Empathetic listening.
3. Normalizing feelings and reactions.
4. Creating an open and supportive climate.
5. Protecting a parent from too much self-disclosure in a group.

(continued on page 5)

Many Faces of Parenting

“There is no single model of parent education. It involves a wide range of strategies including manuals and handbooks; child development and parenting courses; self-help and support groups; home-visiting programs; and television, radio and magazine series. It takes place in varied settings, including schools, universities, hospitals, health

centres, mental health clinics, day-care centres, churches, libraries, community centres, shopping malls and wherever else parents are likely to gather. Target groups include future parents, single parents, adolescent parents, grandparents, divorced parents, parents of children with special needs, and parents of infants, preschool, school-

age and teenage children. Goals of programs range from the relatively specific, such as improving verbal communication, discipline, or health care, to the more global, such as expanding parents’ knowledge of child development or parenting skills...”

Kagan, s., Powell, D., Weissbourd, B., & Ziegler, E. (1987). America's family support programs. Westford, MA: Yale University.

6. Engaging parents from too much self disclosure in a group.
7. Tailoring recommendations to the unique needs, concerns, and feelings of the parent and family.
8. Identifying individual and family dysfunction.
9. Tailoring a referral to the unique situation of the parent and family.

Level 4: Brief Focused Intervention

Knowledge base:

Family Systems Theory.

Personal Development:

Awareness of one's own participation in systems, including one's own family, the parents' system, and larger community systems.

Skills:

1. Asking a series of questions to elicit a detailed picture of the family dynamics of a parent's problem.
2. Developing a hypothesis about the family systems dynamics involved in the problem.
3. Working with the parent for a short period of time to change a family interaction pattern beyond the on-to-one parent/child relationship.
4. Knowing when to end the intervention effort and either refer the parent or return to level three support.
5. Orchestrating a referral by educating the family and the therapist about what to expect from each other.
6. Working with therapists and community systems to help the parent and family.

Level 5: Family Therapy

This level is outside the scope and mission of parent and family education. The following description is offered to show the boundary between Level 4 parent and family education and Level 5 family therapy.

Knowledge base:

Family systems and patterns whereby distressed families interact with professionals and other community systems.

Personal Development:

Ability to handle intense emotions in families and self and to maintain one's balance in the face of strong pressure from family members or other professionals.

Example Skills:

1. Interviewing families or family members who are quite difficult to engage.
2. Efficiently generating and testing hypotheses about the family's difficulties and interaction patterns.
3. Escalating conflict in the family in order to break a family impasse.
4. Working intensively with families during crisis.
5. Constructively dealing with a family's strong resistance to change.
6. Negotiating collaborative relationships with other professionals and other systems who are working with the family, even when these groups are at odds with one another.

Positively Parenting- Education & Support Program

Positively Parenting- Education & Support Program is a community based parenting program aimed at promoting the value of parent education. The program is for all individuals involved in raising children. We have resources available that will make the most important job of your life easier, more enjoyable and rewarding. The program has a resource lending library on every subject involving parenting. We offer books, audio/visual materials and information handouts available to loan. Presentations, information and referrals to other sources are also available. We offer many different parenting classes throughout the year. Positively Parenting also hosts a weekly playgroup for parents. We meet every Tuesday at Gateway Elementary School from 11am-12pm. Playgroup includes story time, singing, crafts, and a healthy snack. All of our services are free of charge and open to everyone.

For further information, call 236-4804 or email positivelyparenting@sasktel.net



'Momentary Magic'...a public awareness campaign developed to encourage people to slow down and appreciate moments with children. One aspect of the campaign was an online forum. People were encouraged to share stories of these

moments. The following story submitted by a busy mom of four who feels she 'does it all', provides a moment of reflection as to how we can all get caught up in the 'to do list of life' and completely miss the moment.

"I recently spent a few hours with my girlfriend, on a Sunday afternoon. This type of visit together is unusual in that we never seem to get time alone, without kids or interruptions, so

we sure enjoyed the visit.

As we were reluctantly heading home, we started to joke about how little our husbands had done while we were gone, how messy the house would be and the kids would be out of control. But as we pulled up to her house, we looked in the window and there sat her husband in a rocking chair, with their 3-year-old little girl and 5-year-old little boy sitting on the floor while

he played the guitar and sang to them. We both looked at each other with tears in our eyes, and watched as Dad had a moment with his kids.

This was worth more than the "to do" list we seem to have as mothers. I wish I would take more time for these moments with my kids. It is something we can learn from our husbands!"

Submitted by Audrey - 2005

Survey Results Reveal How Little Kids and Parents Converse...

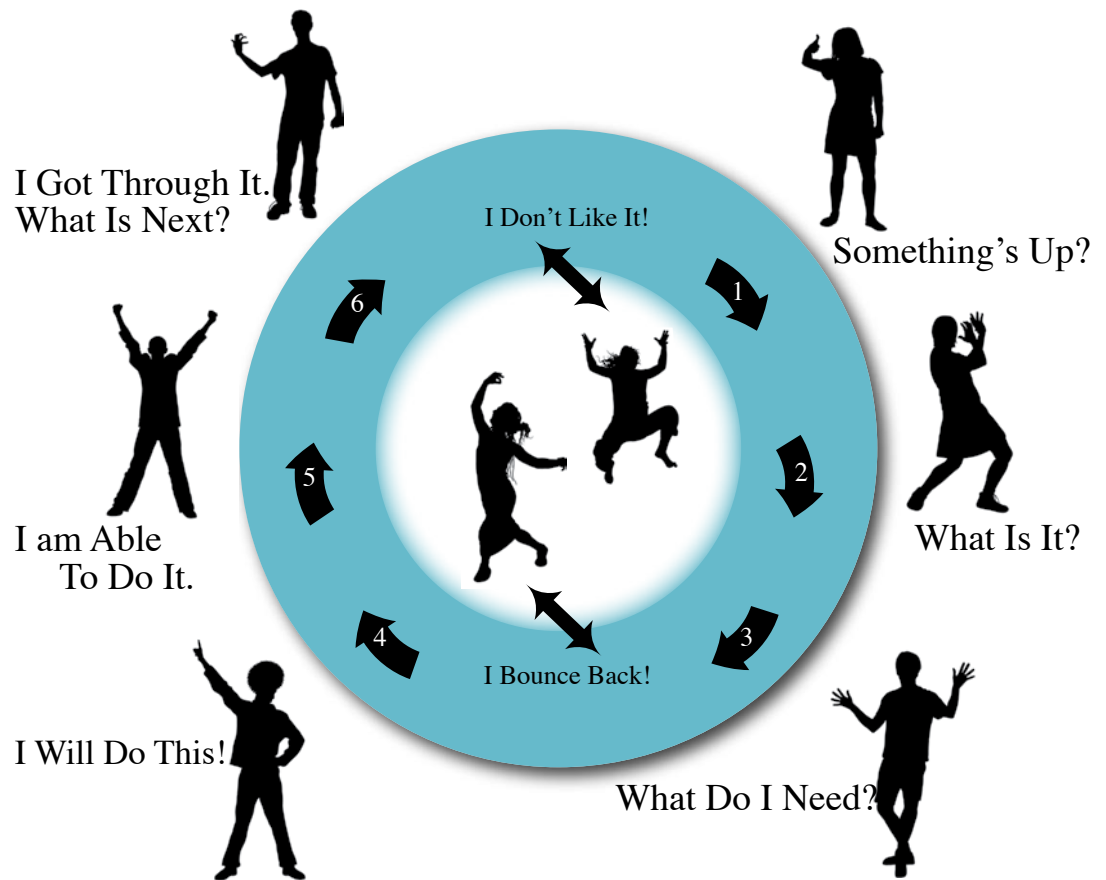
How much time to parents and children spend talking to each other every day? Less than an hour say **73 percent** of the 505 5th to 8th graders and **58 percent** of their parents who participated in a nationwide (USA) family communication survey, Let's Connect, 1998 (conducted by Lawrence Kutner, Ph.D., contributing editor to *Parents magazine*).

Only **20 percent** of kids found that it's very easy to talk to their parents about important issues and **26 percent** say it's somewhat or very difficult. Ironically, more than **50 percent** of both parents and kids complain that the other does not give them a chance to explain themselves.

*Have Things
Changed?*

Cycle of Change

(www.lessons4living.com)



This model, as suggested by Gwen LePage, Human Resource Consultant is useful as a visual tool and framework to help people to identify or make sense of what is happening in their lives. Change can be understood as a six step, repeating process with two central features of resistance and resiliency. Sometimes your life can be that you are on several cycles of change at once.

Something's Up - Step one is the early recognition of a coming change. It is that phase that while everything is going well and you are feeling normal, you begin to get a sensation that something is different – something is up.

What is it? – Step Two is that of clarification and clear recognition of the situation. It can be named and described and often appears as either a problem or an opportunity. You get to choose your point of view because both danger and opportunity

are involved. A clear understanding of the situation is needed in order to decide a course of action.

What do I need to do? – Step Three is the development of a plan of action. What do I need to do and how will you do it?

I Will Do this! – Step Four is action! Once plans are made they must be put into action – you do it.

I Am Able to Do This. – Step Five represents any changes in the plan until there is a sense that it is working. You soon realize that the goal can be accomplished!

I Got Through It. What's Next? – Step Six means time to celebrate! The change has been made and things are normal again. It is not the “old normal” but a new normal. Knowing that change always occurs you begin looking ahead to see what is coming.



Spend-a-Penny

Changing the way a group is functioning...

Have you ever led a discussion group and found that one or two people monopolize the time or a couple of people never seem to say a thing. Peter Renner in his book *The Art of Teaching Adults, How to become an exceptional instructor & facilitator* (page 76–78) provides the following exercise ‘Spend-A-Penny’ to help change the way group members relate to each other and the topic discussed.

Although simple, this can be very effective technique to get everyone to participate in class activities. It can be quickly inserted at any time without detracting from the content of the session.

Spend-a-Penny is Best Used to...

- encourage even the most timid learner
- slow down frequent contributors
- demonstrate that everyone has equal rights and responsibilities
- shift the focus from content to process
- add a playful element – with a very functional purpose

Group Size

This can be done with groups of any size.

Time Required

Just enough to explain the rules and distribute tokens. From there, the group continues to discuss the task at hand.

Materials Needed

Three pennies (coins, poker chips, or any symbolic token) per person.

Room Setup

Participants stay where they are.

How to Proceed.

1. Explain the purpose of the exercise.

By being brief you’ll hardly lose the flow of what’s been going on. Introduce this as a way to avoid singling out individual behaviour you wish to remedy by saying, “two or three people have been doing all the participating,” or “the participation on this topic has been a bit lopsided this morning and I’d like to hear what the rest of you have to say.”

2. Explain the activity.

Tell everyone to stay where they are. Distribute tokens, or simply ask participants to produce three coins.

3. Explain the rules.

Pennies can be spent during the ensuing session in the following manner. Every time a person speaks up, it costs a penny, which is placed in front of the speaker. Once all three are spent, the participant has used up his or her opportunities to participate and must remain quiet. This way everyone has equal opportunities.

4. Get on with it.

Engage participants in an activity that offers active participation, such as a discussion, demonstration, question-and-answer session, or case study. You may need to remind them of the basic rules, but people usually get into the swing of things.

5. Invite discussion on the activity.

Some time after using Spend-a-Penny, ask the group to comment on its usefulness and future use. This should not be a critique of the exercise, but an assessment of its effect on the level of involvement. Ask the group to think of ways everyone can ensure a more balanced participation. “Pennies” might become a code word for the group. If, for instance, a discussion becomes too one-sided, anyone could invoke the “equal-penny rule” as a reminder to let everyone have an equal share in the proceedings.

How to Slow Down the Fast Ones

Spend-a-Penny is an effective way of handling the expert in the class who always has something to say and may prevent others from making a contribution. Frequent contributors, rather than being put off, respond positively.

How to Encourage the Quiet Ones

Those who usually sit back in relative silence find this an easy way to make contributions. Some have said with amazement that spending their pennies represented a change in their usual behaviour: they got caught up in the play and found it easy to speak up. Not having to compete and being assured an equal voice can be quite liberating.



Spend
-a-
Penny

A Resource Guide...

The Weaving Literacy Planning Guide: Supporting integrated approaches to literacy and community building in Canada.

This guide is a field manual for literacy planning that provides tools and time frames for organizations that wish to conduct their own literacy planning process. The guide was developed as a result of a national project funded by the National

Literacy Secretariat and Human Resource Skills Development through FRP Canada. The objective of the project was for literacy organizations to partner with non-literacy groups to create community action plans.

Groups with an interest in building community capacity around literacy will discover a wealth of helpful information, including examples and stories from across Canada. This guide also includes references

to supplementary books, websites, journals and organizations.

Parenting Education Saskatchewan was pleased to participate in this project with the community based literacy organization, READSaskatoon. This partnership resulted in the creation of workshop on how to integrate literacy based concepts within existing parenting education programming. The concept of plain language and

facilitation cognizant of literacy issues is explored.

If you are interested in hosting a workshop, please feel free to call Bev Digout (306.934.2095) or Mavis McPhee of READSaskatoon (306.652.5448).

FASD Training Workshop

Free of Charge - Lunch Provided

“Building Success for Individuals with FASD: How to design programs and supports that work - moving the Cognitive Disability Strategy forward”

Ile-a-la-Crosse Workshop

Della Maguire & Francis Perry
November 29, 2006
Ile-a-la-Crosse Friendship Centre

Swift Current Workshop

December 6, 2006
The Days Inn - Swift Current

North Battleford Workshop

December 8, 2006
Western Development Museum

La Ronge Workshop

February 19 & 20, 2007
La Ronge Motor Hotel

Yorkton Workshop

March 19 & 20, 2007
Best Western Parkland Inn

www.skfasnetwork.ca



Book Review

Still Life with Children: True Tales of Love, Laughter and Laundry

Richard Scrimger

(Paperback ISBN 0006384862)

This hilarious book has been described as ‘the first book in years that has a person laughing out loud and chortling every few minutes’. Scrimger’s description of life with four kids under the age of six is so accurate and heart felt that you just want to go over to his place and pay a visit.

His ability to see the individuality and magic of each of his children is inspiring. The book covers a full year of his life with his children as they make their way through the various seasons and events. If nothing else, *Still Life With Children* is wonderfully written and provides that moment of reflection and humour that makes any day worthwhile!

Do you have a book that you would like to share? Please feel free to submit the details to parent.educ@sasktel.net

Parenting Education News

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