

Parent and Family Education

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This column is devoted to innovative/special techniques and procedures for working with family and parent training. Contributions or questions should be sent to Joyce and Gary McKay, 1800 N. Heatherbrae, Tucson, Arizona 85715.

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Basic Adlerian Parent Education and Beyond in Tacoma, Washington

Basic Adlerian parent education groups have been offered in Tacoma for several years. In addition to Dinkmeyer and McKay's (1976) *Systematic Training for Effective Parenting* (STEP) groups, the following programs are offered for parents. Hopefully, readers will find information here which can help them expand their services for parents.

1. *Single Parents Groups*. Prior to attending a regular STEP group, single parents are encouraged to attend four sessions where the particular problems of single parents are discussed. Leroy Baruth's (1979) *Single Parent's Survival Guide* is used as the text for this group.

2. *Encouragement Groups*. These sessions run for four or five weeks and are designed to provide encouragement for the participants through getting involved in encouraging each other. The concepts of encouragement are taught as well as the difference between praise and encouragement. Exercises designed by John Taylor and the communication skills presented in STEP are used in teaching the concepts.

Mary M. Oberg served as Parent Education Coordinator, Home and Family Life Education, L. H. Bates Vocational Technical Institute, Tacoma, Washington. She died on November 10, 1980. Let this article be a tribute to her role in the Adlerian movement and of the service she provided the parents in her community.

3. *No Text Parent Study Groups*. These groups are designed for parents with low reading skills. The group meets for eight sessions to learn about the principles of Adler and Dreikurs through mini-lectures, discussions, exercises developed by John Taylor and supplementary handouts. Problem solving and encouragement techniques are emphasized.

4. *Parents of Pre-Teens and Teens Groups*. In these groups, special emphasis is placed on encouragement and communication skills. Teens may come with their parents for any or all of the sessions. The teens can look at the materials, take the same values test the parents take (see below), and participate in open discussion. These groups meet for nine or ten weeks using Shirley Gould's (1977) *Teenagers: The Continuing Challenge* and Linda Kings's *Teen Study Manual* as the texts.

5. *Family Council Meetings*. Participants meet for four weeks to learn how to establish family councils. The following elements of the family council are stressed: encouraging cooperation and communication between family members, establishing mutual respect, helping family members move toward responsibility and independence, and enriching family time together. In addition, pitfalls to avoid in family councils are emphasized. Dreikurs, Gould and Corsini's (1974) *Family Council* is used as the text for these groups.

6. *Parent "C" Groups*. These groups meet for nine or ten weeks to discuss specific challenges they have with their children. These sessions are used as follow-up experiences for study group members. There are no planned topics in these groups, what is discussed depends upon the member's contributions. The purpose of the group is to become involved in problem solving for their child-training concerns. The group is called a "C" group because the encouraging elements of a group often begin with a "C": cooperation, communication, collaboration, concern, caring, etc. (Dinkmeyer and Carlson, 1973). The size of the group is limited to six to eight members to give each person time in a two hour period to discuss one of their concerns.

In the basic study groups, parents take the following values test which is used as a basis for discussion.

Values

(Circle A if you agree, D if you disagree.)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| A | D | 1. Using rewards and punishments is the best way to gain cooperation from children. |
| A | D | 2. Sometimes it's okay for parents to spank kids. |
| A | D | 3. Dad should always have the final word in family decisions. |

- A D 4. Kids should have the right to choose all of their own friends.
- A D 5. Kids should have the legal right to leave their parents.
- A D 6. Kids follow what parents do, not what parents say.
- A D 7. Children should be involved in all of the family's major purchases.
- A D 8. Teenagers should be allowed to choose their own bedtime..
- A D 9. Children should be allowed to pick the food they want to eat.
- A D 10. Children should not be allowed to disagree with parents.
- A D 11. Messy rooms should be accepted by parents.
- A D 12. Your child should have clean hair and a clean body at the beginning of every day.
- A D 13. A child has the right to an allowance to spend as he pleases.
- A D 14. It doesn't matter whether you win or lose; it's how you play the game.
- A D 15. It's important to get good grades.
- A D 16. Children should believe what parents believe.
- A D 17. It's okay for kids to do anything they want in your home.
- A D 18. A child's homework is the child's responsibility.

In addition to the services for parents mentioned in this article, accompanying experiences are offered for teachers. Below is a description of these experiences.

1. *Teacher Workshops for Day Care Personnel.* Day care personnel are involved in a one week workshop for two hours each day. The workshop includes the concepts of encouragement, goals of misbehavior, feeling of belonging, communication skills and self-esteem. The methods of instruction include demonstration and participation.

2. *Teacher Inservice Training for Nursery School Teachers.* These groups meet once a month for 1½ hours per meeting. The goals of misbehavior, natural and logical consequences, class meetings, developing self-esteem, encouragement techniques, dealing with destructive behavior, problem ownership, communication, brainstorming, and time out procedures from the Adlerian point of view are included in this experience.

3. *Other Teacher Groups.* Groups based on Dreikurs and Pearl's (1972)

Discipline Without Tears, and Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper's (1971) *Maintaining Sanity in the Classroom* are provided for teachers. Beginning in January, 1981, Dinkmeyer, McKay and Dinkmeyer's (1980) *Systematic Training for Effective Teaching* (STET) will also be used for teacher groups.

Through the efforts of trained lay leaders and professionals, the services presented in this article have been made possible. Many experiences can be provided for parents and teachers to help them establish more effective relationships with children and teenagers.

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A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone.

— Henry David Thoreau
