

Back to basics parenting

La Leche members choose close encounters of the best kind

By Maureen Aitken
special writer

La Leche League proponent Dr. William Sears spoke to approximately 150 parents in Mercy High School's auditorium stressing the importance of creative parenting and nurturing babies as discipline.

The La Leche League is a nationwide organization formed in the 1950s that espouses back-to-basics parenting, including breast feeding, the belief that mothers should remain home with their child, and that fulfilling the baby's needs and wants produces a healthy child.

Sears spoke as a part of the

league's weekend seminar on creative parenting, "Close Encounters of the Best Kind."

Sears, author of "Creative Parenting," "Nighttime Parenting" and "The Fussy Baby," said that the two objectives of parenting are knowing the child and helping him or her "feel right."

He said that in the past parents have been made to feel guilty about showing their child too much affection, and that experts have strongly advised mothers to leave their babies crying so they won't be spoiled.

Contrary to the belief of those experts, Sears said, responding to parental instincts are the key to developing a healthy, happy baby.

"By the 1960s mothers knew not their babies," he said. "They asked their doctors, and the doctors didn't know what to do with crying babies."

The '60s, however, brought the strength of new ideas, and intensified the strength of the league, not so much for its more conservative philosophy, as for its belief in natural child rearing, including controversial topics for that time, such as breast feeding and instinctive parenting.

SEARS' BELIEF in "attachment parenting" evolves around key steps that he said produce a healthy, happy baby.

One such step is learning to make a commitment to the baby by devoting time and energy, which is crucial to proper development. Part of that commitment is to learn the baby's signs so well that the parent can detect the baby's needs even before crying. This process, should start even before the baby is born.

In fact, he said, babies should stay with mother immediately after birth so as not to miss the crucial introduction stage when the child first

"When mother is upset, baby is upset. The father's job is to be sure that the mother is as free of stress as possible," he said.

Child-birth classes and consequent study of the growth of your child will help you to prepare for your child's future, said Sears.

When the child sleeps in the same bed as the parents, for example, the parents are able to learn more about the child's responses. This gives the baby a feeling of security and warmth.

"A squeaking wheel gets oiled," he said. "If enough attention is given to the baby, the baby learns that I don't have to cry to get what I want."

Sears claimed that studies indicate that babies who are left to cry often become whinier and more sulky than babies who are responded to quickly.

In fact, he said, babies should stay with mother immediately after birth so as not to miss the crucial introduction stage when the child first

reaches out for attention.

"Learn that they are special and that they have a certain sensitivity," he said. "Happier babies are easier to discipline. A child who feels right is more likely to act right."

SEARS ADDRESSED the majority of his speech to fathers, who he feels are at a disadvantage in parenting because they cannot offer the time that the mother can. He said that the people in the audience are raising the future mothers and fathers of the world, and that if not instructed on proper parenting procedures, mistakes will carry on for generations.

Diane Jacobs, one of two local chairs for the league, said that Sears espoused many of the beliefs of the League. Jacobs said she believed that nurturing her baby produced a bonding that is being lost in today's parents who choose to work and send their child to day-care centers or baby sitters.

Others find comfort in the league, because of their individual parenting styles that are not commonly accepted.

"When my son was 3 years old," said one Northville mother, "every one said I held him too much. The La Leche League said that was OK."

Y classes to open

Registration is still open for new classes at Northwest YWCA, 25940 Grand River. The classes will begin the week of May 12.

Adult evening classes include ceramics, body conditioning, aerobics, physical fitness, tennis, karate, yoga, piano, swimming, and the series "The Best You Ever" and "From the Roots to the Interview."

Daytime classes include ceramics, watercolor, oil painting, swimming, tennis and aerobics.

Teen and youth classes include ballet, tap, piano, karate, gymnastics, free clay, creative dramatics, drama, pottery, basic art, drawing, photography, tennis and our Saturday Special.

Pre-school classes include free

play, school readiness, puppets and stuff, parent-tot gym, tumbling, creative movement and swimming.

A Latch Key program for youths, grades 1-8, runs weekdays after school during the school sessions.

Summer Adventure Day Camp begins the week of June 16. It is offered Monday-Friday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The children will be exposed to many different aspects of camping in a day camp setting. They will sample camp crafts such as knot tying, directional activities, weather, science and outdoor activities. They will be taking trips in the Y's van.

For additional information on all class activities, call the branch, 537-8500.

You can make your little darling the star of stage, screen and shopping mall with the March of Dimes "Daddy's Little Darling" contest.

For \$2 and a 5-by-7 photo, your bouncing baby boy or girl will shine before thousands of shoppers at Tel-Mall. The best of the field will be awarded U.S. Savings Bonds and first-place babies will make a special appearance on the March of Dimes television event, "Born America," June 25-29 on WKBD-TV 50.

Send entry fee and baby picture to the March of Dimes, 17117 W. Nine Mile, Suite 200, Southfield, MI 48075. You'll receive a copy of voting envelopes for family and friends. A vote is cast by donating to the March of Dimes for ten cents per vote or 11 for \$1.

The pictures will be displayed in the mail with more voting envelopes. Boys and girls compete separately. Winners will be announced at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 14, in the mall.

A donation to the March of Dimes supports the latest research into the causes and prevention of birth defects.

Day camp registration opens at Y

Registrations are being taken for Northwest YWCA's "Summer Adventure Day Camp" in the Y at 25940 Grand River. Day camp is open weekdays from June 16 through the month of August.

Weekly rates as well as five and six-week-term rates are available for the camp that offers swimming, games, crafts, trips and enrichment sessions.

For information, call the Y, 537-8500.

Red Cross certifies camp instructors

Summer is almost here and that means swimming, canoeing, sailing and the 12th annual Michigan Safety School. Each year, American Red Cross conducts the one-week camp where participants are trained to become certified instructors in water safety, sailing, canoeing, first aid or CPR. It is scheduled for June 7-15 in Camp Conneaut in Fenster.

The course is open to all Michigan residents 17 years old or over. Each student chooses a major and minor course of study and is involved in daily lectures, seminars, course instruction and practice sessions.

Instructors at the school are expert volunteers from colleges, business and industry, and Red Cross.

A fee of \$175 covers all room, board and textbook fees for the entire week. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, with limited enrollment. Equipment is provided by Red Cross and Camp Conneaut.

To register, contact Red Cross at 494-2865.

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Business workshops offered at Madonna

Two business-oriented workshops are available at Madonna College, Livonia, this spring.

"Human Behavior and Leadership" is scheduled to meet for two weekend sessions beginning Friday, May 16. The workshop will deal with leadership and its relationship to theory, style, time management, problem solving and personal power. Team building and self-assessment. Taken for college credit, the cost is \$165, plus \$10 fee, or \$100 for Continuing Education Units, plus a \$10 fee.

A six-week course, "Creating an In-House Newsletter," emphasizes the practical approach to design, content, format, layout and low-cost

publishing of an in-house newsletter. The class will meet Tuesdays beginning May 13. The fee is \$50.

For information or registration, contact the Continuing Education Office, 501-5188. Madonna College is a four-year co-educational liberal arts college at 1-36 and Levan in Livonia.

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Cosmetic surgery is lecture topic

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