

Confused?

Parents have rights, too

By Shirlee Iden
staff writer

Jane McGurk says parents' rights are equal to kids'. And she ought to know.

A trained therapist with a master's degree, she also is the mother of six children, four girls and two boys. A Bloomfield Hills resident, Mrs. McGurk is the associate director of a new program with headquarters in Southfield.

Sponsored by the Beacon Hill Clinic, the Parent Program is being planned as an ongoing, informal series of workshops to help parents stay sane.

"There'll be no beginning and no end, just weekly availability, like going to a Weight Watchers' meeting for mental health," Mrs. McGurk said.

"It will be \$5 per session for parent training that we believe is quite invaluable."

Sessions will take place in community settings throughout the metropolitan area with group leaders such as Mrs. McGurk, with master's degrees in the helping professions, to lead them.

Participants are encouraged but not required to attend meetings on a regular basis for the best results and problem prevention.

MRS. MCGURK, who once trained under the well-known child expert Dr. Haim Ginott and with his wife, Dr. Alice Ginott, did her graduate studies in the east. She holds an master's degree in psychology and counseling.

"When Dr. Ginott wrote 'Between Parent and Child' that was the first how-to book on parenting," she said. "Now there are around 650 books on parenting out there."

"Parents are often confused because of so many experts expounding on child raising, and we're still feeling the effects of the permissiveness of the 1960s."

She said parents have needs equal to those of their offspring but still often feel guilty when they have to say no.

"We think our program is unique, and we know it's new," she said. "We want the parents to see it as a very non-threatening environment to try to solve problems. Our goal is for them to take as much as they can from it."

Mrs. McGurk has been working in parenting groups for many years. She moved here with her family two years ago from Connecticut.

"I worked at the U Turn, a family agency, but it closed for lack of funding," she said.

SHE ALSO teaches at the Birmingham Community House.

"We're corporate gypsies, having moved around a lot," she said. "In the 1950s we lived in this area."

Now she carries a small caseload at her agency and spends much of her time overseeing the workshops, due to begin on Sept. 20.

Some of the topics covered in the Parent Program are: Talking to Children; Discipline, Praise, Dealing with Children's Anger, Building Self-Es-

teem, and Effective Listening Skills. In Southfield, the workshop will be at 10:15-11:30 Wednesdays in the Wendy Ward Room at Tel-Twelve Mall.

Others are planned for Maple House in Troy from 10-11:15 a.m. Tuesdays; YMCA, 400 E. Lincoln, Birmingham from 1-2:15 p.m. Wednesdays; and finally, I Browse Bookstore, 33086 Northwestern Highway in West Bloomfield at 10-11:15 a.m. Thursdays.

For information, write: The Parent Program 18181 13 mile, Suite D-1, Southfield 48076 or call Mrs. McGurk at 647-5322.

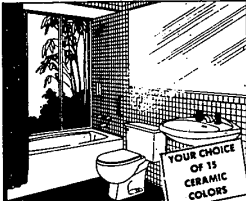


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