

Humber adopts Family Life Education Council program

By JOHN PIRES
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Don't despair if your family isn't overflowing with the happiness and harmony often associated with television's nuclear family.

In fact, you'll be glad to know your family isn't alone—all families have some kind of communication problem.

To help Etobicoke families overcome the enemy within, the Etobicoke Family Life Education Council (EFLEC) was formed in 1974. Operating on a shoe-string budget, the council's headquarters was the Central Etobicoke home of Joan Thornton.

Thirteen years later, and countless success stories in between, Thornton is now co-ordinator of Humber College's Centre For Parent Education. The college, wanting to set up a parent education program, affiliated with EFLEC in 1984. The Centre For Parent Education's comprehensive parenting skills programs allow parents to understand child behavior, reduce anger and frustration towards children, and helps transform hostile situations into positive family time.

Rhona Terry, a session leader and assistant to Thornton, believes the key to easing tensions

between the parent and child is perspective. Today's parents are quick to scold children for coming home late at night, failing a test, or for not doing the dishes. But parents are likely to turn and walk away when a child meets curfew, passes a test, or does household chores. A simple thank you or congratulations goes a long way in solidifying a harmonic family relationship.

The group session format allows parents to interact with other parents, who are often pleasantly

surprised to find out their problems are not unique.

Using texts, videos, open forums, and guest speakers the program advises parents to allow children to solve their own problems. If a child is constantly bailed-out by the parents during childhood, he or she will not be ready for the responsibilities associated with adolescence, warns Thornton.

"They'll grow up thinking someone will bail them out. They haven't been properly trained

when it comes to thinking for themselves because they've been told what to do by their parents.

"They'll become more vulnerable to peer pressure," she warns, "because it is just like life at home, except that someone else is telling them what to do."

But a parenting course that preaches freedom and responsibility for children and a hands-off approach to parenting may not go over well with people from other generations and other customs.

For more information regarding engagements or schedules, phone courses, counselling, speaking Joan Thornton at 675-5056.