

Canadian parenting workshops: Preparing children for school success ^[1]

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Format: Book / booklet

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AVAILABILITY

- Table of contents, evaluation reports and ordering information available ^[2]

Excerpts from book release:

Canadian parenting workshops: Preparing children for school success is a set of ten research-based workshops, developed, field tested, and evaluated by Ryerson University's School of Early Childhood Education. These workshops have been created specifically for parents with young children.

There were six versions of this curriculum before the authors felt it was ready for publication as a practical and relatively inexpensive way to help parents prepare their children for success in elementary school. The first was prepared early in 2002 and it was continually revised with the help of surveys, focus groups and process record keeping, all evaluated by Beth Hoen, an independent evaluation consultant and a member of the Canadian Evaluation Society.

The data used to make revisions came from facilitators at workshops in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec, and most important, from the participating parents, who responded very positively to the program. They left no doubt that, as the authors already knew, there was a need for the information presented in these workshops.

One of the authors of this new book, Dr. Judith Bernhard, a professor in the School of Early Childhood Education at Ryerson University, says, "My experience conducting research made me aware that parents were hungry for information that could help them support their children."

Another author, Dr. Marlinda Freire, a former chief psychiatrist at the Toronto District School Board with a background in pediatrics, says this curriculum not only does "preventive work reinforcing the bonds between parents and children but the group workshops also provide parents with the opportunity to learn from and help each other."

The third author, curriculum writer Vicki Mulligan, says it is "a work in progress. Users of the workshops are invited to participate in the research that will lead to further improvements."

The 10 workshops were originally developed and piloted for Spanish-speaking immigrants, but because of the obvious need, they were revised to make them appropriate for all parents of young children. They are available in English only at present, but can be delivered in French or in the home languages of newcomers. The French version will be available soon. The design is flexible and can be customized for each group of parents. Facilitators do not need previous experience delivering parent education programs because the guide is detailed and includes all necessary background information.

The program, while informing parents of their rights in relation to schools and encouraging them to become involved in their children's education and act as advocates for them, also elicits their knowledge and experience. It encourages networks of support. The philosophical base is respectful of parents.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: child development ^[4]

diversity ^[5]

parent involvement ^[6]

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