

# Learning to Parent

These days, maternal or paternal instincts are not enough, some parents tell Imelda Lee. Thank goodness, there are courses for adults to learn how to bring up their children!

PARENTING IN THE 21ST-CENTURY IS NO LONGER AS EASY as it was during our parents' time. Advances in the study of human behaviour and our own quests for careers outside of the home have made raising children more complicated. Thankfully there are organisations which support parents in their effort to become more effective in their roles. How do these seminars, workshops and talks help, and what do they teach?

## 1 PRAISE MORE, TEACH LESS

Genevieve Pereira, 40, mother of Nathaniel, 10, and Cheryl, five, attended a six-session workshop on Common Sense Parenting conducted by Morning Star Community Services in 2003. The workshop focuses on a particular parenting skill each session. Two of these were effective praise and preventive teaching, which, when practised, led to a lesser need to correct a child, Genevieve found.

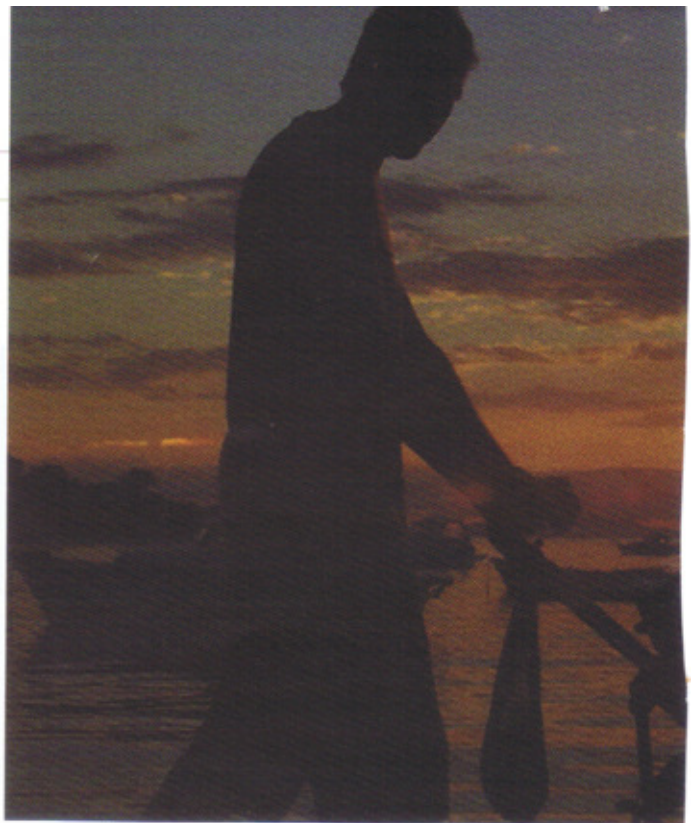
"I've observed that we do not praise our children often enough. We have to find major behaviour changes before we praise. Now when I notice small progress in my children's behaviour I make sure I praise them," she describes.

Teaching her children what she expects them to do before a situation happens also helps as there is less chance of misbehaviour. This skill, called preventive teaching, proved useful

### WHERE TO LEARN

Common Sense Parenting originated from Boys Town, USA. It is conducted in Singapore by Morning Star Community Services. The trainers are aided by a video presentation. Parents role play with the facilitators and with each other in small groups.

Morning Star Community Services  
No 4 Lorong Low Koon, Singapore 536450  
Tel 6285 1377  
Fax 6285 2702  
Email [mstar@morningstar.org.sg](mailto:mstar@morningstar.org.sg)



when Genevieve's daughter Cheryl was going to Sentosa with her teacher and friends. "I told her the steps I wanted her to remember: stay close to the teacher and do not follow a stranger; keep your hat on and drink water frequently."

"Days before the visit, I would practice with her and would ask her to repeat the things she needed to do. I got her to understand the reason behind the expected behaviour. I said if she followed all the steps she would be safe and enjoy the excursion."

Cheryl came home jumping with joy. "She said she had a good time and did not get lost. I praised her for following my instructions, and she saw the results of her good behaviour for herself," Genevieve notes.

## 2 SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

It has been two years since Christina Tan, mum to Shona, seven, attended a Common Sense Parenting workshop, but she clearly remembers its tenets. "I was very impressed



The Tan family