



## 4 RAISING KIDS RIGHT

Marjorie Lim, 36, mother to Rosemarie, eight and a half; Nicholas, six and a half; Martin, four, and Mariella, two, has attended several parenting workshops

organised by the Family Enrichment Society, a non-profit, private initiative founded in 1998 by a group of concerned parents who share the common goal of enhancing the state of society by educating the society's core unit, which is the family. The most memorable one for her was a two-day Raise Your Child Right conference which was held two years ago.

In particular, Marjorie found the tip on having regular one-to-one time with each child very helpful. "When there is a loving relationship, it is easier to make demands on our children when the need arises. This also creates a strong bond of friendship so that when they reach their teenage years they would still turn to us for advice and guidance, instead of their friends who may give them erroneous ideas," muses the clinic manager who is married to a teacher, Cyprian, 41.

The one-to-one time worked for her and second child, Nicholas. "When I only had three children, I noticed one day that my middle son, Nicholas, then three and a half, was very close to his sister. This in itself was fine, but he seemed

to have very little interest in his parents. If we were going somewhere, he would come only if his sister came. I realised I had been neglecting him because he was right in the middle, with a baby after him."

Marjorie took him out for lunch alone one day after nursery school. "He is a naturally quiet boy so he didn't talk very much, but I noticed that he was very happy throughout the lunch. That lunch was a turning point in our relationship. Since then, we have been very close and he enjoys chatting with me whenever he is in the mood," notes Marjorie.

### Challenges

"One of the things we realised quickly was to educate primarily by example," Marjorie shares. "When we first tried to get our kids to tidy up their books and stationery, it was an uphill task. We realised that it was probably because

our own things were often in a mess."

She and Cyprian decided to re-organise their study room with the kids. "We discarded the things we didn't need to create space. We invested in inexpensive yet very presentable-looking cabinets from the neighbourhood shop. We assigned a home for everything and set a new rule: there should be nothing on the study table except during work, art and play periods. Now the children are much more enthusiastic about keeping the study room tidy."

Comments Wendy Chua, counsellor, former school psychologist of Raffles Institution and author of *All Kids R Gifted*, "I acknowledge Marjorie for taking the initiative to reach out to Nicholas. When parents date each of their children, I suggest that they avoid comparing them with each other. Use the time to get to know each other and not to bring out wrong doings or criticism. We teach our kids love by being loving. We teach patience by being patient. When the kids are taking action, every little progress must be affirmed until it is internalised. When affirming the child, point out specific actions, such as, 'You cleared away your toys, that was good'."

## 5 SCHOOL SUPPORT

Schools are also a good source of parenting support. The Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, partners schools in offering parenting sessions. Many schools also bring in parenting experts from volunteer welfare organisations.

Tracey Ng, 37, a full-time mother of five – Denise, 12; Danielle, 10; Debbie, eight, and



### WHERE TO LEARN

Raise Your Child Right workshops are organised by Family Enrichment Society. These are two-day events to help parents and educators discover what makes for successful parenting and family life.

The next Raise Your Child Right conference will be held on 3 and 4 September at The Legends at Fort Canning. See '5 Things To Do In September' on p10 for more details. For more information contact 8106 1544 or 8106 1592

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