

# Help, it's stressful to be a parent! Should I practise extreme parenting or *bo-chap* parenting?

THE ANSWER IS neither.

As parents, we can't afford to be totally hands-off and *bo-chap*, leaving it in the hands of domestic helpers, aunts, uncles and grandparents.

What about extreme parenting? These days, many of us are "extreme" parents without really knowing it. "Extreme" parents go to great lengths to give their children a headstart over their peers, in ways that can cause more harm than good.

It's therefore time that as parents, we take a good look at ourselves and what we are doing to help our children achieve.

Which is why Morning Star Community Services is organising, for the first time, a Positive Parenting Convention (see details on right) to discuss the challenges of parenting today.

Morning Star was formed in 1999 as a community service project of the Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore to enrich and strengthen family relationships. Our services include family life education programmes, social work services, individual and family counselling and before and after school care.

Explaining the move behind organising a parenting convention, Executive Director of Morning Star, Mr Christian Choo said: "We have been observing the phenomenon of extreme parenting. It seems we are so anxious to get everything right and to have the most high-achieving children, that we lose sight of the joys of parenting. We end up over-committing and over-protecting our children, and this leads to even more stresses and strains for all concerned."

What are actual examples of the perils of "extreme" parenting, which Morning Star sees day-to-day in its work with the community, with parents and the children themselves?

Christian identifies some real-life instances:

**• Performance Anxiety:** Parents place such high expectation and stress on children that they have exam phobia. They always 'fall sick' during exams and refuse to participate in the race for fear of failure.

**• Over-Commitment and Over-Protection:** Some parents don't allow their children to hang out with their peer group or fend for themselves. They don't allow the children to make decisions and mistakes for themselves. This leads to children who grow up without the ability to be independent and make their own judgement. Choice-making becomes a

formidable chore to them.

**• Over-Scheduled Children:** There are parents who take it upon themselves to ferry their children from one activity to another, from one tuition centre to another. It's literally going full-speed, with little time for the children to catch their breath. They become physically and emotionally drained, and tension start to mount between parents.

Christian points out that the forthcoming parenting convention is not about giving solutions to all the challenges that parents face today. "All of us, as parents, want the best for our children. It is a platform for us to share ideas and look at different ways and means to bring up our kids with less pain and stress and hopefully, more joy," he said.

The convention comprises the following three sessions:

## SESSION 1 - Ready for the Real World By Ms Jayne Mellor

Drawing upon Boys Town's (USA) 90 years of experience in working with children, teens and families, Ms Jayne Mellor will share trends in today's parenting and the tried and tested ways to help families build a solid foundation, and inculcate life skills for the young. She will explore how we should coach and mentor our kids, so as to equip them with real skills for the real world. Another key focus: Parenting for the new millennia, and how we cope with stresses and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## SESSION 2 - Setting Up for Success By Dr Jessie Ee

Fear-driven parenting is common these days, where we place excessive demands on children to obtain good grades. The whole environment of schooling then becomes a pressure cooker. Dr Jessie Ee will share how families can develop learning competencies for children and teens within Singapore's educational system, and increase their potential for success. She will also delve into the pitfalls of focusing only on grades and how parents can help their children learn in ways that are joyful and meaningful.

## SESSION 3 - Close and Connected to Home By Ms Juliana Choo

In a result-oriented society,

family life and parent-child connections can be cold and functional. The joy and meaning of being family can be lost. When that happens, parent-child connections become thin and the sense of bonding and togetherness fades over time. Ms Juliana Choo will discuss how different parenting styles can be applied to enhance family connections. She will also talk about the significance of increasing positive energies of parents and children, and why we should focus on choice-making as a family, for the family.

Visit Morning Star website at [www.morningstar.org.sg](http://www.morningstar.org.sg)

## About the Speakers

**Jayne Mellor**  
Jayne Mellor has a Masters Degree in Mental Health Counselling and has provided professional family services with Boys Town, USA, for over 25 years. Jayne's wealth of experience includes overseeing the implementation of the In-Home Family Preservation Programme and developing case plans in conjunction with the In-home Family Consultant staff. As a professional trainer, she has developed and conducted workshops on the Boys Town Family Preservation and Foster Care Model in training Boys Town staff and external audiences.

**Jessie Ee**  
Jessie Ee is an Associate Professor in the Psychological Studies Academic Group, National Institute of Education in Nanyang Technological University. She obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Newcastle, Australia, specialising in Educational Psychology. She is the main co-author for *Thinking about Thinking: What Educators Need to Know*, published by McGraw Hill; *Empowering Metacognition through Social-Emotional Learning: Lessons for the Classroom and PBL Made Simple: Lessons for the Classroom* published by Cengage Learning Pte Ltd.

**Juliana Choo**  
Juliana Choo is Principal Social Worker and Family Life Coach with Morning Star Community Services. She conducts talks, workshops and counselling sessions and oversees case management of clients at-risk. Programmes and talks that were developed, conducted or delivered by Juliana include *Guiding Our Children in their Sexuality*; *Couple Power*; *Work Life Harmony*; *Adventure Learning - Facilitator's training*; *Dealing with Loss for Children*; *Self Esteem Groupwork for Children* and *Team Building for Parent Support Groups*.

# Positive Parenting Convention 2009

## From Stressful to Joyful Parenting

What the Convention looks at:

- ✎ What it means to set our kids up for success in life and in school
- ✎ What it takes to keep our kids close to us and to home
- ✎ What tools can parents use to gain a better sense of how to raise their children and bring about more enriching family relationships

**Session 1 - Ready for the Real World**  
by Ms Jayne Mellor, Boys Town, USA  
How to coach and mentor our kids, so as to equip them with real skills for the real world

**Session 2 - Setting Up for Success**  
by Dr Jessie Ee, National Institute of Education  
How families can develop learning competencies for children and teens within Singapore's educational system, and increase their potential for success.

**Session 3 - Close and Connected to Home**  
by Ms Juliana Choo, Morning Star Community Services  
How different parenting styles can be applied to enhance family connection, bonding and togetherness.

Date: Saturday 13 June 2009

Time: 9.30am to 1pm

Venue: DBS Auditorium

Fee: \$18 per person (\$12 for PAssion card members)

Contact person: Sharon or Jessica at 63158812 or Veronica at 62851377

Interested participants can sign up online or download registration form at [www.morningstar.org.sg](http://www.morningstar.org.sg)

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