

Early Childhood Family Education

Published 11/13/06

Would families in your community like help dealing with their teenagers? I ask because response to last week's column on this was immediate, and positive, from several communities.

I suggested that Minnesota's legislature build on the Early Childhood Family education program, which brings parents of young children together weekly to discuss how to do a better job with our youngsters. My wife and I did this when we had 3 year olds.

First, we learned how experts and other families suggested we respond to challenges like temper tantrums, or jealousy among children. Next, we found support for some of the things we were trying to do. We also discovered some community activities and resources available for our youngsters, that we had not know about before.

Last week, recognizing that teenagers, like little children, can be a big challenge, I asked if the Legislature should consider funding a few pilot Teen Family Education - or TFE programs, based on the ECFE model.

When people take the time to write - which I always appreciate - they often disagree with something I've written. But this week, the response was positive. Here are four examples:

Yes, I would love a class on parenting teenagers. I have a 15 year old daughter and a 10 year old daughter. I would love a class to help us all through this fascinating but often frustrating time.

I could not believe what I was reading when I saw the article about ECFE for teenagers. With a 3,11 and 13 year old, I loved ECFE and have learned so much from them about my 3 year old. I am such a better parent because of them. I have often joked with family and friends that I needed ECFE for my teenagers...it was so funny that other people were thinking it too. I would be very interested in this type of program. I hope it can be successfully launched in the Elk River area.

I read your commentary in the Mille Lacs County Times and agree that parents of teenagers need support also. I utilized ECFE when my children were young and could definitely use some help now that I am a single parent

of a 16 year old son

Hi, I agree with your idea for an ECFE type program for parents of teenagers. I have been involved with ECFE for eight years and miss it very much now that my children are in grade school. I also am a high school coach of ten years and see the challenges that come with that age. the Elk River ECFE Advisory Council recently held a candidate forum for our school board candidates... the topic of parenting classes of teens was brought up... We all thought that would be helpful. I hope the idea is pursued.

- - - Does this make sense? Would it be useful for you, or people you know? Please write me at jnathan@umn.edu, and tell me, what YOU think.