

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

BY DR JAMES DOBSON

FATHERS AND THE CLASSROOM

The National Center For Education Statistics in America once released the findings of a study that should not surprise us.

It showed that children are far more likely to get good grades in school and are less likely to fail or be expelled if their fathers are highly involved in their schoolwork. This is true even if they don't live with their kids. This study, based on interviews with parents and guardians of almost 17,000 children, found that in two-parent households where both parents were highly involved, 51 per cent of their children got mostly As. Where only the father participated, 48 per cent got mostly As. And when only the mother was involved, 44 per cent got mostly As. When neither parent showed an interest, only 27 per cent of the children did well in school. The investigation revealed the critical nature of participation by both parents, but especially fathers, in the educational setting. When this involvement does not occur, the child's chances of achieving academically are dramatically reduced. In fact, everything works better for kids when their parents care. But when mothers and fathers are distracted and over-committed, or strung out on drugs or alcohol, it is the young and the vulnerable who suffer the most.

The truth of the matter is that children can't raise themselves. They require enormous amounts of time, energy, patience and care. So mums and dads, you're needed at home and at school.

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Singapore Limited
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voices

i say STOP MAKING EXCUSES

CHOO KAH YING

RAISING an autistic child is a road that is paved with uncertainty, frustration and heartbreak. Confronted with a dizzying array of treatments, parents of autistic children can be easily overwhelmed by the financial and emotional burden of having an autistic child.

As the mother of Sebastien, a moderately autistic child, I have been travelling on this road for the last nine years. I once considered having an autistic child the worst thing to have happened to me.

However, my incredibly difficult journey with my son has opened my eyes and challenged me to become a better person. This journey has become less arduous over the years, not because it got easier, but because I changed my attitude.

Understandable though it may be, many parents of autistic children hold certain beliefs that can make this tough journey even more difficult.

"My child is autistic."

Parents often use this refrain to explain their children's inappropriate behaviour in public. When their child injures others on purpose, they respond: "So sorry, but my child is autistic."

By sticking to this belief, they fail to set the right expectations for their autistic children and shirk the responsibility of teaching their children to behave decently. Autistic children can learn to behave better!

"He just cannot do it."

Parents often assume their autistic children cannot do many things. By doing things on their children's behalf, they fail to equip their children with the necessary skills for life. They are simply fulfilling their own prophecy that their children cannot do things on their own.

"Autism is so complex that only professionals can help my child."

Raising an autistic child is not rocket science. As the person who spends the most time with your child and the one who loves him the most, *you* are the expert on your child. Professionals should be there to support you on your journey, not replace you.

"If it works for so-and-so's son, how come it is not working for mine?"

Many parents assume that an effective treatment for one autistic child should

work for another. The reality is that autism is such a complex disorder, treatment outcomes vary from child to child. This false assumption often leaves parents feeling frustrated with their child and/or treatment professionals.

"There's no time to waste if I want my son to be normal."

Many parents are seeking that miracle cure that would "transform" their autistic children into normal ones. They put their happiness on hold until their children are "normal". Driven by the goal of normalising their children, they follow a punishing schedule of therapies that push them and their children beyond their limits. More importantly, they are simply unable to take time out to just enjoy being with their autistic children.

Having the right attitude means answering this question honestly: Are you willing and able to look at your autistic child with fresh eyes, to appreciate his uniqueness and celebrate his efforts to survive in our society?

If your answer is "yes", then you will be able to tap into your strength, creativity and love. You will find a way to connect with your autistic child, knowing that he is trying his best to reach out to you.

Do you agree with this contributor?
Email us at news@newstoday.com.sg

STOP DENGUE IN YOUR HOME!

Do you know that the outbreak of dengue in Singapore may cause more damage than what SARS did in 2003? In other words, we can say that even Asia's cleanest city cannot escape deadly mosquito bites as long as the breeding of mosquitoes continues. Singapore may need to brace itself for a dengue epidemic that could be more serious than the three it has seen since the 1960s. The Government implemented an effective islandwide search-and-destroy campaign to curb mosquito breeding. However, you will still get dengue fever if you are bitten by a mosquito from the *Aedes aegypti* group. This disease was first identified in the Caribbean between 1827 and 1828.



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Also available in major Hospitals' Pharmacies

Sole Agent: Winkai Co, Tel: 6295 6576

Authorized Distributors: • Active Sources • Aroma Stationers • Norsk Safe Marine • Regwell Health • Iso-Max Services Pte Ltd



LABORATORY TESTED!



Advanced Jardin Concentrate Solution has good killing property when tested against *Aedes aegypti*.*

Advantages of GoodAire® Solution:

- Proven effective in destroying Aedes Mosquitoes
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- Eliminates odours & cigarette smoke
- Repels insects
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- Mix it with water in ratio 1:10 (1 part jardin : 10 part water)
- Apply it as a mosquito-repellant, can be directly applied to the body.
- Wipe on furniture to repel mosquitoes
- Mop the floor frequently to keep mosquitoes away

*Test Report: ref no: GoodAir/002/05
Protocol for laboratory evaluation of insecticide