

IS YOUR JOB AFFECTING YOUR CHILD?

KAVVYA CHRISTOPHER
Times News Network

IF you thought Wipro's only about Azim Premji and rich young software professionals, think again. They are also into good parenting. Regular parenting workshops are held at the various Wipro offices and there is a reason for it. Two out of every 10 children in the city are stressed out because of their parents' jobs. High-profile, highly stressed, time consuming jobs of parents affects the children, resulting in a rise in behavioural problems and decline in their performance levels. "Children are coping with high levels of stress," admits Meera Ravi, a counsellor at the Prerna Academy for Growth and Guidance.

Sixty per cent of working parents in the city are not able to spend enough time with their children. "In such cases, parents often come up with lame excuses. It is best to be honest. If you have a hectic job that keeps you away from your family, you must face it and help your child face it as well. In addition to being sensitive and emotional, children are also naturally very understanding," explains Meera. There is always a debate on quality time spent

FACT FILE

- ◆ Be consistent while you are disciplining your child
- ◆ Follow the 3Fs: Be friendly, firm and fair
- ◆ Watch your words. Don't say things which you don't mean. Do not threaten a child with something that cannot be carried out
- ◆ Help your child talk and express feelings
- ◆ Treat your child as an individual, a human being
- ◆ Be genuine, open and honest in your relationship
- ◆ Remember, hitting is very different from beating up a child
- ◆ Most important, show a lot of physical love and affection

According to experts, quality time involves giving the child undivided attention, sharing views and helping the child express his feelings.

Unruly and badly behaved children are often the result of "Santa Claus" fathers. "Highflying parents are ridden with the guilt of missing their child's growing years. They make use of the limited period by showering their children with expensive gifts and put an end to any kind of discipline that the child may have had," says the counsellor.

There are many individuals (still) who tend to fulfil their needs or aims through their child. One must remember that a child is a different and unique individual and has to be treated like one. "Many people tend to

carry their childhood baggage and conveniently pass it on to their children. Self awareness helps tackle this problem to a great extent. You need to discover and learn how to deal with your insecurities as an adult as well as a child," says Meera. Suppressed or repressed children tend to grow up into angry and frustrated teenagers. Just a tad of love may help avoid such an uncomfortable result.

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CITY TALK

Fundas from the family table

Mealtime togetherness at home can create achievers, says research. *BT* explores

ASHA CHOWDARY
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EATING dinner together may be a thing of the past in many families, but going by new studies, this practice now needs a re-think. A recent Who's Who survey shows that 66 per cent of top students say

that they ate dinner with their families on a regular basis. The American Psychological Association also published a study sometime ago which illustrated the crucial role of the family meal in the lives of teenagers. The study found that teenagers with better relationships and more academic motivation ate dinner with their families an average of five days a week. As experts say, "The organised family meal's main ingredient — communication — is one key to raising emotionally healthy children."

Among Bangaloreans, the trend holds just as good. Ace swimmer Nisha Millet places her success firmly on strong family bonds. "As far back as I can remember, my family has always eaten dinner together," she says. "After a whole day out, this was a time for

bonding, talking about the day and listening to what everyone had to say. We shared our problems and felt better after talking about them. Our parents were always there to motivate and

SOUL FOOD



help us along."

Photography expert Waseem Khan can never forget how his mother used to make a big deal about having dinner together. "During her childhood, her father used to

make it mandatory for every child to be present at the table for every meal," he says. "If they were five minutes late, they were sent back to their rooms without food. Of course, my mother was not so strict but she made sure we ate dinners together. These rituals make youngsters more stable and centred. The closeness makes a huge difference in any child. Today, I'm a much more family-oriented person and I love spending quality time with them."

Model Pashmeena Barker remembers how Sunday used to be family day and every evening they would eat together. "This ritual was not forced upon us but it was something we looked forward to. It was a time we would catch up with each other's lives. I went on to do well in college and I often think, my

family's support has helped me even today," she says.

Child counsellor Meera Ravi believes that spending time with the family makes youngsters feel validated as they grow up to be more stable. "A family dinner meets lot of needs of the child — till the need for love, attention and belonging. The more needs that are met, the more young person is happy. They will have much more motivation and enthusiasm. I have met so many young kids suffering from depression. Most of them don't have meals with their families together — even if they go for the tuition, attend the schools, they don't do well in their studies. Spending time together with the family makes a world of a difference in a person's life."

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