Read YES

Software for PARENTING

By Anupama Bijur

TECHIES may be the new-age super heroes of a white collar working class. But ESOPs and bonuses notwithstanding, they have the same concerns as non-IT people when it comes to their role as parents. The lifestyle of techies has exhibited certain peculiar characteristics that social scientists and companies employing them are beginning to sit up and take notice, because this could affect their equations with their families.

Like the latch-key kids of a previous generation, a phenomenon that the IT revolution has presented to us is that of the IT kids. And just as companies who employ them have felt the need to recompense their talent with generous bounties, Wipro Infotech has pioneered a unique method to invest in the future of techies. This year, the company introduced workshops on Effective Parenting, the first of which was held in February for Wipro Infotech employees and their spouses.

Family counselor Meera Ravi addressed parents at a one-day workshop to thrash out issues on child rearing and peculiar problems experienced specifically by IT parents. What she found could on one hand be reassuring to non-IT parents but worrying all the same to behavioral scientists. Techies might have topped their classes in information technology and electronic engineering, but like most non-IT parents, they felt severely ill-equipped to handle children effectively, especially

Parenting challenges faced by techies may be unique, but the answer does not lie in bits and bytes but lots of heart and self-awareness

problems that arose as a result of their careers and its demands.

"Most techies are young and this is the first generation of IT workers with no precedent of such a lifestyle and its demands," says Joseph George, Manager Employee Development, Wipro Infotech. This means that the normal avenues of help - a parent with similar experiences, wise counsel from elders on how to

While buying toys for their kids, parents' choices should not be driven by what's popular among their colleagues

Rules for IT parents

- Watch your words when you say something to your child.
- Teach your child to value money as well as relationships.
- If your child is old enough, explain why your working hours are not like other parents.
- Assure him that because you spend less time with him, it does not mean that you love him any less.
- Avoid showering your child with excess toys because all your colleagues' children have them.
- There is no ideal or perfect way to
- bringing up children.
- Don't expect to have a 'dream child'.
- Role modeling is one of the best ways to bringing up children. Children are bad listeners but good imitators.
- Don't be too conscious of what is right and what is wrong.
- Be aware of yourself and what you want from your child.
- Be honest and genuine with your child
- Respect him as an individual
- Give unconditional love and care

handle such situations or learning by imitation - are not available to IT parents.

The problems are more than the issue of large expendable incomes. As first generation parents of the IT revolution, IT parents have to deal with adjusting to a better lifestyle, how to make children learn the value of money, how to be a hands-on parent despite long working hours and frequent business travel, balance keeping up with the Joneses and not giving in to one's child's whims and fancies.

With demanding careers, says

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Meera Ravi, most parents find disciplining children, without being autocratic, a problem. "A lot of them have read up on child rearing and are aware of the problems, but don't know the right way to handle them."

New challenges to parents from kids will have to be met with the awareness that there are no magical rules to bringing up children. A balanced child rearing formula will have to be arrived at by each parent, keeping in mind the individual characteristics of their child. Parenting is not something that is inherent. It's an art and can be cultivated.