

BASIC LIVING SHILLS: THE MISSING LINK IN PARENT EDUCATION?

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Anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests that many Australian families are suffering from a deficit in basic living skills necessary to provide for the everyday needs of their members. Welfare agencies, medical practitioners and allied health workers claim that many families do not possess adequate skills to meet the family's basic needs, particularly those families who are considered 'at risk' and/or vulnerable. It is argued that many families lack knowledge and skills in family food management, interpreting consumer information, and managing a household. Parent Education Programs could address this problem. In addition to focusing on family dynamics, such programs have the potential to consider more practical issues of family life. In cognisance of the evidence, this project suggests ways that a more practically-based Parent Education Program might be developed. The proposed program includes topics such as: meal planning and preparation; basic nutrition information; household budgeting, shopping skills, interpreting consumer information, developing interpersonal skills and understanding human development. The acquisition of such knowledge and skills has the potential to empower families, assisting them to take greater responsibility for their lives. In turn this will impact on their own well-being and ultimately the well-being of society as a whole.