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### **ROBERT KIRWAN**

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Member of the  
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Bachelor of Arts  
Mathematics & Economics

Master of Arts  
Education Administration

Professional Educator  
Practicing Since 1974

Live Talk Radio Show Host  
With Laurentian University's  
CKLU 96.7 FM

### **TO CONTACT**

The Learning Clinic  
4456 Noel Crescent  
Val Therese, ON P3P 1S8  
(705) 969-7215

rkirwan@thelearningclinic.ca

www.thelearningclinic.ca



### **Education & Career Planning Is One of the Most Important Responsibilities of Family Managers**

#### *REFLECTIONS* by...

Robert Kirwan OCT, B.A. (Math), M.A. (Education)  
Education, Training & Career Development Coach

If you are a parent, you really don't need to be reminded about the importance of education. What goes on at school has an impact on every single facet of family life from the time your youngest child enters Junior Kindergarten until the day he or she finally decides that it is time to leave the classroom and enter the world of work.

Many parents today don't realize, however, just how different things were when they were going through the system. It sure seemed a whole lot easier to deal with school matters when my own children were growing up. Homework was less difficult to understand and I had no trouble helping my children with their assignments. Most of the time we just let the school take care of education responsibilities. Come to think of it, everything about life seemed so much easier to deal with.

Times are different today – in everything, not just education. Parents are no longer just parents: they are “Family Managers” with responsibilities that include a wide variety of functions, including the management of the education and career planning of their children. In other words, today's parents **MUST** take an



active role in the education program of their children. They have no choice and it is imperative that they fully understand the implications of provincial testing; IPRC meetings; IEP requirements; special education and resource support; academic vs applied levels of study in high school; college vs university vs apprenticeship options; report cards that have numbers from 1 to 4 instead of percents and letters; etc.

Many parents are left in a total state of confusion, making an attempt to become involved by “helping” with homework until they recognize that the math being taught in school today does not look like the math they were taught 20 or 30 years ago. They try as hard as they can to “force” their children to keep up with assignments and to get high marks but this often leads to an elevated level of stress in the home and a negative attitude towards education among the children.



Today’s parents have no choice! They must accept their role as “Family Managers” and within that organizational structure of the family falls the management of Learning and Education programs for children.

This can mean measures that include anywhere from home schooling to private schools and everything in between from regular schools to special schools to private tutoring. Whatever it takes, it is your responsibility as the “Family Manager” to make sure that effective learning takes place for all members of

your “team” – yourself included.

The primary responsibility for educating your child is no longer the job of the schools. It is your job as a parent and how you manage your choice of schools and your understanding of the school system is critical to your performance as the “Family Manager”.

You must find time to visit your child's school once in a while. Talk to the teacher and principal. And don't just talk about the weather. Talk about substance and become better acquainted with the programs. Ask for explanations. Question policies and philosophies with which you disagree. Visit web sites and check things out.

Whatever you do, **DON'T DO NOTHING!** Your job as a “Family Manager” is the most important job you will ever have in your life. Be good at it!

