

*You're Invited!*  
*To a "Strengthening Families" Book Discussion*  
*Starting Wednesday, April 7*

Catherine Ripley, Trustee, Edmonton Public Schools

What is one way to achieve the schools and communities we envision in 2030? "Strengthen Families" was one major suggestion raised in a May 2009 community meeting! In January, 45 people gathered in the Greenfield School gymnasium to dig deeper into this theme as well as into the themes of Improving Communication and Enhancing Innovative Citizenship Education. The idea of hosting a book club discussion focused on parenting spun out of the January "Strengthening Families" table conversations. So, because there's no time like the present, you are invited to join me in discussing *Hold On To Your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More than Peers* by Dr. Gordon Neufeld and Dr. Gabor Mate on Wednesday evenings, starting April 7.

Why a Book Discussion? At the January meeting, several table groups brainstormed, first, the definition of a strong family and second, ways to build strong families. A couple of action ideas participants suggested as ways to build loving, supportive families "where everyone has a strong sense of belonging" were to "help families find right balance of spending time with each other" and "to be aware of what helps." I believe reading and talking about this book will help on both counts.

In the Note to the Reader, Dr. Mate writes: "Gordon and I have written *Hold On to Your Kids* with the radical intent of reawakening people's natural parenting instincts.... Our focus is not on what parents should do but on who they need to be for their children...." So, let's read it and discuss what we think.

If you are interested in joining this five-six week book discussion, starting Wednesday, April 7 in the evening, please contact me at [Catherine.Ripley@epsb.ca](mailto:Catherine.Ripley@epsb.ca) or 780-887-1002. I look forward to hearing from you.

*You're Invited!*  
*To Build a SW Edmonton Community Wiki*

There were, of course, other ideas suggested on January 14 on how to build strong families, improve communication, and develop engaged citizens, and you can access these ideas online in a new wiki called SW Edmonton It Takes a Village at [wikispaces.com](http://wikispaces.com). Perhaps you will even be inspired to pick up one of the ideas and run with it!

For those of you, like me, who may have never used a wiki, a wiki is "a website that allows the easy creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages... it is often used to create a collaborative website [and/or] to power a community website." (Definition from Wikipedia, which is a wiki founded on this principle). This is my experiment in "improving communication" by creating a space where everybody can all share the good things they are doing in these three areas, pose questions, throw out ideas,

etc. The wiki will be as successful as those who visit it, add to it, and use it. Don't be shy! Please visit and build the wiki with me!

<http://swedmontonittakesavillage.wikispaces.com/>.