



Authors Wendy Johnson, Gloria McInnis and Heather Tansem have suggestions for *Raising Kids ... for the fun of it*. PHOTO SUBMITTED

Local authors share fun ideas for parenting

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Backyard obstacle courses and fence murals are just two activities that have made Heather Tansem's house a popular place to hang out in the summer.

Tansem, co-author of the recently-released book, *Raising Kids ... for the fun of it*, is one of three local moms who pooled their parenting experiences to come up with a book of more than 1,000 fun ideas to make raising kids more enjoyable.

Tansem met Wendy Johnson and Gloria McInnis at a moms' group while their children were preschoolers. The three have been sharing tips and activities ever since.

Every idea in the book has been tested in at least one of their households.

The book is based on the idea that moms are always sharing these kinds of ideas with each other and don't necessarily have the time to sift through thick volumes on parenting to come away with only a couple of practical suggestions.

Raising Kids ... for the fun of it is broken down into sections pertaining to each of the four seasons.

Tansem calls it, "the Reader's Digest version of parenting."

"One of our friends said it's like a good recipe book," she adds.

Although the book mainly targets parents, it was also written for teachers, grandparents, camp counsellors, "anyone who wants to have fun with kids," says Tansem. "We wanted the book to be for everybody."

She says the book could have been called "good old-fashioned fun," because many of the suggestions have been used by parents for years.

The authors hope the activities suggested will give parents creative and inexpensive alternatives to video games and other sedentary pastimes.

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- Heather Tansem,
co-author

"Our motivation is to get kids off the couch and out the door," says Tansem.

She also says many of the outdoor activities have helped both the children and parents on her block to get to know each other better.

"It's a good way of meeting the neighbours," she says.

One of her children's favourite ways to beat summer boredom is a homemade obstacle course.

Tansem helped her kids turn ordinary items from their garage, like lawn chairs and sports equipment, into an obstacle course that entertained them for hours.

Painting a mural to hang on the fence soon became a community project with the neighbours' kids.

Tansem also recalls a time when everyone in the family showed up for dinner "a little bit off."

To lighten the mood, she served dessert before supper calling it "backwards day," and says attitudes changed instantly.

"One little idea can change the atmosphere in the house in a second," says Tansem.

The authors of *Raising Kids ... for the fun of it* hope to come out with another book called *Raising Kids: Your Stories* with readers' suggestions and possibly write *Raising Teens ... for the fun of it*.

To find out where to get a copy of *Raising Kids ... for the fun of it*, visit www.raisingkids.ca.

To date, about 400 books have been sold.

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