

# Los Angeles Times

THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 1996  
COPYRIGHT 1996 THE TIMES MIRROR COMPANY LCY 112 PAGES



Photos by CLARENCE WILLIAMS / Los Angeles Times

Edith Lopez plays with 2-year-old son, Elvis, after graduating from the 12-week parenting course.

## Central Los Angeles

### Program Helps Nurture Parenting Skills

**E**dith Lopez, a single mother raising five children in Boyle Heights, can tell you all the headaches of parenting.

She lived in a small apartment with her 14-year-old twins, Hugo and Eddie.

"I was losing my patience with them," Lopez said in Spanish. "They would always fight. They didn't do their homework or keep their rooms clean."

Lopez realized that it was time to get help. She found out about a parenting program to help resolve the communication barrier between her and her sons.

Now, three months after she began the course, they dutifully obey her. The program also included classes to help Lopez with her other children, ages 10, 8 and 2.

Lopez was one of 20 parents who have completed the Los Niños Bien Educados Program, which means the Well Behaved Children Program, at Dolores Mission church.

The 12-week course was designed to educate Latino parents on topics such as juvenile delinquency, child abuse and gang violence. The program uses *dichos*, or Spanish sayings, to familiarize them with issues within their culture.

"At first I wasn't sure if [the program] would help much," Lopez said. "I am so happy that I went. It teaches you ways to talk to your children without yelling or spanking them. I have more patience with them now. We understand each other much better."

Parents meet in weekly three-hour sessions to learn parenting skills, engage in group discussions and participate in role-playing. The sessions end in a *platica*, an informal discussion on the day's topic.

Classes are run by Rosaura Magana, a family consultant at parishes, who attended a special training program to facilitate the class.

"The most common problem the parents share is lack of obedience and respect from their children," Magana said. "This program teaches them to use speaking skills to discipline their kids."

The course, which operates with public and private funds, is sponsored by the Center for the Improvement of Child Caring, a Studio City-based



Twenty parents participated in the graduation ceremony during Mass at Dolores Mission.

nonprofit group that develops parenting programs. The organization sponsors five-day training programs for people interested in becoming certified instructors.

The model for the program was developed by educators Lupita Montoya Tannatt and Kerby T. Alvy based on child-rearing research with Latino families and recommendations of Latino educators.

The program, which operates in 16 states, was first implemented in some Los Angeles schools 10 years ago, Alvy said.

Information: (213) 881-0039.

—MONICA VALENCIA