NEWS UPDATE

Homework…. A benefit or a burden?

Are your childhood primary school memories of homework positive or negative? Did it inspire you to learn or frustrate you? Do you think it benefited you or did it have little impact on you as a learner?

France recently decided to ban homework from all French schools. Some local schools here at Penrith do not give homework. This reignites a long term debate about homework from the viewpoint of parents, teachers, students and educational researchers.

Parents have strong views that parental involvement in their children’s homework activities can be both beneficial and detrimental. It can be detrimental when parents are stressed or struggling because of the homework burden, but can be beneficial to student motivation when parents provide a supportive, encouraging and positive learning environment for their children. TIME IS PRECIOUS as we know and the multitude of family commitments nowadays can lead to clashes and stress.

Students often comment on homework in a negative way that might lead to a longer term negativity around homework and increasingly damaging attitudes to learning in general. Some would agree it has a role in reinforcing learning (eg Maths tables, reading, etc) yet many find it a chore, a meaningless activity that is a struggle after a full day of learning already. It impacts on their time for creative play, relaxation or commitments to sport and other interests out of school.

Teachers are sometimes caught between parental expectations that homework is a necessary part of good schooling (“it’s a good school because they give heaps of homework”) verses the value of it really enhancing student learning. It is a clash of philosophies that has raged for decades about the worth of homework and its role in learning.

Love it or hate it….. it is bound to be part of your child’s school life into the future.

PREMIERS READING CHALLENGE
A friendly reminder that you only have 1 week left.

PARENT HELPERS
Parents must complete the ‘Working with Children Check’ online module before they can attend an excursion or incursion. http://ceo-web.parra.catholic.edu.au/asp/volunteerscpmodule/module1/index.htm

CONGRATULATIONS Miss Emery
On your recent marriage.
We hope your future life together will be full of happiness and good times.

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STUDENT LEADERS RECOGNISED

On Thursday evening, 8th August, all the student leaders from Bethany and from other schools in the Penrith area, went to the 2013 Primary School Leaders Civic Reception. At the reception, we met his Worship the Mayor of Penrith, Councilor Mark Davies.

As we entered the Evans Theatre at Penrith Panthers, we were greeted with the wonderful singing voice of Heather Townsley (6R), who has a scholarship with the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre.

We were then introduced to the Mayor Mark Davies, who gave a speech on leadership and how important it is. He described the word LEAD to us as being; L for listen, E for encourage, A for accept and D for develop. These were very significant statements to us all in year 6.

We were then brought up to the stage school by school, one by one. We shook hands with the Mayor Mark Davies, received a certificate that congratulated us on our leadership, and had a photo with him.

The night ended with a group photo of our Bethany 2013 Student Leaders. It was a great night and very encouraging. Congratulations!

By Chloe Cunningham

CALMSLEY HILL FARM EXPERIENCE

Yesterday we got on a bus to go to the farm. First I had recess, I had chips. Then we went to look at the animals. I saw some animals. I saw some pigs. I went on a tractor ride. Next I looked at the cows. I watched the sheep shearing show and the cracking show. Finally I had lunch. I had a ham sandwich. I had fun at the farm.

Jeremy - KW

Yesterday we went to the farm. I sat next to Madison, We had morning tea. Next we patted the rabbits and chicks. After we saw the pigs and the cows. We went on the tractor. When we went down the hill it was going really fast. We got to milk the cows. We went outside and we played on the grass. I had a wonderful time.

Imogen - KR

My day was awesome on the farm. On the farm I milked the cow and it was good, I had a great time. My farmers name was Erin, she is a very nice lady, she is a farmer. My favourite part was when I patted the lamb and the sheep, it was fantastic. We saw a dog when we were on the bus and I sat next to Bryleigh. I had fun on the bus ride. Miss Biordi cracked the whip and Madison did it to and it was good.

Georgia Dudley KB

CANTEEN ROSTER - WEEK 6
Contact MICHELLE 0404-580-636
Rollercoasters
Letter to Parents

Dear Parent,

Working with children holds both rewards and challenges. For many children, one of their challenges will be to cope with family change. They need support and information to navigate these uncharted seas successfully. When parents and counselors work together, sending similar messages of encouragement and hope, children’s outcomes improve.

For this reason, a group for children of changing families, called Rollercoasters, is being formed for primary-aged children. This group is designed for children who have recently experienced parental separation, divorce, or other changes in family composition. Whether your child reacted strongly or mildly to changes in their family, they often benefit from working with other children who have had similar feelings and experiences.

Rollercoasters utilize discussions, games, role-plays, art, and craft to help children cope with feelings of loss, manage anger, and improve self-esteem. Groups will meet once a week for 6 weeks from 4:00pm - 5:15pm. There is a small weekly cost of $10 for the programme. Currently the group runs each term alternating between our Parramatta and Blacktown group rooms.

There is a ‘Tip Sheet for Parents’ available on request and a flyer with the dates and venues for the next group. I look forward to having your child in our group. Together we can support your child to adjust to these changes.

If you have any questions or if you are interested in having your child participate in this group please contact me.

Kind regards

Allen Naidy
Education and Group Coordinator
CatholicCare Social Services Parramatta
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PO Box 2022 North Parramatta NSW 2150 |
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Dive in
Swimming Academy

Learn to Swim School Holiday Intensive Program
24th September - 5th October

With 2 options:

9 day Program includes Water Safety Education
$100 (program through weekdays)

or

5 Day Program (wk1 only): $62.50
(closed October Long Weekend)

Enrol for Learn to Swim these April School Holidays and help your children advance their swimming skills.

Children are graded at time of booking and assessed continually throughout the program.

BOOK NOW! Call 4733 6666
122 Balrie Road, Penrith
You will be amazed at their improvement!

Spring/Summer Season is Approaching

Time to investigate Swimming Lessons and give your child a head start for Summer!

Free Assessment

Bring your child down to Dive in Swimming Academy and our qualified and experienced instructors will determine your child’s swimming needs.

What makes Dive in Swimming Academy different to other centres?

• Our instructors are engaged with your child to bring the best possible lesson for them each week.
• Swim Australia registered centre.
• Our instructors give you the parents written Progress Reports on how your child is progressing.
• Our classes are pay by the month for your convenience.

To find out more:
Call our friendly team now on 4733 6666
or visit our website
www.diveinswim.com.au
Dive in Swimming Academy, 122 Balrie Road, Penrith
The language of resilient families

Children and adults in resilient families tune into the needs of each other, choosing situation-specific language, rather than simply regurgitating generalised ‘feel-good’ or ‘get-on-with-it’ platitudes.

kids who feel overwhelmed; kids who experience rejection; perfectionists

The ability to compartmentalise bad events and keep them from affecting all areas of life is a powerful coping skill. Sportspeople, politicians and others who work in the public arena need to be adept at it. When something unpleasant happens during recess, for example, kids need to park their thinking about that event so they can get on with the rest of the day. The ability to compartmentalise thinking is a fantastic life skill kids can learn within their family.


When kids are troubled by events or spend too much time brooding it helps to do something to get their minds off things for a time. Playing games, spending time together, watching some TV, going out – are all good distracters for worried, anxious or stressed kids. Self-distraction is healthy, providing some welcome perspective. It also prevents kids from replaying awful experiences in their heads, blowing them out of proportion.

4. “Who have you spoken to about this?” Strategy: seeking help Good for: kids who experience bullying and social problems; handling all types of personal worries.

Resilient people seek solace in the company of others when they experience difficulty. That’s why social connection is such a strong preventative strategy for young people. The promotion of help-seeking behaviours is one of the best coping strategies of all. Even if kids don’t overtly talk about what’s bothering them, it can be immensely reassuring to spend time around others who are empathetic, understanding and willing to listen and help.

5. “I know it looks bad now but you will get through this.” Strategy: offering hope Good for: kids experiencing loss, bullying, change or extreme disappointment.

There are times when parents can do nothing else but keep their children’s
chins up and encourage them when life doesn’t go their way. Being the ‘hope’ person can be hard work, that’s why parents need to be supported by resilient people and workplaces too. It helps to be mindful that a child or young person’s resilience is nurtured by the presence of at least one supportive adult. You may have to be that person!

6. “What can you learn from this so it doesn’t happen next time?” Strategy: positive re-framing. Good for: Kids who make mistakes, let others down or experience personal disappointment.

One of the common attributes of optimistic people is their ability to find a learning, or look for a message, in difficult or negative situations. Parents can help kids reframe events to help them see things differently. For instance, rather than regarding a public speaking opportunity as problematic and a chance to look foolish it’s better to reframe it as a challenge and a chance to shine. It also helps when parents model re-framing so kids see you changing how you view seemingly negative or worrying situations.

Good for: kids who worry about exams or performing poorly in any endeavour; pessimists.

If you’ve ever been driving to an important event only to be stuck in traffic then you would know that there are some situations you just can’t control. The only way to cope is to accept what’s happening because worrying and fretting won’t get you anywhere. Similarly, parents with a resilience mindset can help kids understand what’s worth worrying about and what’s not, and that some things won’t change no matter how much kids fret or beat themselves up!

8. “This isn’t the end of the world” Strategy: maintaining perspective.
Good for: kids who catastrophise or blow things out of proportion.

While most of us catastrophise at times, jumping to the worst possible conclusion, it is a habit that only aggravates anxiety. When kids constantly think the worst case scenario, challenge their views. “Yes, you could end up not knowing anyone at camp but you won’t be the only one. Besides you’ll probably end up making new friends like you generally do.”


Many children and young people talk in extremes – ‘awesome’, ‘the best’, ‘the worst’ and ‘gross’ roll off their tongues easily these days. Unfortunately, their extreme language leads to extreme emotional responses. Develop the habit of widening back their language by introducing shades of grey, rather than black and white. Replace “I’m furious” with “I’m annoyed”. “It’s an absolute disaster” with “It’s a pain”.

“I can’t stand it” with “I don’t like it”. Realistic language leads to realistic thinking, which helps kids handle many ordinary situations that they have blown out of proportion.


Kids can sometimes feel overwhelmed by events such as constant failure, constant rejection or always narrowly missing being picked for a team. They can be overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy and helplessness. Action is often the best remedy. Help them take the first step forward, set some goals, make some plans. Identify the first step and hold their hand while they take it. Taking action is a quality shared by resilient communities, organisations and individuals.

**Bring resilience into your everyday language**

Resilient parents focus on building children’s and young people’s strengths for the future, while helping them cope with the present difficulties and challenges they experience.

The key to promoting resilience lies in the language that parents use. My challenge for parents is to make resilience an integral part of your family’s proprietary language. You’ll know you have succeeded if your children as adults remind you, when they hear any complaints or whinges from you in your dotage, to ‘hang in there’, ‘this too will pass’ and ‘find the funny side’. Granted they may be phrases you don’t want to hear, but at least you know that you’ve drummed into your kids some important core messages that have stayed for life.

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Michael will talk more about Resilience and other vital parenting matters in the Very Important Parenting Saturday seminars conducted in 5 Australian capital cities in term 3 this year. Find out more about what’s been called the Parenting Event of the year at parentingideas.com.au