



March 8th, 2018

Partners in Learning Newsletter
Moving forward With the Passion to Succeed

Screen Time

A huge hello to all members of our beautiful community. It's very hard to believe that we are well along the way to the Easter break. As we get ready to move into the holidays I thought it may be of benefit to explore screen time and the influence television, movies and video games may have on young children.

It's important to note that television, movies, video games and the internet can be a positive influence on your child. This is especially when:

- you get involved when your child is using them and help your child make good choices about what games to play or things to watch
- you get involved and talk with your child about what's going on in the game or program so he/she understands it
- your child uses good-quality content on screens – for example, playing a video game that involves solving creative puzzles to progress to higher levels
- using screens gives your child new ideas for traditional play – for example, playing Minecraft might get your child interested in designing buildings on paper
- using screens helps your child learn new skills – for example, doing a video about a school excursion might help your child learn video-editing skills.

Risks of screen time

Screen time can have physical, developmental, safety and other risks. If you reduce the amount of time your child spends using screens, you can reduce the risks for your child.

Physical Problems

Using screens can cause physical problems. For example:

- Looking at a screen for extended periods of time intensely can cause sore, irritated and dry eyes, headaches and fatigue.
- Looking down at a device can make your child's neck and spine uncomfortable.
- Being inactive for long periods using a screen can lead to a less active lifestyle, which could lead to obesity.

You can **reduce these risks** by encouraging your child to:

- regularly look away from the screen into the distance
- keep his neck upright when he/she is using a phone or tablet
- take regular breaks to get up and move around
- make physical activity part of his/her daily life.

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Development issues

Too much screen time can have an impact on children’s language development and social skills. This is because children need real-life interactions to develop these skills. Too much screen time can also affect older children’s development – for example, it can affect their ability to have conversations, maintain eye contact, pay attention in school or read body language.

Too much screen time can also result in children missing out on developing a wide range of interests, and the friends and learning associated with these interests. You can reduce this risk by making sure your child balances time spent using screens with other activities.

Warmest Regards,

Kathy Cvitkovic – Assistant Principal (3 – 6 Learning Community)

“Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible” – Dalai Lama

A Word from Our School Vice Captains

Dear MWPS,

Thank you to our WONDERFUL P&F Committee and all the Parent Helpers who volunteered to cook our special lunch on Tuesday. We all enjoyed our sausages/ veggie burgers, Easter egg or popcorn.

This week Miss Henaway took some students to STATE SCHOOL SPECTACULAR. 5/6 Camp is coming soon as well as the grade 6 jumpers.

This year at Melton West our main focus is RESPECT and to be kind to one another.

This year at Melton West our main focus is RESPECT and to be kind to one another. Have a nice week and remember to respect yourself and others around you.



Sincerely,
Samantha And Jackson.



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Getting it right in English!

Developing Successful Writers



Writing is an essential skill. It is more than just putting words on paper. Writing is a process of communication that plays an important role in your child's life—both in and out of the classroom. Our focus at school is to teach students transferrable skills that will assist them with any writing task that they undertake- we teach the writer, not the writing.

Teachers plan learning opportunities for students to develop key skills in writing, while gaining confidence and independence in writing a variety of different text types and forms and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Students are taught the craft and conventions of writing, as well as the process of planning, drafting, revising and editing. Students are also supported with strategies to help them develop their writing stamina.

You can make a big difference in helping your child to develop writing skills and become successful in writing. There are many opportunities you can provide at home to allow your child to apply the skills they are learning beyond the classroom and into some purposeful, real-life contexts.

Below are some suggestions of how you can support your child to become a successful writer:

- * Be a good model of writing. Let your child see you write and talk with them about how you use writing in your life- making lists, writing letters, emails, notes to family members
- * Find reasons for your child to write- help with the shopping list, cards to family members, thank you notes, books for younger or older siblings to read at bed time. A journal is a great way for your child to record things that happen day to day or when away on a family trip.
- * Share stories from your life with your child. Your life stories are more interesting to your child than made up stories or TV shows... these become great inspiration for writing.
- * When your child wants to tell you about an interesting thing that happened during the day, enjoy listening and encourage him or her to jot the event down. It encourages their enthusiasm and might make a good piece of writing later.
- * When your child shows you his or her writing, focus on what your child is doing well. Writing is very personal and confidence can be easily crushed, so respond to what they write rather than how they write it.
- * Stress the importance of the writing process of planning, drafting, revising and editing, not just the final product.
- * Provide writing materials for your child- paper with lines and no lines, pencils and pen, shaped notepads, journals, spiral bound books, coloured pencils, stencils, markers and erasers.
- * A child's speaking vocabulary is greater than written vocabulary. Help with spelling as needed, but do not expect your child to spell every word correctly. If children only use words they know how to spell, their writing will be dull and lifeless.

Fostering good writing habits will make a big difference in your child's attitude about writing!

Sarah Marshall- Leading Teacher Literacy

Marvellous Maths

Great Maths Apps for Kids

These days more and more kids are using tablets and smart devices. This is providing a great opportunity for parents to use mobile applications (apps) that link Maths to real life experiences as a way of drilling, practicing problem solving and teaching concepts.

These are some of the apps and websites we use in the school. If you are after any more, have a chat to your child's teacher who will be able to make some recommendations.



Bugs and Buttons

This app teaches children skills such as sorting, counting and recognising patterns
Age group: 5-7



Symmetry Shuffle

This app focuses on shape and transformations
Age group: 8-12



Little Monkey Maths

A variety of apps include: Subitising, Friends of 10, Number Lines, Reading Numbers
Age group: 5-7



Beebot

This helps children practice the language of position.
Age group: 5-7



Targeting Maths

There are individual apps focusing on all areas of numeracy, base don grade level.
Age group: all ages



Mathsterious Mansion

This app is based on whole number understandings, addition, subtraction and the 100s chart, it supports the development of mental computation.
Age group: 7-10



Eggy Maths Apps

There are several Eggy app for Numeracy. Search on the app store.
Age group: all ages



Mathletics

Mathletics is available as an iPad app. All students in our school have a login and password access to this resource and can use this at home.
Age group: all ages



Nanja Factor Free

This app builds fluency around multiplication facts. Age group: 8-12



When kids experience problems at school

by Michael Grose

Every parent wants the best for their children, and that includes wanting them to have great experiences at school. By and large, Australian schools deliver on that expectation. They are generally safe places for kids, staffed by hard-working teachers who have the best interests of their students at heart. Achievement, discipline and student wellbeing are high on the list of priorities for most teachers.

Nevertheless, despite the best teaching practices things do go wrong at school. Most kids experience learning difficulties from time to time. Conflict and peer rejection are a normal part of school life. The developmental nature of childhood means that there will always be some turbulence, particularly around key transition ages such as the start of adolescence. During these times young people frequently experience a dip in their learning as well as significant relationship difficulties. Kids will often come home from school with grievances, and call on their parents for assistance.

Your approach as a parent when your child has difficulty at school can make a huge difference to their resilience and to their future relationships with teachers and peers. This includes not only any advice you may give and the way you give it, but also the way you approach the school, if that becomes necessary. Unfortunately, anecdotal evidence suggests that there's been a significant increase in aggressive incidents at schools involving parents reacting to their children's grievances. This presents a danger to teachers, harms the all-important teacher-parent relationship, and sets a bad example to children about how to resolve differences.

Here's a seven point checklist to help you stay focused and be effective if your child experiences difficulty at school.

1. Be empathetic first

Kids, like adults, like to vent. They will often benefit simply from having told their side of a story to a trusted source. Often they just want their parents to understand what's happening, so your first response should be an empathetic one. That is, your child should feel you understand them and take them seriously. "That's awful. I'd be upset too if someone stole my lunch" is the sort of response kids want to hear when they are genuinely upset.

2. Stay calm and take your time

It's natural as a parent to want to protect or defend your children, particularly when you think that they've come in for some unfair or poor treatment. But acting when you are full of emotion is not always smart as emotions make us prone to over-reaction and jumping to all sorts of possibly incorrect conclusions.

Rather than getting on the phone straight away to organise a meeting at school, take your time to think through

how you might assist your child. Time generally provides greater perspective, which will likely lead to a better response from you.

3. Get the all facts

Getting the facts about the situation can be really tricky. Kids are faulty observers and often only see one side of a story when there's a problem with a teacher or a fellow student. They sometimes can't see that perhaps they may have contributed inadvertently to a dispute at school, or perhaps said something that may have upset a teacher. It's your job to help your child or young person process what happened in an incident, so that all the facts emerge and you can fully understand their place in any problem. Keep asking questions to enable the complete story to unfold.

4. Assess whether to go to school or not

Often problems can be dealt with at home, simply by talking through an issue and giving kids some common sense tips to help them cope. However, if your child has a recurring problem that he can't solve himself, or you think adult intervention may be needed to sort out a relationship issue with a teacher or peer, then consider meeting with your child's teacher or year-level coordinator.



5. Use the right channels if you take the issue to school

Approach the school calmly, going through the school office or directly to your child's teacher if that is the usual protocol. If you have already established a relationship with the teacher concerned, then it's often easier to approach them directly.

6. Look for solutions rather than blame

Parent-teacher meetings usually get nowhere when either party blames the other. State the problem as you see it and view your child's teacher as an ally, not a foe. "I'm really worried about Jeremy. He's been acting strangely lately and I need some help" is the type of approach that will elicit a helpful response. Talk about your concerns and keep the discussion focused firmly on what's best for your child. Listen to your teacher's viewpoint, valuing a different perspective.

7. Stay in touch

Be realistic with your expectations, remembering that some problems can't be solved to your satisfaction, nor will they be resolved straight away. Be prepared to work alongside your child's teacher over the long-term, which means maintaining communication with each other.

Parenting is easy when things are going well, but testing when your children struggle or experience difficulty. Stepping back and taking a long-term, reflective view is often the best approach when your child experiences difficulty at school.



Michael Grose

Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's the author of 10 books for parents including Thriving! and the best-selling Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It, and his latest release Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent children.