

Positive Parent Involvement: You make the difference by Michael Grose

The message for parents Australia-wide is clear – become involved in as many aspects as practical in your child's education. The involvement of parents helps break down the mystique about schools that can exist for some children. Their chances of success are better when they see school as an extension of home rather than an institution .

Positive parent participation demonstrates to children that you value learning and their school in particular. Children copy many of their parents' views so your positive attitude to school and learning is catching.

Here are some ideas to help you participate in your child's education in positive ways:

... Find out what your school is trying to achieve for your child and show your support for its aims. Discover what sets your child's school apart from others.

... Support a broad, balanced curriculum that offers children a variety of educational experiences rather than a program that focuses narrowly on the traditional 3 R's.

... Direct constructive criticism through the correct channels such as the principal or the school's governing body. Gossip or thoughtless criticism within the general community can easily tarnish a school's reputation.

... Become an advocate for your child's school and promote its positive features throughout the wider community. Encourage your child to take pride in their school through your example.

... Attend school activities such as open days, concerts, sports events and celebrations. Invite other members of the community along as well.

... Consult with your child's teacher about practical ways that you can assist both at home and at school.

Positive parent participation in school and learning is a proven criterion for student success, one practical way to assist your child as a learner is to become involved in his or her school-life.

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Michael Grose is a leading parent educator, a trained teacher and author. For further ideas about raising confident kids and resilient teenagers visit www.parentingideas.com.au

Getting kids to school on time by Michael Grose

"Come on Brad! Get a move on. School starts in ten minutes and you're not even dressed yet!"

If this scenario sounds familiar then you are not alone. Anecdotal evidence suggests that getting children to school or pre school on time can be one of the most difficult tasks for parents.

Missing a few minutes each day may not seem like a big deal but your child may be missing more than you realise if he or she is continually late. Current research shows that mornings for most children are the most productive time of the day with 10.00am the peak period for productivity. When children arrive late and take time to settle as they inevitably do precious minutes are lost. A child who is fifteen minutes late to school each day misses one week of school every year.

How can you get your dawdling kids out the door without yelling yourself hoarse? Here are few techniques and ideas for you to try to get your punctually-challenged children to school on time.

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Our Kids

'Getting kids to school on time ' continued

- ... **Establish a morning routine.** Make sure your children know what is expected of them in the morning, and also what you will do. Resist nagging but be willing to take them to school even if they haven't fully prepared for the day.
- ... **Identify and remove distractions such as television.** If the children are regular watchers before school change the routine and keep the TV off. It should only be turned on when children are completely ready for school.
- ... **Teach some the basics of time management.** The average adult underestimates by about 25 per cent the time it takes to do various jobs. Make sure you have realistic time estimates and stop packing so much into the time you allocate. Encourage older children to estimate how long it takes to do activities such as getting ready in the morning. Then they can measure the time taken to do these tasks and compare their estimates with real time.
- ... **Arrive at school ten minutes early.** Plan to arrive at school early rather than be there on time. This idea works well for perpetual latecomers, whether young or old.
- ... **Model a good routine.** Its pointless expecting children to be organised in the morning if you are in a muddle yourself. Set a good example by being as methodical as possible and avoid sleeping in unless your children are so organised that they get you breakfast in bed. And pigs might fly as well!

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Michael Grose is a leading parent educator, a trained teacher and author. For further ideas about getting your family flying using the same formation visit www.parentingideas.com.au

What you should know about ...Intelligence by Andrew Fuller

Many people think we are born with a set amount of intelligence and that they have "to like it or lump it." This is not true as intelligence is not fixed and alters over your lifespan.

Children's brains are much busier and quite a bit clearer than adult brains. From birth, the brain is busy setting up connections. At birth each neuron has 2,500 synapses and the number increases rapidly so that by 2 to 3 years of age, it is more active, more connected and more flexible than ours. Up to nine or ten the brain continues to be twice as active as an adult's.

Between ten years of age and puberty, the brain ruthlessly destroys its weakest connections preserving only those that experience has shown to be useful. The adage here is 'use it or lose it' – and this applies at any age.

You can help your children to use their brains well by connecting ideas, linking words with pictures, pictures with sounds, developing their concentration and memory skills. Also

help them to become resilient learners who do not give up at the first sign of difficulty.

This doesn't mean rushing them to learn before their time, and it doesn't mean pressuring children to be the fastest readers, the youngest writers or the slickest number crunchers. Rather it's giving them opportunities to understand that learning can be fun. It's important to expand kids abilities but not necessarily to accelerate them.

Some children have difficulty with learning and it's important to remember that everyone can be good at something. Finding an area of strength for your children and supporting it will not only build their confidence to learn in other areas but will also help boost their self esteem.

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Andrew Fuller is clinical psychologist and author. Further information on this can be found in Andrew's latest book "Help Your Child Succeed in School- A Guide for Parents". The book can be ordered from www.inyahead.com.au.



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