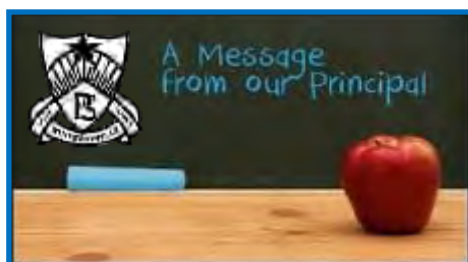


Wentworthville Public School

QUALITY TEACHING TO MAXIMISE STUDENT LEARNING

Term 3 Week 8 2021 Newsletter



From the Principal – Denise Lockrey

Wonderful Happenings at Wenty!

The staff and executive continue to lead, plan and keep teaching and learning as our focus even during Stay at Home Orders and Learning From Home. Our support personnel continue to support the school and engage in professional learning to build their capacity in their various roles.



70 - 100 Fullagar Rd
WENTWORTHVILLE NSW 2145 Australia

Phone: 02 9631 8529

Fax: 02 9896 3079



Website: www.wentwthvil-p.schools.nsw.gov.au

Email: wentwthvil-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Student Portal: <http://portal.det.nsw.edu.au>

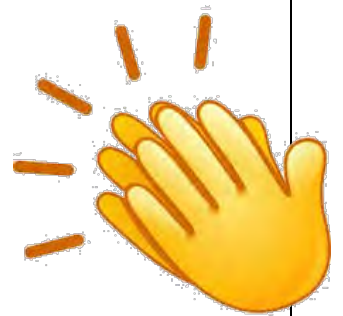
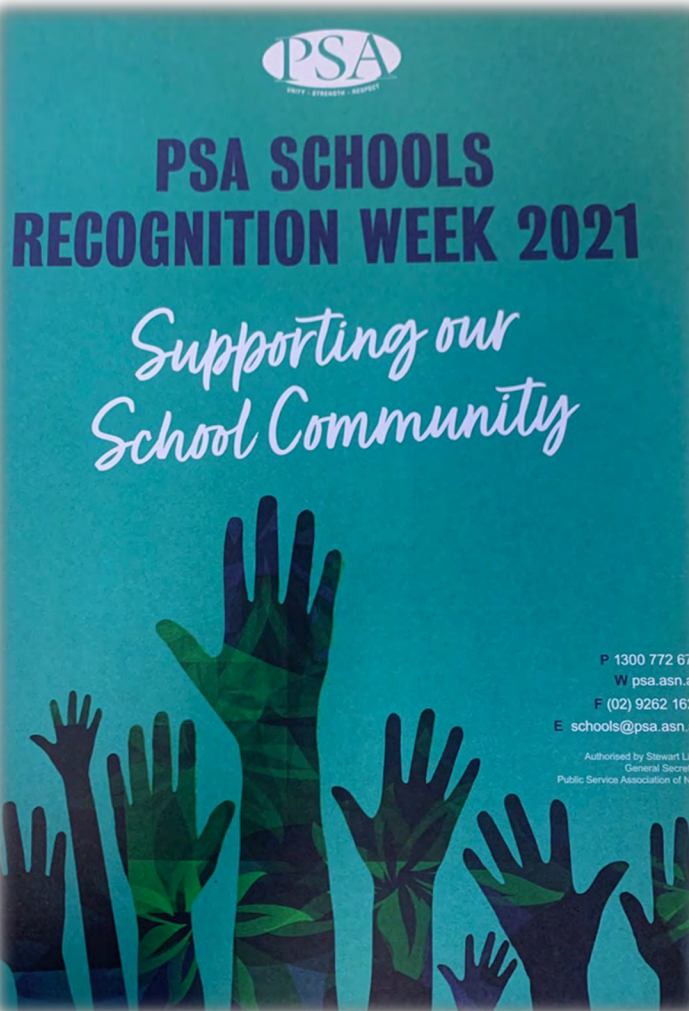
(Continued from page 1)



Mr Warren has been getting our new 100 Laptops we have purchased for Years 3-6 set up and ready for when everyone comes back to G Block!



Thanks to all our wonderful Admin team, GA and SLSOs at Wenty who serve our school and community by contributing each and every day! We want to especially acknowledge you next week...



(Continued on page 3)

2022 Forward Planning

Class placement for 2022 is a complex task that staff invest a lot of time and effort. Parents are welcome to provide written information to Mrs Lockrey (The Principal) **by Friday October 29, 2021** if there are specific needs you think should be taken into consideration about your child /children when considering class placements in 2022.

Any information which is delivered to Mrs Lockrey after this date will unfortunately not be able to be considered in class placements for 2022. Consideration to social and emotional needs, academic ability and behaviour can be considered, but no guarantees can be made as staff make determinations which are in the best interest of all attempting to achieve a balance in each class.

It is a difficult task which teachers weigh up very carefully. Parent requests for changes of their child's class will not be considered in 2022 as this is a school management decision and we commit considerable time in formulating the structure for the following year.



2021 Leaving slip

Dear Mrs Lockrey,

My child/ children will not be returning to Wentworthville Public School in 2022.

We are moving to..... and will be going to
..... School in 2022.

Student Names:

- 1. Class in 2021
- 2. Class in 2021
- 3. Class in 2021
- 4. Class in 2021

Parts of Parent Portal Communication last Friday August 27

...the Premier and Minister for Education announced the Roadmap for Return to onsite learning in a staggered return of students to face-to-face learning. I have been in many briefings today and read a lot of communications and want to give you key information today!

There is an extension of three weeks to the learning from home until at least the end of Term 4 - Week 3. The good thing about this, is it does give us time to put steps in place to ensure a smooth and safe return for our students and staff who are all craving to be with others and learn and connect once again, in a COVID-safe way!

Given these continued restrictions, I want to repeat our earlier advice to strongly encourage all parents and carers to keep their children learning from home. The messaging from the Department is:

'Parents and carers in Greater Sydney must keep children – across primary and secondary school – at home unless they need to be at school. Schools and outside of school hours care (OOSHC) services are open for any child that needs it.'

I continue to thank the Wentworthville PS parents for keeping their children at home and accessing Learning From Home and the support from the teachers with our WOW work this term. I urge you to continue doing this for the next three weeks of Term 3 and the first three weeks of Term 4 after the school holiday period (September 18 - October 4), as we all contribute to reducing our movement and hopefully reducing transmission numbers during this Public Health Order.

Staggered return of students to face-to-face learning will **begin Monday October 25** (if our LGA is considered safe to do so by NSW Health). The plan is:

- ◆ From Week 4 - October 25 -Kindergarten and Year 1 (including Kindergarten and Year 1 Support Unit Students)
- ◆ From Week 5 - November 1 -Years 2 and 6 (including Year 2 and Year 6 Support Unit Students)
- ◆ From Week 6 - November 8 - Years 3,4, and 5 (including Years 3,4 and Year 5 Support Unit Students).

So starting November 8 ALL students will be back on site.

There are many layers to this roadmap, and I will send more information to families when I have more clarity around logistics for LGAs of concern and impact to Wentworthville PS. It will always be a NSW Health response with consultation with the Department of Education that advises when it is safe for our schools to return on site.

During these challenging times amidst Stay at Home orders and during Learning from Home, I wanted to share this positive message I found from the *Nurture International School* to encourage you as parents / carers, as you may be feeling stressed with the added difficulty of now being the 'teacher' for your child / children.

(Continued from page 4)

Please remember...

You don't need to replicate their school experience.

Don't try to be your child's classroom teacher. Just keep being the teacher you ALREADY are.

WE trained for years to teach the way we do, just as you trained for years to teach the way you do.

We couldn't take over your job overnight, and we know you won't be able to take over ours.

Read with your child

Cook with your child

Garden with your child

Enjoy the outdoors with your child

Make and create things with your child

Listen to music with your child

Sing and dance with your child

Play with your child.

Above all, keep being the kind, calm and caring role model your child needs during this challenging time.

This is how you can teach.

Just keep being YOU!

Your child is learning from you every single day.

Remember – just do your best, it's all we ever ask of you.

With great fondness - everyone at Wentworthville Public School!

The next number of weeks will be challenging, but we will get through this together. Please take time for some positive experiences with your family and take time to reflect and rebalance amidst this challenging time. Look for those bright spots each and every day!

Remember, if you have a question or need clarification or support, please phone the school on 9631 8529 or email the school. Our School Psychologists have also put together some valuable contact resources for families during remote learning and these will be sent out on the parent portal as well and be available on the school website.

Take care and stay safe...

Denise Lockrey

Principal



The colours of Stay at Home Orders!



Thursday August 12 -Multi colour



Friday August 13 -Sparkle!



Monday August 16 -Earth tones



Tuesday August 17 - Water colour days - Mrs Lockrey had the colour of the Atlantic Ocean and Mrs Khanlu the colour of the Pacific Ocean!



Wednesday August 18 - Mrs Grant and Mrs Khanlu both brighten up the colour grey!





Thursday August 19 -Mrs Khanlu and Mrs Lockrey back in black!!!



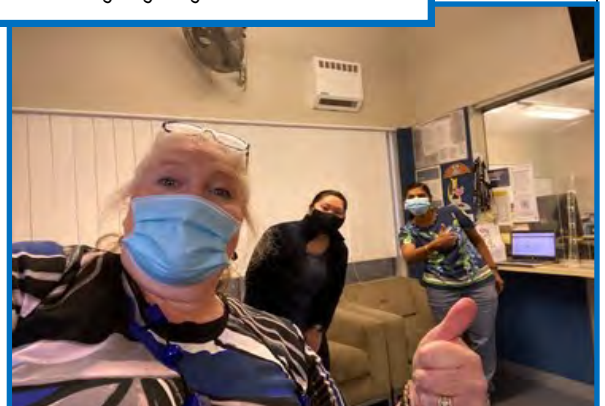
Friday August 20 -Mrs Mohanaraj, Mrs Nanda and Mrs Lockrey brightened by the colour white!



Monday August 23 -The colour purple!!! Everything always looks better in purple I think!!!



Tuesday August 24 -No way we could feel blue on Blue Day with these colleagues getting into the colour!



Well done Mrs Paulraj and Ms Lee.



Wednesday August 25 -Mrs Cheeseman looking after the school with the colour orange!!!



Thursday August 26 -The colour green and in our first aid safety helmets too!!!



Friday August 27 -The colour pink brough a smile to Mrs Nanda, Mrs Khanlu and Mrs Lockrey!! Not that you can tell behind our masks!!



Monday August 30 -Animal print day!



Tuesday August 31 -Mrs Khanlu and I were in spots - but not a spot of bother, as we farewelled Winter!

WOW!

Building update!



Opportunity to bring forward some earth works at COLA / tiered seating installation near new H Block Hall

I continue to be in very close communication regarding the next stages of the build with all key stakeholders. We have an opportunity, which we are taking, to bring forward some building works that would have been completed in the upcoming Christmas holiday period to now. These works will be completed before October 25, when students are back on site in significant numbers (pending Doe and NSW Health clearance).



Parent Zoom Catch Up with the Senior Executive

Each Wednesday at 12.00pm we will be holding a Parent Zoom catchup with the Senior Executive. It is an opportunity for parents to ask questions and chat with the Senior Executive team. Various weeks there may be a special guest that will join us and we'll let you know ahead of time who that will be.

DON'T
MISS OUT!

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday at 12.00pm

To join the Parent Zoom Catch Up please use the Zoom details below:

<https://nsweducation.zoom.us/j/65067074921?pwd=XNUNVNEMXZmVGpwaGdlYStKVWZPZz09>

Meeting ID: 6506707 4921

Passcode: 459205



Practical Parenting in a Pandemic

A webinar with Maggie Dent

Wednesday 1st September 4.00pm - 5.15pm

In this webinar Maggie explores the layers of stress, anxiety and grief for families that have been created by the pandemic. She then dives into the issue of students learning from home. Maggie will explore the reality of parents working from home with kids or teens underfoot, with some doing digital learning while in social isolation. This is an exciting opportunity for school communities to access to provide support in this difficult time.

Wentworthville Public School invites parents and carers to participate in this optional webinar. This is free for the parents and carers of Wentworthville Public School.

Access the webinar via the link below.

<https://nsweducation.zoom.us/j/68784865493?pwd=MDR4dTdqR1Vpekx4K3hvcWNaWXgyQT09>

Denise Lockrey

Principal



PARENT COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER (CLO) ZOOM ROOM INVITATION

Dear Parents/Caregivers

This is the invitation for our parents/caregivers to join Helen on Zoom every Tuesday. The first Zoom meeting is Tuesday 31 August 2021 from 10.00 am to 11.00 am.

The purpose of these Zoom meetings is to give Helen the opportunity to touch base with our parents/caregivers. At these Zoom meetings we will be able to discuss helping children with home schooling, how to keep them organised and engaged with their learning. I have prepared the Daily Routine Sheet/Timetable for home schooling that may help you with this. Other topics of discussion may include their reading levels and how to help with Maths at home. We can also discuss about parenting, how to discipline our children in positive ways or any topics that our parents are interested in related to our children's learning and well-being including where to access help if needed, and any questions you may have.

Please use this Zoom link to join our meetings.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://nsweducation.zoom.us/j/67117847491?](https://nsweducation.zoom.us/j/67117847491?pwd=aVplbWFrMHJxczdveVdzdFZhczFpQT09)
[pwd=aVplbWFrMHJxczdveVdzdFZhczFpQT09](https://nsweducation.zoom.us/j/67117847491?pwd=aVplbWFrMHJxczdveVdzdFZhczFpQT09)

Meeting ID: 671 1784 7491

Passcode: 778723

We look forward to our families joining us next Tuesday.

Warm regards,
Helen Huynh

*please
join us*

WE ARE TAKING ENROLMENTS NOW FOR KINDERGARTEN 2022



70-100 Fullagar Road,
Wentworthville NSW 2145
Ph: 9631 8529
Email: wentwthvil-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Website : <https://wentwthvil-p.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

Principal: Mrs Denise Lockrey



Enrolment for Kindergarten 2022 is now open. If you live in the local area and have a child who is due to start Kindergarten at Wentworthville Public School in 2022, **now is the time to enrol**. Please visit the school website and complete the online application as soon as possible. If you know of a friend or neighbour with an in-area child due to start school, please share this information with them.

Would you like to find out more information about our School or enrol your child to attend? For further information, please visit our school website <https://wentwthvil-p.schools.nsw.gov.au/> or call our office school office on 9631 8529. We look forward to welcoming you to our wonderful school.



This Term, our school will be participating in the **Partners in Learning parent survey**, another part of the **Tell Them From Me** suite of surveys. The survey asks parents and carers questions about different factors that are known to impact on student wellbeing and engagement.

Running this survey will help our school understand parents' and carers' perspectives on their child's experience at school. These include: communication between parents/carers and staff, activities and practices at home and parent/carer views on the school's support of learning and behaviour. This valuable feedback will help our school make practical improvements.

The survey is conducted entirely online on smart phones, iPads, tablets, laptops or computers. The survey will typically take 15 minutes or less to complete and is completely confidential. Although participating in the survey is entirely voluntary, your responses are very much appreciated. More information about the survey is available at: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/tell-them-from-me>

Please complete the survey by Friday 17th September 2021

To access the parent survey for our school go to <http://nsw.tellthemfromme.com/62nx9>

OSHClub

Outside School Hours Care



In OSHCLUB news the company along with the educators and children have been working together in creating an activity pack with craft resources for the children at Westmead Children's Hospital. This pack was created for the children at hospital to have something for them to do and get creative with during these hard times.

During this fortnight the children and educators at OSHCLUB have had lots of fun selecting the activities and packing the bags of resources for the children. From doing this it had sparked great conversation amongst us on how we are helping our local community and have brainstormed other ideas for the future.

This also couldn't have been possible without the support from one of our family members Amir and Malik's mother Rozanna. Rozanna heard our idea and was more than happy to deliver the activity packs to the children at the hospital. We would like to thank her for her support with this.



CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY PACK

KEEPING THE FANTASTIC CHILDREN AT WESTMEAD CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ENTERTAINED DURING THE CURRENT LOCKDOWN IMPACTING OUR COMMUNITY

Recently developed by the Regional Operations Manager & Coordinators of the Following Before and After School Care Services in NSW:

- Burnside Public School Helping Hands, Bert Oldfield Public School Helping Hands, Cambridge Park Public School Helping Hands, Jordan Springs Public School OSHClub, Lane Cove West Public School Helping Hands, Mamre Anglican School OSHClub, Oakville Public School Helping Hands, Oatlands Public School Helping Hands, Penrith South Public School OSHClub, Rosehill Public School Primary OSHCare, St Charles Waverley Primary School OSHClub & Wentworthville Public School OSHClub

Let the ADVENTURE begin...



**JOIN US FOR SOME FUN BEFORE SCHOOL,
AFTER SCHOOL AND DURING THE HOLIDAYS!**
Exciting new adventures every day.

Book online: oshclub.com.au





KLA ZOOM VISUAL ARTS

Miss Usee, Mrs Hatter and Mrs Rafidi



WANT TO JOIN

Zoom Link:

<https://nsweducation.zoom.us/j/62738492645?pwd=VOE...>

Meeting ID:

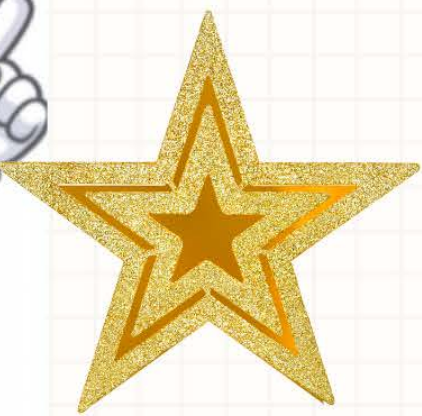
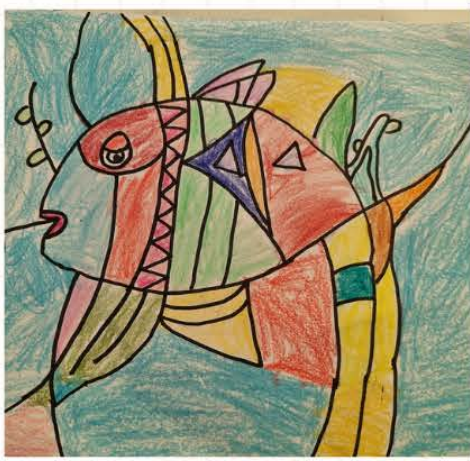
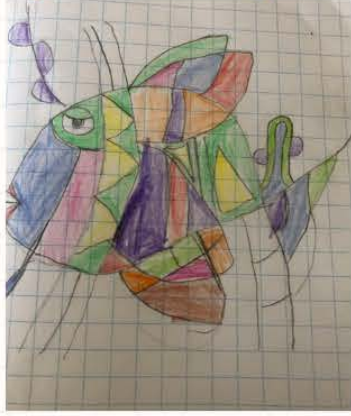
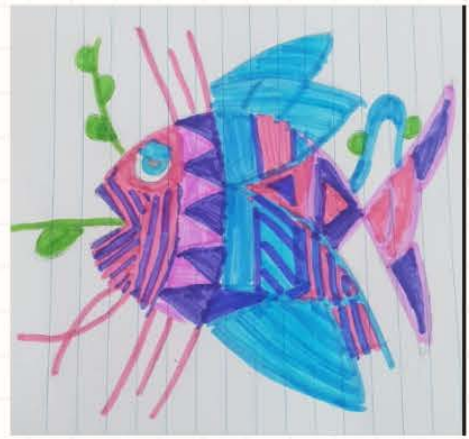
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KLA ZOOM VISUAL ARTS

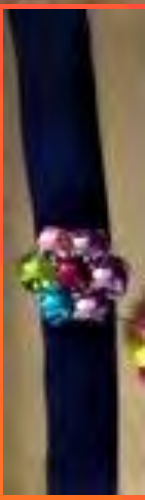


HERE ARE SOME SAMPLES FOR YOU TO HAVE A LOOK AT

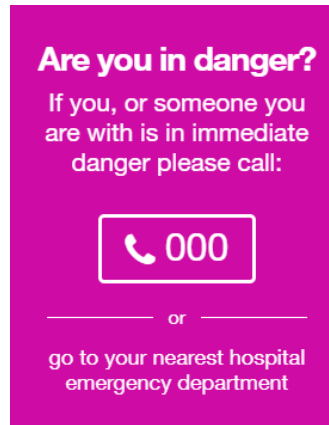






“Art is the highest form of hope”








Resources for Families During Remote Learning






If you or your child needs to talk to someone...





Name	About	Phone	Online
 <p>Kids Help Line</p>	<p>For anyone 25 or under - Kids Helpline is a free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.</p>	<p>1800 55 1800 24/7</p>	<p>Webchat 24/7 https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling</p>
 <p>Lifeline</p>	<p>For all ages - 24-hour crisis support telephone service. Lifeline provides 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.</p>	<p>CALL: 13 11 14 24/7</p> <p>TEXT: 0477 131114 6:00PM - Midnight</p>	<p>Crisis Support Chat 7:00PM – Midnight https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat</p>



<p>Parent Line</p> 	<p>Telephone counselling and support service for parents and carers with children aged 0-18</p>	<p>1300 1300 52</p> <p>9AM- 9PM Monday - Friday 4PM - 9PM Weekends</p>	<p>https://www.parentline.org.au/</p>
<p>Suicide Call Back Service</p> 	<p>A nationwide service that provides 24/7 telephone and online counselling to people who are affected by suicide, experiencing thoughts of self-harm or suicide</p>	<p>1300 659 467 24/7</p>	<p>Online Chat 24/7 Video Chat 24/7</p> <p>https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/</p>
<p>Youth Beyond Blue</p> 	<p>Beyond Blue provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.</p>	<p>1300 22 4636 24/7</p>	<p>Chat Online 3:00PM - Midnight</p> <p>https://www.youthbeyondblue.com/</p>
<p>SANE Australia</p> 	<p>SANE Australia supports people living with complex mental health issues and the people that care about them</p>	<p>1800 187 263 10:00AM – 10:00PM</p>	<p>Webchat 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM</p> <p>https://www.sane.org/about-sane</p>

<p>Headspace</p> 	<p>eheadspace provides free online and telephone support and counselling to young people 12 - 25 and their families and friends.</p>	<p>1300 737 616 (Parramatta Office)</p> <p>9AM - 5PM Monday - Friday 6PM Tuesday 8PM Thursday</p>	<p>Group Chat 24/7 1 on 1 Chat 9AM - 1AM https://headsace.org.au/eheadsace/</p>
<p>QLife</p> 	<p>QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTI peer support and referral for people wanting to talking about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships</p>	<p>1800 184 527 3PM - Midnight</p>	<p>Webchat 3PM – Midnight https://www qlife.org.au/resources/chat</p>
<p>1800RESPECT</p> 	<p>Confidential information, counselling and support service, open 24 hours to support people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse</p>	<p>1800 737 732 24/7</p> <p>Interpreter: 13 14 50</p>	<p>Online Chat 24/7 https://chat.1800respect.org.au/#/welcome</p>
<p>Carers NSW</p> 	<p>Carer Line offer emotional support, referrals and distribute carer specific resources and information to carers and community members</p>	<p>1800 242 636 9AM – 5PM Monday - Friday</p>	<p>http://www.carersnsw.org.au/how-we-help/support/carer-line/</p>


<p>GriefLine</p> 	<p>Counselling support service, online forums, and resources for those who have experienced grief and loss</p>	<p>1300 845 745 6AM - Midnight</p>	<p>https://griefline.org.au/</p>
<p>Mental Health Line</p> 	<p>A mental health professional will answer your call about mental health concerns for you or someone you are concerned about, including children, teens, adults and older people</p>	<p>1800 011 511 24/7</p>	<p>https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/Mental-Health-Line.aspx</p>
<p>Child Protection Helpline</p> 		<p>13 21 11</p>	<p>https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg</p>


If you are looking for an app to support you or your child...

Name	About	Website
<p>Calm Harm</p> 	<p>Calm Harm provides tasks that help you resist or manage the urge to self-harm. You can add your own tasks too and it's completely private and password protected.</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>App Store Google Play</p>
<p>Clear Fear</p> 	<p>The fear of threat, or anxiety, is like a strong gust of wind. It drags you in and makes you want to fight it or run away. Instead, face your fear with the free Clear Fear app and learn to reduce the physical responses to threat as well as changing thoughts and behaviours and releasing emotions.</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>App Store Google Play</p>
<p>ReachOut Worry Time</p> 	<p>ReachOut WorryTime interrupts repetitive thinking by setting aside your worries until later, so you don't get caught up in them and can get on with your day. This means you can deal with worries once a day, rather than carrying them around with you 24/7.</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>App Store</p>
<p>ReachOut Breathe</p> 	<p>ReachOut Breathe helps you reduce the physical symptoms of stress and anxiety by slowing down your breathing and your heart rate with your iPhone.</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>App Store</p>



<p>Smiling Mind</p> 	<p>Smiling Mind is a meditation app for young people. It has been developed by a team of psychologists and uses mindfulness to boost calmness, contentment and clarity. Mindfulness meditation has been shown to help manage stress, resilience, anxiety, depression and improve general health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>App Store Google Play</p>
<p>WellMind</p> 	<p>WellMind is designed to help you with stress, anxiety and depression. The app includes advice, tips and tools to improve your mental health and boost your wellbeing.</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>App Store Google Play</p>

If you are seeking additional information...

Name	About	Website
<p>ReachOut</p> 	<p>Our mission is to deliver innovative e-mental health services that enable young people to take control of their mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>https://au.reachout.com/</p>

<p>Black Dog Institute</p> 	<p>Primary areas of mental health research and treatment include: depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, workplace mental health, adolescents and young people, suicide prevention, e-mental health, and positive psychology and wellbeing.</p>	<p>https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/</p>
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If you are looking for online support...

Name	About	Website
<p>The BRAVE Program</p> 	<p>BRAVE-ONLINE is an evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) available online to help children (8-12) and teenagers (13-17) cope with anxiety.</p>	<p>https://www.brave-online.com/</p>
<p>Smiling Mind</p> 	<p>Online and app-based program to improve wellbeing of young people through mindfulness meditation.</p>	<p>https://www.smilingmind.com.au/</p>

TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD UNPLUG FROM SCREEN



Did you know that too much screen time can

- *Slow language development among younger children*
- *Hold back on creative thinking*
- *Can interfere with social skills development*

Here are a few tips to reduce the screen time for your kids

- *Be a positive role model by reducing your own screen time*
 - *You can create a family tech agreement and create set rules on how devices are used at home.*
 - *Stick to the rules that have been set.*
- *Establish screen time limits before they're turned on*
- *Schedule Green Time by taking the kids out to play in the backyard or at a local park.*
- *Create 'Technology Free Zones'*
 - *Kitchen or dining area can be reserved for having meals and family conversations.*
- *Encourage other activities such as reading a book, playing board games or creating an artwork.*

Upcoming Webinar for Parents

Dr Kristy Goodwin presents: Taming digital distractions

Dr Kristy Goodwin is a digital wellbeing and peak-performance speaker, author and researcher (and mum who also deals with her kids' techno-tantrums!) She's the author of *Raising Your Child in a Digital World*, and a media commentator who doesn't suggest that we ban the iPhone, or unplug the gaming console (digital abstinence isn't the solution). Kristy worked as an educator for fourteen years before becoming an academic and speaker who's on a mission to help children, teens and adults tame their technology habits so they're not a slave to the screen.

This school has a membership with Parenting Ideas, one of Australia's most trusted sources of parenting education and support. As part of this membership, all the parents in this school community can attend this webinar at no cost.



Watch from any device, any location



See the expert as they speak



Catch up recording available

**Valued at \$39 per person
No charge for our school
community**



Watch an overview from Dr Kristy Goodwin

About the webinar

Technology is an integral part of life for our children – it's the portal for their leisure, learning and connection. However, digital technologies can also disrupt a child's focus, put a dent in their learning and compromise their wellbeing. In this webinar, Dr Kristy Goodwin helps parents and carers understand why children and adolescents are vulnerable to digital distractions. She provides science-backed solutions to help kids and teens develop healthy digital behaviours so that they can focus, learn and thrive online.

Key learning and discussion points include:

- how long we should expect focused attention from children and teens
- the research behind why digital distractions are interfering with our children's attention
- how some technologies have been intentionally designed to be captivating and alluring
- why banning technology isn't the solution
- how to teach children and teens how to build a 'fortress around their focus' and leverage the benefits that technology offers them

The webinar will be held on 8 September 2021 at 8–9 PM AEST.

Redeem your webinar – it's easy!

To redeem your webinar click or copy and paste this link:

www.parentingideas.com.au/parent-resources/parent-webinars/webinar-taming-digital-distractions

1. Click 'Add to cart'
2. Click 'View cart'
3. Enter the voucher code TAMING and click 'Apply'
4. Enter your school's name to verify your eligibility. The \$39 discount will then be applied.
5. Click 'Proceed to checkout'
6. Fill in your account details. These are the details you will use to login to your account and access your webinar and resources
7. Click 'Place Order'

This offer is valid until 8 December 2021. If you're unable to make the broadcast time, just register anyway and you will get access to the recording.

Articles for parents

On the Parenting Ideas website you can also view and receive helpful articles to support your parenting journey.

Read up on topics such as resilience, siblings, bullying, digital and social media, friendships, confidence, behaviour, anxiety, girls, boys, learning and education.

Subscribe today – it's free.



INSIGHTS

In praise of fathers: the place of the modern dad



Fatherhood has been transformed from the breadwinner and disciplinarian role of the past to a far more complex framework. Here's how:

Diversity rules

A look at different cultures even within our shores shows there's no one 'right way' to be a dad. Fathers have a strong biological urge to ensure their children's survival, which drives dads to be protective, some to have high expectations and others to promote self-sufficiency. Fathers may differ in how they parent, but ultimately, we all belong to the same valued club. Fathers almost universally want what's best for their child.

Recognising dads

Being a dad is not given the same attention as motherhood. The parenting advice industry is often skewed toward mothers as the direct or primary carers. The lack of recognition can also at times be seen in the mental health field. It's now recognised that men experience heightened anxiety at all stages of fatherhood, however, most simply suffer in silence because 'that's what men do.' The recent advances in mental health promotion still have some way to go when it comes to fathers.

Playtime is crucial

Fathers have long been seen as the kings of play. Science now shows that play is a critical part of the fathering toolkit. Whether it's engaging in rough and tumble play with toddlers, sharing pizza night with primary-school kids or laughing with teens over the latest cat video, dads bond best with their children through play. Oxytocin, the bonding chemical that promotes strong relationships is released most intensely for men when playing with kids. On the other hand, oxytocin spikes for women are prompted by affectionate activities such as stroking, cuddling and talking softly to kids. Activity is at the heart of effective fathering as it's through play that many men do their best fathering work.

Part of team parent

'I wish my partner raised children like me' is a common parent comment. While usually uttered out of sheer frustration this comment misses the point that evolution dislikes duplication. Put simply, if one parent is the disciplinarian the family doesn't need another. Better for the other parent to focus on nurturing, teaching or arranging daily timetables. In busy families it's better to ensure all the parenting bases are covered rather than duplicating roles and leaving out important functions. Working together as one part of team will ensure that most of the needs of a child are met. Alternatively, if you are parenting a child on your own stay connected with other families and reach out for assistance when required.

The school of dad

Traditionally, fathers have been heavily linked with children's learning, but not necessarily of an academic kind. The reinforcement of values, real-world problem-solving and teaching for self-sufficiency have been the usual domain of dads. Recent studies show that dads can also positively impact their children's academic achievement, but in different ways to mothers. While mothers are more likely to be involved in at home learning activities such as hearing children read and supervising homework, fathers are more likely to positively impact their children's attitude to learning. According to American educational researcher William Jeynes, dads focus more (than mothers) on moulding and modelling correct mindsets and behaviours, which provide the foundation upon which children and teens can build their academic journeys. It's this bigger picture focus where fathers can do their best work, particularly changing boys' attitudes to women and giving their daughters the confidence to stand up and be heard.

Dads and kids' development

If a father wants to positively influence children and teenagers, it's important to ensure that their relationship is warm and supportive. While this may be at odds with men's natural tendency to push children's developmental boundaries, fathers should lean on their well defined ability to relate to their kids through play. As Australian educational leader Dr. Tim Hawkes noted in his book "*Ten conversations you should have with your son*" dads who engage in banter and fun are better placed to discuss issues of real substance with their children.

Dads and resilience

Fathers who promote children's self-sufficiency are well placed to develop resilience in their children. In fact, a key role for modern fathers is to ensure, as part of team parent, that their children can confront and overcome the hardships, frustrations and difficulties that life throws at them. This is done less by adopting tough, hard-nosed tactics, and instead allowing kids to take physical and emotional risks in the knowledge that they can return to a warm and secure base.

Dad is a social role

With children growing up in step, adaptive, single parent and same sex families fatherhood has become less a biological and more a social role. As society changes and assisted parenting techniques continue to advance, whoever answers to father takes on importance in a child's life. This is not denying the rights of a biological father, but rather acknowledges that for many children the person who shows up whether stepfather, relative or family friend, or even a single parent doing both roles, is the social father for a child.

In closing

As society changes the role of fathers is also shifting as well. While the place of a father in a child's life has always been important, there's never been a greater need for fathers to be supported in their role and to widen our view of what it is to be a dad.



Michael Grose

Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's an award-winning speaker and the author of 12 books for parents including *Spoonfed Generation*, and the bestselling *Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It*. Michael is a former teacher with 15 years experience, and has 30 years experience in parenting education. He also holds a Master of Educational Studies from Monash University specialising in parenting education.