



Session 3

Positive parent involvement with schooling

There is clear evidence proving the importance of parent involvement in their child's schooling and learning. Parents can assist children towards school success by:

- Creating routines and stability.
- Encouraging reading.
- Helping children to be organised.
- Talking about school with their children.
- Communicating with school.
- Fostering independence and self-discipline.

Parents can also get involved with school via in-class volunteering, participating in school events, joining the school Parents & Citizens committee and other activities.

Strategies for supportive parenting

- Understand child development.
- Be a good role model.
- Provide positive attention.
- Teach emotional intelligence.
- Ensure a safe and secure environment.
- Develop a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

Using discipline effectively

Fairness, consistency and opportunities to learn are needed to make discipline effective. If children are frightened they cannot learn. Humiliation and

corporal punishment are not effective as these approaches do not teach children the right way to behave.

Using positive discipline with children involves giving encouragement and appropriate consequences, and includes the recognition that making mistakes is an entirely normal part of the learning process.

Discipline is most effective when parents:

- Plan ahead and are prepared to better manage stressful times.
- Provide activities for children to avoid boredom.
- Ignore minor misbehaviour.
- Negotiate with their children when children's requests are reasonable.
- Provide appropriate, consistent and fair consequences for misbehaviour; such as loss of privileges, asking a child to apologise, asking a child to go back and complete the task or action the right way.
- Use time out or grounding sparingly and only for the most serious misbehaviour.





Supporting children through common challenges

Parents should speak with the school principal, classroom teacher or school counsellor if their child has difficulties or if the family is experiencing hardship. Many local community welfare agencies and programs also exist to support children at school. Parents can use the internet, contact their local migrant resource centre, council or visit community centres or libraries to find details of helpful services and programs running in their community. Parents may also wish to utilise their family doctor or local community health centre to access referrals for specialist supports.

Bullying

Many children experience bullying at some point during their schooling. This can include:

- Verbal bullying such as name calling, teasing, threats or insults.
- Physical bullying. For example, hitting, scratching, tripping or spitting.
- Social bullying such as excluding or making inappropriate gestures.
- Psychological bullying which may include spreading rumours, destroying possessions or nasty text messages, amongst other things.

For further information on bullying and what to do when a child is being bullied visit <http://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>.

Family Focus Activity 3

Make a meal together

This activity promotes team work, communication and bonding between family members. It is a great way to get members of the family working with each other towards a common goal. Best of all, once you have made a meal together you get to share a meal together!

Materials required

Recipe or menu plan (access thousands of free recipes and menu plans online, use cookbooks or opt for a cultural specialty or traditional family meal).

Ingredients based on your chosen recipes.

Cooking utensils, kitchen and/or preparation space.

Cutlery and crockery to eat with.

Instructions

Involve all family members in making a decision about which recipe(s) to make.

Make a list of ingredients and source everything needed for your recipe. You may have all of the ingredients at home already, or you may need to go shopping.





Achieving School Success

Set aside adequate time to prepare your food, and plan in advance to give yourselves enough time to have meals ready before everyone gets too hungry. This is a process that should not be rushed.

Before you begin, explain to all family members the importance of following the recipe or instructions. Show them pictures of the meals if possible so that they can visualise what the family is working towards.

Assign tasks to each family member and make sure that children are given safe, age-appropriate jobs. No sharp knives or hot ovens for young ones! Remember to supervise children using utensils and electrical equipment.

Give clear and simple instructions. If needed, show children what you want them to do so they can copy you. Use praise as often as you can.

If young children become bored, give them another task, let them watch you instead or set them up with an alternative activity outside of the kitchen so that other family members can get on with the job. For example, write up the menu on a piece of blank paper and get them to colour it in and decorate it to go on the table.

Be patient. What is important in this activity is the process of working together.

Once food is prepared or in the oven involve all family members with tasks such as setting the table, packing away ingredients and washing pots and pans.

When the meal is ready for service, seat everyone at the table or in the same room. Take the time to praise all family members for their involvement. You might even like to take some photos of family members and your food creations.

While you are all enjoying your food you may wish to talk about the process. Ask your children which tasks they enjoyed the most, what recipes they might like to try next time, and what they learned. Give them lots of positive feedback and encouragement for a job well done.

Involve all members of the family in clearing the table and cleaning up after the meal.

