Lyn’s lines

Many of our students are in the shared care of both parents living in different environments. This can be challenging for all parties involved to maintain a consistent harmonious approach to parenting children. Following is an interesting article highlighting current research about how children are affected by this situation and some tips about how we can make this situation less stressful for our students.

Two homes, one heart

With the number of Australian children of separated parents exceeding one million, there’s much at stake when coordinating their back-and-forth movement between two homes, writes Karen Fontaine taken from Parenting Ideas Michael Grose Presentations.

A divorced Canadian couple made international headlines last month with the construction of a duplex-style home – at the centre of which are the bedrooms of their children, aged eight and ten. Doors at either end of the duplex’s central hallway lead to each parent’s self-contained ‘wing’. Each week, one parent has custody of the children; during that week the door to the other parent’s wing is locked, maintaining a relative privacy for that parent. This arrangement provides stability for the kids, who don’t have two homes but rather two parents who alternate their care from week to week. It’s certainly a novel approach at a time when parental divorce affects the lives of nearly one in five young Australians under the age of 20 – “a disruption related to long-term social and economic disadvantages”, according to the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

This is a position supported by Sydney family law professor Patrick Parkinson. In a recent research paper entitled For Kids’ Sake, Parkinson brought together extensive evidence showing that parental separation is a significant risk factor for children’s long-term emotional wellbeing and educational performance. Another expert, Dr Nicky McWilliam, a lawyer/mediator with Sydney Mediation Partnership, spends a third of her working week dealing with separating parents. She notes, “There are always issues with contact arrangements for the children”. Unlike in times gone by, when children automatically lived with their mother and might have spent every second weekend with their dad, shared-care situations are becoming much more common, says McWilliam.

“Most of the times the children are split evenly from week to week and sometimes even from day to day,” she says. In a shared-care situation, academic challenges can arise, says Jacqui Marquis-Conder, Principal Psychologist at Youth Psychology. This is particularly the case if there is a lengthy commute to one parent’s home on some weekdays, allowing less time for homework.

“Academic challenges and even learning difficulties will most certainly arise if there is behaviour issues associated with unresolved and ongoing emotional distress.” A recent study on the effect of divorce or separation on young children and older children found that, contrary to what many public policy makers believe, children are most affected by changes to their family structure in the first five years of life.

“If parents are able to form an amicable shared-care arrangement, and work out a communication style that does not involve the children in their conflict, and then shared care can be ideal for children as well as parents. It breaks from what is often single parenting after separation,” she says.

Interestingly, Ryan’s study also showed that children who are integrated into a new blended family have fewer behaviour problems than those who are not. “In fact, children of blended families actually receive protective benefits that seem to help them avoid some of the negative behaviours exhibited by children who remain in single-
discussions should be held drop the same room, then try to establish a neutral pick for the children.

“I have certainly seen many cases where a child has a warm, loving and close relationship with their step-parents and siblings and this certainly provides protective benefits and potentially increases the child’s resilience,” she says. “Two homes for the kids in a very loving and stable way,” she says. “A lot of that, I think, is due to giving the kids lots of information — making them aware of what’s happening for the next hour, the next day, the next week, the next year — and doing a lot of talking and communicating.”

It’s about explaining to the kids that although they are no longer in a relationship with the other parent, they respect that every parent has a different style. And no matter how young a child is, what’s bearing out from my practice is that that really makes a difference.

Jacqui Marquis – Condor, Principal Psychologist of Youth Psychology, a private practice in Sydney offers tips on how parents can ease the pressure on children for whom they share care:

1. Establish a shared-care arrangement that is child focused not parent focused. “A shared-care arrangement should always reflect the needs of the child first, not the parent. Parents need to ask themselves: ‘Is this about me wanting to get my way or have control of the situation, or is this about what is best for my child?’ For example, if the child must be at both before- and after-school care or does a very long commute in order to spend a particular day with a parent, is this actually in the best interests of the child? This is for the parents to decide, depending on their child’s age and particular needs.”

2. Establish a routine, particularly during the week. “This can be a huge challenge but if it can be achieved for both parents to enforce regular homework, meal, and bedtimes for their children, this will help the school week go smoothly.”

3. No matter how tempting, never speak badly about the other parent to the children (this goes for new partners as well). “This doesn’t mean that you have to say nice things about the other parent but in this case it is wise to follow the good old-fashioned advice ‘if you don’t have something nice to say, don’t say anything at all’. This includes subtle jokes, hints or sarcastic comments – even very young children understand the meaning behind these! And do not under any circumstances share communication from the other parent with your child such as showing them email or text message correspondence.”

4. Make pick-ups and drop-offs as stress free as possible for the children. “If the conflict is so high that parents cannot even be in the same room, then try to establish a neutral pick-up and drop-off spot such as a public park or café. All heated discussions should be held well away from the hearing or sight of the children (whether in person, on the phone, or through text message).”

LITERACY AND NUMERACY WEEK

Monday 29th July - Friday 2nd August

Bittern is celebrating on Monday 5th August.

Students can come to school dressed as a favourite book character: We will have a small parade around the courtyard to share our fabulous outfits.

Also children can bring along a cake decorated in a book theme (with all ingredients listed, please.) These will be displayed throughout the day followed by an auction of them at the end of the day. (see Bittern’s website for more information)

PLEASE NOTE:

Return dates on school notices are there for a reason. When booking an excursion it is necessary to get exact numbers of participants for safety and organisational purposes. Recently staff had to ring many parents for verbal permission for students to go on an excursion on the morning of the excursion. We need to know who is going: to enable staff time to manage: any medical / first aid requirements, how many adults are needed as there is a specific ratio decided by the DEECD of adults to students, dietary requirements and individual supervision for students with special needs.

NOTICES WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED BY THE DUE DATE

If you have misplaced an excursion notice, you are able to download a copy of the form from the Bittern PS website at www.bitternps.vic.edu.au

WHAT’S HAPPENING AROUND THE GROUNDS????

We have been fortunate enough to have two permanent volunteers to assist Brenda in the garden. One of the volunteers has started this week with the second volunteer starting on Monday. Both volunteers have the appropriate paper work to support their work in schools and Brenda will supervise their work during these times. You may have already noticed how great the paths are looking.
LATE IS NOT GREAT!!!!

Sometimes the mornings don’t always run as planned however please make sure where possible that students arrive at school on time ready to start the day! This is important for a variety of reasons the main being that the students miss out on important instructional class time where a lot of learning and explicit teaching occurs. The students can also be embarrassed when they come in late and are unsure of what the expectations are for the session. Remember…..

‘IT’S COOL TO BE AT SCHOOL’ ON TIME!!!!!!! And IF YOU ARE AWAY MAKE SURE YOU BRING A NOTE THE NEXT DAY.

Cerberus Cottage Family & Friends Inc.

HMAS Cerberus, 16 Cook Road VIC 3920
Telephone/Facsimile: 03 5983 0274
Email: coordinator@cerberuscottage.com.au
http://cerberuscottage.weebly.com

Come down and Join! Child Care is provided on Friday Mornings for just $2 per child

Friday- PT Classes- 9:30 at Hastings Community Centre. Laura will adjust the class to your fitness level so if you are a fitness guru you will get a great work out, if you are like me and lack any fitness ability that’s ok Laura will give you less impact options. So: NO EXCUSES. Summer is just around the corner. Just $6 per class

Friday - 10:30-12:30 Samantha is holding her weight loss and well-being group. Samantha believes in eating nutritious foods, learning skills that will keep you and your family healthy for a lifetime, all while losing weight the healthy way. No gimmicks, weight loss powders or pills. You will shed those unwanted kilos and learn how to cook yummy healthy meals. Joining fee from: $50 and as little as $20 per week. Includes: a book with all the dos and don’ts and a meal plan suited to you.

Wednesday Playgroup: Playgroup caters for children aged newborn-5 years and is a great opportunity for parents to relax while children engage in exciting and engaging play. Looking forward to seeing you at Playgroup soon! Playgroup Membership is $24 p/a. Includes: a FREE playgroup shirt.

OR $3 per week ($5 for occasional visits.)

Grade 5/6 ‘Melbourne Urban Camp’
The second installment of **$104.00** is now **overdue**. Please send it along to school A.S.A.P. The final installment of **$100.00** is due to-day the 31st July

SCHOOL UNIFORM IS A REQUIREMENT OF BITTERN PRIMARY……

It has been very noticeable that some students are taking license with the wearing of school uniform recently. As you are ambassadors for the school it is vital that you represent the school in full school uniform.

**Good things about school uniform**

Do you barrack for a sports team? Your team wears a special uniform to identify them. When you go to watch them you may wear part or all of that uniform too. It identifies you as a supporter.

Having a school uniform gives you an identity too. It means that you belong in that particular school. You are part of a special group of people and you belong in that group.

Having a school uniform is also good because:

- You don’t have to worry about what to wear on a school day.
- You know that everyone else will be wearing school uniform.
- You can save your ‘good’ stuff for nights and weekends.
- The clothes are usually practical and comfortable to wear.
- Uniforms can be handed down to other kids in the family.
- With a uniform you have got most of the clothes you need to wear so you don’t need as many casual clothes, and if you are growing quickly that will be a big saving for mum, dad or whoever buys your clothes.
- It promotes equity because everyone has to wear the same.
- There is less pressure on kids to wear the latest fashion, which may not be suitable for wearing all day.
- Most primary schools don’t have change rooms or showers, so there is nowhere suitable for changing into sports clothes for sports lessons. So, casual and comfortable clothes that can be okay to wear when doing anything at all are best.
EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (EMA) 2ND SEMESTER

Parents are reminded that applications for the 2nd Semester of the EMA close on 2nd August, 2013 (NO LATE APPLICATIONS WILL BE TAKEN)

If you successfully applied for the EMA in Semester 1; YOU DO NOT NEED TO RE-APPLY, however if your circumstances have changed, please contact the school office as soon as possible.

If you are new to Bittern Primary School and want to apply for the EMA, call into the office at your earliest convenience to collect an application form.

Thank you.

THAI COOKING NIGHT
Places are filling fast
Book in at the office to secure a place ….It’s going to be a Fun Tasty Night!!

ENROLMENTS FOR 2014
We are currently welcoming enrolments for 2014 and conducting individual tours. If you or someone you know would like a private tour with your child and partner please call in at any time, we are more than happy to ‘show off’ our school.

HOT DOGS !!
Hot dogs will be available this Friday, at a cost of $2.50.
If you would like your child/ren to purchase a hot dog, please complete the order form and return it to school this Friday, together with the correct money.

PLEASE NOTE – THE CANTEEN IS NOT OPEN ON HOT DOG DAY

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HOT DOG ORDER FORM
I would like to order _____ hot dogs @$2.50
NAME: ___________________ GRADE: ___
Please find enclosed $_________________
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HOT DOG ORDER FORM
I would like to order _____ hot dogs @$2.50
NAME: ___________________ GRADE: ___
Please find enclosed $_________________
---

HOT DOG ORDER FORM
I would like to order _____ hot dogs @$2.50
NAME: ___________________ GRADE: ___
Please find enclosed $_________________
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Bittern Primary School
Produce Stall

When: This Friday 2nd August

Featuring: Left over chocolates @ $1.00 ea.
: Cooking Club ‘delicacies’

Also come and purchase: organic produce (vegies, herbs etc.) that the children have harvested from the school garden. Maybe make some vegetable soup, which is an easy winter meal on a cold night.

The stall is open for sales between 2:45pm-3:00pm (before assembly) and again at 3.30pm-3.45pm (after assembly).

Anyone with spare home baked goods (e.g. cakes, biscuits, slices, jam) or home grown items (e.g.: lemons, eggs, veggies, fruit, herbs) are also invited to donate them for sale at our stall.

All items must have an accompanying list of ingredients attached.

Just bring them along to school on Friday!

Prices: Items range from 50c to $4.00

Please support our stall!
Parents Make a Difference

FREE
Information Session
for Families, Carers, Interested Persons.
Includes light dinner and childminding

How to Help Your Child Step From Primary School to Secondary School

This session focuses on:
- Positive Communication Between Parents and Teenagers
- Helping Your Child And Family Cope With The Transition From Primary To Secondary School
- Tips And Strategies To Stay On Top Of Increased Workloads
- The Developmental Changes Children Experience During This Phase

Date: Tuesday 27th August
Time: 5.00pm – 7.30pm
(Dinner Provided @ 5:00, Sessions Starts @ 5:30)
Venue: Western Port Secondary College
201-215 High Street Hastings
Bookings Essential:
www.surveymonkey.com/s/westernportsc
By Fri 9th Aug
Enquiries call Robyn: 5975 2445
This event is open to the whole community

Child Minding available – please book children in when you register

Presentation from Angie Wilcock

Angie is a highly regarded Australian expert and speaker on transitions in education. She has appeared on TV (Mornings with Kerri-Anne and the Today Show) and radio, she works with parents, students and teachers Australia wide on coping with the changes in high school. She is a published author with a strong background in teaching, as well as being a mum of two sons. Her sessions are a mix of humour, anecdotes, Information, real life parenting…but above all, strategies to support families during this very critical phase of education and personal development. Her new book, "The Transition Tightrope", supports parents in understanding this new phase of education…and life!