



Porty's Power of Positive Thinking

A fortnightly communication between home and the school community

PRINCIPAL: Mrs Julianne Emmert

Edition #11 - 22nd March 2016

VALUE : *Every child matters every day!*

Port Curtis Road State School acknowledges the traditional Dharumbal people on whose land it stands.

Our School Rules and Acceptable Behaviour

- **Be Safe**
 - **Be Responsible**
 - **Be Respectful**
- Respect for Ourselves**
Respect for Others
Respect for Learning



Acknowledgements
Learning Place
Teacher Aides Supporting Students with Disabilities.

Sue Larkey: International Author, Autism Spectrum Specialist, Teacher
Sue Larkey is unashamedly passionate about her mission - to inspire parents and educators and teach them how to Make it a Success.

The Umbrella Network
"families supporting families"
LOVE our kids
EMPOWER ourselves
INSPIRE our community

Amanda Hartmann,
Inclusive Learning Consultant
Speech Pathologist, Spectronics

Mr John Fleming Principal
advocates a dramatic shift in the way primary school children are taught using the John Fleming Explicit Teaching Model

WELCOME to Porty's Power of Positive Thinking, Edition #11

One of our Core Priorities for 2016 is 'Foster Student and Staff Learning and Wellbeing'. This is reflected through our every day life at Porty by engaging in partnerships with families and organizations to support us.

A snippet from Wellbeing for Learning and Life policy.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A positive school ethos and rich learning environment that is open, respectful, caring and safe optimises learning through a commitment to wellbeing.

Port Curtis Road does this by:

- promoting a positive school ethos in newsletters, school publications, meetings with parents, P&C Meetings and weekly school parades
- tracking individual student data and ensuring individual needs are being met through different approaches (differentiation) and to be inclusive of student needs
- demonstrating a commitment to providing a school where students can experience success and achievement every day
- providing students with a warm, caring, safe, supportive environment where they can grow in confidence and resilience
- utilising local support personnel and networks e.g. Guidance Officer, Speech Language Officer, AVT Teacher the Cerebral Palsy League to help with student learning needs identification
- ongoing review and development of the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan with support of Staff, Students and P&C. RBP clearly outlines expectations of-Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be a Learner
- having a commitment to professional development through Staff DPPs and a school Professional Learning Plan aligned to school priorities, staff and student needs
- encouraging students to develop a sense of identity and belonging through making and being engaged in decisions i.e. (raising money for charities via student council.)
- maintaining and continuing the high Staff morale and wellbeing
providing a smart, safe and responsible use of digital technologies (internet, emails, games and resources)

PARTNERSHIPS

Productive partnerships expand the knowledge, skills and resources available in the school.

Port Curtis Road State School does this by:
supporting positive working relationships between students and all staff to ensure students know that they are appreciated, respected and safe.

providing ample opportunity for parents to discuss student progress frequently during the year (i.e. parent/teacher interviews, P&C meetings and informal conversations)

ensuring that teaching and learning is connecting and respecting the life experiences and cultures of our students

maintaining our school as a happy, safe place that ensures students have a sense of belonging to the school

being highly involved in programs, e-Smart Framework, Professional Development and networks organised

developing partnerships with other organisations including Kids Matter, Friends for Life and many others

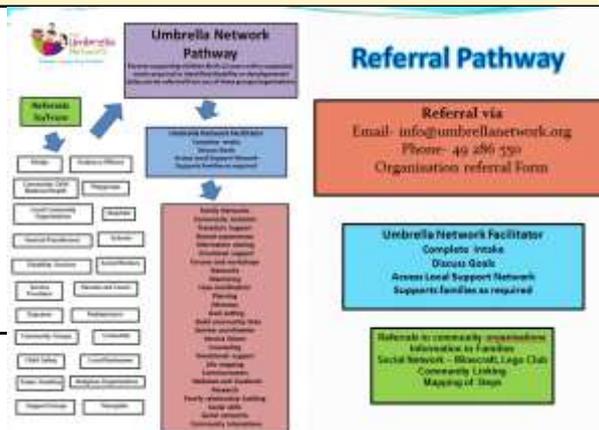
supporting partnerships with schools in our Cluster to share and utilise staffing and resources (e.g. NAI-DOC & District Sports Association)

monitoring school attendance and morale as indicators (positive or negative) of social and emotional competence within staff and students at the school

We are currently networking with Kids Matter, The Umbrella Network and Centacare, to name just a few, to provide support and care to our families.

Take Care
Julianne Emmert
Principal

Did you know? **Are you using iPad / tablet for kids with ASD?** The iPad provides a wonderful visual tool for kids with ASD and most have strengths in visual areas compared to other areas. In addition the iPad activities are repetitive, logical, self-paced and engaging. *"The addition of an iPad was a game changer in my son's education. He literally went from having to rely on the TA/teacher for note taking and dictation of long writing assignments to doing all writing himself within one week. His writing capabilities have increased as well as his independence and self-esteem. While this is only one example of how technology can change a child's life, it points out that the IEP team should always be looking at ways to incorporate technology to make a child's learning more effective and easier, thereby reducing frustration and potential behaviours".* www.suelarkey.com.au



What do we do at The Umbrella Network Rockhampton Inc.
 The Umbrella Network Rockhampton is a non-profit organisation that passionately supports families with "special needs children" primarily aged birth to 12 years - an ever growing market. Everyone's journey is different, so it is important for us to:

- Empower people to travel their own journey to suit them and their family
- Provides the tools (experience and knowledge) to become advocates for the child and the family
- Provide a safe place to meet like-minded people and where there is no judgement *Numerous Partnerships have been formed within the community and surrounding areas, new groups, new activities, new events and new families.*

We provide information and support through the following:

- Play groups – Play Connect for autism and developmentally delayed children.
- My Time (mums, dad, grandparents) to focus on themselves building confidence, friendships and support.
- Social groups and events such as CQ Kids Connecting, Minecraft Club, My Dad and Me (project-focused to enhance relationships with children), along with outdoor movie nights and luncheons
- Networking with local service providers so that referrals provide all the assistance available in the region
- Workshops: parenting, relationships, food and nutrition, behavioural, autism
- Parent Connect Program funded by Department of Communities – connecting parents with vital support
- Sensory, DVD, Book borrowing library
- Mentoring of new families to the Network by those who are willing to share their experiences
- Specialist medical services such as paediatrician, occupational therapist, speech therapist, psychologists and counsellors
- A space for workshops and presentations that is also used by other community organisations www.umbrellanetwork.org

Resources
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www.theumbrellanetwork.org

Amanda Hartmann, Speech Pathologist, Spectronics.
www.spectronics.com.au

Department of Education and Training
<http://education.qld.gov.au>

Sue-Ellen Kusher-Mindworks Consultant
www.mindworksteam.com.au/sue-ellen-kusher

Bullying No Way!
<http://bullyingnoway.gov.au/national-day/index.html>

National Centre Against Bullying
www.bullying.org

KidsMatter
www.kidsmatter.edu.au/

Mindmatters
www.mindmatters.edu.au/

E-Safety
www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues

eSmart Schools/The Alannah and Madeline Foundation
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Top 12 Tips to Set Up for Success in 2016

1. Understand their difference (strengths and challenges), accept their different way of thinking, learning, socialising, etc. (Great reference to understanding ASD is Dr Tony Attwood's books see page 6).
2. Break it down. Break tasks down into smaller parts and give them each step sequentially. If possible, give them a checklist to mark off as they do each step. Do NOT expect the children to multitask! Allow them extra time to get it done, but let them finish! It is important to finish one task before going to another.
3. Slow it down. Be aware of communication difficulties. Allow time to process verbal information, use visuals, and don't overload them with verbal information.
4. Use their special interests to motivate and engage – their strengths are motivated by their interest.
5. Show them what is expected and what is happening, then they have less need to fight for control (i.e. schedules, routines, timers).
6. Be careful how you use words, their literalness can mean they misunderstand you. Avoid words like 'could', 'would', 'can' as they perceive them as a choice, e.g. "Can you start work" can be seen as a choice.
7. Use visuals to support learning: schedules, photos, pictures, Pics for PECS, timetables, highlight key information, mind maps, etc.
8. Prepare by previewing. If possible 'preview' the learning ahead of time, to give a mental framework of what is being presented or what is next.
9. Check in regularly – don't wait for the student to ask for help – check in (learning, social and education).
10. Computers and iPads are enabling for so many people with ASD, they can help build connections and confidence. (See tips for iPad's on page 4).
11. They find it hard to see things from other people's perspective. This is known as 'theory of mind'. They might also find it hard to understand and predict other people's behaviour, and to understand how their behaviour affects others.
12. They often find it hard to recognise facial expressions and the emotions behind them. They may miss facial cues from adults about behaviour, or social cues from peers.

A successful education for any child starts with a positive working relationship between home and school. One of the biggest challenges for parents/carers and teachers is to develop an effective relationship. It is the interest of everyone involved—child, staff and families—that we create a positive partnership. This is created through teamwork, meeting, clear goals, regular communication and learning together.

8 Key Strategies for Working with Families

1. Team work is the key to achieving desired outcomes. We are all on the same side. We all have the best interest of the child at heart. When we have the attitude that we are all on the same team, the child's team we view everything differently.
2. Share information, brainstorm ideas and learn together.
3. Ask questions. You should never be ashamed to ask questions. We are all there to help the child through life.
4. Brain storm ideas. Remember not every strategy works for every child so it is good to have a few ideas to try.
5. Keep it real. Be brave and honest about the child and their requirements.
6. Remember the child may act differently at home and at school.
7. Respect each other! Be appreciative of each other's efforts.
8. Ensure the child and family develop a good relationship with the Principal. An informed Principal can support staff, student and families. They can be a good mediator when issues arise at school and find resolutions whether it is funding, behaviour or breakdown in communication. Principals tend to be constant in schools, whereas teachers can change each year. When the Principal is on side everything else will flow. Remember usually on a bad day the child gets sent to the Principal who needs to understand the child for this to be an effective strategy.

Excerpt from *The Ultimate Guide to School and Home* by Sue Larkey and Anna Tullemans, page 113.