Frogponds and baby beanies: How one school fosters student and teacher wellbeing through connecting with their community

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Abstract

The Context It is Tuesday afternoon at Prescott College, a Seventh-day Adventist high school in an inner suburb of Adelaide. Students and teachers are packing up their books, pens, computers and folders. But next, some are gathering garden tools, others are setting up a puppet theatre and still others are tuning up musical instruments. Students and teachers are all engaged in purposeful activity. It is service learning time, a program that fosters wellbeing for both students and staff.

Recommended Citation


This is better than having contact with your child’s school only when there’s a problem, either at school or in your family. How to build a strong parent-school relationship. You can build a parent-school relationship in several ways: Be involved in the school community in whatever ways you can. For example, you can ask the school and teachers for information or feedback. You can also share your child’s special events or achievements outside school. Speaking to student wellbeing or support staff like counsellors or asking for a referral to an educational psychologist might help if you need extra support or expertise. Attending school information nights can help you work out who in the school is responsible for different aspects of your child’s care and education. Jealousy of their mother being with a new baby or younger brother or sister. Worry about how a depressed mother is managing without them. Anxieties about their parents. This may be linked to a parent’s feelings about their own experience of school. Fear of letting down their parents, as well as themselves and their teachers, may add to a child’s nerves about sitting for SATs – undermining their confidence and possibly leading to results that do not do justice to their real ability. In the new school there will no longer be a main relationship with one teacher throughout the year and the opportunity for some play. While many younger children have already been given some homework, the demands really increase after primary school. Teacher-initiated play is a close cousin to inquiry based learning. At Whitby, our early child educators ask children questions about the rules and process that govern the play, and then encourage children to make connections to the wider world through their own body of knowledge. Students are also given an opportunity to bring stories to life through dramatic play. When children are given opportunities to act out scenes and express themselves, they improve their social confidence, increase their ability to see the perspectives of others and increase the attention they give to the literature. This teacher engagement supports children in their creativity, while also challenging them to think about why they chose to create an object.