



Welcome to our 29th issue of the Family Newsletter. This edition, along with articles on parenting, includes our calendar of programs for parents, grandparents and professionals who work with families.

New year, new beginning

Issue 29

Term 1 2016

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7 days a week

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When is the best time to make change?

So it's now 2016... We've made it through Christmas, New Year, holidays, back to work and the return to a new school year. We've probably even made a number of new year's resolutions to motivate ourselves to make some positive life change – lose weight, stop smoking, drink less, exercise more.

The new year has become a traditional time for making big life decisions, seemingly based on what we don't like about ourselves. It's easy to see why the beginning of the year might seem like a good time to make change, with the end of one year and the start of another, however let's explore whether this is an appropriate (or even sensible) time to initiate BIG change.

For many of us the beginning of a new year is a stressful time – physically, financially and emotionally – so why would we put extra pressure on ourselves to make big changes? New year's resolutions often fall by the wayside and we are left with feelings of failure and disappointment for not sticking with it. Then we feel worse and end up giving up on our ideas for change altogether (until next year's list of resolutions).

What if we did it differently?

What if we chose to make change at some other time of the year that's not attached to a significant event? What if we decided to only change one thing at a time? What if we first thought about why we want to make a change? Is the need for change coming from ourselves or from others who think we should make changes?

What if, after considering these things, we decide when, how and what changes we wish to make at a time that suits us? What if we had a really clear plan about how to achieve our goals, strategies to address self-sabotage, and a caring and honest support network?

I wonder if our 'anytime throughout the year' resolutions would be more successful?

– Kate Kerlin

If anything in this newsletter inspires you to want to learn more about the changes you can make, contact the Family Education Services team at CatholicCare Sandhurst and we'll point you in the right direction.



How our moods affect our kids

As a parent or caregiver have you ever noticed that when you're in a rush, feeling anxious or acting agitated, that your child starts reflecting that same behaviour right back at you. Have you ever wondered why this happens?

When I first noticed this happening with myself and my children I decided that, as the adult, it was my responsibility to take a step back and look at the situation and my own behaviour. We have a lot of power as adults in a child's life; when we are feeling (and acting) stressed, frustrated, impatient, or angry it's easy to become overwhelmed and to act out our feelings.

When this happens, the impact for our children can be twofold: firstly, we know that children model a great deal of their behaviour on the adults around them, therefore they mimic how we behave. Secondly, when we are controlled by our own feelings our children can become overwhelmed by our emotional energy.



If your child has been happily playing and you come in and speak in an angry tone that conveys the way you are feeling, the next thing you know your child is reflecting back your mood.

What happens next? Either a power struggle that ends in tears, or you, as the parent, become aware of

how your mood has affected your child and you take a step back to try a different approach.

One way of doing this is to practice mindfulness around managing your emotions. Mindfulness is a popular term that describes the alternative to living life on auto-pilot, where we pay attention to our daily tasks and have conscious awareness of what we're doing.

To be mindful, means to be present in each moment, to bring our awareness into the now, and to observe the way we are feeling in mind and body.

When we practice being mindful, and bring this into our daily lives and into our parenting, we can create some space for ourselves to make a choice about whether we react or respond to each situation we experience, as well of being aware of what buttons are being pushed for us.

When we react we are allowing our emotions to drive our behaviour; compared to when we respond to a situation. This means we consciously choose how we will proceed instead.

When we are aware of what's going on for ourselves emotionally, it is much easier to have some awareness of how our mood and behaviour may impact our children.

Mindfulness provides us with a great tool to navigate life as a parent and life in general. Where instead of reacting to our children's behaviour we can make mindful choices regarding what behaviour we model and how we respond to our kids.

There are many resources supporting us to practice Mindfulness including phone apps, children's books, and meditations. Our *Bringing up Great Kids* program focuses on Mindful parenting as do *Tuning In To Kids* and *Tuning In To Teens* parenting programs. If you are keen to find out more about these programs, please give us a call.

– Kate Kerlin

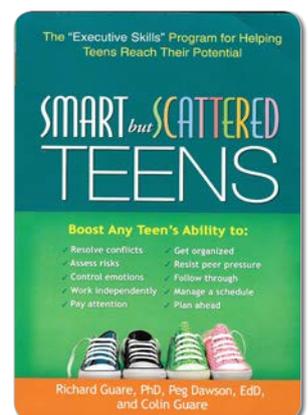
8 Olinda Street Library

Olinda Street Library is free to the general public. Borrowing period is three weeks at a time. Call in, browse the library, borrow a book and enjoy a coffee. You can find the library on the corner of Olinda and Mitchell Streets in Bendigo, or phone 5441 7881.

Opening hours: Monday to Thursday, 10am to 4pm.

Book review - Smart but Scattered Teen

"I told you, I'll do it later." "I forgot to turn in the stupid application." "Could you drive me to school? I missed the bus again." "I can't walk the dog--I have too much homework!" If you're the parent of a "smart but scattered" teen, trying to help him or her grow into a self-sufficient, responsible adult may feel like a never-ending battle. Now you have an alternative to micromanaging, cajoling, or ineffective punishments.



Tuning into our teens

A general reaction to the word 'teenager' is often one of perhaps alarm, sometimes distaste, frequently a shake of the head. There seems to be a general consensus that teenagers are a bit like monsters, and we are told to batten down the hatches between the ages of 13 and 17.

Times are changing

For those of us who have experienced our beautiful ten year old telling us they hate us when they reach the age of 13, we know the confusion and pain that can go alongside the changes in behaviour our children display as they move through adolescence. How can that divine baby I birthed 14 years ago now be slamming doors and telling me they want to move out of home?!



Initially, this experience can feel really challenging as a parent, particularly with your first born. However we tend to learn as we go, about what the teenage years can bring for us and our children. It becomes less overwhelming the more experience we gain, along with an understanding of what did and didn't work the first time round.

Our programs

CatholicCare Sandhurst, Family Education Services offers a parenting program designed for parents and carers of teens.

Tuning in to Teens is a six week program that has been researched and developed by Melbourne University specifically to provide information and strategies for parents and carers of teens. The program is based on the concept of emotion coaching, a parenting style which focuses on being 'tuned into' our children's emotions instead of focusing only on their behaviour.

Emotion coaching

This way of parenting helps our kids to understand and manage their feelings without judgement, which encourages the development of emotional intelligence – the capacity to recognise and understand emotions in themselves and others. Ideally, this will help equip our young people with the skills and strategies necessary to manage their emotions effectively as adults.

This excerpt from the forward to *Tuning in to Teens*, written by Professor Nicholas Allen (Professor of Psychological Sciences at Melbourne University), sums it up beautifully:

There is a common cultural belief that because children are orientated more towards their peers as they enter their teen years, family relationships cease to be relevant. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It is crucial that parents understand the role of emotions in family life, to improve relationships and raise healthy, happy teenagers. The Tuning in to Teens program takes core skills around emotional awareness and regulations and creates opportunities for connection between parent and teen.

The group experience provides an important supportive setting for participants to learn and consider the balance between being available and monitoring their teen, and gradually stepping back and allowing them greater autonomy.

Tuning in to Kids is a similar program specifically designed for parenting younger children. Both Tuning in to Teens and Tuning in to Kids are run regularly at CatholicCare throughout the school year.

As a taster, and an introduction into what you can start trying at home, the following is a basic model of how to emotion coach your child:

- 1. Tune in:** notice or become aware of emotions.
- 2. Accept and listen:** show understanding and empathy.
- 3. Reflect:** what you hear and see. Name the emotions.
- 4. Support** with problem solving if necessary.

Practice! Enjoy! and call us if you'd like to learn more about the programs we offer.

Are chores still relevant?

For many of us, doing chores was a normal part of childhood, however in recent years, possibly due to our increasingly busy lifestyles, this no longer appears to be the case.

Parent educators are more and more often seeing parents of young children feeling unsure about whether it's ok to expect their kids to do jobs above and beyond pocket money expectations.



Parenting expert Michael Grose talks about the importance of making sure all children are responsible for some chores. He states that chores or household tasks exercise children's organisational muscles, in particular time management.

Things to remember:

- Separate helping at home from pocket money.
- Children can do a mix of self-help and family jobs.
- Use rosters to help children remember their responsibilities.

Grose refers to having different levels of responsibility and expectations depending on a child's age and stage of development, and identifies some guidelines for chores for each age of childhood.

| Age | Appropriate jobs |
|-------------|--|
| 3 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pick up toys after useDress and undress self with helpClear table and put dishes on the bench |
| 4 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Set the table / stack dishwasherMake the bedPrepare own cold cereal |
| 5-6 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Make own sandwich and clean upAnswer the phoneHelp with planning and grocery shopping |
| 7-8 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Take pet for a walkFold clean laundry and put awayTake phone messages and write them down |
| 9-10 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Turn on the washing machineChange own bed and put out laundryCook simple meals from a recipe |
| 11-12 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Travel on public transportVacuum the housePrepare an evening meal for the family |
| Teenagers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Organise travel for own activitiesCook a meal at least once a weekTake responsibility for clothing purchases |

Taken from Michael Grose's Parenting Ideas resources (www.parentingideas.com.au)

Recipe – Lemon yogurt muffins

- 2 1/2 cups self-raising flour
- 3/4 cup caster sugar
- 1 tablespoon finely grated lemon rind
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 cup vanilla yoghurt
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Icing sugar mixture and lemon zest to serve



Preheat oven to 190°C/170°C fan-forced. Grease two 24-hole muffin pans.

Combine flour and sugar in a bowl. Make a well in centre. Add lemon rind, lemon juice, yoghurt, oil and egg. Using a wooden spoon, stir until just combined.

Spoon mixture into prepared pan holes. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, swapping pans halfway during cooking, or until golden and cooked through. Stand in pans for 3 minutes. Turn out onto a wire rack to cool. Dust with icing sugar. Top with lemon zest. Serve.

Term 1 – Programs and workshops

For all registrations and enquiries for our Bendigo programs and workshops please contact our centralised intake service or name specified. Phone Ky on 5438 1300 or email fesintake@ccds.org.au. All Bendigo programs are held in CatholicCare Sandhurst's Noel Daly Room at 176-178 McCrae Street Bendigo.

Bendigo

Keeping Kids In Mind

When: Saturday 13th and 20th February
(2 weeks)
Time: 10am - 3pm
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)
Contact: Kate on 5438 1300

Keeping Kids In Mind

When: Wednesday 17th Feb to 16th March
(5 weeks)
Time: 10.30am - 1pm
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)
Contact: Kate on 5438 1300

Boys Brains – PD for professionals working with children and families

When: Monday 21st March
Time: 6.30pm - 9pm
Cost: \$40



Regional

Bringing Up Great Kids

When: Wednesday 10th Feb to 16th March
Time: 10am - 12noon
Where: Romsey Hub (library)
Main Street, Romsey
Contact: Leticia on 5422 0281

Life Partnerships

When: Sunday 21st February
Time: 9.30am - 1.30pm
Where: Shepparton office
68 Wyndham Street
Cost: \$200 per couple (negotiable)
Contact: Anne-Maree on 5438 1300

Connecting with Kids

When: Monday 29th February
Time: 1pm - 3pm (12.45 registration)
Where: St Mary's Primary School
45-49 King Edward St, Cohuna
Contact: Jenny on 5456 2062

Worry Less Grandparents Group

When: Thursday 3rd March
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm
Where: Shepparton office
68 Wyndham Street
Contact: Christine on 5820 0444

We deliver programs and workshops for schools, kinders and other agencies. If you would like to discuss options for workshops or programs for your parents please call Ky.

Coming up in Term 2, 2016

Tuning in to Teens, Bringing Up Great Kids, Keeping Kids in Mind, Tuning in to Kids, Children's Program and much more!

For further information call Ky Gregg on 5438 1300 or email fesintake@ccds.org.au

Register early! Groups are subject to maximum and minimum numbers.
Unfortunately child care facilities are not available unless specified.

Program and workshop information

Programs for parents

Tuning In to Kids

In this six session program you'll find out how to help your child understand and manage feelings such as worry, frustration and anger.

Bringing up Great Kids

This six week program is fun, relaxed and informative. The six week covers topics such as children's brain development, responding to kids emotions, mindfulness activities and putting yourself in your kids shoes. It is a great opportunity to get together with other parents, have some time out and talk about the ups and downs of parenting.

Tuning In To Teens

Tuning in to Teens is a 6 week program for parents and carers of teens. This program provides parents with a greater understanding of their teen's emotional experiences while teaching specific skills that can assist in being supportive and staying connected.

It provides insights into adolescent development as well as communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and practical advice on how to provide encouraging parenting throughout this developmental stage.

Programs for children

Seasons for Growth for Young People

An 8 week program that assists children to manage and understand the changes they experience when a loss occurs in their life. This may be the death of a family member or friend, family separation, change of school or other life change.

Family separation

Recovering From Separation Program

An eight week program for people wanting to find ways to move on; it covers responding to emotions, managing difficult situations and letting go.

Keeping Kids in Mind

Keeping Kids in Mind is a 5 week course for separated parents who are experiencing on-going conflict. The course is designed to:

- assist parents to see through their children's eyes the experience of parental separation.
- develop greater understanding about how to support children following family separation.

Phone Ky Gregg on 5438 1300 if you are interested in finding out when any of these are running next.

Workshops

Toddler Workshop

A two hour workshop for parents and carers of toddlers that covers the developmental stages, connecting and communicating, and managing behaviour.

Starting School

This workshop identifies issues for new preps and their families and explores ways to assist your child at school.

Help Your Kids Worry Less

This two hour workshop will discuss strategies that may help your child worry less; provide information and practical tools to assist children manage their emotions.

Boys Brains

This workshop will give insight into the workings of a boy's brain and how their needs are different to girls. It provides practical strategies to help parents and carers understand and meet boy's needs.

Kids and Anger

Kids and Anger covers the reasons why children get angry, helps you to understand your own responses to your children's anger and ways to help children express their anger appropriately.

Connecting With Kids

Using emotional intelligence to understand and guide children's behaviour, this workshop covers beliefs around parenting; information on brain development and children's emotional development.

Knowing Your Teenager

This workshop looks at the latest research around teenage brain development, peer relationships, and tips for building and maintaining positive relationships with your teenager.

Relationship education

Life Partnership Programs

This half-day workshop is for couples getting married or committing to a long term relationship. The workshop explores key relationship themes such as family background, communication, dealing with differences and managing conflict.

Stepfamilies

Stepfamily Workshop

This three hour workshop will provide an introduction to the unique and often complex issues associated with step family relationships. It will cover children, the parenting role and couple dynamics.