

PARENT MENTORING PROGRAM

AIM

To provide support to new kindergarten families, with the transition to kindergarten.



PURPOSE

To help develop prior to school relationships for both the child and parent as well as developing networks and a sense of community within Mount St Thomas Public School.

ROLE OF MENTORS

To attend various meetings and events of the “SMART START” program as support for parents.

To provide 2005 families with a network, to help with any concerns or questions.

BENEFITS TO PARENTS

- Parents also need support at this transition stage in your child’s life.
- Provide opportunities for relationships to develop with the school and other parents.
- Mentors are able to provide positive models and help you establish links with other parents.
- Will provide parents with both formal and informal opportunities for discussion about relevant issues.
- Develop confidence within the school setting
- Establish relationships with school staff
- flyer including the Parent Mentoring Program.

Mount St Thomas Public Schools

'SMART START' 2005

Parent Mentors

What is the mentoring Program about at Mount St Thomas?

Mentoring at our school is simply the support provided by a current parent, who will foster new kinder families in the transition to school process.

Purpose of the Program is to -



- Develop a prior to school relationship for both the child and the parent
- To foster the sense of community within our school, through the development of positive relationships.

Expectations

- To be available to meet families on Tuesday 2nd November, 12.00 pm. Mentors are then invited to other 'Smart Start' sessions taking into account your other commitments.
- To make contact with your group of parents on the school premise, and out of school. This would include offering your personal contact details to your nominated families.
- To encourage and include nominated families in school functions and events.
- To assist kinder teachers if required during the orientation visits.



Mount St Thomas Public Schools

'SMART START' 2005

Parent Mentors

Confidentiality

You as parent mentors are being provided with personal details and information that the 2005 parents are willing to share. It is essential that you establish and respect the relationship with these parents. Confidentiality on your behalf is necessary for this program to be successful.

You're Role Within the 'Smart Start' Program

- To provide a friendly face at Smart Start sessions
- To organise morning tea for any sessions held (roster system will be useful)
- To attend the session on the 2nd November (the initial meeting of mentors with the nominated families)
- Develop a friendship with your nominated families.
- Attend the 'Smart Start' BBQ on Friday the 12th November from 6.00 to 7.30pm.



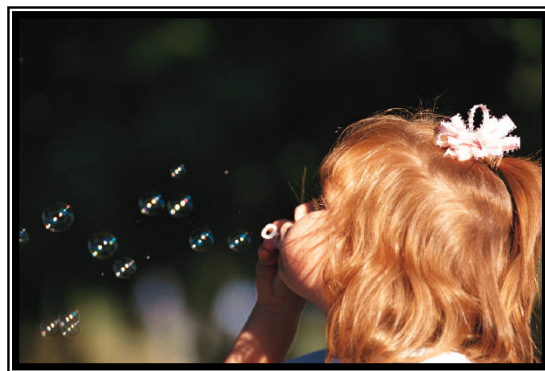
Mount St Thomas Public Schools

'SMART START' 2005

Parent Mentors

Your Role in term 1,2,3,4, 2005

- To continue the friendship with nominated families
- Be part of the welcome to new parents morning tea the second week in February 2005.
- Offer support and advice to your nominated families regarding the starting school process, school protocols and other issues they may bring up.



Mount St Thomas Public Schools

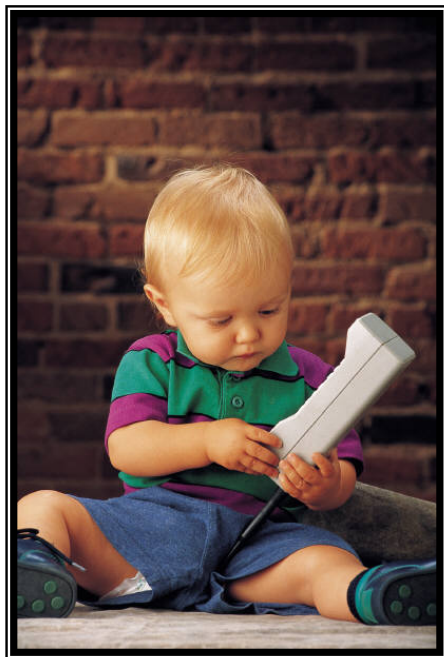
'SMART START' 2005

Parent Mentors

IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

Mentors

Topics/Issues You Could Talk About



- Information about excursions
- Role of P & C / Fundraising / Canteen and Class Helpers
- Contact parents re upcoming events
- Communication protocol for concerns
i.e. see the teacher concerned or Mrs Buckley

Things to remember when talking to parents

- P & F not a forum for complaints about teachers or school

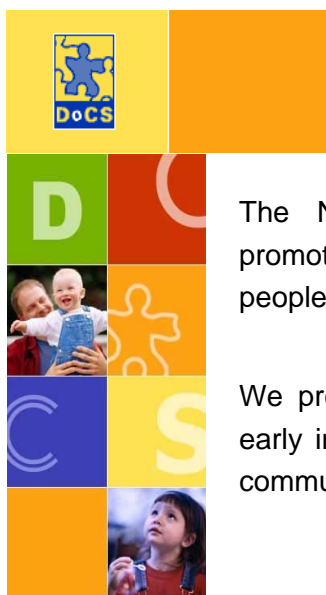
Mount St Thomas Public Schools

‘SMART START’ 2005

Parent Mentors

Other issues to consider

- Days you are available – Monday / Friday currently proposed.
- New parents availability and do they already have some connections within the school or amongst themselves.
- Parents who already have siblings in the school – involving them in the process / their role.
- Brainstorm Session – Support for mentors – could meet as a group to exchange ideas, ask questions and support each other.
- Website you may find helpful – www.comunity.nsw.gov.au



The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and works to build stronger families and communities.

We provide child protection services, parenting support and early intervention, foster care, adoption services and help for communities affected by disaster.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Research has shown key concerns for parents, children and early childhood educators relate to social issues of adjustment and relationships.

The TTS strategy aims to address these issues through a variety of strategies.



The commitment to this strategy is based on the research from Canada and Australia that reports a direct link between a successful transition to school and on-going positive outcomes academically and socially for children and parents.

Mount St Thomas Public School

SMART START PROGRAM



Strategies implemented:-

Several staff have been attending training/information workshops on various aspects of TTS.

The school has a representative who attends the Wollongong TTS network meetings held monthly at the DET office.

A committee of teachers and parents was formed in term 3, 2004.

The committee has:-

- Been working through a matrix to self-access where we fit regarding areas of strength and weakness.
- Developed an initial strategy to address areas of improvement and include those outlined in your green flyer including the Parent Mentoring Program.

Mount St Thomas Public Schools

“SMART START”

2005

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IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

MENTORS

Topics/issues you could talk about

- Information about excursions
- Role of P&C / fundraising/ canteen/class helpers
- Contact parents re upcoming events
- Communication protocol for concerns – ie see the teacher concerned or Principal
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Things to remember when talking to parents

- P&F not a forum for complaints about teachers or school
- Brain storm other ideas
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WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PARENT TO ASSIST YOUR CHILD WITH THE TRANSITION PROCESS??

- Attend Orientation sessions
- Ask a teacher at your early childhood setting if any other children will be attending your Child's school. If so ask if they can arrange for get together for you to meet.
- Attend a playgroup at the school.
- Visit the school after hours – play on the play equipment –walk around the grounds and familiarise them with the setting.
- Give your early childhood setting teacher permission to send information about your child to the school.
- If your child has additional needs or you have concerns about your child settling into school – make an appointment with the principle and teacher.
- Come to the school morning tea.
- Make contact with parents during orientation and organise a get together in a park. (contact list out the front)
- Make some time to get to know other children and their families – **FRIENDSHIPS / RELATIONSHIPS** are a key element in a child's ability to settle in to school.
- If your child is having trouble settling or separating from you when they start school – make time to speak to the principle and teacher and develop strategies that will help with this process.
- Talk to other parents – you will find that you are not alone in fears and anxieties for your child.
- Join the P&C or Fundraising committees and become a part of the school community
- **TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT STARTING SCHOOL.**
Talk about their fears, anxieties and excitement.
- **DON'T OVER DO IT** – They are getting the “your starting school soon – how exciting” from family and friends etc. It becomes overwhelming for them.
- **LISTEN** to them - don't discount their fears.
- Talk about routines such as going to the toilet, lining up in the mornings, sitting at desks etc. The research has shown that children are most concerned about who they will play with (friends) and **THE RULES.**
- If in doubt **ASK.**

Dear ????

As part of the Mt St Thomas Public Schools Commitment to ensuring children's transitions from prior to school settings to school is successful for the child, family and School, they have formed a Transition to school committee. As part of the transition plan for children starting school in 2005 the committee has developed a parent mentoring program.

In brief this means that several parents have been selected to be mentors/support people to a small group of new parents attending Mt St Thomas School in 2005.

A mentor is simply an adviser or guide and would be available to assist new parents with any questions or concerns they may have during the transition phase of starting school.

The Transition to School Committee would be very grateful if you would consider becoming one of our mentors in the program. If you are interested in participating in this program could you please call Tracey Kirk-Downey on 42264190 (hm) by Monday the 18th October. We will be having an information session for those interested on Friday the 22nd October at 9.15am in the school Library. At this meeting we will be discussing in more detail what the program hopes to achieve and your role in assisting us achieve our goal of helping new families transition well into our wonderful community of Mount St Thomas Public School.

I very much look forward to hearing from you and hope you will help us ensure a great transition for families starting school at Mount St Thomas in 2005.

Tracey Kirk-Downey

On behalf of the transition to school Committee

