

METRO WEST TRIPLE P PRACTITIONERS NEWS

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DEAR PRACTITIONER,

Welcome to the December 2015 edition of our Triple P Newsletter.

It has been a very busy time for you the practitioner. In the 2014-2015 financial year, you ran over 400 parenting events across Western Sydney (including the Nepean region).

How do we know you did this? Well, you uploaded all these events on to the Resourcing Parents website. It was a record high for the website - they have never had so many events advertised before.

Congratulations on all your efforts in making Resourcing Parents such a success!

We have been busy here at FWT+DP. We have run several training events, such as *"Building Early Literacy in Bi-Lingual Families."* The event was facilitated by Dr. Criss Jones Diaz. The training focused on theories of early literacy and it provided participants with strategies on how to support bi-lingual children to retain their first language or 'home' language. The key messages were that diversity is a strength, not a deficit and multiple literacies can strengthen a child's overall literacy proficiency.

We also ran two workshops on how to understand and use social media in your work— *"Social Media for Community Services: A Guide for Beginners"* & *"Facebook: A Guide for Intermediate & Advanced Users."* Do you use social media in your work? Have you (or your team) thought about how to leverage this tool to engage with community?

In November we had another great Triple P Practitioners Network meeting with **Ruth Phelan** as our Guest Speaker.

Ms. Phelan is Child & Youth Mental Health Worker from the Central Coast Health District. She and her team have developed the Mental Health Positive Parenting Program - a Triple P program developed specifically for parents suffering from a mental illness. She spoke about this program and their continuing work with parents with a mental illness. For some insight into her work check out this link: <http://ow.ly/TBM5x>.

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MENTAL HEALTH POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM

Adapted from a Research Article by Ruth F. Phelan, Deborah H. Howe, Emma L. Cashman, & Samantha H. Batchelor

Approximately 24% of parents have a mental health problems¹. It's clear from our practice and from the research that a parent's mental health directly impacts on their ability to parent and form attachments to their children.

The illness or the side effects from medication may affect a parent's capacity to provide appropriate care. Symptoms may also affect the quality of the interactions between the child/ren and adult/s². Some studies have also shown that parents who experience moderate to high levels of psychological distress are also more likely to display irritable or hostile parenting behaviors and less likely to display parental warmth.¹ These factors may lead to an insecure or disorganised attachment in the child.²

There are limited interventions available that can help these parents to improve their relationships with their children and improve their parenting skills. Especially interventions that are non-stigmatising and offer empowerment.

In response to this issue the Central Coast Children and Young People's Mental Health developed the Mental Health Positive Parenting Program (MHPPP). The MHPP is an adaptation of the Triple P Parenting Program. It retains the four fundamental sessions, and adds two more - 'The impact of mental health on parenting' and 'Children's fears, friendships and schooling.' The program also replaces follow up phone calls with four weekly home visits³.

The program was piloted in 2005 with 19 families and due to its success it was continued with in the community. In 2011, a retrospective study was conducted to determine the continued impact of the program. 86 participants qualified to be included in the study because they completed all of the components of the Mental Health Positive Parenting Program. This cohort comprised 77% of all parents who had participated in the program over the six years³.

The main findings of this study were that:

- The most common mental illnesses suffered by the parents were depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder.
- The course significantly reduced dysfunctional parenting strategies.
- Parents reported significantly less behavioral problems with their children.
- Home visits had a positive impact on outcomes, but why or how they made such an impact needs to be investigated further.

References

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3. Phelan, R.F., Howe, D.J., Cashman, E.L. & Batchelor, S.H. (2012), *Enhancing parenting skills for parents with mental illness: The mental health positive parenting program*, *Medical Journal of Australia*, https://www.mja.com.au/system/files/issues/001_01_160412_open/pe11181_fm.pdf, Accessed: 20/09/2015

EARLY LITERACY

By Sharmila Falzon



Literacy development is a dynamic process that begins in the early years and continues through ones life. Early literacy development provides the cornerstone to a child's literacy skills in later life. However contrary to popular thought, early literacy does not mean early reading or writing.¹

Early literacy skills are a set of behaviours, actions and interactions that a young child undertakes, which in turn provide the building blocks for 'adult' literacy skills such as reading writing and comprehension. These skills develop in a child, through their positive interactions with literacy materials, and other people¹.

A baby chewing on a book, a toddler repeating the words and a pre-schooler turning book pages all have meaning—these actions show early literacy development¹. Therefore it is important to encourage and support children to play with books, magazines and other written materials. It is also important to sing nursery rhymes, listen to stories and to encourage scribbling and colouring¹. All these actions support a child's language development.

Two significant ways that has workers and parents we can encourage early literacy development is through play and promoting an environment rich in oral language.

Play is an important factor in literacy development². Play can encourage the recognition and manipulation of symbols and text. It can introduce children to literacy concepts in an open and non-threatening way. Play also allows children to 'absorb' these concepts at their own pace. For example, dramatic play such as 'shops' or 'post office' gives children the opportunity to pretend to make lists, sort items, 'write' addresses and use play money.²

Having an environment that is rich in oral language is also vital to early literacy development¹²³. Children require exposure to a wide range of spoken language, including 'silly' things such as nonsensical songs, rhymes and jokes. They need the opportunity to enjoy and manipulate the words, music rhymes which they hear².

So what can you do in your service to promote early literacy? Here are some ideas:

- Use posters and pamphlets around the service that provide examples of how parents can read and sing to their children².
- Model how families or read or tell stories to their children from very early ages.¹
- Support families to maintain their first language and developing literacy and numeracy in their own languages.²

References

1. Zero to Three (2003), "Early Literacy," Brain Wonders, <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/early-language-literacy/earlyliteracy2pagehandout.pdf>. Accessed: 27/10/2015 .

2. Community Child Care Victoria (2011), "Early literacy and numeracy: A self-guided learning package," http://www.gowrievictoria.org.au/Portals/12/Documents/Professional%20Development/SGLP/Early%20literacy%20and%20numeracy_Dec12.pdf, Accessed: 3/12/2015

3. Schickedanz, (1999). *Much more than the ABCs: The early stages of reading and writing*. Washington, DC: NAEYC

TRIPLE P RESEARCH SNAP SHOT: MOTHERS & FATHERS PARTICIPATION IN A COMMUNITY BASED UNIVERSALLY OFFERED PARENTING PROGRAM

“Mothers and fathers participation in a community based universally offered parenting program in Sweden” is a study conducted by Wells, M.B., Sarkadi, A., and Raziye, S. The study examined the characteristics of parents who attended parenting programs versus who did not attend. Read the full abstract [here](#).

The findings were that:

- **Fathers**, parents who were not from the Sweden and who came from a lower education background **were less likely to attend** a parenting course.
- **Motivation for course attendance varied** between mothers and fathers. Mothers were more likely to attend the course if they thought their child/ren had *behaviour* problems. Whereas fathers attended if they through their child/ren had *emotional* problems.
- Parents who used harsher parenting strategies were more likely attend.
- The **universal program did not have universal reach**.
- **Different recruitment strategies need to be used** to attract fathers and mothers to the course.

*Further research articles about Triple P can be accessed [here](#).
(Including free access to full articles).*

Moving Forward Conference Trauma, Recovery and Wellbeing

This two day conference will focus on trauma informed and person-centred practice. Showcasing flexible innovative responses, that support recovery orientated approaches for people living with mental health issues.

This conference is for all community workers , allied health and education professionals as well as consumers and carers interested in healing, recovery and wellbeing.

Novotel Hotel, Sydney Olympic Park

30th March 2016

8.45am to 5.30pm - Conference Day + Expo

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30th March 2016

8.45am to 5.30pm - Conference Day + Expo

Early Bird Registrations

\$290 to attend for 2 days

\$160 to attend for 1 day

Early Bird closes 19th February 2016

Or

Full Registrations

\$350 to attend for 2 days

\$190 to attend for 1 day

All registrations close 16th March 2016

Limited discounts are available for Consumers and their carers / families. Enquires to 02 9620 6172 or info@fwtdp.org.au

Registrations www.fwtdp.org.au