Project title: A Successful Start to School

Project description:
Four meetings were planned (one of which occurred in National Literacy and Numeracy Week, the other three will be held during Kindergarten Transition in Term 4) to provide expert information to parents of pre-schoolers who will be attending our school in 2009 and subsequent years, concerning early Literacy and Numeracy development.

Practical hands-on activities were organised for the preschoolers while the parents were given a variety of practical strategies. Each family was given a package of simple maths games and activities as well as handouts relating to motor skills and language development. The latter three workshops will be for parents only and will focus on the use of stories and rhymes to develop literacy skills, especially Phonemic Awareness.

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School, region, diocese: Holsworthy Public School, Sydney South West Region
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Number of students, teachers, parents, other community members directly involved:
- 10 pre-schoolers
- 4 teachers, including the Reading Recovery teacher, ESL teacher, Early Stage One teacher and STLA
- 34 parents
- one speech pathologist
- one occupational therapist

Intended literacy and/or numeracy outcomes:
Parents will develop skills in:
- choosing quality children’s books
- extending their children’s language responses
- organising play activities to maximise fine motor and visual perceptual skills
- using rhymes and songs to develop phonemic awareness
- structuring activities to encourage children to think mathematically in real-life situations
- identifying age-appropriate language and motor development
- accessing support services.

Children will:
- become more familiar with the school setting and key personnel
- learn skills which will support their early literacy and numeracy learning.

Evidence of achievement of intended literacy and/or numeracy outcomes:
- In our surveys, parents who attended the first session all rated the workshop as ‘helpful’ or ‘very helpful’.
- Most rated their knowledge of their children’s development prior to the workshop as ‘average’ or ‘below average’.
- After the workshop, all participants rated their knowledge as ‘improved’.
- All participants responded that the information provided was useful, clear, practical and well presented.
- As the aims of the project are very long-term ones, it is difficult to quantify these at present but we will see from the Best Start data over the coming years if students are starting Kindergarten better prepared than previously.

**Feedback about making grants available for such projects:**
Receiving this grant has been a most worthwhile activity even though it was a lot of work. For several years, the support staff have wanted to organise workshops such as this but the time was never available to do all of the planning required and budgets are so tight that money was limited.

We have now been able to set in place a structure and resources which should make repeating this process in subsequent years relatively easy. We want to make this an annual event on our school’s calendar.

We gained valuable information from the parents as well as the parents gaining knowledge. Parents had many questions and were most appreciative of the opportunity the workshop provided to speak to experts in the area of child development.

Providing the grants to schools can help to turn good ideas into reality. Without the need to fulfil our obligations for the grant, we may have put this into the ‘too hard basket’ and missed out on an excellent initiative.