

## How Does Your School Become Involved?

School communities and their Principal are invited to lodge a formal expression of interest with the Families Matter project team in Canberra.

Our trainers will then contact your school to arrange a suitable date and location to train school staff and parent presenters.

Each school will need up to four interested parents to participate in a full day training program which will equip them to present the workshop to other parents in the school community.

A teacher or other appropriate school staff member will also be trained and work with parents to assist them to plan, organise and run the workshop for other parents and family members from the school community.

Workshop participants are encouraged to plan for the further development and continuation of the discussion process in the school, to build and sustain a productive family-school partnership.

## How Can Families Help Young People?

- **Care for and support** your child to build close relationships. Listen to what he or she has to say and express your affection physically and verbally.
- **Encourage** your child to set high but realistic and attainable goals in behaviour and education.
- **Provide** routine and rules in a positive way.
- **Involve** your child in family activities and decisions. Encourage involvement with the community and with physical activity and hobbies.
- **Assist** your child to develop appropriate levels and areas of independence and personal responsibility, helping them to take charge of their lives as they get older.



### Further Information can be obtained from:

Families Matter Project Office  
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# Families matter



A program for families and schools working in partnership to support the well-being of young people.



The family element of *MindMatters*

For further information Freecall 1800 183 066

## Families Matter...

**Families Matter** is an initiative which seeks to engage parents/carers and families with schools to promote the health and well-being of young people.

This is the essential family element of the national *MindMatters* initiative. It is designed for parents and families of students in secondary schools.

**Health and wellbeing** includes emotional and spiritual resilience which enables us to enjoy life... and to survive pain, disappointment and sadness.

*"It is a positive sense of well-being and an underlying belief in our own dignity and self-worth and the dignity and worth of others."*

(English Health Education Authority 1998)

There is a need to address the connections between feelings, thoughts and behaviour and their links to resilience and health. There are many issues and challenges that impact on the developmental needs of young people. They need supportive families and communities to help them build resilience and cope effectively with challenges.



During adolescence there may be a decline in a young person's sense of connectedness to family and school. It is important to encourage young people to keep talking and connecting with parents, carers and family to avoid anxiety or depression.

Social and emotional health and well-being has been linked to young people's schooling outcomes, their social development, future health and capacity to contribute to the workforce and community.

Research has indicated that 14% of children and adolescents in Australia experience serious health and well-being problems and that less than one one-quarter of these receive professional help.

By the time they are 18 years old, an estimated 24% of young people would have suffered at least one episode of major depression. At any one time, between 1% and 3% of adolescents could experience a major depressive disorder.

**Families Matter** recognises that strong, positive support and understanding from families is vital to the development of adolescents' confidence and self-esteem and their attitude to learning. It aims to strengthen and develop the partnership between school and home.

## Families and Schools in Partnership

**Families Matter** reflects that parents, carers and families are essential partners in all aspects of learning. Research clearly shows that children's learning outcomes, health and well-being are improved when parents, families and schools work closely together.

The **Families Matter** initiative provides resources and training to enable parents to set up and run a workshop for other parents to explore the ways in which families can work together with their school to support students.

The Families Matter initiative:

- Enables parents/carers or family members to be the leaders and presenters at the workshops
- Encourages parents to be familiar with school curriculum and to strengthen home-school partnerships in teaching and learning
- Links with strategies that schools are using to foster student health and well-being
- Recognises the powerful influence of parents/carers and family on young people's attitudes and learning, and the important learning that takes place in the home
- Supports parents and carers in their role as educators and mentors of their young people
- Highlights the vital importance of family encouragement as a factor in a young person's development.

**Families Matter** has been developed by the peak parent organizations, the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) and the Australian Parents Council (APC). This initiative has been funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Ageing.

ACSSO and APC have contacted secondary schools across Australia to invite them to participate in the national launch of the **Families Matters** initiative.

