

The Weekly News

Keeping you up-to-date with what's happening at Giant Steps Tasmania 24th November 2011

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

As the school year is quickly drawing to a close I want to acknowledge the tremendous dedication of the staff at Giant Steps. The excitement that occurs at morning tea or lunch time when a student has taken a "Giant Step" is a pleasure to witness. Conversely when a student is experiencing challenges, staff are problem solving the triggers. Like many parents, staff have an internal checklist of questions we constantly ask ourselves. Below is a sample of questions that consistently run through our thoughts when we are working with students.



- Did I prepare the student well enough for the change of activity or event?
- Am I using too much verbal language and overloading their sensory system?
- Do I need to use more gestural rather than verbal prompts to indicate what activity is next?
- Does the student have a clear understanding of how long we will work on this activity?
- Have they been given a clear understanding of when the activity will end and what the next activity will be?
- How well did the student sleep last night? Are they able to tolerate unfamiliar activities today? Do they need more "islands of solitude" dispersed throughout the day today?
- Is the student feeling well? How were they on the bus this morning?
- How can I assist the student to communicate how they are feeling?
- Is this student feeling sad about something that occurred some time ago and unable to communicate the concern?
- Was there an incident that occurred earlier in the day that might have remained unresolved that is still bothering them?
- What happened just before the meltdown?
- Have I included enough choice making options in their day so that the student can exert some control over their day/ their environment?
- Are there any environmental triggers I have missed that may have caused sensory overload e.g. sudden noises, physical movement of others, photosensitivity etc.?
- Is this student anxious and trying to mask it?
- What can I do to minimize the distress in the short term and what skill do I need to teach the student as a pro-active strategy to help reduce anxiety in the future?
- Have I used the appropriate prompting systems to support this activity or to assist the student prepare for change i.e. visual, verbal, gestural?
- How can I be pro-active about this situation/context for the student in the future?
- Is my personal affect having an impact on the student?
- Have I followed the usual routine?

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This is by no means an exhaustive list, there are any number of questions to constantly consider depending on a range of factors but it's important to reflect and acknowledge the mental work we all engage in to support students, teenagers, and young adults to ensure we are setting them up for success in whatever they undertake. We all need to experience success on a regular basis and we are determined our students will continue to take "Giant Steps".

CHRISTMAS CARDS

The Adult Group have some lovely hand made Christmas Cards for sale. They come in packs of 6 for \$10 now available at Pip's Office.

SCHOOL FEE REBATES - 2012

Anyone wishing to apply for a rebate on school fees for the 2012 school year, is asked to contact Anne to arrange for the appropriate forms to be forwarded to you. These close on Friday 2nd December.

CALENDARS

We will only be selling calendars to families of students at Giant Steps. If you would like to pre order one please contact Pip at the office. They will sell for \$24.95

Anne

Dates to Remember 2011

- ★ Sunday 4th December - World Festival of Magic Show
At 1.30 pm Princess Theatre
- ★ Thursday 15th December - End of Year BBQ & Breakup
- ★ Tuesday 14th February 2012 - **FIRST DAY FOR STUDENTS**

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Green Room
In
Action

