

## SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S GIFTS AND TALENTS

Supporting a child's fundamental growth, particularly that of a gifted child, is paramount to parents who were surveyed by Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ). In a recent study, *'What Parents Want'*, parents were asked what their views were towards their satisfaction levels with their child's education and the decision-making process when choosing a school. "School choice is one of the most critical decisions any parent will make in respect of their children. Understanding how and why parents make such a decision is crucial in ensuring independent schools continue to meet the needs of parents while sustaining a healthy and viable independent schooling sector into the future for students" (ISQ, 2015).

The key findings of the report reflect many Caloundra City Private School parents' feeling regarding their child's education and learning environment. One parent surveyed commented that their choice of school for their kids "was not about fees, religious affiliation, or academic results, it was about a nurturing and fulfilling environment for my boys, where I know they will enjoy actual learning," (Parent Comment, ISQ, 2015).

In my experience, there are certain fundamental truisms when helping children learn, including:

- Every child has skills;
- There will always be someone, somewhere who is more skilled at any one instant; and
- It is virtually impossible to look into the future to predict which are going to be the most valuable skills, and knowledge.

The ISQ Parent Survey found that the priorities for parents when focusing on their child's education were:

- Preparation for the student to fulfil their potential in later life;
- Encouragement of a responsible attitude to schoolwork;
- Good discipline;
- High quality of teachers; and
- Teaching methods and philosophy.

I agree wholeheartedly with the key outcomes and results of this survey. When I think about how schools can best support children's learning the teaching team is fundamental in my mind. A supportive, encouraging and skilled teacher who nurtures a positive learning environment that supports both the strengths and weaknesses of each individual child in their class, will surely foster a child's learning. A teacher who can specifically guide a child in improving their skills and knowledge is highly valuable; everybody loves to learn, we just don't know everything that we will want to learn. What will take your fancy in five years' time? Discussing how we can best support a child's talents is essential in fostering a child's love of learning.

Rarely will we know what we want or need to learn for the future – learning is exciting, entertaining, engaging, and it captures a young person's mind. Each child is an oyster, rich with pearl, it is never certain until it is tasted; a child will not know what they want to learn initially. The world is their oyster, ready for them to taste the ocean of knowledge that lies within.

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