

# energise

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issue 7: March 2011

schools + parents + carers + students

# The Australian Curriculum

The new Australian Curriculum has been endorsed by all states and territories and will begin to be implemented in Tasmanian government schools at the start of Term 1, 2012.



Updates about the Australian Curriculum will be provided by your school, or for more information, visit the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) website: [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au)

The new curriculum is also available online at: [www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au)



## So, what is it all about?

The new curriculum sets out what all young Australians are to be taught (K-12) – wherever they go to school in Australia – and the quality of the learning that is expected of them as they progress through school.

It aims to ensure consistency of teaching and learning across all Australian schools in a way that reflects the local context and takes into account individual student's family, culture and community background.

Because it is a nationally endorsed curriculum, schools and teachers in Tasmania will have more opportunities to plan, share and access resources with colleagues across the country, and better cater to student learning needs and interests.

This year, Tasmanian government schools will continue to assess students against existing reporting requirements, and begin preparing for the implementation of the new curriculum in 2012.

Next year, our schools will implement the new curriculum for English, maths and science, followed by the history curriculum in 2013. Other subject areas will be implemented in subsequent years, including geography, languages and the arts, health and physical education, civics and citizenship, design and the technologies and economics and business.

Although there will be some differences in the organisation and presentation of the curriculum, and in some of the content that will be included, Tasmanian schools are well placed to move to the Australian Curriculum, as there are a great deal of similarities in the knowledge, understanding and skills which underpin the curriculum in key learning areas.

If you have any questions about the Australian Curriculum, speak to the principal at your child's school or contact your local Learning Service (contact details on back cover).

# Launching into Learning

Have you heard about *Launching into Learning*?

*Launching into Learning*, or "LiL," is the Department of Education's highly successful early years program that provides a range of opportunities for families with young children from birth to four years.

As a parent, you (and your family) are your child's first teacher and have the most powerful influence on their early learning and development. *Launching into Learning* (LiL) is based on this belief and is an initiative that supports families during the early years to help children do better when they start school and throughout their lives.

Parents and children attend LiL sessions together to play, learn and have fun. You'll get to know the school and other places in the community, meet and build friendships with other families, and find out about local services and what's happening in the community.

# Is your child gifted?

While most parents think that their child is the most talented/clever/wonderful child in the classroom, some children truly are “gifted” and require additional programs and support to extend their learning and development.

If you think that your child might be gifted but you are not sure and you don't know what to do about it, try getting started with these three easy steps:

- Read up on the characteristics of gifted children. Visit the Tasmanian Association for the Gifted website, [www.tasgifted.com/](http://www.tasgifted.com/) and download a copy of their “Is my child gifted?” brochure.
- Make yourself some notes of your “evidence” of your child's giftedness – this might include some samples of your child's artwork, writing, maths... (or whatever their strengths are).
- Make a time to meet with your child's teacher!

When you meet with your child's teacher, you may want to ask about having your child formally assessed by the school psychologist.

Once your child has been assessed, your school will be able to set up a meeting with one of the Department of Education's Extended Learning Officers, whose role it is to provide support for the education of gifted/highly able students, enhance learning and assist with matters relating to their educational needs.

If your child is gifted, they will probably need different work to the majority of the class – not necessarily **more** work, but **different** work that is more conceptual and at a higher level.

You might like to consider asking your child's teacher about developing an individual education plan for your child, and also inquire about opportunities for your child to work with other children of similar interests and abilities.

Identifying and supporting a gifted child is an exciting and sometimes difficult journey, but there are plenty of people available to help and support both you and your child along the way.

SEO Extended Learning contacts

- Learning Services North: William Briginshaw – mobile: 0429 318770 or email: [william.briginshaw@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:william.briginshaw@education.tas.gov.au)
- Learning Services North West: Julie-Ann Jolly – 6428 2282 or email: [julianne.jolly@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:julianne.jolly@education.tas.gov.au)
- Learning Services South and South East: TBC – Phone 6212 3245



Don't be shy in asking for help or support. The Tasmanian Association for the Gifted is an advocacy and support group for parents and teachers of gifted students.

For information or advice, contact 0488 291 497 or visit the website: [www.tasgifted.com](http://www.tasgifted.com)

The Department of Education's *Policy on the Education of Gifted Children and Guidelines For Accelerated Progression For Gifted Students* is available from: [www.education.tas.gov.au/school/curriculum/extended-learning/policy](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/curriculum/extended-learning/policy)



Over the past four years the Department of Education has monitored over 1,000 children who have regularly attended the *Launching into Learning* program. The results tell us that all these children come to school better prepared for Kindergarten and obtain higher scores in their Literacy and Numeracy tests in Prep.

Parents benefit from LiL too – by developing stronger connections with teachers and their local school, having access to resources and building new friendships with other families.

Over 100 hundred schools across Tasmania are involved in LiL, so if you have a child who is four years of age or younger and you are interested in finding out more about the LiL program, check with your local school (or one in your local area) to see what may be available for you and your family.

For more information about the program, contact 6429 8575 or visit the website: [www.education.tas.gov.au/earlylearning/earlyyears/launching](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/earlylearning/earlyyears/launching)







## Team sports

Playing team sports is not only beneficial for your child's physical health and wellbeing. It's also great for developing your child's communication skills, and teaches your child some important lessons that will benefit them in every area of their life.

1. Teaches commitment: When your child signs up for a team, they are making a commitment to stick with it for the full season. You should encourage your child to honour their commitment – even if they decide halfway through that they don't really like the sport anymore, or want to drop out because their friend/s have, or its too early to get up on the weekend... or any number of other excuses they might come up with.

2. Creates good losers: It's important that your child learns at a young age that things don't always work out how they want them to!

3. Promotes teamwork: Team sports teach children to work within a team dynamic and cooperate with others for 'the greater good'.

4. Builds friendships: Children can make friends outside of their school friend circle. It's also a great way for parents to get involved in the community too!

Remember, not all children enjoy team sports, so don't feel bad if your child doesn't want to play soccer or football or hockey. Other team activities can be just as rewarding, such as dancing, gymnastics, drama or robotics clubs.

# An apple a day...

...really is good for your health!

Not only are apples a cheap, tasty and nutritious lunchbox snack, they are also great for kids (and parents) on-the-go, versatile in the kitchen and packed with natural goodness.

Did you know...

- Apples help to clean teeth and strengthen gums.
- One large apple supplies almost 30% of the minimum daily fibre requirements.
- Apples help to detoxify the body, are rich in antioxidants and have some antiviral properties.
- Apples assist in digestion.

A lot of the goodness in apples is contained in the skin – so encourage your children to eat the whole apple and remember to wash your fruit carefully before you eat it.

Tips:

- 1) Never buy soft apples. Apples of all varieties should be hard and firm, so if you can dent an apple with your finger, **DO NOT BUY IT.**
- 2) Keep your apples refrigerated – this will help them stay fresher for longer.
- 3) To prevent sliced or cut apple from going brown in your child's lunchbox, rub the cut surfaces with a mixture of lemon juice and water, then wrap in cling wrap or put it in a small container.



# Nits!

Children can pick up all sorts of undesirable things from school – naughty words, bad habits and, top of every parent's hate list, head lice!

(You're already itching as you read this, aren't you?)

Unfortunately, head lice or nits will probably rear their ugly heads at least once during your child's journey through primary school. It's nothing to be embarrassed about, but there are things you can do to minimise the impact on your family and your school community:

- **Notify your school immediately.** If your child has head lice, they must remain at home until an initial application of head lice treatment and all eggs (nits) are removed.
- **Check your child's hair regularly.** The easiest way is to comb the hair carefully over white paper, looking out for the lice's empty egg cases or 'nits'. The lice themselves are harder to spot, but look out for brown or grey insects about the size of a match head that lurk at the roots of your child's hair.
- **Wash your child's hair** in one of the lice-killing shampoos available at the local chemist or pharmacy. It's a good idea to get other family members to wash their hair in the same shampoo – just to make sure the head lice don't spread. Apply plenty of conditioner (which slows the lice down) and comb the hair from the root down to the tip with a fine nit comb (the chemist will sell you one). Destroy any head lice you find, and repeat this process every couple of days until they are gone!
- **Don't panic!** Head lice don't spread diseases or pose any serious health threat. Often they don't even cause itching.



As parents, you have the prime responsibility for detecting and treating head lice.

Principals and teachers do not need to be involved in checking children's hair for head lice.



- **Don't blame yourself.** Head lice are not a symptom of dirty hair. The only reason that primary school students are particularly vulnerable is that they are more sociable than the rest of us. They literally get their heads together more often, giving lice the opportunity to migrate from one scalp to another.
- **Don't worry.** *Pediculus humanus capitis* is no match for a parent who takes quick and decisive action.

To help prevent the spread of head lice:

- Check your child's hair every morning.
- Teach your child not to share brushes, combs, hats, swimming caps, hair bands.
- Braid long hair, or tie it back.
- Brush your child's hair twice a day – the head lice hate it! 100 strokes a day won't stop them, but it will make them less active and easier to get rid of.
- Wash all hairbrushes and combs in hot soapy water and dry them in the sun.





# Good vision

Undetected vision problems are estimated to affect about one in four Australian children – and may contribute to potential learning difficulties in reading, writing, viewing the whiteboard, using a computer and other classroom activities.

Vision plays a significant part in the learning process for children, and there are strong links between vision impairment and poor educational outcomes.

Parents and teachers should watch for signs that a child may have a vision problem, including an avoidance of reading and writing, lower comprehension and short attention span. These signs are sometimes incorrectly suspected as learning disabilities such as dyslexia or attention deficit disorder.

Without clear vision, learning can be difficult and stressful, and many children try to adapt to their vision problem without knowing they could see better. The good news is that many of the common vision problems amongst school-aged children can be detected and managed with a quick trip to the optometrist.

Through regular eye examinations, you can help your child to achieve the best possible vision and help them reach their full potential at school.

## Helping with homework

Helping your child with their homework is an opportunity for you to participate in your child's education and encourage a positive attitude to learning both in and out of school.

Helping with homework shows your child that you are interested in what they are learning, and you'll also find out what they are doing at school and what their strengths and difficulties are.

In primary school, homework should not be a burden to your child. It may involve your child taking home a home reader that you can read together. Or, for older children, it might involve some revision of things they have studied at school, or preparation for the next piece of learning.

How you can help:

- Set aside a 'study area' at home where your child can concentrate and do their homework. You'll need a flat surface (desk, table or bench) and good lighting. Make sure you also have pens, pencils, rulers, scissors, glue, dictionary and paper on hand... and turn off the television!
- Make sure your child has a break and something to eat and drink before settling down to do their homework.
- Ask your child what the homework task is and how it follows on from what they were learning at school.
- Be interested, and talk to your child about what they have learnt so far.
- Help your child become an independent learner – explain how to look up information or find a word in the dictionary rather than simply giving them the answer in order to get the task finished.
- Don't let your child copy information straight from books or the internet. Apart from it being plagiarising someone else's work, it doesn't help your child learn. Instead, talk about the information together and work out the key facts, then help your child to write down notes about what they've just learnt.



# good learning

## When should my child's eyes be tested?

Optometrists Association Australia recommends that children have a full eye examination with an optometrist before starting school, and regularly thereafter as they progress through primary and secondary school. A thorough eye examination with an optometrist takes approximately 25 minutes and attracts a Medicare rebate. No referral is required.

## Is there assistance available?

If you are on a low income, you may be eligible for assistance through the department's Spectacle Assistance Scheme. This scheme provides financial assistance towards the purchase of standard frames and lenses for full-time students from Kindergarten through to senior secondary level. Application forms are available from optometrists participating in the scheme or from the Financial Assistance Unit of the Department of Education (see contact details right).

## What are the signs that might indicate my child has a vision problem?

- Skipping or re-reading lines
- Omitting or confusing words when reading
- Poor comprehension when reading
- Homework taking much longer than it should
- Short attention span with reading and school work.

## Other signs to look out for may include:

- One eye turning in or out while the other points straight ahead
- Frequent blinking
- Red or watery eyes
- Covering or closing one eye
- Holding a book very close to read
- Squinting or sitting very close when watching television
- Complaints of headaches, or blurred/double vision

For information about common eye problems, children's vision and resources written specifically for parents, download the Parent's Guide to Good Vision at: [www.optometrists.asn.au/childrensvision](http://www.optometrists.asn.au/childrensvision)

For more information about the Department of Education's Spectacles Assistance Scheme contact the Service Centre on 1800 816 057 or visit: [www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents/costs/assistance/spectacles](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents/costs/assistance/spectacles)



- Be positive about your child's attempts. If you have any concerns about their progress, make an appointment to speak to their teacher.
- Don't let homework become a chore! Make it a special time that you can spend talking and learning together, and that you both look forward to.



Don't be tempted to correct your child's homework and make your child copy it out. Your child's teacher needs to know how much your child understands and can do on their own!



# Woodbridge Marine Discovery Centre

Tucked into the shore of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel south of Hobart, is Australia's oldest marine education centre.

Opening its doors in 1979, the Woodbridge Marine Discovery Centre was established to challenge students of all ages to learn about, discover and care for the marine environment through a wide range of shore- and sea-based programs.

Operated by the Tasmanian Department of Education through Woodbridge School, the Marine Discovery Centre offers marine education programs for students from Kinder to Grade 12.

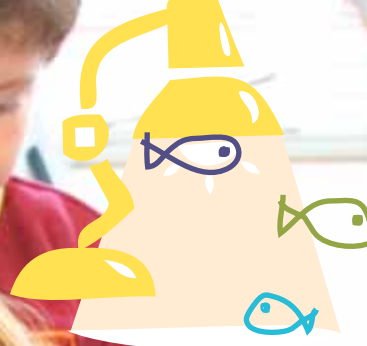
The Marine Discovery Centre is open every day of school term to both primary and secondary classes. Programs are tailored to the needs of each class, and can include activities such as foreshore surveys, observing live plankton, studying marine invertebrates, learning about marine animal adaptations, or exploring the human impact on the sea. Secondary students also have the unique opportunity to conduct field work on board the centre's own research vessel, *Penghana*.

One of the features of the centre's programs is the opportunity for students to make contact with live marine animals. The centre has many aquaria which house a large collection of local species including fish, sharks, crabs, sea stars, sea cucumbers, sea snails and octopus.

In addition to the education programs, Marine Discovery Centre staff run school holiday programs in June and September; take part in community education events and conduct professional development workshops for teachers. The centre also has an outreach program which allows students in northern Tasmania the opportunity to participate in a range of marine programs at their own school.



For more information about the Marine Discovery Centre or how your school can arrange a visit, contact 6267 4649 or visit the website: [www.woodbridge.tased.edu.au/mdc](http://www.woodbridge.tased.edu.au/mdc)





# eSchool excites young learners

The Tasmanian eSchool is the Department of Education's online and distance learning provider, offering educational programs and online courses for students from K-10.

With campuses in both Launceston and Hobart, the eSchool enrolls students who meet enrolment criteria such as isolation, pregnancy, physical or psychological illness or travel. The school also provides online courses to students across Tasmania to enrich or support their regular in-school learning program, e.g. by providing a language subject, an advanced subject or a tailored life skills program.

Year 3 student Gabby, (right) came to Distance Education Tasmania in 2007 due to her family's physical distance from the nearest school.

Gabby loves learning to type and regularly emails her teacher and friends. As well as writing stories and reports using Word and PowerPoint, she shares her work and opinions with others in real time (online).

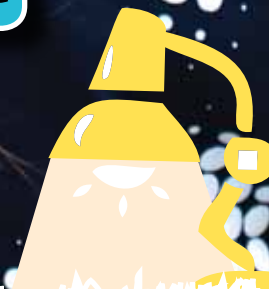
As well as regular online lessons, Gabby is involved with some of the eSchool's extra-curricular online programs, including Junior Science Club, Book Share and the Student Representative Council. She also likes the online extension programs, such as Ad Astra and Mathletics, which offer opportunities for challenge and feedback.

eSchool teacher and early childhood coordinator Tanya Smit says that "using ICT with younger students is an exciting and positive experience for all involved". As students master the online interactive classroom tools they quickly progress to being independent learners. Apart from the benefits of learning ICT skills at a young age, there is also a strong connection with the teachers and other students which leads to collaborative learning opportunities and the sense of belonging to a community.

Like Gabby, many other students and their families at the eSchool are discovering that the use of online tools in the early years can provide a powerful skill base for the rest of the primary years, as well as an infectious enthusiasm for learning!



For more information about the Tasmanian eSchool call 1800 068 052 (toll free) or visit the website: [www.tasmanianschool.tas.edu.au](http://www.tasmanianschool.tas.edu.au)



# Jump Rope for Heart

The healthy way to help fight heart disease and stroke!

Established in Australia in 1983, the Heart Foundation's Jump Rope for Heart is known for being one of Australia's most popular physical activity and fundraising programs in schools.

Jump Rope for Heart teaches school children how to keep fit and healthy through learning physical activities like skipping, and improves their strength, confidence and stamina.

Students who participate in Jump Rope for Heart program not only have lots of fun with their peers, but also learn how they can help save Australian lives by asking family and friends to sponsor them in their skipping.

If you would like your child to be a part of this fantastic program, contact your child's teacher or principal about bringing Jump Rope for Heart into your school.

If your child is already participating in Jump Rope for Heart, thank you in advance for supporting the Heart Foundation and the fight against cardiovascular disease!

Heart Foundation

## Jump Rope for Heart



For more information about getting involved in the Jump Rope for Heart program in Tasmania, please contact Megan on 6220 2210 or visit the website: [www.jumprope.org.au](http://www.jumprope.org.au)

Teachers - simply click on the *2011 Teachers Register!* button to register your school.



Being active matters!





# Being active matters!

We all know that being active is important for the health and wellbeing of our children, but it's no secret that many Australian children (and adults) do not get enough physical activity each day.

Research shows that children who are physically active as kids are more likely to be physically active as adults and will enjoy greater health benefits than children who are less active.

*Being active matters!* is a booklet that has been developed to provide information, hints and

tips about the importance of physical activity for children from 0-5 years old, as well as suggestions on how you can help your child (and your family) incorporate more physical activity into your daily routine.

As a parent, you are in a great position to provide a range of fun physical activity opportunities for your child. Being active and playing active games regularly with your child allows you to be a good role model for physical activity and is also a great opportunity to interact and bond with your child.

Why not try some (or all) of the activities in *Being active matters!* with your child – you'll be amazed at how many opportunities there are each day to get active!

Download your copy of *Being active matters!* from [www.education.tas.gov.au/earlylearning](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/earlylearning) or ask at your child's school for a hard copy.





## school in the spotlight



Do you have a good news story about a school/ community partnership, or simply a story about something that your school does well? If so, we would like to hear from you.

The 'school in the spotlight' feature in engage parent magazine is an opportunity to showcase some of the many wonderful programs being run in Tasmanian Government schools.

Please contact the Communication Services Unit by emailing [communications@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:communications@education.tas.gov.au) or post your story idea to engage parent magazine, GPO Box 169, Hobart 7001.

## PARENT FEEDBACK WANTED!!

We really appreciate your feedback and welcome the opportunity to improve future editions of engage parent magazine.

Please email your comments or suggestions for future topics to [engage@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:engage@education.tas.gov.au) or post to engage parent magazine, GPO Box 169, Hobart 7001

## contact

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Learning Services North-West – phone (03) 6434 6389  
60 Wilmot Street, Burnie, Tasmania 7320

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[www.education.tas.gov.au/school/publications/engage/subscribe](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/publications/engage/subscribe)

ISSN 1836-0971

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## Term dates 2011 Kindergarten to Grade 10

2011	Start		End
Term 1*	SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH AND NORTH WEST, Tuesday 15 February,  SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH, Wednesday 16 February	EASTER BREAK: Friday, 22 April - Sunday 1 May	Friday 3 June
Term 2	Monday 20 June		Friday 2 September
Term 3	Monday 19 September		Wednesday 21 December

\*College students should contact their college and/or Polytechnic campus for details, or visit [www.education.tas.gov.au/school/termdates](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/termdates)

The Department of Education is committed to providing a high quality magazine that is both environmentally friendly and low in cost to produce.

