



ANNE GEDDES

Our society needs to examine itself. If we have an attitude of children as powerless and we have rights over them, then abuses are invited. This attitude is reflected in the recommended parenting styles of the Greens and Biddulphs.

EXPLOITING CHILD NUDITY!

In March 1994 the Children's Interests Bureau had brought to its attention a post card showing in graphic detail a naked little boy urinating which was readily available in card shops.

The Bureau requested that the sale of such cards be investigated by the Classification of Publications Board. The card has since been assigned a "Refused Publication" on the grounds that it depicted exploitative child nudity.

The Bureau would be interested to hear of any other publications that are of concern to readers.

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REVIEW OF SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION GUIDELINES IN QUEENSLAND STATE SCHOOLS

Under Queensland law students in primary and state secondary schools are obliged to attend a school until they are 15. Exclusions are to be formally conducted pursuant to Education Department Guidelines and are to be used as a last resort only. Despite this, an eight year old Brisbane girl earned some unwanted notoriety recently after she was heralded as the youngest student ever to be excluded from a Queensland state school. The girl said that whilst she had been asked to leave two other schools, this was the first time she had been formally excluded.

This is not an isolated case. Principals and teachers are increasingly coming under fire for demonstrating a "nimby" attitude towards troublesome children - not in my backyard. Hundreds of children every year are excluded from Queensland schools, many others are merely arbitrarily dismissed by principals and teachers who flagrantly disregard their legislative obligations to institute a formal exclusion process.

On the other hand, Mr Pat Comben, the Minister for Education, recently announced that teachers who are accused of criminal offences will now be assigned desk duties until the necessary investigations are completed, a sensible manifestation of the right of innocence until guilt is proven. Unfortunately, this does not apply to students, who remain idle and without support for the duration of the formal exclusion process, which can drag on for months.

Further, there are nine children in Queensland at present who have not been formally excluded but are the subject of bans by the Queensland Teachers' Union.

A review into the Suspension and Exclusion Legislation and Guidelines for Queensland state schools is underway. DCI will be submitting a report to the Education Department highlighting the shortfalls of the present system and how it can be amended.

If you are interested to find out more about this campaign, please contact Craig Mackie, (07) 8571155.

THE MULTI-CULTURAL/ANTI BIAS CURRICULUM

What is it and why should it be implemented young with children? **It is the study of many ideas, values, beliefs and behaviours by which we organise and give meaning to the world and where an active approach is taken to "challenge" prejudice, stereo-typing and bias.**

As parents, teachers or caregivers it is our responsibility to prepare children for their participation in society as an adult, therefore they need to be aware of acceptable and legal behaviour.

In Australia, our government, elected by the polls has adopted anti-discrimination laws in regards to: race, gender, sexual preference, disability and age. The multi-cultural/anti bias curriculum should be implemented to:

1. give all children in the service equal opportunity - *we will respect differences; we will not accept unfair beliefs or acts*
2. offer the children choice - *there is no "RIGHT" or "WRONG" way of doing things. There are only differences.*

3. give children guidance to positive and appropriate behaviour - *a persons identity is never an acceptable reason for teasing or rejecting them. Discuss positively the physical characteristics of each child.*

Our multi-cultural/anti bias curriculum seeks to convey - *each child is valued; each group is important; everyone is competent.* A balanced, respectful, integrated approach to cultural diversity never set one culture or group above another, but rather helps children to gradually learn to appreciate the value of diversity within and among cultures.

Each of us is a product of at least one culture, and we share a lot of similarities:

- * *we all get hungry*
- * *we all need a place to live*
- * *we all love our family and our friends*
- * *we all seek productive work*
- * *we all need entertainment and leisure*

Within our cultural similarities we share differences:

- * *what we eat*
- * *the type of homes we live in*
- * *our families - whether they are extended, nuclear or single parent - we all get love and a sense of belonging from our families.*
- * *some of us are artists, some work on the land, others make a living from the water*
- * *some of us participate in church activities, others sport or community activities.*

When children are reared in a climate of anti-discrimination and develop anti bias values and beliefs, they learn what equality is. They learn that everyone has rights, they have a right to their individuality, that they have choices and from this comes positive self concept, good self esteem and good mental health.

AUSTRALIA'S ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS

Race, gender, sexual preference, disability and age laws, are adopted in order to make