

The Roles and Responsibilities of Parents in the Education of Their Children

Nancy D. Kwalea

Editor's Note: The following is a summary report of a seminar on "The Roles and Responsibilities of Parents in the Education of their Children" presented by Mrs Asenaca Vakaotia of the Institute of Education of the University of the South Pacific, to parents and teachers in Honiara, Solomon Islands in October, 1996.

The speaker introduced to participants some background information on her role in the Basic Education and Life Skills (BELS) Programme and covered a lot of interesting ideas and gave valuable advice on how parents can improve their roles and responsibilities in their children's basic education.

The presentation, which was accompanied by handouts, included:

Developing the whole child - identifying and encouraging special talents;

Why parents should become involved in the work and activities of schools;

The need for parents to motivate and guide their children to attend school daily; the need for children to be helped to rest; the need to allow study time for children;

The need for schools and parents to work together in assisting children to realise a sense of purpose and direction in life - helping children to discover their strengths and helping them to develop those strengths;

Positive interaction with children - In addition to physical needs the child needs attachment and stimulation for his mental and emotional development. It was stressed that children need a close, sensitive and loving relationship with the adults who care for them, and this can be recognised through consistently 'positive' words and actions. A lack of attention can make the child unhappy and insecure, and

neglected children lose interest in life, have less appetite and may fail to grow normally in mind and body. Encouragement, praise and recognition of children's efforts were stressed.

Parents were encouraged to build children's self-esteem and help children at home by ensuring nutritious meals for children's health development, helping children to do their homework by providing study space with simple furniture, sufficient lighting, motivation and guidance, checking their exercise books, holding brief discussions with them, and supervising them to ensure that their homework was done.

The speaker stressed the need for storytelling as it encourages learning and helps children to maintain the home language and culture. Singing songs, learning rhymes, drawing pictures and reading stories were recommended as activities that can help the child's mind to grow and prepare the way for learning to read and write.

The seminar was very well received by participants, who felt strongly that the ideas put forward by the speaker, while not necessarily new, were timely reminders to Solomon Islands' educators of the community's crucial role in young children's full educational development.

* * *