Parent Engagement strategies

Practical strategies aimed at reducing children’s anxiety levels were discussed at a series of parent engagement sessions hosted by Catholic Education in regional centres in Central Queensland recently.

The sessions were presented by Managing Director of Early Life Foundations and renowned health and education expert, Professor Shona Bass, widely recognised nationally and internationally for her work with professionals and parent groups on an extensive range of topics related to children, families, parenting, education and leadership.

Director Catholic Education, Diocese of Rockhampton, Leesa Jeffcoat said the sessions had generated considerable interest with more than 700 teachers and parents across the diocese attending sessions in Mackay, Bundaberg, Emerald and Rockhampton.

“This is clearly an area where families are seeking information,” Miss Jeffcoat said.

“These parent engagement sessions provided information on recognising anxiety and introduced strategies to reduce stress and anxiety levels in children with the aim of assisting parents and teachers to understand and manage children’s behaviour and provide some guidance as to what steps to take if they believed their child may be experiencing elevated levels of anxiety,” she said.

Catholic Education Assistant Director: Schools, Michael McCusker coordinated the sessions which were also live-streamed so parents in more remote communities were able to tune in.

“We were very pleased to be able to facilitate these valuable parent/teacher education sessions for our school communities and the feedback to us has been extremely positive,” he said.

“Parents attending the sessions commented that it was helpful to gain a clearer understanding of the causes and types of factors influencing anxiety and a good reminder to react to the child and not just the behaviours. Reflecting on why the child is behaving in a certain way makes it easier to deal with behaviours and not to personalise them,” she said.

Miss Jeffcoat said the importance of good mental health in students was a priority in Catholic schools and partnering parents and teachers in developing a better understanding of the reasons behind anxiety in children was a positive step towards promoting mental wellness.

Pictured above Professor Shona Bass presenting to parents in Bundaberg