

Why a social skills group?

For all sorts of reasons some children find it much harder to think socially and use their social tools suitably when it really counts; making friends, rolling with the punches, joining in, reading others, coping with not getting their way, taking turns, thinking positively and dealing with day-to-day frustrations.

The verdict is in. A body of well regarded studies reveal that teaching social thinking to young people with social delay does improve their ability to interact socially.

The value of a social skilling group is that kids can learn these vital living skills through direct teaching, role-play practice and social activities in the context of a small friendly group.

A *What's the Buzz?* group either consists of 4 or 5 children with one facilitator, or 7 or 8 children with two facilitators. Children selected are about the same age so everyone has the opportunity to build friendships in a safe, structured and encouraging environment.



Testimonials

"What's the Buzz? teaches invaluable life lessons disguised as fun and play for kids. We have been amazed at the transformation in our six year old son's social skills." *Heather, mother*

"Our daughter loved this program. We think it has been effective as she's jumped forward in leaps and bounds. Her understanding of herself and others, and her social confidence has blossomed." *Bennett, father*

"Luke has made enormous gains. We are seeing him resolve conflict in new ways, develop more resilient thinking and build positive relationships with peers. Thanks to the lesson notes and parent tips we have the confidence to continue with this at home." *Sara, mother*

Mark Le Messurier

Mark is an author, teacher and mentor to kids and their families. He is married to Sharon and has two daughters, Kim and Noni. His background spans twenty years in schools and includes Special Education. Mark is a recipient of an Australian National Excellence in Teaching Award.

He works in private practice at Fullarton House often with the kids and teens whose unpredictable emotion and behaviour gets in the way of their learning, friendships and a cohesive family life. These kids find life tough and also make it tough on those who care and teach them.

Mark provides practical and therapeutic interventions to strengthen the performance of these kids, and this is the essence of his last book *Teaching Tough Kids* (2010). It follows hot on the heels of his internationally best-selling book, *Parenting Tough Kids* (2008).

Mark and Madhavi Nawana Parker collaborated to write *What's the Buzz?* a social skills enrichment program for primary students. It is a refreshing 16 lesson program that highlights social thinking through discussion, explicit skill development, role-play practice and play-based activities.

The program has been written for use in schools by teachers, school counsellors, school psychologists, teacher assistants, support staff, parent volunteers and allied health professionals. It also has application in a range of private clinical settings; psychologists, counsellors, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, social workers, play therapists and so on.
The book, 'What's the Buzz?' is now available.

What's the Buzz?



Mark Le Messurier & Madhavi Nawana Parker

A UNIQUE SOCIAL SKILLS EXPERIENCE

**A social skills enrichment programme
for primary students**

Mark Le Messurier

Phone: (08) 8332 0698

Email: mark@marklemessurier.com.au

Website: www.whatsthebuzz.net.au

Fullarton House
Assessment, Therapy and Teaching
213 Fullarton Road
Eastwood SA 5063

What does the course offer?

First term

- meeting people and exiting
- getting attention
- following instructions
- being friendly
- competition, winning and losing
- identifying feelings
- feelings and the warning signs
- thinking positively. Celebration and interim certificates

Second term

- feelings and ideas to create wellbeing
- empathy, responding to others
- handling worry
- dealing with disappointment
- responding to bullying
- the connecting art of conversation
- learning to 'fit in'
- giving and receiving compliments. Celebration and achievement certificate

When and Where?

Children's sessions are scheduled for Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons beginning at either 4pm or 5pm. They are held at;

Fullarton Park Centre, 411 Fullarton Road, Fullarton

They usually begin in week 2 of school and conclude in week 9.

A 'Parent Only' session is scheduled from 7pm to 8pm on the 3rd Monday of the of the programme. It is held at;

Fullarton House, 213 Fullarton Road, Eastwood
(Please note 'Parent Only' sessions are in a different location to children's sessions)

What can parents do to help?

A parent's role is invaluable. Each week parents can follow up on what their child has learnt in the session by reviewing the lesson notes from the book, *What's the Buzz?* In addition, each lesson offers comprehensive 'home tips' so parents can continue to work with the social skills and social thinking well into the future at home.

Can parents sit in on sessions?

In order to protect the confidentiality of all, parents are not invited to children's sessions. We guarantee to supply ample feedback. Actually, one of the strengths of *What's the Buzz?* sessions is the friendships, exchange of information and support parents have found in one another over coffee while sessions take place.

Do children need a psychological assessment to attend?

An assessment can be helpful, but it's not a requirement.

Will Mark speak to my child's teacher?

Teachers like to know when a student is attending. Usually, they contact us if they wish to. It is important to hand the 'TEACHER surveys' and brochures to your child's teacher so they know your child is participating.

How does reporting my child's progress work?

Besides the two formal 'Parents Only' Meetings we will continue to talk with you. This may be briefly and casually following a session, by phone or by email. Occasionally, when an issue occurs it is wise to share it with us.

Are refunds available for missed sessions?

Refunds are not available for missed sessions. However, it is very helpful to us, and to all participants, to know in advance if your son or daughter cannot attend a session.

Is this programme filled with "badly behaved" children?

Absolutely not! This programme promotes the skills linked to friendship building and relies on the creation of safe and

friendly emotional tones. Success hinges on the careful selection of children who have degrees of social, emotional and behavioural challenges, but above all are likely to form a bond, likely to learn and likely to enjoy one another's company.

Is this group suitable for my child?

Kids who attend *What's the Buzz?* are usually challenged by:

- Friendship building and maintenance skills
- Emotion; being too passive, fearful or too reactive
- Poor empathy (at the moment it counts)
- 'Reading' the social cues of others
- Dealing with their feelings appropriately
- A negative approach to problem solving
- Loneliness and isolation
- An overreaction to losing games & disappointment
- Anxiety and worry

Enrolment and cost

Arrange enrolments through Sharon (8332 0698). The cost is \$500 per term, plus a minimal one off cost for a copy of the book, *What's the Buzz?* It contains comprehensive lesson notes and practical follow up suggestions for parents. Full payment is required by the end of the 3rd children's session each term. The course runs for two terms. Please ask your school system for a subsidy, as increasingly some are prepared to contribute to your child's social and emotional wellbeing.

Can I enrol for just one term?

Sorry, this is not possible. The programme is designed to be a 16 week course that runs over 2 school terms. The objective is for children to have an extended period of time together to consolidate learning and build friendships between one another.

