

I provide the following information to the inquiry into NAPLAN testing, specifically in relation to terms of reference (c)(1) and (e).

"Our culture has become obsessed with an education system that wounds many types of learners" to quote from *Natural Brilliance* by Paul Scheele. To send home results, like this, can have a very harmful effect on a child and their parents. This is one day of testing and making sweeping Judgements on a school or child's performance is unfair. I have always thought that exams are very limited, depending on the mood and mindset of the person marking. Sometimes it is black and white, but even then it could be an off day. For a child with dyspraxia or similar learning challenges many days are tricky. The O.T. says my son is under the autistic umbrella, but he cannot really be defined with a label, because he is unique. She has given me info on dyspraxia. My 20 year old nephew has dyspraxia and has had very similar issues with writing and anxiety. My child has brilliant ideas and wants to be an inventor. He thinks outside the box. Naplan and reports smothered in poor marks are not beneficial. They wound self-esteem. All of his NAPLAN results were low last year. It seems that 50% of students must be "below average"/under the mark!!

The Headmaster tells me that NAPLAN is to check that programmes are effective. The spelling was not even correct in the test. It is a joke.

I have been on a mission to help my child and I have been looking at nervous disorder. All the research I have done is suggesting nutrient deficiency and heavy metal toxicity. He is not digesting well and therefore not absorbing nutrients well. Since the detox, with foods that draw out toxins, he is answering questions like never before. He is taking probiotics and omega 3 EPA and other supplements, eg. coconut oil to soothe his digestion. I understand that the gut/brain connection is very important. Eating sandwiches and lots of fruit is NOT the answer for a child who is intolerant to yeast/ dairy and/or wheat. Both my children have these intolerances. I would appreciate it if teachers stay out of their lunch box. The muffins I make are not full of sugar.

Any child with nausea, low bowel control, red eyes, rashes and/or itchy ears could be looking at intolerances. Yeast and heavy metals are playing havoc with digestion. Excessive antibiotics, too much sugar, processed foods, sweets, dairy, chlorinated water and synthetic chemicals are causing imbalance in digestion. There could be recommendations for parents to check food intolerances. There are more and more children with allergies and neurological problems.

Last year the paediatrician recommended C.A.P.D testing and motor skill issues. The teacher marked the C.A.P.D. questionnaire with Minus 4 &5's for answering

questions and following instructions. We paid \$320 for the test to find that, no, his auditory processing is fine. Now the occupational therapist is suggesting the "Alert Programme." This is about a child consciously monitoring their energy levels and using techniques like stretching to calm down or pushing on the desk to rev up. This is a very positive way of *calming the nervous system* and I have found it very helpful. The book is called *How Does Your Engine Run?* by Mary Sue Williams and Sherry Shellenberger. It seems there are children with 'big personalities' who could also benefit. If a child has low marks there could be recommendations and guidance.

Negotiation and choices.

My child is very shy, and was refusing to go to school, because he was so afraid of class speaking. The school had been supportive and let him do one on one with the teacher. Even that was stressing him. A child with verbal issues should be allowed an alternative project. It is not possible for him to speak freely, out of his comfort zone/home. He is very, very shy. Interesting that extreme shyness and sloughing away of intestinal mucosa are symptoms of mercury poisoning. Distressing to see that mercury has been in vaccinations. Yesterday a teenage friend told me that her school forced a boy to do public speaking until he was crying and shaking. Not O.K!! I am hoping there will be more sensitivity in education when enough parents speak up. Dr Sarah Lantz is lecturing at Universities, hospitals and communities. She has dissected the umbilical cords and placentas and has found much to be concerned about. Dr Lantz is recommending 'prevention' with wise consumer choices. The Education Dept. could support her work. *Chemical Free Kids* is a book for all of us.

Education could encourage children to be their best unique self and cut out all the ABCDE labels. 'D for dumb' is not O.K. For any child. Ever. It may mean limited achievement or lack of effort to an adult. But to a child it means "not O.K./hopeless." A Teacher could inform the parent with a personal note that their child needs extra attention.

Paul Scheele's technologies of learning and human development have this question, "***How can people learn most effectively, to use the tremendous resources within, to create a higher quality of life?***" This is a real question for all of us.

I am disillusioned with the old 'biggest and best' style. I look forward to Evolution in Education.

Sincerely,

Anne Devine.