



Media Release:

### **Teaching kids about serious issues requires a light-hearted approach: parents and experts agree**

Taking serious issues too seriously can be a hindrance when it comes to teaching kids.

A recent survey of Australian adults showed that humour and laughter was seen by most as a valuable tool to bridge the distance between adults and children because it breaks down social and demographic barriers.

The research showed that 96% of participants believed that a fun and playful environment is a valuable tool to help communication because it engages children and aids learning. Another finding showed that two-way conversation was seen as the most effective discussion tool when discussing serious issues with children.

Laughter expert and researcher Helene Grover concurs with the survey's findings saying the process of laughter increases the brain's ability to learn and being too serious can be a hindrance for kids learning.

"When we laugh, our brains produce chemicals which activate left brain/right brain activity, which is conducive to learning. It literally opens our minds to new things, and can be particularly beneficial when dealing with big themes and issues."

Nearly two thirds of participants agreed that children learn best through laughter because it makes them more receptive and attentive to learning. Women (72%) and people between the ages of 50-65 (73%) felt more strongly about this.

The survey was commissioned by McDonald's Camp Quality Puppets, a non profit education program which teaches primary school children about tolerance, acceptance and anti bullying, particularly in relation to welcoming peers recovering from cancer treatment back into their school.

The McDonald's Camp Quality Puppets Program is celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> year with more than 3,000,000 Australian children having benefited from the program. Nationally, another 230,000 children will be educated by the program this year.

Camp Quality's National Performance & Education Manager Angela Carroll understands the importance of presenting education about serious issues to kids in a safe environment, and in a way that breaks down barriers.

"Some of the themes we cover in the show can be difficult for young kids to process – but by educating them through the fun of a puppet show that is held in the familiar environment of their school, and with their friends and teachers there with them, it is much easier for them to grasp some very big issues that can yield some wonderfully positive results.

A key element to the McDonald's Camp Quality Puppets Program is engaging with the kids in a two-way conversation, we definitely find this communication achieves the best learning outcomes."



Laughter expert Helene says that humour and lightness translate to kids being open to new ideas and feeling comfortable to ask questions.

"I'm delighted that Australian parents understand how important laughter and fun is when it comes to teaching kids about big issues", says Helene.

For further information about the program, volunteering or to fill out a booking request, please visit [www.campquality.org.au](http://www.campquality.org.au).

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#### **About McDonald's Australia**

Australia's first McDonald's restaurant opened in Yagoona, Sydney, in 1971. Today there are 786 McDonald's restaurants across Australia, 75 per cent of which are franchised and run by local business men and women. The organisation employs 85,000 people in restaurants and corporate offices Australia-wide, and is the largest employer of youth in the country. McDonald's creates more than 6,000 new jobs each year and spends over \$40 million per annum on training and people development. McDonald's suppliers export \$175 million worth of Australian products annually and its restaurants spend more than \$1.6 billion on food, packaging and other goods and services each year. For more information visit [www.mcdonalds.com.au](http://www.mcdonalds.com.au)