



Media notification

Researchers engage kinder kids to unlock learning secrets

An Australian research project aims to discover why some children experience challenges with school learning by studying how young children at the pre-school level learn.

The University of Melbourne's Faculty of Education in association with the Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) will launch the ASG Early Intervention Research Program, housed at the University's Early Learning Centre on 21 November.

"Pre-school teachers often don't see themselves as preparing children for literacy learning, but this project challenges that notion. We see the early years of learning as critical to children's success throughout school," says Ass. Professor Margaret Brown, the new Program's Director.

Findings are expected to provide a framework for teachers and parents in how to intervene with children facing learning challenges and help children reach their full education potential.

The five-year study will investigate how young children learn, focussing specifically on literacy, to draw out the issues that impact development. There is evidence that intervention beyond Grade 2 is less effective, so early intervention strategies are critical. With current debate about literacy standards in Australian schools, this project may challenge current practice.

With an estimated 10% of primary-aged children in Australia experiencing academic under-achievement (and much higher in disadvantaged schools), the findings of the research will have significant implications for teachers, parents and teacher educators.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES:

- *Seven 3-5 year old children will perform a welcome song to the core research team, including Professor Field Rickards and Ass. Professor Margaret Brown*
- *The children will also be showing some of the work they've produced, particularly literacy-related material*

Event: ASG Early Intervention Research Program launch

Date: Tuesday 21 November

Time: 11 am speeches and official launch of the program:

- University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Glyn Davis
- Dean of Education, Professor Field Rickards
- ASG Chairman, Dr Gordon Young

11.30 am Media photo opportunity

Venue: Early Learning Centre, 40 Clarke St, Abbotsford (Parking on Clarke and St Heliers Streets)

RSVP: smcau@unimelb.edu.au or phone 8344 8331

Media inquiries:

Lanie Harris
Media Relations Officer
Faculty of Education
(03) 8344 4259 or lanie.h@unimelb.edu.au

Janet Thomas
Public Relations, ASG
(03) 9276 7758 or 0402 837 758 or
jthomas@asg.com.au