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Education aspirations equal success for Australian children

ASG Parents Report Card reveals parents' perceptions of state of education in Australia

The aspirations Australian parents have for their own children's education is the strongest driver in their academic success, and 94 per cent agree higher education is important for their child, reveals a new study from ASG and Monash University.

Released today, the first edition of the *ASG Parents Report Card** investigates the state of education in Australia from parents' perspectives, Australia-wide.

Undertaken by the Faculty of Education at Monash University, the report reveals parental aspirations are the strongest factor in their child achieving academic success, and that the strongest educational resource available to Australian children is support; from home, school and the community.

"Parents hold incredibly important, often intangible resources in contributing to their child's educational success. The *ASG Parents Report Card* has found that parental aspirations for their children's education is the glue that holds everything together-- aspirations optimise and underpin all other resources and influences that support their children's educational needs," says John Velegrinis, CEO of ASG.

"Regular communication with children about the importance of education and the aspirations for their future from an early age, helps children to feel supported and achieve their learning potential," explains Mr Velegrinis.

With more attention than ever placed on the results of NAPLAN testing, the *ASG Parents Report Card* also examined how parents' perceptions of their child's education relate to their child's most recent NAPLAN scores.

Monash University's analysis revealed that parents' perceptions of their child's knowledge and skills were the largest predictor of all NAPLAN scores; indicating that parents are fundamentally concerned about their children's subject knowledge and ability to apply it in a test situation like NAPLAN.

"The findings of the *ASG Parents Report Card* show that, generally speaking, Australian parents have an acute focus on, and understanding of, their child's knowledge, skills and ability. This demonstrates the importance of schools, teachers and policy makers working together to model a more holistic approach to communicating with parents," says Mr Velegrinis.

"There is an opportunity, and a desire, for ongoing discussion on the nature of learning that occurs in schools and the approach to homework, to lead to better educational outcomes for Australian children," adds Mr Velegrinis.

According to Dr Shane Phillipson, associate professor in the Faculty of Education at Monash University and co-author of the report, the *ASG Parents Report Card* also highlights parents want to better understand school curriculum and teaching methods, but are generally positive about the quality of teaching.

"Parents generally hold teachers in high regard, with 89 per cent agreeing their children's teachers are very capable and 85 per cent believing the school curriculum will help their child with their future careers.

"The education system has procedures in place to ensure parents and teachers are communicating on both behavioural and performance progress. However, there is a call from parents to be educated about the teaching methodology, so they can ensure they're supporting their child's education in the home setting," said Dr Phillipson.

The *ASG Parents Report Card* also found that while 87 per cent of parents would like more money to support their child's education, there are other significant drivers that contribute to the quality of their children's education.

"Strong support ensures a child can always ask for assistance when they need help with their homework at home, and that they have everything they need in order to achieve academically at school.

"Cultural expectations are also influential, with parents agreeing that they make significant decisions about their children's education based on their families' value systems, traditions, beliefs and the social support they have around them," explains Dr Phillipson.

The report also uncovers that while Australian parents share largely positive educational aspirations for their children; the degree of expectation differs based on whether their children attend private, Catholic or public school; or the gender of the child or parent.

"Parents of children attending private schools generally have higher aspirations for their children; 95 per cent talk about higher education and 88 per cent believe a degree will help their child achieve their ambitions.

"Private school parents also report stronger agreement that their children have learning goals, that they want to do well at school and can apply their learning, in comparison to children who go to public schools.

"These aspirations reflect an expectation by parents paying private school fees to achieve a 'return on educational investment'," explains Dr Phillipson.

The ASG Parents Report Card found that while parents generally agree their children want to do well at school, the strength of agreement was significantly higher among parents with daughters.

"Two thirds (67 per cent) of parents with sons say they have to remind their sons to study, compared to only 55 per cent of parents with daughters. And almost half of all parents of daughters agree their child will not stop until their homework is complete, versus only 39 per cent of parents with boys," said Dr Phillipson.

In addition, the research reveals 77 per cent of fathers perceive their child to be high achievers, compared with 69 per cent of mothers.

"The research found that dads may be wearing rose-tinted glasses when it comes to their perception of their child's ability, versus mothers more 'realistic' views of their offspring's scholastic performance.

"Fathers were also stronger in their belief that their children have more knowledge compared to other children the same age (70 per cent) versus mothers (61 per cent)," said Dr Phillipson.

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The ASG Parents Report Card report is available via this link: www.asg.com.au

***About ASG Parents Report Card:**

The *ASG Report Card* describes Australian parents' beliefs about the capacity of the current educational environment to meet the educational needs of their children.

ASG developed the concept of the index and partnered with the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Melbourne, to develop and undertake a study in March 2015. Over 1,900 Australian parents, grandparents and guardians participated in the research, across all states and territories of Australia.

The co-authors of the *ASG Parents Report Card*—Dr Shane Phillipson, associate professor and Dr Sivanes Phillipson, senior lecturer at Faculty of Education at Monash University—developed the questionnaire and research methodology and worked with ASG to publish the survey findings.

About ASG:

ASG believes all Australian and New Zealand children deserve equal access to education regardless of wealth, status and capability.

We provide a range of products, information and resources to support children's education from their early learning stage through to post-secondary studies.

ASG has supported parents plan for the cost of their children's education for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 520,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments have been returned to members and their children.

ASG is member owned, meaning benefits are returned to their members and their children, rather than shareholders. Parents make regular contributions to an education benefit fund that helps offset education fees and other expenses.

To learn more, visit: www.asg.com.au.

For further information, images or to coordinate an interview with ASG CEO, John Veleginis or Dr Shane Phillipson of Monash University, please contact:

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