

Values: At the Centre of Our Work  
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# VALUES: AT THE CENTRE OF OUR WORK

- Nine Values of Australian schooling
  - Care and compassion
  - Doing your best
  - A fair go
  - Freedom
  - Honesty and Trustworthiness
  - Integrity
  - Respect
  - Responsibility
  - Understanding, tolerance and inclusion



# VALUES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

- Early childhood – learning rules of behaviour
  - Inductively – “put that where it belongs”
  - Modelling, clues in facial expressions
  - Acquisition of language
  - Becoming aware of world outside their own physical and emotional needs
  - Attempt to understand adult standards of behaviour
  - In second year – recognition of the past, use of previous experiences, able to make inferences, see own ability to act, view self as an entity



## ▶ Research Findings:

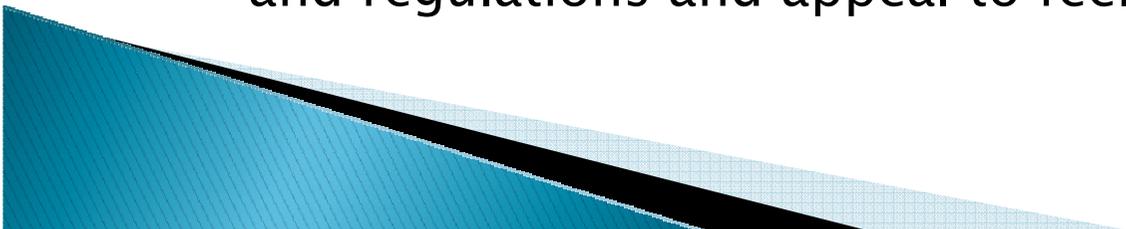
Jarrett (1991) in *The teaching and Values - Caring and Appreciation* has reported a number of research findings regarding values development in young children.

## ▶ It has been known for a long time (Baldwin 1940s) that

- Children from families with democracy *without* control were often cruel and disobedient, while children in families with control *without* democracy often lacked initiative and an inner sense of responsibility. The combination of democracy *and* control in the family led to the optimal pattern of assertive kindness on the part of the child

## ▶ Snow (1987)

- Cites evidence that working class parents tend to appeal to authority (theirs) and threats of punishment, whereas middle class parents more often cite reasons for their rules and regulations and appeal to feeling



▶ **Stent (1980) – found that**

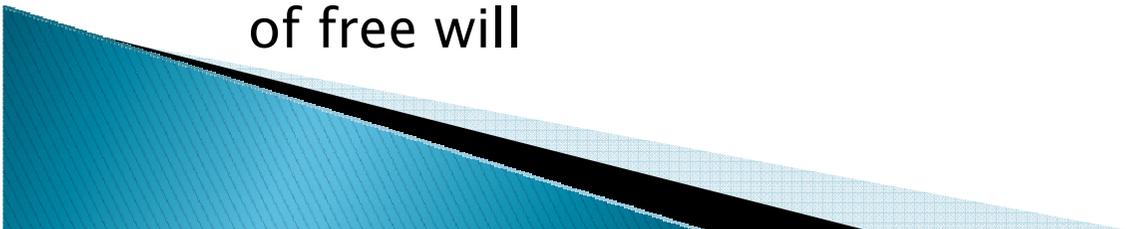
- An eight month old feeds a dog and 3 months later is seen playing at feeding a doll, instructing it and showing it objects and by 3 years old may teach the doll words, but also be of considerable help to other children

▶ **Dunn (1987) reports**

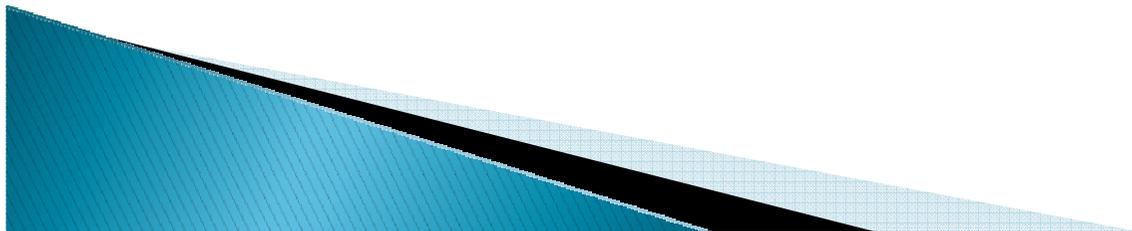
- Unusually early instances of children's sense of humour as when a 2 year old drinking a glass of milk in his high chair suddenly points at his glass saying "Beer" and bursts into loud laughter

▶ **Damon (1988) reports**

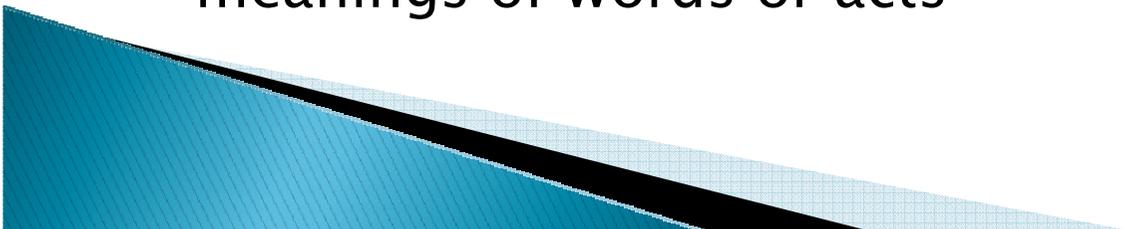
- Early tensions in children's lives: "Shame and Doubt which first appear at the toddler age, are the natural enemies of self control, and threaten the young child's growing sense of free will



- ▶ More is learned from peers than most adults recognise, perhaps in part because of a power differential. Damon (1988) has noticed that whereas with other children there is helping and sharing, with adults there is – *co-operation*
- ▶ Blum (1987) employs the term “responsiveness” to name a characteristic that begins in early childhood; he means by this not just such a response as smiling at an approaching adult, but also and more particularly an altruistic act



- ▶ Damon (1987) found that lectures by parents and others have little effect on attitudes and behaviours, but if a child spontaneously or with help from an adult becomes engaged in genuine service to another... with praise and appreciation for a job well done, these altruistic impulses are strengthened
- ▶ Kagan (1987) claims “The content of moral standards seems to be a product of history, culture, family values, and the individual’s personal reconstruction of his or her past experience”
- ▶ White in Kagan (1987) states that “In the absence of a basically trusting relationship with the [adult] there is no reason for the child to let the [adult] arbitrate the meanings of words or acts”



- Implications for educators:
- In our study in 1998 one of the key findings was that teachers and learners lacked a common language/vocabulary to discuss values – thus developing language and meanings about values is a basic step
- Professional development and critical reflection by educators on own values
- Modelling values is central
- Allowing children to learn values through play without adult intervention
- Role plays, dramas and moral dilemma situations
- Stories and putting oneself in another's shoes (Empathy)
- Curriculum and pedagogy which integrates values (implicit) and is learner-centred as well as explicit values activities



- Use values to foster value for diversity and difference
- Allow teachers and learners to take risks, inquire, explore and problem solve
- Value discussion without necessary consensus
- Involve parents and caregivers
- Develop trusting and supportive climate
- Use values clarification activities which are within the child's experience
- Use art and drawing as a way to express values
- Values as part of the whole context and environment and seen as social relationships
- Co-operative group work where all have a specific role to play in the group outcome
- Caring for pets and helping others
- Cross generational activities and institutional links eg kindergartens and retirement villages



○ Some final thoughts:

- “Direct instruction in morals has been effective only in social groups where it was part of the authoritative control of the many by the few. Not the teaching as such but the reinforcement of it by the whole regimen of which it was an aspect made it effective. To attempt to get similar results from lessons about morals in a democratic society is to rely upon sentimental magic” (Dewey, 1916, p.411)
- “The primary aim of every educational institution and of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring... It establishes the climate, a first approximation to the range of acceptable practices, and a lens through which all practices and possible practices are examined”.(Noddings, 1984)
- “The school is in the business of values education, unavoidably. Right now, each school and teacher is either educating or miseducating at this point. The myth of neutrality has clouded the issue for too long” (Hill, 1991)



# KEY REFERENCES USED

- Hill, Brian, 1991, *Values Education in Australian Schools*, The Australian Council for Educational research, Hawthorn, Victoria.
- Jarrett, James L, 1991, *The Teaching of Values: caring and Appreciation*, Routledge, London
- Stephenson, J., Ling L., Burman, E., Cooper, M., (Eds) 1998, *Values in Education*, Routledge, London.

