

MEDIA RELEASE

New book helps children prep for Prep

23 January 2015: A new book from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) helps parents teach young children to handle the challenges of starting school.

Families Coping: Effective strategies for you and your child, by Erica Frydenberg, provides information on coping repertoires for children, and exercises to help them develop resilience and negotiate relationships with those around them.

“Young children are quite capable of identifying those situations that they find challenging or difficult to manage, and of identifying a wide range of productive and non-productive coping strategies,” explains Dr Frydenberg, an educational, clinical and organisational psychologist, and Principal Research Fellow at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

“A parent might help a child who is anxious about the first day of school by helping them to identify productive coping strategies to anticipate the stress and plan to deal with it in advance, such as by choosing the clothes the night before and taking care of other chores so that the morning is not so stressful.

“Getting information, discussing the situation or preparing through play or role-play can be a form of proactive coping.

“The key is to prepare, planning and constructing a path of action together, but also evaluating this together afterwards in terms of its outcomes.”

Families Coping addresses research showing that parents’ perceptions of their children’s coping vary from those of their children’s teachers and from those of the children themselves.

“Since children appear to cope in different ways in different contexts, such as school and the family setting, it’s important for parents and teachers to have conversations with children about challenging situations and possible ways of coping in each of those settings,” Dr Frydenberg says.

Families Coping brings together two frameworks – positive parenting skills and the transactional model of stress and coping – to create a program of positive psychology aimed at parents, children and counselling professionals. The book prepares families to cope with the varied situations and challenges that they are confronted with in modern life, and provides a toolkit for parents that can be used in a self-help mode or as an instructor-led program.

Families Coping: Effective strategies for you and your child is published by the Australian Council for Educational Research, RRP \$39.95, available from 27 January 2015.

For further information visit < <http://acer.ac/frydenberg> >

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Review copies are available. Extract available for publication.

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