

Unit Name: **FOCUS**

Parents, carers and families are an integral part of the Positive Living Skills Initiative.

The Positive Living Skills program is a universal and practical program designed specifically for children from Preschool onwards, and the principles and positive effects of the learning experiences can reach teachers, school staff, parents, families and wider communities.

The goal is to prevent problems before they develop, by implementing a positive life skills program from an early age. The Positive Living Skills program assists to create habitual positive, healthy supportive behaviours by guiding children to learn to understand and self-direct their own thinking processes, emotions, actions, responses and outcomes, and build effective self-management and social skills.

Focus is the key underpinning principle of the Positive Living Skills program. Being able to fully connect with a task or to a moment in time is a key driver of success in any area of life, and building the skill to actively direct our focus in positive ways from moment to moment allows us to move toward and to appreciate positive experiences and ultimately live our lives in positive ways as we move toward our potential.

When students learn how to direct their focus to the present moment, learning is enhanced along with self-awareness and self-management. When children learn to develop the skills to direct their focus in positive ways, they experience more fulfilment, higher quality relationships and ultimately more enjoyment at home and at School.

Definition of Focus:

1. **A Fully Connected Focus** is a complete positive connection with an experience, learning opportunity, performance, action, or interaction.
2. **A Positive Focus** is the driving force for positive living and directly influences the quality of people's learning, performing and overall living.

Student definition:

To focus is to put my full attention to something, to concentrate only on it.

Fully Connected Focus

A fully connected focus is essential for optimal learning, quality performance and joyful living. When your focus is fully connected, you learn more, see more, feel more, experience more, remember more, perform closer to your potential, develop more meaningful relationships, and live more fully every day.

*Dr Orlick has studied the concept of focus, relating to the pursuit of excellence in high performance, as well as in the development of Positive Living Skills for many years, and he has contributed as a Mental Training and High Performance Focus Coach and Consultant for high performing Athletes, Coaches and Performers in more than 30 different performance disciplines for decades.

We have all seen young toddlers and children so absorbed in a game or experience that it is difficult to move their focus from what they are absorbed in. They are fully connected.

Focusing is a skill that can be learned, trained, practiced, improved, coached and refined just like any skill. When children young people and adults are given opportunities to better understand how to focus and then practice focusing every day, and are supported for their efforts, huge improvements can be made.

Choosing a positive focus

The other concept of focus as it relates to Positive Living, and which underpins this Program, is that we have the ability to **choose a positive focus** daily. When we learn that we have the capacity and the power, and ultimately the responsibility, to choose a positive focus, our level of fulfilment within our life experience improves dramatically.

As human beings, we assign meaning to the events that occur in our lives through a range of filters. We experience our own unique version of reality in our lives through our beliefs and values, our rules about how we believe the world should be or how people should behave, and through our history and background, our past experiences, our culture and family history and so on. So when we experience an event, the event on it's own doesn't have meaning. We decide what the event means based on how we filter it.

To put this into context, let's say Person A sees someone they know across the street (Person B). Person A waves and Person B does not say hello nor do they wave back to Person A. The meaning that person A assigns to that event depends on how they filter that event. If Person A has low self-esteem or is in a low emotional state at the time, they may think that Person B is ignoring them or upset with them, and wonder what they did wrong. If Person A has healthy self-esteem or beliefs they might decide that Person B must not have seen them, and let it go, or walk across the street to catch up to Person B. What person A decides to focus on, and whether that focus is supportive or not, will determine the meaning they give the event, and what they will do as a result.

At any given time we're filtering out information that doesn't seem relevant to us, and filtering in what matches with our beliefs and values and history and our current emotional state.

Another great example of this is cars. Think back to a time when you may have bought a make or model of car that you were not aware of up until that time. That make or model is new to you when you buy the car. Soon after you drive your car home you seem to notice that type of car everywhere whereas days earlier you had not noticed them at all. You started filtering them into your awareness.

If you think about your focus as the beam of light that is coming from a torch, then you can begin to understand that you are in charge of where you shine the light.

You can choose to focus from moment to moment on what is working in your life, or what is not. You can focus on what you have to appreciate or what you believe is missing in your life, you can decide to focus on what others are not giving you or on what action you can take toward your goals, or on how you can give to others. The question is, which choice of focus is the most empowering for you and for others?

Here are some ideas on how the concepts of Focus can be applied in your home life:

- Applying the concepts of the Focus Unit of the Positive Living Skills program will enhance memory and learning skills which will propel academic achievement forward
- As students build their focus skills they will also build confidence and self-esteem, and also improve their communication and social skills, improving relationships at home
- Assist children to remove as many distractions as possible when participating in activities at home by modelling focusing on one task at a time when possible. When students learn to focus on the present moment they can experience more balance in their lives and more joy at school and at home, finding more to appreciate about school and life in general, improving their outcomes in both areas
- Learning to direct their focus in positive ways teaches children to reframe mistakes into learning experiences, enhancing their potential, and building skills to see the opportunities in situations
- With the implementation of focus skills, the classroom culture and energy will be more focused on applying the learning and on a positive learning experience, which can then flow into a child's learning at home and in life
- Improving focus skills and the ability of students to focus through distractions will improve the learning outcomes of all students, particularly those diagnosed with ADD/ADHD

*****For more information about the Positive Living Skills program, and to access the free resources from the Positive Living Skills family link, visit www.positivelivingskills.com**