

# 101 ways to help your child with school

Bill Spooner



# **Bill Spooner's** **COACHING ACADEMY**

*Every child is born a genius.*



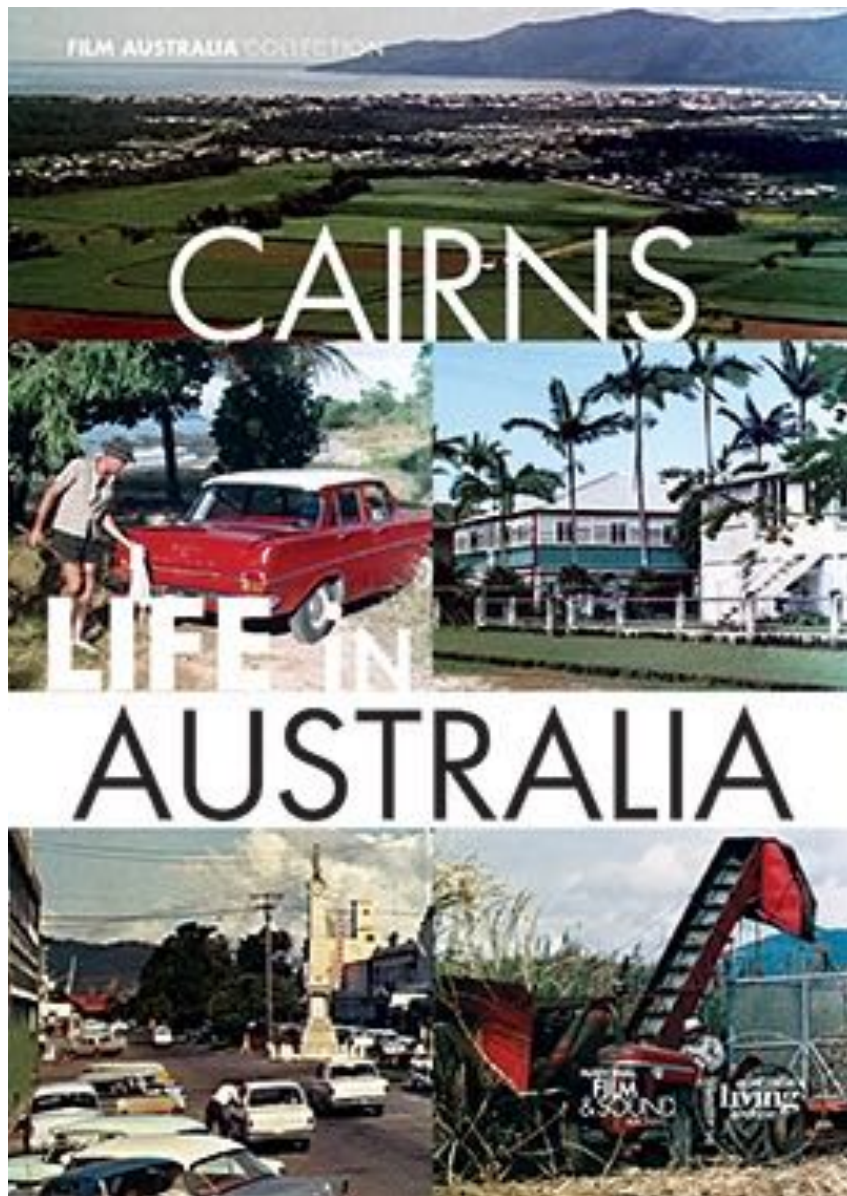
**Supporting Parents with the  
Education of their Children**

**ALL SUBJECTS, ALL AGES, ALL LEVELS**



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Bill Spooner grew

up in the Cairns of the 1960's. His father, deciding that Sydney was no place to bring up children moved the family north in January 1960. Bob Spooner was Cairns' first specialist physician and a pioneer in many areas of tropical medicine.

Bill and his sisters went to Edge Hill Primary School. Bill then went to Trinity Bay High School and attended Cairns High for years eleven and twelve attending The

Southport School on the Gold Coast.

In 1973 he graduated from the Queensland College of Art and completed a Post Graduate Diploma of Teaching in 1975.

Bill taught secondary art at local high schools before moving away from the class room to work in careers education, senior schooling and as an adviser to schools and teachers in curriculum development. This gave Bill the opportunity to broaden his educational interests and to work at the cutting edge of education at a state, national and international level.

He has been actively involved in many professional and community associations and projects, all designed to further the cause of education and to further the ties between schools, parents and the business community.

In 1997 his career saw a major change when he resigned from Education Queensland and set up *Bill Spooner's Coaching Academy* having decided that he could make a greater contribution to children and their parents by working in the private arena. Bill has a passion for motivating children to learn, to achieve success and happiness.

He has five children ranging in age from 42 to 11 and lives with his wife Noeline and three younger children at Lake Placid.



I honestly believe that every child is born a genius. That every child is gifted in some way. No child should ever be given any reason to doubt his or her self worth or ability to achieve.

## *101 ways to help your child with school*



Welcome to my little book. I hope that these words of encouragement will assist you in some small way in the greatest task of your life; the raising of your children. School and education take up a major part of the lives of children. As a parent of five children ranging in age from forty two to to 11 and as an educator for forty one years I have had the joy and privilege of spending a lot of time with my own children and with the children of other people. This, along with working as an adviser to teachers, has given me the opportunity and time to think about learning and how to motivate children to learn.

I have often wondered why it is that babies and very young children embrace learning and development with a natural joy and exuberance and so many older children are turned off by learning, or at least by learning what the society requires them to learn. As educators and parents, we tend to put the blame for our anxiety about their apparent negativity on our children. I believe that instead of asking what is wrong with the children we should be asking what is wrong with us and what we can do about their anxiety.

Kids soon learn that education is not always about learning, but that it is a competitive sorting and grading process. A process of elimination. They change from being the active participants of learning that they were as little ones to be unwilling, passive recipients of learning. Children may feel that they lose control of their learning and have it imposed on them. The preoccupation can be with right and wrong. A black and white approach to life and too often the emphasis can be is on what is wrong. The world is in actual fact an ambiguous place.





1. Give a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach him to fish and he eats for life. Inspire him and he owns a chain of seafood restaurants.

2. When a baby is learning to walk, what do you do? You hold your arms out and offer encouragement. When he falls down onto his fat, little bottom, what does he do? He gives you a big, gummy grin and tries again. Nobody tells him he just failed.

3. Most of us are blessed with children with perfectly functioning organs; lungs, liver, etc.

The brain is also a perfectly functioning organ. Tell this to your children.

4. Your child deserves every success. Believe this.
5. If you have little ones, make it your life's number one priority that, despite everything, you will not let them lose their natural exuberance for learning.
6. The sum total of the world's knowledge is doubling every 2.5 years. Our children will live in a century that will see changes that we cannot possibly imagine. This is a good and wonderful thing because it will provide opportunities for success and happiness never before seen. Rapid change provides for new opportunities. Instil this positive view of the future into your children. Counter the negativity of the doom and gloom merchants.
7. Don't cling to the past. Would you really like to go back to the eighties, seventies, sixties, fifties, let alone the thirties and forties? The world is getting better, despite what the media would have us believe.
8. There is a big bright, beautiful, future ahead. Believe it and tell your children often.
9. Children need to know *how* to learn, more than *what* to learn. Learning how to learn takes the stress out of learning and like everything, once you know how, it's easy. Help them look at creative, lateral ways to achieve solutions.



10. We all have different learning styles. Some of us are visual learners, others are auditory learners and still others are kinaesthetic learners. You can find what style of learning suits your child and

help him or her to cater for this. Some people are not good at sitting at a desk all the time. They need to get up, walk around, and talk to themselves. Visual people learn by making pictures in their minds. An auditory person likes to talk about what is being learned.

11. The best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else. Encourage your children to teach you what they are learning. You will need to be a good student and genuinely curious.
12. If you are the father of boys it is imperative that you are a reader of books. It is never too late to develop the habit of reading. Boys need to see that men value books.
13. Books put us inside other people's heads. They expand our minds. They teach us. Students who are habitual readers are invariably more successful at school than those who are not. Join the library. Buy books
14. *If you read one good book a month to your kids you will do much more for their education than the entire education system will achieve in ten years.* Bruce Courtney
15. Boys need to see that men value learning and knowledge. Many boys regard learning as a feminine activity. Most of their teachers are women. It is mostly Mum who gets anxious about school. It is Mum who goes to the parent teacher night. It is Mum who makes the lunches.
16. Dad, you make the lunches. You ring the school. You initiate a meeting with his teacher. Don't make it a big deal and don't wait for a reason. Do your best to help your child's teacher with his learning.
17. Get to know your child's teachers and establish a relationship with them. The results of this will amaze you.
18. I have always said to my students, "Tell your parents that I am here to help them with your learning." As a parent adopt this attitude.
19. In the past, boys learned by helping their fathers work and by watching. This rarely happens in this post-industrial age that we live in. Fathers go to offices and come home exhausted. Share what you do with you son. It will make him feel valued.

20. Nobody ever lay on his or her deathbed and said, "I wish that I had spent more time at the office."

21. Children have more need



of models than of critics. Be a role model for your children.

22. Surround your son with good adult male role models; his uncles, your mates. As fathers, we all need help to raise our sons. This is how we used to do it. Some cultures still do.
23. Go and buy the book, "Rich Kid Smart Kid" by Robert T. Kijosaki. Don't think about it, do it. Today.
24. Practise the art of positive thinking. If you are positive and enthusiastic about life, your kids will be too.
25. Ask your child who is responsible for his or her learning. The answer will be, "I am." We are talking about the concept of being an independent learner. This is a great thing to think about. As independent learners it is the individual learner who is running the show; who 'owns' the learning. Help your child to assume ownership of his or her learning.
26. Teach them that dreams are not something to wait for; they are something to work for.
27. You are the client of your child's school in the same ways as you are the client of your dentist, doctor or greengrocer. Help the school with this concept.
28. Some parents go into schools with trepidation because it brings back memories of their own schooling. Get over it. Show that you are positive about school.



29. Never criticise the children's teachers in front of them. Have such discussions away from them. Make the discussion positive and if you feel that there is a problem ring the school and make an appointment. You will often find that the problem is merely one of communication and easily fixed. Don't criticise the teaching profession. Show that you value teachers as people who are doing the most important job in the community. They are not doing it because they want to be rich.
30. How many children have you got? How would you like to be locked up with a thousand of them every day? Think about it.



31. Before you choose a new school for your child, visit the school on a working day. Walk around, get the feel of the place. Good schools are happy schools. Good teachers are warm, happy people.
32. Don't punish. Punishment is an out of date concept and leads to more negativity. Use rewards. Give them a treat when they do well. Come home with a pass to the movies, have a celebratory dinner with the family, buy the doodad that you've been getting pestered for.
33. However, be spontaneous with these rewards and don't mention the treat until after the accomplishment. Do not motivate children with extrinsic rewards. This suggests to the child that the activity is difficult or unpleasant otherwise, why is a reward, which has nothing to do with the task at hand, being offered? The wise parent says, "You're really enjoying that book!" not "If you read this book you can go to the movies on Saturday!"
34. Don't criticise. Criticism is not good for self-esteem, particularly for teenagers, many of whom are more fragile than they pretend to be. Use praise. "You got a C- for maths? Honey, that's just fantastic! Next time it will be a C+ for sure."
35. Don't spoil them. They know quite well that they shouldn't have all that they ask for. They are only testing you. It is a way of asking for discipline.
36. Remember the only result that really counts is the final one. The rest are a practice run.
37. In life we learn by making mistakes. The first time we do anything we usually get it wrong. Unfortunately, in education there can be an over emphasis on what is wrong. Emphasise what is right, instead.
38. Learn how the assessment system works. There are two forms of assessment; summative and formative. Summative counts; formative is a progress report.
39. When your child gets an assignment, have a look at the assessment criteria. This will tell you how the assignment will be marked. By monitoring (not doing) the assignment you can help your child stay on task and to the point.
40. There are two kinds of homework. The homework set by the teacher and the homework set by the student (independent learner.)
41. One of the biggest barriers to study is simple time management. You can help with this. Children like routine and predicability. Help to draw up a table with the days of the week across the top. Divide each day into one hour blocks (down the left column) starting at (say) 4 pm or whenever and going through to bedtime. Include the

weekend if study is done then. For each day and hour put in everything that has to be done; dinner, evening chores, part time job and that just has to be watched TV program. Divide the time remaining into two lots. One for set homework and assignments and the other for study and revision.

42. Make a pact that this has to be strictly adhered to. Offer rewards for good time management. After the first hour or so, take in a chocolate or glass of milk and offer quiet encouragement. Help them reward themselves. "I am going to do my algebra first and get it out of the way and then I am going to have a five minute break and do something nice."

43. Talk to them with the same respect that you give to your adult friends.



This is Bella. She recently undertook our Reading Freedom program.

44. They need to always have a novel on the go. This is read in bed before they go to sleep.

45. They need their sense of dignity. Don't belittle them in front of other people.

46. Your (particularly high school) child needs an efficient, organised, systematic study area. There must be good lighting and ventilation. A good-sized desk or table, book shelves and storage systems.

You can buy cheap cardboard ones at office supply shops. Have a pinboard above the desk for assignment deadlines, timetables, current mindmaps (some kids will know what these are), goals, etc. Include the family's positive affirmation of the week. You can find heaps of these on the internet or from books; eg "The power is within me!" Don't make a big deal about this, just make it a simple family routine. Stick one on the fridge too and refer to it.

47. Head banging music is definitely not appropriate to study, no matter what your fourteen-year-old boy may say. Calming, slow beat music definitely is. Encourage soft Baroque (yes Baroque!) music or some of that New Age music playing in the background. Have an electric oil vaporiser going in the room or the house. Don't use one with a flame. Heat calming, pleasant essential oils.

48. Any form of stress or pressure stops learning dead in its tracks. Anxiety causes rapid brain cycle activity and puts us into "Beta". In Beta, we are only using our conscious mind. The "here and now" where our short-term memory is. Think about it like this. You are running late in the morning, trying to get everyone out of the house and chaos is reigning. There is a shoe missing, the dog hasn't been fed, it's garbo day and your car keys have disappeared. You stop; you take a deep breath, close your eyes for

a moment and turn around. And guess what? There are the car keys. Why? Because you calmed down, slowed your brain cycles and went into "Alpha". This is where your memory and subconscious are. This is where kids need to be to learn and study. When they are calm, relaxed and in control of their learning, information gets into their subconscious. If they go into an exam situation in the same state, they can retrieve the information back from the subconscious. Don't be anxious; relax.



49. Make sure that they drink lots of water. Brains need water.

50. Make breakfast the largest meal of the day and turn off the TV at dinnertime. Sit down together at these two meals. Make it slightly formal; an "occasion". Observe the conventions of etiquette. There is not enough of this around nowadays.

51. Courtesy and concern for others are society's lubricants and we learn these from our parents.

52. Fathers, assist your sons to be 'gentlemen' by example. There is equal emphasis on both the words 'gentle' and 'man'. I'm talking about those old fashioned things like the car door, standing up, seating the lady and walking on the kerb side. A father needs to counter the boorish behaviour demonstrated in the mass media by men towards women. Such habits will do nothing but good for your sons' feelings of self worth as well as making him an even more likeable person.

53. Kids need physical activity. Find a sport and help them get good at it. It does wonders for self-esteem. You may have to initiate this, but again don't make a song and dance about it, just quietly do it. Get your teenagers off the couch and outside. Go for a run before breakfast or in the evening with them. It will be good for you too.

54. Kids also need time out. Time to goof off and do nothing. Time to be kids. Time to get dirty and go feral. Give them this time.

55. Too many kids have too much crammed into too little time. School, sport, part time job, dancing lessons, etc. These are good, but strike a balance. Relax, they'll turn out OK. You did.

56. Research has shown that children who are good at fantasising are far better learners and cope better with disappointment than those who have lost this ability. But fantasy requires time, and time is the most endangered commodity in our lives. Children need time to dream, to think, to invent solutions to problems, to cope with stressful experiences, and to simply fulfil the universal need for solitude.



57. Learn relaxation therapy and teach it to your kids.

58. Henry Ford once said: "Whether you believe you can or believe you can't, you're right." You gotta have attitude! We talk to ourselves at least 50 000 times a day..... and who listens? Help your kids to make their self-talk positive and to accept themselves and others. Help them to list and write down their good points.

59. Be grateful and help your children to be grateful for life and all the good things around - family, friends, good times and health. Rejoice and be thankful.



60. Talk to your children about classroom confidence. Identify the main purpose of the lesson. Have water and be fed. Choose a good seat. Participate and interact. Ask questions. Use positive self-talk.

61. Nobody has the right to interfere with another's learning. Classroom management is part of a teacher's job. Unruly, disruptive behaviour is not on and must not be tolerated. No excuses.

62. Your good rapport and positive relationship with the school will be of benefit to all.

63. Exams require long-term preparation and the day to day work at school is essential for success. As the exam approaches, your child's systematic, calm routine at home and at school will ensure success. The summaries and mindmaps are done and filed for easy access. The questions have been asked, the problems solved. Your child is calm, in control and confident. He or she has systematically revisited the summaries due to the effective time management that you both put together. There has been exercise, good food and a calm, supportive family. A family can be two people. Success is assured!

64. Every child is born a genius and is gifted in at least one way. Recent study has shown that we have multiple intelligences. There are at least seven of them and the old notion of I.Q is no longer adequate. Your child is gifted in at least one of these areas whether it be logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic (these are the athletes and dancers), musically, verbal linguistic, inter or intra personal. Put the spotlight on the gift and nurture the others.

65. Some people learn the concept of humility from their parents. Others learn from bitter experience.
66. Change the way that you ask your children to do things. Instead of saying 'can you?' or 'could you?' say 'would you?' or 'will you?'. Don't say, "Could you do your homework now?" Instead say, "Would you do your homework now, please?" Instead of saying, "Can you take the rubbish out?" say, "Will you take the rubbish out, please?" 'Can' and 'could' imply competence and children can think of a million reasons why they can not or could not. Would and will still gives them the power to negotiate but not a reason to say why they can not or could not. This works from toddlers ("Would you not throw your toys?") to teenagers. Consciously practise this for a week until it becomes your habit. I guarantee that you will be astounded by the results. To know more about this read John Gray's brilliant book *Children Are From Heaven*. He is the same author who wrote *Men Are From Mars. Women are from Venus*, another brilliant book.
67. Talk to your children often about their learning. Teenagers can be reluctant to talk if they expect a lecture or criticism. They also don't want to know how it was in your day. Talk in positive, affirmative ways without being demanding or pushy. Look for every opportunity to praise and encourage.
68. Make the mornings enjoyable, relaxed and smooth. The children will arrive at school relaxed and ready to learn. Lateness, arguments and tension can affect the whole day's learning.



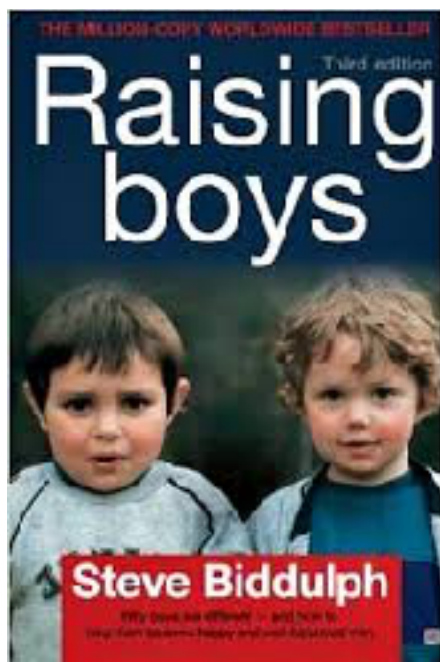
69. Don't tell them that their fears are silly. They are real and if you try to understand, you will reassure them.

70. Children learn different things at different times and at different speeds. One child may walk at nine months, his brother at twelve. One child may take to reading quickly, the other to numbers. Still others may be putting the growth into physical learning. Don't compare one child to another. Don't be anxious about the differences. Expect them and enjoy

them.

71. The fear of failure may often hold children back from learning new skills. Be supportive when they flunk.

72. Einstein wrote, "It is a grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of coercion." When a one-year-old falls down while learning to walk we say, "Good try! You'll catch on soon!" No caring parent would say. "Every baby your age should be walking. You'd better be walking by Friday!"
73. Children are curious and risk takers. They have lots of courage. They venture into a world that is immense and dangerous. A child initially trusts life and the processes of life. Nurture this.
74. Young children learn by example. They watch you and they will see what you're about by what you do, not what you say.
75. Boys should start school later than girls should. At this age, boys are mentally less developed than girls, especially in fine-motor coordination which means that holding pencils and scissors is more difficult. They are still in the stage of gross motor development and want to move their large muscle around and not sit still. They see that the girls are better than they are at writing and drawing and the teacher is a woman. They think that school is for girls. Starting a year later gives them time to catch up with the girls, a better chance to succeed and greater self-esteem.
76. The first three years of schooling are the most important.
77. In twelve years of schooling, the most important teacher is the first one.
78. As I write this, the thought for the week at Bill Spooner's Coaching Academy is "Passion is powerful....nothing was ever achieved without it and nothing can ever take its place." Adolescence is a passionate time. Kids want an intense and engaged learning experience with men and women who challenge them. Learning should be fun and energetic and the passion in the child should be matched by parents and teachers.



79. Steve Biddulph, in his book *Raising Boys*, makes the point that boys make trouble to get noticed. Girls **ask** for help, boys **act** for help. Boys who act as if they don't care, really do want to be successful and to be included. Often we make it too hard for them and then we punish them. At one time, the 'threat' of their vitality was squashed with the cane; now it is often done by tedious and bureaucratic 'report' systems. These are based on the psychology of distance. What they need are strong adults who are close and involved with them so that if there is a problem, it's easier to talk.



80. People are by nature learning animals. Birds fly; fish swim; humans think and learn. Therefore, we do not need to motivate children into learning by wheedling, bribing and bullying. We do not need to keep picking away at their minds to make sure that they are learning.

81. John Holt, in his book, *How Children Learn*, describes the the natural learning style of young children.

"The child is curious. He wants to make sense out of things, find out how things work, gain competence and control over himself and his environment, and do what he can see other people doing. He is open, perceptive, and experimental. He does not merely observe the world around him, he does not shut himself off from the strange, complicated world around him, but tastes it, touches it, hefts it, bends it, breaks it. To find out how reality works, he works on it. He is bold. He is not afraid of making mistakes. And he is patient. He can tolerate an extraordinary amount of uncertainty, confusion, ignorance, and suspense... School is not a place that gives much time, or opportunity, or reward, for this kind of thinking and learning. Make the time at home."

82. Children learn by asking questions, not by answering them. Toddlers ask many questions, and so do school children - until about year three. By that time, many of them have learned an unfortunate fact, that in school, it can be more important for self-protection to hide one's ignorance about a subject than to learn more about it, regardless of one's curiosity. Tell them that they can always go to the staffroom during the break.

83. Why is it that during a child's first two years that we trust him or her to know how to go about learning? Nobody worries that a baby will be too lazy or unmotivated to learn things; we assume that every baby is born wanting to learn the things that he needs to know in order to understand and participate in the world around him.

84. Praise and acknowledge your children for who they are and not just for the things they do. It will alleviate the stress of comparing and competing.

85. The structure of schools assumes that children are not natural learners, but must be compelled to learn through the efforts of others. From now on, no matter what the age of your children, work toward the mindset that we are all individual learners and others are there only to assist us in this process. Think about it this way. Pre-school age children have this mindset. You as an adult have this mindset. If you want to learn something new, whether it is a new accounting program, fly-fishing, or Japanese cuisine, you go and do it. You might engage the help of others, but you direct the learning. Why is it that the only people who do not direct their own learning are too often children at school? We blame them for not being motivated to learn. Perhaps as

adults and as a community we should look at what we do to make learning an onerous chore for some children for 12 years of their lives.

86. Who knows more about your computer you or your fourteen year-old boy? How did he learn this? He and his mates taught themselves.

87. Your child is an important separate person and needs respect to be allowed to say what he or she thinks, likes and notices, to be noticed, to make decisions.

88. A hundred years from now it will not matter what your bank account was, the sort of house you lived in, or the kind of car that you drove...but the world may be a different place because you were important in the life of a child.

Anonymous



89. Don't imply that their inappropriate behaviour means that they are bad. It erodes their sense of worthiness.

90. Be patient. He might be a late bloomer.

91. Teach them that dreams are not something to wait for; they are something to work for.

92. There are three ways to get something done: do it yourself, employ someone, or forbid your children to do it.

93. A child learns best about the world through first hand experience.

94. If you've had a bad day, don't take your frustration out on your children.

95. *Don't throw away your friendship with your teenager over behaviour that has no moral significance. There will be plenty of real issues that require you to stand like a rock. Save your big guns for these crucial confrontations.* Dr. James C. Dobson



96. Strange new problems are being reported in the growing generations of children whose mothers were always there, driving them around, helping them with their homework - an inability to endure pain or discipline or pursue any self-sustained goal of any sort, a devastating

*boredom with life.* Betty Friedan

97. We do not necessarily love our children just because they are our children, but because of the friendship formed while we raised them.
98. Raise your children to feel that they can accomplish any task or goal they decide upon and you will have succeeded as a parent and given them the greatest of all blessings.
99. "When your child started at school it was never their intention to struggle and fail; only succeed and make you proud." Liz Dunoon.
100. One day, Debbie who is our reading specialist, came in with the positive affirmations below. I thought this so fantastic that I had it made into a sign to hang in the foyer.

You're fun!	You're growing up!	You're learning!
You're a winner!	You're so loving!	You always do your best!
You're my friend!	You try hard!	Super!
I trust you!	You're special!	Remarkable job!
You're important!	Outstanding!	Beautiful work!
You mean a lot to me!	Excellent!	You learn well!
You make me so happy!	Great!	Spectacular!
You're mine!	Neat!	You're precious!
You're one of a kind!	Well done!	You make me laugh!
I knew you could do it!	You're my darling!	You can do it!
Remarkable!	You belong here!	You're so thoughtful!
I'm proud of you!	Great discovery!	I see you're trying!
Fantastic!	You figured it out!	That's so cool!
Nice work!	Magnificent!	That's awesome!
Looking good!	Marvellous!	How do you do that?
You're beautiful to me!	Terrific!	You deserve a medal!
Now you've got!	You're important!	You are incredible!
Phenomenal!	A+ job!	Bravo!
You're sensational!	You're my buddy!	What a happy face!
You make my day!	You did it all by yourself?	Super work!
It's fun to do this with you	How nice!	I like sharing with you!
How smart!	Creative job!	You amaze me!
Exceptional performance!	Good job!	You're so special!
Fantastic try!	You're unique!	You are very responsible!
Super job!	You're a peace maker!	You're a good helper!



You share well!	I'm so glad you said sorry!	You are exciting!
You learned it right!	Give me a big hug!	What an imagination!
How creative!	You're fun!	I can't believe you're so clever!
Good for you!	What a good listener!	I wouldn't want you any other way!

101. Have you ruled out learning difficulties? Over the years I have seen very many normal, intelligent children who for some reason have difficulty with learning. Invariably, these children are dyslexic or have Irlen syndrome or both. Unfortunately both of these are not understood by the education system. Pretty well every child that I have seen who is receiving learning support is dyslexic or has Irlen syndrome.



## Do You Have the Gift of Dyslexia?

**This checklist provides a guide to help a parent/educator determine if a child has symptoms of dyslexia. Of course, there are no two people alike and one would not have all the characteristics listed. Different people have different characteristics to different degrees**

Appears bright, intelligent and articulate but is unable to read, write or spell at grade level.

Labelled lazy, dumb, careless, immature, "not trying hard enough", or "behaviour problem".

Isn't "behind enough" or "bad enough" to be helped in the school setting.

High in IQ, tests well orally but not in written form.

Feels dumb, poor self-esteem; covers up weaknesses with compensatory strategies; easily frustrated and emotional about school reading or testing.

Talented in art, drama, music, sports, mechanics, storytelling, sales, business, designing, building or engineering.

Seems to "zone-out" or daydream often; gets lost easily or loses track of time.

Difficulty sustaining attention; seems "hyper".

earns best through hands-on experience, demonstrations, experimentation, observation and visual aids.

## **Memory and Cognition**

Excellent long-term memory for experiences, locations and faces.

Poor memory for sequences, facts and information that has not been experienced.

Thinks primarily with images and feelings, not sounds or words (little internal dialogue).

## **Behaviour, Health, Development, Personality**

Extremely disorderly or compulsively orderly.

Can be class clown, troublemaker or too quiet.

Had unusually early or late developmental stages (talking, walking, crawling, tying shoelaces.)

Prone to ear infections, sensitive to foods, additives and chemical products.

Can be extra heavy or light sleeper, bedwetting beyond appropriate age.

Unusually high or low tolerance for pain.

Strong sense of justice, emotionally sensitive, strives for perfection.

Mistakes and symptoms increase dramatically with confusion, time pressure and emotional distress or poor health.

## **Vision, Reading and Spelling**

Complains of dizziness, headaches or stomach aches while reading.

Confused by letters, numbers, words, sequences or verbal explanations.

Reading or writing shows repetition, adding words, transposing, omission, substitution, reversal of letters, numbers and/or words.

Complains of feeling or seeing non-existent movement while reading, writing or copying.

Seems to have difficulty with vision, yet eye exams don't reveal a problem.

Extremely keen sighted and observant, or lacks depth perception and peripheral vision.

Reads and re-reads with little comprehension.

Spells phonetically and inconsistently.

## **Writing and Motor Skills**

Trouble with writing or copying; pencil grip is unusual; handwriting varies or is illegible.

Clumsy, uncoordinated, poor at ball or team sports, difficulties with fine and/or gross motor skills and tasks, prone to motion sickness.

Can be ambidextrous and often confuses left/right, over/under.

### **Hearing and Speech**

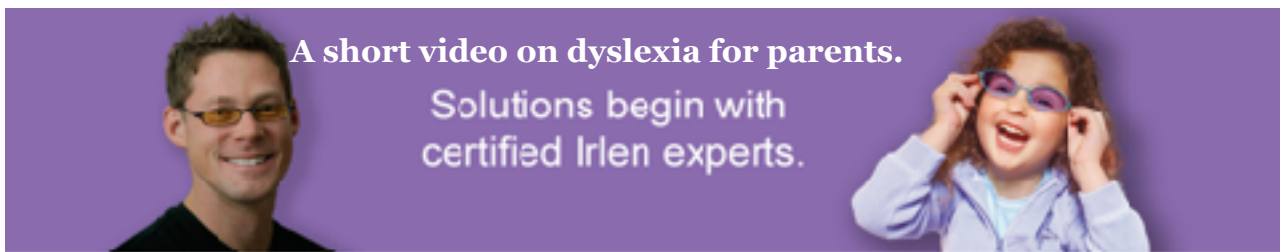
Has difficulty telling time, learning sequence information or tasks or being on time.

Computing math shows dependence on finger counting and other tricks; knows answers but can't do it on paper.

Can count, but has difficulty counting objects and dealing with money.

Can do arithmetic, but fails word problems, cannot grasp algebra or higher level maths

## **What is Irlen Syndrome?**



Irlen Syndrome (also referred to at times as Meares-Irlen Syndrome, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, and Visual Stress) is a perceptual processing disorder. It is not an optical problem. It is a problem with the brain's ability to process visual information. This problem tends to run in families and is not currently identified by other standardized educational or medical tests.

Irlen Syndrome can affect many different areas, including:

Academic and work performance

Behavior

Attention

Ability to sit still

Concentration

This problem can manifest itself differently for each individual. This problem is not remediable and is often a lifetime barrier to learning and performance. If you suffer from any of the following, Irlen Syndrome might be your problem:

Print looks different

Environment looks different

Slow or inefficient reading



- Poor comprehension
- Eye strain
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Difficulty with math computation
- Difficulty copying
- Difficulty reading music
- Poor sports performance
- Poor depth-perception
- Low motivation
- Low self-esteem

### **Symptoms of Irlen Syndrome**

Light Sensitivity:

Bothered by glare, fluorescent lights, bright lights, sunlight and sometimes lights at night.

Some individuals experience physical symptoms and feel tired, sleepy, dizzy, anxious, or irritable. Others experience headaches, mood changes, restlessness or have difficulty staying focused, especially with bright or fluorescent lights.

Reading Problems:

- Poor comprehension
- Misreads words
- Problems tracking from line to line
- Reads in dim light
- Skips words or lines
- Reads slowly or hesitantly
- Takes breaks
- Loses place
- Avoids reading

Discomfort:

- Strain and fatigue
- Tired or sleepy
- Headaches or nausea
- Fidgety or restless
- Eyes that hurt or become watery

Attention and Concentration Problems:

Problems with concentration when reading and doing academic tasks.

Often people can appear to have other conditions, such as attention deficit disorder, and are given medication unnecessarily.

#### Writing Problems:

- Trouble copying
- Unequal spacing
- Unequal letter size
- Writing up or downhill
- Inconsistent spelling

#### Other Characteristics:

- Strain or fatigue from computer use
- Difficulty reading music
- Sloppy, careless math errors
- Misaligned numbers in columns
- Ineffective use of study time
- Lack of motivation
- Grades do not reflect the amount of effort

#### Depth Perception:

- Clumsiness
- Difficulty catching balls
- Difficulty judging distances
- Additional caution necessary while driving

#### Distortions:

Words on the page lack clarity or stability; i.e., may appear to be blurry, moving, or disappear

This short video demonstrates the difference that Irlen spectral filters can make for a child.

# Bill Spooner's Coaching Academy

## **"Every child is born a genius"**

Bill Spooner's Coaching Academy brings to Cairns' parents and their children a dynamic and professional educational service designed to help children reach their true potential.

Children from year one to year twelve and adults are coached in all areas of learning including maths from preschool to university level, reading, English and the sciences. Specialist motivational, study and time planning courses are also taught.

The staff are all highly experienced, practising professionals who have all been personally "head hunted" for their brilliance by Bill.

Our belief based on studies of business people, scientists and sports people is that successful people are optimists, like themselves, enjoy the doing and feel part of something bigger than themselves.



Students work in small specialist groups on individually tailored program in a calm, positive atmosphere based on the principles of Alpha Learning.

Students are initially diagnosed to assess their needs before a program is put in place for them. All parents receive a quarterly progress report.



Successful children who are achieving are happy children and at Bill Spooner's Coaching Academy that is the bottom line. Happy children.

**For more details on how we can help you and your children, visit my website or phone 4141 3232:**

<http://www.billspoonerscoaching.com>

***Do it now.***

***You become successful the moment  
you start moving towards a  
worthwhile goal.***

**Ensure success for your child.**