
From The Green Couch

Term 2 - 2026



We Tell Our Children, “Your Best Is Good Enough”... But Do We Really Mean It?

As parents, we say it often. We tell our children that all we expect is for them to do their best. We reassure them that marks are not everything, that effort matters more than perfection, and that we love them regardless of what appears on a report card. These words are important. They provide comfort, security, and encouragement. Yet if we are honest with ourselves, many of us struggle to fully live out the message we so readily communicate.

The truth is that parenting in today's world can feel overwhelming. We are constantly reminded of how competitive life has become. We hear about limited university spaces, rising academic expectations, and the importance of building a strong résumé from an increasingly young age. We see stories of exceptional achievement on social media and hear about children who seem to excel in every possible area. It is therefore understandable that we worry about our own children's futures. We want them to have opportunities. We want them to succeed. We want them to be happy, secure, and capable of navigating an uncertain world.

The pressure we place on our children rarely comes from a lack of love. In fact, it usually comes from a place of deep love and commitment. However, alongside that love often sits something else: fear. Fear that they will not reach their potential. Fear that they will miss out on opportunities. Fear that they will struggle in a world that appears to reward only the very best. These fears are natural, but they can sometimes influence our expectations in ways we do not even realise.

Children are remarkably perceptive. They pay attention not only to what we say, but also to what we do. They notice our reactions when marks are lower than expected. They hear the extra questions we ask after a disappointing test. They see our excitement when results exceed expectations and our concern when they do not. Even when we tell them that their best is enough, they are constantly gathering information about what we truly value. Many children learn, often unintentionally, that achievement brings approval. They begin to associate their worth with their performance.



A child who earns 90% feels successful, while a child who earns 65% may feel as though they have failed, even if that mark reflects genuine effort and significant growth. Some children become so fearful of disappointing their parents that they hide test papers, avoid difficult conversations, or become intensely self-critical whenever they make mistakes. In these moments, the message they receive is not that their best is good enough, but that their best is only acceptable if it produces a particular outcome.

As an educational psychologist, I often meet young people who are carrying far more pressure than the adults around them realise. They worry about their marks, their future, and whether they are meeting expectations. Many are exhausted. They balance demanding academic workloads alongside sport, cultural activities, leadership commitments, family responsibilities, and social pressures. Yet despite working incredibly hard, they often feel as though they are never doing enough. They live with the constant belief that there is always another assignment to complete, another test to prepare for, or another standard to meet.

Part of the challenge lies in how we define success. Society tends to celebrate visible achievements: distinctions, awards, leadership positions, sporting accolades, and university acceptances.



These accomplishments are certainly worth celebrating. However, they represent only a small part of a young person's development. We do not always recognise the courage it takes for a shy learner to contribute in class, the perseverance required to improve from 40% to 60%, or the resilience shown by a teenager who continues to show up despite facing personal struggles. Growth often happens quietly, away from certificates and trophies.

Every child is different. They have different strengths, interests, personalities, and capacities. One child may thrive academically with relative ease, while another may need to work significantly harder to achieve average results. One child may excel in mathematics, while another shines in art, music, relationships, leadership, or practical problem-solving. There is no single measure of human potential, yet academic achievement often becomes the benchmark against which children evaluate themselves.

This does not mean that parents should lower expectations or stop encouraging effort. Children benefit from structure, accountability, and guidance. They need adults who believe in them and who challenge them to grow. However, there is an important distinction between encouraging excellence and demanding perfection. Excellence focuses on effort, learning, and personal growth. Perfection focuses on outcomes and leaves little room for mistakes. Excellence inspires. Perfection exhausts.



Perhaps the real test of whether we believe that our children's best is good enough comes when their best does not match our hopes. Can we remain supportive when a mark is lower than expected? Can we celebrate progress even when the final result is not exceptional? Can we recognise effort, resilience, kindness, and character with the same enthusiasm that we recognise achievement? These are not always easy questions to answer, particularly when our own fears about the future begin to surface.

Children need to know that their value does not fluctuate with their performance. They need to experience, through both our words and our actions, that they are loved and accepted regardless of whether they succeed or fail. They need the freedom to make mistakes, to learn, to grow, and occasionally to fall short. This sense of unconditional acceptance does not reduce motivation; rather, it provides the secure foundation from which genuine confidence and resilience can develop.

The next time we tell our children, "Your best is good enough," it may be worth pausing to reflect on what that statement truly means. If we want our children to believe those words, we must be prepared to demonstrate them, especially when outcomes are disappointing. We must learn to separate our fears from their journey and recognise that success is not defined by a percentage, a ranking, or a report card.

Ultimately, our children will not remember every mark they achieved at school. What they are more likely to remember is how they felt when they came home with those marks. They will remember whether they felt seen, supported, and accepted. They will remember whether home was a place of pressure or a place of safety. And perhaps one of the greatest gifts we can offer them is the certainty that, regardless of the outcome, they were always more important than their achievements.

Dr Chaland van Zyl
Educational Psychologist

Some of what we got up to this term:

Grade R - Wow, this place is big

We introduced the girls to the importance of friendship, kindness, and body safety in a fun and engaging way. The talk encouraged learners to build caring friendships while developing the confidence to speak up and seek help from a trusted adult when needed.

Grade 1 - Classmates and Friends Make the World Brighter

Our Grade 1 learners participated in a fun and interactive workshop on friendship, kindness, and being thoughtful classmates. Through stories, discussions, and activities, they explored what it means to be a good friend, use kind words, solve problems respectfully, and help others feel included.

Grade 2 - The not so friendly friend

Through the story of 'The not so friendly friend', the girls explored what healthy friendships look like, how to recognise behaviours that cross personal boundaries, and the importance of speaking up when something doesn't feel right. The workshop encouraged learners to build positive, respectful relationships while developing the confidence to set healthy boundaries.

Grade 3 - You can be a hero

Through a relatable story and engaging discussions, the girls learnt how to recognise bullying, support their peers with kindness, and respond safely by speaking up, including others, or seeking help from a trusted adult. The talk encouraged learners to be courageous, compassionate, and to help create a school environment where everyone feels safe, valued, and included.

Grade 4 - Bullying

This session focused on understanding bullying and its impact. Learners explored how words and actions affect others, the "15-second rule" for pausing before reacting, and the ripple effect of behaviour, linking it to both school expectations and broader consequences.

Grade 5 – Peer Pressure and Friendships

Learners explored how to navigate peer pressure while maintaining their individuality. The session emphasised that while friendships are important, it's essential to think independently, along with practical ways to recognise healthy friendships and be a good friend.

Grade 6 – Resilience and Peer Pressure

This session focused on building resilience, helping learners "bounce back" from challenges - while also equipping them with skills to handle peer pressure and make positive choices.

Grade 7 – Run Your Own Race

This session focused on managing comparison and recognising individual strengths. Learners are encouraged to embrace their own journey and define success in ways that are meaningful to them.

Grade 8 – Friendships and Relationships

This workshop examines the changing nature of friendships during adolescence. Learners discuss healthy and unhealthy relationships, friendship challenges, and strategies for building and maintaining meaningful connections.

Grade 9 – Finding Your True North

This session focuses on values, purpose, and personal direction. Learners reflect on what matters most to them and how these values can guide their choices and decision-making.

Study Skills - Study Skills – Grades 4–6, Grade 8 and Grade 10 learners attended study skills sessions, with a particular focus on developing effective time management strategies. These sessions are designed to support learners in managing increasing academic demands. All termly talks are intentionally structured to build on one another, ensuring ongoing development and reinforcement of key life skills throughout the year.



Drama for Life: Anti-Bullying Programme

This term, our Primary School is excited to launch the Drama for Life (DFL) Anti-Bullying Programme in partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand. Through engaging, drama-based activities, learners will develop empathy, respectful communication, emotional awareness, and positive relationship skills. Led by Ronewa Mphephu as part of our Educational Psychology offering, this proactive programme aims to equip learners with the skills and confidence to build a kind, inclusive, and supportive school community.

Community Outreach Projects

Community engagement continues to be a vibrant part of school life, reflecting our commitment to Serviam and social responsibility. This term, our school community has supported numerous outreach initiatives, including donations to local organisations, fundraising for the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital, CANSA, CHOC, and Reach For A Dream, as well as community projects such as World Oceans Day and the Grade 12 outreach at Light of Hope Homes.

Most recently, our families generously supported our Mandela Day collection, enabling us to assist several organisations, including Kids Haven, the Teddy Bear Foundation (Krugersdorp), Witkoppen Clinic, Witkoppen School, and the Three2Six Project. Thank you to everyone who continues to embody the spirit of Serviam through your generosity and compassion.

Meet our Team



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Some of Our Favourite Quotes...

"Be the person you needed as a child"

- Chaland's favourite quote

"Promise me you'll always remember: You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

- Lerelle's favourite quote

"Healing is not a straight line. Be patient with yourself."

- Ronewa's favourite quote

"Be kind, you don't know what people are going through."

- Codelia's favourite quote