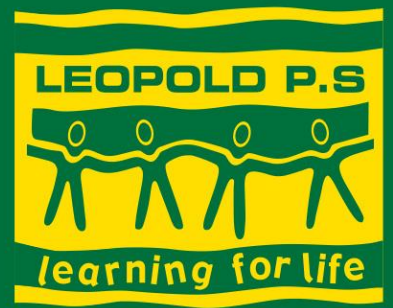


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The Great Outdoors

How can we keep a **Healthy Mindset** no matter what the situation?

I recently heard a Mental Health expert state that the single most helpful practice for maintaining a **Healthy Mindset** was to be in the outdoors spending time in nature – exercising, playing, relaxing or working.

My wife and I have been loving extended walks around so many picturesque parts of the Bellarine Peninsula. We are so lucky down here – there are numerous attractive and stimulating options.

Some very healthy things happen to our minds and bodies when we exercise in our great outdoors. Here's some of the benefits:

- Endorphins and Dopamine are released into our brain that lift our moods
- Unwanted chemicals are expelled
- We receive a Vitamin D intake
- We burn off calories
- Our senses are stimulated and an appreciation of nature is enhanced
- Our heart rate increases and we breathe in fresh air that refreshes our brains
- We experience a mind shift – like a recalibration
- Improved sleep patterns result



For parents one great benefit of doing the above is that it has the potential to counteract the **Overuse of Screen Time**. Many families are struggling with issues around gaming and the misuse of media. It's not always easy to maintain the necessary limits in this area, so if healthy alternatives can be fostered, the issues around the mistreatment of these devices may be managed a little easier.

One mum I was chatting with recently was celebrating the **Family Project** in their backyard that her child was happily involved in. She explained that her child was stimulated and entertained for some hours while they worked together as a family on clearing and cutting up some unwanted plants.

Another great spin off of the above, is that important connections and opportunities to communicate with our children are created.

Some suggestions that may be helpful:

- Do a weekly family outing to a spot around the area for a walk or.....
- Go to a park to kick or throw a ball
- Ride the bikes together
- Walk the dog near or far
- Develop a family project - plant a garden or clean up the backyard together
- Go to the beach or hit the surf
- Go fishing
- Have a picnic in the backyard

All the best everyone. Stay positive.

Rob Hunter LPS Chaplain

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