



Identify and assist students affected by trauma, anxiety, and school refusal. Practical *Nurture* strategies for all school staff to help students thrive in the classroom and bounce back from challenges.

What is Nurture?

Nurture is defined as “to feed or support ... to educate or train...”(Collins dictionary 2021) *Nurture* requires a caring adult to support children and young people’s social, emotional and cognitive needs. Schools are well placed to be that caring adult and to empower children and young people to thrive.

Nurture In Schools Australia uses international best practice **to identify students with social, emotional and cognitive needs. Identified needs are addressed based on 50 years of evidence based practice** to ensure children and young people receive the latest neuroscience based behavioural strategies. *Nurture* provides classroom teachers with targeted individual/group support for the child or young persons developmental needs.

Nurture research findings in the average classroom

36% of children had Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs as identified by the online survey tool.

1 in 10 children had high levels of SEMH.

1 in 4 children were experiencing moderate difficulties.

Boys were three times more likely to experience high SEMH needs compared to girls.

29% of children did not feel emotionally secure.

28% of children were having difficulties giving purposeful attention.

27% of children were having difficulties accommodating to others.

The Boxall Childhood Project. Nurtureuk 2019

The Six Nurture Principles for Learning

- Learning and achievement is enhanced through meeting social, emotional, and cognitive needs.
- How we communicate impacts on mental health, learning and achievement.
- Nurture cultures promote reflective practices.
- Self-esteem and a sense of identity are key to positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Feeling emotionally safe is essential for mental health, learning and achievement.
- Celebration of diversity enriches the community

The history of Nurture

Over 50 year history originating in London in response to large numbers of students presenting to schools with impoverished early nurturing experiences. Providing *Nurture* in schools using international best practice based on research and evidence has changed the trajectory of children’s and young people’s lives.

Nurture is embedded in Attachment Theory, Trauma-Informed Practice and the latest Neuroscientific research. **“Across species we need nurturing contact and touch which help generate endorphins and hormones, increasing growth and strengthening the immune system.”** Prof. Francis McGlone *The Neurobiology of attachment* 2021 University of Liverpool

Outcomes of Nurture in schools

Provides the opportunity to:

- **Improve students’ sense of belonging, wellbeing and engagement**
- **Develop students’ pro-social skills, and dramatically reduce behavioural difficulties**
- **Increase school retention rates and lower absenteeism**
- **Enhance academic achievement**
- **Build staff capacity and staff wellbeing across the whole school**

Nurture Groups: For all educational settings. Nurtureuk.org

Identify and address social, emotional and cognitive needs - The Digital Developmental Portrait

An online survey tool using over 50 years of evidence informed best practice to identify students with social, emotional and cognitive needs. It can be used to target individual students, whole class/group or the entire school. Targets and behavioural strategies are provided dependant on the results of the data.

Benefits include: Identifying student strengths and areas for development quickly and easily; identify students who need additional support; Provides targeted interventions to address students’ needs; provides data to monitor students social, emotional and cognitive progress; and provides social, emotional and cognitive data evidence for the allocation of resources.



Why do schools need Nurture?

Children and young people who experience **trauma and/or loss, separation and grief** of a significant adult will benefit from the ***Nurture*** initiative academically, socially, with improved behaviour and self and social regulation in and outside of school.

Schools acknowledge the **social, emotional and cognitive stressors** that children, young people, families and society experience. The *Nurture Developmental Portrait* provides schools with a scientific tool that maps students social, emotional and cognitive needs against their developmental stage, which is often different to their chronological age. When these needs are not addressed it undermines students ability to learn to their potential, as well as their ability to regulate themselves, resulting in disengagement and poor behaviour. *Nurture* training provides classroom teachers with targeted individual/group strategies and support for addressing identified gaps. These are based on 50 years of evidence informed best practice.

Identification and causes of students with a potential brainstem trauma

How to identify this student?

- The student is hypervigilant, does not trust adults, fidgets, rocks on chair, overly touchy, lack of personal space.

What are the causes?

- Traumatised** students become stuck in the brainstem, or if they feel threatened they will retreat to the brainstem without making a decision to.
- Cortisol** is best known for producing the stress response of fight/fright/freeze/flock, it helps the body respond to stress/danger.
- Memory** – Two types of memory, 1. Explicit memory is conscious, intentional recollection of facts and 2. Implicit memory is unconscious perception and emotion, the body remembers and it can trigger challenging behaviours.

Strategies for a student with a potential brainstem trauma

Safety - Breathing, self-calming, relationships and love, mindful activities, meditation, mindfulness colouring, sequencing, counting.

Movement - Rocking, rhythm, dance and yoga.

Music, singing, laughter, reciprocal movement and fun, drums, rhythm cups, clapping rhymes and instruments.

Touch, essential oils.

One of the most helpful ways to move children and young people from these super-high anxiety states, to their calmer 'thinking brain', is patterned, repetitive rhythmic activity.

Brainstem calming activities need to be:

Relational - offered by a safe adult

Relevant - developmentally-matched to the child rather than matched to their actual age

Repetitive - patterned

Rewarding – pleasurable

Rhythmic – resonant with neural patterns

Respectful - of child and family

Brainstem Calmer Activities

Walking – individual – being asked to do regular jobs so that there are walking breaks in between tasks. Being asked to show visitors where things are in the school. Whole class – being given information whilst walking, a walking mindfulness exercise.

Tapping – individual / whole class – self tapping on knees (left/right) to think of good or positive things, self tapping whilst breathing, self tapping whilst engaged in something fun.

Breathing – individual – trusted adult partnership breathing (child matches adults breathing using an agreed non verbal cue). Whole class – blowing things as a focussed activity (with the primary aim to do deep breathing), make it a classroom tradition to take 3 deep breathes, held for 3 seconds, before starting a new piece of work.

Nurture Training Opportunities

- Introduction to a *Nurture* in Schools Approach (2 hour online).
- Whole School *Nurture* Approach for Learning (WSNAL).
- *Nurture* Practitioner Intervention Programme (Sylvia Lucas).
- Enhancing the Whole School *Nurture* Approach for Learning.
- Strengthening the Whole School *Nurture* Approach for Learning.
- The Developmental Portrait training.
- Evidence Informed Development of a *Nurture* Room.