

JSA Early Support Aboriginal Literacy Project

This project is a volunteering opportunity for people to help young Aboriginal children in primary school in the Northern Sydney Region.

The idea behind it is to help the children raise the level of their literacy before they progress too far in the infants/primary school system. If they drop behind in basic literacy in the early years they can have great difficulty in completing their schooling.

Aim

The aim of the project is to provide each child with a daily opportunity to learn and practise. The one-to-one work with the volunteers has a definitely beneficial and positive effect, not only on the child's learning, but it also tends to raise their self-esteem. It is much appreciated by the parents and the participating schools and the volunteers derive much enjoyment and satisfaction from their participation and contribution.

What is needed

Volunteer participation involves a regular commitment during school terms of an hour or so on one morning per week during school time. No teaching qualifications or experience are necessary. Materials and assistance are provided by the staff of the school.

It will be necessary for you to arrange a Working with Children check, which can be done on the Internet.

All you really need is the time and the enthusiasm to really make a difference in a young Aboriginal life.

History

Planning and consultation started in 2003 after a symposium held by Jews for Social Action (JSA) of the North Shore Temple Emanuel, Chatswood,— part of a series held every year. This one was on Aboriginal issues and there were Aboriginal speakers, including Linda Burney, Pat O'Shane and Bill Jonas.

In 2005, in cooperation with the Guringai Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, a small group of volunteers from JSA initiated a pilot project tutoring one six-year-old Aboriginal girl.

Since 2005 our volunteer tutors have supported over 50 children at 20 primary schools in the Northern Sydney region.

This project has the support of the Reconciliation Network, Northern Sydney Region, and is conducted in collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Team at the NSW Dept of Education's Regional Office.

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