

Media release



29 May 2020

Schools resume after coronavirus shutdown amid concerns for parent mental health

With the majority of Queensland public school students returning to school next week, **yourtown** is calling on parents and carers to take this time to look after their own mental wellbeing.

Parentline, a service of **yourtown**, has seen an alarming drop in parents seeking help in April, with a sudden 34% decrease, a new report has revealed.

yourtown Virtual Services Manager Tony FitzGerald said that leading into April they had seen a 17% increase in contacts to the service but that this had fallen off dramatically once COVID-19 related school closures commenced. This also coincided with Easter school holidays which traditionally sees a smaller decline in contacts. However this trend has continued with the resumption of remote learning.

“This decrease in contacts to Parentline during the month of April is disturbing. This underscores fears that parents may not have the time to look after themselves or reach out for support whilst focussing on juggling their own working commitments with home schooling.

“Whether children are in or out of school, the coronavirus pandemic has made managing family life a much bigger job. We know that this period of isolation has been more conducive to heightened stress, anxiety, financial crisis and relationship conflict. The role of positive parenting has perhaps taken a back seat while parents are reacting to everything happening around them.” said Mr FitzGerald.

“The challenging behaviour of children has consistently been the top reason why parents have contacted Parentline. Parenthood at any time is demanding and emotional, and parents and carers have been overwhelmed over the past few months. We are concerned about the short, medium and long-term impacts on parent’s emotional and psychological well-being and the flow on effects this may have for children.

“We are encouraging parents and carers to give themselves permission to not be perfect, to try to lower their stress and anxiety levels and take some time for themselves as kids start returning to their school environment. These are challenging times and it’s hard juggling all the demands placed upon parents, continued Mr FitzGerald.

Established in Queensland in 1996, Parentline is the only service in Queensland that provides free confidential phone and WebChat counselling and support for parents and carers of children in Queensland. Parents or carers in Queensland can contact Parentline on 1300 30 1300 or parentline.com.au

The seven-day-a-week professional counselling and information service is a critical service in promoting positive parenting of children living in Queensland.

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