



2016 Griffith University Gold Coast Science Competition

Parent Information



ENTRIES DUE MONDAY 22 AUGUST 2015

A Note To Parents 😊

Dear Parents

Our school has participated in this competition for 10 years and we are proud to continue that tradition this year. Every year the standard of student work gets bigger, better and higher so we can't wait to see the ideas your children come up with this year!

We have had growing success with our entries and last year we had 9 winners in the Gold Coast competition, 18 winners at the state competition and 3 encouragement awards at the national competition. WE WANT THIS TO BE OUR BEST YEAR YET!

Now is the time to start thinking of ideas. The key to this is finding something your child is interested in. There is no limit, this activity allows for endless creativity and imagination!

Does your child...

- Ever wonder how something works?
- Ever wonder why things happen?
- Like to invent things or think about inventing things?
- Have a particular interest? eg. Animals, creating collections, dinosaurs, fossils
- Like to make models, posters, make up games?
- Like learning about new things?
- Like to experiment and test and measure?

Then this is the activity for them!

There is no doubt that entering this competition is a big commitment by both students and parents. But I can assure you the rewards are well worth it! There is a registration fee but our school will meet this cost.

Dates to remember:

- Friday 15 July – your child has returned their Expression of Interest form to the office to indicate that they will be entering the competition.
- Monday 22 August 2016 - Competition entries are due to school. We absolutely must have entries by this date to allow us time to register the entries and make sure they meet the criteria etc.
- Thursday 25 August 2016 - Science 'exhibition' at school to celebrate all of our entrants and to have a look at their hard work.
- Monday 29 August – the entries will be delivered to the competition.
- By the afternoon of Wednesday 31 August, we will be notified of any award winners.
- Thursday 1 September at 6:00pm – Awards ceremony at Queensland Academy of Health Sciences in Ashmore.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate in getting in touch with me. Kind regards

Fiona Keswell

Head of Curriculum

fkesw1@eq.edu.au

Top Tips For Parents!

- Guide, support and encourage but avoid 'doing the doing'. I use the analogy of *let your child sit in the driver's seat and you be the navigator*. Let your child choose the topic, and make decisions, you will help to steer them in the right direction or say things like 'you could present your work as a poster, as a model or on a display board...which do you think would be best.' Some children, especially if it is their first time entering, may find the openness of the competition difficult and may need assistance to narrow down their options. But absolutely DO let them make the decisions and you support and guide once those decisions have been made.
- Photos, photos, photos!
 - For the project
 - For the journal
- Acknowledge additional assistance in the journal.
 - "My Mum helped me type my journal"
 - "My Dad helped me drill some holes"
- Maintain the journal on a regular basis – don't leave it until the end.
- For students in the Junior School, typed journals are accepted as long as any assistance with typing etc are acknowledged in the journal.
- Read the handbook carefully and make sure all of the criteria for your child's category have been met.
- If needed, encourage your child to come to the lunchtime help sessions.
- Talk with your child about different presentation methods.
- Any issues, questions, concerns etc – just ask 😊

HAVE FUN AND GOOD LUCK MUMS AND DADS!

How to Help Children with Science Projects Without Doing It for Them

by Courtney Corda

Science Competition season means that parents everywhere are preparing to help their children with their projects. When your child works on a science project, she is putting the scientific method into action and learning more about how to actively understand the world around her. Her assignment is clear, but as a parent, how involved should you be? Where is the line between too helpful and just right? The following guidelines can help you support your child in an appropriate way.

1. Keep in Mind the Goal of a Science Project

Science projects let children explore a topic and, at the same time, demonstrate certain curriculum-based and grade-appropriate skills and concepts. It is important to keep in mind that your child is not being asked to conduct a Nobel-prize-worthy experiment. What your child will learn may be something you already know, but your child needs to go through the process of hands-on exploration to really see and comprehend the scientific principle studied.

2. Help your Student Locate an Appropriate Project

It can be tempting to guide students into an area of science that matches your own interests, but your child will find greater joy and put more effort into their project if it ties into something they like or about which they are curious. Also, keep in mind that science can be found in the most unlikely places. If your child already has a science question in mind or an area of science they want to explore, go with that! If not, using the [Science Buddies Topic Selection Wizard](#) tool can help your student find a science project that matches their interests and grade level.

3. Be a Chauffeur and a Sounding Board

During the research and planning stages of the project, your child will need your assistance in many ways. While you should not sit down and perform the research, you can help get the ball rolling by talking to your child about the selected project and any materials they have already read in preparation. Help them brainstorm a list of keywords for additional research and suggest strategies for online searching or drive them to the library. You might also help your child find some good YouTube videos or DVDs related to their topic. You'll need to help procure materials, too! During these early stages, be available as a sounding board so that you are aware of how the project is progressing. It's okay to ask questions like "What will you use to measure it?" or "How many trials do you plan to run?" but be careful not to take control of the process; let your child work out the steps, figure out what is needed and do the legwork themselves.

4. Leave the Project in Your Child's Hands

After an age-appropriate project has been selected, your child should be able to perform the experiment independently. That doesn't mean you can't watch; you'll both have fun if you're able to peek over a shoulder during particularly cool moments of the experiment. Depending on the nature of the experiment, your child might need a bit of family help to pull it off. My son recently ran a marble through a 20-foot long track. He operated the stopwatch at the end of the track and directed his assistants: me (who held the track steady), my husband (who started the marble on my son's cue), and my daughter (who recorded the times called out by my son) to help with additional steps.

5. Let Your Child Interpret and Showcase the Results

Whether your child proves or disproves their hypothesis, something happened in the experiment and there are results to be analysed and conclusions to draw. Your child should make any charts or graphs that will be used in conveying their results themselves. Many science projects culminate with the creation of a [project display board](#) that summarizes and shares all stages of the project. Don't take over! Your child has gathered all the information that is needed for the board and will need to make choices about the design, layout and presentation. Encourage them to look at pictures of project display boards online to get some ideas. Help your child stay on track in terms of timing, but let them take charge as they bring the project to a close. For example, you might sit with your child and the family calendar and map out in advance which afternoons they'll set aside to work on the project when other activities won't interfere.

Ultimately, a science project should be a rewarding experience for your child. As you watch them engage in a project that lets them actively ask questions, explore, learn and grow, you will have plenty of opportunity to be proud of them as a student. And you may find that talking about the project offers fertile ground for bonding over science, which is a wonderful thing!