

Editorial

In the first issue of *The Aboriginal Child at School* this year we commented on the group of Aboriginal children about to begin their formal education. It is appropriate, with three-quarters of the school year behind us, to ask ourselves how well these children have in fact progressed and how, as a result of their experiences, they now view themselves, as learners and as people.

Are they confident, competent learners who have established a pattern of success in their early ventures?..... Or do they now greet new learning experiences with anxiety, with expectations of difficulty and of failure?

Do they see the classroom as a learning setting in which they enjoy the learning tasks, their peers and their teachers?..... Or do they see the classroom primarily as a behaviour setting?

Have they come to see the school as a welcoming part of their lives, a place where they belong and are accepted and where they enjoy and are enjoyed by others?..... Or is school, in their eyes, an alien place where they feel 'outsiders', unsure of themselves, a place where they need to be wary?

If these first several months of school have not been warm and rewarding, with successes far more frequent and significant than failures, we can predict with, unfortunately, a high probability of being correct, that their future years of schooling will find them unready and unlikely to succeed, to profit from or to enjoy what schools can offer.

It is widely held that children have a right to education - more, that they have a right to an appropriate education. For children at the beginning of their school careers, an 'appropriate' education must surely be one which helps them to view themselves as competent young people, and which tempts them forward to a constant discovery of the world about them and of their own powers and humanity.

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