Helicopter parents should step back and watch

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At the end of the program, parents reported significantly lower stress levels, with more confidence and a better understanding of their children's capabilities.

Children make progress when given space and time

Ms Richardson said the Respectful Approach is ultimately about building a trusting, lasting bond with positive communication between parents and children. There is less focus on checklists and achieving milestones, with acknowledgement that each child is different.

"Participants in the study reported worrying less about performance pressure after attending the classes, which let them refocus on their relationship with their children," she said.

"As parents we tend to go and 'save' our children when they start to struggle with something, instead of letting them try to resolve their own challenges. But if the children aren't looking for help, perhaps they can be left to do their own thing and work it out themselves."

Ms Richardson explained the Respectful Approach helps to establish good patterns in early years so children learn to build confidence in their abilities and to deal with conflict in emotionally intelligent ways.

"Traditionally early behavioral interventions have predominantly focused on modifying undesirable child behaviors," Ms Richardson said.

"By building good communication and a close parent-child bond, we can potentially prevent problems occurring in the long term."

Ms Richardson and her research supervisor Associate Professor Therese O'Sullivan are now expanding the pilot study to track parents and
children over three years to determine whether the decline in parental stress levels has a lasting impact and investigate long term outcomes in child development.


Provided by Edith Cowan University

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