



Meccano: How it Works

Background

The Meccano Program has been a part of the co-curricular offerings at Macquarie Primary School since 2005.

Program Purpose:

The Meccano Program at Macquarie serves to build and support

- relationships and communication skills
- fine motor dexterity
- cognitive dexterity
- conceptual understandings that support mathematics and technology
- vocabulary specific to design and construction
- learning dispositions including patience, persistence and planning
- the *Learning Assets* (inquiry, communication, collaboration, research, and self-management)

The Meccano Program allows students to explore and demonstrate skills in ways that may not be obvious and accessible in other aspects of our curriculum.

Participants

The Meccano Mentor Team comprises volunteers with an interest in helping children optimise their school experience and success. Our volunteers are part of the *School Volunteer Program ACT, Inc.* This organisation supports the work of more than 135 volunteers across the ACT Public School System. Each Mentor brings individual skills and distinctive personal and vocational experiences which build a rich team environment.

Student participants are identified through the school's Special Needs processes. Careful consideration is given to the composition of the group to optimise student experiences. Participating students typically range from Years 3-6.

Teamwork is central to the Meccano Program. Initially individual mentors are introduced to each student and as time progresses teamwork extends throughout the group. Collaboration and shared problem solving are features of the Meccano group dynamic.

While there are numerous benefits of the program for students, another outcome is the relationship developed between mentors, staff and parents.

Keys to Success

At Macquarie, the Meccano Program occurs during the recess break each Wednesday morning. Within the informal environment of the Meccano program there are structures to ensure the program achieves its purpose.

Ultimately the goal for students is to complete a construction project. This involves

- selecting,
- completing,
- demonstrating, and
- dis assembling a working model.

During this process mentors observe and guide student reflection on their skills and achievements. As program coordinators, the school leadership team provides feedback to classroom teachers, as do participating students themselves, who are always eager to share their latest learning and stories.

Families are kept informed about their child's involvement in the program and are encouraged to visit the Meccano Program in action.

Further information about the School Volunteer Program ACT is available at www.SVPACT.org.au , or through Macquarie's front office team.