



GROWING UP LEFTY

Thankfully, younger 'lefties' have much more positive left-handed experiences than Lena's.

Rhiannon Hart, a writer, says she always enjoyed being left-handed as a kid, and on the whole has found it a positive experience: "I like being that little bit different," she says, "and the teasing, being called 'cacky handed' for instance, was always good natured."

Jill Browne has similar views. At school she was encouraged to use her right hand but thinks that was more pragmatism than superstition, as at that time many school-leavers needed to be able to use right-handed machinery.

WRITE AND LEFT

Queensland Prep teacher Margaret Carty says last year she had an unusually high number of left-handers: six in a class of 21.

"We note handedness at the beginning of the year but it's not an issue at all," Margaret says. "We try to consolidate a child's preferred hand in Prep year [in readiness for Year 1]."

For parents, it may be worth doing some research and discovering the best ways to teach writing to lefties, who are actually 'dragging' and 'pushing' their pencils in the opposite directions to right-handers when forming letters. Since few teachers are taught any of this information, you may have to bring it to their attention.

Many left-handers struggle to find a way of writing that prevents smudging and allows them to see what they write. This often results in 'hooking' where the left hand is curled around the writing. Whereas right-handers tend to slant the paper left to right, many lefties prefer their paper slanted right to left, or even sideways. Pencil grips, left-handed pencil sharpeners (which rotate in the opposite direction) and left-handed rulers (which allow the left-handed user to see the measurements as they rule) may also be useful, depending on the degree of left-handedness.

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Who would look after your kids?

If something should happen to you and your partner, have you specified who you would like to raise your children?

You may think you don't need a Will because you're young, or because you don't have many assets. But what about the most valuable part of your life – your children?

None of us likes to think about it, but as responsible parents, we should. "It's not a myth but a reality that children can, and sometimes do, end up living with relatives their parents would not have chosen," says Tracey Smith, a Queensland Law Society Accredited Specialist in Succession Law.

"If you don't provide formal directions in a legal, up-to-date Will, who gets custody of your children could be decided by the courts."

"As a mother, I understand how difficult it is for parents to even contemplate not being there when our children need us the most. But as a lawyer, I understand the crucial importance of having a current Will that includes care of your children, just in case," says Ms Smith of Smith Legal Solutions.

"We insure our car and house against the unknown future. Think of appointing guardians for your children as an insurance policy on their future and wellbeing," she explains.

To make life easier, Smith Legal Solutions will come to you, so you can do it right now, rather than put it off. (Sadly, next month, or next week, might be too late.)

Visit www.smithlegal.com.au or call 5554 5487 to take advantage of special introductory rates for Kids on the Coast readers, available until 31 March, 2011.

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