

News Release

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Hon Gail Gago
Minister for State/Local Government
Relations
Minister for the Status of Women
Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister Government Enterprises
Minister Ast Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Energy

Thursday, 3rd December 2009

PARENTS URGED TO DO THE MATHS ON TUTORING PROGRAMS

Parents are being advised to do the maths before investing in expensive computer tutoring programs that may not provide any real benefits for their children.

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) has received several complaints from consumers who've paid up to \$12,000 for educational programs, often on high-interest finance plans.

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gail Gago said "People pushing education software are often salespeople wanting to make a commission, without any educational qualifications, and they put the pressure on parents to buy the product in support of their children's future."

"The salespeople ask children to undertake a test, but the relevance of the test to education in South Australia is questionable, and it seems that many programs are not aligned with school curriculum."

Minister Gago said companies selling educational products target parents at various times during the year, but with the school year drawing to a close and reports going out, parents need to be objective about their children's progress.

"Parents want their children to reach their full potential, but really they should talk to their school to discuss whether their children need extra help in the first place and what other options are available to assist in their learning."

"Even hiring a private tutor may turn out to be a less expensive and more worthwhile option for a child needing some additional support."

Minister Gago is urging parents to weigh up the benefits of these tutoring programs before signing anything, but reminded parents of their cooling off rights if they have already signed a contract.

Under the door-to-door provisions of the *Fair Trading Act 1987*, consumers are entitled to a 10-day cooling-off period when they purchase goods or services costing more than \$50. The trader must give consumers written information detailing their cooling-off rights, and cannot accept any payment or supply services until the cooling-off period expires.

Door-to-door traders who breach these provisions face penalties of up to \$10,000 if caught.

For more information on door-to-door trading call OCBA on 8204 9777, or 131 882 for regional callers, or visit www.ocba.sa.gov.au