

## From the Fisher's Mouth

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28<sup>th</sup> June 2010

As fishermen we gain great affection in our shiny, expensive rods, reels, lures and boats and take great price in their upkeep and general wellbeing. Given the time, effort and expense we put into our fishing, we are loathe lending equipment to family, friends and especially children.

In fact, most fishermen would be more likely to hand you a fist full of hundred dollar notes than pass on the use of their latest super special carbon graphite diamond composite rod matched to a reel handcrafted in Japan with gold plating, extra bling, & 'go-fasters'.



Handing an \$800 baitcaster combo to a seven year old is not the sort of thing most people would contemplate, however there comes a time when we need to put faith in our offspring and give them a taste of quality equipment.

The rods and reels in my boat are premium quality and I often put my trust in young children to use and look after my equipment. To date, I have not had a small child break or lose a rod, nor have they created a tangle that was any worse than an adult can concoct. I have found children learn the basic skills of casting & fishing very quickly and are easier to teach than adults as children are more open to new ideas.

Learning how to use a baitcaster (where the reel sits on top of the rod) is something that scares most adults as the fear of the reel over-running and creating a tangle (also called a 'birdnest') causes most not to persist after the first few attempts. Children however exhibit great patience and provided you show them how to use the reel, they will very quickly be able to pinpoint where they want the lure or bait to land.

To avoid junior fishermen hooking those around them as they cast, make sure that your little citizens do not cast with the lure or bait overhead (teach them to cast underarm). Start them in the backyard with a rubber casting plug so that no injuries to person or property eventuate.

The art of baitcasting starts with the plug hanging just off the tip of the rod and just above the grass. Accelerate the plug smoothly using the rod so that when you release your thumb off the spool the plug flies in a parabolic arc (the trajectory is similar to how you would kick a football). Just before the plug lands, ease your thumb on to the spool to stop it spinning and wind the handle to re-engage the gears.

It sounds simple, and it is, but like anything we do it takes practice to master.