

Harnessing the power of education

Deepening our impact and broadening our reach



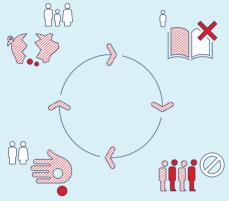
Compounding effects of disadvantage

1. Family challenges

These may include sickness, disability, unemployment, difficulty affording basic living costs, inability to provide resources for their child's education, limited access to digital technology and skills, and a lack of knowledge or confidence about how best to support children's educational development.

4. Overall life outcomes impacted

Inability to get ahead in life, health and wellbeing affected. passing disadvantage on to the next generation.



2. Reduced educational outcomes for children

Behind in essential skills when they start school, not having the items they need to fit in, having limited access to resources for learning development, falling behind at school and facing difficulty in catching up, and having limited access to the support needed for guiding study and/or career paths.

3. Difficulty getting a job

A lack of engagement and motivation with their education, lower educational performance, leaving school early with few or no qualifications, fewer job opportunities, and having limited connections to community networks and services.

Our approach

In the past challenging year, Australian families faced escalating cost-of-living pressures, impacting essential areas like food, transport and housing.

Amid these difficulties, it's crucial to equip young people with skills for the digital future, that align with evolving workforce needs.

The Smith Family's long-term educational support, assisting children and their families from preschool right through to post-school education addresses these challenges.

Learning for Life provides:

- Financial assistance to pay for essentials like school uniforms. textbooks. digital tools and excursions
- Support from a Family Partnerships Coordinator who works closely with a student and their family to problemsolve any barriers to education
- Access to a variety of short programs to improve literacy. numeracy and digital literacy outcomes, and connects students with mentoring and careerrelated opportunities

Our approach also focuses on fostering parental involvement, acknowledging that engaged parents, regardless of income or background, contribute to a child's educational success.

We developed a Family Practice Framework that guides The Smith Family's work. It emphasises collaboration and the importance of creating a supportive environment to ensure the best possible support for families to enhance their children's educational outcomes.

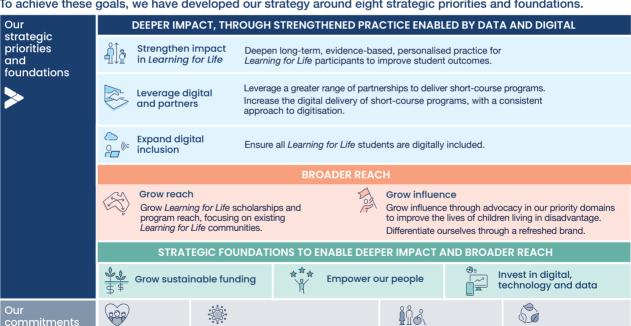
Our strategy

Be a child safe

organisation

Ambition by 2027	Over five years to 2027, we will deepen our impact and empower young Australians in need to create a better future for themselves. To do this, we will use personalised, evidence-based practice, data and digital. We are committed to growing the number of <i>Learning for Life</i> scholarship recipients to 100,000 and expanding the program to reach 250,000 children and young people.				
Our goals	IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES MEASURED BY:				
	Attendance at school	from Year 10 to	through school completion of equivalent	Tertiary continuation and completion	Engagement in study or work post-school
	WE AIM TO GROW:				
	Scholarships: to 100,000 <i>Learning for Life</i> scholarships	Program reach: to 250,000 program participants	Program participation rate 50% of <i>Learning for I</i> students participating ir our programs	Life ensuring 100% of	

To achieve these goals, we have developed our strategy around eight strategic priorities and foundations.



Strive for reconciliation and

Torres Strait Islander peoples

cultural safety for Aboriginal and

Improve our

environmental

sustainability

Embrace diversity

and inclusion

We track our results

We track the progress of the children and young people on our *Learning for Life* program, against four longer-term outcomes to understand the effectiveness of our approach. We also assess the short-term outcomes of our programs as these help to put children on the path to reaching the four longer-term goals.

1. Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential for students to achieve positive educational outcomes.

2. Advancement

Each year of schooling a child completes leads to better overall life outcomes, and improves their ability to make economic and social contributions to the community.

Tertiary 3a. Continuation Rate

Our Tertiary Continuation Rate measures the proportion of first-year *Learning for Life* tertiary students who continue into their second year at university, while still on a scholarship.

83%

is the average attendance for Years 1–10 *Learning for Life* students in 2022.

85.7% for primary school students, 77.9% for secondary school students, 79.2% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

66%

of Learning for Life students in Year 10 in 2020, advanced to Year 12 by 2022.

88.1%

of Learning for Life Tertiary Scholarship students continued from first to second-year study at university in 2022–23.

Improved numeracy

Improved literacy

Increased academic engagement and achievement

Increased self-management and confidence

inipiotoa intorao

Let's Count

85%

of early-years professionals reported improved capacity to work with parents/carers to support emergent numeracy of their children.

Let's Read

97%

of community professionals reported an increased capacity to engage families to foster children's literacy development.

student2student

94%

of participating students improved their reading. 80% of students agreed student2student made it easier to do their schoolwork.

Short-Term Results

Program Results

3b. Completion Rate

Our Tertiary Completion Rate measures the proportion of students who complete a qualification in four years.

Learning for Life students engaged in 4. post-school education, employment or training

A key indicator of our approach's success is the proportion of Learning for Life students who transition successfully from school to further education, training or employment.

52.9%

of Learning for Life Tertiary Scholarship students who commenced study in 2019 had completed a qualification by 2022. 85%

of students who were in Year 12 in 2020, were in education, employment or training two and a half years after leaving school.

Enhanced networks and relationships

Improved knowledge and understanding of study options and career paths

Improved knowledge and understanding of financial management

Passport

of students increased their understanding of what to expect at high school.

iTrack

80%

reported that participating in iTrack has improved their knowledge of post-school options and career pathways.

Cadetship to Career

strengthened their knowledge and skills in using digital systems and technology in the workplace. 93% reported that participating in the program had increased their commitment to what they're learning.

Saver Plus

of participants were saving the same amount or more three to seven years after completing the program.

Supporting a child's educational journey

Early years

When starting school, one in three children in Australia's most disadvantaged communities are developmentally vulnerable in at least one key area. This figure is just 15% in the least disadvantaged communities.1

The challenge

Starting school is a significant milestone for every child and their family. The abilities children can draw on when they start school affect both their engagement in learning and their academic success. This makes it even more important for every pre-schooler to have the chance to develop the basic language, numeracy, physical, social and emotional skills they need to achieve positive educational outcomes later in life.

How we help

Our early numeracy and literacy programs help educators and community professionals support parents, carers and family members of children from birth to five years old.

This year we worked to evolve our numeracy program Let's Count to achieve greater community engagement and cultural relevance. This included embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge into the program pedagogies and practices. In 2024, the refreshed version will be rolled out nationally and aims to engage even more early-years professionals and families to support children to notice, explore and talk about mathematics in everyday life.

In collaboration with academic partners, Let's Read is being reviewed and redesigned to reflect contemporary best practice in supporting the early language and literacy development of young children.

In nine communities across Australia, we worked strategically with a broad range of partners to deliver place-based activities funded under the Australian Government's Communities for Children Facilitating Partner initiative. In each community, activities are co-designed and delivered under a five-year strategic plan with a strengths-based focus - developed in consultation with families, local service providers. schools, businesses and government agencies. Our work in these communities aims to improve the health and wellbeing of families and the development of young children in strong child-friendly communities.

• Key programs include Communities for Children (3,482 participants), Let's Count (26,017 participants), Let's Read (26,912 participants) and Child and Parent Centres (838 participants).

57,284

children aged under five participating in early-years programs

Australian Government, Australian Early Development Census National Report 2021: Early Childhood Development in Australia, Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Canberra, 2022.

Primary years

Only 12% of Year 5 students whose parents have not completed Year 12 exceed the national minimum reading standard for their year level. The figure for Year 5 students whose parents have a university degree is 57%.1

The challenge

Children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often face complex socioeconomic challenges that make it difficult for them to remain engaged at school. They are more likely to encounter systemic barriers within the education and broader human service systems than other young people. Families often struggle to access essential services such as housing, health care and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This can directly impact children's educational outcomes, as many families don't have access to the support networks they need to thrive. In recent years, increased cost-of-living pressures have also disproportionately impacted young people.

How we help

This year, we built the foundations to boost the participation of students in our short-course programs. Participation in these programs supports students' motivation and engagement at school, and helps them build skills they need to succeed in Year 12 and lead productive lives after school.

Building on the success of the Catch-Up Learning program, we launched an online group tutoring pilot for Learning for Life students in Years 4-7 who would benefit from tutoring in literacy and numeracy. This pilot will be completed in 2023–24. A second research report highlighting the program's outcomes was published in December 2022.

While the initial results of our *Peer-to-Peer* project pilot were promising, we determined that we need to do further testing on the effectiveness and scalability of various delivery models. Testing of a community partnering model with a school community hub in Victoria is now underway.

- Key programs include Communities for Children (9,700 participants), Passport to Success (3,979 students) and Learning Club (2,461 students).
- 30,280 students are sponsored through Learning for Life.

47,743 primary years students participating in programs

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2022, ACARA, Sydney, 2022 <nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/ default-document-library/2022-naplan-national-report.pdf>.

Secondary years

Year 9 students from disadvantaged backgrounds are, on average, 4.5 years behind in reading and 3.2 years behind in numeracy, compared to students from advantaged backgrounds.1

The challenge

The secondary years can be challenging for young people as they deal with physical, social and emotional changes. For young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, financial hardship, complex relationships and family health issues can make these years even more difficult. While rapid ongoing economic, social, technological, environmental and cultural changes are potentially expanding opportunities for young people, there is still a clear risk that those experiencing disadvantage will be left further behind as a result of these changes.

How we help

This year, we partnered with secondary schools in Learning for Life communities and delivered a suite of education and career-related programs and activities. We introduced a series of Career Activities designed to enhance students' career education by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge for the world of work and further study.

Demand for programs such as Work Inspiration, an employer-led program for secondary students and SmArts, a creative skills program, continues to grow. demonstrating the need for career-focused, post-school option programs in communities experiencing disadvantage.

Two other programs we implemented this year were Money Talks and Keep the Change, both focused on building students' financial literacy skills.

Partnerships with industry experts and our corporate partners have been key enablers in the implementation of these programs and activities and will allow us to extend our support to more Learning for Life secondary students into the future.

- Key programs include Career Activities (20,634 students), SmArts (1,181 students) and Work Inspiration (1,712 students).
- 31,049 students are sponsored through Learning for Life.

55,979 students participating in programs

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), NAPLAN results 2022.

Post-school years

Almost half (49%) of 24-year olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are not fully engaged in work or study. compared to 18% of those from the most advantaged backgrounds.1

The challenge

The post-school transition into work and study is a critical time for young people. For those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the cost of travel, textbooks and other necessities can exacerbate the financial pressure on their families. At the same time. students must adjust to a self-paced workload and timetable, and a wider range of academic choices. In families where a student from a disadvantaged background is the first person to participate in tertiary education, access to mentors and other support may be limited. The COVID-19 pandemic also negatively impacted young people by altering their experience of tertiary education, displacing them from critical part-time employment and reducing their ability to cover post-school education costs.

How we help

We researched how we can work more strategically with higher-education partners to support *Learning for* Life students in their chosen post-school pathways. We will continue work on this project in 2023-24 and consider the recommendations of the Australian Universities Accord, an independent review of the country's higher education system, established by the Australian Government.

1,528 tertiary students are participating in programs such as the Learning for Life Tertiary Scholarship (1.493 students) and Cadetship to Career (30 students).

1,528 tertiary students participating in programs

Lamb, S, Huo, S, Walstab, A, Maire, Q, Doecke, E, Jackson, J and Endekov, Z (2020), Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out, Melbourne: Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University for the Mitchell Institute.

Our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

In 2021, 58% of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 to 24 years and who are living in the most disadvantaged communities had attained Year 12 or equivalent, compared to 87% of those living in Australia's most advantaged communities. This disparity highlights the relationship between poverty and advantage for First Nations people.1

The challenge

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' educational outcomes may be affected by a variety of complex social, systemic and cultural factors. Despite the best efforts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and organisations, governments, education providers and communities over many years, many students continue to have poorer educational outcomes overall than non-Indigenous students. Targeted and appropriate support can help students to better engage with their learning. This support needs to form part of a fundamental shift in the current systems, operations and ways of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, as well as their families and communities 2

How we help

This year, we saw the number of Learning for Life students who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people increase to 23.9%, up from 22.2% in 2021-22. We continue to be guided by our 2021-2024 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), as this supports our work building relationships with communities and families.

Our work with the Girls at the Centre and Engaging Parents and Community programs continues to grow, enabling us to provide support to students and their parents. We are working with local communities in Ipswich and Cairns to ensure that community members can share their experiences with education and The Smith Family with us. Listening and learning grows our knowledge and enables us to improve the effectiveness of our programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

15,020

Learning for Life students identify as Aboriginal and **Torres Strait Islander people**

- Productivity Commission 2023, Closing the Gap Repository.
- Productivity Commission (2023), Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Draft Report.

SmArts AFTRS program in the NT



Tahlia, SmArts AFTRS program in the NT

"In April, 15 students from one of our partner schools in the Northern Territory participated in a four-day Intro to Radio and Podcasting SmArts program developed through The Smith Family's partnership with the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS).

Guided by AFTRS educator Jess, who travelled from Svdnev. the students learnt some of the skills required to be a radio or podcast presenter, edited their own podcast. and heard from an ABC Darwin producer and presenter about a career in radio. On day four, the students visited a local radio station, Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association, where they participated in a live broadcast and recorded talk breaks.

The SmArts program allows students to experience something that they don't usually get in their day-today school life. The students from Taminmin College were really excited by the opportunity. Not every program ends with the students coming up to thank us, but this time they all lined up to thank me.

The students were so invested in what they were doing. The school principal said some students in the program weren't very engaged in their classwork and were usually disruptive. In the program, all of them were really interested in participating, especially when they went to the radio station and were on air.

When they listened to themselves, they were so chuffed. You could see their happiness. The growth in the students' confidence throughout the week and particularly after speaking on live radio was palpable."

Peter, Smith Family team member. NT

CASE STUDY

Programs and support to succeed at school



"I was struggling a bit when I was connected with The Smith Family in 2019. Back then, I wasn't working and was relying on Centrelink payments. My kids, Holly (11) and Lily (9), were starting school. I didn't realise how much the uniforms actually cost. It was a struggle to get uniforms, shoes, and all the bits and pieces they needed for school. I'm now lucky enough to have a job, but The Smith Family really has helped.

Lily started doing student2student last year. I haven't had a lot of time to sit down and read with her as much as I did with Holly. It's really helped having someone read with her one on one.

She was a bit shy to start with, but after a few sessions, she opened up and the buddy also opened up. She had a wonderful experience, and I noticed her reading improved a lot. Holly started student2student this year. Her reading's not bad, but having someone help her with bigger words, and explain what they mean, has been really helpful to her.

Within the last few years, The Smith Family has offered Learning Club cooking sessions and student2student, which has been great. Holly has done the Future Seekers program too."

Ebonie, Learning for Life parent

Fundraising performance

Allocating our resources for impact

Resources are essential for building strong infrastructure and increasing our effectiveness and impact for children experiencing poverty, so they can build skills to change their futures.

In the five years to June 2023, 72% of donations from our supporters has been spent on our community programs, with 28% of our resources invested in the vital activities that build our continuing organisational capacity and sustainability.

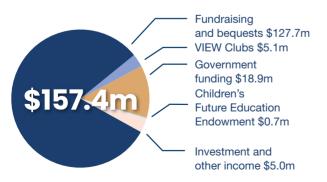
However, our 72% funding allocation to community programs is just one measure of the effectiveness of our organisation. Another critical dimension is the positive impact our investment in resources and activities has in supporting the achievement of the four program

outcome measures we track and report - the attendance, advancement, tertiary continuation and completion. and engagement rates of students we help.

The Smith Family has joined with other not-for-profits to develop initiatives aimed at providing donors and charity partners with a deeper appreciation of a range of not-for-profit evaluation criteria. Our goals are to demonstrate the effectiveness of resource allocations so that donors can see the impact that together we achieve for those we help. By facilitating greater openness around how funds are carefully stewarded. and by showing how all costs contribute to a healthy, sustainable, and effective organisation, we aim to help donors understand the important and enduring part donations play in making the difference they expect.

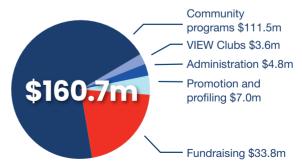
Where we obtained our financial resources

2022-23



How we applied our financial resources

2022-23



Our progress

199,680 participants

The Smith Family reached 199,680 children, young people, parents, carers and community professionals in 2022–23, up 4.1% on the previous year.

162,534

children and young people participated in our programs in 2022-23

62,822

Learning for Life sponsorship recipients



Children aged under five participating in early-years programs



6,747 Community professionals*



30,399 Parents, carers and adults



47,743 Primary school students



55,979

Secondary school students



1,528 Tertiary students



*Community professionals (not Smith Family team members) include early-years educators and program facilitators in communities.

91 Communities



Learning for Life participation

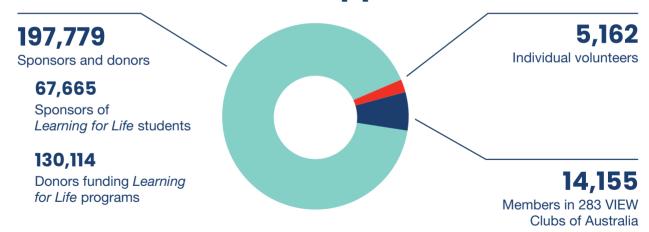
23.9%

of sponsored students (15,020) in 2022-23 identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

We partnered with **799** schools

attended by Learning for Life students

217,096 Individual supporters



260 Partner organisations

79 Corporate partners 170 Trusts and Foundations 11 Tertiary institutions

Here and on cover: Learning for Life student Audrina with her mother. Melita

CASE STUDY



"When I connected with The Smith Family, I was a single mum caring for my daughter Audrina and my mum, and providing kinship care for my nieces and nephews. I'm a proud Gamilaroi woman, and connection to culture and Country are important to me.

I was struggling financially at the time. I'd just lost my home and was just making ends meet on a casual wage. The Smith Family was there to support us through Audrina's *Learning for Life* sponsorship, the *student2student* reading program and *Saver Plus*.

As a single parent it can be hard to instil confidence in your kids and encourage them to get involved at school. The Smith Family gave me the support I needed to do that.

The sponsorship funds meant I always had enough to give Audrina the basics she needed for uniforms, shoes, bags, pens, pencils and books. It also allowed her to get involved in netball, which helped develop her social skills and connected her to the community.

With The Smith Family's support, Audrina is thriving. She has excelled in her reading and is getting into public speaking. My numberone wish for Audrina is to be happy and follow her heart and passions. I want her to beat the past barriers our family members have faced, and The Smith Family is helping her do that."

Melita, Learning for Life parent

CASE STUDY

A lifeline in tough times



Rae and her three grandchildren

"Without people stepping up and sponsoring kids, there would be no help for families like us.

We've been caring for our three grandchildren on and off for three years. My husband is on a disability pension and hasn't worked since 2012.

When the kids came to us, we were getting no money or help. My son helps out a little bit now, but most of the pressure is on my husband and me.

The money from The Smith Family helped out so much with Blake's uniform.

I was able to get him at least one of every item he needed, including a pair of socks. Thank goodness for that. Otherwise, he'd be getting into trouble for not having the right uniform.

The Smith Family has really helped in terms of getting uniforms and being able to say, 'Yes, we can afford to send you on that trip'. I know I have extra money for whatever they need - swimming fees and things like that. The other support is really good as well. If I have a problem, I can ring the staff.

I just wish there were more Smith Family sponsors out there. They've been a lifeline for us."

Rae, Learning for Life grandmother

The life-changing gift of education



"Learning for Life sponsorship has changed my life and the lives of so many other young people.

We didn't have much growing up. Mum didn't work, and she was looking after three kids while trying to deal with her own mental health issues. She did her best, but our shoes were always too small and falling apart, and we always got the same Vegemite sandwich in our lunchboxes. I was never able to join school excursions and activities, and I never had my school photo taken.

Once my sponsor started their support, my life changed completely. It shaped who I am today. All of a sudden, I was able to have a pencil case, a proper school bag, shoes, books and pencils. When you're a kid and you don't have all the stuff everyone else has, you feel left out and left behind.

I never thought I'd get the opportunity to go to university, but when I won the New England University Vice Chancellor's Award at the end of Year 12. I knew I had to go. The Smith Family helped me with a *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship. That's when I knew I'd be able to do it.

Today I'm working in the banking sector, looking to develop my leadership skills and build a life with my partner.

Sponsorship has given me the opportunity to fulfil my dreams and aspirations, and better myself. It gave me the confidence to achieve the things I've achieved."

James, Learning for Life Alumni



"During COVID, the teachers recommended that my son Yasin get a laptop to work on at home, but I couldn't afford it. The only laptop we had was for my eldest daughter, who was studying at university. Yasin had to join video calls and write essays on his phone. It was hard.

The laptop from The Smith Family helped Yasin with his schooling. He is still using it. Yasin is now 16, but when he was offered The Smith Family sponsorship he was in primary school. We were struggling financially. I wasn't working. Only my husband was providing for us. We have five children.

I couldn't go to work because it was too hard for me to find someone to look after them at home, and I couldn't afford to put them in childcare. We went through some very hard times. Ever since we've had The Smith Family sponsorship, it has helped me a lot. I really appreciate what The Smith Family is doing for my kids. The help that the sponsors give my children goes a long way. We were struggling before we started with The Smith Family. Now we're able to do a bit more as a family because I don't have to worry so much about the kids' schooling."

Charlotte, Learning for Life parent



Contact details

General enquiries

GPO Box 5348
Sydney NSW 2001 **T** Freecall: 1800 024 069

E tsfmktg@thesmithfamily.com.au

Volunteer Co-ordination Unit **T** 1300 397 730

National office

Level 17, 2 Market Street
Sydney NSW 2000
T 02 9085 7222 F 02 9085 7299
E tsfmktg@thesmithfamily.com.au

VIEW Clubs of Australia

Level 17, 2 Market Street Sydney NSW 2000 **T** 02 9085 7178

T Freecall: 1800 805 366 **E** view@thesmithfamily.com.au

- f TheSmithFamilyAustralia
- SmithFamily_org
- (c) thesmithfamilyaus

thesmithfamily.com.au