

IMPROVING THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF DISADVANTAGED YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

Make it count!
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Outline

1. Education matters
2. Australia's educational challenge
3. What influences educational outcomes?
4. Improving educational outcomes of disadvantaged young people
5. Two evidence informed programs: Let's Count and Learning for Life
6. Questions?

EDUCATION MATTERS



Education matters – for individuals and nations

- Educational attainment predicts future health, wellbeing, employment, income, and welfare prospects
- Many low skilled jobs are automating or disappearing
- 75% of fastest growing occupations require Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills
– children who start school behind in maths often never catch up
- Skills of a nation's population influence social development, cohesion, economic growth, innovation

AUSTRALIA'S EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE

Young people are behind at each stage

EARLY YEARS



Developmentally vulnerable

One in three children in most disadvantaged communities is developmentally vulnerable in one or more key areas when they start school.

PRIMARY YEARS



Numeracy

94% of Year 5 students with a parent who has a uni qualification are above the national minimum standard, compared to **61%** of children whose parents did not complete Yr 12.

SECONDARY YEARS



Year 12 completion

Around **30%** difference based on socioeconomic status of students.

POST-SCHOOL YEARS



Post-school engagement

41% of 24 year olds from most disadvantaged backgrounds were not fully engaged in work or study, compared to **17%** among most advantaged.

WHAT INFLUENCES EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES?



Multiple factors impact children and young people's development

1. Personal characteristics

eg intelligence, social skills, health, self esteem, aspirations

2. Family

eg resources, parental aspirations, engagement in child's learning

3. Peers

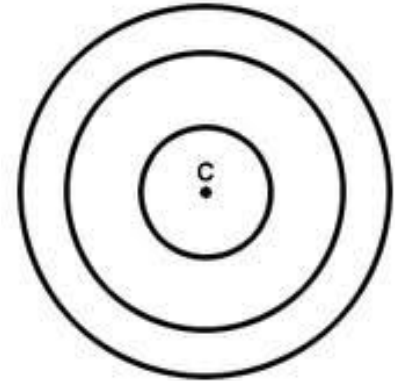
eg aspirations, attitudes to education, risk taking behaviour

4. Learning and care institutions

eg teacher quality, student mix, school's expectations

5. Community and societal

eg economic and infrastructure, role models, social cohesion, safety



These factors shape a child's likely pathway through life, but pathways aren't pre-determined and they can be influenced.

Individual factors that influence educational outcomes

- **Early achievement** eg literacy, numeracy
- **Non-cognitive** skills eg perseverance, motivation, self esteem, goal-setting, self-efficacy, problem solving
- **Mindsets** – belief about whether intelligence is fixed or can be developed (growth mindset)



Individual factors that influence educational outcomes

- School **attendance** – related to achievement and school completion, especially for disadvantaged students
- Student **mobility** - especially for disadvantaged students
 - Low SES students who move school 3 or more times in the first 4 years of secondary schooling have 65% probability of not completing Year 12.



Family factors that influence educational outcomes

- **Parental engagement** in children's learning is a **bigger predictor** of how children do in school than family's socioeconomic status
- Aspects that matter most:
 - Parents' **aspirations** and **expectations** re children's achievement and participation in further education
 - Parent-child reading
 - Parents' **conversations** influence cognitive skills, value and enjoyment of learning
 - Creating **stimulating environment** eg books, visiting libraries, museums, fostering learning around child's interests
 - Positive and trusting **parent-teacher relationship**
- Influences orientation to learning, motivation, engagement, confidence, beliefs

Family and peer factors that influence educational outcomes

- Parents are important influence on whether young people **complete Year 12**, second only to academic achievement (at age 15)
- Most important influencers on whether young people intend to go to **university** are perceived expectations of parents and peers
 - Students at age 15 who believe their parents expect them to go to uni are **11 times** more likely to say they plan to attend uni, compared to students whose parents don't expect them to go to uni

In-school factors that influence educational outcomes

- Quality of **teaching**, targeted to individual learning needs of students
- School **culture** and **environment**
 - Expectations
 - Nurturing environment, students socially connected and at ease
- **'In-school'** factors explain about 35 – 40% of variation in student achievement while student, family and peer factors explain about 55 – 60%.



IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE



Intervene early and balanced long term support

	High school graduation rates (%)	University enrolment (%)	Use of welfare (%)	Criminal convictions (%)
No intervention	41	4	18	23
Early childhood intervention only	66	13	9	17
Adolescent intervention only	64	12	10	18
Balanced intervention across full life cycle of a child	91	38	3	11

Improving educational outcomes

- **Cognitive** and **non-cognitive** skills aren't determined solely by genetic factors – they can be developed
- **Target interventions** at appropriate stage of life to influence skills most malleable at that stage – eg non-cognitive skills during adolescence
- **Shared responsibility** and **collaboration**
- Use **data** and **evidence**

EVIDENCED INFORMED PROGRAMS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

LET'S COUNT AND LEARNING FOR LIFE

1.Let's Count: Developing children's early maths skills

- Childhood maths skills **predicts** later achievement
- Many **parents** uncertain or negative
- Stronger focus on **literacy**
- Nurturing parents' **capacity** and **confidence** to guide children's development critical, esp for disadvantaged families
- Maths in the '**everyday**'
- **Play** is vehicle for maths development
- Interesting, useful, fun ➔ **positive disposition**



Let's Count early maths program

- Designed to improve maths skills of **children 3 to 5**
- Esp for children from **disadvantaged** backgrounds

Principles

- **Strong partnerships** between families and early childhood educators.
- All children, parents/carers and educators can be **powerful mathematicians**.
- Use of **play, discussion and investigation** as key pedagogical approach.
- Maths learning can be **enjoyable** for all when undertaken in relevant and meaningful context.



Let's Count – early maths program



Workshops for early years educators to enhance their skills and confidence to develop children's maths learning and support parents to do the same.



Educators **engage with parents**; give guidance on using everyday activities to notice, explore and talk about maths with their children.



Parents use ideas and resource packs to explore maths with children

Young children engaged in home environment develop stronger skills and positive attitude to maths

Evaluation shows **positive impact** on children's maths skills, enjoyment and confidence, and on educators and parents.

2. Learning for Life scholarship program



- Early intervention and long-term approach (Heckman)
- Parental engagement
- High expectations
- Reciprocity and accountability
- 'Beyond school' – complements but in addition to school
- Outcomes focus

Learning for Life scholarship



Parent and community engagement

Key programs at different life stages

EARLY YEARS



- *Let's Count*
- *Let's Read*

PRIMARY YEARS



- *Student2student* reading program
- Learning Clubs

SECONDARY YEARS



- *iTrack* career mentoring
- Creative enrichment
- Career and post-school pathways
- Work Inspiration
- Aboriginal girls' programs

POST-SCHOOL YEARS



- Tertiary mentoring
- Financial Literacy

PARENTS AND CARERS



- *Tech Packs*
- Financial Literacy

**Balanced
intervention
across
young
person's life**



*Learning for Life
scholarship*

THE FAMILIES WE ARE SUPPORTING



Learning for Life families



- **34,000** students nationally; 18,000 families
- **94** communities across all states/territories
- All **low income** families – Health Care Card or pension
- **18% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander** background
- 71% of parents **not in the labour force** or unemployed; 60% haven't completed Yr 12
- Over half are **single parent**, 6% grandparent/kinship/foster
- 40% of students and 50% of parents have a **health** or **disability** issue
- 20% of students have been at **4 or more schools** and 1 in 20 have been at 6 or more schools
- 50%+ of secondary and tertiary students on program for **6+ years**

OUR OUTCOMES



Measures of effectiveness

LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES

- Young people are in education, training, and/or work
- Young people complete Yr 12 or equivalent
- Young people stay engaged with learning

ENGAGEMENT ADVANCEMENT ATTENDANCE

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

- Improved literacy and numeracy
- Improved confidence (self-efficacy)
- Improved motivation and aspiration
- Enhanced networks and relationships
- Improved knowledge/understanding
- Improved or sustained school attendance

PROGRAMS Build skills & knowledge & influence attitudes & behaviours

Let's Count, Let's Read, Learning for Life, Student2Student, iTrack mentoring, Learning Clubs, Creative enrichment, careers/post-school options workshops, Work Inspiration, Tertiary Mentoring, Tech Packs, Financial literacy

Some outcome measures of *Learning for Life*



- Improve **school attendance** over time to 90%
 - Average attendance rate of Aboriginal students on the program is 86.1%
- Increase the proportion of students who advance to **Year 12**
 - 7 out of 10 students are completing Yr 12
- Increase proportion of students engaged in **employment and further education** after they leave the program
 - 84% of students are in work or study a year after leaving the program

These are strong educational outcomes for highly disadvantaged young Australians

Conclusion

- It is possible to improve the educational and life outcomes of highly disadvantaged young Australians
- Evidence informed programs, nuanced for local circumstances and that have a continuous improvement focus, are key
- Early intervention, long term support, parental engagement, collaboration, outcomes focus and scaling effective initiatives critical if we want to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people



THANK YOU QUESTIONS

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