

UNDERSTANDING THE EVIDENCE ABOUT SUPPORTING POSITIVE OUTCOMES

NSW Principals Conference

Wendy Field
Head of Policy and Programs
Anne Hampshire
Head of Research and Advocacy

10 June 2015



Presentation overview



- Who is The Smith Family?
- What research underpins our work?
- What are we trying to achieve (Outcomes)?
- How are we tracking?
- What did we change in our approach and why?
- What will drive the change from here?
- Questions

The Smith Family



OUR VISION

A better future for young Australians in need.

OUR MISSION

To create opportunities for young Australians in need by providing long-term support for their participation in education.

OUR BELIEF

Every child deserves a chance.

OUR HISTORY

Established in 1922 by a group of businessmen

OUR FINANCES

\$81 million in 2013-14:

- \$47 m from donations, corporate support and bequests
- \$26 m from government
- \$3.3 m from recycling commercial operation

THE PROBLEM WE'RE ADDRESSING AND THE RESEARCH WHICH UNDERPINS OUR WORK

The problem we're trying to solve

- Disadvantaged children and young people in Australia have poorer educational outcomes than their more advantaged peers.
- Gaps in educational outcomes exist prior to school, continue through school and into post-school education and employment.
- The relationship between student background and educational outcomes is more pronounced in Australia than in nations such as Canada.

Which students struggle to achieve positive educational outcomes?

- A number of individual and family characteristics are associated with differences in educational outcomes.
- On average, students who live in families with:
 - parental unemployment
 - low levels of parental education and/or
 - an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background...have lower rates of school attendance, poorer academic achievement and lower Year 12 attainment rates, than their peers. (Lamb, 2004)

Research underpinning our approach



- Multiple factors impact children and young people's outcomes
- These factors place a child on a particular trajectory or pathway
- Trajectory isn't fixed - can be influenced by the right support at the right time
- Working in multiple areas of a child's life maximises likelihood of positive outcomes
- Early intervention and prevention is much more cost effective than remedial efforts aimed at 'fixing' entrenched problems

For disadvantaged children, greatest returns from balanced interventions across young person's life

	High school grad rates	Uni enrolment	Welfare enrolment
Balanced intervention throughout childhood	+50%	+34%	-15%
Early childhood & adolescent intervention	+44%	+23%	-14%
Early childhood intervention only	+25%	+9%	-9%

“The same amount of total investment distributed more evenly over the life cycle of a child produces more adult skills than policy that concentrates attention on only one part of the child’s life cycle.”

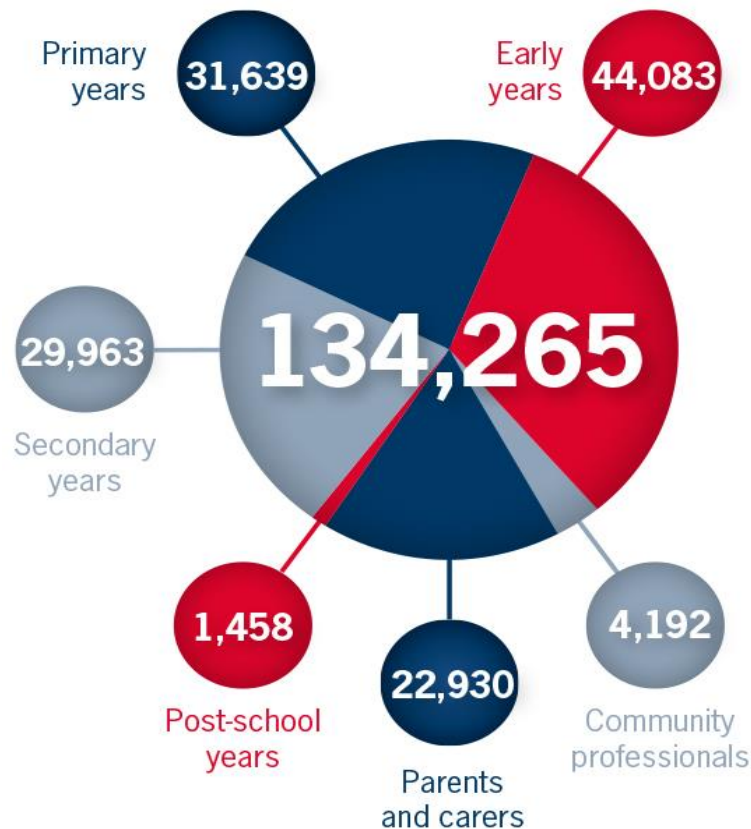
Invest early – and keep on investing

James Heckman

OUR PROGRAMS AND SCALE

Our scale

In 2013–14 The Smith Family reached 134,265 children, young people, parents, carers and community professionals, across 94 communities, in each state and territory.



In 2013-14, 34,000 students were supported with our *Learning for Life Scholarship*. Includes 10,300 in NSW.

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
- *Girls at the Centre*

POST-SCHOOL YEARS



- Tertiary mentoring
- Financial Literacy

PARENTS AND CARERS



- *Tech Packs*
- Financial Literacy



Learning for Life
scholarship

THE FAMILIES WE ARE SUPPORTING

Characteristics of *LfL* students and families

- 34,000 students living in 18,000 families
- 16% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
 - 2,000 in NSW
- 68% of parents not in labour force or unemployed
- 60% of students live in sole-parent family
- A third have 6 \geq people in the family
- High level of housing instability, resulting in frequent
- No quantitative data (yet) of child/parent disability/health incidence but significant qualitative indications
- Over half of LfL secondary students on program for 5 or more years



How disadvantaged are LfL students relative to their peers?

	Total student population for 50 NSW schools (n=31,478)	TSF LfL students in the same schools (n=2,591)
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background	14.3%	24.7%
Parent/Carer Year 12 completion or post-school education	80.3%	39.4%
Parent/Carer University education	12.5%	3.4%
Parent/Carer Employed	79.0%	18.4%

This data shows LfL students are more disadvantaged than their peers:

- They are more likely to be of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background
- Less likely to have a parent who has completed Yr 12 or university
- Less likely to have a parent who is employed



everyone's family

PARTNERING WITH SCHOOLS

Scope



- All States and Territories
- Students in circa 4,000 schools
- *Learning for Life* in circa 400 partner schools
- 9 'School Hub' sites

THE WHY



- Common goals and ambitions for students
- Our work can complement work being done in schools
- Parent engagement is core to our model and aligned with ambition of schools
- Support the school-family interface
- TSF work in bringing resources to students, families, school communities.

What works for partnership?

- Clarify common goals and outcomes
- School leadership support
- Governance clarified; mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities (MoU)
- Open communication; sharing of data re student progress and or family issues
- TSF work aligned with School Improvement Plan
- TSF work integrated into school rather than 'add on'

OUR OUTCOMES

Outcomes we are aiming to achieve



everyone's family

- LONGER TERM OUTCOMES**
- Young people are in education, training and/or work
 - Young people complete Year 12 or equivalent
 - Young people stay engaged with learning

**ENGAGEMENT
ADVANCEMENT
ATTENDANCE**

**SHORT TERM
OUTCOMES
CONTRIBUTE TO
LONGER TERM
OUTCOMES**

OBA:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

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

- Increased access to and use of community resources
- Increased parent engagement in school activities

- Improved service collaboration and integration
- Enhanced cross-sectoral partnerships

PROGRAMS

Programs build skills and knowledge and influence attitudes and behaviours

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY

Learning for Life scholarship, student2student, iTrack mentoring, Learning Clubs, smArts, Careers/Post school options workshops, Let's Count, Let's Read, Work Inspiration, Tertiary Mentoring, Tech Packs, Financial Literacy

SCHOOL

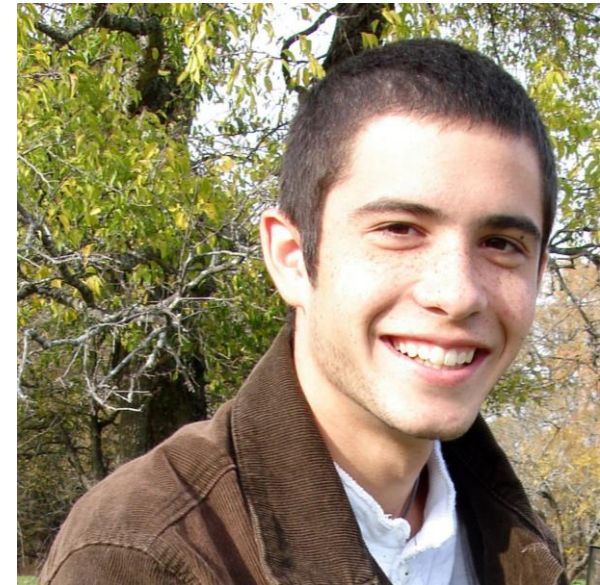
School Community Hubs

COMMUNITY

Communities for Children, Child and Parent Centres

Measures of effectiveness of *Learning for Life*

- Improve school attendance over time to 90%
- Increase the proportion of students who advance to Year 12
- Increase proportion of students engaged in employment and further education after they leave the program



1. Increased school attendance

Learning for life 2013 average school attendance rates

National

91.2%

NSW

90.9%

National

86.0%

NSW

83.0%

For *Learning for Life* primary school students

For *Learning for Life* secondary school students

86.9%

National

For *Learning for Life* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students

**All are
improvements
on 2012**



How do our students' attendance rates compare with others?

- In the schools where we work, 70% of LfL students have attendance rate the same or better than the average of their peers, even though LfL students are more disadvantaged

Some students are struggling with attendance, but we are seeing improvements

School attendance rate by percentage bands	2012 %	2013 %
90% or above	58.9	63.1
80 – 89%	23.4	22.6
70-79%	9.3	8.6
60-69%	3.9	3.3
Less than 60%	4.4	3.3

How do attendance rates vary by family characteristics?

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have lower rates than non-Aboriginal students
- Children living in one parent, mother-headed households have lower rates than other family types
- Children whose parent/s is studying or working have higher attendance than those who are unemployed or not in the labour force.
- Children whose parent/s had no formal or only primary education had the highest attendance rates.

2. Improved Year 12 completion

The Smith Family's advancement rate

National

62.5%

NSW

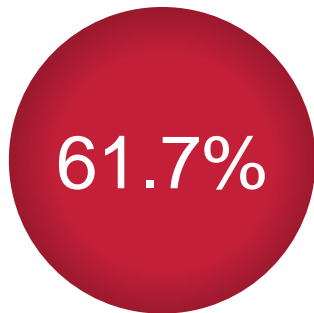
60.2%

Learning for Life students who were in Year 10 in 2011 and advanced to Year 12 or its equivalent by 2013.
Up from 60% for the period 2010–12.



3. Successful post school transitions

Fully engaged



Partly engaged



Learning for Life students in work or study 12 months after leaving the program. This is for students who left the program in Years 10, 11 or 12. Of the 20% who were not engaged, two-thirds were actively seeking employment and one in 7 was volunteering.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, 56% were fully engaged and 14% were partially engaged.



Engagement Rate 2013

(excluding those still at school)

Year completed at school	Fully engaged %	Partially engaged %	Not engaged %
Yr 12	60	23	17
Yr 11	42	22	36
Yr 10	54	20	26

- Young people who left school in Yr 11 had poorest engagement rates.
- Strategies being developed to help them either complete Yr 12 or have a clearer and actionable post-school plan.

Engagement Rate 2013

- **Major reasons for early school leaving were:**
 - Wanted to earn own money
 - Wanted to get job, apprenticeship
 - ✓ Didn't like school
 - ✓ Missed a lot of school/were absent from school a lot
 - ✓ Weren't doing well at school
 - ✓ Had problems with teachers
 - ✓ Had problems with students
 - Didn't need Yr 12 for the study, training or job they wanted
- ✓ Opportunity to identify some of these young people early and work with them to stay at school

Why we changed our program delivery approach in 2012

- Highly dispersed programs and events – no capacity to assess our total impact due to diversity of approaches.
- Scholarship families in over 4000 schools; (some of this is due to mobility)
- Resources stretched – challenge to oversight the quality of programs.
- LfL team members confused about their role – supporting families/brokering partnerships.
- Exit rates from scholarship circa 10% per annum – unable to realise our intent to support across the school life course (now 5%)
- Low participation in support programs by families on scholarship at circa 7% (now 22%)
- Difficult to manage school partnerships – because covering too many schools. (concentration now increased to 52% from 41%)

What have we done since then?

- Reduced the number of programs in the LfL suite to a 'core' of 10 using a multi factorial cost/benefit approach
- Focussed on data – this has a number of facets
 - Extended CONNECT Capacity to capture participant data for 7 of our 10 core programs
 - Invested in improving technical capacity
 - Established KPIs as leading indicators for scholarship activity – now down to program coordinator level
 - Implemented annual monitoring and reporting cycle for all of our programs, including scholarship
 - Longitudinal tracking of our long term outcomes
 - Recruited data analytics capacity to the Policy and Programs team.
 - Piloted revised roles to address 'span of role' issues
- Developed an evidence informed approach to working with scholarship families and partner schools; guidelines and training to support implementation.

What will drive change in the future?

Maintain focus on 'practice' with families – learn and adapt for what works

Strong emphasis on outcomes and data – feedback loop to managers and teams.; data informing policy

Drive a culture of accountability through tracking performance

Monitor and continue to support consistency in program implementation

Scan the external environment for innovation and improvement.

Maintain the momentum!