

# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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# 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

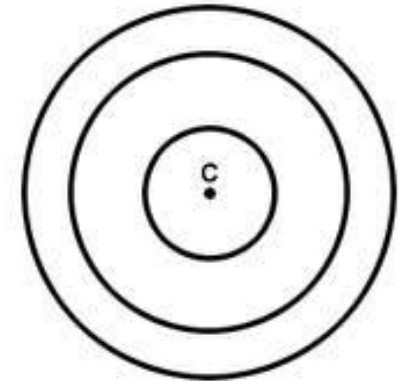
eg aspirations, attitudes to education, risk taking behaviour

## 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, goal setting
- **Mindsets** – belief about whether intelligence is fixed or can be developed (growth mindset)
- **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 SES
- Aspects that matter most:
  - **Aspirations** and **expectations** re achievement and participation in further education
  - Parent-child reading
  - Parents' **conversations** influence cognitive skills, value and enjoyment of learning
  - Creating **stimulating environment**
  - Positive and trusting **parent-teacher** relationship
- Influences orientation to learning, motivation, engagement, confidence, beliefs

# 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, 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
<b>Balanced intervention across full life cycle of a child</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>

# 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
  - \$4.4 billion pa ➡ insufficient data to assess impact

# THE SMITH FAMILY'S *LEARNING FOR LIFE* SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

# ***Learning for Life – key underpinnings***



- Early intervention and long-term approach (Heckman)
- Parental engagement
- High expectations
- Reciprocity and accountability
- ‘Beyond school’ – complements but in addition to school
- Multiple partnerships – family, school, community, business, philanthropy
- 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*



# LEARNING FOR LIFE FAMILIES





# Learning for Life families



- **33,000** students nationally; 18,000 families **(550+ in TAS)**
- **94** communities across all states/territories
- All **low income** families – Health Care Card or pension
- **19% 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**

# PROGRAM OUTCOMES



# Measures of effectiveness

**LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES**



**SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES**



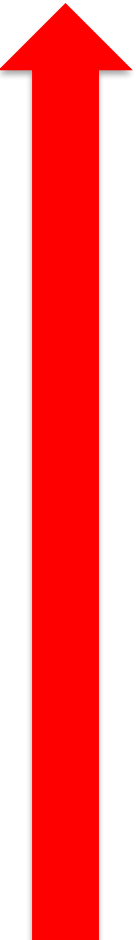
**PROGRAMS**  
**Build skills & knowledge & influence attitudes & behaviours**

- 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**

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

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



# Increased school attendance

The Smith Family's national average attendance rates, 2015



90.7%

For Learning for Life  
primary school  
students



86.1%

For Learning for Life  
secondary school  
students



86.1%

For Learning for Life  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander school students

## National comparison

The average attendance rate for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 1 to 10 in all government schools is 83.2%, below the 86.1% of Aboriginal students on Learning for Life.

# Improved Year 12 completion

## The Smith Family's national advancement rate

68.2%

Learning for Life students who were in Year 10 in 2013 and advanced to Year 12 or its equivalent by 2015. Up from 60% for the period 2010–12.

Between 2012 and 2015, **6,500** students have been supported on Learning for Life to complete Year 12.



### National comparison

The national Year 12 completion rate for 19 year olds from Australia's lowest socioeconomic decile is 60.6% and for the second lowest decile is 61.4%. This is well below The Smith Family's Advancement Rate of 68.2%.

# Successful post school transitions

**84.2%** of former Learning for Life students nationally are in work or study 12 months after leaving the program

Fully engaged

65.8%

Partly engaged

18.4%



For **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** young people, **74.2%** were engaged – 54.6% were fully engaged and 19.6% were partially engaged.

For both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students who were not engaged, 80% were actively **seeking employment** and one in six was **volunteering**.

Nationally, **58.9%** of all **24 year olds** from lowest SES decile are fully engaged. This is well below the rate for former Learning for Life students who are much younger and have had less time to establish themselves, post-school.



# KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO IMPACT



# Key contributors to impact include



- **Early intervention + long-term** support, including different program offerings at different stages of young person's development
- Respectful long-term partnerships with **parents/carers** around their child's education – scholarship not welfare, supporting parents' engagement in their child's learning
- **Place based** approach – local partnerships with schools within national program implementation and evaluation framework
- Work across **multiple areas** of a young person's life, particularly home-school relationship
- Multiple **cross sectoral** partnerships
- Strong outcomes focus and use of **data** and **practice** experience to refine approach - including for different groups of students



# GOOD PROGRESS, BUT JOURNEY CONTINUES...

# Conclusion

- Regularly hear of Australia's educational challenge
- It's real – educational outcomes related to children's background – but improvements are clearly possible
- Teachers and schools are critical but can't do it alone
- Parents aren't 'the problem'
- Home environment, parental engagement and home – school relationships vital
- Long-term sustainable improvements possible with long-term support
- No one organisation can do it alone – need common purpose and shared effort
- Need to scale effective support and continue to build body of evidence

# DISCUSSION

