

EDUCATION:

The key to preventing
entrenched disadvantage

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Anne Hampshire
Head of Research and Advocacy
The Smith Family



Entrenched disadvantage in Australia

- Around 5% of Australians experience severe disadvantage
- Over half a million children in jobless households/poverty
- Characteristics associated with risk of long-term disadvantage include:
 - Low educational attainment
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background
 - Jobless households
 - Long term health/disability
 - Living in disadvantaged areas
 - Older people



- Predictor of future employment, health, welfare prospects
- Skills development is cumulative – young people who start behind often stay behind
- Failure to complete Year 12 or equivalent increases risk of lifetime economic and social disadvantage
- Employment markets emphasise knowledge, skills, innovation
- Australia's economic and social prosperity relies on capacity to realise potential of all Australians



Many young people being left behind

EARLY YEARS



Developmentally vulnerable

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

PRIMARY YEARS



Numeracy

More than 10% difference in Yr 5 students at or above national minimum standard based on parents' education.

SECONDARY YEARS



Year 12 completion

More than 10% difference based on socio-economic status of students.

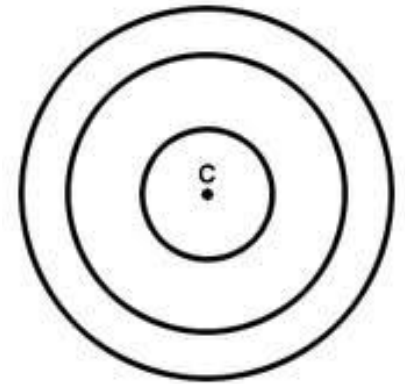
POST-SCHOOL YEARS



Post-school engagement

Post-school, 42% of 17–24 year olds from most disadvantaged backgrounds were not fully engaged in work or study, compared to 17% among most advantaged.

- Multiple influences on young person's development
- Early intervention – mitigates risk or prevents emerging problem getting worse
- More cost effective
- Balanced intervention for disadvantaged children
 - invest early and keep on investing throughout a young person's life
 - This gives best return on investment (James Heckman)



***Learning for Life* scholarship – early intervention to improve educational outcomes and prevent long-term disadvantage**



Parent and community engagement

Key programs at different 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

POST-SCHOOL YEARS



- Tertiary mentoring
- Financial Literacy

PARENTS AND CARERS



- *Tech Packs*
- Financial Literacy

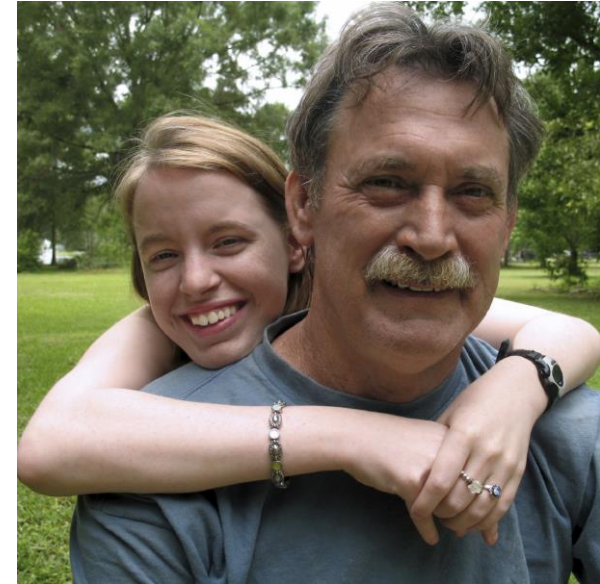


Learning for Life
scholarship

Parental engagement

- Parental engagement in children's learning is bigger predictor of how children do, than a family's socioeconomic status.
- Students with engaged parents, more likely to do well at school, graduate from school and go on to higher education.
- Parental engagement in learning is one tool that can help close the gap in achievement between children of different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Education Capital, 2014



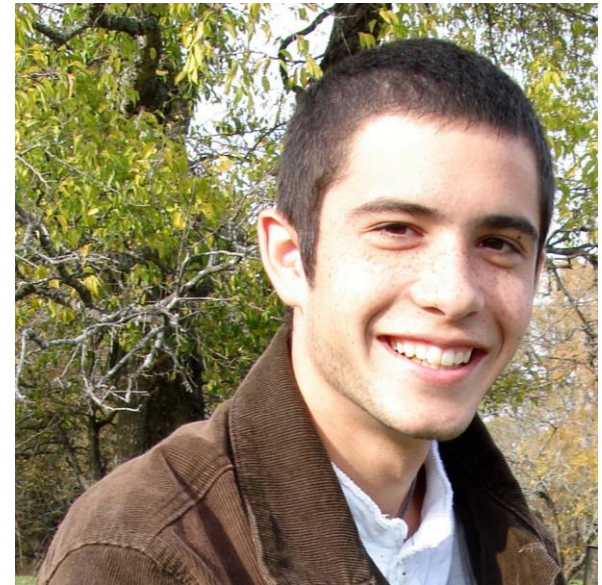
Learning for Life – scale and characteristics

- 34,000 students from 18,000 families
- 94 communities across all states and territories
- Low income families – Health Care Card or pension
- 16% (5,500) Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
- 68% of parents not in labour force or unemployed and low % have Year 12
- 60% sole parent families
- More disadvantaged as a group than school peers, even in disadvantaged schools
- Over half of secondary students on program for 5+ years



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



Increased school attendance

Learning for Life 2013 average school attendance rates

91.2%

For *Learning for Life*
primary school students

86.0%

For *Learning for Life*
secondary school students

86.9%

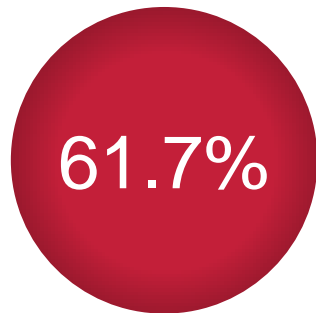
For *Learning for Life* Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander school students



**All are
improvements on
2012**

Successful post school transitions

Fully engaged



Partly engaged



Learning for Life students in work or study 12 months after leaving the program. This is of 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.



Using data to improve effectiveness

- Review of School Funding – insufficient data to assess impact of \$4.4 billion annual investment in programs to address educational disadvantage
- Detailed analysis of *Learning for Life* longitudinal data across range of characteristics is leading to improvements in outcomes achieved by highly disadvantaged young people
- If Australia is to address entrenched disadvantage, need to invest in evidence-based initiatives



Conclusion

- Clear relationship between education and lifelong social and economic outcomes
- Many children and young people living in disadvantaged families are at risk of poor outcomes
- Many young people not achieving good educational outcomes
- Background is not destiny – early intervention provides way of helping children on positive pathway
- Through partnerships with family, schools, governments, non-government organisations, business and philanthropy the cycle of entrenched disadvantage can be broken





everyone's family