



Emotional literacy:

Building strong relationships for lifelong learning

“Tomorrow’s world will require adults who have been taught to draw on a wider range of capabilities and competencies; who are curious, resilient, self-disciplined and self-motivated; who can navigate differences, overcome language and cultural barriers, and who are at ease working in a team.”

A Smith Family Snapshot Report

November 2009



everyone's family

“40% of Australian primary and secondary school students have poor social and emotional skills.”

Professor Michael Bernard, University of Melbourne, in conjunction with the Australian Council for Educational Research

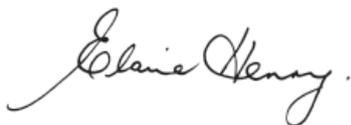
Message from Elaine Henry

In a globalised knowledge era, the only constant is change. Our children are growing up in a technology-enabled, socially networked environment in which their wellbeing depends more than ever on the relationships they are able to form and the mosaic of skills that they are able to draw on at different times, in different contexts, for different purposes. In this context, personal achievement and productivity depend not only on academic achievements but also on the emotional intelligence that assists in coping with the multiple stresses and pressures of modern life.

Until very recently, an individual's ability to recognise, understand and manage their own emotions – and to recognise these emotions in others through empathy – has been marginalised within education systems that measure success in predominantly academic terms. The cultivation of these ‘soft skills’, popularly perceived to be the duty of parents/carers and others outside the classroom, has suffered significantly as a result of changes specific to the family unit over the last 50 years. The increased prevalence of adolescent mental health issues, particularly among disadvantaged children and youth, is but one symptom of this neglect.

When The Smith Family commenced its organisational transformation a decade ago, it was clear from the evidence that hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged kids in Australia were growing up without the skills they needed to survive in society, let alone thrive. To this end, we have spent the last ten years building an evidence-based suite of literacy programs known as *Learning for Life* to provide these kids and their families with the educational opportunities to make a better life for themselves. Starting from birth and stretching across the course of a child's life, we assist families with the emergent literacy and numeracy needs of their babies and toddlers and, as they grow up, give children and young people access to other crucial literacies, including financial, digital and emotional literacies to help them realise their potential.

This Snapshot Report discusses the importance of emotional literacy in particular, not just in supporting children and young people to build strong relationships now, but as the essential precursor to their broader academic and economic achievements in the future. It also outlines some of the innovative initiatives and partnerships The Smith Family has created in this field that are enhancing the capacity of disadvantaged children right around Australia to confidently meet and overcome the challenges that life presents to us all.



Elaine Henry, OAM
Chief Executive Officer
The Smith Family

Front cover quote: Roberts, Y. (2009) *Grit – The skills for success and how they are grown*, The Young Foundation, UK.

Front cover top left photo: Students from Gray Primary School in performance.

Front cover top right and bottom photo: Members of the *Girls at the Centre* program working as a team.

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Jane's experience

“Just feeling like I was good at something made me feel like I fit in, and, the funny thing is, my reading and other school work seems somehow to be easier since I started music and joined the school's rock band,”

explains Jane, a Year 5 *Learning for Life* student.

Like most kids, Jane just wanted to feel included - like the others in her class.

She wanted to be part of what was happening in the playground; simple things like to eat her lunch with the other girls. But wearing an old uniform that was too big and wanting to avoid questions like where her books were, or why she wasn't on the school netball team, or why she never went on school excursions, meant it was just easier to keep to herself. She felt like an outsider, and that really hurt.

Jane had stopped telling her mum about school excursions. She knew there wasn't enough money. Missing out sometimes made her feel angry, but she knew it wasn't her mum's fault. It still seemed unfair. Instead, when school excursions came around she'd pretend to be sick. On those days the sense of being left out was almost unbearable.

Jane was getting a bit of a reputation at school for being disruptive but, as she figured, at least when she was at the principal's office, she got out of reading aloud in class and no one there would notice when she stumbled. Each day she would wait anxiously for the last bell to ring, so she could go home, let herself in and try to forget all about it. She'd spend endless hours watching TV, or playing her guitar, while she waited alone for her mother to come home from work. Her mother worked long hours as an office cleaner and often got held back.

She couldn't wait until she could leave school for good; then she wouldn't have to feel different, be teased as the poor kid, or thought stupid. She didn't know what she wanted to do; maybe she could help her mother at work or get a job at the local shops or something like that. She didn't really care, she just wanted out.

But that was all before Jane discovered she had a talent for something. And that something was music.

She remembers clearly the first day that Mr Peters, the new music teacher, asked if anyone could play an instrument. Just mucking around, Jane picked up the



guitar and played a few things. At first she thought she had made a fool of herself as everyone had gone all quiet, but then Mr Peters asked her to play that song again, and then again.

Music is now Jane's favourite lesson of the week and, anytime she gets, she practises guitar with some of the other kids in the school's rock band. When she plays she forgets others are watching – she doesn't even mind if they do.

Excursions are also no longer a problem, since Jane's mum heard about The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* program. Earlier this year, Jane went on the school's three-day band camp, where she got to hang out with all the kids and, best of all, to play lots of music.

Jane's music teacher made this observation about the children, many of whom came from the same disadvantaged background as Jane: “What I noticed was that there were many students who had suddenly made the discovery that they liked making music and were good at playing an instrument. That realisation created a big change in the attitude of many children, it gave them confidence, which helped them in other areas of their schoolwork as well.”

With the encouragement and support of The Smith Family, Jane has also been getting help with her reading. She has a buddy with whom she practises reading through the *student2student* tutoring program and she is starting to think about what she might want to do when she is older, and what subjects she will need to study.

“The change in Jane over the past year has been incredible to watch,” commented her mother. “I sometimes have to pinch myself to believe that the confident girl playing the guitar on stage is my daughter!”



Members of the *Girls at the Centre* program working as a team



What is emotional literacy?

“Students are lacking the confidence, persistence, organisational and team work skills to help them perform at the best of their ability.”

Professor Michael Bernard, University of Melbourne

Our children are growing up in a dynamic world. A world in which a person's ability to cope, adapt and thrive in an environment of constant change is as much a requisite for success as is a post-school qualification.

Why is it that some children and adults seem better able to cope with these shifting sands than others? What are the attributes that employers focus on to select one applicant over another when both candidates on paper fit the job? And why do some individuals bounce back from adversity where others fall?

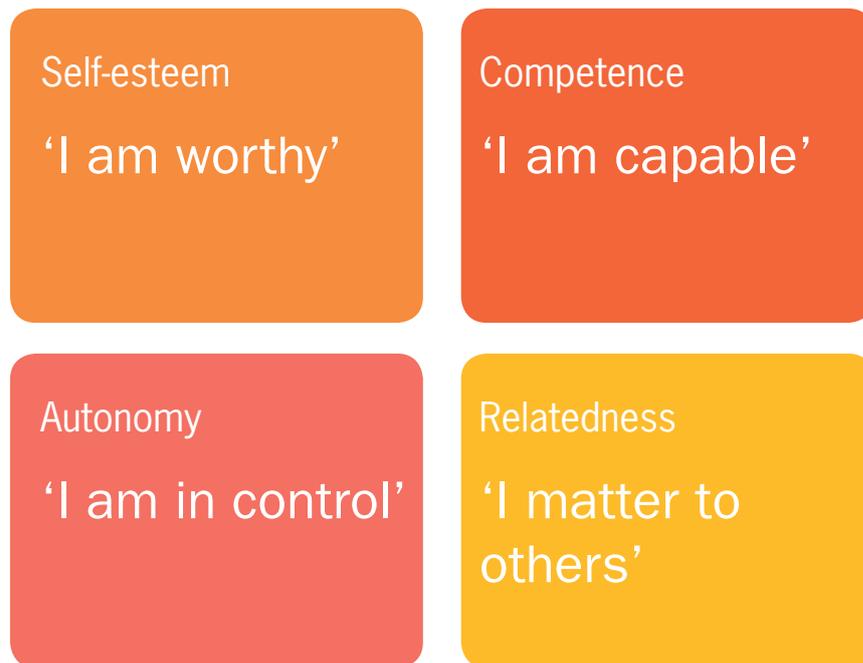
Over the last decade, a growing body of research has suggested that the answer to these and similar questions lies in our varying levels of emotional intelligence. This set of skills helps shape a person's understanding of the world; guides their relationships, engagement and success in school; and informs their aspirations around who or what they want to be. Put simply, they are the tools that, along with academic skills, inform the attitudes we bring to the situations we are faced with and the way we engage others around us.

At The Smith Family, they are the skills that go to the very heart of our work in enabling supportive relationships for disadvantaged children and their families to aspire to and create a better future for themselves through education. If they are to truly break the persistent cycle of intergenerational disadvantage, these individuals need to overcome the significant impact that their circumstances can have on their sense of self-esteem and competence, which in too many instances carry lifelong negative consequences for their abilities and achievements.

That is why we have embedded the principles of emotional intelligence (or **emotional literacy** as we call it) throughout our *Learning for Life* education and learning programs, with the aim of enhancing disadvantaged students' abilities to:

- Recognise and understand their emotions;
- Manage these effectively through self-discipline;
- Recognise emotions in others through empathy; and
- Draw on all of these to successfully develop and manage relationships for different purposes in different contexts.

Figure 1: Emotional literacy - key attributes or characteristics (Vale et al., 2009)



These abilities are what the evidence suggests to be the key skills that make up emotional literacy. They in turn depend on the individual developing four distinct attributes or characteristics: self-esteem, competence, autonomy and relatedness (see Figure 1 above).

Self-esteem – 'I am worthy'

Self-esteem refers to the general perception a person has about themselves and their general concept of self-worth. Research has shown significant changes in levels of self-esteem at different stages in people's lives, while also indicating periods where it is most impacted by interventions. For example, self-esteem is especially malleable during early childhood and the primary school years, and becomes increasingly difficult to alter throughout adolescence and young adulthood, by which time individuals have begun to 'accept' a certain level of self-esteem as part of their identity (Trzesniewski et al., 2003). This indicates the importance of adopting a preventive approach focusing on early childhood and the primary/early secondary school years.

Competence – 'I am capable'

Competence (or 'self-efficacy') refers to the ability to operate effectively within one's environment. It is closely related to self-esteem and involves a person's confidence in overcoming barriers and performing tasks (Bandura, 2006). It includes having a sense of purpose, educational aspirations, and anticipation and belief in a bright future.

Autonomy – 'I am in control'

Autonomy refers to the capacity for self-determination and critical participation, and is understood as an individual's ability to situate their life in a wider context, to critically analyse it and, if necessary, to change it. A young person who has achieved a sense of autonomy will not simply react spontaneously to circumstances and other people but manage their responses reflectively and proactively with a sense of direction that they have chosen for themselves (Vale et al., 2009).

Relatedness – 'I matter to others'

Relatedness refers to feeling significant to others and being a part of social networks with friends and peers. Networking and social support systems need to be established early and maintained for young people to maximise their likelihood of success in all areas of their lives. This can be achieved through formal relations with teachers and other professionals, and informal relations with siblings and peers (Vale et al., 2009).

Disadvantaged children typically start some way behind their more advantaged peers with regard to how strongly they perform on these characteristics, because they have fewer resources, role models or opportunities for positive reinforcement.



Students performing at The Sydney Conservatorium of Music



“Every kid has a dream for their future, but they don’t all have the tools to succeed. If given a chance to succeed at school, or even to go on to uni, then there’s a world of possibilities out there.”

Paul, *Learning for Life* tertiary student

Why is emotional literacy important?

Emotional literacy and social skills play a vital role in helping children and young people engage constructively in education, training and learning. They are also essential in enabling individuals to take control over their lives and mitigate the impact of their immediate circumstances on the pathways they wish to follow. Without adequate confidence in their own capacity and ability to succeed, many individuals will avoid rather than embrace the challenges that lie before them, and in so doing exacerbate their social and economic marginalisation.

Emotional literacy is therefore critical not just for the individual concerned, but for the wellbeing of their family, community and indeed the productivity of the nation as a whole. Increasing rates of mental health problems among adolescents, and high-profile instances of youth resorting to desperate and often violent actions against themselves or others have provided a stark warning of the consequences of further neglecting emotional literacy.

However, organised opportunities for the development of emotional literacy and social skills remain unevenly distributed. Young people in lower income families are less likely to have participated in organised activities with a focus on sports, music, arts and social activity

clubs, than those in the higher income families (CCSD, 2006). It is likely that these personal development opportunities are seen as ‘extra-curricular’ and therefore associated with a financial cost beyond the reach of many disadvantaged families.

We already know that disadvantaged children and young people are particularly at risk of having low emotional literacy levels. Research has shown that financial and material disadvantage can have a negative lifelong impact on an individual’s self-esteem, competence, autonomy and relatedness and can deeply affect their sense of identity, belonging and wellbeing (Friedli, 2009). Financial disadvantage in particular can significantly reduce a young child’s readiness for school. Parents/carers carrying greater levels of stress and have access to fewer material resources to support them, ultimately affecting the way they interact and care for their children. In these instances, where families are experiencing stress and hardship, it is especially important to ensure children are able to acquire support and encouragement from other sources where possible (Furlong et al., 2003).



Girls at the Centre program participants on a trip to Melbourne



“Often, what makes us successful is not the road we choose. It’s how we decide to handle the bumps in it.”

Professor Rosabeth Moss Kantor, Harvard Business School

Emotional literacy – the right support, at the right time and in the right place

Emotional literacy may be easy to understand on paper, but its components are difficult to teach in any formal manner because of the complexity of factors influencing each individual’s experiences. Research and the experience of The Smith Family have suggested that a range of opportunities are required at various points across the course of a child’s life and in the key environments of family (home), school, community and workplace.

The majority of students participating in our *Learning for Life* suite of literacy programs are growing up in jobless and lone parent homes, with few opportunities within the school curriculum to help them develop the emotional literacy skills they need to succeed. To this end, we focus on providing support outside the classroom, enabling relationships with a diverse range of caring individuals willing to help them learn.

The right support...

Being able to access one-to-one guidance and support from ‘significant others’ outside their family, particularly mentors, has been one of the most important factors in helping our students to first aspire to a better future and then develop the skills they need to make that dream a reality.

The value of mentoring in developing emotional literacy is well established in the literature (Hartley, 2004), where it has been linked to positive improvements in a students’ self-esteem, social and interpersonal skills, in addition to enhancing their school attendance, academic performance and relationships with family and friends. Furthermore, a close and supportive relationship with an adult mentor is a significant predictor of resilience in those who experienced childhood adversity.

Emotional literacy also develops through working with groups of people in different contexts. Skills such as the confidence to speak to an audience, the ability to work in a team and the authority to take on a leadership role, can all be nurtured and developed through activities such as playing in a football team, participating in a music program or engaging in a group experience such as Outward Bound.

...at the right time...

The evidence has shown that children and young people have distinct emotional literacy needs at different stages in their development, with the early years being a particularly important time for developing the building blocks of self-esteem and self-awareness (for example).

Figure 2: Emotional literacy skills and capacities across the life course

Early Years (0-5 yrs)	Primary Years (6-12 yrs)	Middle Years (12-16 yrs)	Young Adult Years (16-24)	Adult Years (25+ yrs)
DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/carer-child bonds • Emotional vocabulary • Emotional control • Self-awareness • Awareness of others 	DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional control • Peer group bonds • Social skills • Self-esteem STRENGTHENING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional vocabulary • Parent/carer-child bonds • Self-awareness 	DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social skills STRENGTHENING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional vocabulary • Emotional control • Self-awareness • Self-confidence • Self esteem • Peer group bonds 	REINFORCEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-control • Self-confidence • Peer group bonds • Social skills STRENGTHENING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional vocabulary 	REINFORCEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-control • Self-confidence • Peer group bonds • Social skills STRENGTHENING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional vocabulary

Darker orange areas indicate areas of greatest impact for emotional literacy interventions

Building emotional literacy is therefore a cumulative process of nurturing and reinforcing appropriate emotional and social skills across the life course (Figure 2).

In the early years, children begin to learn words for the emotions they are experiencing – their *emotional vocabulary*. Parents/carers can explicitly teach new words by applying labels when children experience specific emotions. For example, when an infant smiles a parent might say “Oh, you are happy” and over time, the child learns to associate the word with the gesture and the emotion they are feeling.

When the child enters primary school, teachers can strengthen and expand this emotional vocabulary through games or role playing that model emotional states for children. They can act out situations and ask children to guess how the character is feeling. The progression from these lessons is to practise interpreting other people’s emotional states and learning to ‘be in their shoes’.

An individual’s emotional vocabulary is therefore an important foundation not only for understanding one’s own personal emotional state, but also empathising with others. The development and lifelong expansion of this vocabulary is crucial in creating positive interpersonal interactions across various settings, including the home, at school and in the workplace.

Once an individual is able to recognise emotions through their vocabulary, the next step is to understand how to control them. Research has shown that the ability to manage emotions and deal effectively with

interpersonal interactions develops over time, with clear links between how relationships are modelled within the home and how children enact them in school.

For example, regulating physical aggression is learned behaviour and many factors, including having parents who have separated, adolescent motherhood and financial disadvantage can all act as predictors of high levels of aggressive behaviour during adolescence or adulthood (Tremblay, 2006). These patterns may be less amenable to intervention after eight years of age, resulting in an escalation of academic problems and antisocial behaviour and eventual school drop-out.

For this reason, the role of the parent/carer in promoting warm, sensitive and positive relationships with their children from an early age cannot be underestimated. This bond is developed early through the frequent, positive interactions they experience together, for example, during feeding and bathing. Ultimately, it is this early attachment to their parent/carer that impacts most heavily on a child’s ability to form close relationships later in life and on the development of their emotional literacy more broadly.

Then, as young people grow up, the influence of friends and peers on their behaviour increases. Self-confidence and social skills become highly important for developing social networks and connecting with the community, and the quality of their peer relationships has been closely linked to a child’s academic success. For example, children who are socially isolated have lower self-esteem, tend to dislike

Figure 3: Emotional literacy relationships and attributes across the settings

Home/Family	Community	Educational Institutions	Workplace
<p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy and strong parent/carer-child bonds • Positive parenting, role modelling and aspirations • Supportive/caring family climate <p>ATTRIBUTES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate resources within the home for lifelong learning 	<p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonding social capital in the community • Bridging social capital with resources beyond the community <p>ATTRIBUTES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood quality • Interconnected services 	<p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy teacher/student relations • Positive relations with peers <p>ATTRIBUTES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools' readiness for children and young people • Schools adequately resourced 	<p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive and productive relationships with employers and peers • Team work <p>ATTRIBUTES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for learning on the job • Opportunities for personal and professional development

Darker orange areas indicate areas of greatest impact for emotional literacy interventions

Research has shown that when students feel cared about, are welcomed, valued and seen as active resources and not passive learners, the climate of classrooms and schools change for the better.

Elias, 2006

school and are significantly more likely to be involved in risky behaviour, including substance abuse, gang involvement, teen pregnancy, and violence at school (Smith & Sandhu, 2004).

...in the right place

In addition to their life stage, the relationships and attributes of the various settings or environments in which children and young people learn and develop have also been found to play a crucial role in supporting their emotional literacy (see Figure 3). Educational institutions appear to be particularly influential in the formation of positive attitudes, behaviours and a sense of self-efficacy in young people that has been shown to account for 8 to 15 per cent of differences in attainment (Lupton, 2006).

This is because, as an intensely social environment, the school's social atmosphere can significantly affect students' senses of competence and broader attitudes. Students who enjoy strong connections to their teachers and peers via social activities feel a greater sense of purpose and pride about their participation and have more positive long term outcomes.



Students practise their woodwork skills during a visit to Bairnsdale Secondary College

Right: Leonora was one of 25 students who attended the National Aspiring Leaders Summit in Canberra
Photo courtesy of Tweed Daily News



OUTWARD
BOUND
AUSTRALIA

OUTWARD BOUND
Inspiring Australia

Australia

Leandra



Girls at the Centre participants on a school excursion



“Students who are well liked by peers are happier at school, better adjusted both psychologically and emotionally, and considerably less likely to engage in aggressive and violent behaviours.”

Smith & Sandhu, 2004

The Smith Family’s emotional literacy programs

Emotional literacy programs at The Smith Family are education initiatives and opportunities that support the physical, social and emotional development of our students, as well as their emerging personal skills, talents and interests.

Girls at the Centre

The *Girls at the Centre* program, which is offered through a middle school on two campuses (two secondary schools) in Alice Springs, aims to counteract the high absenteeism and school drop-out rates of teenage girls and to improve their relationships with each other.

According to Annette Jamieson, principal of Alice Springs High School, “*Girls at the Centre* has helped to diffuse confrontations between girls through the modelling of positive relationships and the support the girls are getting in how to relate to one another and work as a team.” It has also improved the attendance and achievement of the 55 girls who have already participated.

At each of the participating schools, a ‘girl coach’ has been appointed to act as a mentor, adviser and advocate, and a ‘girl’s room’ has been set aside as a place where the girls can meet and connect with girls of their own age. The program offers access to tutors and mentors and opportunities to participate in curriculum enhancement activities, such as sport, cooking and art, and to attend workforce workshops for skills development in resume writing, interview practice and telephone technique. The girls’ aspirations and confidence receive a boost with an annual visit to stay with families and attend classes at schools such as Ruyton Girls’ School in Melbourne.

iTrack Mentoring

The *iTrack Mentoring Program* is a school-based, one-to-one, online mentoring program for our students in Years 9 to 11. The aim of the program is to motivate students as they transition from secondary school to tertiary study or work, by connecting them to a supportive adult who is also a working professional. This mentor provides guidance on career options and builds the student’s emotional literacy skills (e.g. self-esteem, competence) as the relationship progresses.



Nathan and mentor Iain meet at a face-to-face session as part of the *iTrack* online mentoring program



National Aspiring Leaders Summit delegate, Sjon from WA, chats with Her Excellency, Governor-General, Quentin Bryce

Typically drawn from The Smith Family's corporate and community partners, these mentors participate in regular weekly online chat sessions with students and also meet with them in person at the beginning, middle and end of the program to help them plan appropriate pathways to achieve their post-school plans.

A teacher from one of the participating schools explains the benefits of the program: "*iTrack* is so important for our students who have little or no contact with people outside their area; with tertiary education; or with good role models – all important for making informed decisions about their future."

Bella

The Bella Art Workshop, facilitated through a partnership with Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney University College of the Arts and Mallesons Stephen Jaques, provides our artistic students with the opportunity to enhance their skills, develop their creativity and, as a consequence, build their confidence and self-esteem.

Over a four day residential program, the students, aged between 15 and 18 years, participate in artistic workshops, tour art galleries, and spend time with artists and art educators. By working in groups and alongside other young people and adults, the program also helps with their team-building and social skills and for many of them, provides them with their first real glimpse of city life.

The Smith Family acknowledges the contribution of all the partner organisations that facilitated the delivery of these programs.

CONverge

With the support of our partners, The Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the Matana Foundation for Young People, secondary students from disadvantaged communities participate in CONverge, a music program which focuses on the 'voice' as an instrument. Over a six week period, students participate in music workshops at their respective schools guided by expert help and the support of staff from the Conservatorium, culminating in a live performance.

National Aspiring Leaders Summit

In 2009 the *National Aspiring Leaders Summit* was attended by 25 of our secondary students aged between 15 and 18 years. Run in partnership with Outward Bound Australia, the seven day Summit combined exhilarating adventure activities and expeditions with personal development workshops to give students the opportunity to test themselves, inspire each other and, as often happens, develop a new outlook on life.

Participating students have reflected on the Summit as one of the most significant events in their school life. The benefits of the program typically extend beyond improved academic performance to also enhance their motivation, confidence, emotional self-management, leadership and team work abilities.

One of the participating students commented: "It truly has changed my life. It has made me realise who I am, what my strengths are, what my weaknesses are, and also made me truly appreciate what I have. It tested my limits both physically and mentally and I found that, if I put my mind to it, I truly can do anything."



Participants in the Swan Nyungar Sports Education Program, WA



Conclusion

Emotional literacy is crucial for children, young people and adults to be active and productive citizens in today's world. To not only survive but thrive in the fast-paced, global knowledge economy that our children will inherit, they need to be able to manage multiple and diverse relationships and a range of social pressures. They need to be innovative and curious, open to change, to have the confidence and ability to tackle challenges head-on, and the resilience to bounce back from adversity.

Building the emotional literacy of children from birth across the course of a child's life is the key to ensuring each generation of children grows up with the best chance to succeed. However, access to opportunities that support the development of these emotional literacy skills, be they in the home, school, community or the workplace, remains inherently unequal, with lifelong consequences for a person's identity, sense of belonging and wellbeing.

With a strong international and national evidence base in place, there is no excuse for this neglect of emotional literacy to persist. This Snapshot Report has touched on some of the key ingredients – emotional vocabulary, emotional control, attachment to parents/carers, significant others and peers that research has shown to be vital components in building emotional literacy and creating individuals with strong self-esteem, competence, autonomy and capacity for relatedness.

We know that focusing on the early years results in the greatest impact, but we also have a duty not to ignore those who have not had the benefit of this support, and there are many successful initiatives that can be put in place in the school, community and workplace settings.

For this reason, The Smith Family provides disadvantaged children and young people with emotional literacy opportunities across the life course, concentrating on prevention and early intervention. We understand the importance of providing kids with the best start in life and then walking alongside them throughout their education to support their continued engagement and achievement. Emotional literacy is but one of eight literacies that today's children need to develop if they are to succeed in breaking the cycle of disadvantage once and for all.

About The Smith Family

The Smith Family, established in 1922, is an independent social enterprise that works in partnership with other caring Australians to help unlock opportunities for disadvantaged Australian children and their families to participate more fully in society.

As research has shown, supporting children's education is one of the most effective means of breaking the cycle of disadvantage and ensuring all children have the same opportunity to realise their potential. However for children to learn, they need the right relationships with those around them, relationships that help them belong and participate not only locally in their communities, but also more broadly as responsible citizens.

The Smith Family's role is to act as a 'connector', coordinating a collaboration of different stakeholders in a community to facilitate a comprehensive network of relationships across the life course for children and their families. In this way, we are able to engage caring individuals and organisations in the Australian community and leverage their capacities, skills and/or resources to support the increased participation of disadvantaged children through our evidence-based suite of educational programs known as *Learning for Life*.

Throughout the course of their lives, and at key transition points where they are most vulnerable, we connect our *Learning for Life* students with those in the wider community who, as sponsors, mentors, tutors and coaches, help them build the aspirations, determination and resilience that will take them across the line to a better future.

List and copies of available publications may be obtained by contacting:
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Snapshot Report: Emotional Literacy

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everyone's family

The Smith Family Snapshot Reports

The Smith Family Snapshot Report series focuses on the essential literacies, or capacities, that contribute to a person's development of life skills which enable their meaningful participation in society.

These literacies are:

- Emergent introduction to books, reading and counting
- Comprehension basic reading and writing
- Digital computer and internet skills
- Financial managing and making decisions about money
- Emotional managing one's own emotions and developing relationships with others
- Health adopting positive behaviours through nutrition and physical activity
- Community locating, using and contributing to relevant services in their community
- Intercultural understanding, respecting and interacting with others from different cultures

Snapshot Report: Emotional Literacy

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