

# Steps To Prep

## School Transition Program

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## Who we are

- We help people change their lives through support and education
- We speak out for a fairer society where everybody thrives
- We're Australia's first charity
- We're a not-for-profit and non-religious organisation
- We've helped people, families and communities achieve positive change for 200 years

# What is Steps To Prep?

A partnership between families, early childhood services, child health and schools to optimise school readiness and transition to school

The program is referral only aimed at the most vulnerable children at risk of not making a successful transition to school

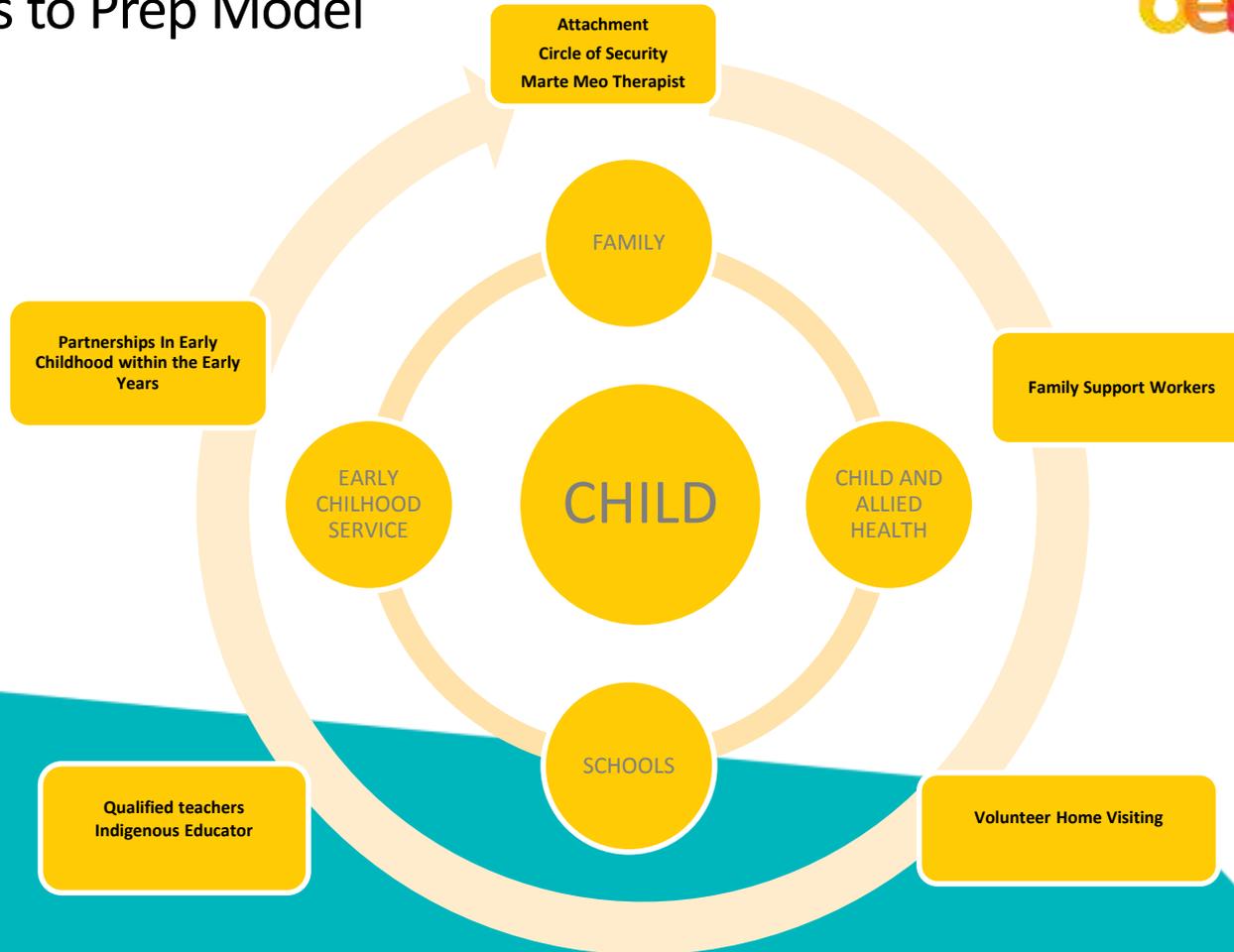
## Why School transition programs?

Research shows making a positive start to school links to children's later social and educational wellbeing. Traditional models have focused on skill acquisition but successful transition depends on more than this.

**Steps to Prep differs from these traditional models because it creates**

- Connected families in connected communities
- Confident parenting
- Appropriate early foundation experiences
- Understanding of emotional development

# The Steps to Prep Model



## First Steps

- Referral from Early Childhood Services
- Partnerships In Early Childhood (PIEC) consult – is the referral appropriate?
- Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)
- Marte Meo video interactional analysis – to identify what the child has developed, what they need to develop and parent capacity to support each stage of development
- Foundation Skills – taking it back to basics

## Next Steps.....

Referral to Child Health & Brigance developmental screening

Allied Health Referrals

Parent Information and Education sessions – Early Years Centre professionals, health professionals, CDABS, school representatives

Marte Meo Video Feedback – Three strengths and a Working point

Program incorporating Shaping Brains neuroscience (e.g. Mind-Up curriculum)

Family Support

## Additional Steps

Referral to Early Years Centre and community programs – Circle of Security Parenting, Creating Connections, You Make The Difference, Supported Reader Program, Saver Plus, Parent Connect

Volunteer Home Visits – supporting parents with Marte Meo working points and consolidating foundation skills

Family Support – working closely with individuals to meet their specific needs

## Consolidating the Transition

### **Visit Early Childhood Centre**

Provide updates on regular basis

Discuss progress/issues

Connect with Directors and  
Educators

Provide strategies to meet  
emotional needs (Circle of  
Security)

### **Visit the school**

Provide transition statement  
including any referral history

Connect with school Principal,  
Guidance Officer and Class Teacher

Connect with parent during first  
week re school transition

Connect with parent during first  
month re progress

## Case Study Karley

Referral from child care indicated significant behavioural and self-regulation concerns

Throwing of chairs and scratching staff were a daily occurrence - triggered easily

Parent presented as disengaged and resentful towards her daughter, intolerant and hostile

### Strategies included

- Circle of Security framework for parents
- Role-modeling for parent
- Marte Meo reflective work to build connection
- Mindful activities for self-regulation for parent and child
- Home visiting for reinforcement
- Linked parent to emotional well-being group (Creating Connections)

## Case Study continued

- Linked parent and child to Child Health and Pediatrician
- Engaged with Child Care Service to ensure consistency of information for Karley and parent
- Engaged with school to inform of Karley's needs

### Outcomes:

Karley entered school with confidence and increased capacity to self-regulate. She continued to settle into school and six months into the year parent reported that Karley was doing very well, with glowing report cards.

## Unexpected outcomes through ongoing PIEC EYC communication

Several early childhood services adopted Steps to Prep practices -

- returning their program to basics
- incorporating foundation self help skills for all children
- implementing self-regulation activities
- embracing Circle of Security concepts



Several schools adapted their approaches to meet specific children's needs -

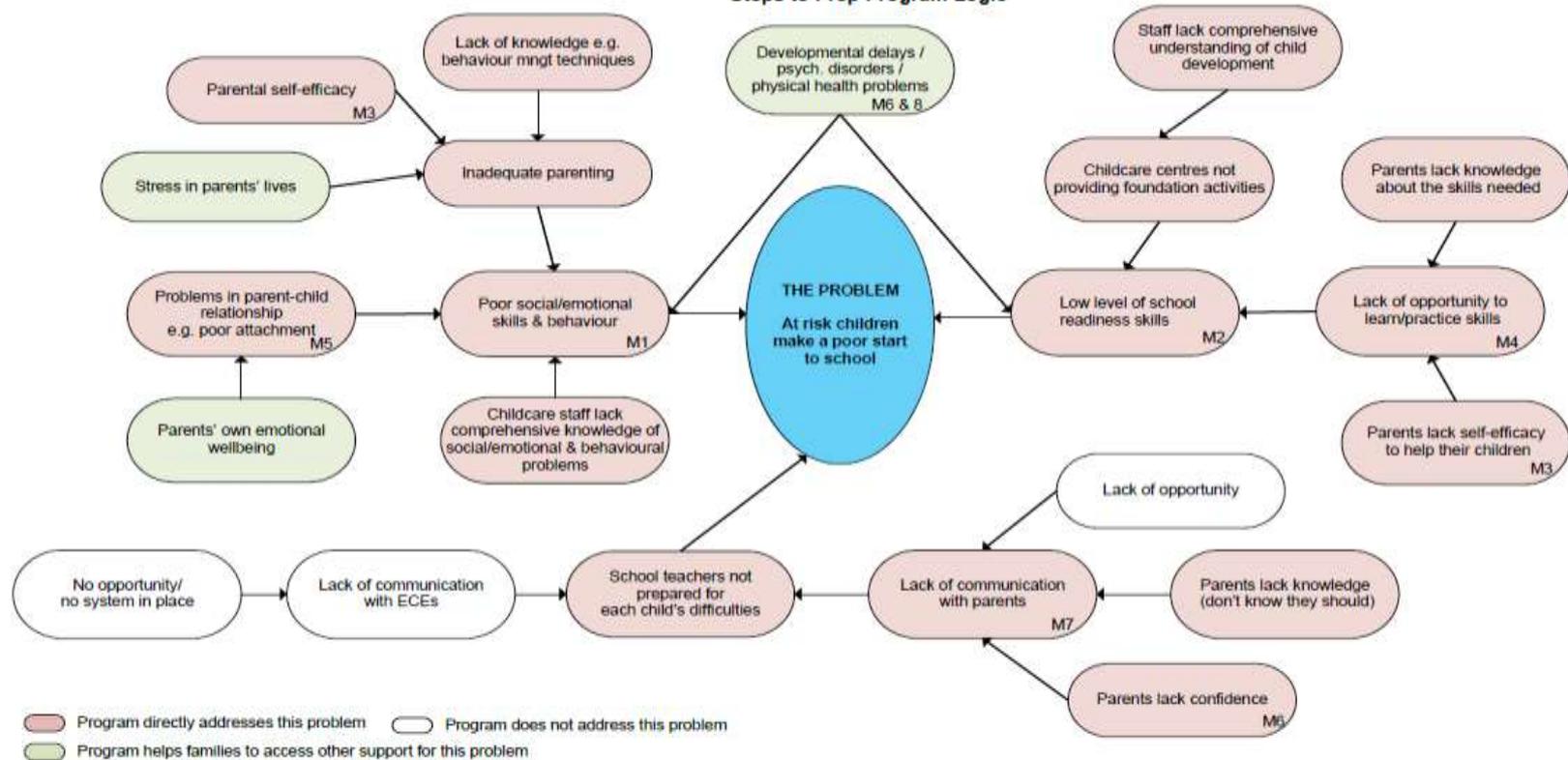
- School ensured child was placed in classroom closest to toilet to address toileting concerns
- School rostered extra staff to playground duty and implemented additional attendance checks to manage child's tendency to run away



# Evaluation of Steps to Prep

1. How does the program achieve its intended outcomes?
  - What is the underlying rationale for the program?
  - What is the program logic – link program activities to expected outcomes
2. Is the Steps to Prep program contributing to improved outcomes for children and parents?
  - Is the program contributing to the short term outcomes identified in the program logic?

## Steps to Prep Program Logic



### Measured outcomes for evaluation

M1. Children's social/emotional skills & behaviour improve as measured by parent and ECE SDQ report.

M2. Children's school readiness skills improve as measured by the Brigance Screen.

M3. Parents report an increase in efficacy to support their child as measured by the FES.

M4. Parents report an increase in time spent doing learning activities with their child as measured by LSAC questions

M5. Parents report an increase in warmth in their relationship with their child as measured by LSAC questions

M6. Parents report an increase in efficacy to access and communicate with other services as measured by the PPS

M7. Parents & teachers report regular communication and a productive relationship.

M8. Children are assessed and access appropriate services to support developmental needs (parent & teacher report)

## Baseline data

So far this year, how often have you had informal chats with this parent?

Responses for 7 children

- 5 reported 10 or more times
- 1 reported 5 to 9 times
- 1 reported 1 or 2 times

What do you talk about?

- Child's progress
- Child's behaviour

Quantity of communication is not the issue.

How would you describe this parents understanding of their child's development?

- Very aware of child's difficulties, actively seeks appropriate support
- Some understanding and attempts to provide support
- Appears aware but lacks understanding of the implications
- Completely unaware of child's difficulties

- 2
- 1
- 4
- 0

*I think the parents are trying as hard as they know how. I feel they have limited skills themselves and they want better for their child.*

*I think this limits their ability to understand that getting assistance is a positive rather than a negative thing.*

## **6/7 teachers had suggested additional services for the child**

- 4 speech therapy
- 2 child health
- 2 learning support
- 1 behaviour management support

## **Only 2 parents had accessed the recommended support**

### **Why not?**

Most common reason according to teachers was that the parent didn't accept that the child needed it

## Parent 1 – parent’s own story

- At 4 year old health check, mum was told that her son needed speech therapy  
All his health check results were low, and she put it down to being tired that day. She asked friends, who all thought he was fine, so she ignored it.
- Through Steps to Prep they attended another 4 year old health check and she was again told that her son needed speech support.  
Even though he wasn’t tired this time, and all his other checks were fine, she still assumed he would grow out of it.
- When a speech therapist did a talk at the Steps to Prep group, the therapist spoke to her son and recommended speech therapy, specifically saying, “Don’t leave it!”  
At this point she realised she needed to take the issue seriously and the child is now receiving speech therapy.

# Kindy teacher's relationship with child's parent

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**I am confident that the parents of this child...**

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Are doing a good job participating in their child's education

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Are easy to reach when I have a problem or question

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Keep me aware of all the information I need about their child

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Are friendly and approachable

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Are receptive to my input and suggestions

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Respect me as a competent teacher

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Are clearly committed to their child's education

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Have their child's best interests at heart

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Are worthy of my respect

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Baseline	Follow-up
27	31
21	25
26	27
29	36
27	22

## Parent 2- teacher's comment

*It has taken the past 6 months to make mum aware of her son's development.*

*She was very surprised with her child's development (how far behind) and the initial child health nurse visit scared her.*

*The Steps to Prep program made it easier for her to come to terms with his development and taught her strategies and guided her to help him.*

## Partnerships between Families, Early Childhood Services, Child Health and Schools

Is the child ready for school ?

Ready Supported Children *plus*  
Ready Supported Families *plus*  
Ready Supported Schools *equals*  
Successful school transition

Is the school ready for the child ?



# Thank You

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