

Family Foundations Program Evaluation



Belconnen
Community
Service



ACT
Government

Lessons learnt on delivering an integrated early intervention parenting support strategy

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Presenting on

- The principles and strategies underpinning an effective parenting program
- Practice principles and strategies that contribute to improved parenting capacity and enhanced parent-child attachment
- The value of “child development master narrative” (L’Hote et al., 2018)
- The importance of blended prevention (Prinz, 2015)

Family Foundations

- Delivered by Belconnen Community Service and funded by the Community Services Directorate, ACT Government
- Early intervention
- Therapeutic
- Promotes strong, secure and healthy relationships
- Flexible support for parents and carers
- Families with difficulties
- One-on-one face-to-face sessions

Family characteristics

RELATIONSHIP: primary clients mothers (n=72); fathers (n=6) and grandparents (n=3, all female)

AGE: Primary Client: The age of the primary client ranges between late teens and mid-fifties, with both mean and median age in the mid-thirties

AGE: Primary Child: ranges 0- 5 years, with an average age of 3.36 years and a median age of 3.57 years

GENDER: Children: 59 male, and 40 female. Primary children were more likely to be male than female (30 male, 22 female)

Family Size (n=62): families with 1-2 children.

Delivering parenting support

- Outreach
- Group work and one-on-one work
- Flexible and individual
- Needs of the clients first
- Strengths based program
- Supervision and support to practice

Parenting knowledge

*...I've had to **turn my whole parenting thing right around. Re-learning** everything again and I don't agree with all of it, but **I try it** (Parent).*

*...what's **going on in his head**...It's just **learning** about their **mindset** and their **brain development** and all that sort of stuff (Parent).*

Help seeking

Because I just figured I can do everything by myself, and I can't. Now I know it's fine, you don't have to do everything by yourself (Parent).

Emotional regulation

*[Family Foundations] made me look in a different way upon my **child** and his **behaviour** and **reassess my reactions** and how **my behaviour** also made him behave... (Parent).*

*...**not try to change him but to embrace him, using his cues to better manage his behaviours...**(Parent).*

Parenting confidence

...FF saying, "Actually, no, your daughter presents with many challenges. Yes, I understand your worries as we just sort of need to fight our way through those early years, because later on all of these challenging qualities will be very beneficial to her"... Also for her [FF practitioner] giving me reassurance that what I've been doing is actually good (Parent).

Community connectedness

*I've done **more than connect** with **kids**, my **mum** and **community** (Parent).*

*Through Family Foundations I've **met people**...it makes you **feel, thank goodness** there's **someone else out there** (Parent).*

Enhanced parent-child attachment

*... help them **learn** more **confidence**, because they felt more **secure** in their **attachments** and stuff. I think it's fantastic (Parent).*

The kids feel safe – not clingy (Parent).

*Well, it makes them **feel** more **secure**. Yes, he's more **secure**. He's having **less tantrums** than before (Parent).*

Implications

- Child development master narrative
(L'Hote, 2018)
- Child development at the core
- Supporting parents to learn about their children:
 - how to talk to them
 - how their child views the world
 - ages and stages of development

Blended prevention (Prinz, 2015)

Integrated system of evidenced based parenting supports:

- Broad reach strategies (Parenting groups)
- Intensive and one-on-one supports (Family Foundations)
- Targeted intake and allocation
- Reaching the 'right' parents

= strengthens access to prevention and early intervention

Practice implications

Lessons learnt on delivering an integrated early intervention parenting support strategy

1. Be principle and theory driven = diversity within similarity
2. Be flexible, client and child-centred = their needs first
3. Have a foundation of 'child development master narrative' (L'Hote et al., 2018)
4. Support parents to learn how to talk to their child
5. Support parents to learn how to view their child's world
6. Combine universal and targeted parenting systems = strengthen access to prevention and early intervention

Family Foundations



- Improved parenting capacity and enhanced the parent-child attachment
- Improved parental ability to recognise own emotions when caring for child
- Improved emotional regulation and behavioural outcomes of children
- Enhanced the quality of the parent-child attachment