

Voices from agencies, practitioners and parents

Expanding practitioner knowledge through the Healthy Start National Strategy for parents with learning difficulties


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National strategy for children of parents with learning difficulties

Healthy Start is an Early Childhood – Invest to Grow initiative, funded by the Australian Government under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2005-2009.

Healthy Start



Healthy Start aims to translate knowledge and research into practice and build capacity across the human service sectors to better meet the needs of these families


Australian Supported Parenting Consortium



Parenting Research Centre
raising children well
www.parentingrc.org.au



The University of Sydney
www.afdsrc.org



Using evidence-based practice to improve family-practitioner partnerships

Overview


1. Describe 2 parenting programs
2. Case studies
3. Conclusions

With appropriate support...


Learning, adapting and overcoming parenting difficulties

Creating safer, supportive and more stimulating home environments





Parenting Young Children
A program for parents with learning difficulties
Produced by the Parenting Research Centre



- Parent-child interactions and child care skills
- Developed & evaluated by PRC
- Promising results
- 3 phase training
 - Pre-reading Module
 - 2 day practitioner training
 - Support to use program with 1 family
- Individual, parent-directed



Healthy & Safe
AN AUSTRALIAN PARENT EDUCATION KIT

- Child health and home safety
- Developed & evaluated by Uni of Sydney
- RCT – significant improvements in health knowledge and skills.
- 3 phase training (as for PYC)
- 10-12 sessions
- 19 modules

Disemmination of the programs


394 practitioners trained

75 completed Phase 3


Pre-evaluation data for 122 families

Post data for 44 families

Follow-up data for 17 families



Anne - PYC



Nurse for 20 years
Mother with feeding and sleeping concerns


Challenges:

- time
- talkative parent

Solutions

- flexibility in work & consistency
- time at the start of the session, be direct, refocus her attention

Betty - PYC



Family Outreach worker
Couple with 3 young children who were being reunified


Challenges:

- Interruptions to program

Solutions

- reviewed skills in role play to ensure maintenance
- Go slow
- Use other services effectively
- Don't focus on crises

Deborah - PYC



Maternal Child Health Nurse
Mum wanting support with behaviour of 3 children


Challenges:

- new issues each week

Solutions

- talk about issue at end of session, do program first
- Allow mother to talk about issue first
- Set goals early and refer back to them
- patience

Fiona - PYC




Social worker
2 parents with learning difficulties, hygiene, supervision and care of 2 young children. Rural setting

Challenges:
- lots of additional concerns & agencies involved

Solutions
- be clear about your role
- Network with other agencies to ensure consistency
- 1 step at a time
- Focus on strengths

Maria - H&S




Social worker
2 parents with learning difficulties, 2 young children.

Challenges:
- change in worker
- time available

Solutions
- careful transition

Nola - H&S



Caseworker - welfare
Single mother with learning difficulties, young baby, wanted independence.

Challenges:
- Concentration / sleep deprivation

Solutions
- Take breaks
- Go slow
- Be imaginative/creative
- Be mindful of client's ability

Olivia - H&S





Case Manager
2 parents with learning difficulties, low ses.

Challenges:
- Cannot read
- Cancel sessions
- Distractions during sessions

Solutions
- Adapted written materials
- Reinforcement
- Session rules

Conclusions

- Parents vary in strengths and needs
- Be flexible
- Reinforcement helps
- Parent directed
- Parent's own pace
- Use other supports