Connected maps
Results of a project to build belonging and connection for children with disability in the NSW Tweed Valley

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Framework for today’s paper

• The project
• Conceptual underpinnings
• The research results
• What is following the research
• Implications of a co-design approach
The Belonging Project

• Aims
  – To increase inclusion in Tweed for children under 8 who have additional needs
  – To underpin a community development process with a research base
  – To ensure a missing voice in research and policy was well represented

• Funded by NSW ADHC
Building Blocks - foundation of values and principles

Consultation with families and community services

Community Strengthening

Fun Stuff for Kids

Service Development

Parent Support

Activities

Evaluation and Outcomes

Participations of kids and families + Belonging Project Research

Year One

Year Two

Parent's Advisory Group

Reference Group

The Belonging Project
Co-design

• Collaboration in design and implementation
  – Involving families
  – Back and forward
  – Multiple sets of relationships

• Structuring in the capacity to respond to what participants say is needed and wanted
  – Reference group with key stakeholders
  – Building collaborative relationship with funder
  – Research embedded into community development
  – Time and resources for capacity building
Co-design → co-production

“the public sector and citizens making better use of each other’s assets, resources and contributions to achieve better outcomes or improved efficiency.” (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2012)

• Includes
  – Co-commissioning of services (including co-planning of policy, co-prioritisation services & co-financing services)
  – Co-design of services
  – Co-delivery of services (including co-managing services & co-performing of services)
  – Co-assessment of services (Loeffler et al. 2012)
Conceptual underpinnings

• Conceptual framework of the project
  – Social geography – space, place and relationships
  – Children’s studies - agency and capacity of children
  – Asset Based Community Development – what’s strong, not wrong

• Research methodology
  – Participatory methods
  – Mapping
  – Semi structured individual interviews
  – Group interviews
Methods

• With kids
• With families
• With groups of kids and families together

• Research questions – influenced by advice from families
Results

• 33 children and 40 parents, in individual interviews and group processes. 31 maps from children
• Age ranged across 0 – 8
• Range of types of ways that kids were impacted by delays or disability. 36% on the autism spectrum.
• 50% were Aboriginal families
• Gender split among kids was almost even. Many more mothers than fathers participated.
• 65% of kids had a sibling with disability.
What’s important to kids & families?

– places

» beaches, river, parks
» home
» Early childhood settings, early intervention, school
– activities
  » Hobbies
  » Culture
  » Sport

– relationships
  » Kids drew places where other kids are
  » Families are key for both kids and parents
  » Friendships a source of strength and tension for parents
What makes it hard?

- Lack of understanding & inclusion by local orgs & businesses
- Financial barriers
- Barriers to community participation
- Lack of appropriate infrastructure & amenities
- Communication and consultation with school
- Getting access to information
- Attitudes and behaviour
  - Awareness of disability in general community
  - Medical services and professional
  - Discrimination and racism
What helps kids and families feel that they belong?

– Awareness and empathy from others in community
– Connecting up with other families with shared experience
– Proactive inclusion by local orgs and businesses
– Education settings that cater to kid’s needs
Building blocks

- What is important for kids
- Community responsibility for Inclusion
- Sustainable activities
- Relationships are key
- Parents facilitate belonging
- Meaningful consultation
- Closing the gap
- Parents know best
- Including the family unit
- Options and choice
What came next?

- Working with families to confirm and build on the outcomes of the research

‘The difference between participation and co-production is a shift from service users/carers being consulted to being equal partners and the co-creators of products and programmes.’ (SCIE 2012, p.5)
Family building blocks day
Workshop with change makers

It is time for action!
The Belonging Project has spoken to kids with additional needs between 0-8 years and their families about what it means to feel connected and included in the Tweed. Come along, hear what they have to say and be a part of the solution as we develop a Capacity Building Framework to implement change across families, organisations, services and the wider community.

The Belonging Project:
Change Workshop
Thursday 05/09

Venue
Murwillumbah
Community Centre
Knox park, Nullum St
Murwillumbah

Date
Thursday
05 September

Time
10.30-2.30

Parents have told us what they want to see happen to make life better for children. Join us to discuss how we turn these ideas into action and plan the way forward to build a more inclusive Tweed.

The Change Workshop is open to all non government and government organisations in Tweed who work with children and families. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP for catering purposes by Wednesday 28th August 2013.

For further details and to RSVP contact
Northern Rivers Social Development Council Project Officer,
Danielle Notara on 02 6620 1818/0427 889 829 or research@nrsdc.org.au
Building Blocks for Inclusion

- Everyone plays a part in a happy community
- Supporting parents helps to support kids
- Relationships & friendships are important
- What is important for kids
- Getting stronger without giving more
- Meaningful consultation
- Options and choice
- Closing the gap
- Care in a way that works for parents
- Including the whole family

Community

Parents

Kids

Services

PLAN OF ACTION

The Belonging Project
Aims:
- To provide kids the opportunity to have fun with other kids in a social setting
- To showcase and develop kids skills/interests/abilities
- To increase education outcomes and close the gap in disadvantage for aboriginal kids

Evidence:
- Kids always put places on their maps where other kids are with them - they value relationships and friendships
- Parents talk about improved self-esteem when kids find activities they love to do
- Parents find cost a barrier to some activities
- Parents want to find inclusive places for them and their kids to go

Who could be involved?
- #
- #

What activities for kids?
1. Homework Club
   - After School
   - Access to computers
   - Assistance with study
   - Transport provided
   - Suggested venues - Minjunbal Museum or Tweed Library

2. Culture Group
   - Based on the Tweed Coast
   - Providing education on language and culture for Aboriginal Kids

3. Arts and Craft Based Activities
   - Kids can enjoy activities with other kids outside of a service setting
   - Linked to an exhibition/public display of artworks

Resources
- Venues
- Staffing
- Materials
- Computers

Start up actions:
- Consultation with existing Aboriginal service providers and groups
- Investigation of homework club models
- Consultation with arts providers in region to scope potential programs

Timeframe:
- Completed July 2014
Aims:
- Increase knowledge and build inclusive practise by businesses
- Increase awareness of disability and build community support for kids and families
- Improve experiences in the school system

Evidence:
- Parents have identified barriers in all three areas and want to see action to create a change in community attitudes.

What activities for the community?
1. Building capacity with people who work with kids
   - Promoting champions - people who are already doing a good job
   - Cultural awareness training with NSW Health Staff
2. Awareness raising
   - Digital Media Campaign - television and social media
3. School Change
   - Targeting Collegial Meetings with School Principals with professional development
   - Presenting information session at staff development days across the region

Resources
- Venues
- Coordinator
- Trainers
- Childcare worker
- Families involvement

Start up actions:
- Engage a film maker to scope an awareness raising campaign
- Confirm school participation and dates for staff development days in 2014

Timeframe:
- Completed July 2014

Who could be involved?
- Training RTO’s
- #
- Tweed Shire Council
Next steps

• Merging research and parent reference/advisory groups

• Capacity building framework
  – Testing
  – Getting ‘buy in’
  – Funding the ‘big ticket’ ideas
  – Keeping momentum up
Implications of the research for the project

• Design
• Research methods
• Practice change
• New supports for kids and families
• Moving from a co-design approach to a co-production approach as the project matures
To read the report:  www.nrsdc.org.au
For more information:  www.ccyp.scu.edu.au

Project flyers also available from CCYP staff at the conference.

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