



Growing together

Expanding roles for family support practice in early childhood education and care



C&K would like to acknowledge the traditional owners
of all the lands where our services are located,
and pay our respects to elders past, present and future.



Review of the 2011–2014 Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Action Plan

Building educator capability to provide inclusive programs that build children’s social and emotional well-being research project

In 2014, the Department of Education and Training reviewed the 2011-2014 Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Action Plan (WAP) to assess the plan’s achievements and to inform future development strategies for the early childhood education and care workforce.

The *Improving workforce capability and service delivery responses to children with complex emotional and social behaviours within an early childhood education and care setting* research project was undertaken as part of the review in response to issues raised at the Early Childhood Workshop in December 2013.

During the workshop, educators and service providers described the increasing challenges faced by services seeking to respond effectively to children with complex emotional and social behaviours, and identified a need for further professional development and understanding of inclusive responses.

How was the research conducted?

The Creche and Kindergarten Association Limited (C&K) was commissioned to complete the project between July and September 2014.

Data was collected through a mixed method approach including:

- six face-to-face consultation meetings across five regional locations
- an online survey distributed through ECEC peak bodies and service providers, government agencies, regional officers and other networks
- a review of relevant literature regarding best practice.

93 participants attended a face-to-face consultation meeting

241 respondents completed the online survey

The project was overseen by an expert advisory group with conclusions tested and validated by a focus group drawn from across the sector.

What were the research findings?

In Queensland, the exact number of children in ECEC settings with complex emotional and social behaviours is not known. These children may or may not have a diagnosed disability. Educators consistently reported that the number of children with complex emotional and social behaviours in their services has increased.

‘Children arrive on our doorstep undiagnosed and we are the first port of call in addressing their needs [with] little support from outside agencies. [We] have one additional needs educator in a group with three children diagnosed with autism (very complex needs)... I totally support inclusion but only [with the] necessary resources to support [us to] make the pre-prep [kindergarten] year a positive experience for all.’

For a copy of this report

<http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/workforce/workforce-action-plan-review.html>



Research study: Educator's work with children with complex emotional and social needs

- Felt **insufficiently trained** and qualified to work with families on **providing feedback to parents** on their child's needs
- Lacked confidence and **found conversations challenging with parents** about their child's emotional and social behaviours, with some **parents not always receptive** to feedback
- Didn't know **how to encourage follow-through of referrals** by parents whose children were requiring health and other supportive interventions
- Needed **more confidence in working professionally across disciplines** at a local level
- Believed that **more skills** in this area would better equip them to not only **form closer linkages** with professionals, but also assist to **raise their professional profile** so they are seen as 'recognised and valued professionals'

Research study: educator quotes

- *'I operate an inclusive program where the diversity of all people are celebrated, including those who behave in diverse ways. Supporting children/families with complex social/emotional needs can be emotionally taxing and at times can feel very difficult when I do not feel trained to manage the types of behaviours presenting.'*
- *'I feel like I'm not knowledgeable to help them (child) and their family.'*
- *'Parents are often distressed, confused and overwhelmed when they realise there is a developmental delay and/or when they get a diagnosis.'*
- *'For children who are diagnosed, it is very reassuring to read reports from allied health and medical professionals. It can be very satisfying to work with these parents and collaboratively develop goals. Educators need to be allocated more paid time to work collaboratively with these families.'*
- *'Sometimes, my full attention has to be on that one child, leaving 19 other children to my assistant. [This] adds a layer of stress in every aspect of the day [and] raises doubts - are we dealing with this the correct way?'*



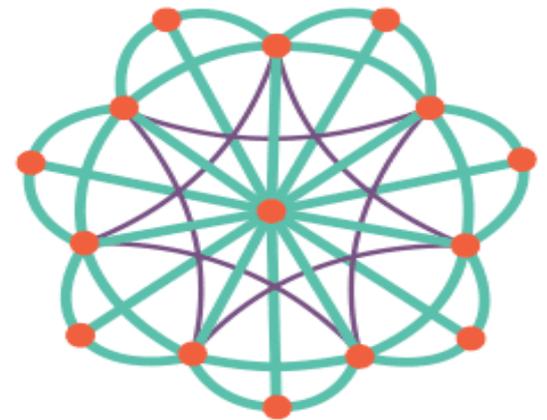
Final report of the Inclusive Practices Project

Improving workforce capability and service delivery responses to children with complex emotional and social behaviours within an early childhood education and care setting

Early Years Connect

<http://earlyyearsconnect.com.au/>

Early Years Connect
Knowledge • Skills • Support



A collaborative project of:

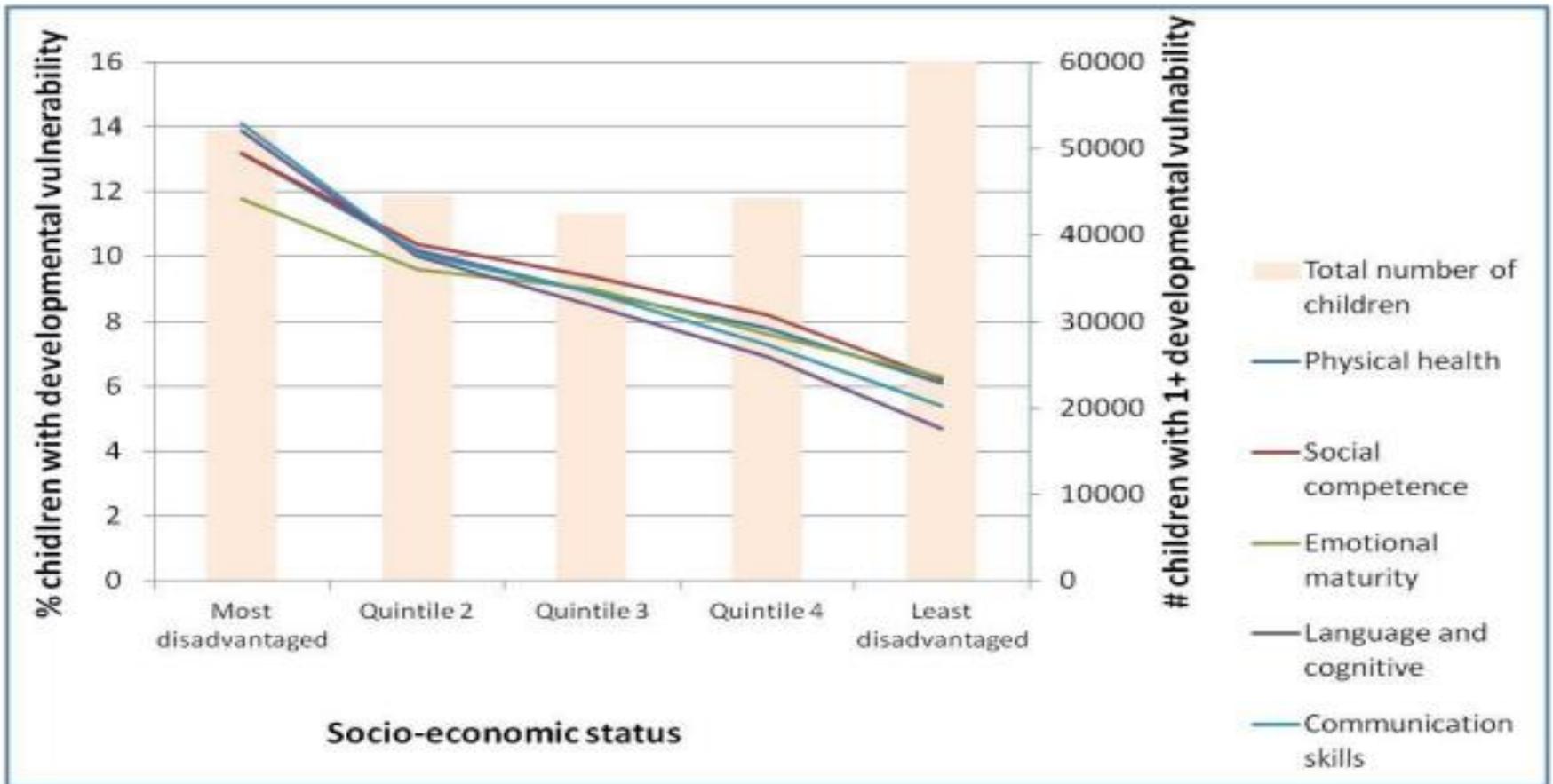


Proudly funded and supported by the Queensland Government

Types of child and family issues

HEALTH FINANCIAL STABILITY
FINANCIAL STABILITY **SECURITY**
HOUSING **DISABILITY** **TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**
DISABILITY TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
HOUSING **COMMUNITY SAFETY**
COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTICIPATION
FIFO **MENTAL HEALTH** **PERSONAL SAFETY** **FIFO**
MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITY **DISABILITY**
FINANCIAL STABILITY **HEALTH** **FIFO** HOUSING
FIFO PERSONAL SAFETY
PARTICIPATION FINANCIAL STABILITY

National data: Developmental vulnerability all children



Source: Centre for Community Child Health & Telethon Institute for Child Health Research 2011 in ARACY Better systems, better chances 2015:24

Vulnerability of children

- 22% of Australian five-year-olds are considered vulnerable
- 1 in 4 Australian children now start school behind
- 1 in 6 Australian children are at risk of neglect and abuse
- 17% of Australia's homeless are children under 12

Source:

Australian Government 2013. A Snapshot of Early Childhood Development in Australia 2012 – AEDI National Report
Australian Government 2013. A Snapshot of Early Childhood Development in Australia 2012 – AEDI National Report
AIHW 2014. Child protection Australia 2012-13. Child welfare series 58. Cat. no. CWS 49. Canberra: AIHW
<http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/index.php/about-homelessness/homeless-statistics>



How does early childhood education help?

Participating in early education is one of the strongest predictors of children's academic outcomes and that "high quality ECEC will shift the population curve for child outcomes, and this is the only type of early intervention for which evidence is currently available for shifting the population curve through enhancing the development of all children in the relevant population, rather than lifting the 'tail' of the population through targeted intervention"

(Melhuish, Belsky and Leyland in Fox et al 2015;265)



Ways C&K connects with families

Welcomed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open door policy
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents as first teachers• Collaborative learning – home & service• Three learners
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and ongoing – back & forth• Family Information nights
Learning and development outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-partnering to review children against ‘spectrum of learning’• Formalised feedback meetings
Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portfolio development• Sharing portfolios with immediate and extended family
Early Years Education Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent portal – ICT platform

Ways C&K connects with families

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent Action Groups – fundraising, social events, playground design, specialist• Supporting Parent Management Committees who operate kindergartens across the state
Inclusion support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individualised Education Plans and/or behaviour guidance plans• Inclusion team meetings – families, speech therapist, educator
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Link Advisors• Kindy Plus Program• Transport at some kindergartens

From my first meeting with C&K Educators, I felt accepted as a parent. All of my concerns were readily allayed and I knew this was a safe place. As a mum of a special needs child I cannot stress how incredible and unusual this is.

Parent feedback

What does ECEC do well?

- Knowledge of children's learning – delivery of active, child-centred developmentally appropriate environments that adopt play-based pedagogy
- Competent observers of children's learning and development journey
- Design responsive learning environments for children across communication, physical, socio-emotional, routines and schedules, transitioning
- Planning, implementing and evaluating curriculum experiences for individual children and groups of children
- A strong sense of children's participation in and leading of their own learning

Question to ponder

- What do you think are the main differentiating points between early childhood education and care and family support?



Theories – shared and different

Shared theories – ECEC & family support

- Child development & attachment
- Ideas about participation
- Ecological approaches for working with families

Family support

- Social causes of child maltreatment & family stress
- Child trauma & resilience
- Self-determination & self-help

Service types

Practical or concrete services	Transport, respite care, material
Educational services	Information and advice, parenting skills, budgeting
Clinical or therapeutic services	Casework, counselling, emotional support, anger management, family mediation
Enabling or advocacy services	Linking the family to other supports via referral and advocacy (e.g. assistance with housing, ECEC, children's education, specialist services)



Differentiating points

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Knowledge of children's learning – delivery of active, child-centred developmentally appropriate environments that adopt a play based pedagogy
- Competent observers of children's learning and development journey
- Design of responsive learning environments for children (e.g. communication, physical, socio-emotional, routines and schedules, transitioning)
- Planning, implementing and evaluating curriculum experiences for individual children and groups of children
- Informational role with families
- Advocacy for children to relevant services
- Knowledge of service system for children

Family Support

- Strategies for parent empowerment
- Undertaking child and family assessment
- Case planning and management with families
- Delivery of therapeutic supports and interventions
- Educational services for parents (parenting programs)
- Enabling services for parents (referral and advocacy)
- Knowledge of and participation in service system for families

Key elements family-centred practice

Relational

- Active listening, compassion, empathy, respect, non-judgmental
- Professional beliefs and attitudes towards families, especially parenting capabilities and competencies

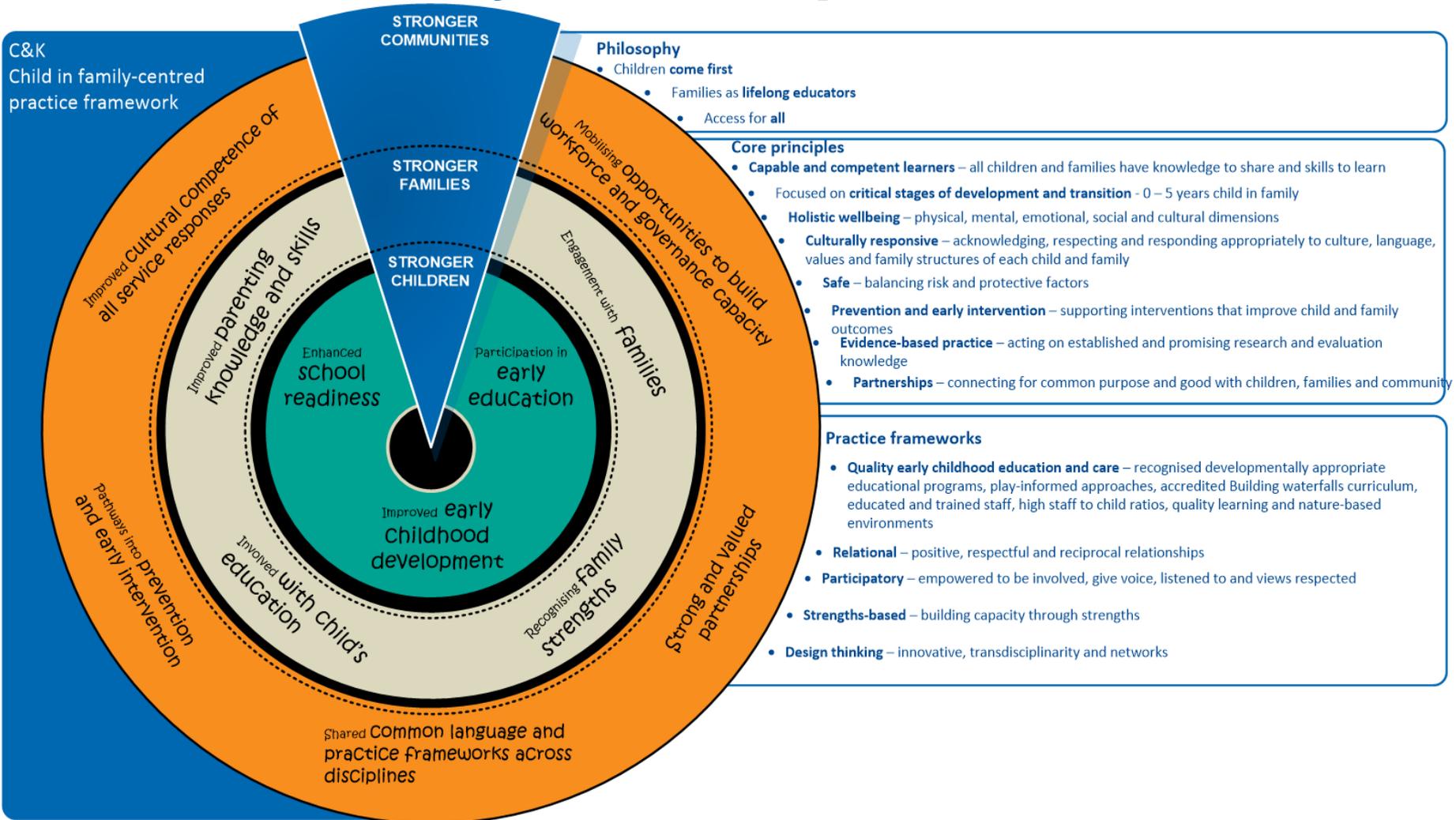
Participatory

- Individualised approach, which is flexible and responsive to family concerns and priorities
- Provides families with opportunities to be actively involved in decisions and choices, family-professional collaboration, and family actions to achieve desired goals and outcomes

Source: Dunst and Trivette 2002 – 2006



Child in family-centred practice model



Developing our '+ 1 model'

