

Let's Start

Northern Territory

Overview

History

The Let's Start Program is based on an earlier initiative called the Ngaripirliga'ajirri Early Intervention Program set up for Tiwi children of primary school age. Domestic and family violence, suicide rates and substance abuse were seen to be having a major effect on the behaviour of children in the Tiwi Islands. The initiative was developed in response to this crisis amongst children and families in the communities.

Aims

The primary aim of Let's Start is to identify and support families with pre-school children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties. Support will be provided for parents to develop their parenting skills, and for the children to develop problem solving and social skills. Families will be encouraged to identify positive behaviour and build family strengths. Other issues that are addressed during the course of activities are domestic and family violence and suicide.

Focus

This is an early intervention program. Children are referred to the program after showing signs of targeted negative behaviours.

Target group

The target group is Indigenous Tiwi Island pre-school children (4-6 years of age) with conduct disorders or behavioural difficulties, along with their parents or primary care-givers.

Project structure

Lead agency

School for Social Policy and Research, Charles Darwin University.

Partnerships

Let's Start is being delivered through partnerships between Charles Darwin University and

- the Northern Territory Government,
- the Catholic Education Office,
- Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health,
- Tiwi Health Board and
- participating schools.

The initiative also involves a range of organisations that provide support for families within the communities.

Funding

Funded by the Australian Government under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. Additional funding has been received from the NT Government and the Australian Research Council.

Project description

The initiative consists of 10 weekly sessions where parents, children and trained group leaders participate in small group activities that are aimed at:

- Developing children's social skills;
- Reducing identified problem behaviour;
- Assisting parents and children to learn problem-solving skills; and
- Assisting parents to identify family strengths and to encourage positive behaviour in their children.

Additional readings and resources

Let's Start Website.

<http://www.cdu.edu.au/letsstart/>

Ngaripirliga'ajirri: Cross-cultural issues in evaluating an Indigenous early intervention program.

Robinson G. & Tyler W. 2005.

Proceedings of the TASA Conference 2005, University of Tasmania.

http://www.cdu.edu.au/sspr/documents/indigenous_robinsonpublishedpaperinproceedings_000.pdf

Ngaripirliga'ajirri: Evaluation of an early intervention program on the Tiwi Islands: Interim report, December 2003.

Robinson G. & Tyler W. 2003.

http://www.cdu.edu.au/sspr/documents/7879_Interim_Report_FINAL.pdf

Investing in Futures: A critical view of options for early intervention and prevention in Indigenous communities.

Robinson G. 2003.

Northern Australia Research Unit, Australian National University, Canberra.

<http://naru.anu.edu.au/papers/robinsonpaper.pdf>

Evaluation

An evaluation of the Ngaripirliga'ajirri Early Intervention Program was conducted in 2003 by Dr Gary Robinson and Dr Bill Tyler, School for Social and Policy Research, Charles Darwin University. The findings of this evaluation can be found in the document:

Ngaripirliga'ajirri: An early intervention program on the Tiwi Islands – Final evaluation report

Robinson, G. & Tyler, B. 2006,

School for Social and Policy Research, Charles Darwin University, Darwin.

<http://www.cdu.edu.au/sspr/documents/Ngaripirliga'ajirri.pdf>

Contact details

Bonnie Moss

Let's Start Manager

Email: Bonita.Moss@cdu.edu.au

Gary Robinson

School for Social and Policy Research,
Charles Darwin University

Email: gary.robinson@cdu.edu.au