

## Section 2: What works?

### Key Messages for Managers

Literacy is one of the most important foundations for success in school and life. It is a crucial survival tool in a global society

Literacy promotion refers to activities that will promote children's eventual ability to read and write printed text. Emergent literacy refers to the skills, knowledge and attitudes that come before and lay the foundations for conventional forms of reading and writing.

Children raised in disadvantaged families are at greater risk of developing inadequate emergent literacy skills in early childhood. A poor foundation in literacy prior to school entry reduces the likelihood of success in subsequent acquisition of literacy skills and increases the risk of disengagement from formal education and poorer life outcomes.

Nearly 30% of students in Years 3 and 5 fail to meet appropriate reading standards, and Indigenous students are three times less likely to reach the Year 5 reading benchmark than Australian students as a whole.

The knowledge, experience and skills that children bring to school is a key factor in literacy success. The home environment is recognised as critically important in promoting literacy development. Further research is needed to link literacy promotion programs conclusively with improvements in literacy and to evaluate the effectiveness of literacy promotion programs in a community or population setting.

#### **Research-based strategies for promoting literacy**

The following information may assist managers who want to promote literacy:

- Professionals who work with children and families are well placed to provide guidance on literacy promotion in the family and home.
- Resources that support literacy, such as books that can be given free to parents of young babies and children, are important tools for professionals.
- Widespread delivery of messages about promoting literacy across the whole community may be the most efficient way to promote literacy, using professionals and consistent community awareness messages that aim at encouraging parents to read to children from an early age.
- Community-wide literacy initiatives are likely to impact on members of the community from all socio-economic backgrounds.