

**Home based parenting programs for parents with learning difficulties and young children:**

**Parenting Young Children and Healthy and Safe**

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## **Healthy Start: A national strategy for children of parents with learning difficulties**



### **Why Healthy Start?**

- Number of parents with learning difficulties increasing
- Social isolation, poverty, poor physical & mental health
- Over-represented in child protection proceedings - neglect
- Effective parenting support strategies exist
- Use of ineffective parenting support further disadvantages parents with learning difficulties

### **Research into Practice**

Healthy Start grew out of a gap between research and practice



### **Research into Practice**

What did we do?

- use of local opinion leaders
- built an active multi-disciplinary network based on Learning Hubs
- provided resources, training, and ongoing support

### **Parent Education Resources**

**Parenting Young Children**  
A program for parents with learning difficulties



**Develops positive parent-child interactions and parents' skills in daily childcare tasks**

### Parenting Education Resources



Increase knowledge and skills for managing home dangers, accidents and childhood illness

### Characteristics of families (n = 120)

- 87% government benefit main source of income
- 52% living in government rental housing
- 7% own or buying own home
- 30% attended special school
- 51% sole parents
- 35% had one or more child living in out of home care
- 45% involved with child protection system

### Characteristics of families (n = 120)

- 12% low birth weight babies
- 13% mothers breastfed for at last 6 months
- Poorer health, on average, than other Australian children

### Completion of a program

- 120 families started the program
- 40% (n = 48) program completion
- Higher levels of partner support predicted program completion

### Parenting Young Children: Results (n = 27)

Improvements in:

- Parent Involvement\*
- Parenting Warmth
- Parenting Efficacy at Child Care tasks

### Parenting Young Children: Results (n = 27)

HOME-SF Infant/Toddler (0 to 2 years, n = 18)

Improvements in

- Parent responsiveness
- Parent acceptance
- Learning Materials
- Involvement
- Variety\*

### **Parenting Young Children: Results (n = 27)**

Early Childhood age range (3 to 6 years, n - 10)

Improvements in

- Parent responsiveness
- Parent acceptance
- Modeling
- Physical environment
- Variety
- Language Stimulation

### **Healthy and Safe: Results (n = 21)**

Health Assessment Forms – Australian Version

Improvements in:

- Illness and Symptom Recognition\*
- Life-Threatening Emergencies\*
- Going to Doctor\*
- Using Medicine Safely\*
- Health Comprehension

### **Healthy and Safe: Results (n = 21)**

Home Inventory Danger, Safety and  
Precautions – Australian version

- Decrease in Total Dangers\*
- Decrease in Toy or Animal Dangers\*
- Increase in Cooking Precautions\*

### **Healthy and Safe: Results (n = 21)**

- Need for attention because of illness increased at post-evaluation
- Need for attention due to injury or accident decreased
- Parent's rating of child health was below pre-test score



Healthy Start

A national strategy  
for children of  
parents with learning  
difficulties

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