

## Linking Schools and Early Years **Evaluation summary**

An important element of the Linking Schools and Early Years (LSEY) project is the external evaluation. The evaluation enables LSEY to contribute to Australian research evidence around ways to promote support so children arrive at school ready to engage in the opportunities offered in their new learning environment.

The evaluation has identified practice principles and key ingredients that relate to what and how communities have implemented LSEY and aims to provide a summary of the LSEY evaluation findings from data collection in 2008 (baseline), 2010, 2011 and 2012. For more information about the LSEY project and full evaluation reports see www.rch.org.au/lsey.

## **Core components**

The evaluation has indicated that what communities do (the activities) is important, but it's how they do it (the approach) which really makes the difference. The evaluation identified core components which were consistently evident in the planning and implementation of the LSEY approach and local activities.

These are considered imperative in creating service/school and systemic change.

A locally responsive approach (place-based)  Responding to the impact that local realities and context can have on children and their families

A partnership approach

 Cross-sectoral service partnerships that can provide a continuum of learning and support for children and families

Outcomes and evidence informed planning

 Starting with clear outcomes for children, families and services and using evidence to inform practices to achieve the desired outcomes

Community led

 Planning and action is led by local families and services and strengthens local leadership capacity

Respectful relationships

 Relationships underpin and drive the effectiveness of community level responsiveness, planning, action and outcomes

**Towards sustainable change** 

Building community capacity to achieve ongoing longterm practice change and improved outcomes for

families

children and







## Summary of the LSEY external evaluation – outcomes, practice principles, key ingredients, activities and findings

The evaluation found that the identified core components that drive the effectiveness of the project activities. The graphic below is a snapshot of the evaluation findings around each project outcome and some example activities. Changes identified through the evaluation are an indication of how practice change between early years services, schools and communities can contribute to 'children arriving at school ready to engage in the learning opportunities offered'.

## LSEY outcomes Project activity examples LSEY approach Changes identified from the LSEY evaluation Core components for Partnerships and networks Stronger relationships have created functional partnerships sustainable change Opportunities to collaborate strengthen relationships Peer swaps Sustainable Links worker support A shared understanding and common language community Community forums Increased capacity of early years/school partnership working partnerships Joint professional Embedded commitment to networking and local partnerships development Clear indicators of sustainable partnerships and local activities A locally responsive approach (place-based) Outcomes and evidence informed planning Transition calendars More children participating in transition activities that start Children & families earlier in the year and involve multiple school visits Community transition make a smooth practices Schools have enhanced transition activities and programs transition between More schools visiting early years services and vice-versa Formal and informal transition Respectful relationships early years partnership approach More parents satisfied with transition programs Joint transition planning services & schools Consistent information More consistent transition information for children and families Community-led Playgroups in school More opportunities for parents to engage in children's learning Early years Family-friendly reviews More parents spending time in early years services/schools services and Exploring with families their Community services have more conversations with families schools actively about early years services and school role in their children's learning engage with Informal opportunities for Parents report good relationships with early years/school staff families families to engage A culture change in attitudes to parent involvement Partnership approaches to Increased information sharing between early years & schools Schools are Transition Statements Modified prep programs for diverse learning opportunities responsive to the Common language tool More parents share information about their child with schools individual learning Collaborative early Increased referrals between community services, early years needs of all years/school planning services and schools children Sharing professional practice Greater participation in cross-sector meetings and training