

goodstart
early
learning

strategic plan

2011-2014

The early years of life are vital for human development. The importance of a positive environment including good nutrition, health, nurturing and stimulating parenting is now indisputable – biologically and economically. Bringing together the great work of many, the GoodStart Early Learning Strategic Plan outlines our vision and mission, guiding principles and priorities that will direct our actions - which we share with the aim of working more collaboratively with sector peers and partners to establish a solid foundation for all Australia's children.



our purpose

“The early years have profound consequences for the rest of our children’s lives. Laying a solid foundation is vital – like building a house, if the foundations are solid, what follows after that tends to be solid as well. Getting it right the first time is critical.”

*Professor Frank Oberklaid,
Director, Centre for Community Child Health*

Young brain development is dependent on a positive environment - good nutrition, health, nourishing and stimulating parenting. Conversely, persistent stress has the potential to interfere with the developing brain. In fact, many problems of adult society: substance abuse; depression; crime and obesity, result from early childhood experiences.

Importantly the gaps between vulnerable and other children start as early as the age of two, and those gaps tend not to close. Children who start behind tend to stay behind. By intervening early however, we can both

minimise the risk factors and strengthen the protective factors. The earlier the intervention, the higher the effectiveness and the lower the cost.

International evidence shows that high-quality early learning that involves child, family and community has positive outcomes for all children (the inverse is true too; poor quality has negative effects). This is particularly so for vulnerable children. Critically, these are the children that are currently participating the least.

As the largest provider of early learning in the sector, Goodstart Early Learning is in a privileged position to help ensure high-quality, inclusive, early learning environments are accessible for all of Australia’s children to thrive.

“In our view, the economic case for why we should invest in early childhood development is closed.”

*Arthur J. Rolnick,
Senior Vice President and Director of Research
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis*

our vision is for australia’s children to have the best possible start in life.

Our mission is to provide high-quality, accessible, affordable, community-connected early learning in our centres, as well as partner and openly collaborate with the sector to drive change for the benefit of all children.

Our goals

1

Quality

Raise the quality of early learning.

2

Inclusion

Enable all children’s access to and inclusion in early childhood programs.

3

Stability

Ensure financial stability to generate a surplus to reinvest into quality and inclusion initiatives.

our guiding principles

CHILDREN are central to everything we do

The early years of life are a vital time of human development. Early learning plays a crucial role in this by creating stimulating environments, helping maximise protective factors and minimise risk factors in order to build a solid foundation for all children in our care.

FAMILIES are our primary partner

Parents are the first and most important carers and educators of their children - but for many parents raising children can be challenging. Walking alongside and supporting families helps create positive environments for children both where they live and where they learn.

Being a valued part of each unique COMMUNITY

We will operate as an integral part of the local community, becoming part of local service and learning networks so that families get the support they need to prosper.

“The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children have the right to an education that lays a foundation for the rest of their lives, maximises their ability, and respects their family, cultural and other identities and languages.”

*Belonging, Being and Becoming.
The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.*

our strategic priorities

- 1** Implement the National Quality Framework and Early Years Learning Framework
- 2** Partner with the early learning sector to identify, share and embed best practice
- 3** Develop strong and empowered centre leadership
- 4** Grow and retain our skilled and committed workforce
- 5** Reach out, include and support more vulnerable children and their families
- 6** Advocate for and elevate the importance of early learning for all children
- 7** Invest in technology and facilities enhancements
- 8** Adopt strong business disciplines in all we do.

examples of our strategic initiatives for the first three years

The Goodstart Early Learning story will build and grow as we deliver on these initiatives – to have measurable positive effects on the lives of Australia’s children.

Implement the National Quality Framework & Early Years Learning Framework

- Establish internal staff networks and provide resources to raise awareness and understanding
- Introduce a comprehensive staff mentoring and quality support visit program
- Strengthen professional development for all centre staff
- Ensure early learning frameworks are embedded in everyday practice
- Track progress in delivering outcomes across all centres
- Strengthen professional practice within the EYLF
- Develop Goodstart Early Learning’s approach to universal access including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Partner with the early learning sector to identify, share and embed best practice

- Establish Early Learning and Research function
- Develop external relationships with universities and best practice providers
- Establish external advisory board to strengthen Goodstart Training College programs
- Work in partnership to establish a measure of individual child outcomes
- Prepare for a best practice annual conference to be held in 2013
- Engage a ‘thinker in residence’ for the benefit of Goodstart Early Learning and the sector in 2013

Develop strong and empowered centre leadership

- Clarify the role and accountabilities of the centre director
- Increase autonomy of centres within an agreed framework
- Review broader organisational structure to ensure it supports empowered centre leadership
- Ensure match between new role requirements and individuals’ skills and experience
- Provide high-quality leadership development for centre directors

Grow and retain our skilled and committed workforce

- Implement targeted campaigns to attract staff to Goodstart Early Learning and the sector
- Develop specific strategies for attracting Early Childhood Teachers
- Introduce a flexible working model to assist attraction and retention
- Further develop staff engagement and retention strategy
- Utilise Indigenous and other workforce participation programs
- Support employees to up-skill through increased study time and funding of course fees
- Increase the capacity of Goodstart Training College to take more students
- Establish partnerships with universities to develop articulation agreements to facilitate conversion from diploma to degree
- Implement regional/ remote-specific terms and conditions

“The evidence is in: quality early education benefits children of all social and economic groups.”

The Economic Impacts of Child Care and Early Education: Financing Solutions for the Future a conference sponsored by Legal Momentum’s Family Initiative and the MIT Workplace Centre

Reach out, include and support more vulnerable children and their families

Advocate for and elevate the importance of early learning for all children

Invest in technology and facilities enhancements

Adopt strong business disciplines in all we do

Develop a long-term strategy to increase vulnerable children’s access to early learning, in partnership with our Syndicate

Conduct pilot programs to increase participation in our early learning programs in low-SES areas in SA and Vic

Establish community networks in SA and Vic to support families

Identify opportunities for partnering and piloting new initiatives in low-SES communities e.g. ‘Let’s read’ literacy program

Improve access to various funding sources

Invest in targeted staff training and development to better support families in low-SES areas

Prioritise areas of advocacy for Goodstart Early Learning

Map the sector to determine who is advocating for what, and how

Develop an advocacy strategy – who, how and when

Leverage the brand to advance the case for change

Partner with key stakeholders to advance common advocacy initiatives

Partner with our parents to generate a groundswell of support for relevant initiatives

Upgrade IT systems to support centre needs

Develop and commence implementation of an IT strategy

Commence motor vehicle fleet upgrade

Develop a facilities strategy, commencing with a comprehensive facilities audit

Develop an improved repair and maintenance strategy

Introduce and upgrade a number of play spaces and natural outdoor environments in each state

Develop a blueprint for optimal centre design

Implement refreshed brand strategy

Develop centre-specific marketing and occupancy plans

Develop pricing strategy

Introduce labour optimisation strategies

Identify and realise savings from process improvements and procurement practices

Strengthen governance frameworks e.g. internal audit and risk

Our measures

We are committed to measuring the impact Goodstart Early Learning has on children’s lives. Initial targets will be set against the three goals of quality, inclusion and stability and more sophisticated measures developed during the planning period. In addition, indicators and milestones will be set for each of the eight strategic priorities. Results will be tracked quarterly. We will partner with others to develop a set of relevant social impact measures.

our founding members



Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty

Through research, services and advocacy, the Brotherhood of St Laurence helps people experiencing disadvantage at all stages of life, enabling them to build a good life for themselves and their families.



The Benevolent Society is an independent, non-religious, non-profit organisation. Our purpose is to create caring and inclusive communities and a just society. For nearly 200 years we have worked with individuals and communities to help them out of disadvantage and advocated to make Australia a fairer, safer place for all. We believe in an Australia where everyone belongs.



Social Ventures Australia (SVA) is a non-profit organisation that invests in social change by helping to increase the impact and build the sustainability of social sector participants.

Our investments are focused on high-potential organisations that are fostering solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing our community.

We provide funding and strategic support to carefully selected non-profit partners, with a bias towards those working within the critical areas of education and employment. In addition SVA offers consulting services to the social sector more broadly, including to philanthropists who are endeavouring to be more strategic in their approach to giving.



Mission Australia

Mission Australia is a Christian community service organisation that has been transforming the lives of Australians in need for more than 150 years. Today our 550 community and employment services help more than 300,000 Australians a year to get back on their feet.

Our vision is to see a fairer Australia by enabling people in need to find pathways to a better life. By learning from others and sharing what works well for us, we strengthen families, empower youth, strive to solve homelessness and provide employment solutions.

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