



## Evidence informing practice



It is vital that the Australian early education sector continues to gather the evidence on what makes a difference and translate that into educational practice and embed it.

### Evidence and Research

The Education Endowment Foundation's Early Years Toolkit makes it clear that if we are to have maximum impact on a child's development the most efficient things we can do are to provide them with skills in self-regulation, communication and language. Other major influences are an early starting age for education, the level of parent engagement and home learning and an early focus on literacy and numeracy.

A comparative study of Australia and 22 other countries found that the quality of child care in Australia was higher than in other countries,<sup>1</sup> however there is more work to be done. A recent study by E4Kids found that early

childhood teaching practice in Australia is rarely very high quality. The study found that quality tends to be lower in low income suburbs, the very centres serving the children who need access to quality early learning the most.<sup>2</sup>

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Australian early learning practice continues to be informed by the Early Years Learning Framework, an evidence-based framework endorsed by all Australian Governments in 2009 to underpin the National Quality Framework (NQF) objectives

of improving quality in early learning.<sup>3</sup>

As the NQF beds down, the challenge for the Australian early learning sector is to move beyond the framework to embed evidence-informed best practice in centre settings.

### Strengthening Australia's evidence base

Goodstart has partnered with Australian universities and international early learning experts to help build the evidence base for early learning and embed best practice in our centres.

The introduction of *The Goodstart Practice Guide* in 2016, developed by a team of educators led by Canadian

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Professor Jane Bertrand, marks the beginning of a game changing approach to evidence informed practice. The Practice Guide has been greeted with enthusiasm by educators across the network and has been re-enforced with investment in professional development. An additional practice guide is under development to focus on preschool.

In order to stay at the cutting edge of best practice and new thinking, Goodstart has created a Thought Leaders Program which brings international and local experts together annually in Australia to reflect on key practice and research from around the world and share this with the sector, policy makers, business leaders and the broader community.

Locally Goodstart has forged a strong relationship with the University of Wollongong, partnering on a series of research projects, including an evaluation of the learning environment, educator practice and implementation of the new practice framework. The partnership also involves the Researching Effective Early Learning Study which explores

## Impact of early years topics on child development

Early years topic	Impact on child development
Self regulation strategies	+7 months
Communication & language approaches	+6 months
Earlier starting age	+6 months
Parent engagement	+5 months
Early numeracy approaches	+5 months
Early literacy approaches	+4 months
Digital technology	+4 months

Source: Education Endowment Foundation Early Years Toolkit

the role of intensive professional development in enhancing child development through the practice framework.

Goodstart is also a partner in two Australian Research Council Linkage Projects. The first of these is with the University of Sydney, evaluating parent perspectives on child

care quality to help align the evidence around early learning and child care choice. The second project with the Queensland University of Technology is designed to identify effective strategies to increase and sustain a professional early years' workforce.

**As a large-scale provider, Goodstart is a “living laboratory” for early learning and will continue to make a powerful contribution to the body of evidence about how to ensure children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life.**

## References

1. Vermeer H.J, van Ijzendoorn M. H, Carcamo R.A, Harrison L.J. 2016 "Quality of Child Care Using the Environment Ratings Scales: A Meta-Analysis of International Studies" International Journal of Early Childhood April 2016 vol 48 p 33-60
2. Tayler C et al 2016 The E4Kids study: Assessing the effectiveness of Australian early childhood education care programs University of Melbourne [http://education.unimelb.edu.au/news\\_and\\_activities/projects/E4Kids](http://education.unimelb.edu.au/news_and_activities/projects/E4Kids)
3. <https://www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>

## Our Vision

is for Australia's children to have the best possible start in life.

## Our Purpose

is to ensure children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life.



To see how we bring our plan to life, you can view our animation here: <https://vimeo.com/goodstartel/strategic>

**goodstart  
early  
learning**

**Together there's no limit.**