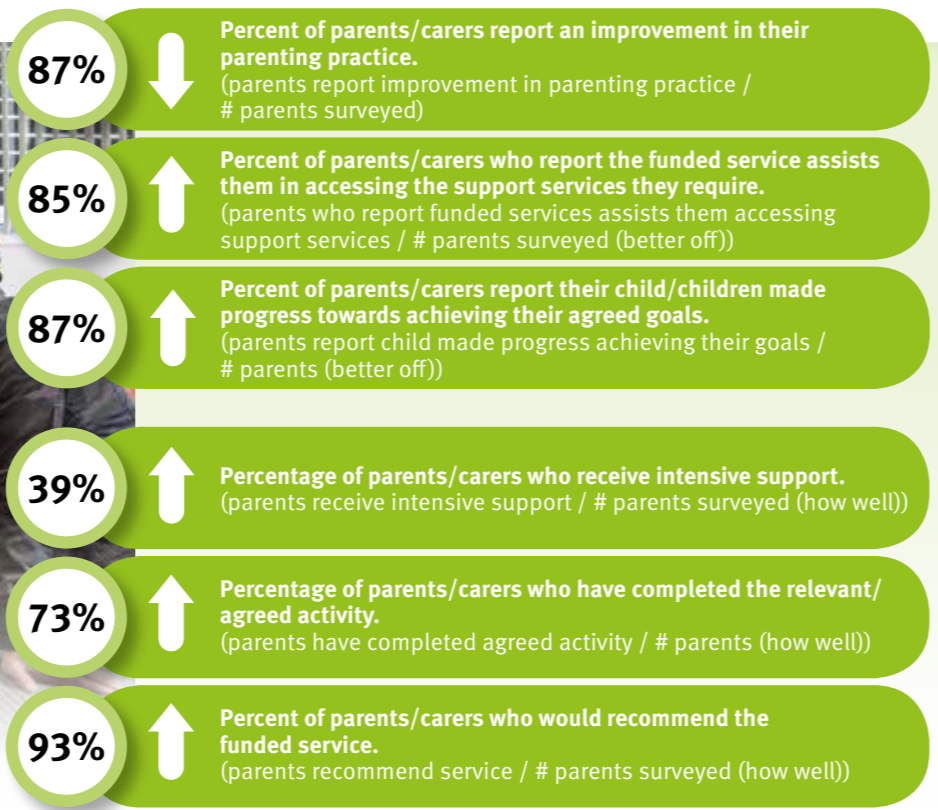


Family Support Funding Scorecard

January – June 2019

To promote and protect the health and wellbeing of children and their families.

Outcomes for children and families



19

family support services

Story behind the data

Effective partnerships

Services have established strong partnerships with local health and medical services, including allied health providers, to deliver valuable information, advice and direct support to children and families. Services provided at playgroup or through referral pathways include child and maternal health checks, immunisation, oral health checks, mental health assessments, speech and language therapy and other health and wellbeing supports. Productive partnerships have also been built with a range of other service providers in order to meet presenting family needs and reduce stress. Services know that effective partnerships are critical to ensure a holistic approach to service delivery is achieved and parents and carers feel supported and empowered to better understand their child's developmental needs and make informed choices to improve learning and development outcomes.

Building trust is key

Taking the time to build trust and rapport with children and families, particularly those experiencing significant vulnerabilities, has been critical to engage parents and

carers in open and honest conversations about their family circumstances and to discuss opportunities for additional support to improve outcomes. Services report that consistent, transparent and supportive communication with clients often results in a greater willingness to collaborate for change and accept referrals to other specialist and support agencies. Building trusting relationships amongst networks and partners has also been reported as a key success factor in supporting children and their parents and carers. These relationships enable staff from different professional disciplines including education, human services and health to learn from each other and work collaboratively, with a common goal and shared responsibility, to improve outcomes for children and their families.

Assessment tools and programs

Family support services have begun using evidence-based assessment tools and programs to screen children's development and identify strengths and challenges for families. Parents and carers are engaged in the assessment process and results are used to inform plans with targeted responses and specialist referrals when appropriate.

Assessment tools to measure positive parenting behaviours and parent-child interactions have also been trialled to identify ways to increase parenting capability and confidence to better support their child's cognitive, social-emotional and physical development. Services undertake assessments at various stages to track parents/carers progress and to re-evaluate plans. Examples of assessment tools used by family support services include Ages and Stages Questionnaires®, Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO™); and Personal Wellbeing Index and Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS).

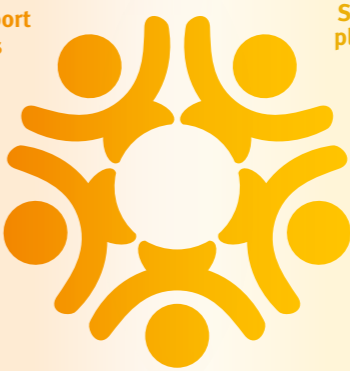
Data

One service provided annual data which represents a 22% increase in children's participation rates, during this reporting period. Other family support services reported an increase in both parent and child participation rates due to improved communication and engagement strategies (e.g. calendar of events, social media announcements), transport solutions (e.g. bus pickup) and outreach activities (e.g. playgroups in parks).

Partnerships

- Parents and carers
- Family Support Networks
- Family Support and Wellbeing Services
- Early Childhood Education and Care providers
- Local health and medical services (including allied health, Aboriginal Medical Services, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Bush Kids)
- Local schools and kindergartens
- Local Councils and Libraries

Activities



- Supported playgroups
- Telephone and web-based support
- Music therapy
- Home visiting
- Outreach programs
- Domestic and family violence referral and support
- Parenting programs
- Transition support
- Family support, counselling, case management

Feedback and observations

What has been the most significant change –

"...gives our kids the opportunity to access services, skilled educators and experiences that they would not normally be able to ... and in a safe and supportive environment."
(Parent attending outreach playgroup)

"...his improvement has been very noticeable and it is helping us in our relationship to be better..."
(Parent attending PELD service)

"...given me more confidence as a parent; gets me out of the house; my anxiety is at an all-time low; I enjoy learning more for my child."
(Parent attending PELD service)

Continuous Improvement

Family support services will:

- continue to strengthen partnerships and referral pathways to support children and families when they need it
- embed evidence-based learning and development programs in group work and individual sessions
- advertise and promote their service to increase visibility and community connection
- improve data collection processes and use reflective practice to inform program design and development and continuous improvement strategies.

The Department of Education will work with family support services to:

- promote the importance of evidence-based practice and cultural capability
- engage in opportunities for collaboration and shared learning through networking and professional development events
- strengthen understanding of Results Based Accountability to embed practices that support service delivery and continuous improvement
- improve reporting through refinement of data collection tools, templates and processes.

Disclaimer: Survey sample is at least 30% of the total target group across the funding category. Annual data has been reported for one service.

Family Support snapshot



2234
Total # of children participating

4%
Children with disability

24%
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse children

17%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children



1514
Total # of parents/carers participating