



Children's mental health: the policy pragmatism needed to address inequity within a generation

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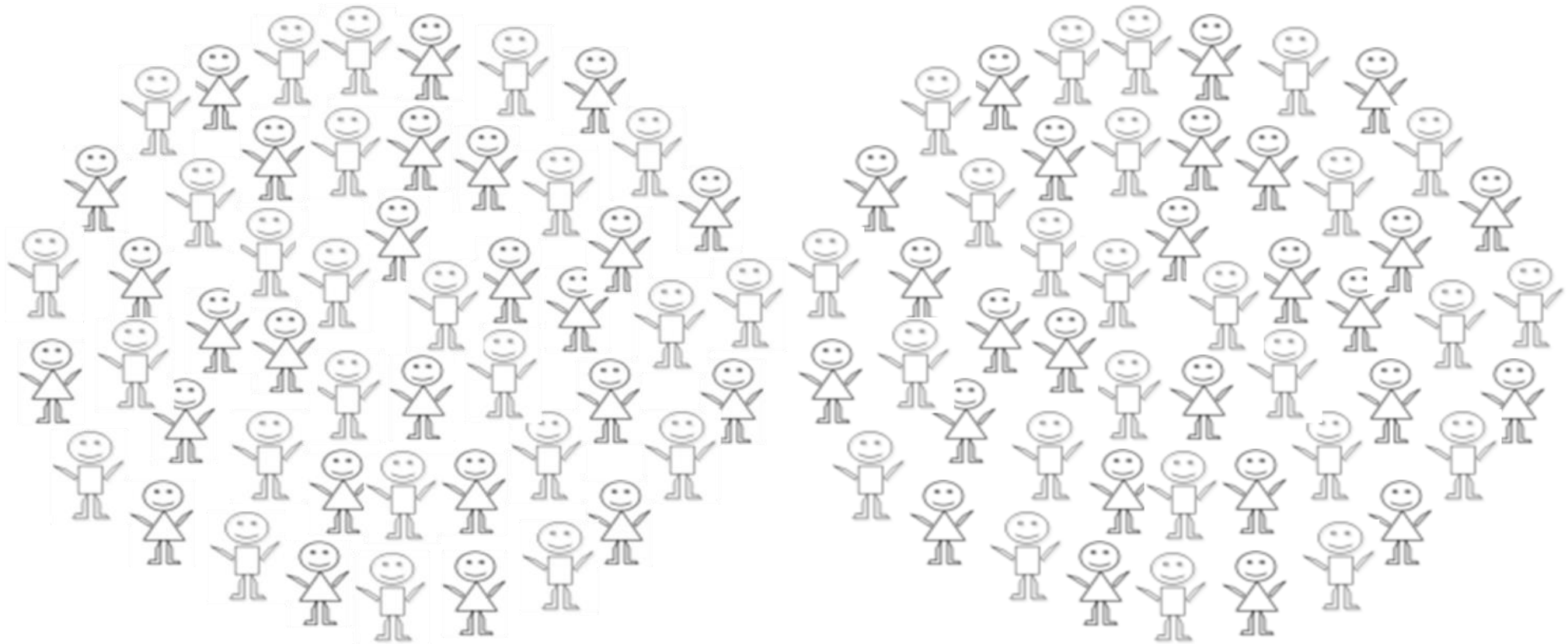
@sharon_goldfeld

Acknowledgement of Country



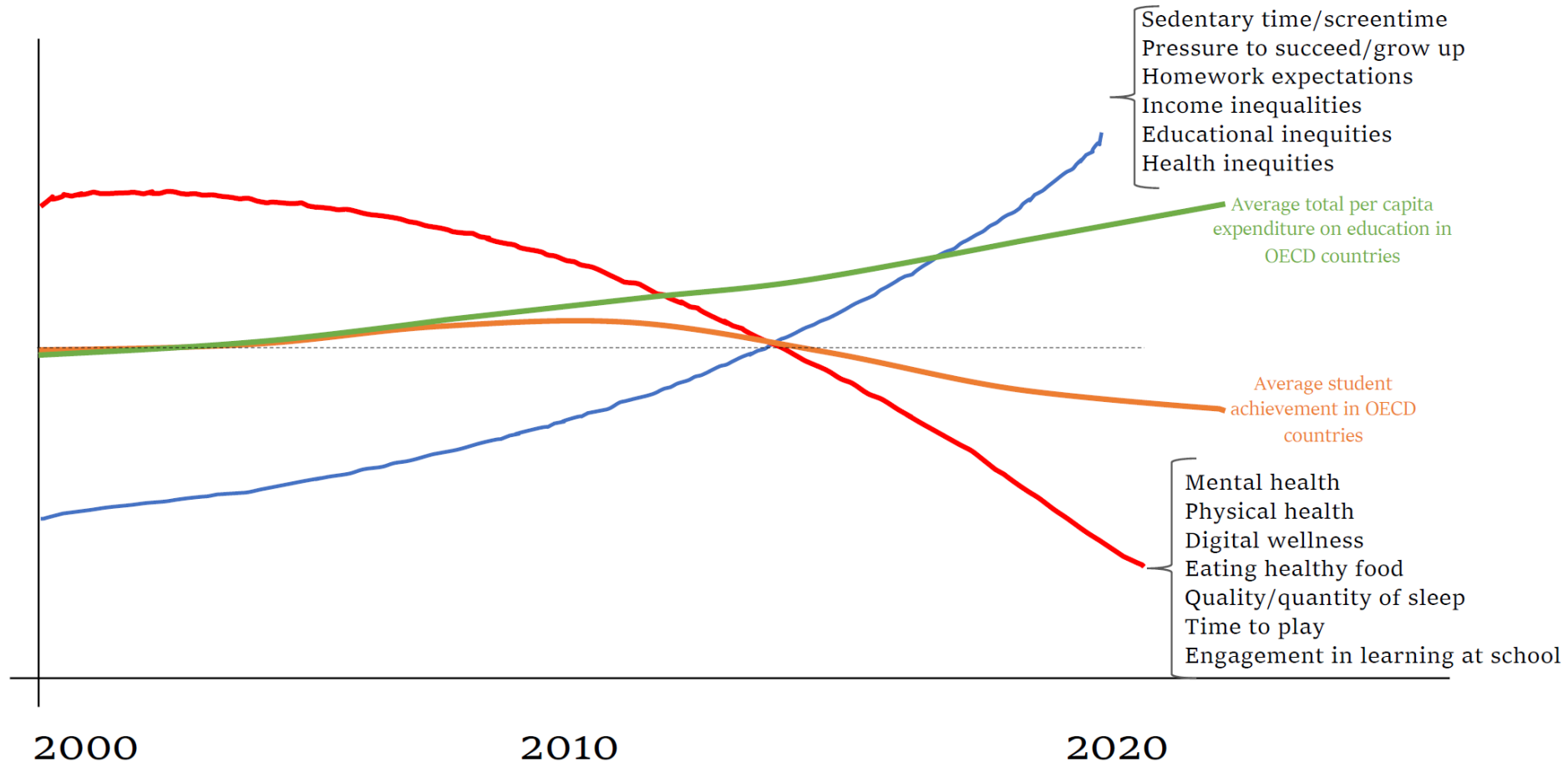


How can we keep populations of children healthy and developing well?





Inconvenient trends



2015

The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents

REPORT ON THE SECOND AUSTRALIAN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SURVEY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Table 2-4: 12-month prevalence of mental disorders among 4-17 year-olds by household income and sex

Household income before tax	Males (%)	Females (%)	Persons (%)
\$130,000 or more per year	12.3	8.8	10.5
\$52,000-\$129,999 per year	13.8	10.8	12.3
Less than \$52,000 per year	24.4	16.1	20.5

Household income includes the combined income for the 2011-12 financial year of everyone living in the household before tax and other deductions are taken out.

Table 2-7: 12-month prevalence of mental disorders among 4-17 year-olds by area of residence and sex

Area of residence	Males (%)	Females (%)	Persons (%)
Greater capital cities	14.2	11.0	12.6
Rest of state	19.6	12.4	16.2

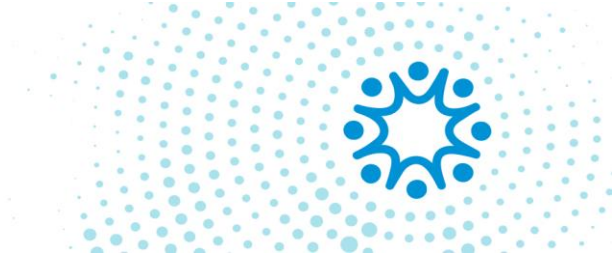
Based on the ABS classification Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA).

Table 2-6: 12-month prevalence of mental disorders among 4-17 year-olds by parent or carer labour force status and sex

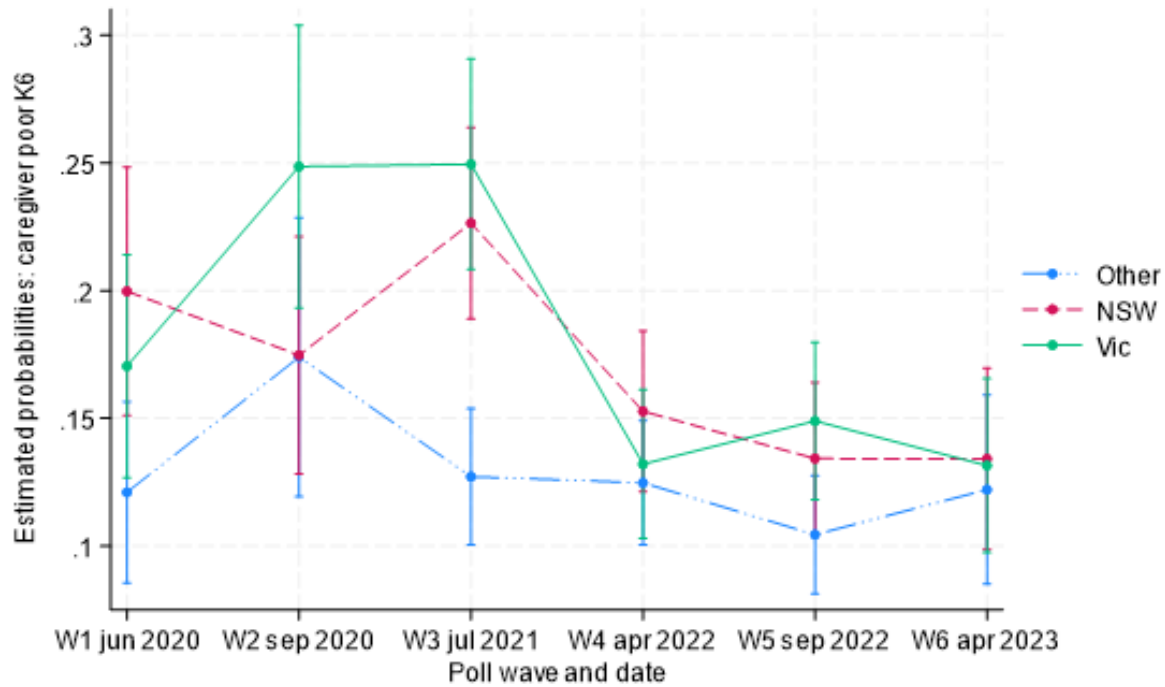
Parent or carer labour force status	Males (%)	Females (%)	Persons (%)
Both parents or carers employed	12.6	9.0	10.8
One parent or carer employed, one parent or carer not in employment	15.5	10.1	12.9
Both parents or carers not in employment	23.4	18.7	21.3
Sole parent or carer employed	16.9	17.1	17.0
Sole parent or carer not in employment	36.0	22.0	29.6

'Not in employment' combines unemployed and not in the labour force.

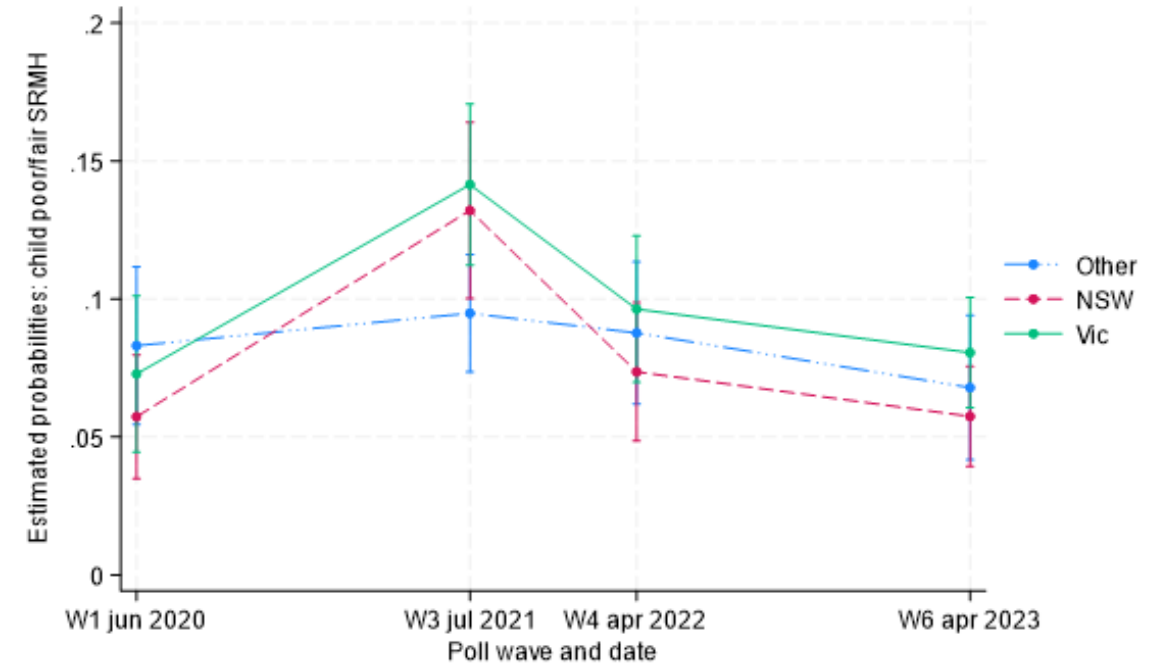




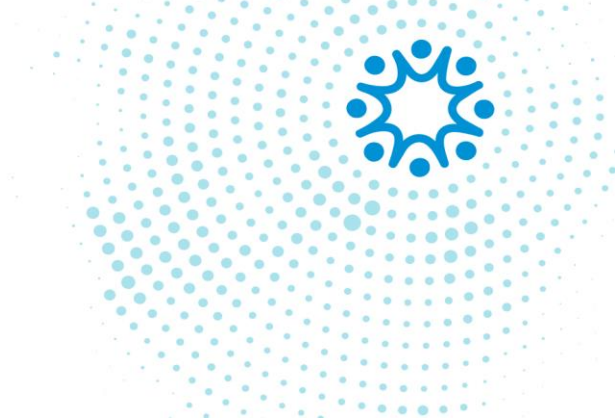
COVID-19 and mental health



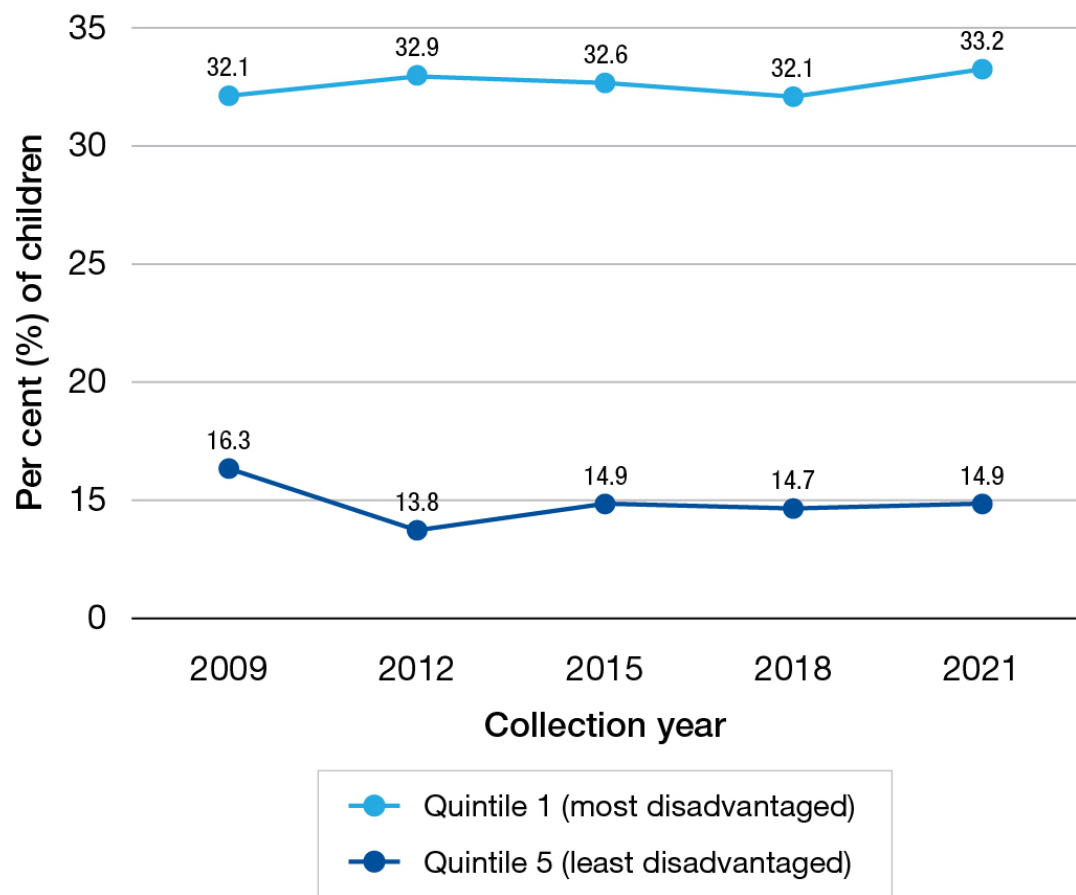
Suboptimal caregiver K6



Child poor/fair/good mental health (v. good/very good)

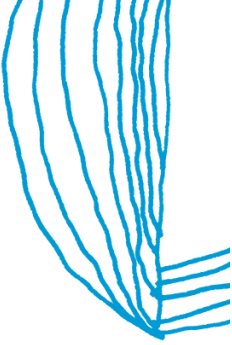


AEDC and Equity



Gray, S., McDonald, M., Guo, S., Leone, V. & Goldfeld, S. How can we improve equity in early childhood? (AEDC 2021 Data Story). Australian Government Canberra. www.aedc.gov.au

Figure 4: National trends in developmental vulnerability on one or more domains by community socio-economic position 2009-2021



Inequitable Medicare spending

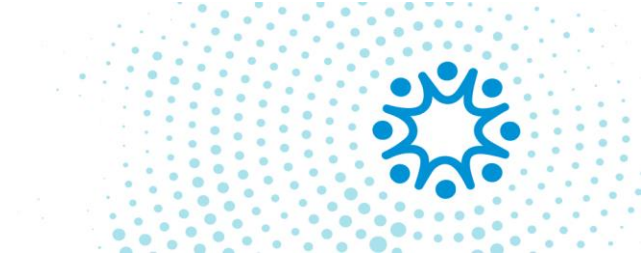
Shares of the Medicare spending by income quintile, birth to 11 years of age

Income quintile	Total spending	GP	Specialist	Imaging & pathology
Lowest	18%	20%	15%	16%
Second	19%	19%	18%	18%
Third	20%	20%	19%	20%
Fourth	21%	21%	22%	22%
Highest	22%	20%	26%	24%



Inequity is the presence of systematic and potentially remediable differences among population groups defined socially, economically, or geographically.

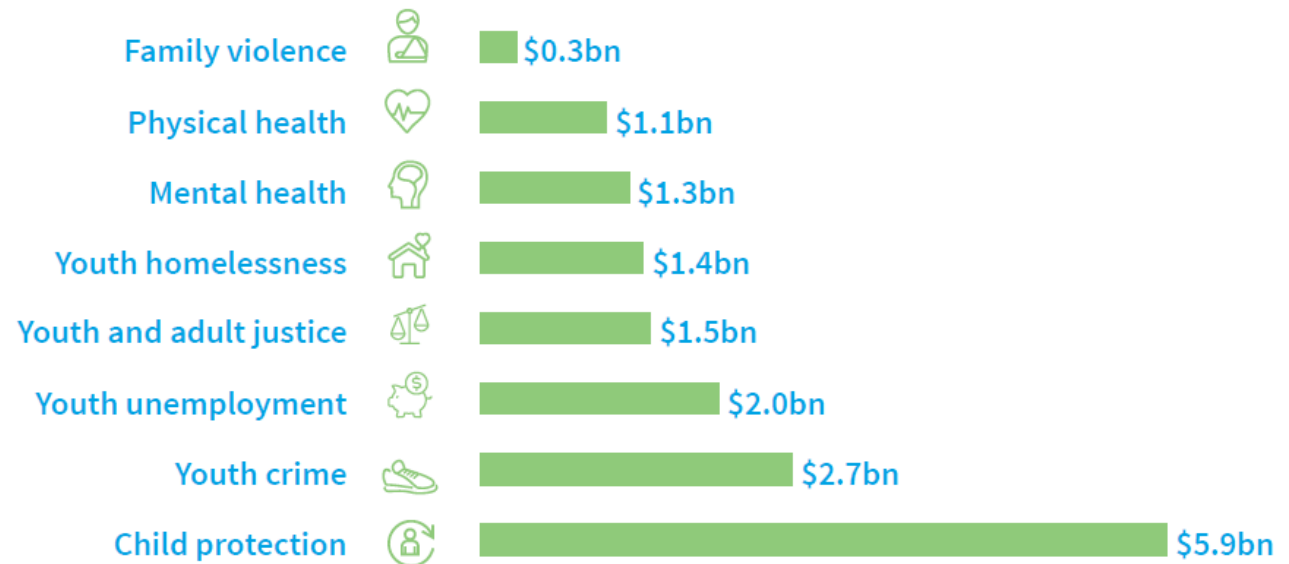
- International Society for Equity in Health [<http://www.iseqh.org>]
- Venkatapuram S, Bell R, Marmot M: **The right to sutures: social epidemiology, human rights, and social justice.** *Health Hum Rights* 2010, **12**:3-16.



Early intervention is key-the costs of late intervention



Figure 1: Annual cost of late intervention in Australia by issue (2018-19 prices, \$bn)



This chart presents spending on each issue experienced by children and young people. The total figure of \$15.2bn accounts for double counting.



The road to equity needs to be paved with more than good intentions





Build it back different?

Radical pragmatism:

We argue the radical pragmatism of effective crisis response— a willingness to try whatever works, guided by an experimental mindset and commitment to empiricism and measuring results — represents a policymaking model that can and should be applied more widely, not only in times of crisis



What should we do? What could we do?





The National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy



THE EARLY YEARS STRATEGY

DISCUSSION PAPER

FEBRUARY 2023



Working together to deliver the NDIS

Independent Review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme

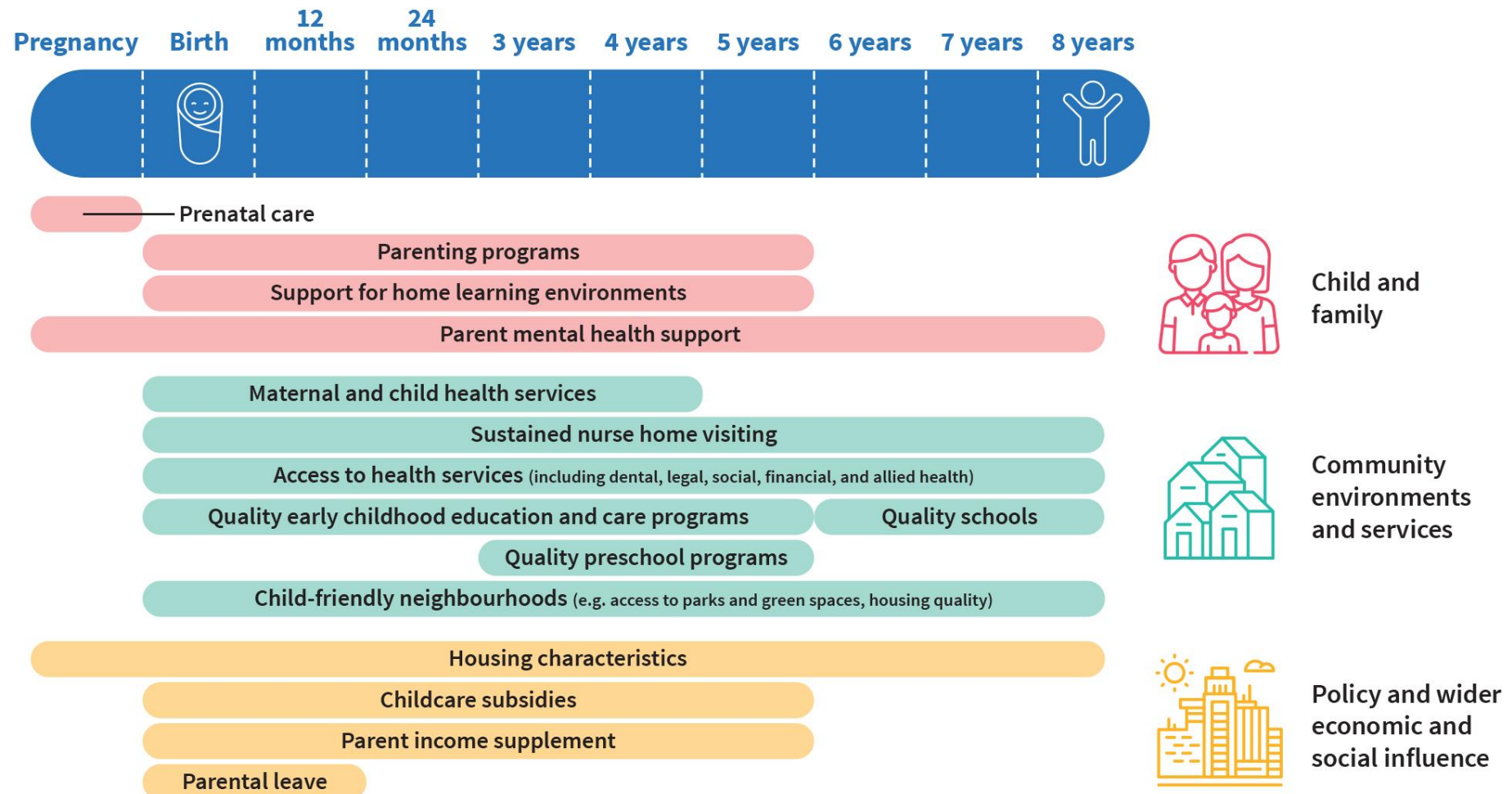
Final Report



2023



Stacking interventions



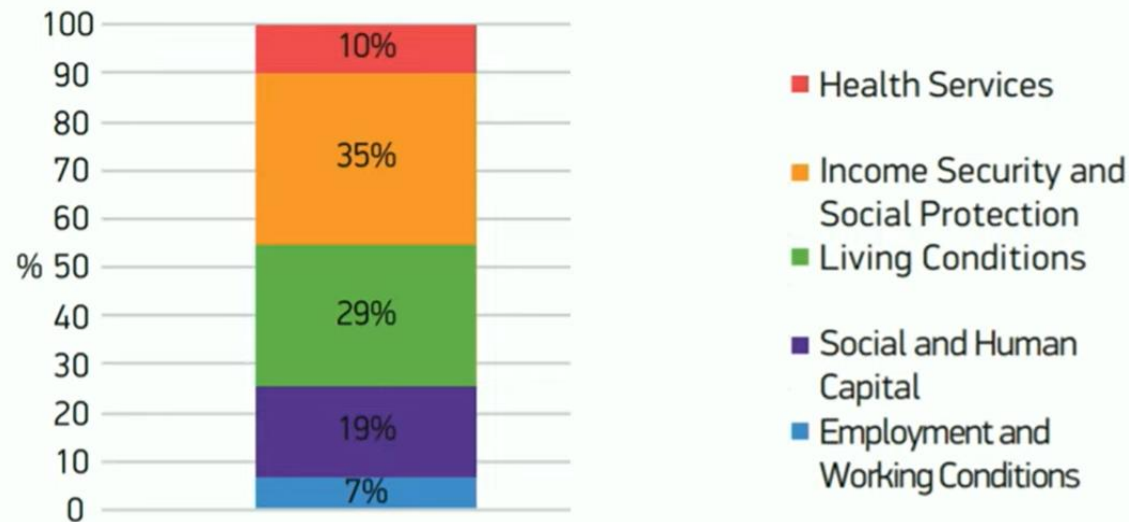


Social Determinants of Health



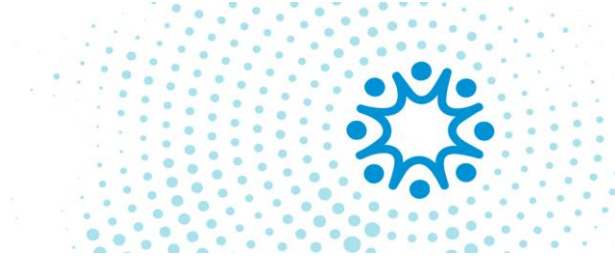
Evidence from the WHO Health Equity Status Report showed only **10%** of the inequality in health status is due to **health services**.

Income, Living Conditions, and Social Capital have a wider impact on the health of citizens across Europe.

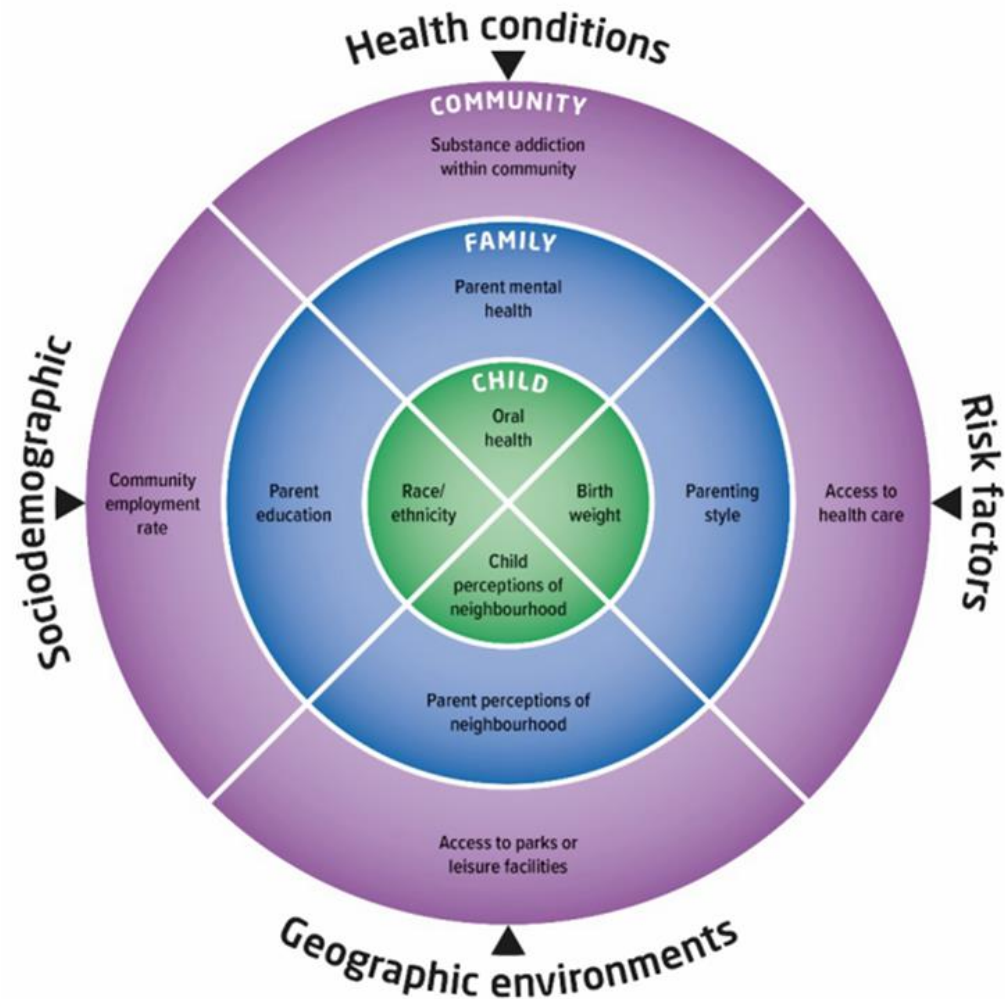


Howe, S. (2023, April 18). *Can a Wellbeing Economy Deliver?* [Conference Presentation]. John Menadue Oration. <https://cpd.org.au/2023/04/menadue-oration-2023/>

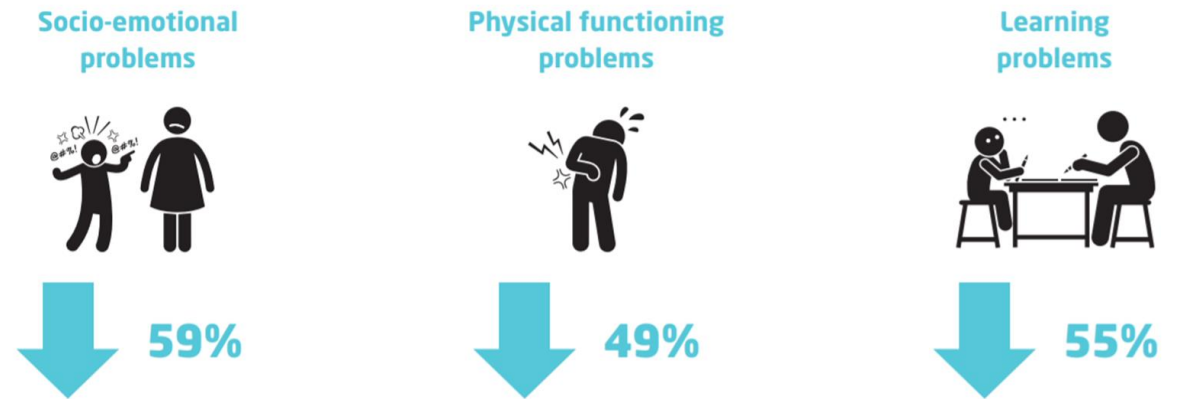
Decomposing the Gap in health status between poorest and richest income quantiles over 36 EU countries



Changing Children's Chances Disadvantage Framework



The projected benefits of addressing disadvantage early



Healthy childhood and pregnancy

Understanding child disadvantage from a social determinants perspective

Sharon Goldfield,^{1,2} Meredith O'Connor,^{1,2} Dan Cloney,^{1,3} Sarah Gray,¹ Gerry Redmond,² Hannah Badiand,³ Katrina Williams,^{2,4,7} Fiona Mensah,^{2,8} Sue Woolfenden,^{1,8,10} Amanda Kvalsvig,¹ Anita T Kochanoff¹¹

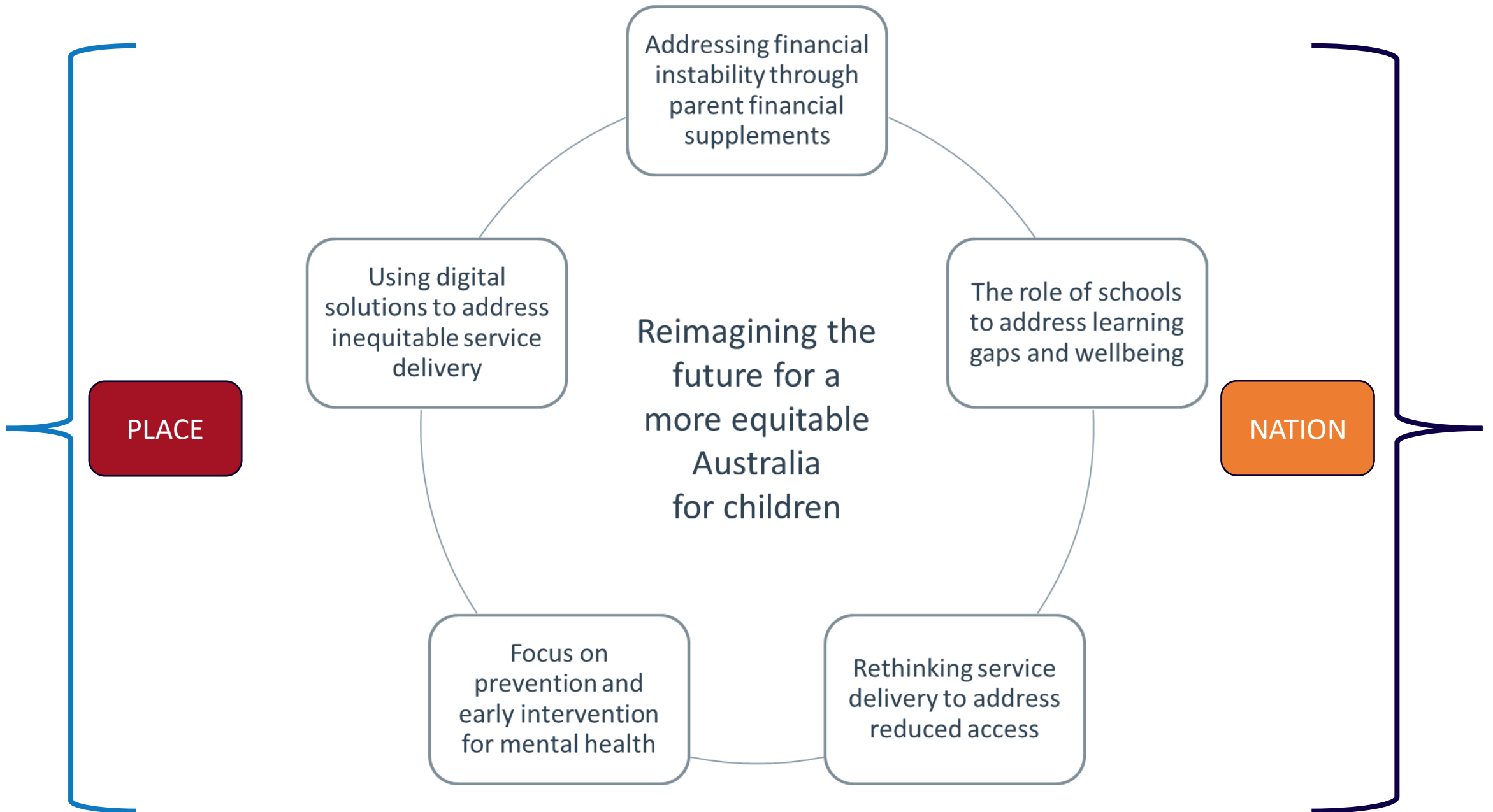


What should we do? What could we do?



Five ideas...





Parent financial supplements



Baby's First Years

The first study in the United States to assess the impact of poverty reduction on family life and infant and toddlers' cognitive, emotional, and brain development

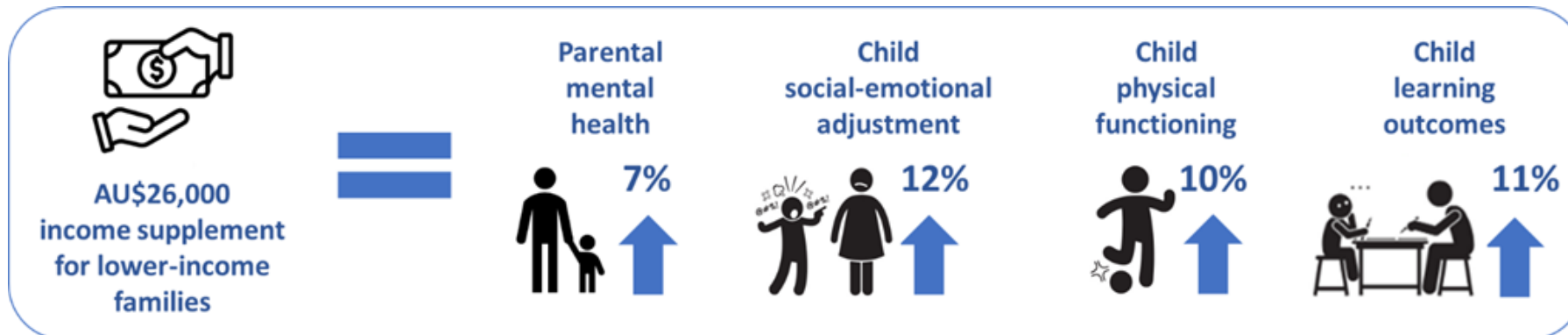
- HOME
- ABOUT
- NEWS AND MEDIA
- PEOPLE
- FUNDING
- PUBLICATIONS
- CONTACT

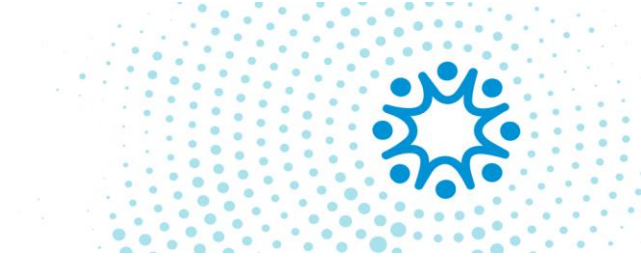


Baby's First Years publishes first findings: Monthly cash support to families impacts infant brain activity

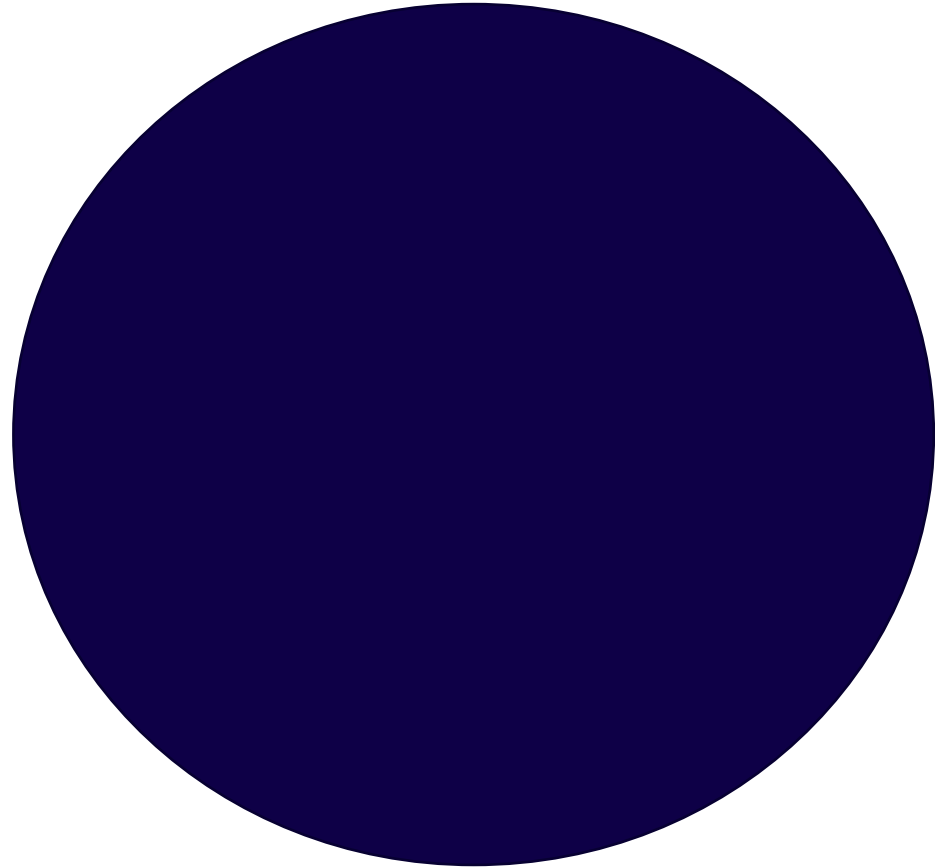
Our new study shows that an anti-poverty intervention had a direct impact on children's brain development. After one year, infants of mothers in low-income households receiving \$333 in monthly cash support were more likely to show faster brain activity, in a pattern associated with learning and development at later ages. [Read more here.](#)

Baby's First Years is a pathbreaking study of the causal impact of monthly, unconditional cash gifts to low-income mothers and their children in the first four years of the child's life. The gifts are funded through charitable foundations. The study will identify whether reducing poverty can affect early childhood development and the family processes that support children's development.





The role of schools





Reinventing Australian Schools

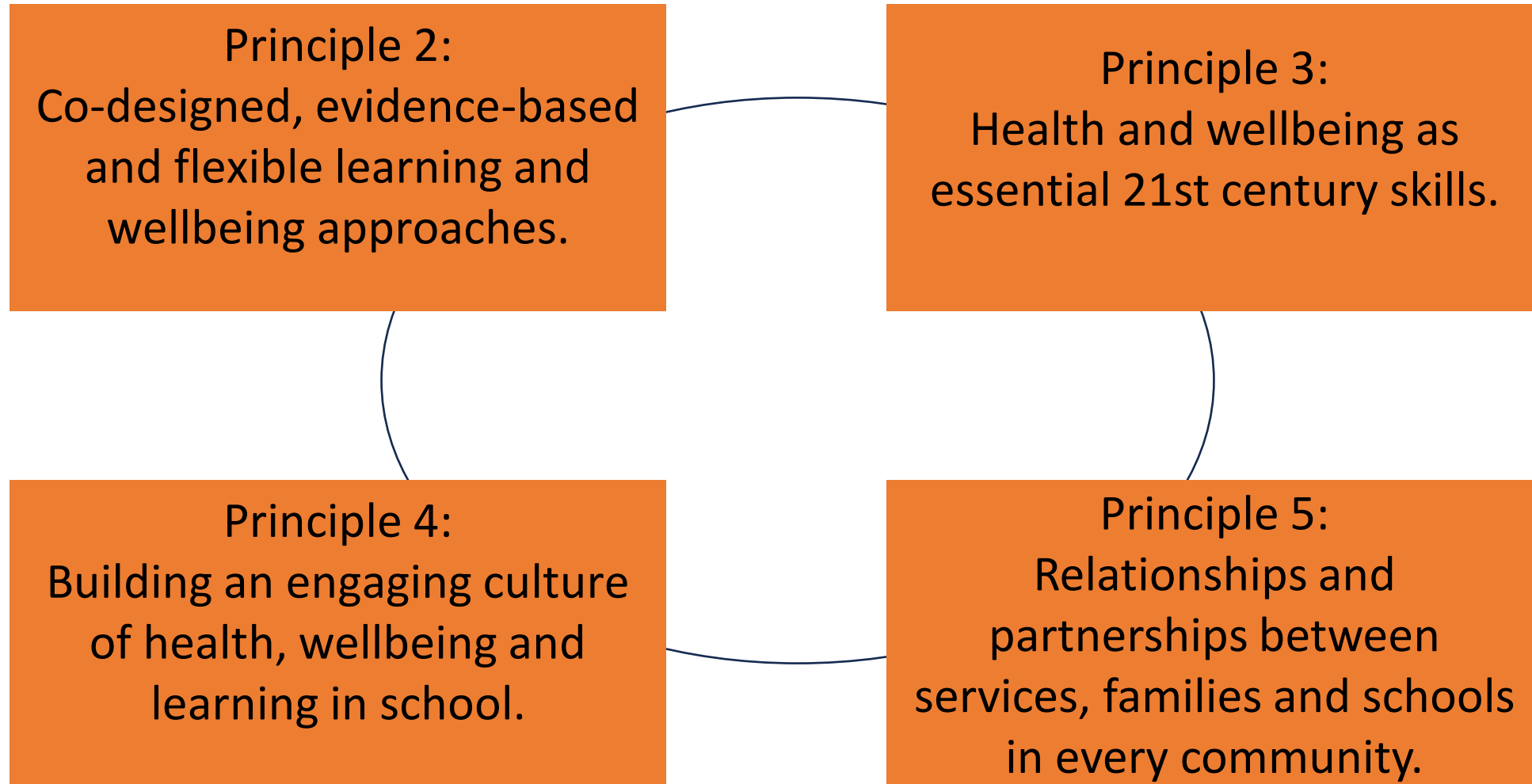
for the better wellbeing, health and learning of every child



A discussion paper for the public on five key principles to improve the wellbeing, health and learning outcomes of every child in every community.

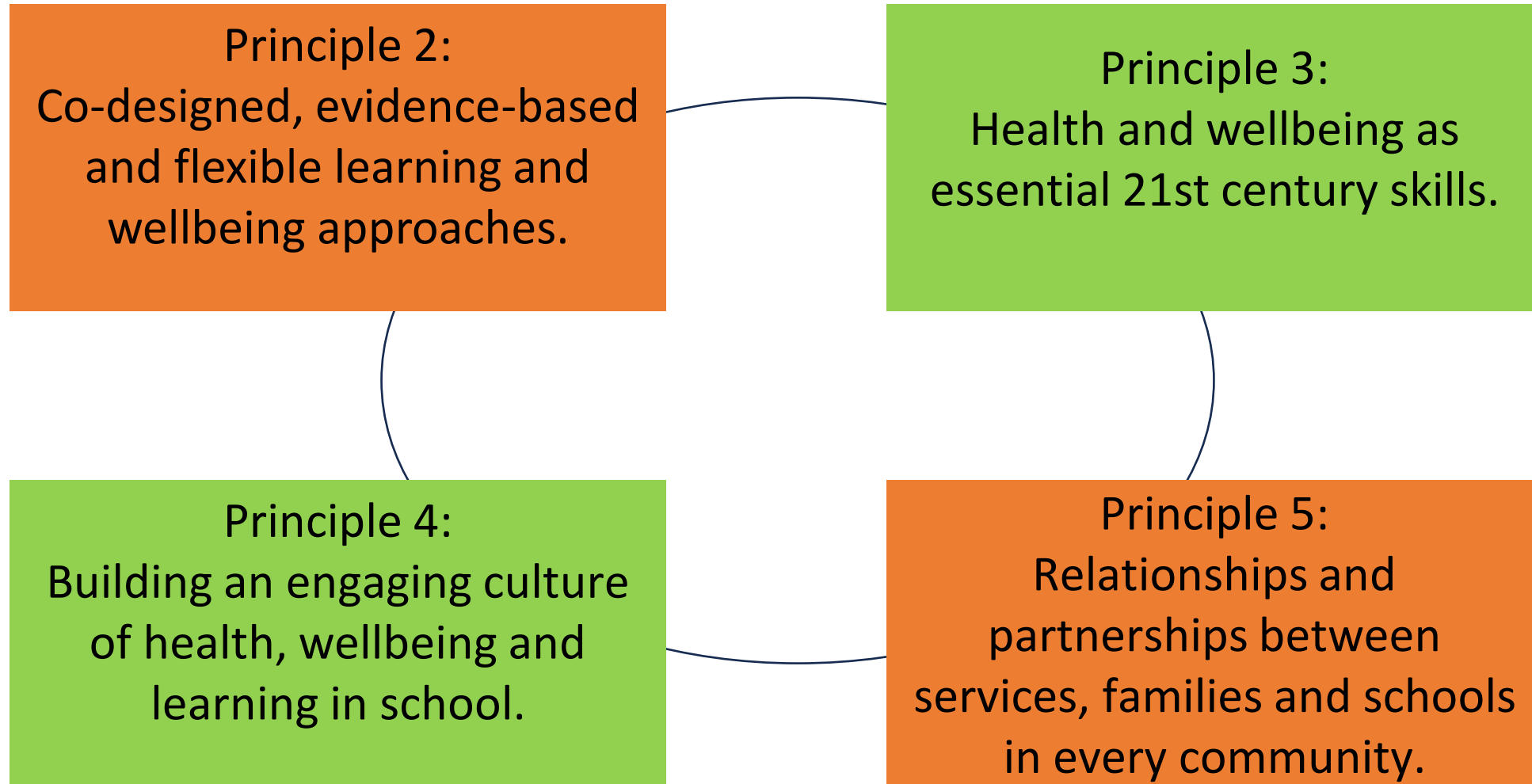
Organising principle 1:

A whole-child and whole-school approach



Organising principle 1:

A whole-child and whole-school approach





MHiPS

Mental Health in Primary Schools

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**murdoch
children's
research
institute**



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Findings




84%
observed increased
PRIORITISATION
of student mental
health and wellbeing
(MHWC survey n=76)



90%
agree the MHWC model
**INCREASED
THE
CAPACITY**
of the whole school to
support student mental
health and wellbeing
(Staff survey n=1322)



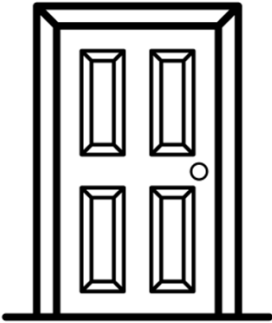
90%
agree the MHWC model
**INCREASED
THE
CONFIDENCE**
of teachers to support
student mental health
and wellbeing
(Staff survey n=1322)

Parents reported
**GREATER
KNOWLEDGE**
of child mental health
and wellbeing

(Parent survey n=686)

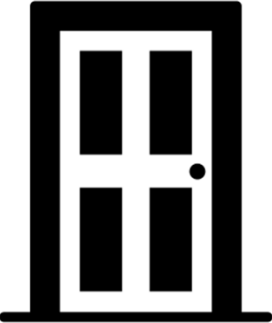
Parents reported
improvement in
**STUDENT
MENTAL
HEALTH &
WELLBEING**

(Parent survey n=686)

Rethinking service delivery



Early Childhood Services



Primary schools



Community health/NGO

Child and family
Hubs

The CRE Child and Family Hub in Wyndham Vale



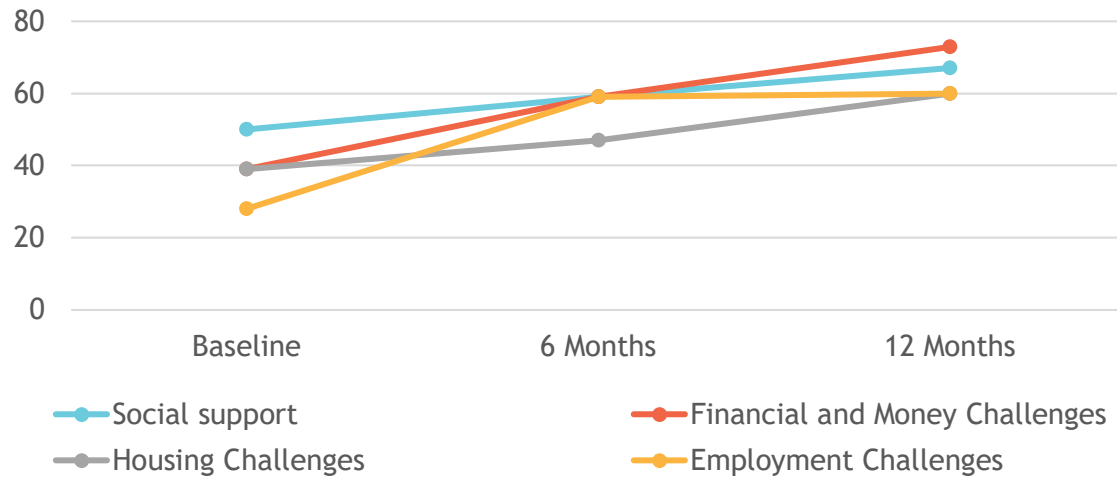
“One stop” Child and Family Hub to better detect and respond to adversities

Health, legal and social care sectors

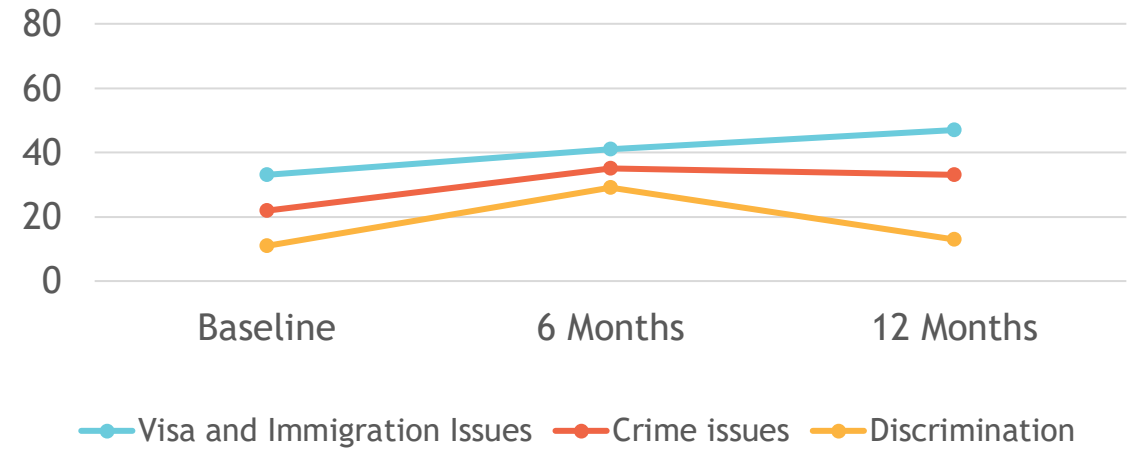


PRACTITIONER DIRECTLY ASKING ABOUT ADVERSITY (%)

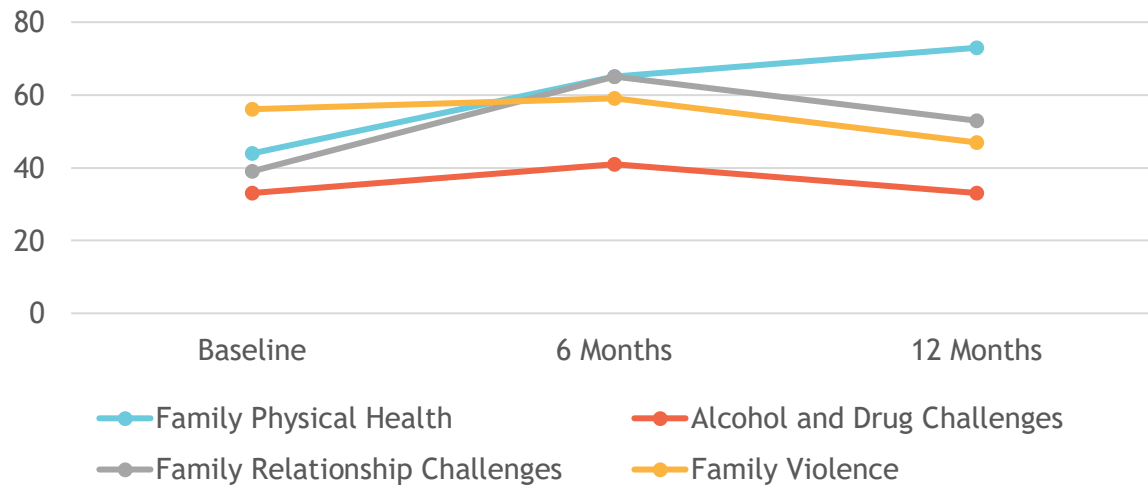
Adversity outside the home



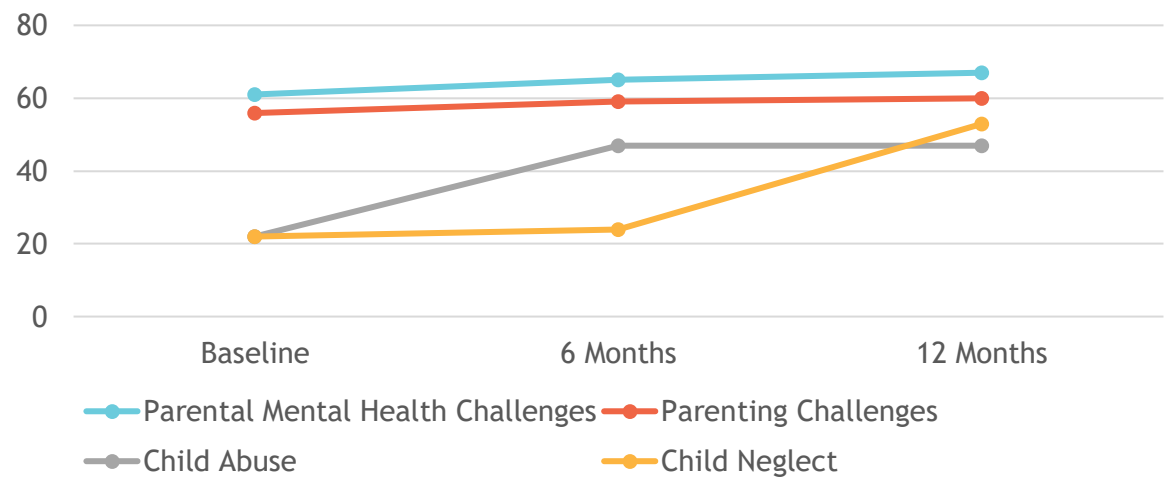
Broader social adversity

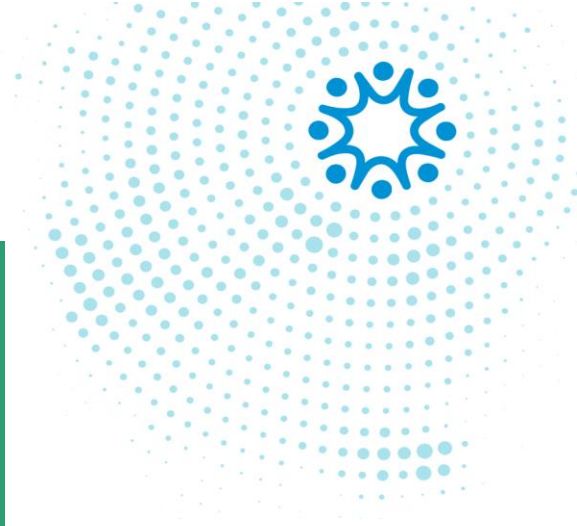


Adversity Inside the Home



Adversity Inside the Home







https://www.childandfamilyhubs.org.au

National Child & Family Hubs Network

[Home](#) [Resources](#) [Contact](#)

What is the National Child and Family Hubs Network?

The Network is a multidisciplinary group that brings together Australian universities, research centres, medical research institutes, community organisations, and state government departments. The Network's members are actively involved in conducting research, training, communication, and advocacy related to innovative (and sustainable) integrated community-based Hubs, to support the health and wellbeing of children and families.

Who is involved?

19°C Mostly sunny 5:30 PM 20/08/2023

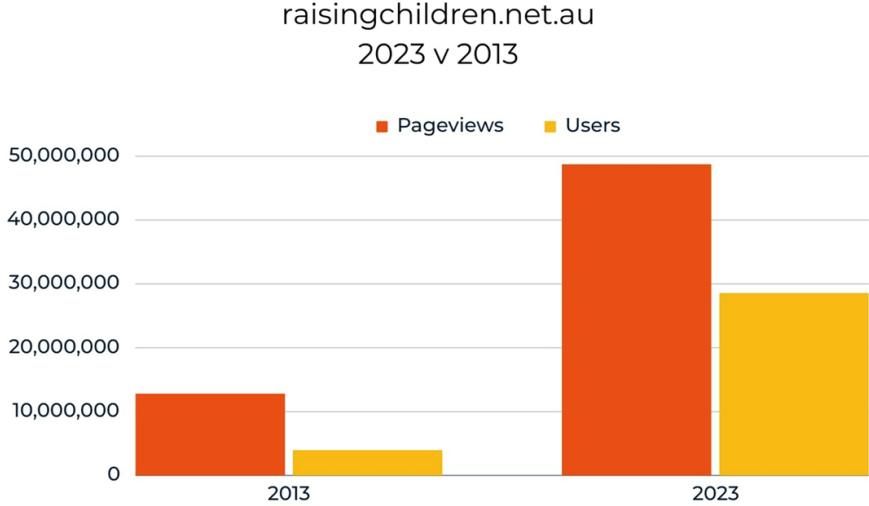
Focus on prevention and early intervention for mental health



The Australian Parenting Website



Reach and Impact



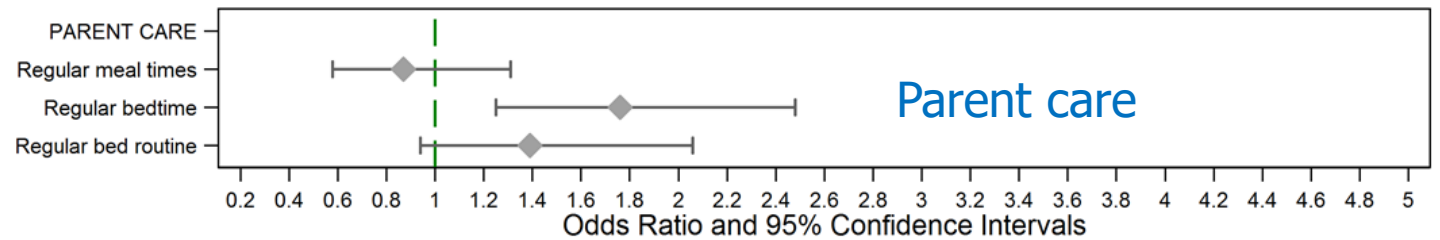
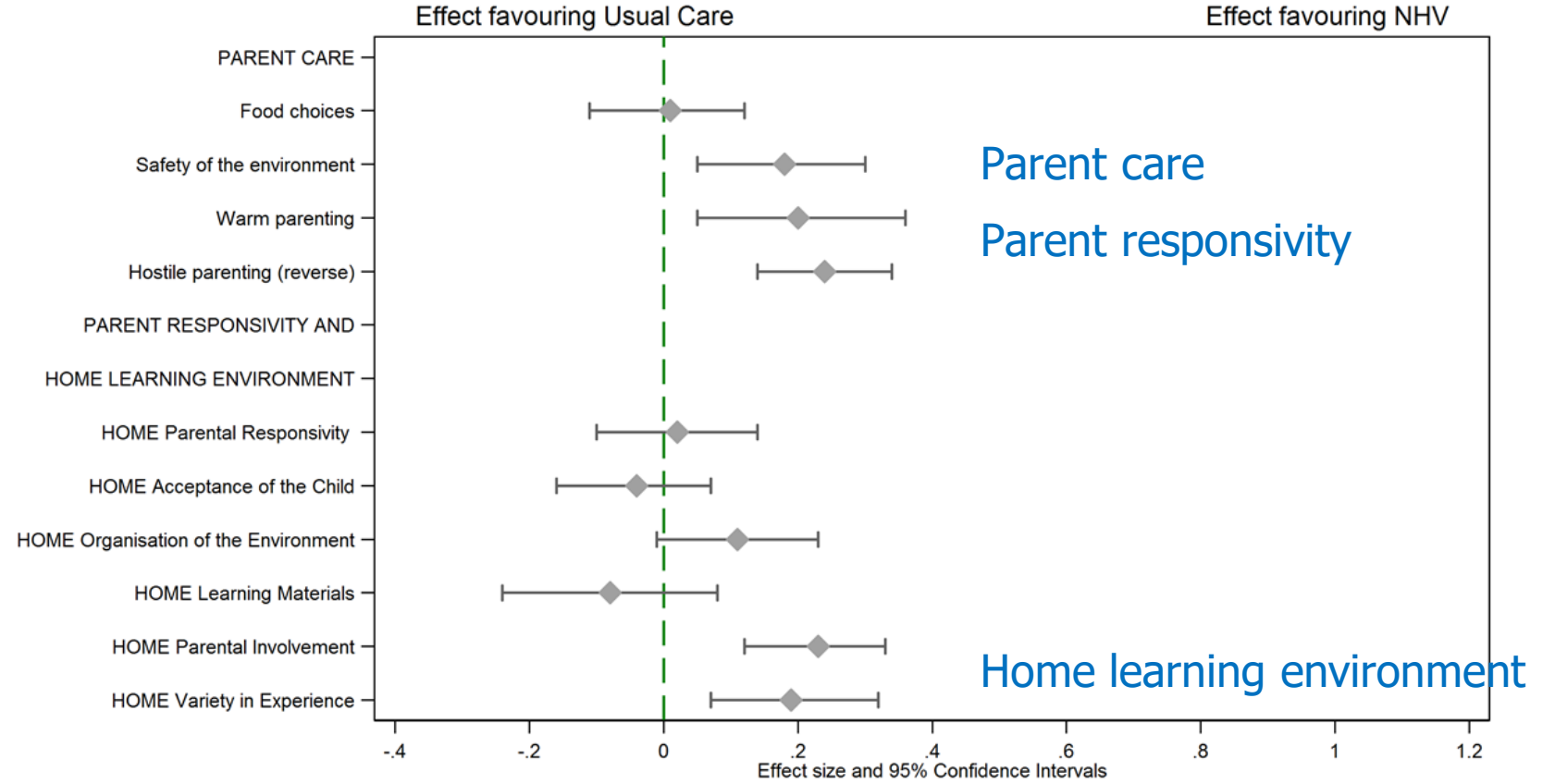
The right@home model

An anticipatory, aspirational, preventive, sustained and (flexibly) structured model of embedded service delivery

- Core program - Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting (MECSH)
- Additional modules focusing on: sleep, safety, nutrition, regulation, bonding/relationship
- 25-35 visits – from pregnancy until 2yrs
- Structured flexibility
- Grounded in a partnership approach
- Focus on building capacity
- Embedded in existing service systems
- Program and process training and implementation support by TReSI

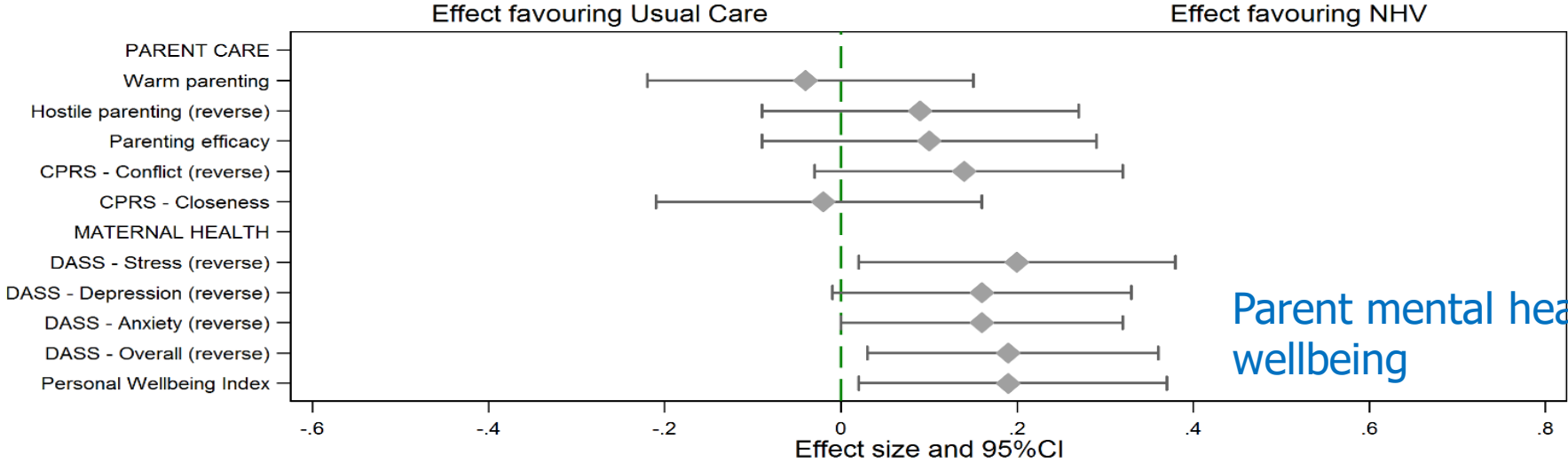


Primary outcomes at 2 years of age

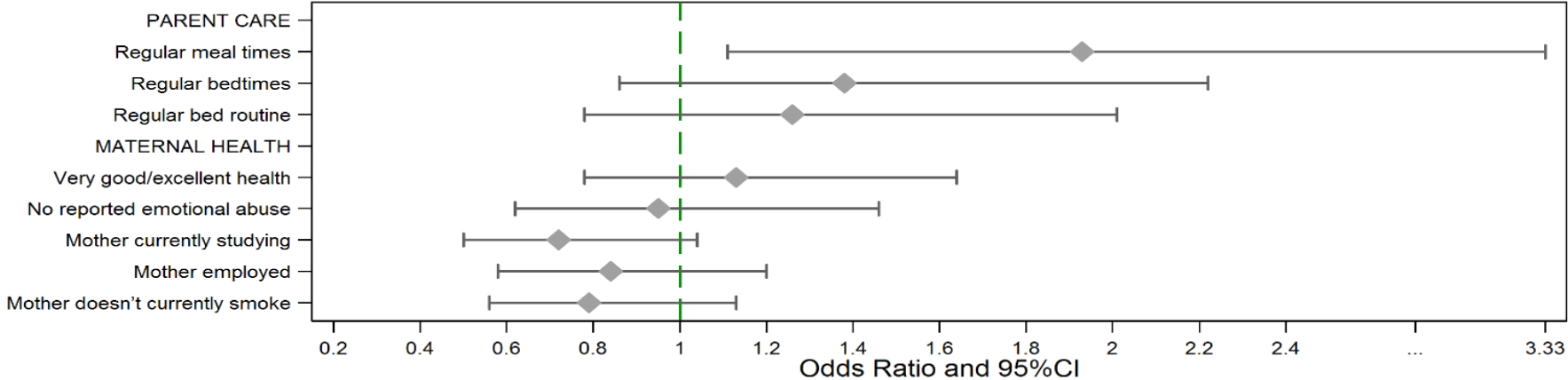


3 Year Outcomes - Mother

Adjusted* Effect Sizes/Odds Ratios with 95%CI for maternal outcomes at 3 years
(MULTIPLE IMPUTATION - ITT)

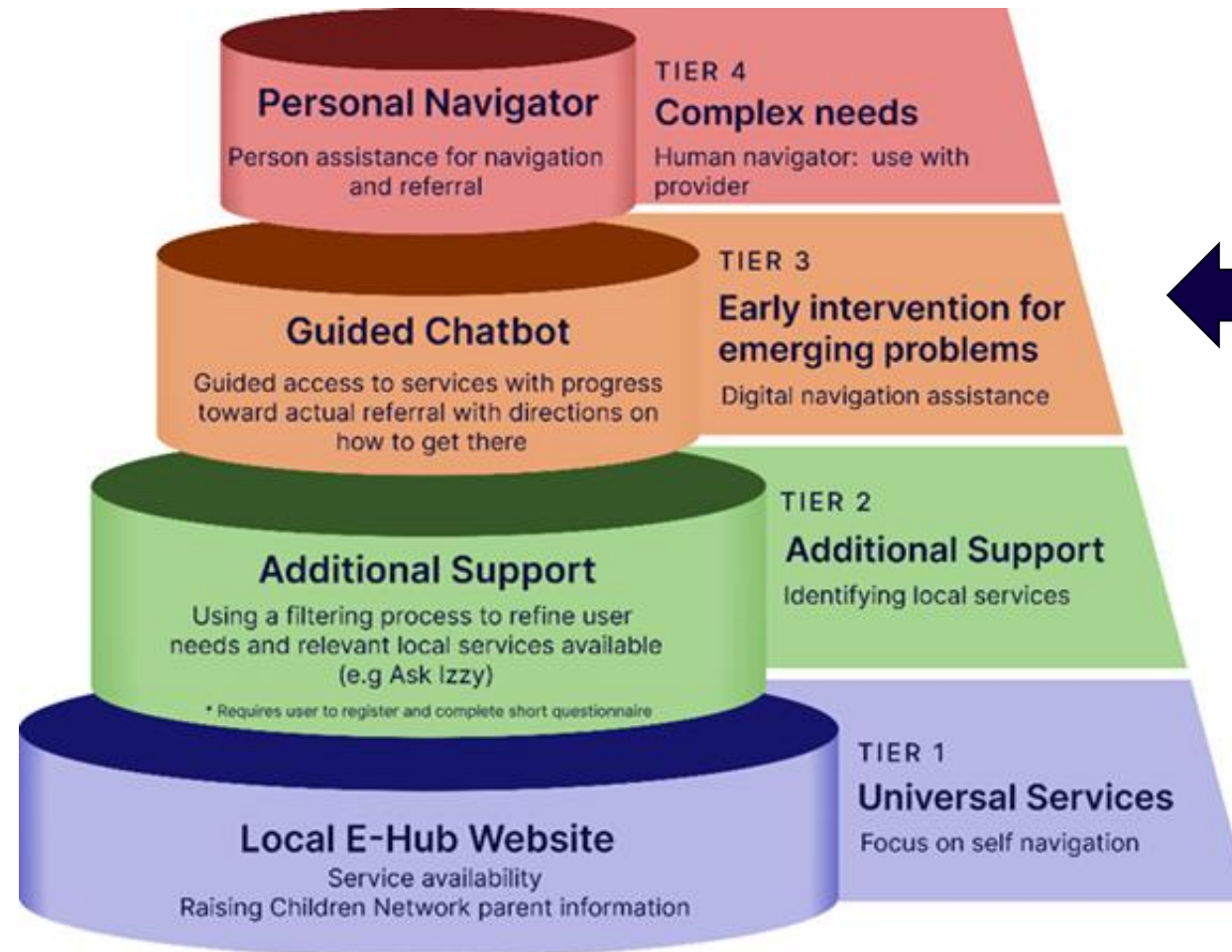


Parent mental health and wellbeing



*: Baby gender; Mother's age at Baseline; SEIFA Disadvantage score at Baseline; Maternal education at Baseline; Parity; Antenatal risk; Mental health; Self efficacy; Child age at 3 Year Ax.

Using digital solutions to address inequitable service delivery



child and family eHub

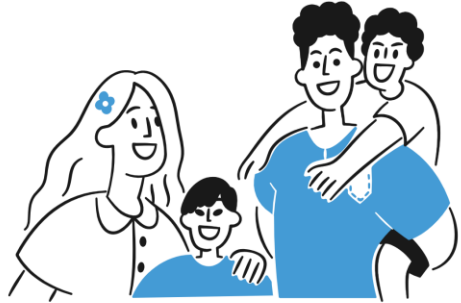
Trusted information Find a professional Online programs Find parent groups Get immediate support About us

Quick exit X

Get support for your family's wellbeing all in one place

The Child and Family eHub connects you with the right support. Find tips you can trust, professionals you can talk to, and other parents to learn from.

Get started → Get immediate support



We all need help sometimes. If you're worried about your child's emotions or behaviour, there are things


Quick exit X

We all need help sometimes. If you're worried about your child's emotions or behaviour, there are things that can help. We help you find the support you need to navigate life's challenges and keep your family thriving.

Check out trusted information

We partnered with raisingchildren.net.au to answer lots of your parenting questions.


Explore information



Find a professional

Learn about the kinds of professionals who can support your family. And get connected with them.


Find a professional



Online programs for parents

Check out programs you can do online. They cover topics like parenting and mental health and wellbeing.


Explore online programs



Find parent groups

Talk to parents and caregivers who are going through similar challenges.

Find parent groups

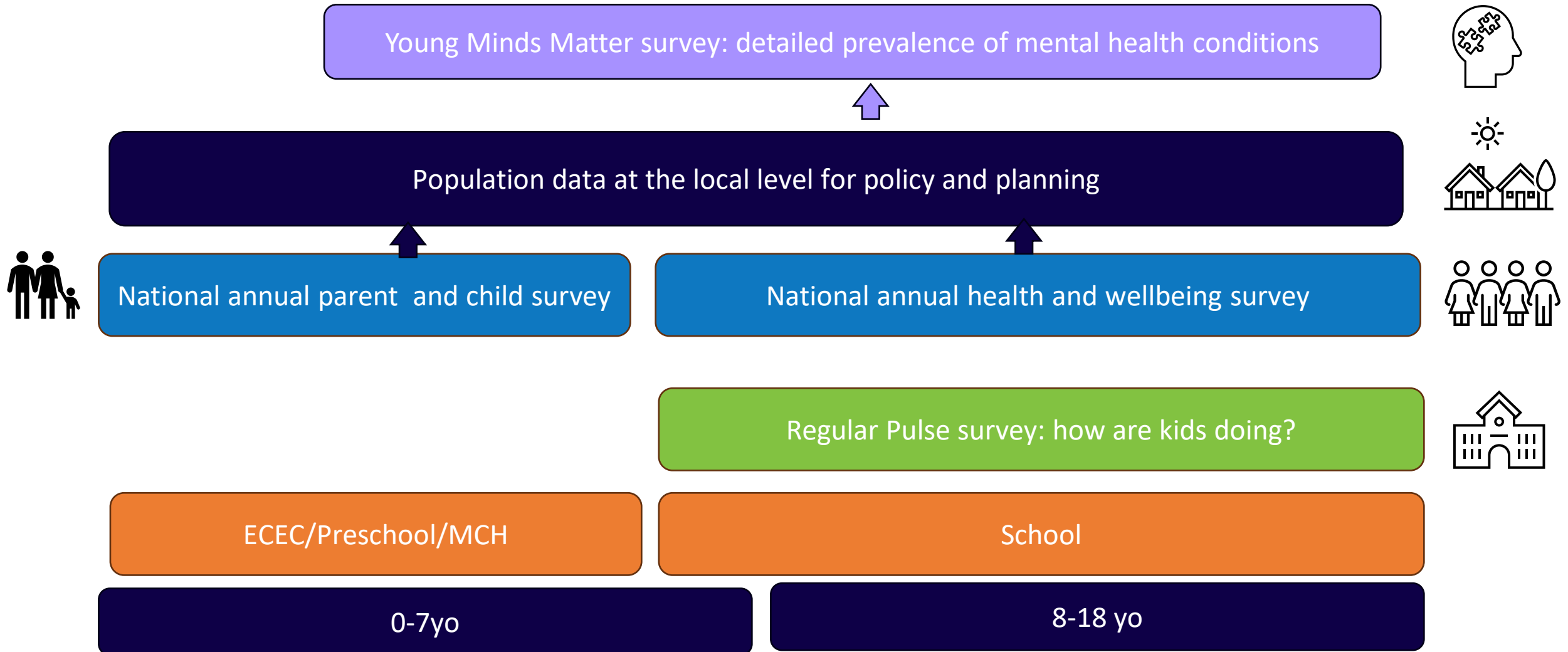






Underpinned by data and indicators to drive and evaluate system change

National mental health and wellbeing data ecosystem



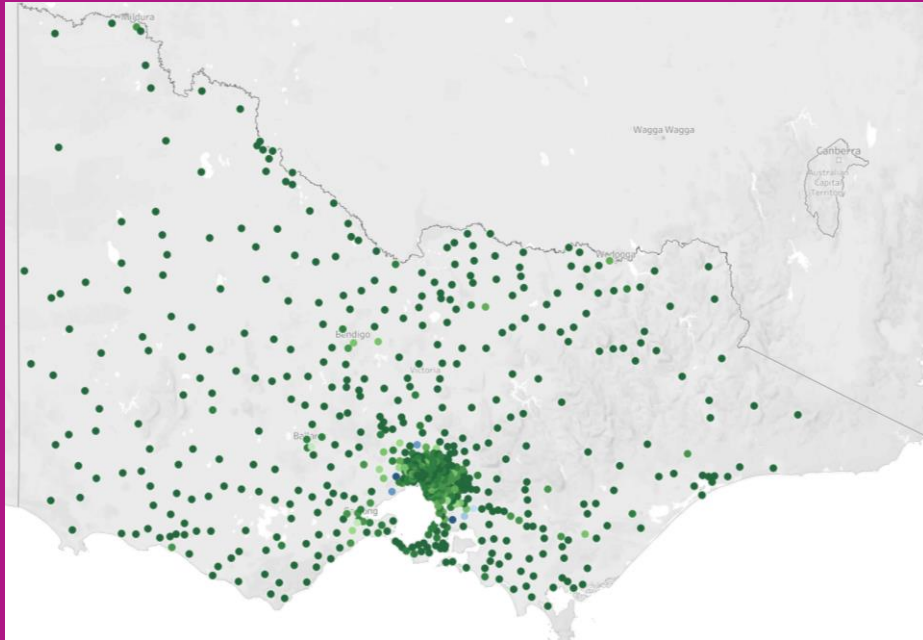
By 2035, GenV's vision is to have solved complex issues facing our children and the adults they become

To create the world's most exciting children's health, development and wellbeing project to answer today's pressing policy and practice questions.

Through GenV, we can reveal how genes, biology, adversity, social systems and services together shape a child's life path.

No other initiative has achieved this at scale.

Australia's largest and most inclusive child and parent longitudinal cohort



more than
115,000
participants
including
45,000 babies
70,000 parents



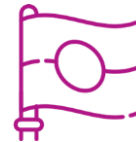
more than
94,000
saliva samples
stored securely at
the Melbourne Children's
Campus



with over
25,000
participants
from Regional Victoria



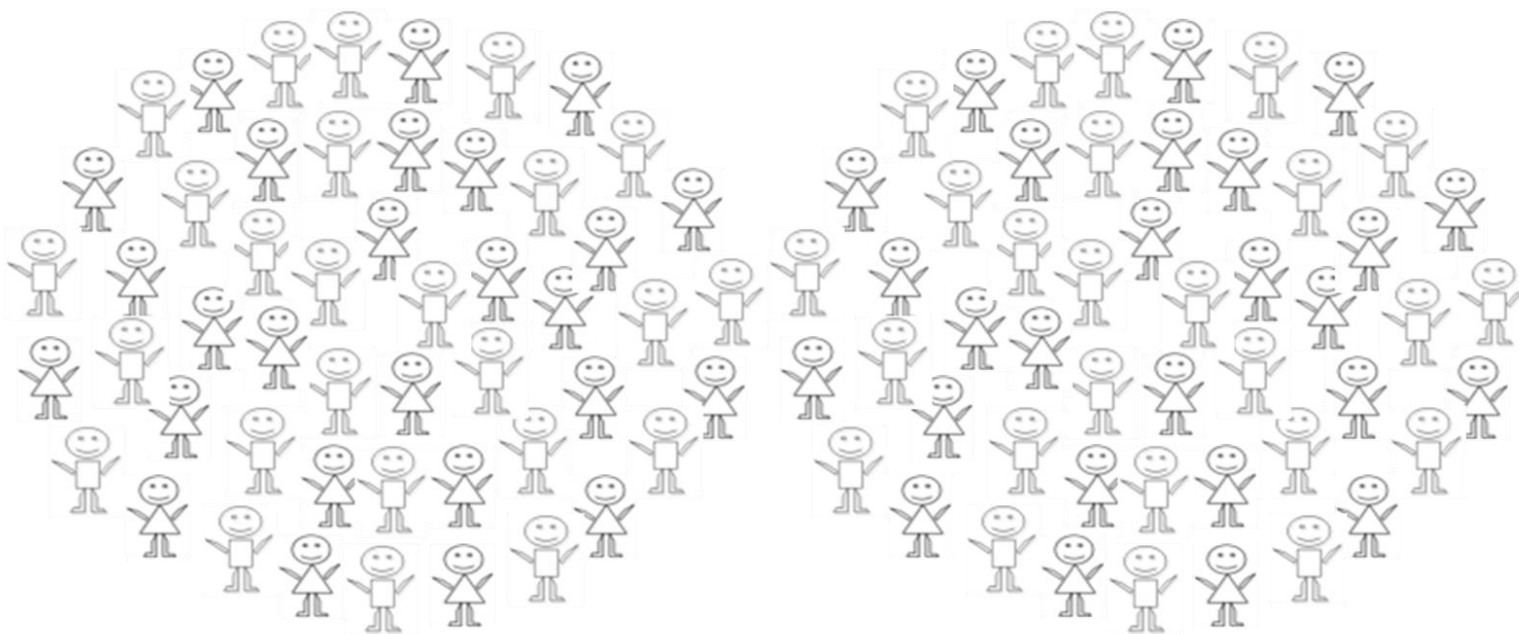
from families speaking
71 languages
including
7,500 families
whose primary
spoken language at
home is not English

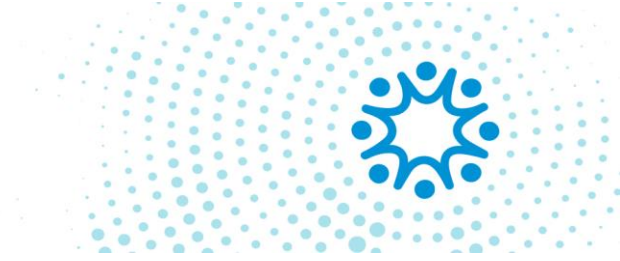


more than
700
parents
who identify as First
Nations



more than
25,000 participants
who are the most or 2nd most
disadvantaged (SEIFA)





‘It is the burden on good leadership to make the currently unthinkable thinkable, to question the obvious, to make the present systems unavailable as options for the future.

The boundaries in our minds create fear about the consequences of crossing over to the undiscovered country. But the possibilities we really need do not lie on this side of our mental fences.

Once crossed, these fences will look as foolish in retrospect as the beliefs of other times now often look to us.’

Don Berwick - 1998



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Parkville 3052 VIC

www.rch.org.au/ccch

The Centre for Community Child Health is a department of The Royal Children's Hospital and a research group of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

**Melbourne
Children's**

A world leader
in child and
adolescent
health



The Royal
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MELBOURNE