Let's Start

Parent-Child Program

What is the Let's Start Parent-Child Program?

A therapeutically oriented **group parenting program** that:

- Supports children's **social-emotional development during the transition to school**, strengthening school readiness and attendance
- **Works with parents to develop their strengths and capacities** in managing their children's behavior, dealing with personal emotional difficulties and family problems.

Let's Start includes thorough community engagement and education, a 10-week parent child group intervention program and a research and evaluation process.

Let's Start improves children's functioning at home, at school, and with peers as well as establishing communication between parents and schools.

Facts

- **24% of Aboriginal children aged 4-17 years are at high risk** of clinically significant emotional or behavourial difficulties.
- **The Northern Territory has the highest overall suicide rate** of all Australian States and Territories with very high rates among the remote Indigenous population including young people.
- **Northern Territory children score below Australian means** on the Australian Early Development Index - a measure of childrens' school readiness.
- **Child protection notifications for neglect** continue to rise in the NT's Indigenous communities signalling an urgent need for prevention.
- **Early intervention reduces the risk** of later mental health problems and psycho-social difficulties and improves performance at school.

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LET'S START PARENT- CHILD

An integrated program focused on strengthening the wellbeing of parents and the development of children during the transition to school.

Overview

- Let's Start is an integrated program focused on child development, early learning and parenting and on the wellbeing of both parent and child.
- Let's Start helps parents to develop their understanding of children's behavior and their ability to recognise their children's needs.
- The 10 week program is for preschool and early primary school children and their parents, aiming to improve children's confidence and attention.
- It is the only available parenting program specifically developed for Aboriginal parents and families with evidence for its effectiveness.
- Let's Start is designed to be delivered in partnership with local indigenous community workers and has been successfully implemented in urban, rural and remote communities.
- Let's Start has received expressions of interest in expansion of the program: From the Torres Strait, from Maningrida and Western NSW.

"Developed over 10 years of experience working with Aboriginal Children aged from 4 to 7 years and familiies in remote and urban communities. The Let's Start program works because it is responsive to culture, kinship and Aboriginal family values."

How It Works

- Let's Start has facilitated referrals from **over 40 urban as well as 8 rural and remote locations** such as the Tiwi communities of Bathurst and Melville Islands, Nganmarriyanga in the Victoria Daly Shire and Jabiru in the West Arnhem Shire.
- It has involved **community group leaders, community schools, preschools, community health care centres, childcare centres and child protection services** to ensure that parents are supported in their different community contexts.
- Its flexibility allows it to align with the practices, policies and processes of these other organisations.
- Organisations that work closely with families and children are able to refer families if they have concerns about a child's development, behaviour or other social-emotional problems and Let's Start can help connect families to other services if required.

Let's Start 2014-2018

Our aim is to extend the reach and impact of our work through a number of complementary strategies:

1. **Expanding implementation:** Extending Let's Start Parent-Child Program to Stronger Communities for Children Sites and other remote and rural locations
2. **Let's Start 0-4s:** Let's Start parenting and play groups for parents with small children 0-4 years.
3. **The Indigenous Parenting Resources Project:** Manuals, training resources & materials; videos on child development & parenting to support evidence-based practice.
4. **Indigenous Child Development Workers:** Professional development for Let's Start Indigenous community- based workers.

