

HIPPY La Perouse, New South Wales

The project setting

HIPPY is a home based early intervention program that works with 4 and 5 year old children and their families to prepare them for school. The program involves local families, predominately Indigenous families and community members, from the La Perouse and Matraville Soldier Settlement Primary Schools and the Gujaga Pre School and children from other local schools and pre schools.

Why is the project needed?

The project identified the need to involve parents in education as a

way to ensure a good start to school. Involving families and caregivers in early education shows children and families that education can be fun. Children see their parents and caregivers joining in and the process builds the confidence and self esteem of both the children and their families. The program aims to give young children a successful start in school and reduce drop out rates in later years. The family also feel welcome at the school. Understanding their role as educators empowers the parents to continue an active interest in their children's education. This has been shown to provide a good beginning and to help reduce drop out rates.

What are you trying to do in this project?

Families start the program when the children are four years old and the program continues for two years. Indigenous home tutors are employed to assist the parents with the weekly activities. There are regular group meetings for the parents and caregivers. There is also a weekly enrichment hour during which the co-ordinator and tutors facilitate relaxation and reflection activities for the parents.

How are you going about it?

Use of action research

The HIPPY program at La Perouse is utilising an action research model to reflect on the effectiveness of the program. They are documenting the ideas put forward by parents and children about what improvements can be made to ensure the ongoing usefulness of the program to their Indigenous communities.

Last year ten children graduated from the program - seven of the children are Indigenous. All of the children are now attending their second year of school and doing well.

Sherri Longbottom is the Co-ordinator of the HIPPY program at La Perouse with Liz Orr as the SFLEX Training and Support worker.



First Graduation HIPPY La Perouse Age 5 2003.

Minto Under 12's Project, NSW

The project setting

The Minto Under 12's Project is auspiced by Uniting Care Burnside and is located at the Minto Family Centre, a suburb north of Campbelltown in NSW. Campbelltown has a population of approximately 11,400 people - 26% of which are aged 0-12 years. There are approximately 1,000 housing department dwellings that are being re-developed to a reduced public and private mix. It has been estimated that 800 public houses will be demolished and that after the re-development two to three hundred will be available for public housing. The issues of service provision for children under 12 years was raised in Campbelltown in two independent

forums - one with residents of Minto and the other among key service providers.

Why is this project needed?

The purpose of this project is to create better opportunities for children in the Minto Public Housing Estate and to normalise the experiences of children. It is also to provide children with opportunities to reach their potential.

What are you trying to do in this project?

It is intended to reintroduce the concept of community caring, to celebrate childhood and to intervene before serious problems develop. It is also recognised that in order to make changes there needs to be a focus on parents and on the community of Minto as a whole. A priority of this project is in gaining parental involvement and having parents enjoy spending time with their kids.

How are you going about it?

The Minto Under 12's Project is only in the beginning stages. We are currently involving the community in planning in the following ways:

- Planning workshop (and introduction to Action Research) held with workers and parents with children aged 0-5 years, facilitated by Liz and Margo from SFLEX. Aim was to come up with ideas for programs for children aged 0-5 years.
- Responding to community need as evidenced by demand (enquiries and waiting lists regarding pre-existing groups) and issues being named by the community (for example the social impact of the redevelopment, no one wanting to hear the stories of families having to relocate due to the redevelopment).
- Trialing Paint & Play (a street based group for parents and children