



Parenting Together®

The Salvation Army Ingle Farm (SA)

A Communities for Children Initiative

AIFS Promising Program Approval November 2016

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Program Objectives

The objectives of Parenting Together® are in line with the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* and include but are not limited to:

- Promoting that families function well in nurturing and safe environments
- Providing support for parents to care for their children before and after birth and through the early years
- Providing support for parents to provide children with secure attachment, consistent discipline and quality environments that are stable, positive, stimulating, safe and secure

Program Principles

Parenting Together® is modelled on the following principles:

- The birth of a child can put extreme pressure on relationships
 - Early intervention can prevent family breakdown.
 - Preparing for relationships should start as early as possible and continue throughout life.
- Co-Parenting is beneficial in child development:
 - Healthy father involvement can result in improved outcomes for children.
 - Teamwork in parenting results in improvement in child behaviour.
 - Parental unity provides a secure base which leads to improved developmental outcomes.
 - Getting couples to work together in a group setting on parenting and relationship issues is very challenging and not easily achieved.
 - The course is most effective when attended as a couple.
- Building/maintaining healthy family relationships is essential:
 - Families want relationships to last for life but all relationships are demanding and require work.
 - Conflict resolution may lead to less vulnerability to poor social and emotional health outcomes.
- Engaging methods of course delivery is required for parents:
 - Skills transfer can be optimised by using culturally relevant platforms, language and media.
 - There needs to be a significant level of trust in the facilitators on the part of those potentially becoming involved. New participants are more easily engaged when at least one partner has an established connection with the facilitator such as having previously attended a preliminary course such as Circle of Security Parenting or Bringing up Great Kids.

Performance Measures and Tools

The measures used to assess the programme are as follows:

- course attendees
- course attendance data
- pre and post course testing

Client Focus

The course is available to all parents/to-be parents desiring to better their parenting skills. It has also been adapted for CALD communities.

Parenting Education has been identified as a need for CALD groups through the development of Salisbury Communities for Children partnerships. These groups are referred via CALD service providers and community leaders, such as leaders of faith communities.

Existing clients of Salisbury Communities for Children are informed of the Parenting Together® courses by FamilyZone- Ingle Farm Hub. This is done by way of leaflets, posters, website, social media (facebook), in addition to a quarterly newsletter sent to over 1500 families by either mail or email.

Clients are also referred through collaborating partners/networks.

Pathways to Parenting Together

There are a number of pathways which may potentially lead to participation in a Parenting Together course.

- There are now quite a number of evidence-based parenting resources/ courses that are on offer. We usually recommend that in the first one thousand days of the life of their child parents get a good foundational understanding of attachment, healthy child development and communicating with baby provided by resources such as Circle of Security Parenting. Beyond that *Parenting Together* is good follow up training as children develop from early childhood through to adolescence. It is particularly helpful for parents prepared to prioritise working together in a manner that has significant benefits for their children's wellbeing and development.

Parents who are participating via this pathway will be able to engage most effectively with the core skills developed in this program as they are likely have more developed communication skills etc.

- Parents who are new arrivals face many challenges in adapting to western culture and the generation gap is exacerbated by their children's ability to learn a new language much faster than them. The usual expertise of children at playing parents off against each other becomes even more difficult to manage in this context. Parenting Together in a New Land has been adapted especially for new arrivals parents. The use of a translator will be needed where English proficiency is very low. Presenters will need some skills in working with families from Non- English speaking backgrounds. Some basic training is provided.

NESB participants will most likely need additional practice in using newly acquired skills and resources to help them retain their learnings from the course. A small purse-sized card listing the essential skills taught in the course has been developed to aid this process. Follow up sessions would also be valuable.

- Agencies may refer parents to attend a course such as Parenting Together. In this case facilitators will need to assess the level of parenting and communication skills of participants and make appropriate adaptations to the material presented. For example they may need to first spend considerable time on communication skills which are vital for parents who want to work together for the healthy development of their children. In some cases this may significantly limit the time available to focus on other key elements of the course. Parents may opt to attend a second or extended course to cover the full content.

There will need to be considerable adaptation of the course for participants who arrive via this pathway. Most likely a significant amount of time will need to be spent on listening skills which will probably become apparent in the first session. In this case, the tips on resolving conflict through negotiation on pages 39-41 of the booklet and p 18 of the course facilitator guide would best be taught and practiced in the initial sessions. Facilitators may need to refer participants with more intense issues such as anger management and training in trauma informed practice in becoming a supportive partner, covered in the fourth session, to professional counselling or another specialist support group.

Course content

Parenting Together is particularly appropriate for parents who are actively looking to improve their skills and prepared to prioritise working together towards nurturing their children and helping them establish healthy boundaries. The key elements in this course can also work with parent and child, parent, teacher and child, grandparent, parent and child, parent, carer and child etc. The course materials, especially the companion booklet, cover a range of issues, which may or may not be included in the course. There are some core skills which are essential elements of the course best developed through practising the role plays during the course and applying them at home.

Course adaptation

We recommend that facilitators find out what participants are expecting to gain from the course during the first session. Some of this can be determined from the pre-test however it is best to ask the group and individuals, in private if appropriate, and record the responses. This will be most useful in determining how the content is to be adapted to meet the expectations/ needs of participants.

Cultural adaption

There are some very marked differences in approaches to parenting with people from different cultural backgrounds. In recent times we have delivered the course with culture specific groups of Caucasian, Burmese, Bhutanese, Congolese and Afghani families. There are some common threads to the animated conversations that have been generated during these courses.

Clearly child discipline ranks as the number one issue. Each of these cultures has a much stronger emphasis on physical correction and raised voices, and in some cultures some from a very early age. This highlights the need to include information from neuroscience regarding age-appropriate discipline and the impact of harsh parenting on child development. There are some communication challenges involved with this as it is a new concept to many from diverse cultural backgrounds. It also highlights the need to respond to question which inevitably follows. What can we do? (If we can't spank and raise our voices) The skills of being able to use the question 'What are we going to do about it?' in place of the power struggles, are not easily learned and

much practice in role playing is needed. Cards translating the LABREC acronym into first languages are also useful. In some cultures this approach also brings with it the added complication of having large extended families with grand-parents, uncles and aunties also being part of the 'we'. This is certainly the case among Bhutanese and also the Africans who well know it takes a village to raise a child. As well as a conversation between parent and child, parent and parent, parents and child, parent and teacher, something more of an extended family conference may be more useful.

Some cultural groups such as the Afghanis have been prevented from becoming literate even in their own language by oppressive regimes. For these people understanding concepts other than smacking and yelling will require extra time and patience from group facilitators to explain the concepts and they will need to keep their language as uncomplicated as possible. Use of the more complex self-efficacy pre and post tests will be extremely challenging with such groups and the simplified version would be more appropriate. Alternatively we do well to continue to make further adaptations as we become more familiar in working with specific differences in parenting of different cultural groups.

Referrals

There may be some issues emerging that may require referral to professionals in the field. It is important that presenters have a range of contacts, preferably known to them in order to facilitate 'warm referrals' where needed. If not there is a range of websites and phone numbers of key agencies at the back of the booklet. It would be good to draw attention to these early in the course. and provide some background about particular contacts you recommend. This may need to be supplemented by local knowledge of professional support available. Local contacts can be added to page 45 of the booklet.

It would also be good to also offer some pointers to negotiating the wide range of online content available and draw attention to relevant websites etc during the course.

Program Delivery

The Parenting Together® course is delivered by trained facilitators with experience and/or qualifications in Social Work, Relationship Education or Family Support Work. CALD clients are supported by a culturally competent team using methods that facilitate the training, such as the use of a translator.

A Facilitator Guide has also been developed. The 54 page manual offers research findings, a seven step skillset relating to partners working together to optimise nurture and development of their children, skills training in partner relationship issues, trauma informed practice, tips on resolving conflict through negotiation and a structured Parenting Together® course option. The Facilitator's Guide also includes suggestions for presenting the course to multicultural groups. See attachment.

The facilitator is required to customise the Parenting Together® course to the specific requirements of the attendees by taking to account the feedback received at an initial survey completed by course attendees. This survey gives attendees an opportunity to provide comments on areas which they are particularly interested in and/or requiring support. The content detail delivered in each area is guided by this. The training is delivered over 5 sessions (usually over a 5 week period), with each session having a duration of 1.5 to 2 hrs. This gives parents the opportunity to practise skills which are covered in the course and also raise any concerns/issues they have come across for further group discussion/training at the weekly sessions, prior to completion of the course.

The structured program includes core sections including:

- The importance of the early years for brain development as it relates to social and emotional learning and the role of parents in this.
- A six step process that facilitates good practice in co-parenting including listening, agreeing together, setting boundaries and rules, emotional self-regulation in the process of doing this, choices and consequences.

Options that can be tailored in depending on the needs of the group include:

- Partner relationship issues
- Blended families
- Trauma informed practice
- A process for resolving conflict through negotiation

The training developed includes discussion/education in trauma informed practice and the following areas:

- Session 1 - Changes-Dealing with the birth of a child
 - a. Starting out
 - b. Being prepared
 - c. How your baby develops
- Session 2 - Parenting
 - a. Travelling together
 - b. Issues for single parents
 - c. Parenting as a team (including engaging fathers)
- Session 3 - The First Three Years
 - a. What children need in the first years
 - b. Setting boundaries for your children
 - c. Anger management
 - d. Anxiety & fear
- Session 4 - Relationships
 - a. Relating with your partner
 - b. Attitude check
 - c. Tips for healthy relationships
- Session 5 - Conflict
 - a. Working together
 - b. Understanding conflict
 - c. Resolving conflict through negotiation
- Resources
 - a. Where to find support
 - b. Useful websites
 - c. Useful phone numbers

A Parenting Together® booklet and DVD has also been developed using the same program context and practice ingredients for use in delivery of the training. The booklet and DVD combo illustrates key concepts such as being prepared for baby, what children need in the first years, child development, setting boundaries, issues for single parents, parenting as a team, mindful parenting, working together, understanding and resolving conflict. It also includes a range of resources, useful websites and contact phone numbers.

In May 2015, a Parenting Together® course was delivered in response to a consultation with Salisbury Burmese community leaders in December 2014. They were invited to suggest how the Communities for Children initiative could support their community and suggested that their main issue was with children playing their parents off against each other. Families had a strong nurturing capacity but were struggling to develop and put into practice boundaries for their children. This observation has been supported by other CALD service providers and community leaders. Salisbury C4C developed a plan to work in partnership with this community to build community capacity initially through Parenting Together® courses. The group had varying levels of English proficiency so translation was provided by a community leader with high proficiency in English and Burmese (Chin). A DVD with Burmese subtitles was also developed to support their learning of the core six step process for setting and maintaining boundaries. A Pre/Post test evaluation of course outcomes was implemented.

Program Outcomes

Parenting Together® is an interactive preventative educational programme which aims to improve family life by changing parental child-rearing attitudes and practices – primarily by promoting and increasing awareness of the positive impact of the following in a child’s emotional and social well-being:

- Understanding a child’s needs
- Encouraging parents to be mindful and respectful in their parenting to provide a secure base for their child’s exploration
- Having a unified and consistent parental approach
- Creating improved relationship and bond between parents and children/babies
- Understanding how to resolve conflict

The course also aims to link participants with available resources and support networks. Refer to Program Logic Table (page 9) for further details.

Program Evaluation

Facilitator Training Evaluation

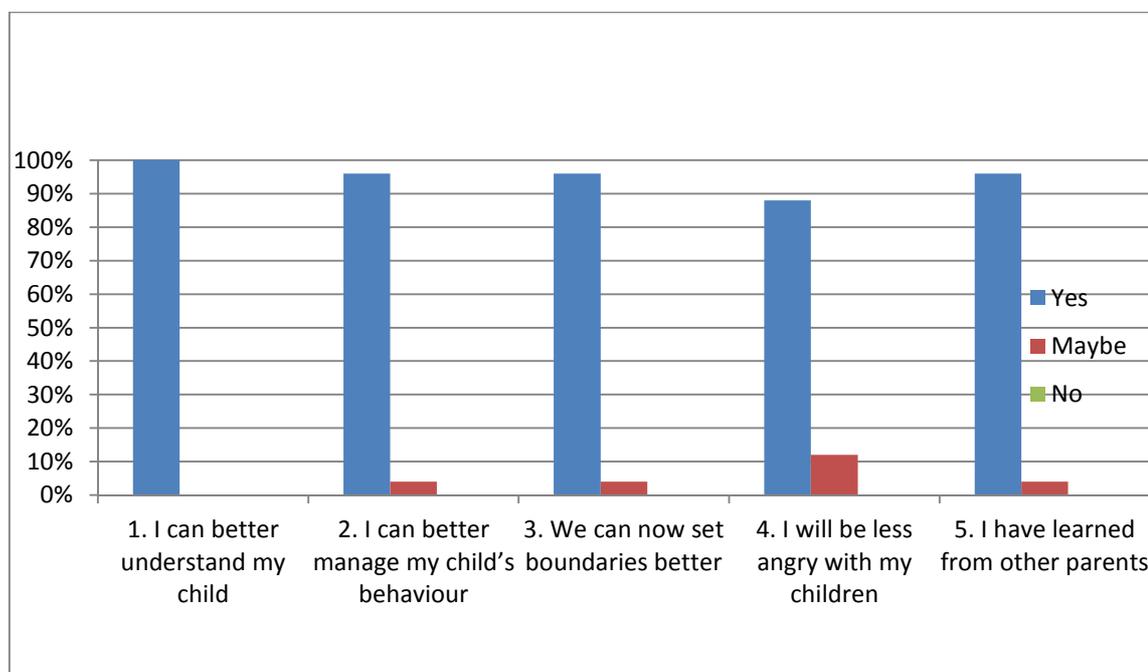
Parenting Together® Facilitator Training Workshops have been conducted in 2013, 2014 and 2015. These workshops were attended by a total of 47 participants including parent educators, men and families workers, reunification workers, targeted intervention service case managers, community development co-ordinators, community liaison officers, multicultural officers, childcare workers and pastoral workers. 83% of participants considered the training met their expectations while 17% considered it partially met their expectations. Participants contributed evaluation feedback at each of these workshops and their input has been included in subsequent revisions of the training delivered and the training manual developed.

Parent Course Evaluation

Parenting Together® courses have been conducted on a regular basis at FamilyZone (Ingle Farm) since 2013 in addition to “on-request” sessions at other community locations. Positive comments have been received on both the delivery and content. The feedback received has demonstrated that parents felt that they had an improved understanding of their children’s behaviour and how to manage this behaviour systematically. These results are displayed in the Evidence of Outcomes Table (page 8) which presents the feedback received for the last 2 parent courses facilitated.

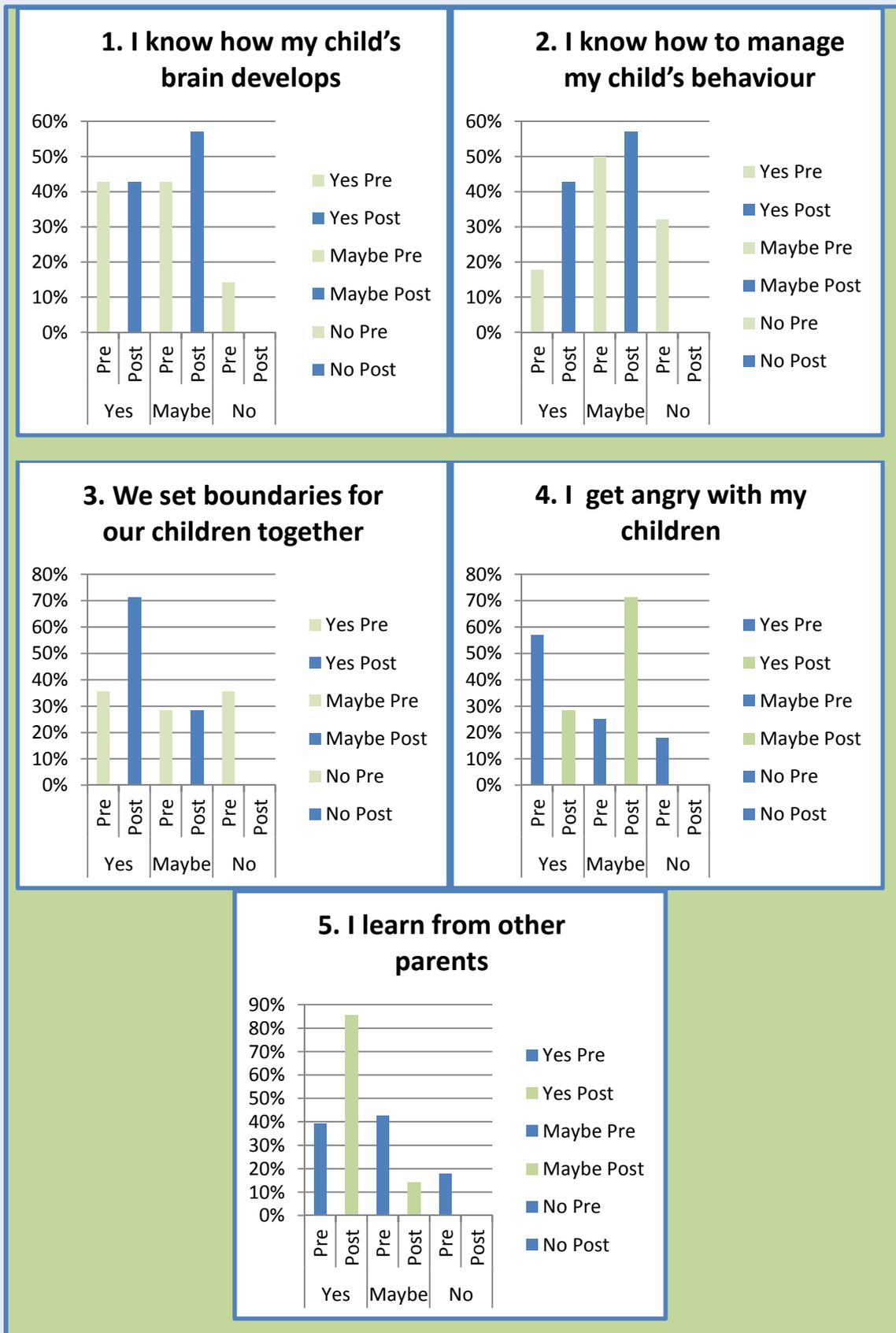
The Feedback Results (pages 6 and 7) display the pre and post feedback obtained for a course delivered to the CALD group (Burmese) of 25. This course was delivered as a full day workshop and a participants post test was administered both at the end of the day and one month later. For the purpose of clarity the post test at the end of the day was reworded to better fit the context for the Burmese given that they were unaccustomed to the methodology while the one month later post test had the same wording as the pre test.

Parenting Together® Feedback Results (same day post test feedback)



Course conducted on 9/5/15, All participants of Burmese origin
 Post-course (same day)feedback sample size =25

Parenting Together® Feedback Results (pre-course compared to 1 month post feedback)

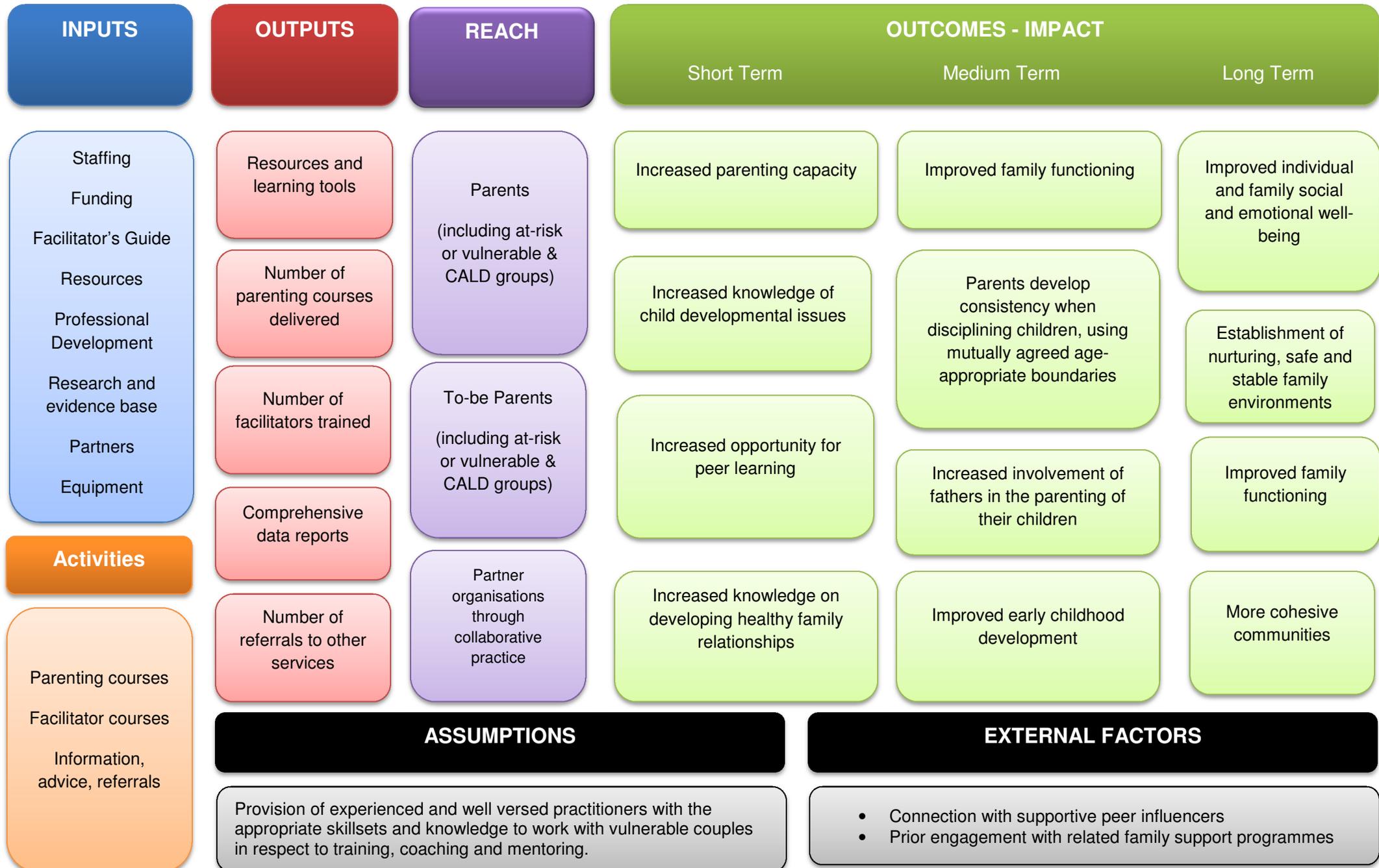


Course conducted on 9/5/15, All participants of Burmese origin
 Pre-course feedback sample size =25, Post-course (randomly selected 1 month after completing course) feedback sample size =7

Parenting Together® - Evidence of Outcomes Table

Location and Date	Delivery	Participants	Evidence of Outcomes
Salisbury, SA May 2015	2 Facilitators 1 x 6 hr session	25 parents (all participants were of Burmese origin)	<p>Increased parenting capacity 36% of parents set boundaries for their child/ren prior to the training, while by the end, 96% felt that they were able to do so in the future. Only 18% of participants felt equipped to manage their child/ren's behaviour prior to the course, while by the end of the course, 96% of participants believed that they were equipped to better manage their child/ren's behaviour. Feedback received parents 1 month after the course was delivered displayed that the majority of parents (who provided feedback) were setting boundaries for their child/ren.</p>
			<p>Increased knowledge of early childhood development Prior to the course, only 43% of attendees were aware of the basics of child brain development, but by the end, 100% of participants were of the opinion that they could better understand their child/ren.</p>
			<p>Increased opportunity for peer learning Prior to the training, 39% said that they learn from other parents, while at the end of the final session, 96% said that they had learnt from other parents. 86% of parents who provided feedback 1 month after the course have continued to learn from peers and therefore it appears that mentoring relationships have been established between the families involved (peer mentoring).</p>
			<p>Increased knowledge on developing healthy family relationships 57% of participants admitted to getting angry with their child/ren. By the end of course 88% had made the decision that they would try to be less angry with their child/ren. 100% of parents who provided feedback 1 month after the course now have some idea on how to control their child/ren's behaviour. Prior to the course, 32% admitted to being unaware of how to control their child/ren's behaviour.</p>
FamilyZone, Ingle Farm, SA Nov 2014	2 Facilitators 5 x 2 hr sessions	4 (all Australian origin, aged 23 to 38)	<p>Increased parenting capacity 100% of participants stated that they would recommend Parenting Together® to other parents in the community. Feedback on what participants particularly liked about the course included: "Being introduced to alternative ideas on parenting"</p>
			<p>Increased knowledge of early childhood development 3 of the 4 participants believed that they had more knowledge on child development at the end of the course than prior.</p>
			<p>Increased opportunity for peer learning 3 of the 4 participants believed that the training enabled them to develop ideas to strengthening their parenting relationship.</p>
			<p>Increased knowledge on developing healthy family relationships Feedback on what participants particularly liked about the course included: "Learning new ideas on how to be a better parent. I am now more aware of how my behaviour effects my son"</p>

Parenting Together® Program Logic



Theoretical and Research Background

Importance of Co-Parenting and the development of Parenting Together®

In order to bridge the knowledge gap between what researchers are discovering and young families who are most vulnerable, in 2008 the Salvation Army Ingle Farm in partnership with The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs, Relationships Australia and Centacare released a booklet and DVD titled "HOW IT IS: young mums, the truth revealed"

The project emerged from a growing desire to support and educate young mums, young mums to be and young adults considering pregnancy. There was an increasing awareness of the lack of easily accessible resources that were suitably targeted at these groups. The resource included a booklet containing answers to commonly asked questions on relationships, sexual health, pregnancy, birth and perinatal care that appeals to youth culture with its graphics and simplified text. It also included a DVD containing detailed stories of young mums who tell it "how it is" in relation to the issues they have encountered. This DVD/booklet is in circulation around many states in Australia and has been used in many settings including senior school curriculums, by school counsellors and chaplains, community centres, Child and Family Health Services, maternity wards and by professionals who work with young mums and dads. One school counsellor reported that it was particularly sought out by students experiencing relationship issues or a pregnancy scare who then passed it on to their friends.

Pressures on New Parents

Family relationships are a major challenge for most of us as numerous researchers have highlighted. Gottman and Shapiro put it this way:

"For as many as 67% of new parents, the transition to parenthood is accompanied by sharp declines in relationship quality, significant increases in relationship conflict, increased depression and psychopathology, and decreased quality of the parent-infant interaction. There has been no known psycho-educational intervention that has successfully taught couples the skills that they will need to preserve intimacy in their relationship, keep fathers involved with the baby, and help parents understand and appreciate infant development." (Gottman & Shapiro 2005, p2)

In order to address the issue, Gottman and Shapiro developed Bringing Baby Home - a research based and research tested two-day psycho-educational workshop designed to teach couples these skills while experiencing the transition to parenthood. The "Bringing Baby Home" workshop focused on helping expectant and new parents make a smooth, positive transition to becoming a family with three goals:

1. Strengthening the couple's relationship.
2. Facilitating and encouraging father as well as mother involvement in this parenthood transition
3. Giving expectant and new parents basic information about infant psychological development accompanied with relevant parenting tips.

This workshop has demonstrated the principle that parents who work together, model cooperative behaviours for their children and demonstrate positive interpersonal behaviour that is responsive to the needs of others (Mangelsdorf SC, Laxman DJ& Jessee, 2011) and promote pro-social development during early childhood (Scrimgeour et al, 2013). It has shown that early intervention can prevent family breakdown.

Mentoring has also been established as a key to maintaining strong family relationships during the early childhood stressful periods. The Family by Family model (Brettig & Sims, 2011) demonstrates

the benefits of mentoring in supporting families. Peer mentoring can help parents with respect to “modelling thriving behaviours and sharing personal strategies” in addition to “brokering families with useful people and places in the local community”.

Father Involvement

One issue arising from this work that has gained the attention of researchers in recent times is the absence of the services provided to address the needs of fathers. For example one study (Quinton et al 2002) found that services are not inclusive of the needs of young fathers when caring for mothers but that the inclusion of fathers is desired by young mothers. It also found that the quality of the relationship with the child’s mother was a more powerful predictor of young fathers’ remaining in contact or losing contact than was the background disadvantage.

According to the UK Fatherhood Institute (2010) children of highly involved dads tend to have:

- Better friendships (and with better adjusted children)
- Fewer behavioural problems
- Better educational outcomes
- Greater capacity for empathy
- Non-traditional attitudes to earning/childcare
- Higher self-esteem and life-satisfaction
- Lower criminality and substance abuse
- More satisfying adult sexual partnerships.

The ideal of having fathers integrally involved in parenting raises all of the very challenging issues around couple relationships. In 2009, in partnership with Families and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, as well as Parenting SA, Centacare, Lutheran Community Care and the Salvation Army Ingle Farm, it was agreed to produce a sequel to “HOW IT IS: young mums, the truth revealed” which was inclusive of young mums and dads called “HOW IT IS: young mums & dads parenting together”. A booklet was developed which included sections on being prepared for baby, what children need in the first years, how baby develops, setting boundaries for children, issues for single parents, parenting as a team, relating with partners, attitude check, anger management, anxiety & fear, tips for healthy relationships, resolving conflict through negotiation and where to find support. It attempts to deal with these often complex issues using relatively simple language and contemporary graphics. However there is a level of complexity not accessible to the more significantly illiterate in this. In order to better address this issue the developers filmed a number of couples, a single parent, a dad’s group and an mum’s group having conversations with parent educators about the arrival of baby, healthy brain development, issues in relation to co-operative parenting, and resolving relationship conflict.

Healthy Family Relationships

If we were to ask articulate young children what they most appreciate from parents, apart from the mandatory self-indulgences, you can easily imagine it would be things like a safe home environment with an absence of harsh conflict and a degree of harmonious relationships between family members. For the majority of parents this is not an easy thing to achieve and requires some considerable skills and education.

Baxter, Qu & Weston (2009, p43) found that:

“it is important for parents to maintain a non-hostile relationship for the sake of the children and the ability for parents to do this is an important ingredient of “quality parenting”. Therefore it is necessary to target parents’ wellbeing, parenting, and co-parental relationships (including conditions that have negative impact on these matters), when implementing strategies related to ‘children’s best interests’.”

In the UK, the Department for Children Schools and Families developed a Green Paper titled *Support for All* which was presented to UK Parliament in January 2010. Its conclusions based on a research report (Walker et al 2010) included these salient points:

- People want relationships to last for life but all relationships are demanding and require work;
- Having a baby, a miscarriage, juggling the demands of work and childcare, ill health and money worries can put extreme pressure on relationships;
- Over half of those who had separated believed they could have spotted problems earlier and dealt with them better;
- Most people thought that learning about and preparing for relationships should start as early as possible – in primary schools – and continue throughout life.

In terms of dealing with relationship issues a clinical study of ‘forgiveness therapy’ (Parker & Pattendon, 2009) that “found that clients with substance dependencies, when compared to controls, recorded significant improvements in self-esteem, depression, anger, anxiety and vulnerability to drug use. The improvements were attributed to the exploration and examination of past resentments and emotions as part of the process (Lin, Mack, Enright, Krahn, & Baskin, 2004, cited in Freedman, Enright, & Knutson, 2005). Most benefits were sustained over a four-month follow-up period, and initial low levels of forgiveness rose to and stayed above the published adult norms.”

This kind of therapy does not mean that partners choose to no longer adhere to boundaries in relationships which exclude unacceptable behaviours such as inappropriate expressions of anger, infidelity and any form of violence. Broken relationships can be repaired where underlying issues are thoroughly dealt with and changed attitude and behaviour is evident. Prevention and early intervention is clearly a preferable strategy.

Parent Education

There is ample information that is now available to support vulnerable families in the critical early years. However a major problem is that this information is not readily accessible to those who are most vulnerable. We know from the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey that approximately 6.2 million adult Australians didn’t have adequate literacy skills to cope with the demands of everyday life and work. The 2006 results from the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey showed that between 46% and 70% of adults in Australia had poor or very poor skills across one or more of the five skill domains of prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy, problem-solving and health literacy. The literacy issue becomes even more challenging when working with humanitarian entrants who are attempting to learn English as a second language.

Some educators believe that how parenting interventions are delivered may be more important than what is delivered (Moran et al, 2004, p 120). It is important for parenting education to be delivered in a variety of modalities and interactive settings. Parenting Together® provides effective training though the use of DVDs, handouts, group discussions, role plays, “homework”, self-reflection, in addition to promoting the establishment of mentoring relationships between peers.

Engagement of Fathers

With respect to parenting programs, the ‘Engaging Fathers: Evidence Review’ (Fletcher, R., May, C., St George, J., Stoker, L., and Oshan, M., 2014, p20,24) has noted that paternal attendance is crucial for program effectiveness as those who attend the training as a couple generally “gain and maintain greater treatment effects than parents who attend on their own”. It was also noted that fathers are often more likely to be disappointed with a program that has a maternal focus in content and delivery. The report made note that early engagement of fathers by the provision of support during the stressful early parenting period to be a valuable approach.

Parenting Together® has been developed to ensure that the content and delivery of the course is aimed at couples, as a pose to being maternally focused, taking to account the stresses in early parenting.

Engagement of Vulnerable and CALD Groups

Engaging CALD communities requires additional considerations. According to the AFRC Briefing No. 18 – November 2010 ‘Enhancing access to family dispute resolution for families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds’, the following are considered good practice in engaging CALD families in mainstream services:

- responding to CALD communities' needs and contexts;
- engaging CALD service providers and community leaders;
- developing partnerships and contributing to building community capacity; and
- fostering a culturally competent workforce and processes that facilitate the effective participation of CALD clients.

The development of Parenting Together® has considered these practices in both engagement of CALD parents and course content.

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October 2016 Evaluation using revised self-efficacy questionnaire

Twelve Bhutanese participated in a Parenting Together course presented in October 2016. There were 2 facilitators and a Bhutanese interpreter. The participants were comfortable in asking questions and were highly engaged in all aspects of the course. The issue of not being able to discipline children in the way they were disciplined as children was a principal topic of discussion in the light of Australian policies. The facilitators introduced different forms of discipline through the course encouraging alternatives to the physical discipline they experienced in childhood. They also participated in a shared playtime after lunch with children, parents, grandparents and carers participating. This further opened up talks about play in child development and creating trusting and loving relationships. The verbal feedback was mostly positive with participants saying it gave them a chance to reflect on their parenting and come to terms with some factors they were encountering. They were happy with the information provided. A pre and post-test survey was conducted using the following questions. A modified more culturally appropriate seven point Likert Scale was used to make translation and comprehension easier for participants using the more easily translatable words completely, moderately or not at all.

Parenting Together® Course -Self Efficacy Questionnaire

(Pre and Post Course)

Name:

Date:

Age:

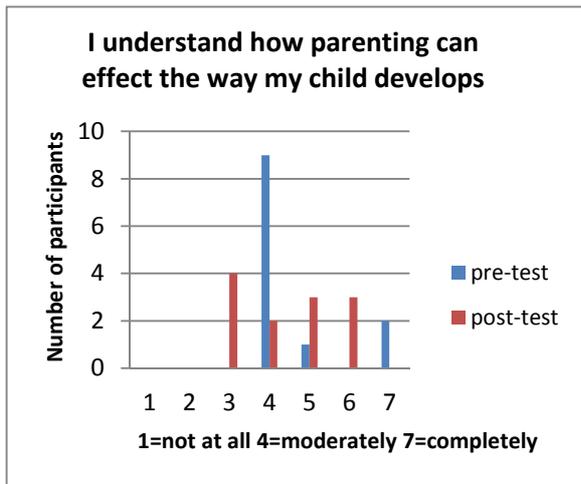
No. of children and age:

Course Facilitator:

Rate how well each statement describes the way you feel right now

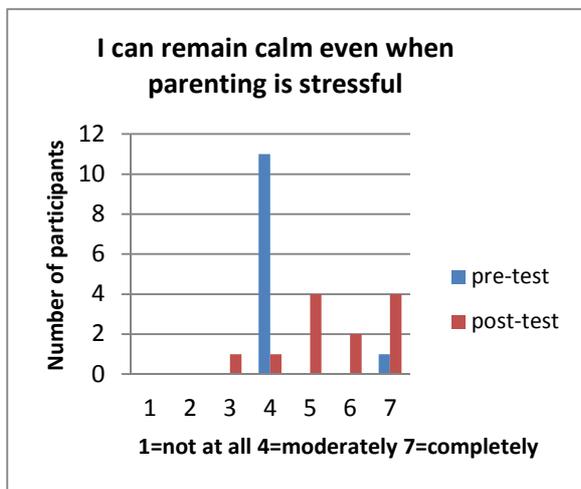
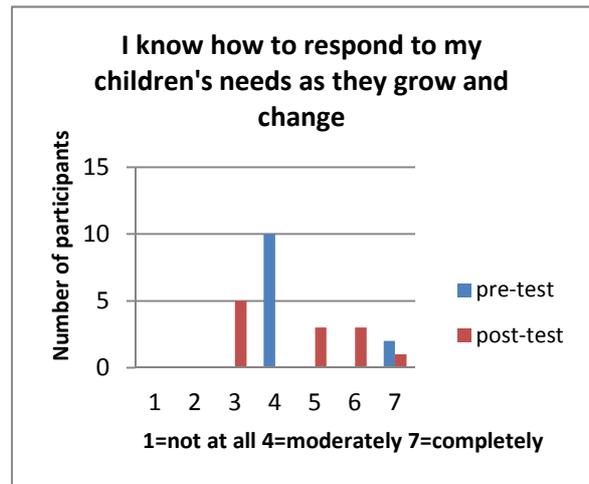
Completely	6	5	Moderately	4	3	2	Not at all	1
Score 7								
QUESTION								Score out of 7
I understand how parenting can affect the way my child develops.								
I know how to respond to my children's needs as they change and grow.								
I can remain calm even when parenting is stressful.								
I understand why my children behave the way they do.								
I can help my children work out solutions to their problems.								
We get along well as a family.								
In our family we have clear rules and our children know what will happen as a result of breaking them.								
I know how to deal with my children when rules are broken.								
I know how to discuss parenting issues with my partner/ex-partner (my child's other parent).								
We are able to solve problems and issues together as a family.								
I understand what can cause stress in our family and ways to respond to it.								
I have good parenting tips which may be helpful to other parents.								

Evidence of outcomes



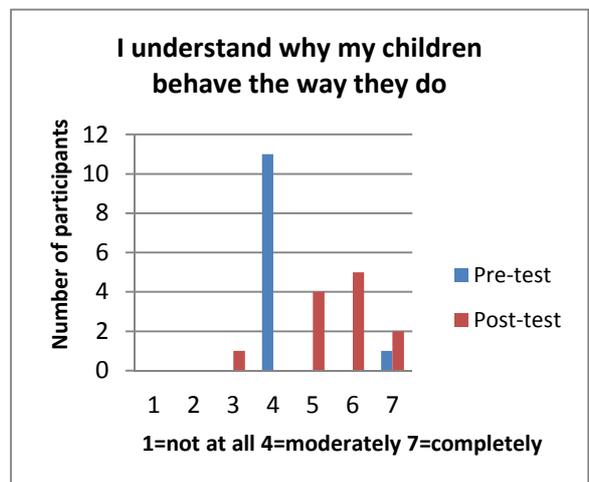
Understanding of the impact parenting on child development was scored to have decreased from 65.5% to 63%. The shifts along the scale may be indicative of increased awareness of the impact of parenting on child development with some recognising that there is much to learn.

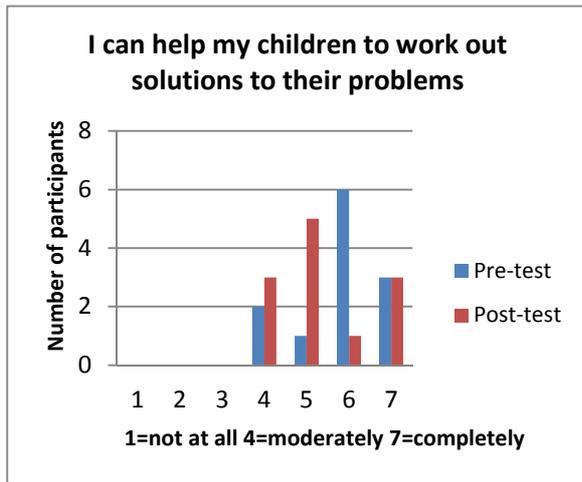
The pre-test predominantly moderate rating was followed by a more even spread of post-test ratings indicating a shift in awareness ranging from improved understanding to recognition of lack of understanding and hopefully the need for further learning.



A 19% improvement in the ability of participants to remain calm was a significant response. Decreasing stress in caregiving is associated with decreased cortisol release and less impairment in brain development. This is an encouraging result.

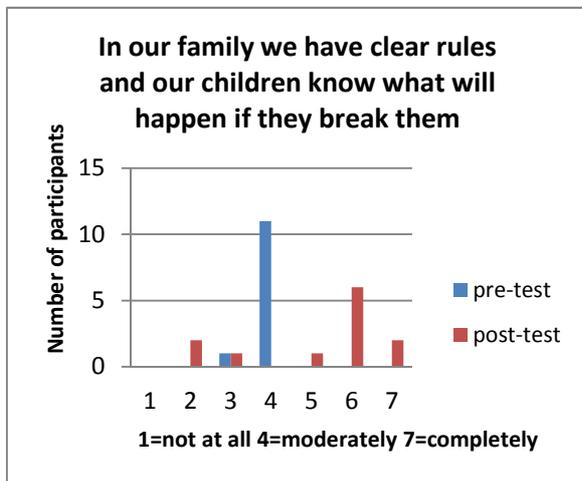
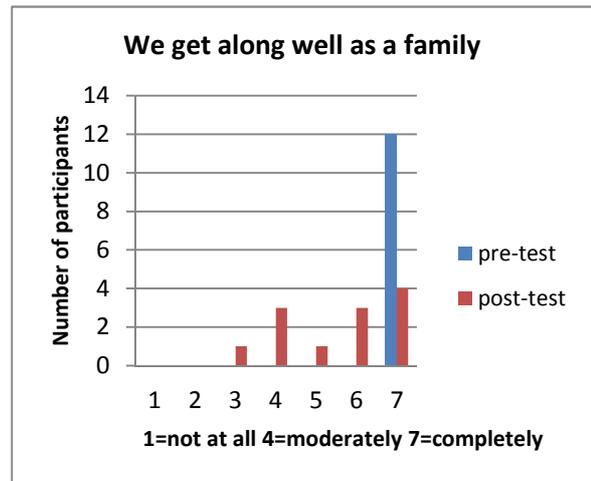
A 12% improvement in understanding of children's behaviour is a positive result for this course.





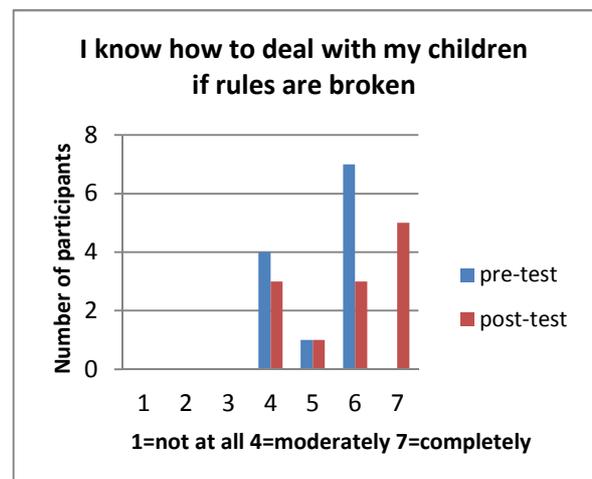
A 7% reduction in understanding of ability to help children work out solutions to their problems may point to more awareness of current limitations of participants, the need to develop additional skills and more focus on this area in course delivery.

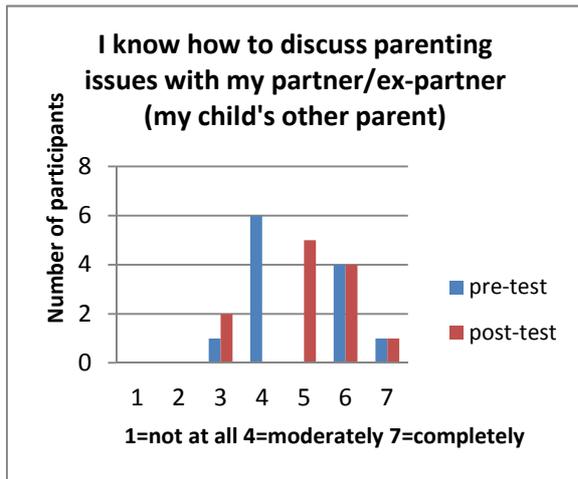
All families scoring “completely” for “we get along well as a family” on the pre-test may indicate they were trying to mark the ‘correct’ answer on the pre-test. It may be positive that there is a greater spread with the post- test, reflecting more considered answers.



A 18% improvement in this area is a positive result for this core element of Parenting Together.

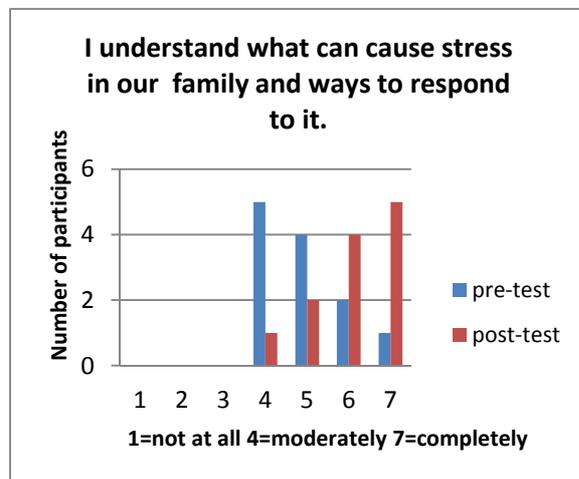
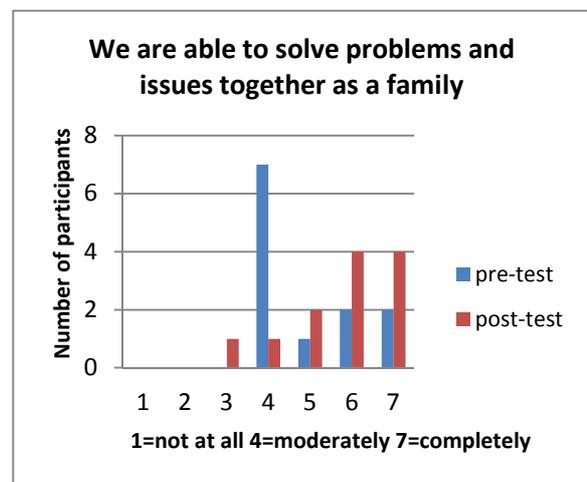
Some improvement (8%) is positive although this may also reflect on confusion in relation to the entrenched culture of physical punishment in some CALD communities and the challenges involved in working out consequences in an Australian context.





This is one of the most challenging and complex skills in any family setting and is particularly challenging where there has been significant trauma in the lives of either or both partners. Some shifts on the scale are indicative of new learnings and/or greater awareness of the need for improvement. Opportunities for referral to further relationship training or counselling is also key element of this course. A listing of websites, relevant contacts and agencies is available in the accompanying booklet which also has a space for local contacts.

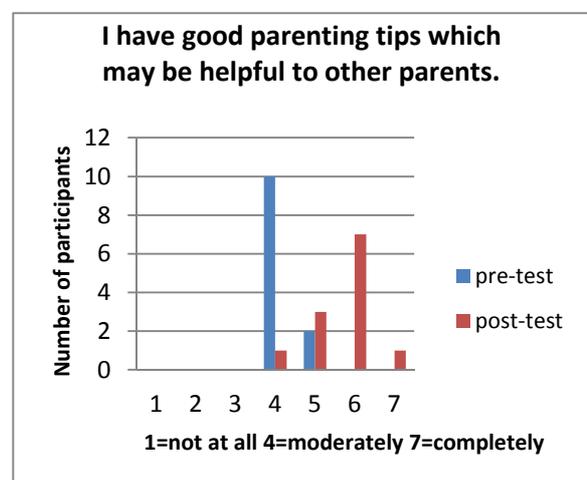
A 12% improvement in this aspect of the course is moderate though encouraging. Again this is a skill that is becoming increasingly complex in an increasingly digitalised, less regulated and multicultural community. This challenge is exacerbated for CALD families whose children are more likely to readily acquire a new language in contrast to their older parents who find this more difficult.



A 17% improvement in this area is again significant and encouraging as reducing stress levels in families is critical to promoting healthy brain development and social emotional learning

in children.

A 21.5% improvement on the scale in response to this question is pleasing given the importance of peer relationships in knowledge transfer among parents.



Additional feedback

At the end of the last session participants were asked to complete a qualitative survey relating to their experience of the course. All participants responded positively when asked whether the course had addressed the issues they had prior to the commencement. They found it most helpful in relation issues around discipline, schooling/education transitioning and family wellbeing. Five participants felt they still needed more explanation regarding appropriate discipline, a challenging cultural issue for a significant number of humanitarian entrants. None thought there needed to be change in how the course was run and eleven of the twelve participants said they would recommend it to their friends.