

Submission to National Children's Commissioner regarding early interventions for young parents

Current interventions provided which address the following types of early interventions:

- likely to decrease the risk profile and trajectory of young parents, young parents to be and their children
- which improve their capacity for safe and effective parenting
- which increase their likelihood of becoming economically secure.

Early interventions which improve young parents' capacity for safe and effective parenting

Name of intervention	Target	Details of intervention	Does it specifically target young parents?
<p>Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting bring together care, education, health, family support and community development for children aged birth to 8 years and their families. There are 43 Children's Centres in operation and a further 4 will become operational by 2018. Children's Centres are concentrated in areas with high levels of disadvantage, providing a multidisciplinary team that includes allied health staff (speech pathology and occupational therapy), community development coordinators and family services coordinators (social workers). Children's Centres work with Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS) to provide child health services and support to parents, including up-to-date health information. Programs delivered by Children Centres are tailored to meet the needs of communities and include but are not limited to the following.</p>			
Antenatal services	Pregnant women in western and northern Adelaide	<p>Antenatal services at children's centres include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antenatal checks for women suitable for midwifery antenatal care • Pregnancy and birthing information • Breastfeeding and parenting information <p>This service is available in Adelaide in western children's centres: Cowandilla, Ocean View and Trinity Gardens, to women who are having their baby at the Women's and Children's Hospital. It involves a midwife providing the same service women would receive at a hospital. In northern Adelaide Lyell McEwin Hospital midwives offer appointments to eligible women at John Hartley, Lake Windemere and Parafield Gardens Children's Centres.</p>	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Young parents' groups	Parents/caregivers aged under 25 years old who have young children	Group programs supporting young parents in interacting and playing with their children through activities designed to strengthen positive, responsive parent-child relationships. Groups are facilitated by social workers, occupational therapists and speech pathologists (combination varies across centres). The names and specific focus of the interventions differ according to the local community needs.	Yes
Universal community playgroups	Children aged 0-5 and their parents/caregivers	Playgroups that are open to anyone (no registration process, although numbers may be capped). Activities are designed to promote positive parent-child relationships, however coaching is not available to the same degree that it may be in targeted playgroups. Social workers, occupational therapists and speech pathologists may provide visiting support at these playgroups run in children's centres. The names and specific focus of the interventions differ according to the local community needs.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Psychoeducational parenting group programs	Parents / carers of young children who are involved with, or at risk of, entering the child protection system	Group programs, which may include Circle of Security, Bringing up great kids, and Tuning into kids, where parenting capacity is enhanced through group education, and reflection. Typically these programs target families who are experiencing psycho-social difficulties to assist them in developing their understanding of the social, emotional and developmental	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.

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		needs of their children. These groups are offered in various children's centres across the state. The names and specific focus of the interventions differ according to the local community needs.	
Targeted playgroups	Children aged 0-5 with identified developmental concerns or are significantly at risk and their parents/ caregivers	Playgroups and other group programs that target families experiencing particular risk factors (through a registration process) to interact and play with their children through activities designed to strengthen positive, responsive parent-child relationships. Some groups are facilitated by early childhood educators (for example, Learning Together playgroups), with periodic support by children's centres social workers, occupational therapists and speech pathologists. Other playgroups are facilitated by children's centres social workers, occupational therapists and speech pathologists. The names and specific focus of the interventions differ according to the local community needs.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Family Contact Playgroup	Children aged 0-5 who are under 12 month Guardianship of the Minister (GOM) orders and their parents	An attachment-based playgroup to support parents to increase their understanding of their children's emotional and social wellbeing and developmental needs; and develop a safe and secure parent-child relationship to support the reunification process. This playgroup is offered in various children's centres across the State which have a Family Services Coordinator.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Groups targeting specific areas of development	Children aged 0-5 with identified developmental concerns or are significantly at risk, and their parents/ caregivers	Group programs include, for example, baby massage, music and movement, and picky eating/mealtime support. These groups often have a more structured format than targeted playgroups and are designed to support parents/ caregivers to increase their understanding of their children's developmental needs and develop a safe and secure caregiver-child relationship as a protective factor that supports developmental outcomes. These group programs are offered across the state in children's centres. The name and specific focus of these programs differ according to the local community needs.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Family Services Coordinators support	Families who are vulnerable and are experiencing disadvantage, and who are in need of additional support	Family Services Coordinators support families to access services and programs to strengthen their ability to effectively support their children's safety, healthy development and wellbeing. This includes the provision of consultation and advice, parenting programs and facilitating referral pathways to appropriate services. This can include referrals for financial counselling or housing support.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Coaching support for parents/caregivers	Children aged 0-5 with identified developmental concerns or are significantly at risk, and their parents/ caregivers	Children's centre occupational therapist and/or speech pathologist provide support for parents/caregivers who have concerns regarding their children's development. Support may include assistance with identification, referral to other services within and outside the centre for assessment and intervention, and coaching around strategies to strengthen parent-child relationships and child development.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.

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Learning Together			
Learning Together	Universal in targeted areas	<p>To increase children’s early literacy, development and engagement with learning. It also aims to engage families in their children’s learning. This is contingent on activities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower parents in their parenting role. • Increase parent capacity to support their children’s learning. • Increase parent involvement in credentialed learning. • Connect families with early childhood services and schools. <p>This program is for families with children aged birth to prior to preschool. It focusses on engaging families in their children’s learning from birth; literacy and numeracy development; supporting learning; attachment and wellbeing. This includes building responsive parenting as well as supported playgroups.</p>	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Learning Together @ Home	Children at risk Referral only	Learning Together at Home is primarily a home visiting program for vulnerable families with children aged birth to before preschool. The program supports families and guides parents in helping their children learn and develop through play. The program also provides advice to families about other early childhood services.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Learning Together	Parents of children 4 years and under, who have disengaged with the education system due to their parenting responsibilities.	This program is a partnership between the Learning Together program and local secondary and tertiary institutions. Parents participate in learning with a primary focus on early childhood and parenting, which enables them to receive credits toward completing their South Australian certificate of education. This program is currently only available at Café Enfield Children’s Centre and Elizabeth Grove Children’s Centre.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents
Families as First Teachers			
The Families as First Teachers (FaFT)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	<p>Qualified early childhood teachers with trained Aboriginal Education Workers will work with families and children from birth to three years in playgroups using Abecedarian strategies that place adult/child interactions at the centre of child development. The program is based on the Northern Territory model.</p> <p>The aims of the program are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developmental outcomes for remote Indigenous children from birth to three years of age • improve attendance, and literacy and numeracy achievement of preschool, primary and secondary school students; • safeguard children • support families to give children a good start in life <p>A commitment to community design of programs and Anangu leadership is central to this model. The program is delivered in the Anangu Lands Partnership - Amata, Mimili, Ernabella, Pipalyatjara, Indulkana, Murputja, Fregon, Yalata, Kenmore Park.</p>	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.

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Positive Parenting Program			
Positive Parenting Program	Parents and caregivers of children ages 0 – 12 years	Parenting sessions (group and individual) based on the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program®, a 5-level system addressing typical, everyday challenges of raising children, to more complex psychological and behavioural problems. The intervention targets all parents using a public health approach to de-stigmatise asking for help and to build positive, strong and healthy relationships in all families along the child protection spectrum. Interventions are available through NGO and DECD practitioners working in three local government areas (Playford, Salisbury, Port Adelaide Enfield) and one rural region (Limestone Coast).	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
<p>The Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS) is responsible for developing and implementing effective strategies to improve early childhood health, development and wellbeing outcomes for children from birth to five years of age in South Australia. This is achieved by the promotion of positive parenting and provision of universal and targeted programs. CaFHS is currently undergoing a state-wide service redesign that will result in an enhanced Service Delivery Framework and models of care. Services will be contemporary, evidence-based, child-centred and family-focussed, culturally responsive and effective. They will support the provision of best health and development outcomes for children using an approach underpinned by proportionate universalism.</p> <p>Programs include the following:</p>			
Universal Contact Visit			
	Following the birth of a baby, families in South Australia are offered the service by a Child and Family Health nurse.	The Universal Contact Visit is comprehensive, responding to the needs of the baby and parents at the time of the visit, providing support in relation to parent infant needs, conducting child health checks, maternal wellbeing screening, safe sleep education and observation of the baby’s sleep environment for home visits. The nurse supports the family by linking them with their local community, including the local general practitioner and other organisations.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Family home visiting			
	Parents are referred to the Family Home Visiting service by child and family nurses of the Child and Family Health Service.	This nurse-led parenting program is designed to support first-time parents experiencing adversity and aims to support parents to improve infant – parent attachment and monitor child development.	Available to but does not specifically target young parents.
Strong Start			
	First time mothers experiencing challenges in their lives.	This program operates in the northern and southern metropolitan areas to support first time mothers who are experiencing challenges in their lives which impact on parenting and could result in adverse outcomes for their children’s health, development and wellbeing.	Young parents are included as are other mothers experiencing challenges.

Links to program evaluations where available:

- **Learning Together evaluations:**
 - https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/learning_together_final_impact_execsummary.pdf
 - https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/learning_together_final_impact_part1.pdf
 - https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/learning_together_final_impact_part2_technical.pdf

- **Children's Centres evaluations**
 - http://www.frasermustardcentre.sa.edu.au/files/links/Qualitative_Evaluation_Rep.pdf
 - http://www.frasermustardcentre.sa.edu.au/files/links/Childrens_Centres_Impact_E.pdf