



AEDI data helped local partnership adapt teaching to better support children's development.

Torres is an AEDI Community in the Torres Strait area of Far North Queensland. Torres is situated approximately 2,300 kilometres from Brisbane CBD. English was the second language for more than 90 per cent of children in 2009.

What did the AEDI results show?

The 2009 AEDI results showed 59.9 per cent of Torres children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains and 39.2 per cent developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. Of the 236 children in the Torres Community surveyed for the AEDI in 2009, 92.4 per cent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

The results identified that children were developmentally vulnerable in the language and cognitive skills, communication and general knowledge and social competence domains. Around one in three Torres children were developmentally vulnerable in the language and cognitive skills domains and around one in four in the social competence domain, compared to just under one in ten for the 2009 national average.

Bringing about change

The AEDI data helped to clarify the needs of local children and was used as a benchmark to advocate for the implementation of Strait Start, a program developed by a partnership between Yumi Education Support Service and Montessori Australia.

The Strait Start program was developed specifically for children in the seven Torres Local Communities and commenced in 2010.

The partnership used AEDI data to adapt Montessori teaching to better suit the needs of the community. The program focussed on improving independence, motor development and language acquisition through learning activities sensitive to the culture of the community. The program also helped prepare children for school.

The Yumi Education Support Service is a joint initiative between the Torres Strait Islanders' Regional Education Council and the Department of Education, Training and Employment through the Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (Far North Queensland).

Most positive aspects of the AEDI for the community

- Children who attended the Strait Start program were reported as having performed better than their peers in early literacy and numeracy tests in pre-Prep (the year before formal full-time school).
- Families reported their children were feeling more confident and were more independent.
- Not only children, but also their families engaged with the Strait Start program.



Photo: Reload Images

Looking ahead

Strait Start's success has ensured it will continue in 2013. Plans are in place to expand delivery of Strait Start to more communities in the region.

In addition, Yumi Education Support Service plans to use the 2012 AEDI data in the program's evaluation.

About Montessori

Montessori educational programs are offered for children from birth through to 18 years of age. Montessori professionals also work to support the needs of children outside the classroom setting, with a particular emphasis on parent education and community outreach programs

For more information

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