

Australian Early Development Census

Kingston Primary School

Western Australia 2018

About the school

Kingston Primary School is situated in a local housing area within the suburb of Australind, Western Australia. The school opened in 2009 with nearly 250 students, and since then enrolments have rapidly increased to 650 students in 2012 and over 800 in 2018. The housing area, itself, has limited community facilities.

What did the results show?

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a national measure of early childhood development. It measures five key areas or domains when a child starts full-time school. The domains are: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; communication skills and general knowledge.

The 2009 results showed that nearly 27% of children living in Australind entered school developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains and 12% were vulnerable on two or more domains. In 2015, there was a significant improvement in the percentage of children identified as being developmentally vulnerable reducing to 21% on one or more domains and 10% on two or more domains. The improvement in the community results were also reflected in the School Profile results.

Bringing about change

In response to the 2009 AEDC results and the limited services available to families with young children in the area, the school embarked on a journey to support local families and strengthen early intervention, and prevention initiatives.

As part of the school's approach, the school appointed a Deputy Principal to focus on the early childhood phase of schooling, and to facilitate stronger local connections between government and non-government organisations to help generate better access, and support services for families.

Key actions that followed included:

- establishing two playgroups in association with Playgroups WA (one family-led playgroup with over 20 families attending and a supported Maori language playgroup with nearly 30 families in attendance)
- participating on the local Early Years Network, an across agency group, to advocate for key resources
- facilitating a Memorandum of Understanding between the regional directors of WA Country Health Southwest and the Department of Education (WA) to provide a Child Health Clinic at the school
- offering free parent workshops on child development at the school, delivered by external agencies
- implementing home-school transition programs in partnership with parents
- signing a Deed of License Agreement with an Allied Health team to bring an occupational therapist, speech pathologist, physiotherapist and 'vulnerable families' team to work out of the school building to support the wider local community.

Achievements

The school has been a catalyst in facilitating key community partnerships to support the needs of local families. As such, there has been an increase in the number of children accessing early intervention measures prior to arriving at school. The school looks forward to reviewing their next available AEDC results, along with other data and information, to evaluate the effectiveness of their intervention strategies. The school is a finalist in the category, Primary School of the Year for the Western Australian 2018 Education Awards.

Looking forward

Attendance at the 2018 National AEDC Conference, confirmed for the school, the importance of community cohesion as a key indicator for long term developmental outcomes, particularly for those at high risk. As such, the school is continually looking for opportunities on how they can better support families within their community context, that are meaningful, relevant, at the point of need, and in ways that best suit their family's needs.

For more information contact

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'It is important that as educators we look outside of the expected ways of delivering services and create whatever opportunities we can to support families with engaging with the services they need, where they need them, and when they need them.'