

Presentation Abstracts

Theme 4: Collaboration in paediatric allied health

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Abstract title: *Little Tackers: An innovative approach to educating and supporting families*

Parenting is tricky.

As a small health facility, Timboon and District Healthcare Service is sensitive to meeting the needs of our local community by striving to provide consumer-driven and collaborative approaches to program delivery.

Introducing Little Tackers is a 6 week multidisciplinary program for parents of children up to preschool age that targets common parenting challenges. In response to community requests, we sought parent input to the design of the program. Education was delivered by regional specialists.

Our aims? To build parent capacity and health literacy, whilst providing practical strategies. A comprehensive evaluation strategy measured the success of the program and formed the basis of future program planning.

Our capacity of 20 families was reached and the feedback was extremely positive. By providing childcare we were able to overcome one of the largest barriers inhibiting parent attendance. We were pleased to see an increase in parental knowledge surrounding not only the areas of difficulty that were initially identified, but other relevant areas of early childhood development. Encouragingly, our local families are maintaining their connection to healthcare providers to access further education, information and support.

The end result was a cost neutral and sustainable program that was tailored to the community's needs. The resulting strengthened relationships with other early childhood stakeholders will see an expansion of the program in 2016; watch this space!

Little Tackers demonstrates that smaller health services are capable of providing innovative support to their catchments, without breaking the budget.

Biography

Holly has been practicing as a speech pathologist at Timboon and District Healthcare Service for 2 years. Working in a community health role she encountered many families struggling with parenting as well as understanding and managing the challenging aspects of their child's development. She saw first-hand the constraints of travel and finances on local family's ability to access support, particularly given the rural placement of the town. Holly is passionate about family centered care and is excited to share the outcomes their team achieved in this project as well as future plans for Little Tackers.