



Introducing the Let's Read Community Program

Project partners:



Affiliated with:



Welcome

This introduction includes:

- Background
- About Let's Read
- Let's Read Community Program model
- Community-wide early literacy promotion
- Evaluation
- Implementation
- Next steps



Background

Early (or ‘emergent’) literacy...

...refers to the **skills, knowledge & attitudes** that are precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing, and the **environments** that support these developments.

Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998

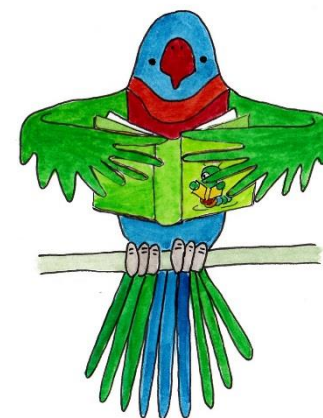
Background

Why is early literacy so important?

By investing in our children's early literacy, we're laying the foundations for children's success in school and life – and the future prosperity of our nation.

This is important as it will contribute to:

- Better outcomes for society
- Better outcomes for children
- School readiness
- Positive brain development
- Positive relationships between children and their families



Background

Literacy in Australia

- **A significant proportion of Australians have difficulty with reading.** They experience real problems in understanding and using written information from different sources like newspapers and magazines, job advertisements and labels on medication.
- **Almost half (46%) of Australians over 15 years lack the literacy skills** they need to meet the demands of everyday life and work (ABS, 2006)
- The 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) report shows that **Australian Year 4 children are ranked 27th out of 45 countries** in reading, making Australia one of the lowest ranking English speaking countries in the world.
- Gap between **Indigenous and non-Indigenous** children is large, particularly in remote areas



About Let's Read

Let's Read is a national, evidence-based early literacy initiative that promotes reading with children from birth to 5 years.

Let's Read was developed by the Centre for Community Child Health at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital. The Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and The Smith Family have partnered to implement Let's Read with communities across Australia.



For further information see: [Tool 1 – Let's Read Community Program Overview](#)

About Let's Read

The Let's Read Community Program **vision** is that all Australian children enter school with strong emergent literacy foundations.



About Let's Read

Outcomes

We recognise that **families**, **services** and the **community** all have a significant influence on children – as well as on each other.

As a result, the long-term outcomes for the program are :

- Let's Read **communities** provide environments that successfully support strong emergent literacy development in children from birth to 5 years.
- Partner **Services** in Let's Read communities include literacy-promoting activities as a core element of their practice.
- **Families** in Let's Read communities engage in emergent-literacy-promoting activities with their children every day from birth.



About Let's Read

Approach

The Let's Read Community Program:

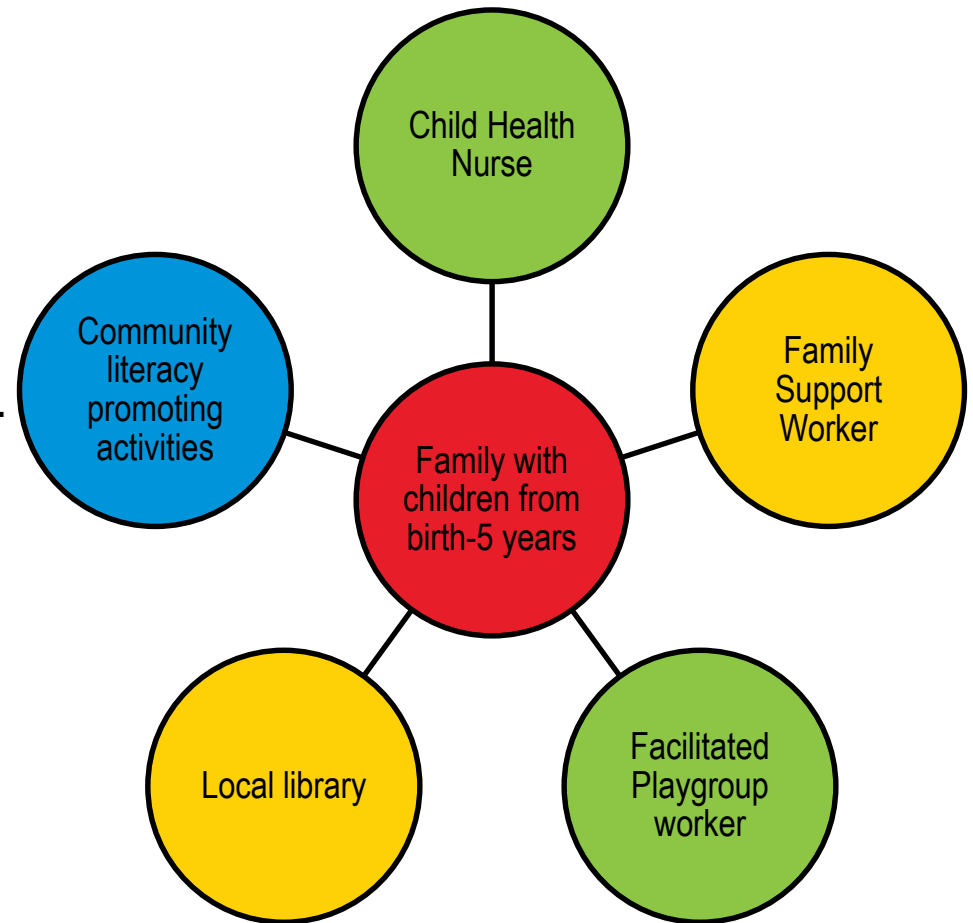
- draws on the knowledge, skills, resources and connections of local families, services and community groups
- provides coordinated, locally relevant approaches to emergent literacy development
- uses a place-based approach to focus on the whole social and physical environment in a community
- looks for opportunities to support existing strengths and capacities and compliment the way communities already work with vulnerable families
- uses a strengths-based approach to working with families



Let's Read Community Program Model

Who delivers it?

- A **Network of Partner Services** deliver the Let's Read Community Program to families with children from birth to five years from vulnerable groups or communities.
- **Let's Read-trained Community Professionals** from the network of Partner Services deliver the Let's Read Community Program during their interactions with families.



Let's Read Community Program Model

How often is it delivered?

Let's Read communities aim to deliver the Let's Read Community Program to vulnerable families 10 times during their child's first five years. This will be achieved by ensuring the network of Partner Services in a Let's Read community collectively enable access to the Let's Read Community Program for:

- **all families** four times at or around the following ages: 4 months, 12 months, 18 months and 3.5 years
- **vulnerable families** an additional six times, spread across the ages from birth to 5 years with a greater emphasis on interventions between the ages of 1–3 years



For further information see: [Tool 1 – Let's Read Community Program Overview](#) and [Tool 3 – Early Literacy Research and the Let's Read Community Program](#)

Let's Read Community Program Model

How is it delivered?

Let's Read-trained Community Professionals deliver the **5 Elements** of the Let's Read Community Program model during their interactions with families:

Check in

Discuss emergent literacy

Model

Show, share and deliver resources

Emergent literacy connections



For further information see: Tool 1 – Let's Read Community Program Overview and Tool 3 – Early Literacy Research and the Let's Read Community Program

Let's Read Community Program Model

What resources are used?

During their interactions with families, Let's Read-trained Community Professionals use:

- Let's Read Reading Tips and Tools
- Let's Read suggested books to show

These evidence-based resources, developed in partnership with early literacy and early childhood experts, provide practical information to support families to share books, stories, songs and nursery rhymes with their children from birth



Community-wide early literacy promotion

Raising community awareness about the importance of early literacy development is vital to building and sustaining this evidence-based program in your community.

Partner Services within Let's Read communities work collaboratively to provide literacy-rich environments for families and children by implementing community-wide early literacy-promotion activities that are documented in their Let's Read community plan.

These include:

- disseminating early literacy messages
- providing opportunities for families to engage in emergent-literacy-promoting activities with their children
- holding literacy-promoting community events.



Evaluation

Evaluating the Let's Read Community Program will help us to understand whether the program is achieving its intended outcomes.

Evaluation is built into the implementation of the Let's Read Community Program. It involves gathering and analysing information from services, professionals and families to:

- identify what is working well and how it can be strengthened
- identify what is not working well and how it can be improved
- enable Let's Read communities to be accountable to funding bodies
- demonstrate the need for ongoing funding and resources



Communities that set up the Let's Read Community Program in their community will be given access to the Evaluation Framework.

Implementation

Tasks

There are a number of tasks involved in implementing the Let's Read Community Program. They include:

- identifying the need
- engaging relevant Partner Services
- developing and implementing a Community Plan
- managing budget and seeking funding (where relevant) and strive for program sustainability
- supporting Partner Services to deliver the Let's Read Community Program as per the model
- supporting Partner Services to embed emergent literacy promotion in their practice
- supporting networking between Partner Services
- overseeing, participating in and undertaking evaluation activities defined in the Evaluation Framework.

Implementation

Who?

To complete these tasks either:

- a Let's Read Steering Committee can be formed or
- an existing committee (ie: one already working on early childhood issues) can be joined and the Let's Read Community Program can be added as a standing agenda item

Next Steps

To gain a clear understanding of the tasks involved in implementing the Let's Read Community Program and the corresponding toolkit resources that need to be completed visit:

<http://www.letsread.com.au/Communities/Get-your-community-involved>

If you have any questions, please contact letsread@thesmithfamily.com.au





Thank you

Project partners:



Affiliated with:

