

## Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

# Case study: A Head Start Children's Centres Currumbin and West Burleigh

### Resources for Queensland early childhood education and care services

*It's not something that we start as soon as the kids get into the preschool room, it's something that we implement from the babies room.*

Two of A Head Start Children's Centres on the Gold Coast have used the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to help inform their individual programming for children and form partnerships with families and local schools to amplify children's development outcomes.

Jodie Gimellaro, Director at A Head Start Children's Centre at West Burleigh said that educators use a mix of strategies, which link individual child observations with the *National Quality Framework*, and *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) learning areas and the AEDC. The key is a longitudinal approach to each child's development.



### An individualised response in context

The A Head Start centres use their own digital data system, designed in collaboration with the educators, which makes it possible to see instantly and monitor how individual children are tracking against key development milestones.

Through the online system, Jodie and her team can identify key learning areas and focus on how each child is 'traveling in each of the learning areas' which are linked with the AEDC domains.

In one instance, where Jodie could see further support was needed for a particular child, she went back to the data.

'I looked at the learning area and the child had just transitioned so they didn't have that sense of belonging yet. Because they were not settled in, they weren't learning to the best of their ability. So when we see that, we'd develop an individual program.'

Jodie says the team will ask: 'how can we make them feel more secure, safe and supported in that room?'

In answering this question, educator strategies often involve parents. They might create a book for children and post this to parents via A Head Start's secure intranet. Parents can 'see what we're doing to help their child settle in, so that at home they can also implement the same strategies,' Jodie says.

## Building partnerships with families and communities

As well as these one-off strategies for identified vulnerabilities, regular online progress reports allow educators and parents to follow and collaborate around children's development.

Individual observations and programs along with monthly programs and material on 'being, belonging and becoming' are collated to give a holistic developmental picture for the child. These assist individual children in making the transition to school and also promote partnerships between the centre, the community and schools.

A Head Start created a transition report which mirrors the AEDC domains and provides insight on how children are developing.



Jodie said the centre's first transition statement 'was quite basic'. But the centre's transition statement has evolved 'and aligns to what is reflected in EYLF and the AEDC'.

'We look at all facets of the child, not just whether they can write or recognise their name, but whether they have developed self-help skills, to aid in their transition to school. Developing their independence to self-regulate their emotions, what to do if they are hot or cold or if they can get their own lunch boxes and feed themselves.'

Jodie was satisfied with the value of integrating the AEDC and EYLF in the transition report after she received positive feedback from teachers on how children were transitioning into school. She plans to work more closely with the school to share information about learning opportunities and curriculum.

### Questions

- How does your service monitor individual children's development?
- How might your service record, analyse and integrate individual children's records and observations across the EYLF and AEDC?
- While the AEDC does not track individual children's development, how might your service work with individual children using your understanding of the AEDC domains?
- How might the AEDC data be useful in identifying opportunities to partnership with families and local schools?