



Aboriginal Parenting Programs: Review of case studies

October 2017



About AbSec

The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) is the peak Aboriginal child and family organisation in NSW. AbSec is committed to advocating on behalf of Aboriginal children, families, carers and communities, and to ensure they have access to the services and supports they need to keep Aboriginal children safe and provide them the best possible opportunities to fulfil their potential through Aboriginal community controlled organisations.

Central to this vision is the need to develop a tailored approach to Aboriginal child and family supports delivering universal, targeted and tertiary services within communities that cover the entire continuum of support and reflect the broader familial and community context of clients. Such services and supports would operate to mitigate risk factors or vulnerabilities thereby reducing the need for more intensive or invasive interventions.

Our vision is that Aboriginal children and young people are looked after in safe, thriving Aboriginal families and communities, and are raised strong in spirit and identity, with every opportunity for lifelong wellbeing and connection to culture surrounded by holistic supports. In working towards this vision, we are guided by these principles:

- acknowledging and respecting the diversity and knowledge of Aboriginal communities;
- acting with professionalism and integrity in striving for quality, culturally responsive services and supports for Aboriginal families;
- underpinning the rights of Aboriginal people to develop our own processes and systems for our communities, particularly in meeting the needs of our children and families;
- being holistic, integrated and solutions-focused through Aboriginal control in delivering for Aboriginal children, families and communities; and
- committing to a future that empowers Aboriginal families and communities, representing our communities, and the agencies there to serve them, with transparency and drive

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Executive Summary

Aboriginal children and young people continue to be over-represented at all levels of child protection, requiring a concerted effort from services and the service system more broadly to effectively meet the needs of Aboriginal children and young people, their families and communities. However, while there is a growing focus on investment in evidence-based approaches to achieve meaningful change for children and families across the continuum of support, there is very little published evidence about what works in Aboriginal communities.

AbSec understands that Aboriginal communities are experts in their own lives, and have an unmatched understanding of the needs of their children, families and communities. Having identified an absence of meaningful data on the effectiveness of parenting supports for Aboriginal parents and communities, Family and Community Services (FACS) engaged AbSec to develop case studies from across NSW of effective and innovative Aboriginal-led practice in the provision of parenting supports. This was intended as a starting point in articulating the key elements of effective parenting supports for Aboriginal parents and families.

AbSec engaged with practitioners and service managers from six service providers about the design and implementation of parenting services through their organisations targeted towards Aboriginal parents. Across these case studies, a number of key elements emerged, including:

- Aboriginal self-determination at the systems and process levels, through Aboriginal community controlled organisations, including the design and delivery of programs tailored to local communities
- culturally embedded and locally tailored approaches, building on community strengths
- the critical role of skilled Aboriginal practitioners in delivering culturally enriched services that are aligned with the needs and expectations of Aboriginal parents and communities
- Programs that include flexibility and adaptability to meet the identified need of local Aboriginal parents and families
- holistic, integrated service delivery, including partnerships with other relevant service providers, to support parenting skill development and the implementation of these skills into practice within the family context

- availability and accessibility of service provision using a ‘no wrong door’ approach to ensure vulnerable Aboriginal parents and families receive services when and where they are needed.

These key themes are consistent with the principles identified by AbSec for a holistic Aboriginal child and family system, and demonstrate the importance of Aboriginal-led, culturally embedded supports that are tailored to the holistic needs of Aboriginal families across the continuum of care.

Recommendations:

Noting these key themes, AbSec makes the following recommendations for the provision of parenting supports to Aboriginal families:

1. That an Aboriginal Parenting Framework is established to guide investment in parenting supports for Aboriginal parents. The development of this framework must be:
 - a. built on the principle of Aboriginal self-determination, strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal communities to design, develop and continuously improve parenting supports
 - b. support Aboriginal communities to deliver locally tailored, individualised parenting supports that are culturally embedded, through flexible funding approaches
 - c. ensure that funded parenting programs are not delivered in isolation but as a component of a broad, genuinely integrated Aboriginal Community Response.
2. Invest in the ongoing development of a library of resources to showcase Aboriginal community-led approaches that are achieving strong outcomes or showing promise in strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal parents, supporting Aboriginal communities in the ongoing development of local approaches.
3. Align outcomes of the Aboriginal Parenting Framework to Aboriginal perspectives of parenting practices and child outcomes that are community-led and culturally embedded.

Introduction

The continuing overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in the NSW child protection system is proof that the series of reforms and child protection inquiries have not worked for Aboriginal children, young people, and families. Statistics show that Aboriginal children and young people in out of home care (OOHC) experience poorer outcomes across the domains of mental health, and education, and approximately one in ten young people involved with the NSW criminal justice system were in OOHC¹. AbSec is committed to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in the OOHC system and improving outcomes for NSW Aboriginal families and communities. To achieve this, the child protection system requires significant reform aimed at strengthening Aboriginal families, keeping Aboriginal children safe at home, and preventing the need for entering the OOHC system. Working with Aboriginal peoples or families ‘in isolation from their extended family, community, and nation [ignores] the cultural contexts in which people exist’². Therefore, a transformed child protection system should seek to build the capacity of parents, and address family units within their cultures and communities.

To better inform ongoing Targeted Earlier Interventions (TEI) reforms, AbSec has undertaken a limited review of parenting supports that aim to build the parenting capacities of Aboriginal parents. Specifically, six case studies have been developed reporting on the organisation and parenting program(s) delivered including the dynamics of service delivery, the rationale for program and organisation development, and the successes and shortcomings.

This paper, commissioned by the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), complements the Parenting Resource Centre’s (PRC) desktop analysis of parenting programs, which identified a lack of evidence with respect to efficacy of parenting programs with Aboriginal populations. In order to commence building an evidence base, this paper seeks to identify common elements of parenting supports for Aboriginal parents as reported by program managers and facilitators, informing further investment in community-led Aboriginal parenting supports and areas for more in-depth analysis.

¹ Townsend, M. (2012) Are we making the grade? The education of children and young people in out of home care, NSW Family and Community Services

² MENZIES, P. 2007. Understanding Aboriginal Intergeneration Trauma from a Social Work Perspective. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 27, 367-392.

Background

The Parenting Research Centre (PRC) has conducted research on programs and interventions for parents and families to inform the ongoing systemic reforms for Out of Home Care (OOHC) and Child Protection systems across NSW. The review presents ten internationally sourced programs with a high level of evidence indicating their effectiveness in building parenting abilities across a spectrum of vulnerability levels, and in line with five of the seven HSOE outcome domains. These ten programs are: *Triple P*; *Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up*; *Incredible Years*; *Multisystemic Therapy*; *Nurse-Family Partnerships*; *Parent-Child Interaction Therapy*; *SafeCare*; *Stepping Stones Triple P*; *Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*; and *Treatment Foster Care Oregon – Adolescents*. While six of these programs (*Stepping Stones Triple P*, *Multisystemic Therapy*, *SafeCare*, *Nurse-Family Partnership*, *Triple P level 4 & 5 enhanced*) are marked as potentially suitable for Aboriginal families, the review notes that ‘*very few were developed specifically for [Indigenous families]*’ and that ‘*consideration of the suitability of programs for particular subgroups should attend to the origins of a program in addition to attending to research evidence for its effectiveness, particularly where cultural sensitivity and appropriateness is deemed to be an important factor in program selection*’.

There is then an identified need for the development of tailored and culturally embedded parenting supports, developed by and for Aboriginal peoples themselves, to strengthen Aboriginal families through culturally embedded supports. However, many Aboriginal communities are already delivering important supports to their families, providing an opportunity to engage with practitioners and draw on their expertise regarding the elements of effective service delivery in this area. The limited existing evidence about effective parenting supports and effective service delivery to Aboriginal communities³ can be examined to develop a broad framework for the development of tailored supports that are most likely to be effective in strengthening Aboriginal families.

The core principles promoted are community-led, tailored, and culturally embedded approaches in line with the AbSec/FACS co-designed *Plan on a page for Aboriginal Children and Young People 2015-2021*⁴ and recommendations from the *Closing the Gap ‘Parenting*

³ MILDON, R. & POLIMENI, M. 2012. Parenting in the early years: Effectiveness of parenting support programs for Indigenous families *In: CLOSING THE GAP CLEARINGHOUSE* (ed.). [ONLINE] at <http://webarchive.nla.gov.au/gov/20170827075151/https://aifs.gov.au/publications/parenting-early-years>

⁴ ABSEC & FACS. 2015. *Plan on a page for Aboriginal Children and Young People 2015-2021* [Online]. Available: <https://www.absec.org.au/images/downloads/Plan-for-Aboriginal-Children-and-Young-People.pdf> [Accessed].

*in the early years: effectiveness of parenting support programs for Indigenous families' (Resource sheet no 16 – August 2012).*⁵

Framework for Aboriginal Child and Family Services

AbSec's *'Achieving a holistic Aboriginal Child and Family Service System for NSW'* presents a comprehensive, evidence-informed model of Aboriginal child and family services aimed at creating an environment in which families can be supported to optimise the developmental environment for Aboriginal children and young people. It outlines three key principles for an effective and responsive Aboriginal child and family system:

1. Child development occurs within the context of their social and physical environment, with relationships playing a key role in optimal development and adaptive outcomes⁶. Effective approaches to improving outcomes for vulnerable children must include supporting positive change for the child's social network, their parents, extended families and communities. A genuine integration of services that support children both directly and indirectly through strengthening capabilities, stability (including economic), and resilience of families and communities is required. Interventions can become genuinely inter-generational, thereby optimising the developmental context and trajectory of the next and subsequent generations of Aboriginal children and young people.
2. Aboriginal families and communities are stronger and better able to meet their needs when empowered to identify and address the issues that impact their lives.⁷ Aboriginal communities themselves are best placed to develop and deliver services aimed at supporting Aboriginal children and families
3. Culture is a significant protective factor in positively contributing to overcoming adversity and disadvantage⁹ for individuals, families, and communities, strengthening our families and communities to raise strong children connected to their culture. Empowering communities to develop and deliver culturally sound

⁵ MILDON, R. & POLIMENI, M. 2012. Parenting in the early years: Effectiveness of parenting support programs for Indigenous families *In: CLOSING THE GAP CLEARINGHOUSE* (ed.). [ONLINE] at <http://webarchive.nla.gov.au/gov/20170827075151/https://aifs.gov.au/publications/parenting-early-years>.

⁶ SHONKOFF, J. P. & FISHER, P. A. 2013. Rethinking evidence-based practice and two-generation programs to create the future of early childhood policy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 25, 1635-1653.

⁷ The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, led by Professors Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt. Information available at: <http://hpaied.org/about>

⁸ Chandler, M. (2015) Cultural Wounds Require Cultural Medicines: How Cultural Continuity Reduces Suicide Youth Risk in Indigenous Communities, keynote address at Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Conference 2015, Perth, WA.

⁹ National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2015) *Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience: Working Paper 13*. <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

universal and targeted interventions will contribute to the development of comprehensive, state-wide safety-net of services that are embedded within the communities they serve, leading a community-wide response that will support Aboriginal families to keep children safe and connected to their families, communities, culture, and Country.

Put simply, AbSec is seeking to create a child and family system that strengthens Aboriginal children and families through community-controlled (that is, approaches designed and delivered by Aboriginal people themselves) and culturally embedded supports, through a flexible and integrated framework. In understanding Aboriginal children, families, and communities in their contemporary context, the impacts of intergenerational trauma must be considered, requiring approaches that focus on healing. Programs and interventions engaging with Aboriginal families must consider the intergenerational impacts of historical trauma, amidst other socio-economic, political, and cultural factors. The National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families and resulting 1997 report *Bringing Them Home*¹⁰ detailed the continued impact of Australia's forced child removal policies on Aboriginal people. Considering the experience of trauma for Aboriginal peoples and communities is 'cumulative', 'collective', and 'intergenerational',¹¹ supporting Aboriginal controlled, whole-family approaches provides important opportunities to address these ongoing harms.

This broad framework further acknowledges that the nature and intensity of interventions must be flexible, responsive and tailored to the individual and dynamic context of families over time. This is a key feature of AbSec's broad framework, with each level being articulated to emphasise the change in response intensity across the continuum of support¹². Effective Aboriginal parenting supports are essential across all levels of AbSec's holistic model. At the universal *Aboriginal Community Response* level Aboriginal parenting supports strengthen all families and broader networks of care to support Aboriginal children to thrive, including specialised supports for identified cohorts with unique needs (such as young parents). At the *Aboriginal Family Strengthening* secondary level, the needs of particular families identified as being particularly at risk, or as part of a broader intensive response to address potential risk of harm and preserve families, preventing their entry to care. Finally, within the tertiary

¹⁰ AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION 1997. *Bringing them home: Report of the National inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.* . Sydney, NSW: AHRC.

¹¹ SERAN, J. 2015. Australian Aboriginal Memoir and Memory: A Stolen Generations Trauma Narrative. *Humanities*, 2015, 661-675.

¹² See www.absec.org.au for more information, including *Achieving a Holistic Aboriginal Child and Family Service System for NSW* and *Our Families, Our Way: Strengthening Aboriginal Families so their children can thrive.*

Aboriginal Child Safety level, integrated parenting supports will be essential to achieve the safe and sustainable restoration of Aboriginal children to their families in a timely manner, increasing successful exits from care.

Parenting supports therefore have a role to play across the continuum of care in addressing the ongoing over-representation of Aboriginal children and families at every point of the statutory child protection system. As such it is imperative that the key features of effective Aboriginal parenting supports are identified, and that Aboriginal communities are supported to design, deliver and continuously improve such programs through their own community controlled processes.

Methodology

As a first step in building a robust evidence base of effective Aboriginal parenting supports, FACS commissioned AbSec to review a sample of Aboriginal-led parenting programs and develop six case studies detailing current approaches and identifying key features that may contribute to the efficacy of these approaches. While priority was given to those programs that reflect the principle of Aboriginal self-determination, it was acknowledged that systemic issues have contributed to a currently mixed service system for Aboriginal communities, with some positive Aboriginal-led programs delivered through other organisations including non-government, government and academic institutions. AbSec continues to advocate for the establishment of a state-wide safety-net of ACCOs to deliver culturally embedded supports across the continuum of care tailored to local communities.

Drawing on funding data from FACS as well as a desktop review of existing parenting supports, AbSec identified six diverse examples of parenting support approaches in both urban and regional communities across NSW.

Using a semi-structured interview (see Appendix 1), AbSec engaged with the delivering organisations, particularly program managers and facilitators working directly with Aboriginal parents and families to develop a description of each program, its background, and the key features regarding delivery. These case studies are provided below. Finally, examining these case studies side-by-side, AbSec have sought to identify the key features of these programs, bringing together this early evidence to provide a broad evidence-informed framework for Aboriginal parenting supports that are likely to be most effective in strengthening the parenting capacity of Aboriginal families.

Key Themes

An effective Aboriginal child and family system must strengthen Aboriginal parents, families and communities so their children can thrive at home and in their community, in a culturally enriched environment. Strengthening Aboriginal children and families is about the need to improve focus and investment in early intervention to address the underlying drivers of risk, noting the importance of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. This reflected the identified importance of self-determination, identified as a collective right of Aboriginal peoples to determine the systems and services that affect us, in achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal children and families. Further, culture was identified as an important factor in individual and community resilience.

This project involved developing case studies of six organisations delivering Aboriginal-specific parenting programs with the aim of identifying the key features that made the organisations successful and effective. The majority of the organisations examined are Aboriginal community controlled organisations, with others being delivered through experienced Aboriginal practitioners in government and non-government organisations, facilitated by strong relationships with local Aboriginal communities.

AbSec is of the opinion that many of the key elements identified within the literature and case studies are predictable and have been well documented in various domains related to effective service delivery within Aboriginal communities. The key elements are also consistent with feedback provided by AbSec's member organisations, and conversations with other service providers and comments made by Aboriginal practitioners during the 2017 SNAICC National Conference.

The case studies and interviews identified the following consistent elements that were core to the operation of the organisations and influenced effective and responsive service delivery to Aboriginal people:

- Aboriginal self-determination at the systems and process levels, through Aboriginal community controlled organisations, including the design and delivery of programs tailored to local communities
- culturally embedded and locally tailored approaches, building on community strengths
- the critical role of skilled Aboriginal practitioners in delivering culturally enriched services that are aligned with the needs and expectations of Aboriginal parents and communities

- programs that include flexibility and adaptability to meet the identified need of local Aboriginal parents and families
- holistic, integrated service delivery, including partnerships with other relevant service providers, to support parenting skill development and the implementation of these skills into practice within the family context
- availability and accessibility of service provision using a 'no wrong door' approach to ensure vulnerable Aboriginal parents and families receive services when and where they are needed.

Organisations that participated in the review all acknowledged the importance of Aboriginal community control of program design, the availability and accessibility of Aboriginal facilitators were seen as critical as was the integration of cultural elements in the way programs are designed and delivered. These factors were important tools to engage Aboriginal families and making the content relevant and accessible so that families remain with the program. Additionally, many of the case studies noted approaches to provide broader Aboriginal oversight of the program and ongoing continuous improvement, including engaging with Elders or through other community mechanisms. For many programs, engaging with local families and their community was an important factor in ongoing continuous improvement efforts. Many organisations demonstrated formal or informal processes through which their service offering evolved to meet the changing needs of their families and communities. Aboriginal community controlled organisations recognise the need to work with the parents/family to identify and address the vulnerabilities that negatively affect their parenting ability prior to their entering parenting programs.

Aboriginal oversight, Aboriginal staff and good governance processes were seen as important elements in gaining the trust of Aboriginal communities in service delivery. Aboriginal people believe service delivery by Aboriginal community-controlled organisations was the most preferred approach. Aboriginal services requiring additional capacity and capability recognised the usefulness of genuine partnership approaches in supporting Aboriginal service delivery. Nevertheless, Aboriginal organisations should be able to include a focus on local capacity building, moving towards genuine community control and oversight of service delivery targeted to Aboriginal children, families and communities.

Parenting programs offered were based on external (from an Aboriginal perspective) programs with a broader existing evidence base. The specific program varied, and potentially reflected those approaches for which funding was available, allowing organisations to deliver important services in their community. Service delivery needed to be adapted by experienced Aboriginal facilitators to ensure programs were more accessible

and culturally aligned to Aboriginal communities and families. This adaptation was with respect to both content and delivery method, with the focus remaining on building the skills of Aboriginal parents, strengthening parent-child relationships, providing strategies for managing behaviour as well as supporting parents to regulate their own emotional state. Often however there was an overriding requirement from the service system that program content not be changed, reflecting broader systemic investment in particular models not developed with Aboriginal parents and families in mind. The organisations acknowledged the vital role of experienced and respected Aboriginal facilitators in providing a culturally embedded approach to engage Aboriginal parents and families and therefore the success of the program despite these limitations. Importantly, culture is a central facet running through all elements of effective programs, supporting engagement with the program.

Community practitioners were therefore seen as a central element of Aboriginal parenting programs. Many organisations invested in training their staff in various parenting programs, forming a toolbox of skills and strategies they could draw on and tailor to the needs of Aboriginal parents and families. Aboriginal facilitators were also highly regarded for their ability to ensure that programs are delivered in accessible, culturally embedded ways that are best able to engage Aboriginal families and support parenting capacity and capability building.

Parenting programs within the case studies tended to be delivered in the context of an Aboriginal community controlled organisation delivering a broader range of services and supports to Aboriginal families and communities, including budgeting, counselling, domestic violence, substance abuse, health and healing modules. This provided a more holistic approach to family supports, in which parenting or parent-child relationships are seen within the wider context of Aboriginal households. This was particularly the case for Aboriginal community controlled organisations within the case studies.

Integrated approaches may be particularly beneficial to vulnerable families, with relevant and appropriate referrals providing families with easier access to necessary wrap around services. In addition to the explicit focus on parenting skill building, these wrap around supports seek to reduce additional sources of familial stress, giving important space for parents to practice the new parenting skills they are working on developing, and benefit from improvements in the parent-child relationship. While the Boomerangs Coolamon Parenting Program did not specifically include wrap around supports, networks with other services were an important aspect of recruitment, and the peer structure further promoted participants to develop and strengthen an informal network of supports. This was recognised as an

important design feature of the program, allowing graduates to continue to provide support to each other as a cohort in the community.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Waminda South Coast Women's Health and Welfare Aboriginal Corporation – Nowra NSW

Waminda is a culturally safe, holistic community controlled service for Aboriginal women and their families, providing tailored health, and well-being supports to their community. The service has been operating for 33 years, and currently has approximately 90 staff including health workers (GPs and midwives), drug and alcohol supports, family supports (including child and parenting program as well as intensive preservation and restoration services, Functional Family Therapy), domestic violence and healing initiatives.

In addition to serving the Nowra area, they also provide outreach services to Coomaditchie, Gerringong, Bega and Ulladulla.

Programs:

As noted above Waminda delivers a range of programs relevant to parents and families (*Aboriginal Family Support Program, Aboriginal Supported Playgroup and Mums and Bubs Program*). These program offerings are determined through ongoing consultation with their community and service users, specifically local Aboriginal women. Waminda's funding comes from three main sources: State Government, Federal Government and philanthropic sources.

The parenting supports identified include *Parenting Under Pressure, Circle of Security, 1,2,3 Magic* and *Intensive Family Supports*. These particular models reflect available funding grants to train Waminda staff and build their capacity to support women and families within their community. Waminda workers are able to translate this toolkit into a response case plan for families, delivering a tailored response. This is based on a strength-based assessment of families and the development of a case plan alongside the family. This might include one-on-one supports or group settings, including playgroups and other supported peer approaches, depending on the needs of families. Some of the core modules provided include *Parent Coping Skills, Parenting Information and Education, Safety and Risk Assessment, and Safety Planning*.

Waminda receives a combination of referrals from FACS, other organisations, local community referrals and self-referrals. Waminda welcomes 'walk-ins' for their services and refers clients to other organisations to provide an integrated, service response. Waminda

tailors the response to the needs of families, including the timeframe for support and venue; services are delivered where families feel most comfortable. Waminda actively engages with families to identify barriers to service access to ensure that the service response can be accessed by each family.

Success at Waminda was related to the skills and capabilities of their staff in engaging with local families and delivering programs in accessible, culturally appropriate, and safe environments free from judgement. Experienced staff are able to apply tools and approaches tailored to the needs of families and their identified goals. Waminda takes a strength-based approach, building on the strengths already present within families to deliver lasting change. Waminda collect data before and after service intervention, and conduct exit interviews with regular follow ups.

Waminda established two key committees within their organisation (independent of parenting programs) to support them to strengthen all programs they deliver: a Cultural Committee, and a Research Committee. These committees play an important oversight role for all programs offered by Waminda, ensuring they are culturally embedded and tailored to their community, as well as supporting continuous improvement.

Waminda noted that the key to their success was maintaining a clear focus on Aboriginal community ownership and control, with Aboriginal people empowered to determine the design and delivery of local services, that services are connected to the community and culturally informed. Recognition of culture and ensuring that supports were culturally embedded/culturally responsive is important to providing meaningful and effective services to Aboriginal parents.

Waminda practitioners also noted a key barrier to success was housing stability, and the risk of homelessness for families, with parenting capacity building becoming a far smaller priority for families in this context. This emphasises the need to work holistically with the family, providing wrap around supports that are not merely limited to parenting capacity building. Waminda also noted the importance of empowering Aboriginal families to set their own goals and priorities, strengthening engagement and building trust. There was a distinct worry about approaches that “set families up to fail” by not taking the family’s context into account and working with families to address challenges and remove barriers to access.

Key Elements:

- Community control and cultural oversight as key features of effective Aboriginal parenting supports

- Waminda takes a ‘no wrong door’ approach to referrals and intake, utilising the networks they have developed in the community. The service actively engages with families to ensure that programs and supports are accessible, including identifying key barriers to access that may need to be overcome rather than imposing this system responsibility onto families.
- While based on existing programs, Aboriginal practitioners apply this toolkit as needed, tailored to families in their community and delivered in culturally appropriate ways. Flexible service delivery through skilled Aboriginal practitioners was considered important.
- Importance of integrated approaches and wrap around supports in promoting the parenting skill development of Aboriginal parents

Case Study 2: Boomerangs Coolamon Parenting Program – NSW Health, South Western Sydney

The Boomerangs Coolamon Parenting Program is coordinated by the NSW Government through NSW Health. It is managed by an Aboriginal health practitioner who is deeply connected to their local Aboriginal community through community controlled organisations, and also works with other Aboriginal community controlled services with respect to the provision of their health services to Aboriginal people and cultural clinical supervision of other health practitioners.

Program:

The Boomerangs Coolamon Parenting Program is a relationship based parenting intervention that seeks to strengthen the parenting capacity of parents, focused on the period from conception to 5 years of age. It aims to develop a positive, effective long term relationship between parents and their children, integrating parenting approaches such as *Circle of Security* and *Marte Meo* alongside Aboriginal cultural parenting practices. The program was developed by an experienced Aboriginal health practitioner, in consultation with community Elders. The program has been formally recognised with a Baxter Award in 2009, and has continued to evolve over time to strengthen outcomes achieved.

Boomerangs Coolamon Parenting Program is a group-based program that caters for up to 8 women, and can be run from any appropriate service or venue. Referrals are generally made from other services within the local NSW Health network, or through the FACS *Brighter Futures* program. Following this referral, the program facilitator will engage directly with the family and involve other community workers who have existing relationships with the family where available.

The program runs for 8 weeks, and concludes with a camp. Throughout the program, videos are used to show strength based activities of parents and coach parents in their parenting skills. One-to-one engagement through home visits can also be integrated where appropriate. Often, the nature of the emotional group work and peer support throughout the program results in cohorts keeping in touch following the program, strengthening the informal support networks of participants.

The Boomerangs Coolamon Parenting Program seeks to identify and build on the strengths of parents, fostering their relationship with their babies and children, including promoting consistency and the importance of language as a foundation of development and relationships.

The program also integrates a trauma informed lens, helping mothers to understand the impact of trauma, how this might affect them, their parenting, and their child. This understanding, along with active skill building and coaching, helps parents to enact more effective parenting strategies and strengthen the parent-child relationship. This program reflects the important role of the caregiver relationship on child development, and seeks to foster more positive and predictable parent-child interactions.

The Boomerangs Coolamon Parenting Program developer emphasised the importance of embedding culture into the approach, and noted that they would not run the program without an Aboriginal facilitator to ensure the program is delivered properly. Aboriginal community control of program design and connection to community was seen as very important features of the program.

Key Elements:

- While based on an established program, it has been adapted by a skilled Aboriginal practitioner and integrated with Aboriginal cultural practices to provide a more appropriate parenting support. Aboriginal Elders included in the development of the program to integrate Aboriginal cultural practices into the program itself.
- Is strengths based, and takes a trauma informed approach to help parents understand the connection between their own experience, their parenting, and their child's development.
- Includes a deliberate effort to strengthen a cohort of Aboriginal women to provide ongoing supports to each other after the program has been completed.

Case Study 3: KARI, South Western Sydney

KARI is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation that delivers a suite of culturally responsive and tailored health and well-being supports to Aboriginal parents, children and their families. Established in 1999, the service currently employs nearly 100 staff comprising family support workers, multidisciplinary clinical practitioners, early intervention workers, community and cultural workers.

KARI receives funding from the NSW state government and philanthropic sources.

KARI recognises that working effectively with Aboriginal parents and families requires a holistic approach to recognise and address underlying issues that may be impacting on family functioning.

KARI employs a 'no wrong door approach' to ensure Aboriginal people and families in need receive relevant services at the right time, to help address existing vulnerabilities. Additionally, they have assembled a wide network of supporting, ancillary services, and can provide referrals to other relevant organisations to support Aboriginal families in need.

Programs:

KARI receives funding from FACS to deliver evidence-based programs such as the *Brighter Futures Program* and *Triple P* as well as a number of the other programs that are based on pre-existing models e.g.; *Circle of Security*, *1-2-3- Magic*, *Money Minded* and *EIPP*.

Services under the *Brighter Futures Programs* and *1-2-3 Magic* are delivered in the family's home while interactive activities of the program e.g. 'life stories' are delivered in the informal camp environment. KARI receives a mix of referrals from FACS, the local community and self-referrals.

KARI delivers services within guidelines but for innovative services or activities that are outside guidelines, KARI staff seek alternate funding streams to ensure the client receives the service. KARI also delivers community programs that have a focus on encouraging and supporting positive change for children, young people and families e.g. Family Support Services and Programs; Education Programs, Family Support Camps; cooking programs, Community Events and Partnerships Programs. KARI Child and Youth programs not only entertain and educate but more importantly offer Aboriginal children a sense of belonging: such as through community cultural camp to keep youth connected, vacation care, Aboriginal art, Multidisciplinary Playgroup, or swimming lessons.

Core elements of the programs include annual camps that are held for Fathers and Sons and Mothers and Babies. The camps are an informal, non-threatening environment where KARI workers have noticed that parents, children and young people 'let their guards down' and they have a breakthrough with the participants.

Elements of the Triple P program are delivered through the camps that also include cultural components, specific parenting activities and fun activities for children and parents that are conducted individually or jointly; team building, arts and crafts, social and cultural activities. The camps also include the parenting program 'Life Stories'.

The case plan is developed following a strength-based assessment but there are no specific timeframes to work with families and case management spans 3 to 6 months with a recognition that the family may require step-up and step-down services.

KARI workers identified that occasionally before looking to build parenting capacity they may need to work with Aboriginal parents and families to address stressors that may be contributing to family dysfunction, housing instability; drug and alcohol, mental health issues. Through case planning, KARI works holistically with the family, to empower Aboriginal families to set their own goals and priorities.

KARI workers noted that inflexible guidelines introduced challenges for delivering innovative and tailored responses to the needs of families in their community. Further, they felt that the existing conceptualisation of evidence in practice was too static and not responsive to new and emerging evidence. They encouraged a bolder approach to support Aboriginal communities to innovate and test approaches that may strengthen service delivery and achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal children and families.

KARI attributed their success to their status as an Aboriginal community controlled organisation; accessible, non-judgemental service delivery; skilled, experienced, committed, and dedicated Aboriginal staff members; flexible and innovative service delivery; and their reputation as a culturally sensitive, appropriate and responsive service provider.

Key Elements:

- Community and culturally embedded service delivery accessible to Aboriginal families, including their "no wrong door" approach
- An integrated or holistic approach was considered critical, with KARI investing significantly in wraparound services and developing strong local networks to deliver an integrated response to families, often requiring alternate funding streams

- A strengths-based assessment identifies the holistic needs of families to be addressed through a case plan, providing a tailored response to families. In some cases where parenting capacity is identified as a need, it is necessary to address other stressors first in order to create the space for families to engage with skill building supports.
- Experienced and highly trained Aboriginal practitioners deliver parenting supports through a range of approaches, including weaving this content into a variety of formats included culturally embedded camps

Case Study 4: CentaCare Wilcannia-Forbes

CentaCare Wilcannia – Forbes is a non-Aboriginal non-government organisations operating in Western NSW. The organisation covers 52% of NSW and delivers important services to remote and rural communities with significant Aboriginal populations, offering a diverse range of programs and services to individuals, families and communities. These programs include supports for parents and children; counselling and relationship support; help with financial management; mental health services; Men’s programs; help with housing and accommodation; programs for Indigenous communities and programs for Youth. The service was established in 1996 in response to the lack of services for people living in Western NSW.

The organisation has a local community recruitment strategy and a workforce of over 100 employees; 25% of employees are Aboriginal and each branch has 2 to 5 Aboriginal workers (two program managers are Aboriginal, 50% of CentaCare Wilcannia - Forbes middle management are Aboriginal and the agency is coaching and mentoring an Aboriginal staff member to sit on the Executive Board). There is one central Executive Board and no local Boards.

CentaCare Wilcannia - Forbes receives funding from State and Commonwealth governments and philanthropic bodies.

Programs:

In 2005, the service sought funding to deliver a program in Bourke for young teenage Mothers – Strong Young Mums. This program underwent an internal evaluation and based on the findings; the following family based programs were developed: *Strong Young families; Family Care; Men’s Programs – Aboriginal Family Health Strategy; Men and Family Relationship Program*. The organisation also delivers Triple P and Circle of Security parenting programs.

Practitioners receive training in up to 11 programs and which they apply based on need. The service has found that they have a good success rate and this meets the needs of vulnerable families.

The service found that some elements of the programs they receive funding for were not always well suited to Aboriginal families. Aboriginal practitioners engaged with the local community to tailor the service to their needs. While the programmatic nature meant that content could not be altered, service delivery could be adapted to meet the need of their local Aboriginal community.

The service has noticed that very few parents approach their services for help with children and parenting skills. To engage these families, the service uses soft-entry points and maintains a visible presence in local communities through playgroups and fun events in parks and other informal locations. The children will interact with the event and the parents then engage.

A needs assessment of the family unit is undertaken which informs the case plan. Services are delivered in a group setting or one-on-one, depending on individual needs through a case management approach. The smaller population usually results in groups forming naturally (i.e. peer groups, gender) or through support of Aboriginal practitioners. Programs are rarely delivered in the office, as the service considers it is too formal and clinical. A home visit is an important component as is the choice for Aboriginal workers to take Men's groups out to the riverbank, fishing, and camping to deliver the program. Some services are also delivered through outreach.

Service scope is variable and aligned to family need. Providing Aboriginal parents with specific parenting skills is not always on top of the agenda. There are many other factors that impact on the parents that need to be addressed first e.g. overcrowded housing; drug and alcohol abuse; mental health illness; carers, cultural obligations; financial hardship, unemployment. This reflects the holistic approach taken by this service.

There is no specific timeframe with the service reporting they have worked with some families for years. There is also no significant waitlisting for intensive services due to the small numbers, and the service's commitment to respond to people in need as soon as possible. The service still maintains connections with the client and only refers the client to specialised services when there is a need and provides ongoing follow-up support.

The service acknowledges the importance of consulting with Aboriginal people about how they want services to be delivered, building trusting relationships that are respectful. The

service also acknowledges the importance of following cultural protocols, and for services to have a knowledge of local Aboriginal communities in order to maintain the confidence of the families they serve. In order to support this, Aboriginal staff co-design and co-develop programs and directly influence service delivery (the only requirement is that they stick to program guidelines and program content is not altered), developing a program logic and approach that is developed and 'owned' by local Aboriginal practitioners. The service is proud of the fact that they have five Aboriginal male Family Workers because they consider it critical that their workers can engage Fathers.

Key elements:

- Responsive and flexible program delivery within the established program content allowing service delivery to be adapted to meet the need of Aboriginal families and communities.
- While parenting supports may be needed, they are not always the top priority. In some cases additional supports are needed first (housing etc) before parenting supports can be considered
- Local Aboriginal staff recruitment strategy
- Aboriginal people co-design and co-develop programs and directly influence service delivery
- Recognise importance of consultation with local Aboriginal communities about service delivery, observing cultural protocols and respecting the knowledge of local communities

Case Study 5: Muloobinba Aboriginal Corporation, Maryville

Muloobinba is a long-standing Aboriginal Community Controlled, not for profit, community based organisation that delivers services and supports specific to the needs to Aboriginal individuals and families in Newcastle and surrounding areas. Muloobinba receives its funding from the NSW state government.

Muloobinba is committed to providing quality support, services and programs that are culturally appropriate and sensitive and builds partnerships to enhance service delivery for Aboriginal children and families in their community.

Muloobinba staff use a sensitive, holistic approach when working with Aboriginal parents, children and young people to recognise and address underlying external issues that may be impacting on family functioning. Families are assessed using a strengths based approach.

Parenting programs assist with short term supports to strengthen families in the community and enhance parents relationships with their children; enhance positive parenting and living skills. Muloobinba focuses on improving child and parent relationships and attachment, parental functioning and nurturing capacity; supporting parents during the early years of children, programs to help parents raise well-behaved and happy children.

Programs:

Muloobinba delivers services under the following program areas - Child, Youth and Family Support, Families NSW; and Aboriginal Child, Youth & Family Strategy. Muloobinba family support workers provide home-based case management to 105 families; and delivers services and supports to Aboriginal family units under the following program streams: Evidence Based Structured Parenting Programs (55 family units); Triple P (40 family units); Non Triple P/Group Work (80 family units) and Family & Community Event (60 family units).

Muloobinba delivers a range of parenting programs to strengthen Aboriginal families including evidence-based programs that are based on pre-existing models e.g.; Indigenous Triple P, Circle of Security, 1-2-3 Magic as well as a number of other programs e.g.; Bringing up Great Kids and Parents as Teachers, Young Parenting Support; Child, Youth & Family Support; Family Support.

Muloobinba also deliver a range of services and supports to local Aboriginal parents and families including Men's and Women's groups and supported internal playgroups in partnerships with other local organisations.

The programs are delivered either in small group discussions or one-on-one and are open to participation by all clients unless the guidelines are specific about the age group.

The needs of children, parents and families are assessed and service delivery is tailored to meet the identified need which includes information obtained through referrals. Muloobinba uses a structured literary process '*Read to me*' to build relationships and foster positive relationships between parents and their children. Parents receive information about the importance of developmental milestones and instructions on how to foster development and provide early intervention in cases where disability is recognised as the connection to the services provided under the NDIS.

At least two workers must always deliver some services, as different perspectives are critical in identifying innovative options and there is greater availability for supports. Aboriginality is considered a core requirement for employment as Family Support Workers and the workers

need to have expertise, skills and relevant experience required of the position combined with cultural knowledge of Aboriginal families and communities.

Service delivery occurs in families homes, in the office or other comfortable venues and receives referrals from members of the local community or self-referrals. Muloobinba also runs an important supplementary program that addresses external stressors for families e.g.; financial difficulties with paying rent, food and electricity.

Muloobinba also identified a number of key challenges in delivering effective service to their community. This included a funding insistence on model fidelity, despite a mismatch between model design and the needs of Aboriginal families. Greater flexibility in service delivery is needed to support a more tailored service to Aboriginal families, including wraparound supports. Further, the insistence on output measures fails to appreciate the actual change and strengthening achieved by Muloobinba in building the parenting capacity and addressing other family challenges through their parenting and other integrated supports. Culturally informed measures of success are critical to the development and evaluation of Aboriginal parenting supports. Muloobinba felt that it was essential that these processes are driven by Aboriginal communities themselves, so that knowledge and evidence arising can be immediately fed back into the system, further strengthening supports for Aboriginal families.

Key Elements:

- Experienced Aboriginal practitioners are essential to high quality, culturally embedded service delivery that is able to effectively engage and support local Aboriginal families. Consideration should also be given to the value of shared delivery by two practitioners who are able to bring additional perspectives and lived experiences to coaching and support.
- Approaches should be tailored and delivered as part of an integrated suite of services aimed to identify the needs of families and provide supports. Muloobinba draws from a range of approaches, through trained and experienced practitioners, to deliver for Aboriginal families
- Providing a range of delivery options, including Men's and Women's groups, helps to ensure that Aboriginal families can engage according to their needs and in ways that they feel most comfortable. This flexible engagement within a broader community and culturally embedded approach drives effective engagement of Aboriginal families.

Case Study 6: Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation, Emerton NSW

Marrin Weejali is an Aboriginal community controlled organisation with Board Members elected from the local Aboriginal community. Marrin Weejali was established in 1996 to meet the need of the Mt Druitt Aboriginal community grieving from trauma and loss due to early deaths through alcohol misuse and disconnection from their families. Marrin Weejali's original purpose was to help the Mt Druitt community live their lives free from drugs and alcohol that were tearing local Aboriginal families apart and has always recognised that spiritual healing is a part of recovery, and that addiction affects the whole family.

Marrin Weejali considers the elements of Aboriginal control of program design and delivery; integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the programs and connection to the local community as essential to the formation of our programs. Marrin Weejali considers connection to community is central to effective service delivery due to their greater understanding of their families, where they are from, where they fit, and have a clear and current picture of the supports that can assist. They attribute the engagement of their communities with their service to a genuine sense of ownership of the programs, and the culturally embedded nature of the content – it talks to their stories, includes them and recognises their situation and progress.

Marrin Weejali is largely federally funded through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy as well as the Primary Health Network. Further, Marrin Weejali actively seeks out and builds partnerships with other local organisations and bodies to address community need, including local Aboriginal Maternal and Infant support services, Budgery Manya, local Aboriginal preschools and others. Through these partnerships Marrin Weejali both strengthens their own workforce while supporting partner non-Aboriginal organisations to improve their cultural competence with Aboriginal families.

The Marrin Weejali team includes 10 counsellors (five male, five female), including seven Aboriginal counsellors. Some of the counsellors were themselves clients previously. Counsellors carry up to 50 active cases at a time. They are supported by two specialist complex family caseworkers, qualified counsellors, a psychologist and psychotherapist.

Programs:

Marrin Weejali employs a whole family approach across their programmes. Through a partnership with Karabi Community Centre, Marrin Weejali delivers the Indigenous Triple P parenting program every term, reflecting the high demand for parenting supports within the community. Marrin Weejali have made a specific effort to engage with the local FACS office to refer families prior to removing children.

In addition to parenting supports, Marrin Weejali provides a broad range of programs to assist Aboriginal parents, children and families address diverse issues that may be impacting on families. This includes a specific focus on issues that contribute to families coming into contact with, or supporting families who are already affected by the statutory child protection system, including Aboriginal Family Planning Circles, parent peer support groups and their *Keeping Families Together* support resource that provides information and connections to families coming into contact with FACS.

Specialist caseworkers deliver tailored services in either a group or individual setting, including gendered groups where appropriate, informed through a comprehensive assessment of family need. Referrals come from a range of local services or through family or self-referrals, and clients are appointed a key worker. There is no specific timeframe – families can remain connected with the service for as long as they wish. Marrin Weejali noted that families often engage with an intense initial phase that slowly reduces as families develop skills, confidence and informal support networks through their service. Even as engagement reduces, families tend to stay connected.

Fourteen group therapy sessions are delivered each week, sharing experiences with other families, which holds significant credibility for families. Facilitators use story-telling, symbolic and instructive games, music and video as part of group sessions, modelling self-esteem and other skills. The same content can also be delivered through individual sessions as needed.

Marrin Weejali noted their staff have previously encountered barriers trying to work with FACS offices, but these barriers are starting to fall through as Marrin Weejali's efforts to actively engage with workers and strengthen relationships. Marrin Weejali also noted that comorbidity of issues including drug and alcohol misuse contributes to significant case complexity, impacting the effectiveness of parenting and other similar interventions.

Marrin Weejali include evaluation within their service delivery, particularly focused on feedback from Aboriginal people and families within the community. At the end of every term, all participants are asked to complete evaluations and the formation of new groups depends on the needs identified from these evaluations. This guides the ongoing evolution of Marrin Weejali and the services they offer.

Key Elements:

- Marrin Weejali view their position within and connection to their community as central to their success. The local Aboriginal community feels an ownership of the service and support provided, and knows they will be delivered in a professional and culturally embedded way.
- Parenting programs are aligned to established models but delivered by Aboriginal practitioners in a culturally embedded, community context. Stories and peer supports are seen as particularly valued and authoritative, demonstrating the capacity for change and providing families with formal and informal supports as well as role models.
- Marrin Weejali fosters strong partnerships with other organisations within their community, ensuring that a full suite of services can be delivered to families. These services are tailored to the individual needs of Aboriginal families
- Marrin Weejali seeks direct feedback from service users to guide ongoing service development, ensuring that their services reflect and adapt to the changing needs of Aboriginal families and communities. This reflects a responsive Aboriginal service system focused on the needs of Aboriginal families.

Conclusion

This project involved engaging with organisations delivering Aboriginal-led parenting programs (predominantly through ACCOs) to strengthen Aboriginal parents and families, and developing case studies to identify key themes for the effective delivery of family supports.

These themes included the importance of Aboriginal community control and ownership of the service or program, the critical role of skilled Aboriginal practitioners, and the importance of culturally embedded and locally tailored approaches. It was also clear from the feedback of Aboriginal practitioners that strong relationships with families and their community more broadly were considered critical to effective service delivery. This included not only tailoring approaches to meet the needs of local Aboriginal families, but also having the cultural endorsement to support and, where necessary, challenge parents and families to change their approach to parenting their children. Practitioners were able to embed parenting supports in a broader cultural context to engage families and support skills development through to implementation.

Finally, all services emphasised the importance of Aboriginal community control, ownership and oversight of Aboriginal programs and Aboriginal participation in the design, development

of Aboriginal service delivery. Practitioners reported that these factors strengthened community trust in the service and supported the engagement and ongoing participation of Aboriginal families. Aboriginal community oversight is also considered an essential element of ongoing continuous improvement efforts, allowing data to be properly understood and approaches adjusted to further strengthen the outcomes achieved.

It was clear there was a consistent approach in the practice of all organisations that a focus on family strengthening, building informal and community supports as well as referrals on to the formal service system where required, rather than solely on parenting skill building, was critical to success. This is consistent with international evidence and emerging approaches that emphasise the need for holistic, intergenerational approaches that strengthen families and communities, providing a strong relational and environmental context that supports children to thrive¹³¹⁴¹⁵¹⁶¹⁷. This includes supporting families to manage other household stressors and strengthen community engagement, creating lasting networks of support around children and their families. This view recognises the interdependencies between families and their communities, including compounding factors such as poverty and marginalisation for families doing it tough, and how this increases a child's experience of adversity and then risk. As such, any efforts to strengthen families and address risks facing children must take a holistic approach to supporting families and empower communities to deliver the services they need at the local level, addressing the underlying issues that confer risk to families.

The Targeted Earlier Intervention reforms include a stated focus on Aboriginal children and their families. This focus calls for more flexible investment in Aboriginal community organisations to design, deliver and develop in an ongoing way the services and supports to meet identified need in their local communities. Rather than investing in prescriptive, programmatic approaches developed externally and more often in the context of non-Aboriginal parenting norms, funding must support local communities to engage with existing evidence, integrate Aboriginal knowledge and values, and build an evidence base for locally

¹³ CENTER ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD 2016b. From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts: A Science-Based Approach to Building a More Promising Future for Young Children and Families. Harvard University.

¹⁴ BABCOCK, E. & RUIZ DE LUZURIAGA, N. 2016. Families Disrupting the Cycle of Poverty: Coaching with an Intergenerational Lens. Boston: Economic Mobility Pathways.

¹⁵ CENTER ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD 2016a. Building Core Capacities for Life: The Science Behind the Skills Adults Need to Succeed in Parenting and the Workplace. Harvard University

¹⁶ Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2017). Three Principles to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families. <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

¹⁷ SHONKOFF, J. P. & FISHER, P. A. 2013. Rethinking evidence-based practice and two-generation programs to create the future of early childhood policy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 25, 1635-1653.

owned approaches. Given the importance Aboriginal organisations and communities attribute to Aboriginal community control and oversight, this investment must be delivered through a community control mechanism and oriented towards clearly identified outcomes.

Consistent with international best practice, a holistic community-led approach to Aboriginal family and community strengthening is required. Further, funding for program evaluation is an essential component of all Aboriginal service delivery, empowering local Aboriginal communities to develop and strengthen an evidence base. Again, this should not be a simplistic examination of impact, but rather seek to establish a rapid iterative process of evaluation and improvement. Importantly, programs showing promise in one Aboriginal community must not be imposed on other communities, but rather seek to communicate to other communities of emerging evidence and empower communities to examine effective components that they might consider for their own service system.

Many of the organisations outlined in the above case studies have already started down this road of community-led design and continuous improvement. This provides a key starting point for the development of effective targeted earlier intervention approaches to strengthen Aboriginal families and communities. The following key recommendations are provided for consideration in supporting and investing in parenting programs for Aboriginal people and communities:

1. That an Aboriginal Parenting Framework is established to guide investment in parenting supports for Aboriginal parents. The development of this framework must be:
 - a. built on the principle of Aboriginal self-determination, strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal communities to design, develop and continuously improve parenting supports
 - b. support Aboriginal communities to deliver locally tailored, individualised parenting supports that are culturally embedded, through flexible funding approaches
 - c. ensure that funded parenting programs are not delivered in isolation but as a component of a broad, genuinely integrated Aboriginal Community Response.
2. Invest in the ongoing development of a library of resources to showcase Aboriginal community-led approaches that are achieving strong outcomes or showing promise in strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal parents, supporting Aboriginal communities in the ongoing development of local approaches.

3. Align outcomes of the Aboriginal Parenting Framework to Aboriginal perspectives of parenting practices and child outcomes that are community-led and culturally embedded.

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Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview

Questions included:

Name of Organisation:

Address:

Contact details

Name and position:

Part 1 - The Organisation

Q: Please tell me about your organisation. Prompts might include:

- What is the background of your organisation
- Are you a member of a broader group of organisations (Land Council, Aboriginal Medical Services, Aboriginal Child and Family Services etc)
- How long has your organisation been running?
- What is the role of community in your organisation (for example, Board/governance etc). Is it an Aboriginal Community Controlled organisation, according to AbSec's definition?
- From where does your organisation receive most of its funding? (State government, Commonwealth etc)?

Part 2 – Parenting Program Service Delivery

- Q. Can you tell me about the program you run to support Aboriginal parents in your community?
- Q. What led you and the organisation to establish this program? What if anything did you notice happening in your community that this program aimed to support?
- Q. Was this program based on any pre-existing model (Triple P, etc), or was it developed in the community?
- Q. How are parents identified for the program? What strategies do you have in place for recruitment of parents to participate?
- Q. Is your program delivered individually or in a group setting? Are the groups formed in any particular way (gender, age, etc)
- Q. What are the skills, knowledge or other benefits that your program aims to provide to parents?
- Q. How are these skills/knowledge/benefits provided?
- Q. In what ways is your approach effective at supporting Aboriginal parents? Has there been a formal evaluation of this program, the model it is based on, or any formal or informal feedback from program participants? Is there any data that can be shared with us?
- Q. How important are these elements to your program? For example, elements might include:
- Aboriginal control of program design and delivery
 - Integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the program
 - Connection to the local community
- Q. Is your program integrated with other child and family supports delivered in your local community? If so, in what ways? For example, do you refer to other programs or supports, for parents or their children?
- Q. Where does service delivery happen? (in the home of the parent/s, your office, playgroup, surroundings)
- Q. How long do you work with parent/s, families and children? Is there a specific timeframe?
- Q. How many parent/s, families are you able to provide services to?
- Q. How does your organisation connect with parent/s and families to ensure they receive services especially parents, children who may have been difficult to engage
- Q. Who delivers the program? What do you see as the essential skills for someone coordinating/delivering a program like this to Aboriginal parents?
- Q. How flexible is the delivery of this program? How does it (or has it in the past) adapted to the specific needs of Aboriginal parents?
- Q. Are there any challenges or barriers you have identified that impact on the support you provide to Aboriginal parents? In what ways can these barriers be overcome?
- Q. Is there any documentation about the program that you can share?