



Building Children's Resilience through Respectful and Equitable Relationships Pilot Project 2016 – 2018

MAV PVAW Network Meeting
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Aim

To positively influence the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours of children, centre educators and staff, and families, to promote respect and equity between the genders

Evaluation Questions

To what extent can a respectful relationships and gender equity program, run in a selected children's centre, influence the knowledge skills, attitudes and behaviours of educators and staff, children and families?

How can the program be enhanced and modified to better achieve the aim?



Violence against women is serious, prevalent and driven by **GENDER INEQUALITY**

Gendered Drivers

Condoning of violence against women

Men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence

Stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity

Disrespect towards women and male peer relationships that emphasize aggression

Actions to prevent violence against women

Challenge condoning of violence against women

Promote women's independence and decision making

Challenge gender stereotypes and roles

Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships

Change the Story, Our Watch, 2015

Whole of Centre approach

- Educators, managers, parents/families and children in all the rooms

Across a number of activities

- Co-design and delivery of program for educators; workshops, mentoring, room reflections, readings
- Engagement with children and parents/families
- Environmental scan
- Policy audit
- Evaluation

Pilot Project Literature Review

- Pre schoolers are **very sensitive to gender classification**, making them attuned to the stereotypes and norms around them – have blue and red team, not boys and girls team
- Play with **overly gendered toys can impact on how children see themselves**, affecting the development of their identity and future aspirations – outdoor play is a gender ‘leveler’
- Use of **language fundamentally affects how children think about the world** – use storybooks to have discussions about gender
- **Early childhood professionals have great influence** on development of children’s attitudes and beliefs – examine our own unconscious bias
- **Children absorb expected gender roles** by watching adults – let children see tasks and duties being shared



Children

- More pro-social responses and behaviours to challenging situations = shift from Time 1 to Time 2
- At Time 2, both boys and girls reported there would be a less negative outcome if a boy or girl dressed in a non-stereotypical way (a shift for boys from Time 1)
- At Time 2, both boys and girls reported enjoying a broader range of activities.

Educators

- Increased awareness of identifying and intervening in 'gender power relationships'
- Shift towards less traditional gender role attitudes
- Although 75% would recommend the program in other centres but less than 50% agreed or strongly agreed their satisfaction with the program

Parents/Carers

- Parents expressed the view the program needed to take account of broader societal issues
- Reported that the confidence of educators to talk about respect and equity was paramount
- Parents were supportive of the program but said they didn't know much about it.

Key Recommendations

- Ensure leadership
- You need time
- Use a mix of methods to suit the different levels of learning and knowledge - mentoring is particularly effective
- Encourage outdoor play
- Make sure there is a shared understanding of key terms
- Policies and philosophies that include respect and equity
- A staged approach that builds knowledge, competency and confidence
- Use books, toys and equipment to prompt discussion and challenge stereotypes
- Use innovative techniques to engage parents



www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/respectandequity

www.partnersinprevention.org.au

www.levelplayground.org.au/learn (search for early childhood educators)

Sophie Gale: sophie.gale@melbourne.vic.gov.au 0405 187726

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv8VZVP5csA&feature=youtu.be>



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