An interdisciplinary approach to developing a sensory room

Room 4
Saturday 8th October 2016
12.15 – 1.00

Sonia Harris, Social Inclusion Coordinator, SA
Sandy Stewart, Centre Director, Goodstart Hackham
Reconciliation
Goodstart

Acknowledgement of Country
Our Founding Partners
Goodstart quick facts...

- 132 centres in low SEIFA areas
- 644 centres
- 60,000 families
- 72,500 children
- 13,000 staff

Statistics current as at June 2015
Our Purpose

To ensure children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need, for school and life.
Our Strategic Direction 2020

High Quality
Inclusion
Financial Sustainability
Great People
Evidence
Influence
Six areas of focus

1. Building strong family partnerships
2. Becoming community connected
3. Respecting and celebrating diversity
4. Improving health and wellbeing
5. Accessing specialist support
6. Improving organisational systems
Enhancing Children’s Outcomes - EChO

Our intensive, integrated approach in up to 55 high priority centres over the next five years.
What is social inclusion?

We know that not all of Australia’s children have a good start in life – to be a fully participating, valued and respected citizen.

By the age of 5, many are already well behind their peers in learning and development. Those who start behind, tend to stay behind.

For Goodstart, our social inclusion goal is to ensure that those children at greater risk of falling behind have an opportunity to learn and grow through early learning.
This means we support our centres to do three things:

1. Provide high-quality, responsive services to all children already attending, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances.

2. Welcome more children and families in vulnerable circumstances to our centres.

3. Build a resilient, supportive, sustainable workforce.
Priority groups

Includes children:
- From low socio-economic circumstances (ie. SEIFA 1 & 2)
- from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds
- with disabilities or additional needs
- who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- at risk of abuse or neglect (ie. known to Child Protection)
- in detention and children in out of home care
Hackham Centre Profile

- **50%** of Children >100% CCB
- SEIFA 2km radius: **3.1**
- AEDC vulnerability 1+ domains: **32.6%**
- AEDC vulnerability 2+ domains: **23.3%**
- AEDC – *higher in all domains except emotional maturity*
Why a sensory room in EL&C?
The EYLF describes ‘inclusive practice’ as:

“Vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests and abilities of each child. They cater for different learning capacities and learning styles and invite children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions”

(DEEWR, 2009, p.15)
Sensory development

0-6 years
Sensory processing

Humans have 5 senses plus 2 hidden senses

At least 1 in 20 children’s daily life is affected by SPD

1:6 children may have sensory symptoms that affect aspects of everyday life functions

Ahn, Miller, Milberger, McIntosh, 2004
Ben-Sasson, Carter, Briggs-Gowen, 2009
Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)

How does this impact on early learning?
Effects of Sensory Processing Disorder

- Poor self-concept
- Academic difficulty
- Difficulty in groups
- Behaviour problems
- Labelled clumsy, uncooperative/disruptive

- Emotional/Social Problems
- Educational Problems
- Inability to make friends
- Anxiety, depression, aggression
- Deemed out-of-control
The individual child’s sensory personality will determine the type and combination of sensory input necessary.
Everyone is different!
“Providing sensory activities at regular intervals across the day can help the child to reach a calm and alert state.”

Winnie Dunn PhD
Implementation using an interdisciplinary approach
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Director Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning space for room</td>
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<td>Developing room environment</td>
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<td>Budgeting and resource purchasing</td>
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<td>Coordinate planning meetings</td>
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<td>Documenting the journey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rostering time off the floor for PD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspiring team to use sensory room</td>
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<td>Know purpose/evidence for sensory room</td>
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<td>Communicating with families</td>
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<td>Rostering centre use of sensory room</td>
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Occupational therapy
Consultation

10 – 20 – 70
Goodstart Speech Pathologist

- Existing relationship through weekly visits to the centre
- Works in partnership with CD and OT
- Demonstrates role of sensory needs in communication development
- To develop and facilitate the effective use of the sensory room and embed learning and practice change
Benefits of using an interdisciplinary team approach
How is the room used?

To encourage exploration, movement and use of the muscles

All resources are sensory based to meet different sensory needs

The room is set up as a blank canvas to adapt each time it's used by different children and educators
What educators say

Children have open space to express themselves using large body movements

Kelly Hartley, Kindy team Leader

Helps with regulating behaviours and sets up success for the child’s day

Nicole Burdon, Toddler team leader

Having the space and resources to be able to support children, with the extended knowledge we have developed about SPD

Kelly Jarc, Nursery team leader

Children can feel safe, secure and supported. EG: eating meals with a small number of children is not so overwhelming

Sarah McCulloch, Support worker
What have educators learnt?

- Observe children through a ‘sensory’ lens
- Observations with families
- Recognising individual sensory needs
- Increased confidence in sharing
- More curious about children
- Using the language in everyday settings
Future directions
The children’s voice
Thank you!