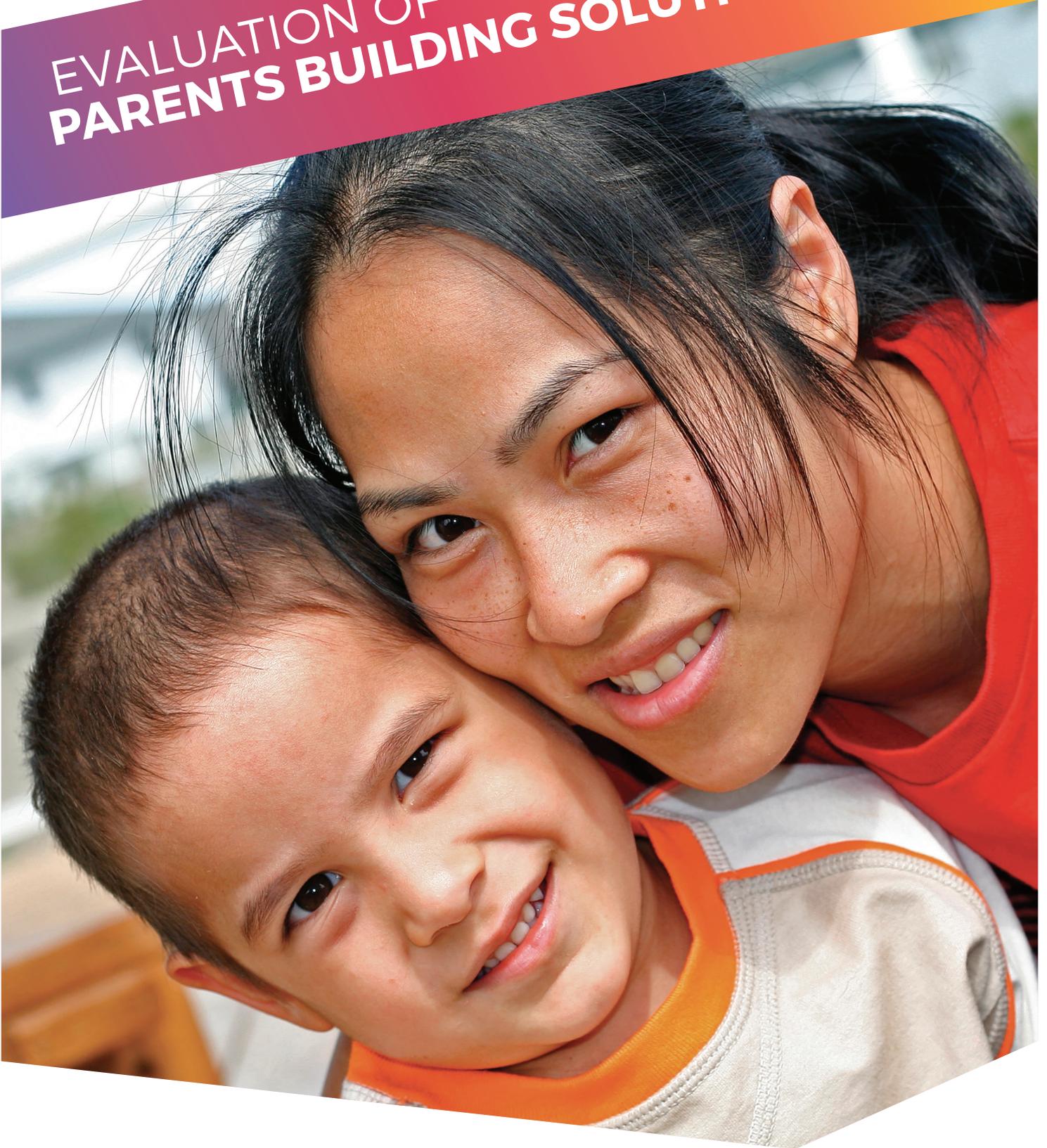


# EVALUATION OF PARENTS BUILDING SOLUTIONS.



Cathie Valentine, Jonathon Cummins & David Giles  
March 2016

**1800 809 722 | [anglicarevic.org.au](http://anglicarevic.org.au)**

**BETTER  
TOMORROWS**

# CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>06</b>
Literature Review	<b>06</b>
Theoretical Underpinning of Parents Building Solutions	<b>08</b>
Method	<b>12</b>
Results	<b>12</b>
Participant Demographics	<b>13</b>
Referral Source	<b>14</b>
Quantitative Data Results	<b>15</b>
Qualitative Data Results	<b>18</b>
Satisfaction with the Facilitation Style and Program Overall	<b>20</b>
Findings	<b>22</b>
Discussion	<b>24</b>
References	<b>25</b>
Appendix 1 – Pre Group Questionnaire	<b>27</b>
Appendix 2 – Post Group Questionnaire	<b>29</b>
Appendix 3 – Follow-up Questionnaire	<b>33</b>
Appendix 4 - Typical Responses for each coding category	<b>36</b>

## **About the Authors:**

Cathie Valentine is the Manager of Parentzone Southern and Communities for Children Cardinia at Anglicare Victoria. Cathie holds a Masters in Rural and Community Development, Bachelor of Arts, Associate Diploma in Social Science and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Jonathon Cummins is the Team Leader of Parentzone Southern at Anglicare Victoria. Jonathon holds a Bachelor of Social Work and Masters of Public Policy and Management.

David Giles is Manager Quality, Practice and Policy at Anglicare Victoria. David holds a Graduate Diploma of Psychology and Bachelor of Social Work.

## **Author Contributions:**

Cathie Valentine oversaw data collection and compilation, and conducted the qualitative data analysis. Cathie contributed to sections of the method, results, findings and discussions.

Jonathon Cummins wrote the executive summary, literature review, and discussion of theoretical underpinnings. Jonathon contributed to sections of the method, results, findings and discussions and oversaw compilation of the paper.

David Giles conducted the quantitative data analysis and wrote the quantitative aspects of the method, results and findings.

The authors would like to thank Dr. Maria Garrett, Research and Evaluation Specialist at Anglicare Victoria's Communities for Children Cardinia program for her feedback on earlier drafts of this publication.

## TABLE OF TABLES

<b>Table 1.</b> Demographics of the 49 parents who provided follow-up data	<b>13</b>
<b>Table 2.</b> Referral Source of the 49 participants	<b>14</b>
<b>Table 3.</b> Self-rated parenting. Summary of scores	<b>15</b>
<b>Table 4.</b> Self-rated parenting. Summary of results from a two-tailed, paired sample t-test	<b>16</b>
<b>Table 5.</b> Parenting Confidence. Summary of Scores	<b>17</b>
<b>Table 6.</b> Parenting Confidence. Summary of results from a two-tailed, paired sample t-test	<b>17</b>
<b>Table 7.</b> Parent-child relationship. Summary of Scores	<b>18</b>
<b>Table 8.</b> Parent-child relationship. Summary of results from a two-tailed, paired sample t-test	<b>18</b>
<b>Table 9.</b> Summary of responses relating to the question "What interactions between you and your children would you like to change/have changed?"	<b>19</b>
<b>Table 10.</b> Summary of responses relating to the question "Are there any behaviours of your own you would like to change/have changed?"	<b>19</b>
<b>Table 11.</b> Summary of responses relating to the question "Have your children changed their behaviours since the group began?"	<b>20</b>
<b>Table 12.</b> Summary of responses relating to the question "What do you value about relationships in your family?"	<b>20</b>

## TABLE OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1.</b> Self-rated parenting. Changes in average scores pre-group to follow-up on a scale of 0-10, in response to the question "how would you rate your parenting?"	<b>15</b>
<b>Figure 2.</b> Parenting confidence, changes in average scores pre-group to follow-up on a scale of 0-10, in response to the question "how confident do you feel as a parent now?"	<b>16</b>
<b>Figure 3.</b> Parent-child relationship, changes in average scores pre-group to follow-up, on a scale of 0-10, in response to the question "how would you rate your relationship with your children now?"	<b>17</b>
<b>Figure 4.</b> Satisfaction with the Facilitation Style. Responses to Questions on a Likert Scale	<b>21</b>
<b>Figure 5.</b> Satisfaction with the Parents Building Solutions Program. Responses to Questions on a Likert Scale	<b>22</b>

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is now unequivocal evidence that parenting and the early family environment are a key influence on childhood development as well as emotional, social and cognitive functioning throughout life (Siegel 1999; Shonkoff & Phillips 2000; Schore 1994). Parents Building Solutions is a strengths-based, developmental parenting program that is founded on principles of participant co-design. The program was developed over a ten year period in response to the needs of parents attending groups at a Regional Parenting Service in Melbourne, Victoria.

Data from 49 parents from 13 Parents Building Solutions programs run by Parentzone are included in this research. Parents were referred by schools, friends, maternal and child health nurses, kindergartens, family members, neighbourhood centres/libraries and through self-referral in response to advertising material. Parents completed a pre group, post group and follow-up questionnaire as part of routine service delivery.

In a variety of areas, significant increases were found in the average ( $p < 0.01$ ) scores given by parents from pre-group to 3-6 month follow-up:

- Self-rated parenting increased from 6.15 to 8.04
- Parenting confidence increased from 6.24 to 8.29
- Parent's ratings of the parent-child relationship increased from 7.34 to 8.46

Furthermore, in response to open-ended questions, parents noted changes in relation to their own behaviour, their interactions with their children and their children's behaviour. These questions did not prompt specific responses, yet several themes emerged. Of the 49 parents:

- 44 reported that their children's behaviour had changed, including that their children were:
  - accepting boundaries and consequences (24 families)
  - communicating better (23 families)
  - calmer, happier and more secure (14 families).
  - 43 parents noted interactions in their family had changed
- 32 reported an improved ability to manage their own and their children's feelings
- 28 reported being more calm and confident
- 17 reported an improved ability to set consequences
- 17 noted they were having more fun and had enhanced emotional connection with their child.

Parents were shown to be strongly engaged with the program. Overall, there was a 90% retention rate in terms of program completion. This represents a drop-out rate of only 10%. This compares to findings by Chen & Chan (2015) and Axford (et. al. 2012) who reported that in both Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) and practice settings, drop-out rates of between 40-60% are commonplace.

**Parents came to the Parents Building Solutions program predominantly to improve communication within their family, particularly around their own responses to their children. Parents reported wanting to be more calm, patient, consistent and to be better able to deal with their own feelings. A smaller but significant number of parents also reported wanting help with changing aggressive/unwanted behaviours in their children or deal with their children's behaviours more effectively.**

The changes identified by parents at post group and follow-up generally matched what parents initially stated they wanted from the group reinforcing both the efficacy of the Parents Building Solutions program, as well as the importance of tailoring the group to respond to parent's needs.

These results are very encouraging. The authors suggest that the high retention rate and positive outcomes may be linked to the participant co-design features of the program, which included:

- Tailoring each group to respond to the unique needs and learning styles of the parents attending
- Acknowledging and building on the groups existing strengths and experience
- Focusing on group process and shared learning
- Providing opportunities for reflection and skill building throughout the program
- Acknowledges the changing role of parents as the child develops from birth through to independence.

These practices were incorporated with program content that draws on a strong evidence base in relation to parenting and child development.

The results from this research are consistent with research and theoretical evidence which identifies that approaches that focus on client/parent engagement are more likely to produce successful outcomes. Further research is needed to identify the specific components and practices that produce change in parenting programs, however these findings generally support the increased use of strengths based and developmentally focussed parenting programs such as the Parents Building Solutions program. Indications from this research are that such an approach may lead to more sustainable outcomes and better implementation in real world settings.

It is recommended that further studies of all types of parenting programs should pay particular attention to the number of parents who are effectively engaged compared to those who 'drop out', and the processes by which parents are effectively engaged and learn new skills in parenting.

#### Summary of typical parent responses from pre group to post group in response to open ended questions

#### BEFORE

'I don't want to be yelling at them'  
'[They're] not listening'  
'[I want to change] my reactions'  
'[I want to stop] smacking and losing the plot'  
'[I want] better ideas on how to discipline'  
'[I'd like to] control my anger when I'm fed up'  
'[I want to] stress less and deal with it better'  
'I think I'm too strict'  
'[I think I'm] over mothering'  
'[I want to stop] being anxious about [my] child's safety'  
'[I'd like to] be more consistent'  
'[I want to] stop screaming'

#### AFTER

'[I'm] a lot calmer'  
'There is a lot more cuddles and understanding'  
'[I'm] not using negative language'  
'[I have] more choices so I don't yell as much'  
'[I've changed] my yelling behaviour towards my children'  
'No more yelling at children'  
'I'm more firm with my expectations'  
'I don't get into power struggles'  
'Instilling family rules and consequences rather than just punishing'  
'It works to give them choices'  
'Listen more - interfere less'  
'I understand a lot of what my toddler is doing is normal'  
'[I've stopped] smacking, because it was clear it was making things worse'  
'Take time to listen and not jump down her throat'

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Parents Building Solutions is a strengths-based, developmental parenting program that is based on principles of participant co-design. The program was developed over a ten year period in response to the needs of parents attending groups at a Regional Parenting Service in Melbourne, Victoria.

**This research represents the first comprehensive analysis of participants in the program. Parents Building Solutions is significant in that the focus of the program is as much on the process of engagement, and being client driven, as it is on the content in the materials. Using an adult, experiential learning model of participant co-design, the contributions, values, and strengths of the participants are used as the basis of learning new skills and building on existing ones.**

This research is significant in that it examines the effectiveness of a program that acknowledges the expertise and contribution of its participants as a key source of change. The research contributes to the discussion about the relative value and contribution of the components of effective parenting programs.

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

There is now unequivocal evidence that parenting and the early family environment are a key influence on childhood development as well as emotional, social and cognitive functioning throughout life (Siegel 1999; Shonkoff & Phillips 2000; Schore 1994). Insecure or poor parent-child relationships, harsh and inconsistent discipline, and poor monitoring and supervision have been shown to be associated with a range of problems relating to mental health, substance use, criminality and educational disengagement (Barlow, Smailagic, Ferriter, Bennet & Jones 2010). It follows that supporting parents to change these kinds of parenting practices will therefore lead to improved outcomes for children and society.

There is strong evidence that parenting programmes are able to affect positive changes in parenting practices (Barlow et. al. 2010; Chen & Chan 2015; Barlow, Smailagic, Huband, Roloff & Bennet 2014; Kaminski, Valle, Filene & Boyle 2008). Meta-analysis and systematic reviews of published studies involving hundreds of studies, and thousands of parents, show that these programmes are generally effective in improving parental psychosocial health (Barlow et. al. 2014), preventing child injury and maltreatment (Chen & Chan 2015; Kendrick, Mulvaney, Stevens, Mytton & Stewart-Brown 2013) and improving children's behaviour (Barlow et. al. 2010; Furlong, McGilloway, Bywater, Hutchings, Smith & Donnelly 2011).

Whilst parenting programmes in general have been shown to be effective, there is little consensus over which programmes are more effective than others, as direct comparisons between programmes have rarely been made (Kaminski et. al. 2008; Barlow et. al. 2014). The assumption until now has been that the specific components of parent education programmes, such as variants in programme content and delivery, are the 'active ingredients' that produce change (Kaminski et. al. 2008). This has led to a proliferation of programmes over the past few decades, each with varying content, technique and models of change, and each vying to produce evidence for the effectiveness of their particular approach (Kaminski et. al. 2008). For instance, a recent review identified 109 different published parenting programmes from Australia alone (Wade, Macvean, Falkiner, Devine and Milton 2012).

**The assumption that the varying components of parenting are the 'active ingredients' producing change is largely untested, and more research is needed to understand the actual factors that make programmes effective.**

This is particularly true given that many Evidence Based Programmes (EBPs) have failed to reproduce the results shown in efficacy trials when implemented in real world settings (Axford, Lehtonen, Kaoukji, Tobin & Berry 2012; Bumbarger & Perkins 2008). There is little empirical evidence at present to support the belief that variation in outcome is due to specific elements within programmes, rather than other factors. For instance, a meta-analytical comparison between behavioural and non-behavioural interventions (Lundahl, Risser and Lovejoy 2006) found little difference in effect size between the two. Kaminski and colleagues (2008) used meta-analysis of 77 studies to identify components of programmes that were linked to larger effects. The authors identified that programme components consistently associated with larger effects included increasing positive parent-child interactions and emotional communication skills, teaching discipline skills and the importance of parenting consistency, and requiring parents to practice new skills with their children during parent training sessions.

Whilst this research provides evidence of the importance of including these components in parenting programmes, the influence of a range of other factors on successful outcomes received minimal exploration in the literature on parenting programmes. These factors might include the degree to which parents are engaged with the programme, the relationship/trust they have with the facilitator, the influence of other participants in the group setting and the internal and external resources of parents themselves.

**In other fields, such as psychology, decades of research has produced extensive evidence that the specific model used accounts for roughly only 1% of the variation in outcomes (e.g. Laska, Gurman & Wampold 2014; Norcross & Lambert 2011; Wampold 1997; and many others). In fact, it has been found that client related factors and the degree of client engagement far outweigh factors relating to the specific model used in psychotherapy and are the single biggest predictor of outcome (Duncan, Miller, Wampold and Hubble 2010).**

Client engagement in parenting programmes is a major challenge in both experimental and real world settings. In their meta-analysis of 31 parenting programmes, Chen & Chan (2015) reported attrition rates of up to 48% for some Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs). Similarly in practice settings, it has been reported that between 40-60% of parents drop out (Axford et. al. 2012). A lack of engagement has therefore been cited as one of the key reasons why many evidence based programmes show considerable 'treatment failure' when implemented in real world settings (Axford et. al. 2012). A systematic review (Mytton, Ingram, Manns and Thomas 2013) of 26 studies relating to enablers of engagement in parenting programmes found significant difference in the views of parents compared to researchers. Parents were more likely to report enablers such as using trusted, non-judgemental and empathic facilitators, having the opportunity to learn skills, the value of the group experience in providing peer support, exchanging ideas and creating a safe place to talk. These factors were rarely identified by researchers, who more commonly identified factors such as having facilitators who were well trained in the program. This suggests that where protocols of EBPs do not promote practices that engage parents, they may in fact be having a counter-intuitive approach on programme outcome. There is therefore an urgent need to understand the factors that promote parental engagement in the change process, and how these can be maximised in programme design and delivery. There is also a need to understand how factors such as the relationship/trust parents have with the facilitator, the influence of other participants in the group setting and the internal and external resources of parents themselves contribute to changes in parenting practices.

**The Parents Building Solutions model is based on the hypothesis that the active participation of parents in the change process is key to changing parenting practices.**

The specific programme content is therefore viewed as one factor amongst others that contribute to programme effectiveness. The range of factors specific to any given programme that are hypothesised to lead to changes in parenting practices include:

- Having programme content that encourages parenting practices that are known to improve child wellbeing
- The perceived relevance of the programme content to parents' needs and reasons for attending
- Whether the programme content fits with, or is able to be integrated into parents existing values and belief system (cultural, family and community values)
- The congruence of the programme delivery with participant's learning styles and theory of change
- Learning that occurs from other parents in the programme and outside/after the programme
- The degree to which the programme facilitator is viewed as trustworthy, knowledgeable and empathic
- Opportunities to reflect on, set goals for, and pay attention to, parenting practices
- Experience of a supportive group environment where participants feel safe to return and participate
- Opportunities to integrate programme content into practices through reflection and opportunity to practice skills
- A sense of hope, optimism and a focus on building on existing strengths

These factors are based on theoretical and empirical evidence from a range of fields, which are further explored in the following section.

## **4.0 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING OF PARENTS BUILDING SOLUTIONS**

### **4.1 OVERALL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

The theoretical underpinnings of Parents Building Solutions are in relation to two broad areas; practices that promote learning and behaviour change (process) and parenting theory (content). Overall, Parents Building Solutions can be described as a strengths based, developmental parenting programme, using participant co-design.

#### **PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE LEARNING AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE**

##### **The Strengths Approach**

Whilst focusing and building on people's strengths is a key element of the Strengths Approach, the overarching framework is much broader. Strengths Based Work moves away from the concept of 'helping' and into 'empowerment'. It involves sharing power with each other rather than having 'power over' (McCashen 2005). This overarching principle informs the way in which Parents Building Solutions is facilitated in that facilitators aim to share responsibility and power with the group through transparent processes and decision making. This principle also informs the parenting approach of the programme in that it encourages parents to focus on the importance of discipline as a means of teaching children the skills needed for self-discipline, rather than trying to control (have power over) the behaviour of their children.

The Strengths Approach is hopeful and forward looking in that it focuses on setting goals, developing skills rather than fixing faults, recognising the competencies and resources of each person and their ability to find solutions to their own problems (McCashen 2005). The Strengths Approach has a strong emphasis on engagement in the change process, recognising that people are most likely to work towards goals that they set for themselves, and to face difficult questions and issues when they are recognised as the decision makers in their own lives.

##### **Adult Learning**

In an Adult Learning model, the teacher takes more of a facilitation role rather than using a didactic style (Burns 1995; Knowles, Holton & Swanson 2012). Learning is participant directed in that it is based on participant needs and negotiated with the participants (Burns 1995; Knowles et. al. 2012). Adult learning is also participant centred in that it focuses on the whole person, utilises participant's experiences as resources for learning, uses relevant materials and small groups (Burns 1995; Knowles et. al. 2012).

##### **Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning is about developing an idea (action theory) from our own experiences and then continually modifying it so that our behaviour becomes more effective (Kolb 2014). Experiential learning comes in stages by first changing/adapting our thinking, then our attitude and finally our behaviour. Effective learning will occur only when all three occur. Once an action theory has been formed, tested, assessed and feedback obtained, the theory can be reflected upon and modified and refined (Kolb 2014). Experiential learning recognises that learning is more effective when it is an active rather than a passive process, as individuals believe more in knowledge they discover for themselves than in knowledge presented by others (Kolb 2014; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2012).

Experiential learning also recognises that long term behaviours and attitudes are hard to change, and that people need the support of others in a supportive and accepting environment in order to experiment and 'try out' new behaviours (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2012).

##### **Solution Focused Model**

The focus of the Solution Focussed Model is solutions rather than problems. It involves thinking about what things would look like when 'the problem' is solved. It acknowledges that 'the problem' exists, but does not focus on it and it involves letting go of pre-existing ideas about the nature and origin of problems (De Jong & Berg 2012; Metcalf 1998).

The Solution Focused approach does not focus on why things or behaviours happen. Instead, it looks at occasions when things didn't go wrong, when there were successful behaviours employed, and how these behaviours can be used again. In this way the family members are encouraged to move away from focusing on their problems and to instead pay attention to what is going on in their lives that they want to continue to have happen. By doing so, family members can recognise when things go well, and use those skills and techniques again.

##### **Stages of groups**

The Stages of Small Group Development were first hypothesised by Tuckman and Tuckman (1977), and has been recognised as providing a good framework for group work theory (Tennant 2006). The stages are generally agreed to be Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Mourning. The model emphasises that any group goes through various stages, and that the processes and practices employed at each stage will help the group to navigate each stage optimally.

## Community Development

Community Development work is driven by social justice values, where everybody is involved in decision making and equity is paramount (Ward 1993; Kenny 2006). It comes from the bottom up not top down. A Community Development approach seeks to address issues of social justice, access to decision making (particularly in areas of personal concern) and minimising the impact of structural constraints.

Incorporating a Community Development approach into a Parenting Programme means recognising the long term, community wide effects and implications of the way a programme is delivered. This includes the paying attention to the way a programme is developed, implemented and researched so as to “do no harm” to communities and considering the implications of practice and programme design on the willingness of communities to accept and engage with programmes and services in the future.

A Community Development approach can also include recognising and addressing the barriers faced by vulnerable parents and ‘hard to reach’ families who may benefit most from parenting programmes (Lohoar, Price-Robertson & Nair 2013). Moore & Fry (2011:25) in reviewing the evidence base on working with vulnerable families and communities state that:

**“[effective services focus on] how services are delivered rather than what is delivered. This is because there is considerable evidence that successfully supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged families and communities depends first and foremost upon the manner in which they are engaged and involved.”**

Parents Building Solutions draws this theoretical evidence together to inform a range of practices that are designed to promote parent engagement in the process of learning new parenting skills. These are briefly outlined in Section 4.2 Key Practices, and further articulated in the Parents Building Solutions Manual (Rutherford, Valentine & Ryan 2015).

## Parenting Theory

The Parents Building Solutions program content draws on a range of theories related to parenting, as outlined below.

## Developmental Framework

**Parents Building Solutions views parenting as the gradual process of assisting children to develop the necessary emotional, social, physical and cognitive skills to be prepared for adult life in our society today. This is achieved through known and agreed rules and known and agreed consequences, which are based on family values and beliefs. This structure provides the opportunity for children to learn self-discipline, responsibility and socially acceptable behaviour. Importantly, this structure is mediated through the parent-child relationship, including communication style, ability to regulate emotions and parental self-talk and self-care.**

**This forms the overall framework for the Parents Building Solutions program.**

Importantly, taking a developmental view of parenting means that the goal of parenting is for children to learn skills, including problem-solving, responsibility and self-discipline. In this sense, Parents Building Solutions differs to some parenting programs that use punishment and reward to ensure compliance with parental expectations, thus bypassing opportunities for children to learn self-discipline and the ability to regulate their own emotions.

The study of childhood development is a large and wide-ranging field. A review by Shonkoff & Phillips (2000) on behalf of a committee of leading researchers and practitioners sought to synthesise the available research on neuroscience and early childhood development. Shonkoff & Phillips (2000:107) identified three key domains that are considered precursors for “lifelong resilience and competency”. These domains are; negotiating the transition from external to self-regulation, acquiring the capabilities that undergird communication and learning to relate well to others. The key skills identified in these domains include learning to regulate one’s own emotions and behaviours, problem-solving, developing the capacity to trust, to love and to nurture and learning to resolve conflict constructively. Therefore, the key concept behind Parents Building Solutions is for children to learn problem solving skills, social skills, how to regulate their emotions, self-discipline and responsibility for their own behaviour. As Shonkoff & Phillips (2000:108) state:

“Learning to regulate one’s emotions, behaviours and attention... captures the emergence of self-control and independence and can provide an analogy for the movement towards competent functioning that characterise development as a whole.”

## Rules based on family values

A child's ability to make judgements about right and wrong has been recognised as a developmental task that is strongly influenced by parenting (Kochanska 1993; Emde, Biringen, Clyman & Oppenheim 1991). The 'moral self' develops as children internalise parent's rules in infancy and beyond (Emde et. al. 1991). In this sense, the articulation of the basis for rules, boundaries and limits (values and beliefs) is important as it teaches the child about the purpose of the rule, and promotes a sense of fairness. Social psychology has demonstrated that perceived fairness is an important component of co-operation and acceptance of authority (Lind & Tyler 1988). Thus the use of known rules is an important feature of PBS. Parents are encouraged to create rules that have a purpose (i.e. learning for the child), are clear, can be understood and remembered by the child and are based on their family values and beliefs. These are initially articulated by the parent, and later, become agreed rules when the child is at an age where they can be negotiated.

## Natural and Logical Consequences

The use of consequences for behaviour is a well-established feature of many parenting programs, including S.T.E.P (Dinkmeyer & McKay 1975), Triple P (Saunders 1999), 1-2-3 Magic (Phelan 2010) and Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton & Mihalic 2001). Many of these programs are considered behavioural programs in that they seek to use positive reinforcement (e.g. praise) for desired behaviours; and negative reinforcement (e.g. punishing or ignoring) for unwanted behaviours (Lundahl, et. al. 2006). This contrasts with non-behavioural or relational parenting programs which emphasise healthy communication, democratic parenting, respect for others, problem-solving and mindfulness (Lundahl et. al. 2006). Natural and Logical Consequences are a key feature of the Parents Building Solutions program, however they are applied in a significantly different way to behavioural focussed programs. Consistent with a developmental framework, consequences are used as a means for children to learn, through cause and effect, self-discipline and responsibility for one's own behaviour. The way consequences are implemented is considered vitally important in the Parents Building Solutions program, with an emphasis on healthy communication; problem solving, avoiding power struggles and using known consequences to provide children with the opportunity to learn how to make decisions about their behaviour. In this way Parents Building Solutions is more similar in philosophy and approach to S.T.E.P (Dinkmeyer & McKay 1975), which whilst using logical and natural consequences, focuses on reflective listening, problem-ownership and problem-solving, and giving choices within limits.

## Parent-Child Relationship

It is widely recognised that the parent-child relationship, including early attachments are key to healthy development throughout life (e.g. Schore 1994; Siegel 1999; Perry 2002). Research into early childhood development shows that the internalisation of rules and the ability to self-regulate emotions and behaviour occurs through repeated healthy interactions with an emotionally available caregiver (Kochanska 1993; Perry 2002). Shonkoff & Phillips (2000:122) state:

**"Regulation in early development is deeply embedded in the child's relations with others. Providing the experiences, supports and encouragement that enable children to take over and self-regulate in one area of functioning after another is one of the most critical elements of good caregiving."**

Research indicates that the influence of the parent-child relationship continues throughout adolescence. For instance, research has consistently shown that parental monitoring of adolescent behaviour is a moderator for a range of risk factors (Hayes, Hudson & Matthews 2003). Evidence also suggests that adolescents must allow parents to monitor their behaviour in order for this to be effective (Stattin & Kerr 2000). Stattin & Kerr (2000) argue that it is the parent-child relationship that facilitates parental awareness of their child's behaviour. Similarly, Robinson, Power & Allan (2010) state that close relationships with parents are a key protective factor during adolescence, providing a 'secure base' through adolescence and into early adulthood. Children must want to follow the rules, and in this regard the development of empathy through a secure and consistent parent-child relationship is critical (Perry 2002). Parents Building Solutions emphasises the importance of the parent-child relationship through a focus on healthy communication; avoiding power struggles, the use of praise, strategies to strengthen relationships, active listening and dealing with uncomfortable feelings. The ability of parents to regulate their own emotions and to care for themselves is seen as vital in building a strong parent-child relationship because this enables parents to respond rather than react to children's behaviour.

## Emotional Intelligence

Emotional functioning plays a major role in the development of social skills and pro social behaviour (Eisenberg, Cumberland & Spinrad 1998; Lopes, Salovey, Beers & Cote 2005; Raver 2003). Parents play a key role in the development of emotional competence through their own expressions of emotion and beliefs about emotion, their reactions to their children's emotion, as well as through discussions and conversation about emotion (Eisenberg et. al. 1998). Whilst there are various influences and mediators on the development of emotional competence and social skills, the parent-child relationship provides the major early context for the development of emotional functioning (Wilson, Havighurst & Harley 2012; Shonkoff & Phillips 2000). Parent's reactions to their children's emotions also directly contribute to the quality of the parent-child relationship (Eisenberg et. al. 1998). Parents Building Solutions focuses on assisting parents to deal with their own uncomfortable feelings (such as anger, anxiety or sadness), as well as emotion coaching strategies for dealing with children's feelings. This builds the parent-child relationship, decreases parental stress and provides opportunities for children to gradually learn the skills to self-regulate emotions and behaviour.

## Self-Talk and Self-Care

Parental psychosocial functioning has been shown to have a significant impact on children's wellbeing (Barlow et. al. 2014). Mental health, parental conflict and parental confidence all impact on the ability of parents to respond effectively to children's behaviour in an emotionally attuned way (Barlow et. al. 2014). The content of the Parents Building Solutions program therefore includes discussions about parental self-care, the importance of social supports, and parental self-talk (via the concept of resilience). This enables parents to respond, rather than react to children's behaviour and to model the social, emotional and behavioural skills they hope to pass on to their children.

## 4.2 KEY PRACTICES

Based on the theoretical framework outlined above, a range of practices are used in the Parents Building Solutions programme. These practices are designed to directly promote participant engagement, which is hypothesised to lead to changes in parenting. The practices include:

- Using materials from sources that are based on well researched parenting theory to match the issues parents are identifying as most important to them
- Parents complete a questionnaire at the commencement of the programme which assists them to reflect on their parenting and what they would like to change
- Discussion is held regarding what parents want to achieve / cover in the programme in week one. Subsequent sessions are designed to cover the topics from this discussion and the pre group questionnaires using the materials in the manual that are most relevant. The agenda for the subsequent sessions is then negotiated with the participants in week two.
- Activities used in the first week focus on the process of group formation. This includes making a group agreement together about how the group will operate.
- Consulting and 'checking in' with the group about issues relating to group processes and the group agreement as necessary.
- Factors such as the appropriateness and impact of the venue, food, location, time of day, session length and seating arrangement are considered for each group.
- Using parent's wording when recording or discussing their ideas, rather than expert terminology.
- Encouraging group discussion through asking for participant's ideas on what is being discussed and strategies they have used successfully; reflecting/summarising parent's comments and asking 'curiosity' questions to open discussions.
- Using a variety of methods of presentation, i.e. auditory, visual and kinaesthetic.
- At the beginning of each session, providing opportunities for reflection on learning from previous weeks as well as how this is being implemented.
- Using activities to set goals individually and as a group in relation to parenting.
- Making a record of the discussion each week and giving this back to parents as a handout (using their own words).
- Giving concrete examples and the opportunity to practice skills and techniques.

The actual practices used in implementing the programme in a real world setting are therefore considered paramount to the outcome of each programme. A range of modules are presented under themes in the Parents Building Solutions manual (Rutherford, Valentine & Ryan 2015), encouraging facilitators to explore the issues relevant to parents. Each theme includes a reflection tool for facilitators to think through practice issues when delivering a strength based program. This allows for continuous learning and encourages facilitators to add additional resources, modelling how to think through each addition with regard to its usefulness in achieving the ultimate outcome of engaging parents in building parenting skills.

## 5.0 METHOD

Parents from 13 Parents Building Solutions programmes run by Parentzone were asked to participate in the research. All participants who returned follow-up forms provided written consent for Anglicare Victoria to use the information they provided for research purposes.

The 13 parenting programmes were delivered in three local government areas, the City of Casey, Shire of Cardinia and Mornington Peninsula, situated at the growth edge of the Southern Metropolitan area of Melbourne. The programmes operated between January 2008 and September 2009. Programmes were delivered from a variety of venues including Community Centres, Schools, Kindergartens, Maternal & Child Health Centres and Family Service venues, each chosen for their centrality within a specific community.

Seven of the programmes were delivered during the day, and six programmes were delivered in the evening. The number of two hour sessions provided as part of the programme varied between four and seven, determined in consultation with participants; four sessions (two programmes), five sessions (three programmes), six sessions (seven programmes) and seven sessions (one programme).

Participants completed pre group, post group and follow-up questionnaires as part of routine service delivery. On these questionnaires, participants rated their parenting, parenting confidence and relationship with their children on a 10 point Likert scale. Participants were also asked to provide written responses to various questions about their family values, communication, behaviours, strengths, interactions, future goals and achievements since coming to the programme (see Appendix 1, 2 and 3). Questions related to the following issues were also included; participant's perception of the success of the programme, presentation style, content, capacity to find ways to work with children, refer friend or relative and usefulness of program. In addition, questions related to the style of facilitators across a range of factors were included.

The follow-up questionnaire was completed between three to six months after group completion. Two options were provided for gathering follow up information; to come together for a follow up session or be sent the follow-up questionnaire by mail, with a reply paid envelope. No incentives were offered to any participants to complete pre, post or follow up questionnaires.

In analysing the data, written responses to questions were transcribed, coded and grouped according to themes. Typical examples were selected to exemplify each category (Appendix 4).

For quantitative data, paired sample t-tests were conducted to investigate whether participants reported significant changes to their parenting, parenting confidence and relationship with their children between the three measurement points (pre-group, post-group and at follow-up).

## 6.0 RESULTS

**A total of 99 parents were enrolled across the 13 programmes included in the study, with 89 parents completing the programme. Overall this represented a 90% retention rate in terms of program completion.**

Of the 89 participants who completed the programme, 49 participants completed questionnaires at the follow-up stage 3-6 months later, and were included in the analysis (response rate 55%).

Of the total 49 data sets included in the analysis, 43 submitted pre, post and follow data, and six submitted post and follow-up only. Whilst most respondents answered all questions, in some cases respondents skipped some questions. No information is available as to why some respondents did not complete all questions. Overall, the rate of response increased with each phase of data collection. While it is customary to eliminate respondents who had not completed all questions at each phase of data collection, the regularity of increased response over time is interesting in itself, and it was therefore determined that all who responded would be included in this report.

Four of the 13 groups elected a follow up session 3-6 months later; 20 respondents completed the questionnaire at this time. The remaining groups elected to not have a follow up session and were instead sent the questionnaire, with 29 respondents completing the follow-up questionnaire.

## 6.1 PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics for the 49 participants are outlined below (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Demographics of the 49 parents who provided follow-up data.

Demographics	Number (n)	Percentage
Total Participants	49	
Gender		
Female	47	96%
Male	2	4%
Age Range		
Under 25	0	-
25-35	13	27%
36-45	26	53%
Over 45	9	18%
Undisclosed	1	2%
Country of Birth		
Australia	36	73%
England	4	8%
Papua New Guinea	1	2%
India	1	2%
Poland	1	2%
South Africa	1	2%
New Zealand	1	2%
Mexico	1	2%
Malaysia	1	2%
Undisclosed	2	4%
Number of Children		
1 Child	8	16%
2 Children	36	73%
3 Children	2	4%
4 Children	2	4%
Undisclosed	1	2%
Relationship Status		
Married	26	53%
Separated	5	10%
De Facto	4	8%
Never Married	4	8%
Divorced	3	6%
Other Relationship	2	4%
Widowed	1	2%
Undisclosed	4	8%
Employment Status		
Employed	18	37%
Full time at home	14	29%
At home/part time employed	5	10%
Unemployed	2	4%
Self employed	1	2%
Not in labour force	1	2%
Carers Allowance	1	2%
Undisclosed	7	14%

## 6.2 REFERRAL SOURCE

Referrals to the programme were received from various sources, with a large number coming from universal services such as schools, maternal child health and kindergartens (Table 2). Referrals via 'Word of Mouth' were also notable, including from friends, family and a past participant.

**Table 2.** Referral Source of the 49 participants.

Referral Source	Number of referrals received (n)	Percentage
Schools	19	39%
Friend	8	16%
Maternal Child Health Nurse	6	12%
Kindergarten	3	6%
Family	2	4%
Past Participant	1	2%
Youth Service	1	2%
Neighbourhood Centre	1	2%
Library	1	2%
Internet	1	2%
Email	1	2%
Newspaper	1	2%
Flyer	1	2%
Anglicare Victoria (internal)	1	2%
Undisclosed	2	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	

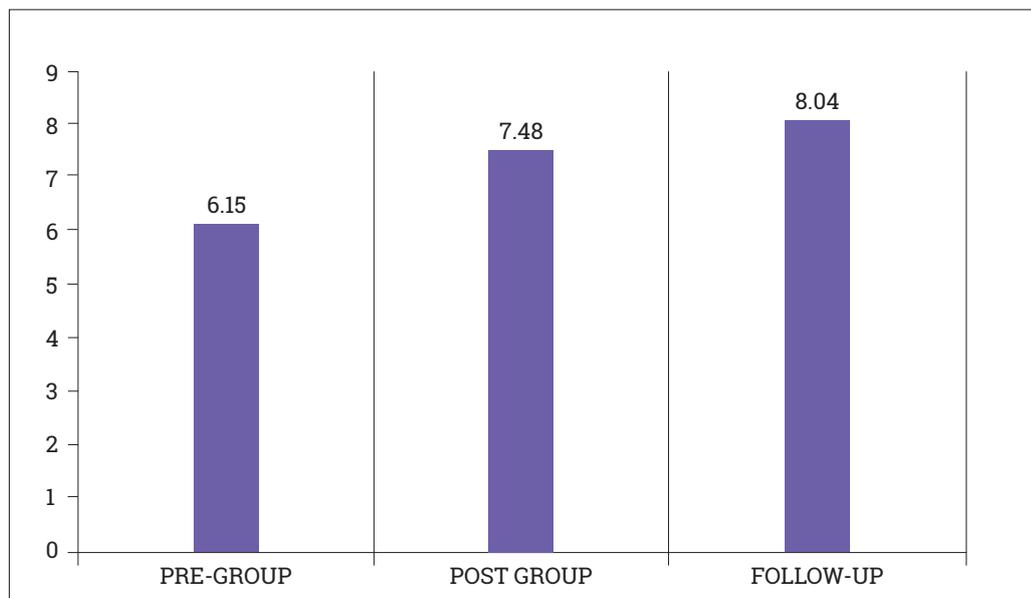
### 6.3 QUANTITATIVE DATA RESULTS

Data based on self-rated scores on a 10 point scale at pre group, post group and follow-up three to six months after group completion are analysed below.

#### **Results in relation to the question "How would you rate your parenting now?"**

Scores in response to this question ranged from two to ten pre group, with a mean of 6.15. At follow-up three to six months after group completion, the mean score increased to 8.04, with a range of five to ten (Figure 2; Table 3). For participants who had scored themselves lowest at pre-group, scores increased by at least three points at follow-up.

**Figure 1.** Self-rated parenting. Changes in average scores pre-group to follow-up on a scale of 0-10, in response to the question "how would you rate your parenting?"



**Table 3.** Self-rated parenting. Summary of scores.

	Number of Responses (n)	Range of Scores	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Standard Error
Pre	41	2 - 10	6.15	1.84	0.29
Post	44	3 - 10	7.48	1.64	0.25
Follow-up	47	5 - 10	8.04	1.04	0.15

A two-tailed, paired sample t-test revealed significant increases in participants' responses to this question for all comparisons (Table 4). Based on this data, the range of effect sizes that we can estimate would occur in 95% of cases were the Parents Building Solutions intervention to be applied to its entire potential client population falls between a medium and very large effect. Accordingly, we could expect that across this entire group of potential programme participants, the increase in self-rated parenting capacity they would exhibit between pre-group and post-group (were they to undertake the group) would be somewhere from 0.43 to 1.16 standard deviations.

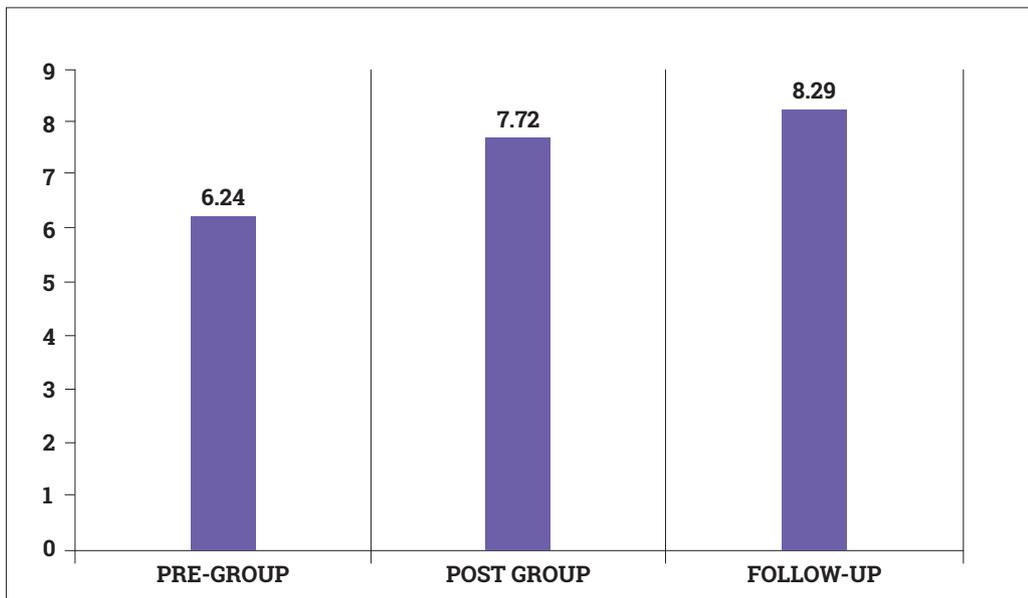
**Table 4.** Self-rated parenting. Summary of results from a two-tailed, paired sample t-test.

	Number of complete sets	t score	p value	Hedges g	95% Confidence Intervals
Pre Group to Post Group	37	5.540	<0.0001	0.79	0.43 - 1.16
Post	41	2.883	<0.01	0.39	0.08 - 0.70
Follow-up	38	7.941	<0.0001	1.21	0.80 - 1.63

**Results in relation to the question "How confident do you feel as a parent now?"**

Participants rated their parenting confidence, with scores ranging from three to nine pre group and between five to ten at follow-up (Table 5). Mean scores increased from 6.24 pre group to 7.72 at group completion, and to 8.29 at follow-up three to six months later (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Parenting confidence, changes in average scores pre-group to follow-up on a scale of 0-10, in response to the question "how confident do you feel as a parent now?"



**Table 5.** Parenting Confidence. Summary of Scores.

	Number of responses (n)	Range of scores	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Standard Error
Pre	39	3 - 9	6.24	1.63	0.26
Post	43	3 - 10	7.72	1.47	0.22
Follow-up	48	5 - 10	8.29	1.05	0.15

A two-tailed, paired sample t-test revealed significant increases in participants' responses to this question for each comparison (Table 6). The most substantial effects were shown between pre group and follow-up, indicating a population parameter somewhere within a range of effect sizes from large to very large. Significant effects were also shown from pre group to post group, and to a lesser extent from post-group to follow-up.

**Table 6.** Parenting Confidence. Summary of results from a two-tailed, paired sample t-test.

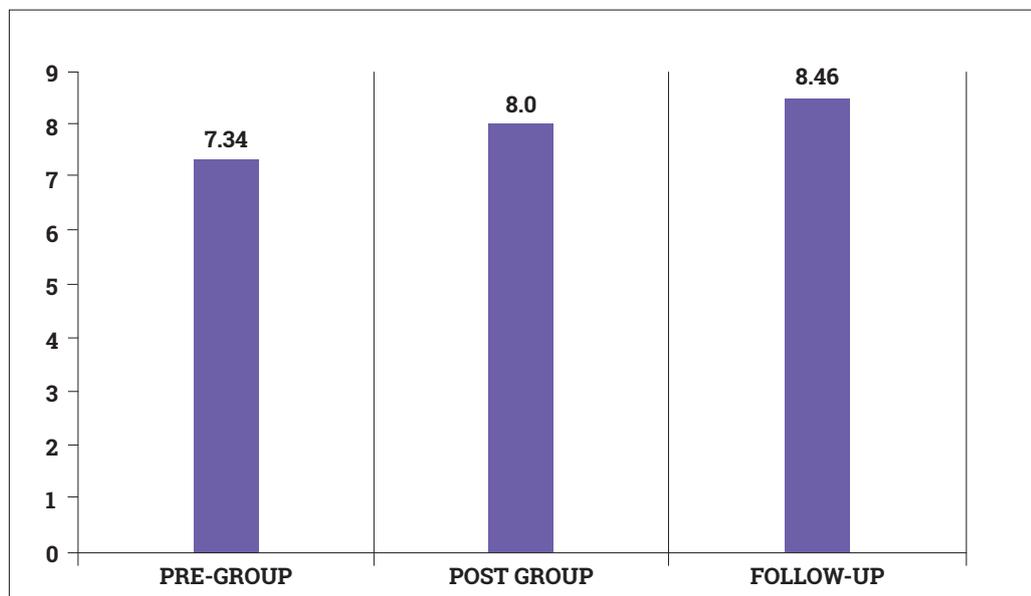
	Number of complete sets	t score	p value	Hedges g	95% Confidence Intervals
Pre Group to Post Group	35	5.540	<0.0001	0.95	0.55 - 1.34
Post Group to Follow-up	41	2.883	<0.05	0.39	0.07 - 0.70
Pre-Group to Follow-up	37	7.941	<0.0001	1.21	0.79 - 1.63

**Results in relation to the question “How would you rate your relationship with your children now?”**

To collect data for this question, participants provided a rating in relation to each child in their care. Participants had different numbers of children, and many rated their relationships with different children in their care with different scores. Also, these different scores were not linked to individual children's names or any other unique identifier, so it could not be determined whether ordinal rank of self-reported relationship quality across multiple children within the one family retained the same pattern across different time points. That is, if a parent with two children recorded ratings of four and seven at pre-group then six and eight at post group, it could not be assumed that the scores of four and six related to the same child across the two points. Accordingly, it was necessary to create a single score for each participant at each measurement point comprising the average relationship rating for all children in the participant's care at that time.

The average rating of relationship across all children in participants care ranged from two to ten at pre group and five to ten at follow-up (Table 7). This indicates that some participants already highly rated their relationship with all their children, and no increase was possible. Overall, participants scored themselves more highly on this question at pre-group (m = 7.34) compared to questions about their parenting overall (m = 6.15) or parenting confidence (m = 6.24). Mean scores however, did increase, from 7.34 at pre group to 8.46 at follow-up (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Parent-child relationship, changes in average scores pre-group to follow-up, on a scale of 0-10, in response to the question “how would you rate your relationship with your children now?”



**Table 7.** Parent-child relationship. Summary of Scores.

	Number of responses (n)	Range of scores	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Standard Error
Pre	41	2 - 10	7.34	1.78	0.28
Post	44	3 - 10	8.00	1.48	0.22
Follow-up	44	3 - 10	8.46	1.47	0.22

Two-tailed, paired sample t-tests were undertaken to investigate differences between participants' responses to this question between all data collection points (Table 8). Significant differences were found from pre group to post-group, with the standardised effect size being medium - Hedges  $g = 0.46$ . While mean scores increased from post-group to follow-up, these were not found to be statistically significant.

The test between pre-group scores and follow-up scores revealed a significant increase, with a standardised effect size that was large - Hedges  $g = 0.76$ . The 95% confidence interval on this effect size (0.39 - 1.12) revealed a population parameter somewhere between a range of effect sizes from medium to very large.

**Table 8.** Parent-child relationship. Summary of results from a two-tailed, paired sample t-test.

	Number of complete sets	t score	p value	Hedges g	95% Confidence Intervals
Pre Group to Post Group	37	2.792	<0.0001	0.46	0.13 - 0.8
Post Group to Follow-up	40	1.225	<0.05	0.30	0.02 - 0.61
Pre-Group to Follow-up	36	4.910	<0.0001	0.76	0.39 - 1.12

#### 6.4 QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

A variety of qualitative data was also available in the format of short responses to open ended questions about parent-child interactions, parent behaviour, child behaviour and family values. These questions were not designed to elicit responses about specific outcomes, but were kept broad in order to enable parents to self-identify the outcomes they were hoping for and the changes that were made. The responses were then coded into themes and grouped (Table 9, 10, 11 and 12). The tables in this section identify the number of times each theme was identified by a parent. Typical parent responses for each category can be found in Appendix 4.

Prior to the group, the most common interactions parents wanted to change was to increase their positive communication as well as change their own responses to their children (Table 9). At post group and follow-up, almost all parents indicated that interactions had improved, with parents noting that they were more calm and confident, and that communication had improved.

**'Emotionally we feel a lot more connected.'**  
**'Communication [is] better because we are more patient.'**  
**'He is not afraid to voice his needs, wants and concerns.'**  
**'We appreciate each other - more hugs.'**

*Sample of written responses from participant in relation to question "Have the interactions between you and your children changed?"*

**Table 9.** Summary of responses relating to the question “What interactions between you and your children would you like to change/have changed?”.

Pre-Group (outcomes hoped for)	Post Group	Follow-up
Increased positive communication (27 parents)	Interactions had improved (44 parents)	Interactions had improved (43 parents)
Change in own responses to their children (18)	Calmer/more confident (20)	Calmer/more confident (28)
Less aggressive behaviours and unwanted behaviours from their child (10)	Improved communication (20)	Improved communication (20)
No response (3)	More fun and enhanced emotional connection between parent & child (9)	More fun and enhanced emotional connection between parent & child (17)
	No response (3)	Identified changes due to understanding of child developmental stage (3)
	No change as yet (2)	No change as yet (1)

In terms of their own behaviour, at the pre group stage the majority of parents identified that they wanted to be more calm, patient and less angry (Table 10). At the post group and follow-up stages, parents predominantly indicated that they had improved the way they dealt with their own and children’s feelings. Parents also noted that they had increased communications skills, improved ability to implement consequences and an improved understanding of children’s development. It is possible that the learning of new skills and understanding may have enabled them to achieve their goal of being more calm and patient.

**Table 10.** Summary of responses relating to the question “Are there any behaviours of your own you would like to change/have changed?”.

Pre-Group (outcomes hoped for)	Post Group	Follow-up
To be calmer and more patient, less angry (31)	Increased skills – Acknowledging and dealing better with children’s and own feelings (28)	Increased skills – Acknowledging and dealing better with children’s and own feelings (32)
Dealing with feelings theirs and mine (15)	Increased skills – Communication (22)	Increased skills - communication (24)
To be more confident and consistent (8)	Increased skills – Appropriate consequences (16)	Increased skills – Appropriate consequences (17)
No response (5)	Increased skills – Understanding of children’s stages and development (13)	Increased skills – Understanding of children’s stages and development (16)
	Increased skills – identifying what children can do for themselves (4)	No change as yet (1)
	No change as yet (2)	No change as yet (1)
	No response (3)	

**‘Less screaming/anger.’  
‘I’m not losing it as often.’  
‘I don’t get into power struggles.’  
‘Instilling family rules and consequences rather than just punishing.’**

*Sample of written responses from participant in relation to question “Have you changed any of your own behaviours?”*

Parents also provided information about changes in their children’s behaviour at the post group and follow-up stages (Table 11). Parents noted that following changes in their interactions with their children and their own parenting behaviour, their children were more likely to accept boundaries and consequences, had improved communication and were calmer, happier and more secure.

**Table 11.** Summary of responses relating to the question “Have your children changed their behaviours since the group began?”.

Post Group	Follow-up
Increased skills - Still some unwanted behaviours, but easier and more quickly dealt with (36)	Increased skills - Accepting boundaries/consequences (24)
Increased skills - Better Communication (13)	Increased skills - Improved communication (23)
No changes too early (5)	Increased skills - Calmer/happier/more secure (14)
No answer (4)	No change (2)
	Worse behaviours (2) <sup>1</sup>

Parents were also asked about what they value about family relationships. At the pre-group stage, parents noted that they valued time spent together, love, communication and fun together (Table 12). Few changes were noted at the post group and follow-up stage, with most parents noting their values had stayed the same. By follow-up however, 17 parents identified that the values they had before the group were enhanced or reinforced through their participation.

**‘I value the small things more.’**  
**‘Children are encouraged to make choices and decisions.’**  
**‘Our values haven’t changed, but how we react to situations has.’**  
**‘The house is more peaceful.’**

*Sample of written responses from participant in relation to question  
 “What do you value about relationships in your family?”*

**Table 12.** Summary of responses relating to the question “What do you value about relationships in your family?”.

Pre-Group	Post Group	Follow-up
Being together / time together (25)	Values are the same (25)	Values are the same (29)
Love (14)	Enhanced or reinforced values (7)	Enhanced or reinforced values (17)
Communication (11)	Changed but no comment (5)	No response (2)
Fun together (9)	No response (5)	
No response (3)		

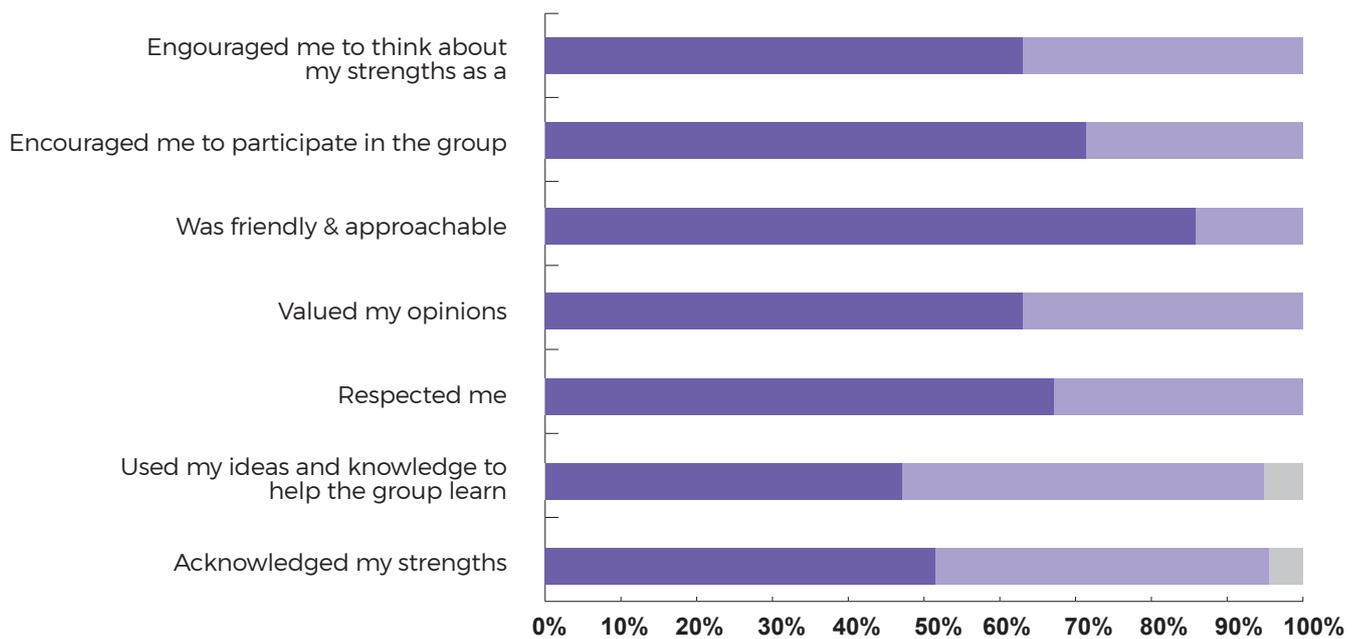
### 6.5 SATISFACTION WITH THE FACILITATION STYLE AND PROGRAM OVERALL

A number of statements were posed at post group where participants were asked to rate the program as to the style, presentation and interaction with facilitators. These were completed on a 5 point Likert scale with (1) being Completely Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither Agree or Disagree; (4) Agree and (5) Completely Agree.

In total, 37 participants provided feedback about facilitation style across seven questions about facilitation style (Figure 5). One participant did not respond to all questions. Overall between 95% and 100% of participants agreed or completely agreed with the statements about the facilitation style, and no participants disagreed with any of the statements.

<sup>1</sup> The fact that two parents indicated behaviours had worsened is discussed in the findings section on page 23

**Figure 4.** Satisfaction with the Facilitation Style. Responses to Questions on a Likert Scale.

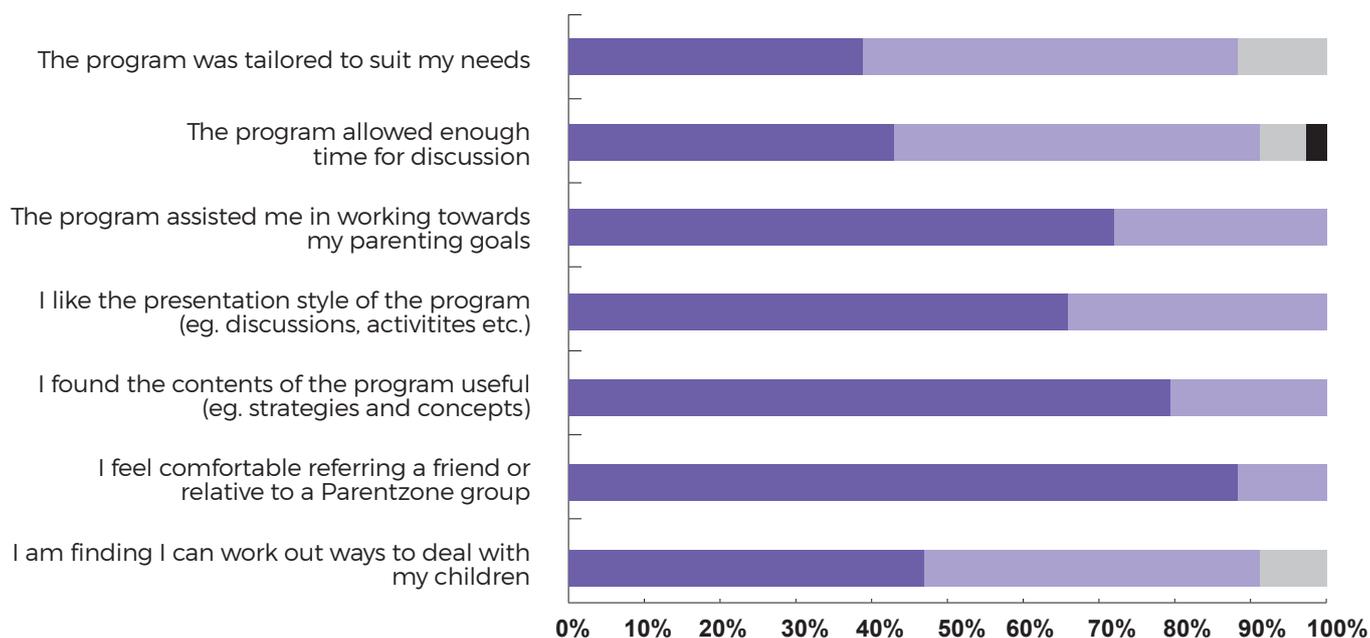


	Acknowledged my strengths	Used my ideas and knowledge to help the group learn	Respected me	Valued my opinions	Was friendly and approachable	Encouraged me to participate in the group	Encouraged me to think about my strengths as a parent
Completely Agree	19	17	24	23	31	24	23
Agree	16	17	12	13	5	10	13
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	2					
Disagree							
Completely Disagree							

Participants also provided feedback about satisfaction with the Parents Building Solutions program at the post group stage using a Likert Scale (Figure 6). One statement was included from the follow-up questionnaire, as this was missed in the post group questionnaire (I am finding I can work out ways to deal with my children). One item was excluded from the results, as it was a question rather than a statement and therefore did not match the likert scale (how useful was the program overall?). Responses to this excluded question were similar to other items (97% rated it as 4 or 5).

Between 89% and 100% of respondents agreed or completely agreed with the statements about the programme. One participant disagreed with the statement that the program allowed enough time for discussion, which may provide an indication of the challenges in balancing different participant's needs in a group setting.

**Figure 5.** Satisfaction with the Parents Building Solutions Program. Responses to Questions on a Likert Scale.



	I am finding I can work out ways to deal with my children	I feel comfortable referring a friend or relative to a Parentzone group	I found the contents of the program useful (eg. strategies and concepts)	I like the presentation style of the program (eg. discussions, activities etc.)	The program assisted me in working towards my parenting goals	The program allowed enough time for discussion	The program was tailored to suit my needs
Completely Agree	21	31	27	21	26	15	14
Agree	20	4	7	11	10	18	18
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4					2	4
Disagree						1	
Completely Disagree							

## 7.0 FINDINGS

The results of this evaluation provide strong evidence that the Parents Building Solutions intervention has a powerful effect on increasing parents' self-rated parenting capacity, parenting confidence and relationships with their children between the periods of both pre-group to post-group, and pre-group to follow-up (three to six months later). Additionally, the results indicate continued improvement between post-group and follow-up, suggesting that increases to parents' self-rated parenting capacity, parenting confidence and relationships with their children continue to occur following exit from the group, even though the rate of these increases probably slows down, at least for some parents.

**These results are very encouraging. Not only does Parents Building Solutions clearly work, it continues to impart positive effects for families months following cessation of intervention (and presumably longer).**

Parents came to the Parents Building Solutions programme predominantly to improve communication within their family, particularly around their own responses to their children. Parents reported wanting to be more calm, patient, consistent and to be better able to deal with their own feelings. A smaller but significant number of parents also reported wanting help with changing aggressive/unwanted behaviours in their children or deal with their children's behaviours more effectively.

Responses to post group and follow-up questionnaires indicate that parents had noted changes by the end of the Parents Building Solutions programme, and that these had continued at follow-up, three to six months later. Parents noted changes in relation to their own behaviour, their interactions with their children and their children's behaviour. In terms of their own behaviour, parents reported being more calm and confident (28 parents), an improved ability to manage their own and their children's feelings (32), as well as an improved ability to set consequences (17). Almost all (43) parents noted interactions in their family had changed, including improved communication (20), and that they were having more fun and enhanced emotional connection with their child (17). At follow-up almost all parents (44) also noted that their children's behaviour had changed, two indicated no change, and two indicated their child's behaviour had worsened. Changes commonly noted included children accepting boundaries/consequences (24), communicating better (23) and being calmer, happier or more secure (14).

Whilst two respondents indicated that their child's behaviour had worsened, their responses to other questions revealed that this was due to factors outside of the programme context. In one instance the participant indicated that this was due to a child entering a new developmental phase as a toddler. In this instance the behavioural changes were likely developmental, and the parent indicated in her other responses an increased ability to effectively manage this behaviour. The other instance of worsening behaviour related to an adult child, who was now attending an anger management course. In this instance, it was appropriate that this person be the one to take action given his adult status. This contextual information indicates that the worsening behaviour was due to other factors, unrelated to the programme's delivery.

In terms of what they value about their family, parents most commonly reported enjoyment of time together or the strength of the relationship pre-group. At follow-up, most parents reported that what they value had continued, however 17 parents reported that attending the group had enhanced or reinforced what they valued about their family, including their enjoyment of family life.

These findings suggest that the majority of parents attending the Parents Building Solutions programme experience a number of changes in their own parenting practices, their children's behaviour and their family relationships. These changes generally match the needs expressed by parents at group commencement and their desired changes in attending the program.

**Client engagement with the program was high with 90% of parents completing the programme they attended, indicating a drop-out rate of 10%. These results are very promising considering that it has been noted that for randomised controlled trials there is a reported attrition rate of up to 48% (Chen & Chan, 2015), and for practice settings between 40-60 % (Axford et. al., 2012) of parents drop out.**

While these results are encouraging, they need to be tempered with further exploration to identify the relation between the strong retention rate (90%), and the focus on process undertaken by the facilitators and integrated in service design. The debate relating to the importance of content and process to participant outcome was explored through the statements participants rated concerning facilitator interactions and the capacity to influence the content and group discussions. Participants generally agreed or completely agreed with the statements about the facilitator and the programme, with many items receiving 100% agreement from participants. These results suggest that participants highly rated the friendliness of the facilitator, respect shown and that participant opinions were valued. Additionally, being encouraged to participate and acknowledgement of their strengths assisted in parents working towards their own parenting goals.

## 8. DISCUSSION

Parents Building Solutions appears to have a number of benefits for parents who attend, in particular a powerful effect on increasing perceived parental functioning. This increase is most substantial during the period of the Parentzone intervention, but continues – albeit at a slower rate – in the months following service-closure. Positive changes were not only maintained following service closure, but continued to be made in the months following it. The results also suggest that the Parentzone intervention has a moderate effect on increasing parent-perceived relationship quality with children.

**Almost all parents reported changes in at least one area following the group. Changes continued to be present in almost all cases at three to six months follow-up, and in fact more parents identified changes at follow-up than in the final group session. The fact that the changes identified by parents at post group and follow-up generally matched what parents initially stated they wanted from the group reinforces both the efficacy of the Parents Building Solutions program, as well as the importance of tailoring the group to respond to parent's needs.**

This research also provides useful information about the kinds of changes parents are seeking from parenting programmes. Parents in the groups were concerned with changing their interactions with their children, especially in the area of regulating their own emotions and improving communication. This research provides preliminary evidence that programmes which directly respond to the concerns and needs of parents are likely to lead to outcomes in the areas parents identify.

It is interesting to note that whilst parents identified changes in most areas, in the area of family values, few changes were noted. In this area, 29 parents indicated that their values had stayed the same, and 17 parents identified that their values had been enhanced or reinforced. Few parents identified finding new values. This contrasts with only two parents noting that their children's behaviour had stayed the same. It appears that whilst parents felt positively towards the programmes, this positive experience did not affect parents' perceptions of outcomes achieved. Parents were able to clearly articulate that behaviours had changed whilst what they valued stayed the same.

**The results from this research are consistent with research and theoretical evidence that approaches that focus on client/parent engagement are more likely to produce successful outcomes.**

Further research is needed to identify the specific components and practices that produce change in parenting programmes, however these findings generally support the increased use of strengths based and developmentally focussed parenting programmes such as the Parents Building Solutions programme. Indications from this research are that such an approach may lead to more sustainable outcomes and better implementation in real world settings. It is recommended that further studies of all types of parenting programmes should pay particular attention to the number of parents who are effectively engaged compared to those who 'drop out', and the processes by which parents are effectively engaged and learn new skills in parenting.

## 9. REFERENCES

- Axford, N., Lehtonen, M., Kaoukji, D., Tobin, K., & Berry, V. (2012). *Engaging parents in parenting programs: Lessons from research and practice. Children and Youth Services Review, 34*(10), 2061-2071.
- Barlow, J., Smailagic, N., Ferriter, M., Bennett, C., & Jones, H. (2010). Group-based parent-training programmes for improving emotional and behavioural adjustment in children from birth to three years old. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 3*.
- Barlow, J., Smailagic, N., Huband, N., Roloff, V., & Bennett, C. (2014). Group-based parent training programmes for improving parental psychosocial health. *New search for studies and content updated (conclusions changed), published in Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 5*.
- Bumbarger, B., & Perkins, D. (2008). After randomised trials: issues related to dissemination of evidence-based interventions. *Journal of Children's Services, 3*(2), 55-64.
- Burns, R. (1995). *The adult learner at work*. Business and Professional Publishing, Sydney: Australia.
- Chen, M., & Chan, K. L. (2015). Effects of Parenting Programs on Child Maltreatment Prevention A Meta-Analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, pii: 1524838014566718. [Epub ahead of print].
- De Jong, P., & Berg, I. K. (2012). *Interviewing for solutions*. Cengage Learning.
- Dinkmeyer, D., & McKay, G. D. (1975). *Systematic Training in Effective Parenting [STEP]*.
- Duncan, B. L., Miller, S. D., Wampold, B. E., & Hubble, M. A. (2010). *The heart and soul of change: Delivering what works in therapy*. American Psychological Association.
- Emde, R. N., Biringen, Z., Clyman, R. B., & Oppenheim, D. (1991). The moral self of infancy: Affective core and procedural knowledge. *Developmental Review, 11*(3), 251-270.
- Eisenberg, N., Cumberland, A., & Spinrad, T. L. (1998). Parental socialization of emotion. *Psychological inquiry, 9*(4), 241-273.
- Furlong, M., McGilloway, S., Bywater, T., Hutchings, J., Smith, S. M., & Donnelly, M. (2011). Group parenting programmes for improving behavioural problems in children aged 3 to 12 years. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2012, 2*.
- Hayes, L., Hudson, A., & Matthews, J. (2003). Parental monitoring: A process model of parent-adolescent interaction. *Behaviour Change, 20*(01), 13-24.
- Kaminski, J. W., Valle, L. A., Filene, J. H., & Boyle, C. L. (2008). A meta-analytic review of components associated with parent training program effectiveness. *Journal of abnormal child psychology, 36*(4), 567-589.
- Kendrick, D., Mulvaney, C. A., Ye, L., Stevens, T., Mytton, J. A., & Stewart-Brown, S. (2013). Parenting interventions for the prevention of unintentional injuries in childhood. *Cochrane Database Systematic Review, 3*.
- Kenny, S. (2006). *Developing communities for the future*. South Melbourne: Thomson.
- Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2012). *The Adult Learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resources development*. 7th edn.
- Kochanska, G. (1993). Toward a synthesis of parental socialization and child temperament in early development of conscience. *Child Development, 64*(2), 325-347.
- Kolb, D. A. (2014). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Pearson Education.
- Laska, K. M., Gurman, A. S., & Wampold, B. E. (2014). Expanding the lens of evidence-based practice in psychotherapy: A common factors perspective. *Psychotherapy, 51*(4), 467.
- Lind, E. A., & Tyler, T. R. (1988). *The social psychology of procedural justice*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Lohar, S., Price-Robertson, R., & Nair, L. (2013). *Applying community capacity-building approaches to child welfare practice and policy*. Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Lopes, P. N., Salovey, P., Côté, S., Beers, M., & Petty, R. E. (2005). Emotion regulation abilities and the quality of social interaction. *Emotion, 5*(1), 113.
- Lundahl, B., Risser, H. J., & Lovejoy, M. C. (2006). A meta-analysis of parent training: Moderators and follow-up effects. *Clinical psychology review, 26*(1), 86-104.
- McCashen, W. (2005). *The strengths approach: A strengths-based resource for sharing power and creating change*. St Luke's Innovative Resources.
- Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2012). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Metcalf, L. (1998). *Solution focused group therapy: Ideas for groups in private practice, schools, agencies, and treatment programs*. Simon and Schuster.
- Moore, T. G., & Fry, R. (2011). *Place-based approaches to child and family services: A literature review*. Parkville, Victoria: Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health.
- Mytton, J., Ingram, J., Manns, S., & Thomas, J. (2014). Facilitators and Barriers to Engagement in Parenting Programs A Qualitative Systematic Review. *Health Education & Behavior, 41*(2), 127-137.
- Norcross, J. C., & Lambert, M. J. (2011). Evidence-based therapy relationships. *Psychotherapy relationships that work: Evidence-based responsiveness, 2*, 3-23.
- Perry, B. D. (2002). Childhood experience and the expression of genetic potential: What childhood neglect tells us about nature and nurture. *Brain and mind, 3*(1), 79-100.
- Phelan, T. (2010). *1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12*. Parent Magic, Inc.
- Phillips, D. A., & Shonkoff, J. P. (Eds.). (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. National Academies Press.
- Raver, C. (2003). Young children's emotional development and school readiness. *Social policy report, 16*(3), 3-19.
- Robinson, E., Power, L., & Allan, D. (2010). *What works with adolescents?: Family connections and involvement in interventions for adolescent problem behaviours*. Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Rutherford, E., Valentine, C., & Ryan, F. (2015). *Parents Building Solutions*. Anglicare Victoria, Melbourne Australia.
- Sanders, M. R. (1999). Triple P-Positive Parenting Program: Towards an empirically validated multilevel parenting and family support strategy for the prevention of behavior and emotional problems in children. *Clinical child and family psychology review, 2*(2), 71-90.
- Schore, A. N. (1994). *Affect regulation and the origin of the self: The neurobiology of emotional development*. Psychology Press.
- Siegel, D. J. (1999). *The developing mind* (Vol. 296). New York: Guilford Press.
- Stattin, H., & Kerr, M. (2000). Parental monitoring: A reinterpretation. *Child development, 71*(4), 1072-1085.
- Tennant, M. (2006). *Psychology and adult learning*. Taylor & Francis.
- Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological bulletin, 63*(6), 384.
- Wade, P. D., Macvean, M. L., Falkiner, J., Devine, B., & Mildon, R. (2012). *Evidence Review: Analysis of the Evidence for Parenting Interventions in Australia*. Parenting Research Centre.
- Wampold, B. (1997). Methodological problems in identifying efficacious psychotherapies. *Psychotherapy Research, 7*(1), 21-43.
- Ward, E.J. (1993). *How to research community issues: the grounded community development research method: a resource learning manual with case studies*. Partnership press with assistance from Deakin University.
- Webster-Stratton, C., & Mihalic, S. F. (2001). *The Incredible Years: Parent, teacher and child training series*. Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado at Boulder.
- Wilson, K. R., Havighurst, S. S., & Harley, A. E. (2012). Tuning in to Kids: An effectiveness trial of a parenting program targeting emotion socialization of preschoolers. *Journal of Family Psychology, 26*(1), 56.



7. How would you rate your parenting?

Not coping well					Coping well				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. How confident do you feel as a parent?

Not very confident					Very confident				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

11. How would you describe your relationship with your children?

	Not very good					Very good				
Child 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Child 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Child 3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Child 4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Child 5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**Thank you for completing this form**  
**Please hand it to your Group Facilitator.**

**APPENDIX 2 – POST GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE**

POST PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Program:

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The following questionnaire is designed to: 1) get you thinking about where you have been, where you are now as a parent and how you might continue to grow as a parent, 2) help us evaluate and improve our programs, and 3) to check if we are on track with our values. All responses are confidential.

PART A: CHANGES

1. Has what you value about your family changed?  
Yes / No            How?
  
2. What do you think are your strengths as a parent now?
  
3. How would you describe communication in your family now?
  
4. Have the interactions between you and your children changed?  
Yes / No            How?
  
5. Have you changed any of your behaviours since the program began?  
Yes / No            Which behaviours?
  
6. Have your children changed any of their behaviours since the program began?  
Yes / No            Which behaviours?

7. How would you rate your parenting now?

Not coping well

Coping well

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Any comments:

8. How confident do you feel as a parent now?

Not very confident

Very confident

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Any comments:

9. How would you describe your relationship with your children now?

Not very  
good

Very  
good

Child 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Child 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Child 3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Child 4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Child 5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Any comments:

10. What concerns do you still have about your parenting?

PART B: SATISFACTION

In sections B & C circle the number which shows how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Completely Disagree (1)	Tend to Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Tend to agree (4)	Completely agree (5)
11. I liked the presentation style of the program (eg discussions, activities, etc).	1	2	3	4	5
12. I found the content of the program useful (eg strategies and concepts).	1	2	3	4	5
13. I feel comfortable referring a friend or relative to a Parentzone group.	1	2	3	4	5
14. How useful was the program for you overall?	1	2	3	4	5

15. What did you find helpful about the program?

16. What could we have done better in delivering this program?

PART C: OUR VALUES

	Completely Disagree (1)	Tend to Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Tend to agree (4)	Completely agree (5)
17. The facilitator acknowledged my strengths	1	2	3	4	5
18. The facilitator used my ideas and knowledge to help the group learn	1	2	3	4	5
19. The facilitator respected me	1	2	3	4	5
20. The facilitator valued my opinions	1	2	3	4	5
21. The facilitator was friendly and approachable	1	2	3	4	5
22. The facilitator encouraged me to participate in the group	1	2	3	4	5
23. The facilitator encouraged me to think about my strengths as a parent	1	2	3	4	5
24. The program was tailored to suit my needs	1	2	3	4	5
25. The program allowed enough time for discussion	1	2	3	4	5
26. The program assisted me to work towards my parenting goals	1	2	3	4	5

PART D: THE FUTURE

27. If we contact you in four to six months time, would you be willing to provide feedback about the continuing usefulness of the program?

Yes                      No

We value your feedback.  
Thank you for participating.

Appendix 3 – Follow-up Questionnaire

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Program: -----

Participant's Name: -----

Telephone Number: -----

The following questionnaire is designed to:

- 1) get you thinking about where you have been, where you are now as a parent and how you might continue to grow as a parent,
- 2) help us evaluate and improve our programs, and
- 3) to check if we are on track with our values. All responses are confidential.

PART A: CHANGES

Has what you value about your family changed since the program finished?

Yes / No            How?

1.            What do you think are your strengths as a parent now?

2.            How would you describe communication in your family now?

3.            Have the interactions between you and your children changed since the program finished?

Yes / No            How?



PART B: SATISFACTION

Circle the number which shows how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

Reflecting back on the program:

	Completely Disagree (1)	Tend to Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Tend to agree (4)	Completely agree (5)
10. I liked the presentation style of the program (eg discussions, activities, etc).	1	2	3	4	5
11. I found the content of the program useful (eg strategies and concepts).	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am finding I can work out ways to deal with my children.	1	2	3	4	5
13. How useful was the program for you overall?	1	2	3	4	5

PART C: THE FUTURE

14. Would you be interested in attending another program?                      Yes                      No

15. Are there any other comments you would like to provide:

Thank you very much for participating

Appendix 4 - Typical Responses for each Coding Category

Question 2. What do you value about relationships in your family? (pre)

Has what you value about your family changed since the program finished? (post/follow up)

Coding Category	Typical Responses		
	Pre	Post	Follow Up
Love (14)	Love; Loving; empathy; closeness; genuine love for each other and respect;	Same as pre; have a strong relationship with my kids; really appreciate where and who they are; value little moments more;	Our values haven't changed, but how we react to situations has; more aware of the positives;
Honesty (5)	Honesty; truth;	More encouragement, not just praise; valuing their individuality but learning to deal with it differently;	Still value love, closeness loyalty. Values haven't changed;
Being together (25)	Togetherness; quality time; social activities; enjoy our time together; spending time; enjoy each other's company; work together;	Out time together; quality time; the house is more peaceful; My husband and I are also working much better with the kids; more closely connected;	Our time together, not always thinking when am I going to get a break; I value the small things more; value time together; Do more things together;
Fun (9)	Having fun; enjoy every moment; fun times we have; happy; fun;	Value little moments more; consciously make time to stop and enjoy them, not rush off to do other things	Values still the same, but feel more confident and calm to implement and pass them on by example.
Communication (11)	Communication – always being there for each other	Remained the same, but learnt ways to express them.  Values not changed; values same as in Pre.	Children are encourages to make choices and decisions; Better mutual understanding; more willing to communicate; Our communication is more important, I want them to feel they can talk to me.

Question 4. What interactions between you and your children would you like to change? (pre)

Have the interactions between you and your children changed since the program finished? (post / follow-up)

Coding Category	Typical Responses		
	Pre	Post	Follow Up
Child/Aggressive behaviour, fighting arguing	(10) Conflict; help with non-aggressive ways to respond; Anger; fighting; butting heads; hot headedness; conflict; brooding; power struggles;	(20) calmer; more confident; more calmer; a lot calmer; less nagging; more pleasant and calm; more respectful; less yelling; choose times when to listen and when to ignore; less anger and frustration; do not escalate as quickly;	(28) More of a team; not always telling them off; I can stay calm; not so judgemental; not as much fighting; happier – more age appropriate; calmer most of the time; less dramas; Instead of feeling like I have to negotiate everything, I now know when to say “I’m the parent and you’re the child”; We compromise more; more patient; less yelling’ more positive moments; calmer; less concern and anxiety;
Positive Communication – less yelling	(27) stop nagging; not having to say things 3 times; I don’t want to be yelling at them; clearer communication; Open communication; Understanding how to make him understand; Selective hearing; negative communication; daughter more open to my suggestions; keeping lines of communication open; yelling; not listening; more direct instructions – follow through; be a better listener;	(20) Discuss feelings; We talk and explain things more; Much more positive; we talk more; by talking to each other more when I stop screaming out of frustration; stick to agreements; Interactions have changed; The way I communicate with them; We communicate a little more; more positive interactions; Talking, I ask better questions; easier to negotiate as we have established new rules; communication better because we are more patient; we spend more time communicating;	Communicating better; take time to explain things to each other when we don’t understand; We talk more now; Child more open (talking); we are more patient with each other; more positive attitude; listening and talking; negotiate a bit more; reward the kids verbally; talk more about things that are important to them; find out what’s behind the bad behaviour; I use the communication tools I picked up during the course; honesty and talk; listen to my children; improved communication
Parent Response change (18)	(18) Stop nagging; my reactions; have better ideas on how to discipline; Understand ‘no’ word; our approach to discipline; right in the middle of fun time he does something irritating and then it is argument time; engage in more activities with my kids; hot not to get worked up; help my teenage son deal with any troubling issues at school; having more time for the kids; getting them to do things they don’t want to do; better balance between time spent with both children; doing more fun things.	(9) We are happier; more affectionate; more cuddles; more fun; emotionally we feel a lot more connected; more playful; we are happier; more fun; more positive; less negative, more assertive; more objective, clarified; I feel less angry and frustrated towards children;	(17) I allow him more freedom; We play more now; There is a lot more cuddles and understanding; We spend a lot of time doing things together; He is not afraid to voice his needs, wants and concerns; We enjoy each other; Do more things together; Play which is getting rough becomes calm or stops without tantrums; encouragement; Less yelling, more positive attitude; interactions between myself and children have more positive moments; we appreciate each other – more hugs; Respond more to positive behaviours; more patient; building trust; both happier; more tolerant of each other. Improvement has been apparent, however some tantrums are still happening. She’s displaying selfish behaviours which I learnt are age appropriate.

Question 5. Are there any behaviours of your own that you would like to change (pre) / have changed? (post)

Coding Category	Typical Responses	
	Pre	Post
Communication	Dismissive; To control anger when I'm fed up; Stress less and deal with it better; Take things less serious; Reduce my temper; Not to get worked up; I think I'm too strict; Being anxious about child's safety; Not taking comments made too personally; my reactions to situations; over mothering' tolerance;	(22) Listening to feelings; Not using negative language; communication with other parents and children; think before I yell or don't yell at all; more choices so I don't yell as much; follow through on my words; explain; use more positive language; I stop and listen more; the way I explain things to my child; listening better; listen more – active listening; my yelling behaviour towards my children; less screaming/anger; no more yelling at children; I'm not losing it as often; giving short clear instructions; being more assertive; less angry; using the four questions designed to decide if something is my problem or not. not using negative language
Child Development	To be more calmer; more patience;	(13)I know how to handle the situation;
Consequences	Be more consistent; I'd like to be more organised; get more patience; planning my time; being more confident;	(16) finding natural and logical consequences; I've been able to negotiate rather than yell; reactions; I give more choices; more firm with my expectations; offer choices and explain consequences; deciding who owns the problem and whether or not I need to deal with it; more co-operation from my kids; the way I explain things to my child; I don't get into power struggles; I statements, not reacting without thinking; new awareness that I need them to learn to think for themselves; consequences/choices – role modelling; instilling family rules and consequences
Acknowledge feelings	(15) Feeling angry, aggressive; calmer and not yell; patient and calm; more self-control; short fuse; stop screaming; gentle and calm; shouting; tone of voice; learn calming skills; more patience; smacking and losing the plot; tendency to scream; anxiety; self-doubt; less yelling frustration; deal with evenings without becoming irritable with the kids;	(28)I know how to handle the situation; distracting more; understanding motivation for misbehaviour; aware of age appropriate behaviour; able to negotiate rather than yell; age appropriate; more aware now; understanding the expectation for his age; ignore silly behaviour; I realise that their not understanding everything I expect of them; understanding my son's behaviour; I sit back and allow my girls to sort it out and then if needed I get involved and by that time I am a lot calmer; better understanding; rules have been set and consequences outlined; looking for reasons behind behaviour; instilling family rules and consequences rather than just punishing;
Identifying what child can do for themselves		Slowing the pace of the day; more choices which helps me not yell as much; explain things rather than shouting NO or DON'T; Picking problems and letting her work through them by herself; use more positive language and offer more praise and choices; I stop and listen more; Answer once then ignore; listening better; thinking more before reacting to children, being calmer; celebrating success;

	Typical Responses
	Follow Up
	(24) Try to distract rather than inflame; It works to give them choices; Explain consequences and leave the choice to the children; I listen to her more; I hear them when they talk; be calm and stop screaming; guess my meditation helps; Less yelling; listen more and not get caught up in the petty dramas of adolescents; listen more – less television; listen more – interfere less; I give the choice in the outcome; use a quiet voice to talk; remain calm, give clear instructions; focus on positive aspects; take time to listen; we have a list of family rules.
	(16) a lot of what my toddler does is normal; understanding girls behaviour; more realistic expectations; aware of long term goals;
	(17) I follow through; explain consequences and leave choices to the children; I warn my child and talk before reacting in such a negative way; his aggression and how I respond; smacking, because it was clear that I was making things worse; time away used instead; encourage my son to come to his own conclusions; The choice / the outcome; reward positives with behaviour charts;
	(32) More patient; I understand that a lot of what my toddler is doing is normal; more patient and understanding; be calm, stop screaming and apply consequences for the misbehaviour; also applying emotional coaching; If I act in control I will be in control; more aware of long term goal of independence; I let them know that it is the behaviour that is the problem, not them; options and choices; take time to listen and not jump down her throat; I have more patience and tolerance.
	(4) Try to distract rather than inflame; I listen to her needs more; I hear them when they talk; I compliment their personalities; Asking questions; positive rephrase;

**anglicarevic.org.au**



OUR FOCUS IS ON TRANSFORMING  
THE FUTURES OF CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND  
ADULTS. OUR WORK IS BASED  
ON THREE GUIDING PILLARS,  
PREVENT, PROTECT, EMPOWER.

**BETTER  
TOMORROWS**