



Australian Parents Council Inc

Indigenous Parent Factor: Successful early learning at home and school

Relevance to Australian Government Policy Priorities

The IPF Program is relevant to a number of Australian Government policy priorities. First, the Government is committed to improving the educational outcomes for Indigenous students. The IPF program, by helping parents to understand how children learn to read and write and how to apply that knowledge in the home setting, reinforces children's early learning in pre-school and the first years of primary school. By encouraging parents to engage with pre-schools and schools IPF fosters the important link based on trust and communication between home and school which research has shown is critical to successful student outcomes.

Second, IPF addresses four key elements of the Indigenous Education Action Plan:

- Students are ready to learn
- Attendance at school
- A Focus on Literacy and Numeracy
- Parental and Community Engagement

Third, the IPF is directly relevant to the aims of the Australian Government's Parent and Community Engagement (PaCE) initiative. The main objectives of PaCE are to enhance the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to:

- engage with schools and education providers in order to support improved educational outcomes for their children
- build strong leadership that supports high expectations of Indigenous students' educational outcomes
- support the establishment, implementation and/or ongoing progress of community-school partnership agreements and
- Support and reinforce children's learning at home.

Fourth, the IPF with its focus on parents contributes to the promotion of family wellbeing with the possibility of parents building on their workshop experience to seek further education and employment. Feedback from the workshops found that parents felt more confident and able to help their children. In a number of cases parents who had received presenter training at the workshops resulting in the acquisition of a training certificate felt encouraged to use this to gain employment in their communities, for example as teacher aides or as workers in Indigenous housing co-operatives and women's shelters. Others have enrolled in TAFE and university, including teacher education courses. Experience of IPF workshops can also serve as a bridge for Indigenous parents to participate in more structured programs such as the *Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters* (HIPPY) and in initiatives such as the Children and Family Centres.



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Fifth, by equipping Indigenous parents and their children with the tools to engage meaningfully with education providers and pre-school and school communities, the IPF is contributing to the Government's policy for social inclusion.

The IPF dovetails well with the *Dare to Lead* and *What Works* programs. With *Dare to Lead* targeting school principals and school leaders, and What Works targeting teachers, the targeting of parents in IPF completes the picture. With its demonstrated capacity to interest and engage Indigenous parents and carers in their children's learning and schooling IPF has synergies with the objectives of other programs such as the, PaCE and What Works. Those synergies enable IPF to sit comfortably within a community partnerships regime.