

RESTACKING THE ODDS

STRENGTHENING PARENTING PROGRAMS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP



Parenting programs are a core part of early childhood services, offering families the extra support they need to thrive.

Strong Communities, a social enterprise in central Queensland, is pioneering evidence-informed parenting program delivery in regional communities. They work in partnership with Restacking the Odds (RSTO), combining local knowledge and practice with research and tools to strengthen parenting programs.

Strong communities

Strong Communities promotes wellness for children, parents, families and organisations in regional and remote areas.

They support regional communities through locally-led programs and services.



Elevating parenting programs

Strong Communities and RSTO are helping to boost the visibility of parenting programs and build recognition of what best practice looks like.

Insights from research and practice, generated through the partnership, are building stronger evidence that high-quality parenting programs strengthen family relationships and support healthy child development.

A key part of this work has been collaborating on indicators of good outcomes in parenting programs – measures that help providers know they're on track to meet the needs of children and families.

These efforts are raising quality expectations across the sector and encouraging investment in approaches that help children and families thrive.



- **Boosting the profile of parenting programs**
- **Generating evidence about the benefits for children and families**
- **Building confidence that programs are meeting community needs**
- **Supporting continuous improvement, innovation and discovery**

Getting better at getting better



Strong Communities has long used data, reflection and continuous improvement to inform its practice. The introduction of the RSTO test and learn platform, and the support provided through the partnership, has strengthened this existing approach – making what’s happening day-to-day more visible and supporting more regular reflection and learning.

For Strong Communities, the partnership provides more evidence about and confidence in existing practice, while strengthening their ability to demonstrate alignment with best practice.

Strong Communities also uses data to support advocacy and funding conversations, using evidence to make the case for the work that makes the biggest difference for families.



‘It’s really exciting to see that emphasis on having quality, evidence-based parenting programs... being able to put the emphasis on quality rather than just quantity is really powerful.’

Crystal Robson
CEO, Strong Communities

Partnership done differently

At the heart of the partnership is the relationship between the people at Strong Communities and RSTO. The partnership is built on trust, open communication, flexibility, and mutual respect and benefits.

For Strong Communities, this meant that when things didn't translate as intended early on, they could name it and work through it together. It also meant that RSTO could respond to Strong Communities' specific context and needs. RSTO has applied this learning with other partners, moving beyond a one-size-fits-all model.

Honest feedback, shared learning and collaboration with Strong Communities have shaped and strengthened the RSTO program, ensuring its tools and supports are locally grounded. The partnership highlights the value of mutual expertise, local knowledge, honest communication and adaptation.

'It always felt relational. There was flexibility, and the ability to share when things weren't working, and then we'd problem solve it together.'

Crystal Robson
CEO, Strong Communities

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Strengthening parenting programs through partnership

As the partnership evolves, Strong Communities remains focused on supporting families and strengthening communities – using evidence to drive continuous improvement, advocate for more services and make the case for high-quality parenting programs.

By bringing together practice, research and collaborative learning, the partnership is contributing to a more connected and evidence-informed early childhood system where parenting programs are valued and able to thrive.



Restacking the Odds (RSTO) is an evidence and learning partner to local early years partnerships, working to give every child an equitable start.

For more information about RSTO

Email: restackingtheodds@mcri.edu.au
Visit: www.rsto.org.au
LinkedIn: [CCCH](#)

A joint initiative led by the Centre for Community Child Health at Murdoch Children's Research Institute, in collaboration with Social Ventures Australia and Bain & Company, RSTO works alongside partnerships to help them measure what matters, see what's working and take action.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.