Anglicare Victoria's 'TEACHaR' program:

Closing the 'education gap' for children and young people in care and the value of research-informed innovation

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“If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.”

Ignacio Estrada

The Innovation Context

(adapted from Wise, S. 2014)

- Our welfare system is overwhelmed by complex social problems, that often seem intractable despite our sector's best efforts.
- It can difficult to conceptualise, define and measure the outcomes for clients of what we do.
- Our ageing population will bring reduced spending on social services.
- CSOs will *need to do MORE with LESS, and DIFFERENT with less into the future. In other words, there will be greater need to embrace innovation.*

The Research Context

Children and young people in care typically experience poorer educational outcomes and vocational opportunities that those in the general student population (Wise, Pollock, Mitchell, Argus & Farguhar, 2010). This may include:

- Reduced school engagement and attendance
- Less positive attitudes to learning and lack of confidence
- Numeracy and literacy problems
- Bullying and negative social relationships with peers
- Challenging behaviours in the classroom

Recent Anglicare Research:

'Care Systems Impacts on Academic Outcomes' (CIAO), Wise et al (2010)

'Anglicare Victoria, Children in Care Report Card', Wise & Smith (2014)

Voices from CIAO (2010)

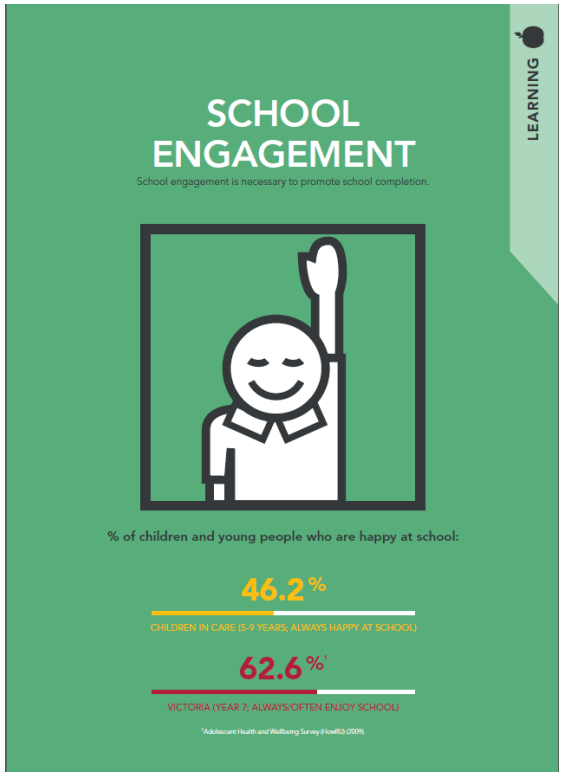
"I don't think she believes in her potential...she's distracted and not able to concentrate on school or even believe in her future"

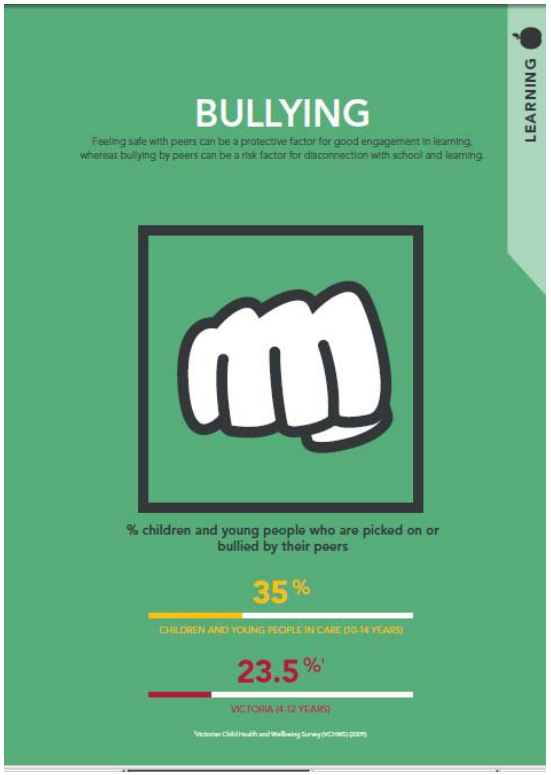
- worker about a child in OHC

"His potential is completely untapped. He's capable of going to university but at this point in time he's just not going to make it"

- school teacher about a young student in OHC

Children in Care Report Card (2014)





The TEACHaR Pilot

Purpose:

Improved educational outcomes for children and young people in OHC

Aims:

- Strengthen school engagement, attendance and attitudes to learning
- Improve literacy and numeracy skills
- Support students to obtain results that are consistent with their potential and ability

The TEACHaR Pilot

Staff

- Three qualified and registered teachers, including one lead teacher/coordinator
- Teachers also bring experience and expertise in the welfare sector and/or special education

Programs

- Eastern Metropolitan Region - Home-based care programs
- Southern Metropolitan Region - Residential care unit

Blended Funding

- $1M over three years - *Helen Mcpherson Smith Trust, Potter Foundation and others*

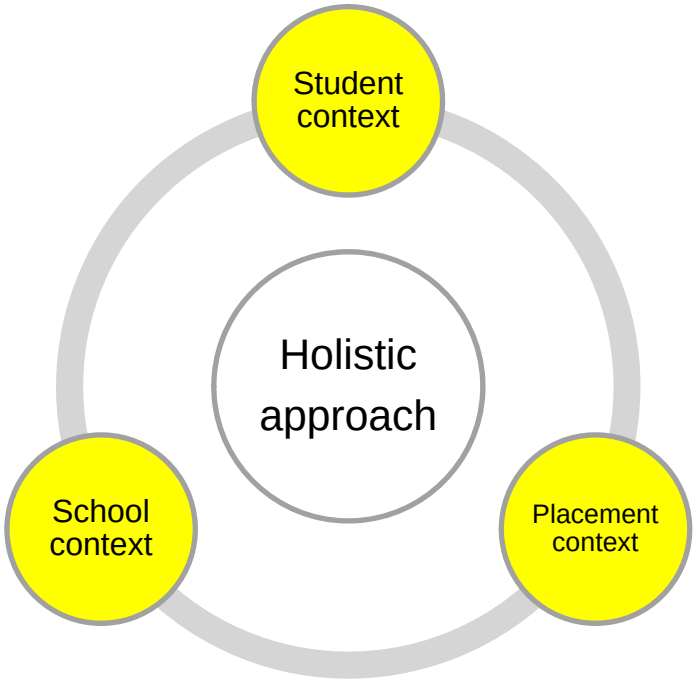
Key Service Activities

- Flexible and direct education support (i.e. ‘teaching’)
- Assessments to address learning needs
- Collaboration with schools
- Engagement with the care setting
- Brokerage

Service Approach

(adapted from Wise,S. 2014)

- Enrolments
- Learning support in classrooms
- Education planning
- Supporting schools with the *'Partnering Agreement'*
- Professional Development



- Intensive learning support
- Assessments and brokerage
- Advocacy
- Enrolments
- Individualised
- Supportive of talents and interests

- Home-based learning
- Care and case planning
- Support and education to carers and staff
- Education consistency across placement changes

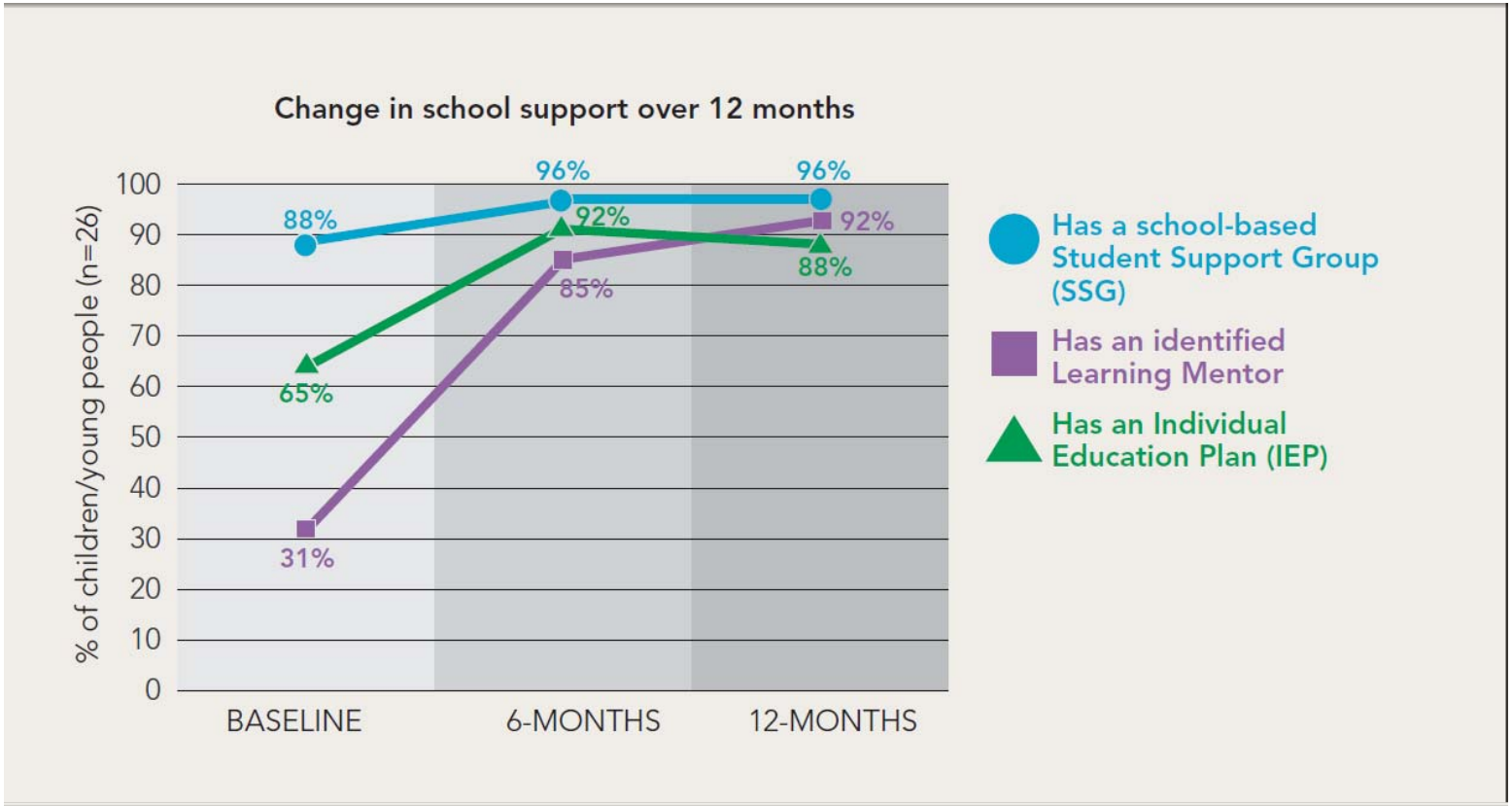
Evaluation and Outcomes

Assessments and reviews are completed for each child and young person on a six monthly basis, commencing at service entry (baseline).

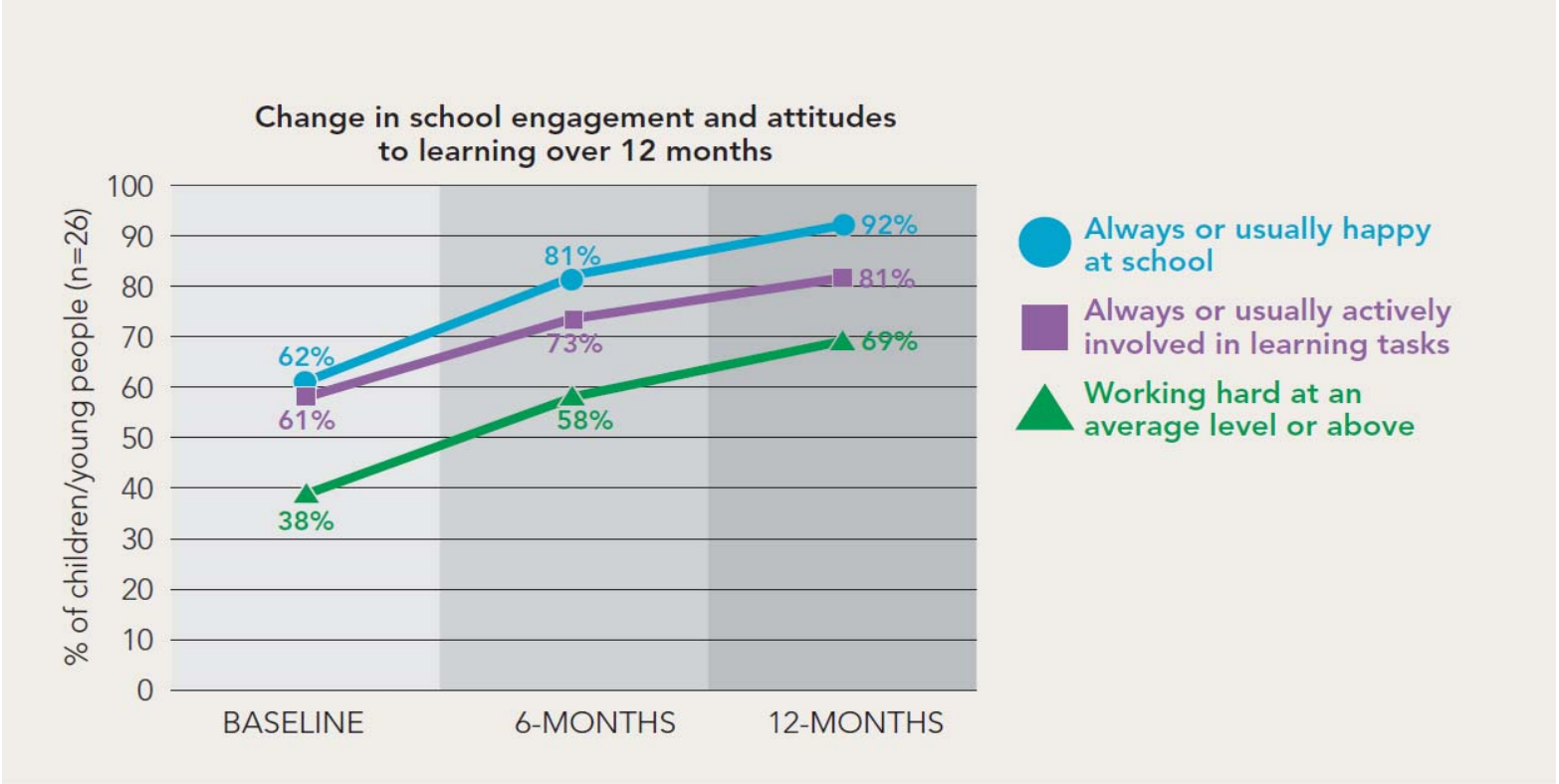
The following outcome domains are measured:

- Level of support from the school
- School engagement, behaviours and attitudes to learning
- Academic skills and achievement
- Learning in the context of the care environment
- Engagement in extra-curricular activities
- Barriers to learning

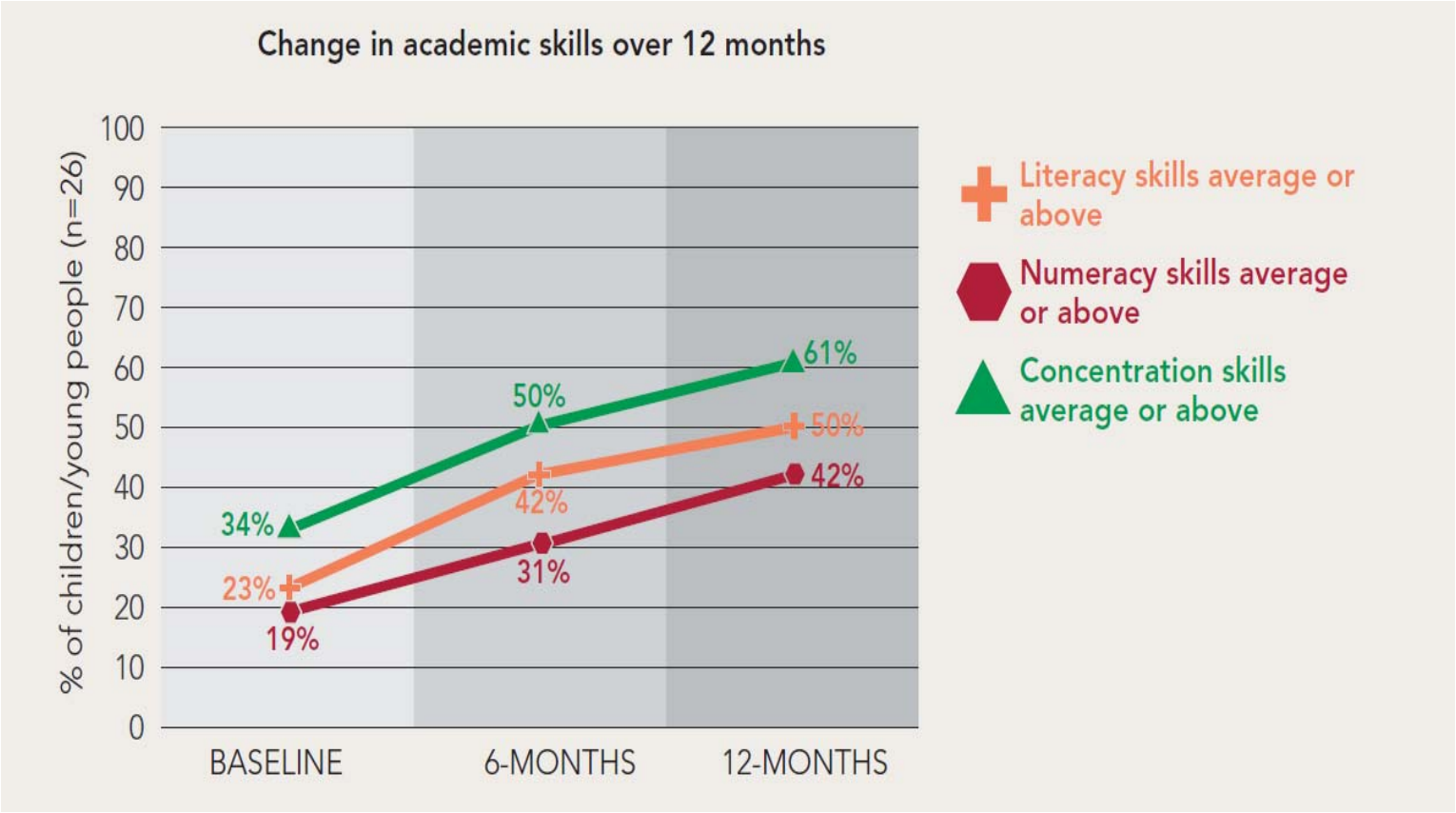
Outcomes – *School Support*



Outcomes – *School Engagement and Attitudes*



Outcomes – *Academic Skills and Performance*



Five Core Principles

- Employment of highly experienced, registered teachers with commitment, expertise, a diverse range of skills and the *heart* to work with children and young people in care
- The teaching role must be flexible – *this is a program that proudly pushes the limits and supports the child or young person wherever they are on their pathway to learning*
- The focus must always be on the child and young person; needs balanced by their strengths, interests and aspirations for the future.
- Collaboration please! – with *children, young people, schools, carers, case managers, residential care staff, DEECD, DHS, TAFES etc*
- Capturing outcomes is an essential part of program delivery, and a necessary way of demonstrating the value of our programs for our clients – *internally, and to Government and other funders.*

TEACHaR Stories

1. Gary – an electrical engineer in the making.

2. Abracadabra! John's journey to become a magician.

References

Wise, S., Pollock, S., Mitchell, G., Argus, C., & Farquhar, P. (2010). *CIAO: Care-system impacts on academic outcomes.* Melbourne: Anglicare Victoria and Wesley Mission Victoria.

Wise. S., & Smith., T. (2014). *Anglicare Victoria Children in Care Report Card, Report No. 2.* Melbourne: Anglicare Victoria.

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