



MEDIA RELEASE

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Indigenous children's program helps 'close the gap'

An Indigenous community on the outskirts of Sydney are running an innovative children's program that is helping to 'close the gap'.

Darryl Wright, CEO of the Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation says communities need opportunities to work on parenting skills and mental health issues early on in life to help 'close the gap'.

"It is really important to connect with your kids between 0 and 5 because if you don't connect with your kids there are always problems in later life," says Darryl Wright.

Pamela Simon, the Indigenous Early Intervention Co-Ordinator at Tharawal introduced the parent-child health education program at the beginning of 2008. "There has been such a positive change in the behaviour of parents and children as a result of the Inspir=Ed program" says Pamela Simon. "I would love to see the program available in all Aboriginal Medical Services. There is such a need in our communities for parents to be supported in this lost art of parenting".

"The program is unique in that it brings mums and kids together in an experiential learning environment, incorporating culturally appropriate songs, games, stories, art and craft together with early literacy and ready for school skills" says Pamela.

"The parents attending the program are much more involved in the health needs of their children and they have increased confidence in their skills and ability to interact." says Dr Gabby Hall, a GP at the Tharawal.

Caption "The kids are listening . They are standing there listening - they are not running away "
says Daryl Wright



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Interviews with community members and health workers are available.

Short preview <http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=NI0zg5XDFg0&feature=related>