STRENGTHENING SOCIAL INCLUSION: INNOVATIONS IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Promoting children’s participation is now central to social policy and program initiatives in Australia and internationally. However, the full potential of children’s participation for strengthening Australia’s social fabric is yet to be fully realised.

This study focused on how participation is conceptualised and facilitated by professionals working in the context of family services. The project utilized action research and built upon previous research undertaken with Interrelate Family Centres that highlighted a gap between support for the principle of children’s participation and how staff actually practice this.

Overall, 186 children, 58 parents and 304 staff participated in 12 action research projects, consisting of 24 action research cycles. Among other findings, the research highlighted that children and childhood are often understood in duality - primarily in terms of being innocent and vulnerable (i.e. in need of protection) and also as wanting and needing to express their views to be heard (i.e. social agents). The recommendations from the research identified processes for transforming the thinking and practices of professionals working with children and young people, offering improvements for children’s inclusion, citizenship, status and recognition within family services.

A major report was developed from this study. The report consists of two volumes. Volume One reports on the overall action research project, undertaken between December 2009 and December 2011, whilst Volume Two includes the reports of the smaller-scale regional action research projects from all 12 sites. You can access both volumes of the report through: www.interrelate.org.au

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

August 2009 – February 2012

PROJECT PARTNER

Interrelate Family Centres

RESEARCH TEAM

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