



**goodstart  
early  
learning**

# Early childhood educators as literacy champions

**Catriona Elek**

Project Manager, Let's Read

Project partners:



Affiliated with:



# Workshop outline

- About us
- About the project
- Project findings
- Demonstration

# Emergent literacy

...refers to the **skills, knowledge & attitudes** that are precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing, and the **environments** that support these developments.

Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998

# Why work with early childhood educators?

- The early childhood education and care (ECEC) environment is important
  - along with the home environment
- Low levels of instructional support found in ECEC settings
  - Across the sector
- Improving ECEC setting can support literacy development
  - especially for children from low-income families

# Let's Read and Goodstart

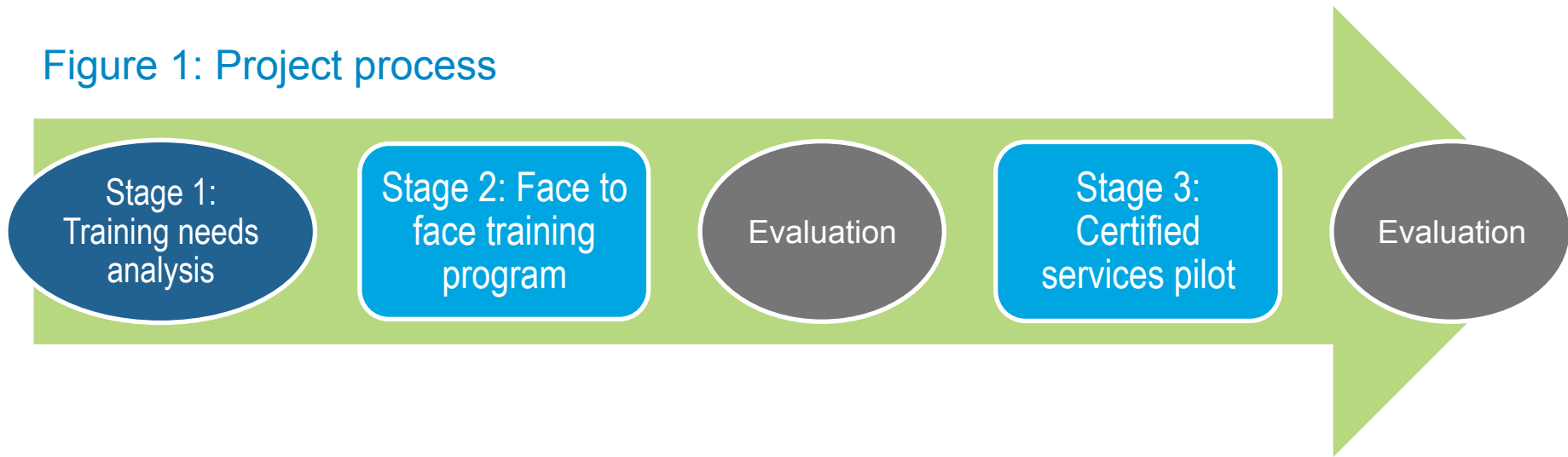
- **Let's Read** is a national, evidence-based early literacy initiative that promotes reading with children from birth to five years.
- **Goodstart** is Australia's largest early learning and care provider, caring for 73,000 children from 61,000 families across 641 centres in all states and territories of Australia.

# What did we do together?

Pilot a low-intensity, low-cost intervention

- Needs assessment
- 15 pilot sites (Centres) in Victoria
- Professional development packages
- Evaluation

Figure 1: Project process



# Step 1: Training needs analysis

- Educators needed and wanted more:
  - Knowledge
    - about child and brain development
  - Confidence
    - to engage families
    - to model literacy promoting strategies
  - Quality books and resources
    - to share with families



# Step 2: Face to face workshop

## Evaluation findings:

- learning objectives achieved
- increased early literacy knowledge
- increased confidence to engage with families
- further information, resources, training, support and communication between centres was needed

Figure 2: Stratified groups and intervention intensity



# Stage 3: Certified services pilot

## Evaluation findings:

- a strong increase in knowledge
- a strong increase in confidence to engage families
- a strong increase in confidence to share their learning across their centre
- Working Together Agreements provided a platform for ongoing development



## Goodstart Early Learning Melton – High Street

This is to certify that Goodstart Early Learning Melton – High Street is a Let's Read Certified Service

### Let's Read certified services aim to ensure:

- Children are confident and involved learners and experience the sort of environments that support and encourage their language and literacy growth every day
- Families and caregivers are empowered and encouraged to share books, stories, songs and nursery rhymes with their children every day from birth
- Staff and educators work together every day to provide children with environments that support and encourage language and literacy growth

### To do this, every day at Goodstart Early Learning Melton – High Street we will work together with:

#### Children at our centre to:

- Share books and stories
- Talk with them about the games they are playing
- Help them notice words, sounds and letter in everyday life
- Share rhymes and songs
- Let them take their favourite books home
- Encourage them to bring their favourite books to the centre
- Have a "Literacy Box", and book to borrow and take home for a week
- Sign in their own name every day in their sign in book in the Kinder room

#### Families and caregivers to:

- Share strategies for promoting early literacy with their children
- Encourage the donation of books to help build a library at our centre
- Share information about the importance of early literacy development
- Encourage families to come and read books or sing songs with the children

#### Staff and educators to:

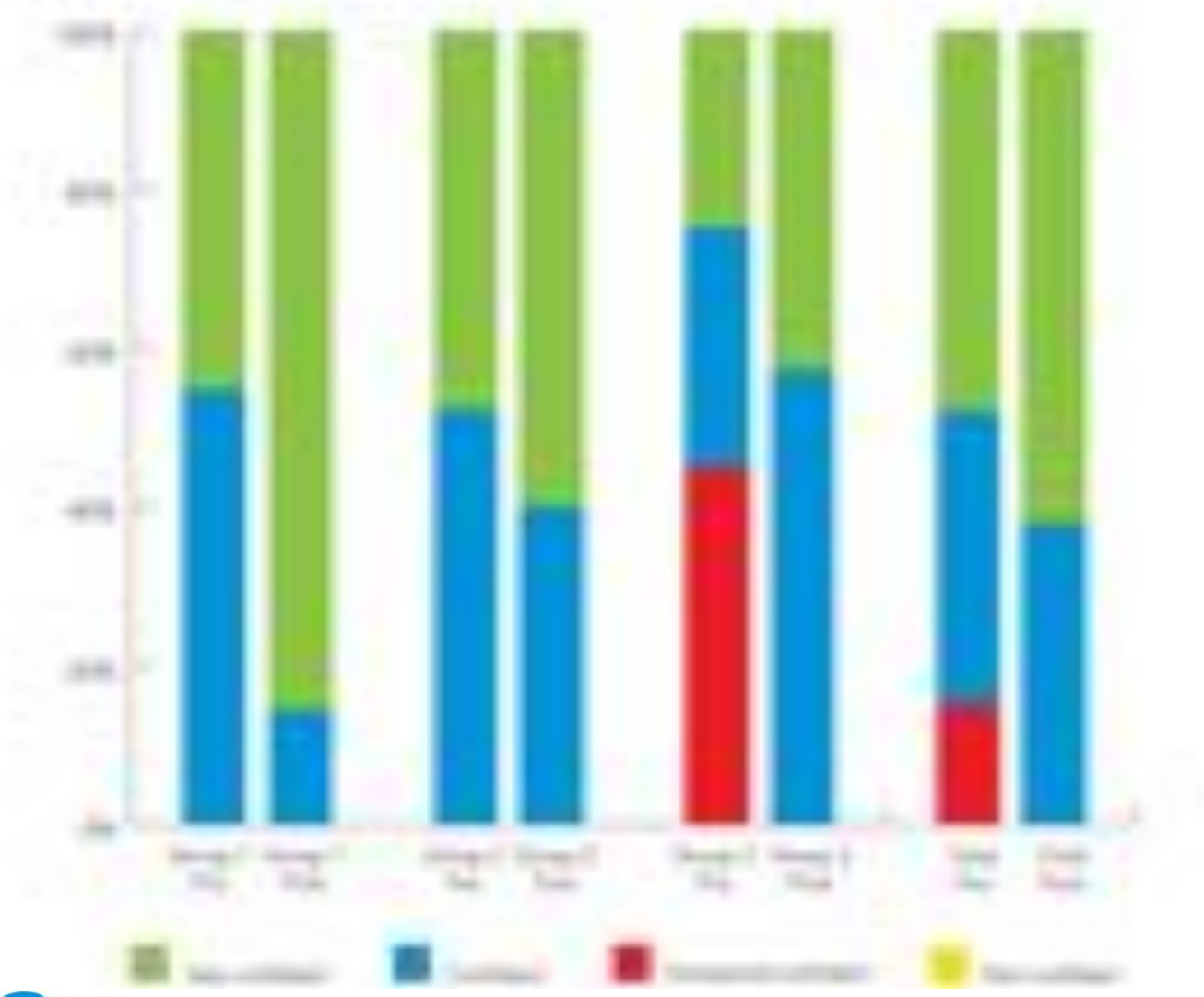
- Share successes and problems solve challenges
- Encourage staff to broaden their understanding of literacy
- Discuss the importance of early exposure of children to literacy with staff
- Ensure all staff have access to quality early literacy training and resources



The Australian Government is working in partnership with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and The Smith Family to deliver Let's Read.



Figure 3: Confidence to engage and work in partnership with families



# Engaging families in conversations about early literacy

Video

# Working with families



# What did we learn?

- Pilot laid the foundations for centre-wide changes
- Confidence to work with families increased
- Educators are became champions in their centres
- Low-cost, low-intensity intervention can work



# Next steps

- Let's Read eLearning
- Recommendations for further research
- Possibilities to scale up the model

# Acknowledgements

- the Australian Government Department of Education (formerly DEEWR) for funding
- Goodstart Early Learning Educators for their participation in the project
- Afrouz Shoghi (Manager, Let's Read, 2012-13) who coordinated the project, with:
- Rhiannon Williams, Jenny Martin and Monica Robertson (Social Inclusion Coordinators for Goodstart for Vic/Tas at various stages in the project)
- Monica Robertson for co-authoring this presentation

## Project Advisory Group:

- Afrouz Shoghi, Centre for Community Child Health
- Christine Andell, State Library Victoria
- Eleanor Donovan, Goodstart Early Learning
- Erica Gardner, Centre for Community Child Health
- Jenny Martin, Goodstart Early Learning
- Julie Green, Raising Children Network
- Lisa Clinch, Goodstart
- Rhiannon Williams, Goodstart
- Sabina Klepp, Gowrie Victoria
- Shae Wissell, Centre for Community Child Health
- Sue West, Centre for Community Child Health





**goodstart  
early  
learning**

**Thank you**

Project partners:



Affiliated with:

