

Case study: Cranbourne Carlisle Primary School

Family Learning Club

Refugee Education Support Program (RESP) 3: 2016 – 2017



Background and Identified Needs

Cranbourne Carlisle Primary School is located in the South of Melbourne. More than half of the student population are from an EAL background. Many of these students are from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

The school identified that literacy support and facilitating social connectedness and wellbeing were key student needs. It was also acknowledged that there was a need for families to feel more confident to engage with the school and increase their capacity to support their child's education.

The RESP Project

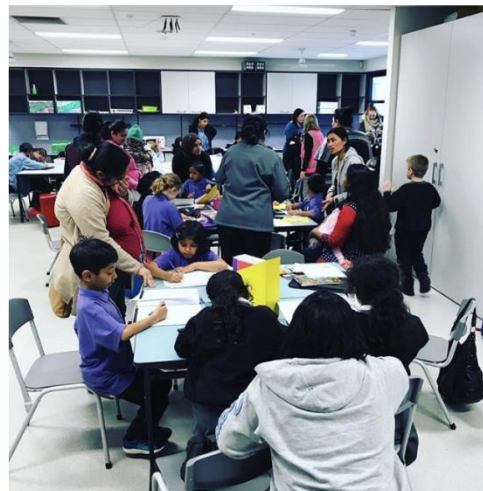
The school partnered with the Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre (SMRC) to deliver a Family Learning Club. The Family Learning Club is a weekly event for students from a refugee or migrant background, which parents are also invited to attend and assist students with their classwork.

The project aimed to increase student achievement outcomes, capacity to engage in learning at school, capacity to engage in social connections and confidence in engaging and

succeeding with their education. It also aimed to increase the school's engagement with families, and family's capacity to support their child's learning at home.

SMRC employed a Family School Partnership Advisor whose role was to provide support, advice and resources to the school. SMRC also recruited volunteers from the community and Monash University to tutor at the family learning club.

The SMRC is a not-for-profit community based agency. They provide a range of settlement services to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds living in Melbourne's south.



Outcomes for Students

Learning outcomes

School staff reported an increase in student achievement throughout the year for students regularly attending the club. Students also agreed the club helps them to complete their school work and reinforces what they are learning in the classroom.

"Doing school work is a lot easier because it's not that noisy. In class if you put your hand up the teacher might not see you. Normally I would sit up the back and no one sees me."
- Grade 4 student

Social and wellbeing outcomes

Students stated that the club has given them the opportunity to make new friends. The coordinating teacher observed a definite increase in confidence for many students that were attending regularly.

"Part of the contribution of the club is getting confident and socialising with friends in different classes and the same year."
- Parent

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Outcomes for Families

Capacity to engage with the school and their child's education

School staff observed that parents who attended the Family Learning Club were more engaged with the school. Parents said they were more aware of what was being taught in the classroom observing how teachers engaged with their children gave them confidence to also assist their children with their school work. Teachers acknowledged the modelling by teachers in the club has impacted positively on the confidence of parents.

"We didn't know what they're doing at school so it's really helpful."

- Parent

Outcomes for the School

Capacity to meet the needs of refugee students

The Family Learning Club provided a space for giving students from refugee backgrounds the extra support they need. The school recognised that providing more individualised support helped these students to complete their classwork while gaining confidence in their abilities.

Engagement with families

School staff reported the Family Learning Club has given the school a new tool for engaging more successfully with parents. They plan to continue running the club in the future and further promote it, particularly to parents of refugee backgrounds.

"My son doesn't make friends easily, and the club has helped him with this."

- Parent

Work in partnership

SMRC played an important role in recruiting volunteers for the Family Learning Club and employing a Family School Partnership Advisor. This partnership finished with the end of RESP, but the school has the capacity, staff commitment and resources to continue their family engagement activities. They will also continue to utilise volunteers who are education students at Monash University.

Lessons Learned

The school has experienced that it requires extra time and commitment to successfully promote the program to the targeted students and families from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

They have also learnt that parents require guidance and support to remain engaged in learning activities with the students. Staff responded to this by devising different activities for the Family Learning Club for every session, which provided a clearer structure and direction for parents and students to follow.

"Because of the small size of the club it's easier to engage the students in their learning, by focusing on a different activity each week."

- Teacher

This resource was produced as part of the Refugee Education Support Program (RESP). RESP assists selected schools to identify and implement strategies to support the achievement outcomes, wellbeing and engagement in learning of students from refugee backgrounds.

To learn more visit: www.cmy.net.au

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