

A Good Start in Life for Young Children: Investigating the impact of place-based interventions for young children at risk of developmental vulnerability

ACTRN12621001140842

Status	RECRUITING
Sponsor	University of Canberra
Enrollment	300 participants

Plain Language Summary

The early years of a child's life are critical for brain development, and children who grow up in disadvantaged communities can face significant developmental vulnerabilities before they even start school. Early intervention — the right support at the right time — can make a lasting difference, but services are often fragmented and hard for families to navigate.

This study is evaluating a place-based early childhood programme in the ACT, where integrated services across health, education, and community sectors are being coordinated to support children aged 0 to 5 in some of Canberra's most disadvantaged suburbs (in the Belconnen District). The study will compare outcomes for children in the intervention suburbs to matched suburbs in the Tuggeranong area that are not receiving the coordinated programme.

The study includes children aged 0 to 5, their parents or caregivers, and educators at participating services in the identified suburbs. Families do not need to apply individually — participation is linked to accessing services in the selected communities.

Key Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion (2)

- Nine suburbs were selected using Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data from 2012 to 2018. Suburbs were considered for the intervention if they had shown a worsening trend in vulnerability in at least three domains and the 'vulnerable in one or more domains' category. Using these criteria and on the ground knowledge from local stakeholders and service providers to confirm areas of intervention, the services invited to participate in the study were selected if they met certain criteria. First, the service must be located within one of the nine intervention suburbs or belong to one of the partner organisations and be located within the Belconnen District Area. Second, the service must target children aged between 0 and 5. The service must also pass a risk assessment and have educators that are willing and able to complete the programmes and consent to data collection and a recorded follow-up interview.
- Additionally, six 'control' suburbs located in the Tuggeranong District Area were selected for inclusion in the study and matched on the same AEDC data for the intervention area. Once the intervention and control suburbs were identified children aged between 0 and 5, their parents or caregivers and educators at participating services in the intervention suburbs are included as participants in the study.

Exclusion (1)

- Suburbs located outside of the intervention and control sites (Belconnen and Tuggeranong District Areas) will not be recruited to participate in the study. However, children and families from outside the intervention and control site areas may access the interventions, data collection and analysis will only be collected and reported on with regards to the primary outcome measures.

Locations (1 total)

ACT, Australia

<https://www.anzctr.org.au/Trial/Registration/TrialReview.aspx?ACTRN=ACTRN12621001140842>

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