

# right@home

## An Australian Sustained Nurse Home Visiting (SNHV) program

Improves parent capacity

Tested and implemented with Australian regional and metropolitan families

Delivered by the existing universal Maternal Child and Family Health Service

Higher program retention rate than any other similar Australian or international program

Developed and evaluated by a partnership of national experts in research, implementation and collaboration

### What is right@home?

right@home is an evidence-based Australian model of sustained nurse home visiting (SNHV) for mothers living in adversity. It begins during pregnancy and continues until the child turns two. Parents who take part receive around 25 visits from a specially trained maternal child and family health nurse, supported by a social worker. The program builds parents' capacity to provide safe, responsive care and a home environment that supports learning. It is currently being implemented across eight sites in Victoria.

### A program with proven impact

right@home is based on best Australian evidence and practice<sup>1</sup> and is designed to embed within and strengthen the existing universal service. The program was evaluated through a randomised controlled trial – the gold standard of program evaluation. It was shown to have the following effects when children were aged 2 years:

- ✓ Mothers more likely to engage in warm parenting practices
- ✓ Mothers less likely to engage in harsh parenting practices
- ✓ Children more likely to have a regular bedtime
- ✓ Fewer safety risks at home
- ✓ Mothers more likely to support their child's learning
- ✓ Children have more opportunity for varied social interaction with adults
- ✓ Compared to the usual care, mothers were more much satisfied with the service and felt more capable as parents

***"I think it's fantastic, this right@home...and it's specifically about your bub, and family and wellbeing...it was just brilliant" (Mum)***

<sup>1</sup> right@home is based on the Maternal Early Child Sustained Home Visiting (MECSH) program with additional focus modules for the Australian context



## Why is right@home needed?

In Australia today, more than one in five children are considered developmentally vulnerable at the time they enter school (AEDC, 2016). This developmental vulnerability is often the result of socioeconomic and psychological adversity in early life, with rates amongst school starters almost 3 times higher in poorer areas. And these children will continue to fall further behind at school and experience more disadvantage as they grow older.

Interventions before these children start school are therefore vital. In Australia only a small number of programs are delivered within the context of the family and the home. Most of these programs have not been rigorously evaluated. right@home fills this gap by providing robust evidence on how SNHV can help improve child development and family wellbeing.

## The randomised controlled trial

The trial tested the program with 722 families (363 intervention) in seven sites across Victoria and Tasmania. Pregnant women of any age and with any number of previous children could take part if they were experiencing two or more of a set of ten risk factors associated with child development and family wellbeing.

It was found that right@home works well for everyone in the trial. The results when children were 2 years old did not change based on number of previous births, level of risk, mother's mental health, or mother's belief in her parenting ability.

The families are being followed until the child turns five to identify if there are long lasting effects of right@home on family wellbeing and learning and development by the time children start school.

## The right@home partnership

The project is a collaboration between the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), the Translational Research and Social Innovation group (TReSI) at Western Sydney University and the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

The trial was supported by the following funders:



## Victorian sites

Cities of Ballarat, Casey, Dandenong, Frankston, Hume, Latrobe, Melton and Whittlesea

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*"It's been quite a surprise how enormously it has changed my practice.  
I don't know that I can go back to working in another way" (Nurse)*