

Gifted Program

STaR recognises that support is often needed when a child's development is advanced. We introduced our Gifted Program in 2010 with two weekly programs in north-western Sydney: a playgroup for families and a 2-hour enrichment program for potentially gifted 3-5 year olds. The playgroup continued in 2011, with the model gradually evolving to better cater for the needs of both parents and children. Although evaluations indicated that families valued these opportunities, both programs are currently 'on hold' until funding sources can be found.

STaR's long-term vision is to be able to offer support to potentially gifted children and their families in their local childcare centres and preschools in a model that parallels the support currently given to STaR children with disabilities. In the National Quality Standard gifted children are included among 'children with additional needs' who require support. A pilot program is envisaged once funding and willing centres (preferably one childcare centre and one preschool) are located.

What would the STaR gifted support model look like?

The centre is assisted to screen and enrol a cluster of up to 5 gifted children, and staff members are mentored in recognising the individual ways that children express their abilities and interests and in providing for their intellectual, social and emotional needs where these are different from other children. The centre is also assisted to support the parents of gifted children with any arising issues, including planning for transition to school.

Who provides the support?

Dr Kerry Hodge leads the Gifted Program. She has worked as a preschool teacher for more than 10 years, as a consultant and more recently as a lecturer and researcher at Macquarie University. Through a Churchill Fellowship, Kerry had the opportunity in 2010 to visit overseas programs for young gifted children and to explore how teachers are educated in early gifted education.

What else can STaR's Gifted Program offer?

- Consultancy and/or professional development for childcare centres and preschools that have one or more gifted children aged 2-5, or would like to attract this population
- Consultancy to establish a playgroup for families with potentially gifted young children
- Consultancy for parents who know or suspect their child is gifted

Who do I contact if interested?

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