



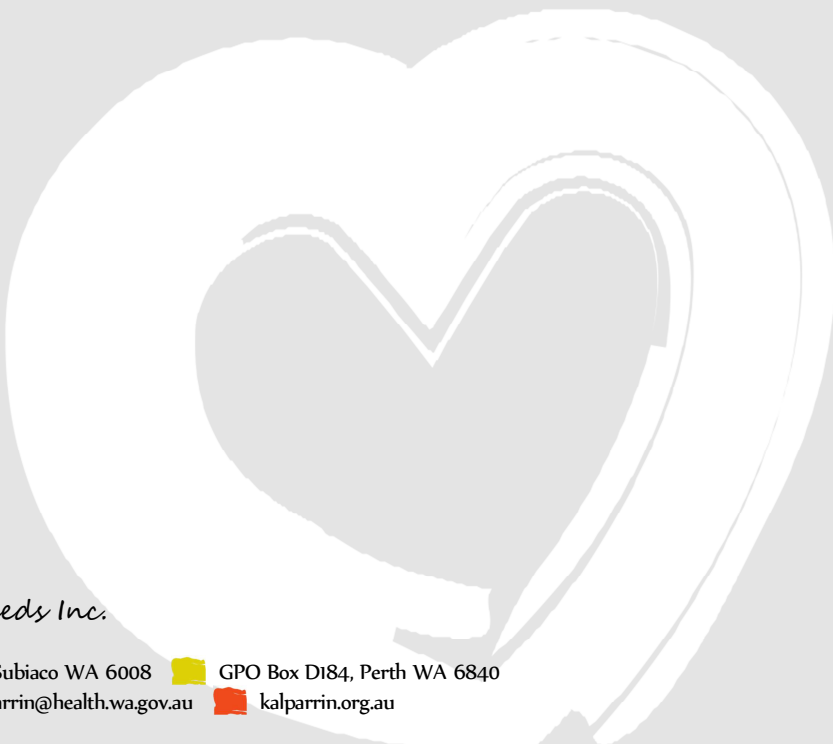
Kalparrin

Supporting families of
children with special needs.









*Acquittal Report
Impacat100 WA
Growing Up for Boys and
Girls
October 2014 to November
2015*

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Project Outline

A submission was made to Impact100 WA to fund a program to support parents in approaching the topic of puberty, and all its complexities, with neuro-typical children. Addressing issues of puberty can be difficult and challenging at best but explaining forthcoming changes in body and mood to a child with a comprehension deficit or limited attention span adds another level of complexity.

Kalparrin outlined workshops, Secret Girls and Secret Boys Stuff that provided a safe and engaging environment in which to cover this topic. Facilitated by a qualified professional, the workshops would cover the following topics:

- What are the hormones doing to me?
- What is personal hygiene?
- What products should I use?
- How do I decide what works for me?

It was anticipated that the funding would enable Kalparrin to run 22 workshops each with 30 attendees in the metropolitan area and regional communities, which would benefit up to 660 people and their families. Regions in Western Australia included the Goldfields (including aboriginal communities), Esperance, Albany, Bunbury, Karratha, Geraldton, Broome, Mandurah along with various metropolitan locations.

Kalparrin were not the recipients of the major award on the night but were lucky to be granted \$10,000 to support programs delivered to Kalparrin families.

The initial project scope was modified to deliver two similar workshops, Growing Up Girls and Growing Up Boys, based on the original concept but reduced to a girls and boys workshop in the North metro area and the same in the South.

One of the most challenging times in a person's life is when they go through puberty. The ebb and flow of hormones alongside the physical changes that are taking place is confusing to the most intelligent of minds. Parents often struggle to help their child understand and cope with the changes they are going through. When you are a parent of a child with special needs, the challenge is multiplied, especially if the level of understanding or communication is varied.

Growing Up Girls

and Growing Up Boys addressed young girls and boys aged 8 to 16 who attended with a parent or carer. Topics of puberty and adolescence were introduced with booklets and questions were asked, and answered in a way that is non-threatening and inviting. A representative from SECCA attended the workshops to provide additional one on one guidance for parents.

During the sessions boys and girls engaged in craft activities and had the opportunity to touch and smell hygiene products such as deodorants, sanitary products and shaving creams. This enabled the children to be engaged in tactile work whilst listening to the conversations that might otherwise have been too embarrassing for them to listen to.

Participants were given sample bags to take home with information that supported the discussions had during the workshops and additional information and resources for parents.

Achievement Against Objectives

The workshops had been piloted over the past two years and have been really well-received. The parents appreciate the opportunity to have someone else broach the topic of puberty as well as provide information in a relaxed and engaging format, using touch and play techniques to enhance

the sharing of knowledge. In this environment it is easier for the children's voice to be heard – even with a communication device.

Whilst we were not able to extend the reach as we would have originally liked, parents reported that their children had taken a lot from the workshops and were engaging conversations that they would not normally have felt comfortable. We were able to deliver four metropolitan workshops which we did not previously have funding for.

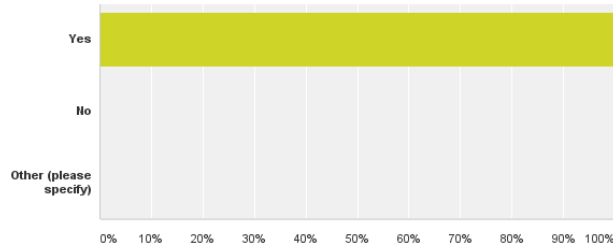
The identified objectives for this program included:

- Introducing the concept of puberty to adolescents with special needs.
- Engaging special needs adolescents in understanding changing body function and personal hygiene needs.
- Supporting parents to engage with adolescents with special needs
- Providing resources and strategies for parents to address issues related to growing up with their special needs teens.

In the four sessions, two for boys and two for girls, conducted these objectives were met with both participants and parents. Most importantly, feedback from parents indicated that 100% of respondents discussed the information they learnt at the event at home with the child. 70% of parents felt more confident about talking to their children about puberty following the workshop.

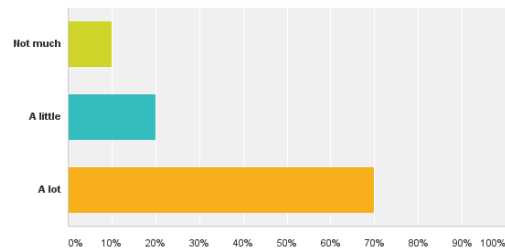
Q5 Was any of the information learnt at the event discussed between you and your child at home?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Q6 Do you feel more confident as a parent to talk about puberty as a result of the Growing Up workshop?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



How were the objectives achieved?

The objectives were achieved by presenting what is often considered an embarrassing topic in a casual and non-confrontational manner. The workshops were deliberately set up as same sex with a male/female parent or carer present. This enable discussion to take place without the children feeling nervous or ashamed (as they have said they do in school based education classes). Having one parent present also established a level of comfort that enabled the discussions to be continued after the event. The number of participants was also kept to a maximum of 10, thus enabling everyone to sit around the table and be part of the group.

Having the children engaged in sensory activities whilst the discussion was being held also enabled them to engage in conversation without feeling like they were in the spotlight. Eyes down on craft activities meant others were not looking at them and they felt more confident to speak.

A representative from SECCA, a non-profit organization designed to support people with disabilities, in their efforts to learn about human relationships, sexuality and sexual health across the lifespan, was also able to have one on one conversations with parents and carers to support the ongoing conversations outside of the workshop.

Project Outcomes

By attending the workshops:

- Participants were able to discuss issues related to puberty and their changing body in a safe and non threatening environment;

- Participants were able to discuss their changing bodies and moods and understand how those changes were related to hormonal changes associated with puberty;
- Participants were able to share some of their concerns about puberty;
- Participants were able to look at and investigate personal hygiene products that they had not been confident enough to do before.
- Parents were able to share conversations about puberty and adolescence in a group setting that took away some of the fear and shame that adolescents often experience
- Parents were able to get professional advice about how to continue conversations about puberty
- Parents and participants took away resources that would assist in ongoing discussions about puberty.

Activities Undertaken

The workshop was presented in an informal setting with the participants and parent seated around a large work table. The children were given colouring in and bookmarks to make whilst a Kalparrin presenter talked them through a workbook about puberty and body changes during adolescents. Participants were given their own opportunity to talk about some of the things they found difficult or ways in which they relaxed when they were feeling in bad moods.

During the discussion samples of hygiene products were shared amongst the group for them to smell (deodorants), feel (shaving cream) or investigate (sanitary products for girls). They also identified products to assist in personal grooming such as hair products (dry shampoo, gel, de-tangling combs), moisturisers and shaving products.

Following the learning part of the workshop, the participants were able to participate in craft and pampering (nails, hair and foot massage) whilst the parents spoke to staff and were given resources to take home.

The workshop concluded with a shared lunch and ongoing conversation.

Project Review

Project Implementation

The original plan for this program was for it to be delivered into regional areas as well as metropolitan Perth. The number of workshops was also considerably reduced from 22 with 30 attendees to four with 10 attendees.

Project Evaluation

A survey was sent out to participants after the workshops using survey monkey. Feedback was also received informally, feedback on the day and with follow up emails from participants.

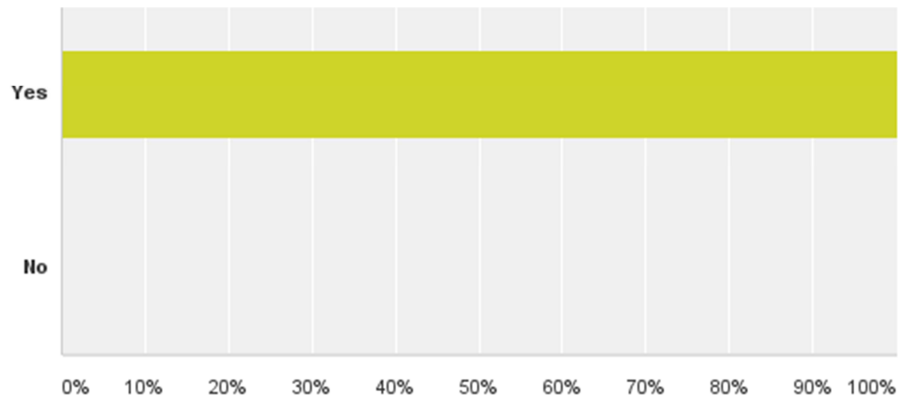
Evaluation Results

The responses to the surveys were extremely positive with 100% saying they would recommend the program to others. The feedback also indicated there was an appetite from parents to have supportive workshops in other areas of discussion such as bullying and other social issues. Apart from the content of the workshop it was also clear that parents and participants alike valued the opportunity to get together with others and share ideas and conversation.

Parents appreciated the opportunity to have the one on one experience with their child and said that it helped to create a shared understanding that enabled them to have more open conversations.

Q7 Would you recommend Growing Up for Boys and Girls to other families of children with special needs?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



“I thought it was very well presented and it was covered very well. It was great to follow up with fun activities that both the children and parents could get involved in. Thank you very much to all the organizers. Well done”

“Great job! Do another session for other families who have interest but couldn't come & I am happy to help :)”

“A follow up workshop just for parents with more detailed information. Perhaps a protective behaviors workshop”

“More groups such as this on various topics as well as social activities. My sons enjoyed meeting boys around the same age and I enjoyed chatting to other parents.”

“It would be good to have a workshop on bullying”

Lessons Learned

This program took the learning from the previous pilot program and incorporated into the new workshop format.

Changing the name from Secret Girls and Secret Boys Stuff to Growing Up for Boys and Girls also gave clarity about what the workshop was about and made it easier for parents to explain to their children what the discussion would focus on. Originally we had considered Puberty for Boys and Girls but a canvas of adolescents quickly identified that a workshop with the word puberty would deter adolescent participants.

Reducing the workshop numbers to 10 gave more opportunity for everyone to have a say and make comment and made it more inclusive than the original planned 30. There would be scope to increase the numbers by an additional 5 without losing the benefits of a small group, however, we would no longer consider a larger group as effective.

Expense Reconciliation

This program was strongly supported by one of Kalparrin's regional volunteers who contributed approximately 32 hours in preparing for and delivering the workshops. There were also numerous donations of craft materials and hygiene products used in the workshops.

Cost Allocation	Budget	Actual	Variance
Venue Hire	360	378	+18
Catering	400	472	+72
Activities	1200	542	-658
Take Home Packs	1000	935	-65
Fuel and Mileage	300	23	-277
Salaries and Wages	1740	1716	-24
Total	5,000	4066	+934

Variances Against Budget

The surplus to the original budget was realized through donations of materials and resources for the activities and take home packs. Allocation that had been made for staff reimbursement for mileage was not claimed and has been considered an in-kind donation by staff.

Some of the underspend was allocated to balance the \$251 over spend for the Dad's matters event at the Urban Griller, also allocated from this funding. This leaves a total underspend of \$231.85

Summary

This program was well received by all participants with very positive feedback. We were particularly happy to hear from the parents who were able to continue the conversations at home after the event and who found the information provided very useful.

There were several suggestions for follow up workshops or for workshops for parents as well as additional workshops for those who had not been able to attend this series.

Kalparrin has also been asked to consider workshops on bullying and other social issues.



Parents had the opportunity to engage in the activities



Growing up for Girls