



# ROOM TO GROW

**How and why local governments can support children and their families to prosper**

Peter Madden, Manager Community Capacity



# Demographics

- Growth Councils have much higher percentages of children and young people.
- There are 8,500 'Babies and pre-schoolers (0-4)' within the City of Gosnells. +600



Babies and pre-schoolers (0-4)

5.8%  
Australia

7.2%  
Growth Councils

6.1%  
Greater Perth

6.7%  
City of Gosnells



# Importance of the Early Years

“The first five years of a child’s life are critical for their development; with children’s brains developing connections faster in the first five years than at any other time in their lives. During this time, foundations for learning, health and behaviour are established.”

“Socio-economic inequalities in children’s early development continue into adolescence and adulthood, resulting in social disparities in adulthood.”

AEDC Research Snapshot -  
Jurisdictional differences in child  
development at school entry - trends  
over time from 2009 to 2018



# The Politics

## Executive function

- A local government can provide any service or facility that is necessary or convenient for the good governance of the people in its district or for the performance of any other function under the Act.



# The opportunities accessible to Local Government



1. Childcare and developmental programs run by the private sector are very expensive
2. LG's can create networks and develop partnerships to create affordable programs
3. Targeted support that addresses community need
4. Sharing the responsibility

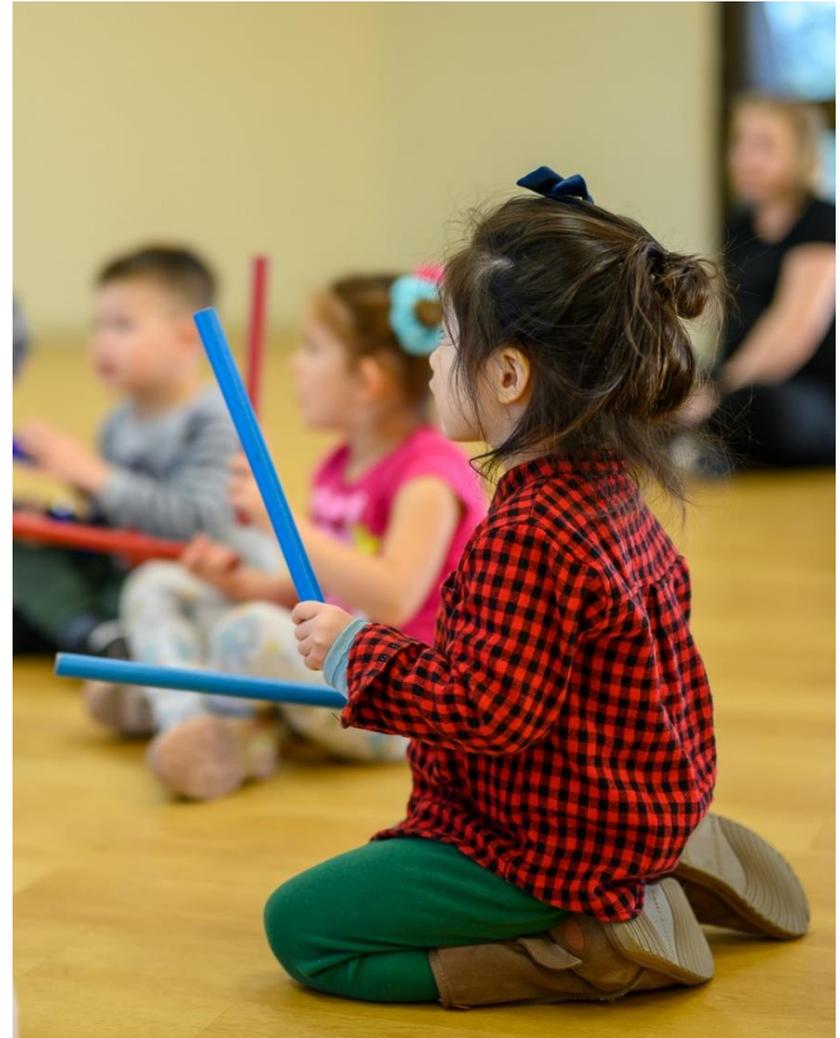
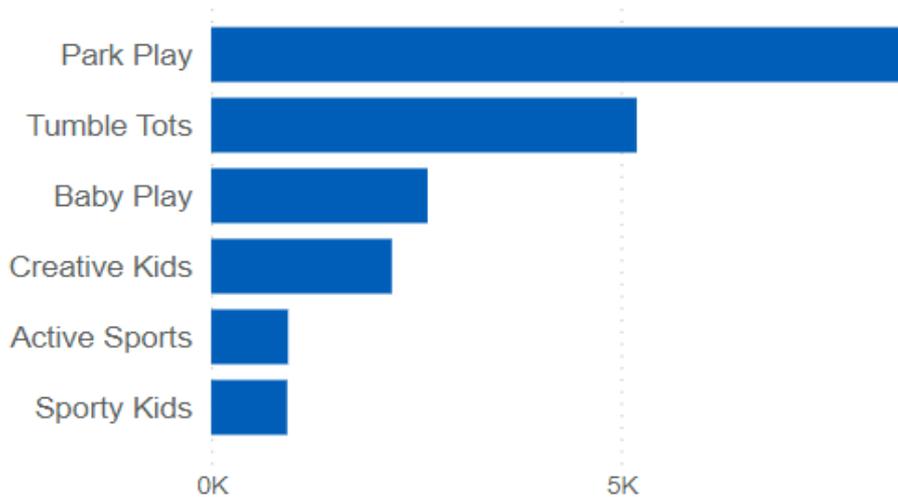


# Programs

- Mix of paid and free programs
- Focus on developmental milestones
- Create community networks

Community building

## Top Programs in 2021/22





# Partnerships



## Ruth - Parenting Support Worker - Communicare

*“Services come and go as funding changes and the Council provides the necessary consistency to keep services linked, working together, meeting the needs of families and filling gaps between services through this collaboration”.*

## Grace – CPC Coordinator – Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc.

*“The Families Team instigated by the City of Gosnells, sets it apart from so many other localities, as it genuinely addresses the pressing need for support required by so many families in this region”.*



# Outcomes

- The return on investment for early childhood programs varies from \$4 to \$12 for every \$1 spent
- Increase community connectedness and pride
- Activate public spaces
- Children get the start they deserve



## Takeaways

- Investment in programs that support the development of children also benefit the wider community in the short and long term.
- Programs must be of a high quality to achieve a positive ROI.
- Local Governments are well positioned to partner with other service providers and deliver affordable programs for families.



## Further Resources

- [https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging\\_being\\_and\\_becoming\\_the\\_early\\_years\\_learning\\_framework\\_for\\_australia.pdf](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf)
- (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/development/understanding-development/development-first-five-years>)
- <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/early-childhood-toolkit/why-invest/what-is-the-return-on-investment>