

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000259

Senator O'Neill asked on 04 June 2015, Proof Hansard page 15

ARACY - parental engagement

Question

Senator O'NEILL: You said that ARACY have been reporting to you about the work they have been doing. Could you give us a summary of some of the key things that they have reported to you so far?

Mr Cook: ... As I said to Senator Wright, they are also giving advice around Indigenous parents and what the important things are around that. I am happy to take on notice any more detail about that.

Senator O'NEILL: Thank you. You do have some material on the website. You have indicated that. I would certainly appreciate any more material that you have. If you could provide that on notice.

Mr Cook: Sure. I'm happy to take that on notice.

Answer

As part of their funding agreement, the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) has provided the department preliminary advice, based on relevant studies conducted by ARACY and international research, to inform the development of messaging around parent engagement. This research has shown that parents' views about parent engagement fall into one of four categories:

- time-poor parents who feel that they do not have the time or energy to participate in parent engagement activities
- parents who believe that it is not their role or job to help educate their children (being instead the school's job)
- parents who are motivated to engage, but feel that they lack the practical knowledge or skills to engage effectively
- parents who are genuinely engaged in their child's learning and education.

The ARACY research also identified that the overarching behaviours which matter most for parent engagement in children's learning are:

- play with children every day
- talk and listen as part of normal activities, be attentive and respond to their needs
- learn – read and count with children every day, as part of normal activities.

For children in primary and secondary school, the priority areas are:

- high expectations and aspirations for children
- positive environment for learning at home
- shared reading and creating a positive environment for reading
- parent-teacher communication and engagement in the school community.

These priorities apply across children's age and developmental status, with different emphases for primary and secondary students.

As part of their funding agreement, ARACY will undertake a specific focus on Indigenous parent engagement in their research. This will include:

- undertaking Indigenous-specific focus groups to gather information regarding beliefs and attitudes of Indigenous parents, educators and students towards parent engagement
- identifying existing messages about parent engagement nationally for Indigenous population
- developing appropriate messaging regarding parent engagement for Indigenous peoples
- a stocktake of existing data sources for parent engagement in Indigenous populations.

It is anticipated that ARACY will report to the department on their Indigenous-specific research in late 2015.