

2019/20

IMPACT REPORT

"Never stop
learning, because
life never stops
teaching."
- Loyal "Jack"
Lewman



We can read stories to each other now.



YOUR IMPACT: 2019/20 YEAR IN REVIEW

A heartfelt thank you for your incredible generosity and support over the past year. With your help, Learning Links was able to create positive measurable impact for almost 4,000 children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

For everyone in the community, this past year was one of immense challenges. COVID-19 exacerbated existing problems for children with learning support needs, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. For many, home learning was not a positive experience despite the best efforts of everyone. As a result, the needs of vulnerable students are now even greater, more urgent, and more difficult for schools and teachers to address.

As an organisation with a vision to create a community where learning difficulties are no longer a barrier to a fulfilling life, it is our priority to help close the gap for these children. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Learning Links shifted our services to an online mode and later reopened face-to-face services as soon as it could be done safely. This blended model of face-to-face and online learning continues today to meet the needs of all children. For Learning Links, as for many other charities, COVID-19 presented challenges. Due to government restrictions we had to temporarily cease in-school and centre-based children's services as well as club-based fundraising. However, with prompt action and support from generous funders, government schemes, and our wonderful staff, we successfully navigated our way through the challenges. Client outcomes continued to be achieved, sustainability remained intact, no employee losses occurred, and the organisation progressively returned to normal operations as much as possible.

Over the past year there was much to celebrate. We were incredibly proud when Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC the Governor of New South Wales and her husband Mr Dennis Wilson became our first Vice Regal Patrons. Her Excellency and Mr Wilson are strong believers in the power of education and their Patronage is a wonderful acknowledgement of everyone in the Learning Links family.

Our relationships within our sector and with government on all levels continued to deepen, and we were pleased to join the NSW Department of Education's Reference Group for the

implementation of the new Disability Strategy to provide input into teacher professional learning based on our extensive experience and expertise.

We surveyed our clients and reached a satisfaction rate of 92%, maintaining our high score. We also consulted with families on their experience during COVID-19 gaining valuable insights on how we can best help them in the future.

The need for support among children with learning difficulties and disabilities continues to grow, reflected in the high double-digit growth Learning Links saw in services across our seven Learning Centres last year. Identifying the best way to meet this demand was at the centre of our strategic planning process when we developed our new three-year strategy called "Impact for Kids". With your continued support, this strategy will triple the number of children Learning Links helps through expansion of services – underpinned by effective advocacy, new program innovation and digital transformation.

What we achieved over the past year was only possible because of the dedication of so many wonderful people like you. A sincere thank you to all the children and families, schools, corporate partners, philanthropic and club partners, supporters, volunteers, staff and to the Learning Links Board.

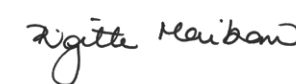
The need for what Learning Links has to offer is perhaps greater now than ever. We carry this responsibility with optimism and excitement for what we can achieve, with your help, to make a real and measurable difference. With investment in our children, their learning, wellbeing and education, the future is bright.



Gregory Wallace
Chair




Birgitte Maibom
CEO



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TOGETHER, WE'RE HELPING KIDS LEARN

OUR VISION

A community where difficulties learning are no longer a barrier to a fulfilling life.

OUR MISSION

To provide children and young people who have difficulties learning with the skills, services and family support that will enable them to realise their potential.

OUR PURPOSE

To prevent learning difficulties from causing disadvantage by offering evidence-based services and advocating to influence government policies. To collaborate with the sector to make sure we contribute effectively to the system.

OUR VALUES

Empowerment

We are resourceful, accountable and proactive, using our initiative to achieve positive change and outcomes.

Collaboration

We value teamwork and the strength that comes from diversity and from joining forces to make a difference.

Excellence

We are professional, competent and driven, striving always be the best we can be, in everything we do.

Integrity

We are reliable and dependable, and guided by our moral compass at all times.



HOW YOUR SUPPORT CAN TRANSFORM LIVES

THE CHALLENGE

Up to 15% of children¹ are affected by learning difficulties and disabilities.

- There is no financial assistance available for many of these children to access the extra supports they need.
- Our education system is struggling to cope with the complexity of the challenge and may lack the expertise to know what to do.
- Many children fall through the gaps and fail to reach their full learning potential.
- These children are at risk of mental health issues, unemployment and incarceration causing significant economic cost to our community.
- There is a strong correlation between disadvantage and learning difficulties – without adequate education it is more difficult to participate and achieve success in our society.



OUR RESOURCES

Expertise and experience from over **48 years** of supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities and establishing inclusive learning environments.

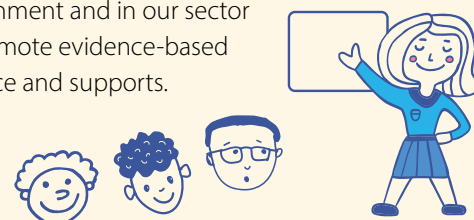
- 205 staff, including specialist educators and teachers, speech and occupational therapists and psychologists.
- 235 dedicated volunteer Reading and Counting Buddies to help children through playful and evidence-based programs.
- Strong, ongoing support from many loyal funders and partners across business, clubs, government and not-for-profit agencies.



OUR ACTIVITIES

Evidence-based programs and interventions including early childhood education, literacy, numeracy, psychology, speech and occupational therapy.

- Assessments to determine children's learning needs.
- Inclusive education and interventions that are playful and engaging, set high expectations and reinforce what is possible.
- Parent support programs, advice and workshops.
- Professional learning and development for professionals, including teachers.
- Raising awareness with government and in our sector to promote evidence-based practice and supports.



THE OUTCOMES

Children are better able to keep up with their peers at school and reach their full learning potential.

- Children make measurable gains with literacy and numeracy.
- Children have improved social, emotional and behavioural skills that support their education and wellbeing.
- Children and parents feel more enabled, empowered and confident about their learning.
- Professionals feel empowered to better teach and support children with additional needs and their families.
- Children are better able to participate in mainstream schooling and activities.



YOUR IMPACT

More children gain the necessary literacy, numeracy, social and interpersonal skills required to complete education.

- Children can better realise their full potential and therefore lead a more fulfilling and productive life with suitable employment and better mental health.
- Parents and families are happier and more productive when their children are able to contribute to society and fulfil their potential.
- The cycle of disadvantage due to learning difficulties and disabilities may be broken.



1.DSM5, 2013

ABOUT LEARNING LINKS

Learning Links was established in 1972 by parents concerned about the lack of appropriate education and support services to meet their children's needs. Today, our focus is on preventing learning difficulties and disabilities from causing disadvantage.

In Australia, a diagnosis of a learning disability and difficulty does not entitle a child or family to financial assistance to enable them to access additional supports. The child's future is therefore largely dependent on their family's financial situation and their ability to pay for the assessments, therapies, educational supports and targeted behavioural interventions that the child needs. It is, however, not just for financial reasons that access to interventions can be challenging. These children are often part of families who may also lack the ability to provide the practical support the children need due to the hereditary nature of their learning disabilities and difficulties.

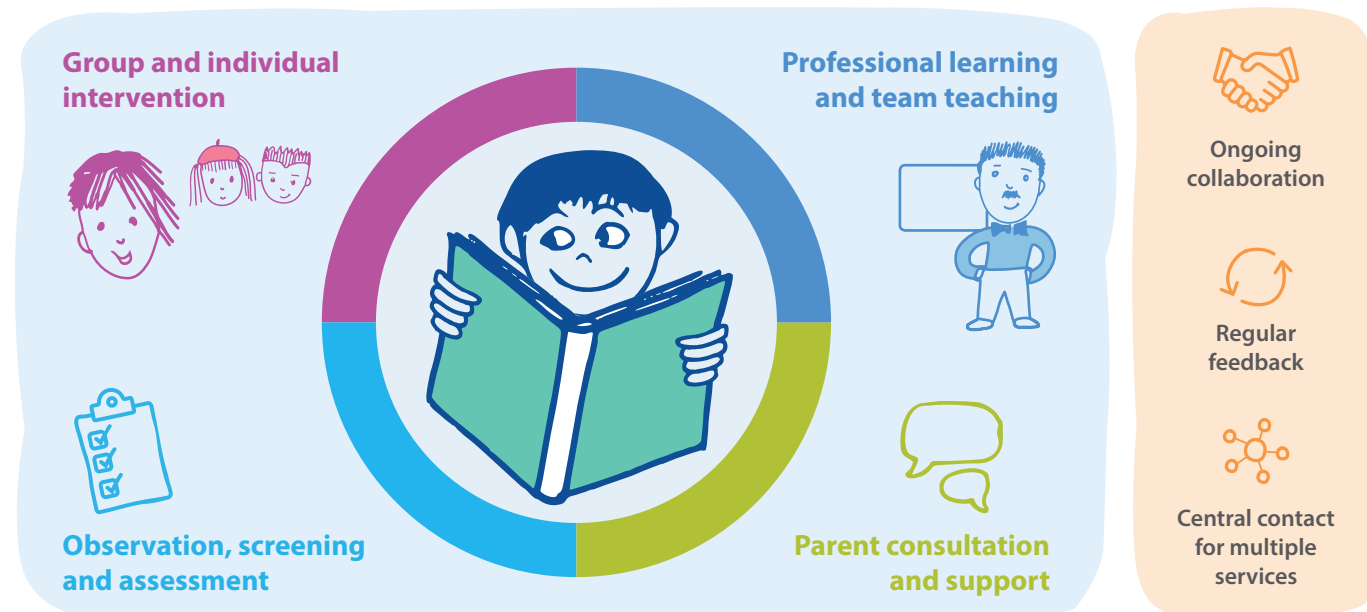
Learning Links works in collaboration with schools, early childhood settings and parents to help children with learning disabilities and difficulties to participate in mainstream settings. These children are often anxious, lack confidence, have trouble communicating and making friends, and many

have behavioural issues. We work with the children throughout their early years and into young adulthood by providing additional literacy, numeracy and allied health supports. Our work also involves supporting and educating their parents, carers and families. An important aspect of what we do is to help build the capacity of schools, early childhood services and professionals to ensure inclusion and sustainable change is achieved.

Children who are accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme can also receive help through Learning Links to achieve their short-term and long-term goals, through the development of functional skills for independence and meaningful community participation.

With almost 40 years experience in the field, our Learning Links Preschool in Peakhurst is a leader in its field and acts as a Centre of Excellence for truly inclusive early childhood education. Inclusion is at the centre of our practice at Learning Links - we aim to enable all children irrespective of their backgrounds and abilities to participate in a mainstream education and community setting, and help them achieve their dreams and goals.

OUR INTERVENTION MODEL



HOW YOU'RE HELPING KIDS LEARN

DIGITAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

CONTINUED SUPPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR FAMILIES NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE

Like many organisations, Learning Links was presented with challenges in the face of COVID-19. However, despite the changing environment, we were united in our mission to find alternative ways to provide quality support to children who have difficulties learning.

These challenges quickly became opportunities, and with the understanding and dedication shown by employees and families we worked together to transfer many services to the digital environment. Through the use of intuitive and engaging technologies, we were able to continue to deliver psychological counselling, speech therapy and specialist tutoring to children who had previously been attending our centres for face-to-face sessions. Our inclusive preschool, supported playgroups and parenting programs were also able to continue with the addition of online support, and the children quickly adapted to this new style of learning.

Expanding our services to digital delivery enables us to reach children on a national level, particularly those in remote areas or those who find it difficult leaving home. It also offers an alternative for parents who are time poor, eliminating the need to travel.

Online has become the new normal for many people and we have certainly seen the benefits of this model for our families.



....AND TEACHERS

REACHING TEACHERS WITH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ON A NATIONAL SCALE

Learning Links' team of experts is now offering a series of one-hour webinars to empower primary and high school teachers, learning support teachers and teachers' aides to get the best out of students who struggle to learn.

This has allowed us to scale our reach to a national level and provide shorter form professional development for teachers who are time poor. The webinars have been very well received by the teaching community, particularly the dyslexia and dyscalculia series which have now become staples. Each webinar provides practical information, strategies and resources informed by research, for teachers to apply in the classroom.





EYMEN'S STORY

4 years old

Becoming brave and confident

By Eymen's mum

Eymen was just over two when we noticed he was having some difficulties. He was extremely timid and antisocial with his peers. He would refuse to go outside of the house as he was scared we would take him to a park where he'd have to see other children. If we were at a park when there were no children about, we would have to leave if any other children arrived. He had severe anxiety and a fear of loud noises, he would shut himself off from his surroundings and not respond with any communication. He was also ashamed of participating in any intervention and would say things like "I am a bad person". He had regular, out-of-the-blue sadness and crying episodes for no obvious reasons, saying "I am feeling sad because I want to feel sad." It was heartbreaking.

We took him to a GP, as well as child and family health nurses. We also saw a paediatrician who referred us to Learning Links.

Eymen started attending Learning Links' new Prep For Preschool™ program in 2019. After a year in the program he moved into the Learning Links Preschool. This year he has been receiving additional support at preschool

through speech and occupational therapy. He also attends psychology sessions at Learning Links and takes part in play therapy.

Eymen has turned into a totally new child! Even though he's still experiencing some anxiety, his interaction with his peers has improved and he is learning how to play with other children. His extreme shyness is gradually improving.

Our family life is so much happier. Eymen's attitude towards his sister has seen a very positive change. Thanks to his new self-esteem, family outings have stopped being intimidating, uncomfortable and scary occasions and have turned into joyful times.

He recently did a presentation in front of his classmates at preschool and looked so comfortable, almost like a 'natural'. Knowing the old Eymen, it was hard to believe it was the same child. It brought tears to my eyes. It was the proudest moment in my life and also the most grateful I have ever felt. I cannot thank Learning Links enough, especially Melissa, Kathryn, Karen and Kwan.



GETTING AN A+

**PRESCHOOL ACHIEVES
HIGHEST POSSIBLE
NATIONAL QUALITY
STANDARD RATING**



Learning Links' inclusive Preschool was awarded an 'Excellent' rating by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

This is the highest possible rating for an education and care service to achieve under the National Quality Standard, which sets a national benchmark for the quality of children's education and care services across Australia.

Learning Links Preschool is one of only 47 services across Australia to receive this accolade. It reflects a service that is innovative, embracing continuous quality improvement and raising the bar on quality education and care for Australian children.

The Preschool was recognised for its collaborative partnerships with the local community, inclusive partnerships with children and families, and practice and environment that enhances children's learning and growth.





HELPING MUMS AND DADS EMPOWERING PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY

Learning Links has developed a new online learning program to empower parents to become better advocates for their children's needs.

The Parents as Case Coordinators™ program offers support via digital training modules, interactive videos and downloadable resources to help families navigate, and take full advantage of, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) service network.

The 10 interactive modules cover a range of topics that provide parents with a toolkit to set goals for their child, help them prioritise the level and types of supports needed, develop their child's NDIS plan, and look after the wellbeing of their family.

Learning Links has been supporting children with disabilities and learning difficulties for almost 50 years. The organisation recognised the need to support the large number of parents struggling to navigate the NDIS and understand the planning processes, which have caused confusion, delays and sub-optimal outcomes for many.

Whilst the NDIS has put measures in place to address these issues, greater focus is required to build the capacity of parents and carers to be informed, exercise choice and have control over their child's supports. Learning Links has provided direct support to parents and families on a face-to-face basis and hopes the new online format will extend the vital support to many more families in need across Australia.

The development of the Parents as Case Coordinators program has been funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme through the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) National Readiness Grants.

PASSING THE NDIS TEST

CERTIFICATION AWARDED BY THE NDIS QUALITY AND SAFEGUARDS COMMISSION

Learning Links commenced delivering registered supports for children accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme in 2017.

To comply with the requirements of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, Learning Links was required to participate in a comprehensive external audit to secure certification as a registered provider of NDIS supports. Conducted over four days in October 2019, the audit assessed all aspects of the organisation's governance; policies and procedures; and the relevant qualifications and experience of our professionals against the NDIS Practice Standards. Learning Links successfully achieved Certification, assuring the organisation continues to provide this much needed support to children and families.



MAKING NEW FRIENDS

THE GOVERNOR OF NSW AND MR DENNIS WILSON BECOME NEW PATRONS

Following a visit to the Learning Links Peakhurst Centre and Preschool in late 2019, jointly with her husband, Mr Dennis Wilson, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, has become the organisation's first Patron.

The Governor has expressed her commitment to education and social justice, which are values that align closely with Learning Links' vision to support children and create a community where learning difficulties are no longer a barrier to a fulfilling life.

"As passionate advocates for education and opportunity, we are delighted to be joint Patrons of Learning Links, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to providing high-quality support and services for children with learning disabilities and difficulties, in collaboration with parents, schools and early childhood specialists," said the Governor.

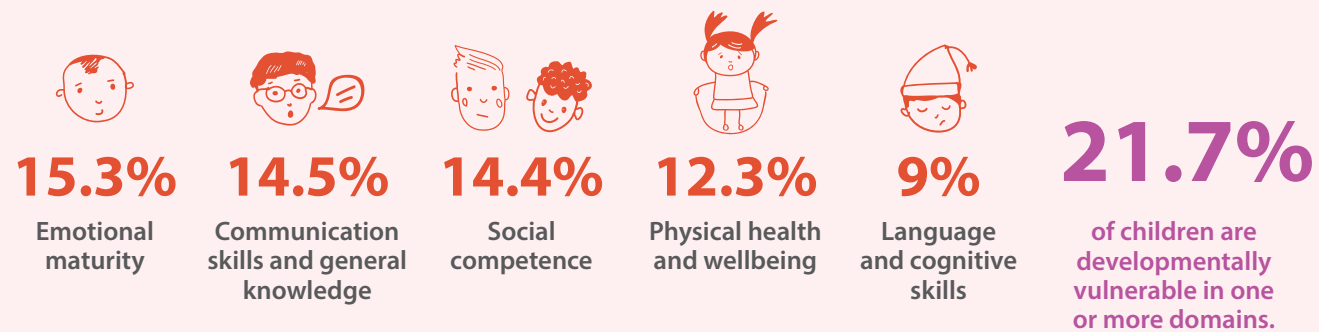
We are delighted that Her Excellency and Mr Dennis Wilson have accepted this Patronage, showing their dedication to education and equality for children, particularly those who are at risk of facing disadvantage in our community. We look forward to working together now and into the future.



THE CHALLENGE FACING CHILDREN

THERE ARE EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Many children entering school are already developmentally at risk in the following skill domains:¹



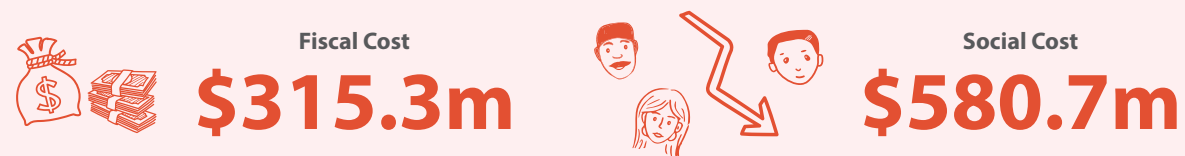
TOGETHER WE CAN BREAK THIS CYCLE!

The financial support available to help families is minimal. Learning Links supports families and communities by providing the specialist interventions required to help these children reach their full potential.

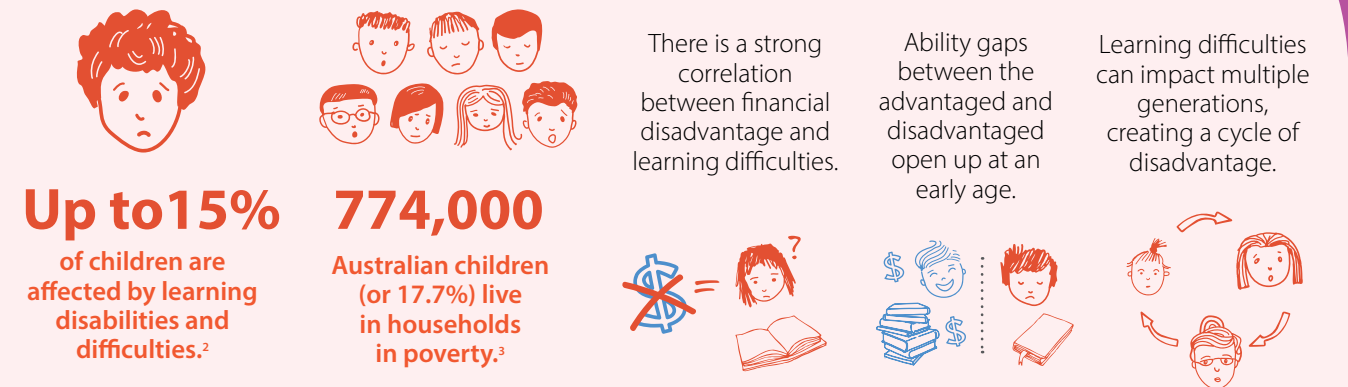


LEADING TO SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC COSTS

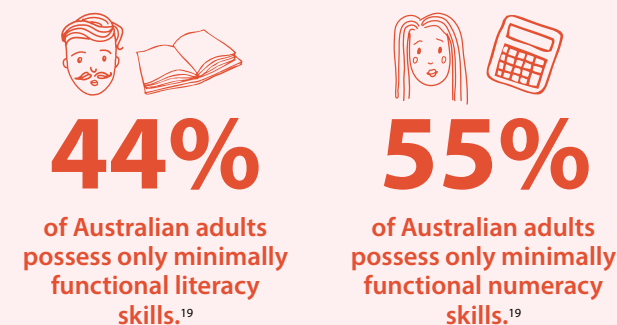
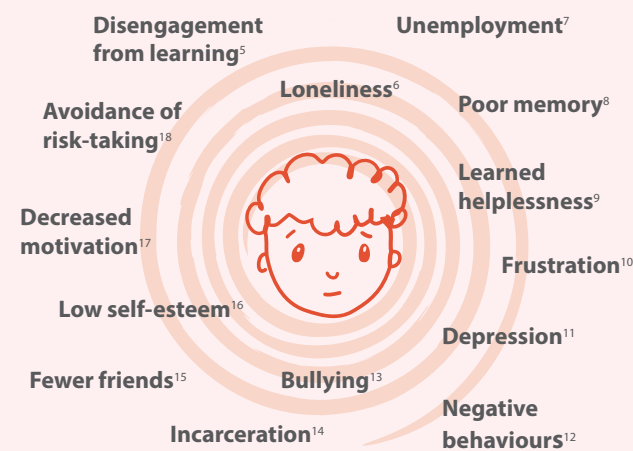
The annual cost of all early school leavers is:



LEARNING DIFFICULTIES ARE COMMON

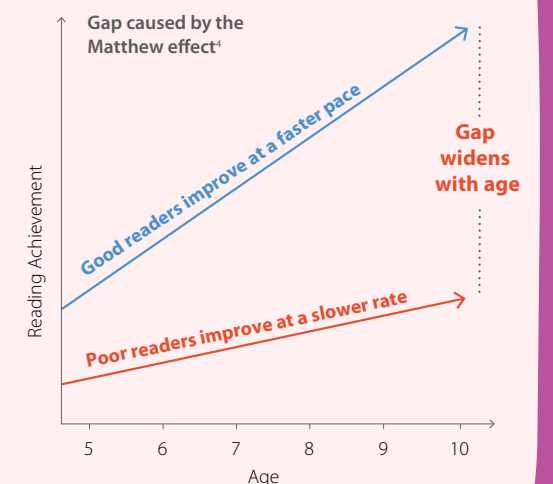


THERE ARE LONG-TERM IMPACTS



AND WITHOUT INTERVENTION

If children don't acquire the necessary skills at an early age, the gap between them and their peers widens as they get older.



¹ Australian Early Development Census, 2018; ² DSM5, 2013; ³ Australian Council of Social Services and UNSW Sydney, 2020; ⁴ Stanovich, 1986; ⁵ Rowe, 2006; ⁶ Carter et al., 2006; ⁷ ABS 2012; ⁸ Hay et al., 2005; ⁹ Firth et al., 2007; ¹⁰ Watson, 2005; ¹¹ Carter et al., 2007; ¹² Rowe, 2006; ¹³ Carter et al., 2006; ¹⁴ SPELD NSW, 2011; ¹⁵ Carter et al., 2006; ¹⁶ Nalavany & Carawan, 2011; ¹⁷ Watson, 2005; ¹⁸ Twomey, 2006; ¹⁹ Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies PIAAC – ABS, 2012; ²⁰ Lamb & Huo, 2017.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING KIDS LEARN

We simply could not deliver our services to children and families without our funders and supporters. We're so grateful for your generosity.

Today in Australia there is little government funding for learning difficulties and we are so thankful to be able to offer many of our programs free to children and families, with the generous support of our funders.

Corporates and Foundations Registered Clubs



A Sweet Helping Hand
Adobe Employee Community Fund
Bluescope Steel
Christmas in The Hills Committee
CMC Markets Asia Pacific Pty Ltd
Coca Cola
Count Charitable Foundation
Hastings Harbour View Motor Inn
Mercedes Benz Alexandria
Officeworks, Liverpool
Optus Corporate
Rotary Club of Somerville Tyabb
Sydney Community Foundation
Tait Mitre 10
The Coast Real Estate
TruRating
Western Port Catholic Parish



Ashfield Catholic and Community Club
Ashfield RSL Club
Auburn Soccer Sports Club
Bellambi Bowling Club
Berkeley Sports Club
Bexley RSL
Blacktown Workers Club
Brighton Lakes Recreation and Golf Club
Burwood RSL Club

Cabra-Vale Diggers
Campbelltown Catholic Club
Campbelltown Golf Club
Canada Bay Club
Castle Hill RSL Club
Chatswood RSL Club
Club Rivers
Club Wyong RSL
Cronulla RSL
Dapto Leagues Club
Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club
Doyalsong-Wyee RSL Club
Forestville RSL Club
Helensburg Tradies
Hornsby RSL Club
Lakemba Club
Liverpool Catholic Club
Magpies Waitara
Merrylands RSL
Moorebank Sports Club
Mounties
North Sydney Leagues Club
Panthers Penrith
Penrith RSL
Pittwater RSL Club
Ramsgate RSL Sub-Branch
Memorial Club
Revesby Workers Club
Richmond Club
Rules Club Wagga Wagga
Springwood Sports Club
St Johns Park Bowling
St Mary's Leagues Club
The Galston Club
The Juniors Kingsford
The Shellharbour Club
Tradies Gynea
Wallarah Bay Recreation Club
Wallsend Diggers
Wyong Golf Club
Wyong Rugby League Club

Government Partners

Bayside Council
Canterbury Bankstown Council
City of Ryde
Department of Social Services
Georges River Council
NSW Department of Education

Volunteers and Pro Bono Support

Andrea Croft (Anaura Consulting), Jan Colley, Isabel Ray, Julie Ducrou, Kristy Peacock-Smith, Mikkel Maibom, Volker Rath, Wayne Camenzuli (Innova Capital).

Community Partners

A1 Bakery, Allowah Children's Hospital, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Cabramatta Public School, David Coleman MP - Federal Member for Banks, Disability Macarthur, Early Ed, Fairfield RSL, Georges River College - Oatley Senior Campus, Glen Innes Severn Council, Gunnedah Early Childhood Intervention, HIPPY Australia, HIPPY Fairfield, Lakemba SaCC, Liverpool Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Lugarno Lions, Luke Priddis Foundation, Mark Coure - State Member for Oatley, McCallums Hill Public School, Muddy Puddles Batemans Bay, Multicultural Health Service - Fairfield, NGROO Education, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Parenting Research Centre, Riverwood Library, Riverwood Public School, Sanctuary Point Connect, Select Print and Exhibitions, St George Men's Shed, St John's Ambulance, St Vincent De Paul, Swansea Baptist Church, Sydney City Council, The Northern Centre.

WHAT OUR STAKEHOLDERS SAY

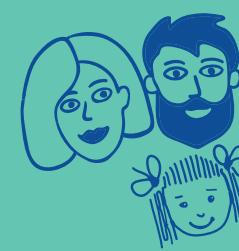
OUR FAMILIES

"Learning Links is a wonderful organisation that genuinely cares for kids and their families."

"I cannot thank Learning Links enough for the changes we are seeing in our son. You truly are child-centred and passionate in the work you all do."

OUR DONORS

"We're proud to be a continuous supporter of Learning Links. They provide ongoing assistance to kids with learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyscalculia. Our partnership is helping change the future of these children."



92%
of our families would recommend Learning Links to others.



OUR STAFF

"The relationships between people on all levels is very good and we have some extraordinarily committed staff who love the organisation. It is very inspirational and makes people go above and beyond. I think there is a high level of trust mostly which means we give people a fair level of autonomy to operate within their roles (where it is possible)."



90%
of our staff would recommend Learning Links as a place to work to their family, friends and professional networks.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

"Volunteering with the Reading for Life program was extremely rewarding. Just to see how far my child progressed within the program made me feel it was a time well worth spent. The change in confidence was amazing!"



92%
of our "For Life" volunteers are very satisfied with their experience.

YOUR COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION AND IMPACT

IN 2019/2020, LEARNING LINKS PROVIDED THERAPY, EDUCATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO:



3,943

CHILDREN

24

Indigenous children participated in a tailored literacy and numeracy program supported by NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group to improve their long-term outcomes.

1,083

Children with conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and ADHD participated in programs to improve literacy and numeracy.

1,262

Children received therapy to develop communications, language, sensory, fine and gross motor skills.



2,132

FAMILIES

652

Children and professionals were able to access services via additional online channels, ensuring ongoing support and accessibility now and into the future.

544

Children were assessed to determine their strengths and needs and to provide families with guidance regarding the support required and potential funding schemes.

595

Children with social, emotional and behavioural concerns were provided support to reduce anxiety, and build confidence, self-esteem and stronger family relationships.



171

SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

478

Children with disabilities received therapeutic support under the NDIS to develop functional skills for independence and meaningful community participation.

322

Children and families in disadvantaged communities were assisted with specialist intervention and support.

886

Parents and carers were provided with specialist knowledge and skills in children's learning, development and family support.



482

PROFESSIONALS

348

Children received inclusive educational care through our Preschool, Prep for Preschool™ and Out Of School Hours care services.

427

Professionals including teachers and early childhood educators were provided with specialist knowledge and skills in children's learning, development and family support.

55

Provisional psychologists gained expertise and skills working with children and families to fulfil the requirements to become fully registered.



205

Staff



302

Volunteers



172

Donors and Funders



Reading for Life® is an evidence-based program that provides one-on-one support to primary school children with reading disorders, including dyslexia.

The program is delivered by volunteer "Reading Buddies" at school or in the home. Children who participate are tested both at the beginning and end of the program to measure the impact of the intervention.

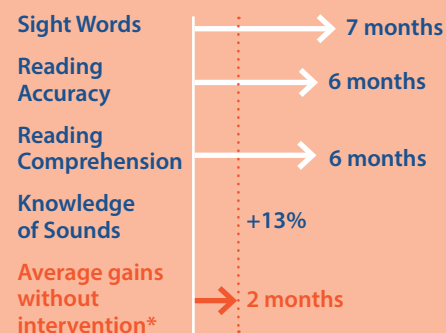


28 Schools
338 Children
138 Volunteers

AVERAGE READING PROGRESS

by children with reading difficulties (15-week program)

WITH READING FOR LIFE



Counting for Life® is a program that trains volunteers to work with children at their school to improve their numeracy, self-esteem and confidence.

The volunteer "Buddies" visit the children once a week for 10 weeks and guide them through a semi-structured program which contains a variety of fun activities and games to encourage children's engagement and interest while building their numeracy skills and boosting self-esteem.



24 Schools
319 Children
97 Volunteers

AVERAGE NUMERACY PROGRESS

by children with numeracy difficulties (10-week program)

WITH COUNTING FOR LIFE



LITERACY AND NUMERACY SESSIONS

Learning Links runs specialist individualised literacy and numeracy classes, with personal assessments to evaluate each child's progress.

Sessions are conducted by education specialists on an individual basis at our centres or within school settings. Sessions are tailored to engage the individual learner, using evidence-informed programs.



426
Children attended our tailored literacy and numeracy classes.

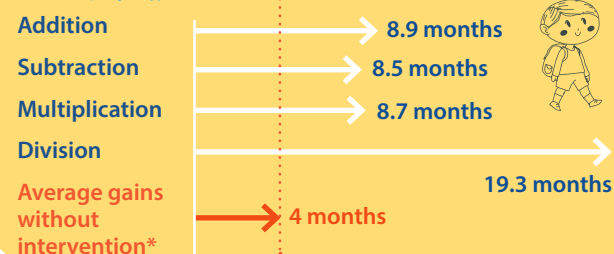
AVERAGE LEARNING GAINS

by children (8-month program)

LITERACY SKILLS



NUMERACY SKILLS



*On average it is estimated that a child with learning difficulties learns at half the rate of their peers

Children with learning difficulties have been shown to make only a six-month improvement for each year they attend school, while their peers progress a full 12 months*. This becomes more significant with age.

Our Educational Support Program is making a change beyond this for enrolled students with significant gains of up to 19 months in the foundation skills for literacy and numeracy being achieved over an eight-month period of intervention. This is a wonderful achievement, working towards breaking the cycle of disadvantage of learning difficulties.

*Thompson, 1990; Wheldall & Beaman, 1999

WHAT YOU MADE POSSIBLE THIS YEAR

Learning Links works in communities across Sydney and NSW to help children and families improve their learning and lives. Here are some of the key highlights and achievements from across our organisation in 2019/20.

PSYCHOLOGY

Our Educational Psychology team conducts cognitive and academic assessments to understand a child's overall learning abilities, strengths and support needs. To gain a detailed understanding of a child's reading, writing and maths skills, additional assessments are also available for dyslexia, dyscalculia, memory, Autism Spectrum Disorder and adaptive behaviour. Through the assessment process, Learning Links assists parents to identify their child's challenges and strengths, and the types of support they would benefit from at home and school to assist their learning.

Our psychology services also provide essential support to children and their families who struggle with emotional, social and behavioural development which can impact on learning. We utilise a range of evidence-based therapies including Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Play Therapy to address anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, poor social skills and issues associated with ADHD.

Highlights include:

- We moved our services online and introduced telehealth services for psychological intervention and parenting programs. These services allowed us to continue our work with children and family during the COVID-19 lockdown and many families continue to use telehealth.
- We expanded our bulk billing services into schools.
- We continued to increase our psychological intervention services throughout the year to cater for children, parents and carers across Sydney.



SPEECH AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Our therapy programs are delivered by a team of energetic speech pathologists and occupational therapists who are passionate about working with children and families. These programs are delivered in our Learning Centres as well as in schools. Our therapists deliver evidence-based intervention with a focus on creating family-centred goals to support children to reach their potential. In schools, our speech therapists work with school staff to identify and support children who need help with their communication skills. Our team also work closely with school staff to help create long term change in school settings to make a difference for many students.

Our speech pathologists support children with understanding and using language (e.g. understanding instructions and concepts, using vocabulary, forming sentences), social language skills, pronouncing sounds clearly, stuttering, and literacy skills.

Occupational therapists help children understand and work with their bodies so they can perform the basic life skills and tasks required of them at home and school. This includes the development of fine and gross motor skills, self and body awareness, sensory processing, visual perception and motor integration.

Highlights include:

- Our team of 23 therapists supported children across our seven Learning Centres as well as in 30 schools around Sydney.
- The opening of our new Learning Centre at Gledswood Hills saw three new speech therapists join the team to provide services at the centre and a number of local schools.
- We supported families through the COVID-19 lockdown by offering online therapy sessions via Zoom, and we continue to offer this online service to our current and new families.



EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Our Educational Support program is delivered by a team of highly qualified teachers who work with children who have learning difficulties including ADHD, dyslexia and dyscalculia. They provide specialist intervention across all areas of literacy and numeracy. Sessions are conducted on an individual or small group basis at our centres or within school settings. Every child attending our program receives an initial screening assessment upon entry which identifies their specific needs and informs the development of an individualised learning plan in collaboration with parents and teachers. Weekly activities during sessions are focused on building confidence and experiencing success in the areas that will have the biggest impact on literacy and numeracy development. Our education specialists tailor each session to engage the individual learner, utilising iPad and other digital technologies,

hands-on materials and carefully sequenced activities to facilitate learning. All programs are evidence-informed and supported by the multidisciplinary team at Learning Links. Regular progress reports are provided throughout the program to optimise educational outcomes.

Highlights include:

- We delivered online specialist tuition services during the COVID-19 lockdown and beyond. Delivering sessions online has always been a goal for our program and circumstances brought this to fruition quickly. We are thrilled to be able to now offer services for students anywhere in the country.
- Our Education Program for Aboriginal students was successfully delivered in a new geographical area, after partnering with the Liverpool Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.



ETHAN'S STORY

7 years old

Matching sounds with letters on level 28!

By Ethan's mum

It was when Ethan first started school that I noticed he was having difficulties with phonics – matching sounds with letters. His teacher also brought up some issues with literacy halfway through kindergarten, including reading, comprehension and blending sounds. To make matters worse, he also developed a stutter in Year one.

I knew I needed to get help straight away. A GP referred me to a speech therapist who worked on correcting his stuttering. The school were aware of his challenges with literacy and were very supportive, providing additional support in his first two years.

I found out about Learning Links through a parent from the school who recommended I contact them. Ethan has since been attending Learning Links literacy support classes with Sarah.

He has become so much more confident in reading and comprehension. His latest school report showed that he had made huge improvements in English going from “below average” in some areas up to “sound” for all attributes.

I have really noticed at home that his reading has improved, and he is even giving the hard words a go using the strategies that Sarah has taught him. At the beginning of Year one, Ethan was on Level 8 readers, and by halfway through Year two he is on Level 28!

His confidence has grown so much that he actually likes delivering speeches in his class! We are so proud of how far he has come.



PARENTING PROGRAMS

HIPPY

The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is based on evidence that children's earliest and most powerful learning comes from their family. Encouraging literacy and numeracy in early childhood sets children up for success in learning. Families access this structured home-based program over two years for free, starting the year before their child starts school. The children work through weekly or fortnightly play-based educational activities, with trained home tutors supporting parents and families to learn about their children's development and engage in educational activities to enable school readiness. The program also offers individual parents and carers a supported pathway to employment and local community leadership. Learning Links conducts HIPPY Cabramatta and Riverwood through funding from the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The program is supported by HIPPY Australia.

Highlights include:

- HIPPY Cabramatta was successful in accessing funding to trial the Age 3 Demonstration Project which will run for three years. We delivered the program to 10 families.
- HIPPY Home Tutors and parents engaged in a range of learning activities including parenting courses, webinars and TAFE certificates. All were completed via distance learning online.
- Over 90% of families who enrolled in HIPPY Riverwood stayed with the program for the entire two-year duration.
- 52 families across the two sites completed the two year program and graduated at the end of 2019 with 190 children and family members attending the graduation ceremonies.
- We responded to COVID-19 promptly and successfully adapted delivery of all aspects of the program to enable us to continue to support HIPPY Cabramatta and Riverwood families. Home visits, parent group meetings and training were successfully delivered to families using a range of platforms including Zoom, Skype, We Chat, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp.



MyTime

The MyTime Group Program is funded nationally and supported by the Parenting Research Centre. It provides facilitated peer support for parents, grandparents and carers of children 0-18 years with a disability, developmental delay or chronic medical condition. MyTime provides invaluable emotional and practical support to parents and carers, with participants accessing a range of specialist supports across the areas of disability, self-care, family support and parenting.

Highlights include:

- 12 MyTime groups in the Learning Links coalition delivered 297 MyTime sessions to 217 members.
- When COVID-19 restrictions commenced, all Learning Links coalition groups across NSW adapted quickly to online delivery and other innovative ways of supporting families. Learning Links was successful in securing supplementary funding to support groups during restrictions.
- The MyTime, MyPlace Group Chat Online Innovation Project was developed, and delivered an additional 19 MyTime sessions to eight new members. The success of this project resulted in additional funding being secured to continue the program for the 2020 calendar year.





EARLY EDUCATION AND INTERVENTION

Preschool

Our inclusive Preschool provides children three to six years of age and their families with a learning community that values diversity of culture, language, ability and experience. All children are supported to participate in a wide range of experiences and play opportunities appropriate to their needs and developmental stage. Children are encouraged to explore, investigate and enjoy learning within our caring and nurturing environment. Our professional transdisciplinary staff include early childhood and special education teachers, educators, speech therapist and occupational therapist.

Highlights include:

- The Preschool continued to operate at 100% occupancy with a growing waiting list and consistent demand from families. All children enrolled met the Department of Education's priority enrolment guidelines featuring children in their year before school, children with a disability, and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- After undergoing a detailed assessment and rating process by the Department of Education in 2019 and receiving a perfect score in all seven quality areas, we applied for and received the highest rating an early education and care service can achieve under the National Quality Framework - EXCELLENT.
- The Zones of Regulation program was adapted by our occupational therapist for preschool aged children and implemented across all class groups in Terms 1 and 2. It was delivered face-to-face in Term 1 and through home learning packages for children learning from home during the COVID-19 lockdown. This program was adapted to support several children's emotional regulation difficulties and provide staff and families with strategies and information to support their regulation and learning at home and in learning settings.

- All children in the Preschool participated in the Handwriting Without Tears program with a focus on 'Mat Man' to support children's pre-writing and drawing development and skills. Mat Man is made of wooden pieces that are the same as pre-writing strokes. These wooden pieces can also be used to form every letter of the alphabet! As the program progressed children were introduced to letters and numbers through a multisensory approach including building them out of the wooden pieces or playdough, or writing them on a slate board.

Prep For Preschool™ Playgroups

To enhance support for young children in the years leading up to preschool or centre-based learning, Learning Links' Prep For Preschool™ program was established at our Oatley centre in 2019 via Start Strong Pathways funding from the Department of Education. This supported early intervention playgroup is for families who have a child aged from two to four years who have a disability or additional need, or who are facing difficulties regarding their child attending an early learning service. The groups are facilitated by a transdisciplinary team of professionals including an early childhood teacher, educator, speech pathologist and occupational therapist, offering a relaxed, safe and engaging environment where play activities are tailored to enhance the development of each child and support their transition to centre-based learning.

Highlights include:

- This program has now grown in 2020 to include three sessions each week at Oatley and two at Rockdale.
- The Rockdale Prep For Preschool™ program is now part of the Rockdale Community Hub which has the benefits of the co-location of health and early intervention services at a shared location where families feel comfortable. The Hub embeds an integrated team-based approach – with the goal to increase the identification and surveillance of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) children at developmental risk from birth to four years and to promote wellness among marginalised and vulnerable people and communities.



MILA'S STORY

4 years old

Strong dancing queen

By Mila's mum and dad

Mila was diagnosed with Down Syndrome when I was 12 weeks pregnant. Knowing Mila's diagnosis before she was born allowed us to prepare and get started with support and ideas very early. We started early intervention and therapies for her when she was three months old. We knew that low muscle tone associated with Down Syndrome would make her early childhood development more difficult. She did physiotherapy to help strengthen and develop her muscles to be able to crawl and walk, occupational therapy to help her learn to hold and use items, such as grasp a spoon or a bottle for feeding, and speech therapy to work mouth muscles and encourage vocalisation. We also enrolled her in early intervention playgroup to help encourage social skills and work on all the things we were learning with her therapists.

Mila began attending the Learning Links Preschool this year. She has worked with Lauren and Hannah, the occupational and speech therapists, every Thursday while in her class. Mila has come along in leaps and bounds. She is happy to go to preschool and has grown in confidence in so many ways. She started off only staying in the lower end of the playground

but now wants to venture up to the fort, where she gives her educators a huge smile as they push her on the swing! She has learnt to hold her water bottle by herself this year, a huge milestone for her! Mila is confident interacting with her educators and the other children and loves to have a dance once any music comes on.

As Mila is an only child, we wanted her to gain social skills and confidence in a school setting without us there, for her to learn to adapt to following instructions and enjoy spending time with her peers. For us as her parents it was a big decision to send Mila to preschool, but we realised very early on that this is the perfect place for her – a place filled with people who have gotten to know what Mila is really like and to help her learn and develop her milestones through support, encouragement and kindness. Mila is a sensitive soul and the educators' approach has been to help her grow in accordance with what she can handle while gently pushing her to new heights.

As parents, Mila's growth has given us the confidence to follow our instincts. Knowing she is able to enjoy opportunities without us present gives us confidence that her future is bright.



Out of School Hours Care Service (OOSH)

Learning Links is the service provider for the Out of School Hours Care service at McCallums Hill Public School in Roselands. The service provides families with a quality recreation and care service for their children before and after school Monday to Friday during school terms. The Vacation Care service is conducted across all school holiday periods.

The OOSH service is accessed by children of all ages and abilities, with funding secured as required on an individual basis for children who benefit from additional professional resourcing.

Highlights include:

- This year we supported the following number of children:
 - 42 children enrolled in the Before School Care service
 - 76 children enrolled in the After School Care service
 - 47 children enrolled in the Vacation Care service

- We were pleased to be able to continue to conduct the OOSH and support children and families following the impact of COVID-19. Utilisation of the Federal government's Child Care Package and JobKeeper initiatives enabled the service to be maintained across the Before and After School and Vacation Care services and support the changing needs of the community.
- The program enabled children to participate in a wide range of activities that reflect all Outcome Areas in the My Time, Our Place - Framework for School Age Care in Australia. This included an increased focus on supporting children to critically and creatively understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

WORKSHOPS

Learning Links offers high quality training to professionals through a range of public, tailored and professional development workshops. Professionals across early childhood, education and healthcare sectors receive practical training that reflects current expert knowledge and industry standards. We provide relevant, innovative and practical workshops which allow professionals working with children to build on their knowledge, skills and professional networks. Our team of professional presenters consists of highly qualified early childhood educators, psychologists, occupational therapists and speech therapists.

Highlights include:

- We ran a two-day intensive teacher professional learning course held in Dunedin, New Zealand for 60 teachers and 20 parents at the end of 2019.
- We launched our new webinar series for teachers and parents in Term 1 of 2020. These have been attended by large numbers of teachers and parents, with several selling out and requiring repeat sessions.
- To ensure we could continue to provide teacher professional learning during the COVID-19 lockdown when face-to-face training wasn't possible, our NESA approved courses were converted to an online, interactive format. These have been well received and ensured we could continue to support teachers to support their students during these difficult times.

Workshops held:

- 18 free parent workshops funded by the NSW Department of Education
- 17 Teacher Professional Learning workshops (3 were funded)
- 5 online webinars which were attended by 188 people
- 8 workshops tailored to meet specific School and Early childhood educator's needs



COOPER'S STORY*

10 years old

Improved attention, writing and independence

By Cooper's mum

Cooper was four when we first noticed he was having a few problems. He was having issues with his speech, and had problems understanding instructions as well as a general lack of attention. He also had social issues. We took Cooper to a paediatrician and he was diagnosed with ADHD, anxiety and level 2 autism.

In 2017 when Cooper was 7, we found out about Learning Links. He started attending speech and occupational therapy, maths tutoring and psychology sessions. These sessions really helped Cooper progress in so many areas of his life.

In the years that he has been receiving tutoring, Cooper's maths has really improved. He is now able to complete more of his maths homework by himself and is really pleased with himself when he does. His writing skills have also improved, as have his expression and comprehension skills. He loves writing stories and shows great pride in his creative writing.

The changes we've seen in Cooper have made a big difference to our family life as well. He is now more capable of doing homework independently which gives me more time to help his brother if needed. It has taken the stress off things so much and we are all much happier for it.



* The name has been changed for privacy reasons.



PSYCHOLOGIST REGISTRATION PROGRAM

Learning Links offers an internship program for psychologists which meets the supervision and placement requirements for registration, as specified by the Psychology Board of Australia. The program takes a provisional psychologist on a one to four-year journey (depending on the chosen pathway) accessing individual supervision, group supervision and professional development. The provisional psychologists complete eight core competencies which include knowledge of the discipline, research, assessment, interventions and legal obligations. They also complete a placement of 17 to 34 hours a week at Learning Links or externally which provides an opportunity to offer intervention or assessment services. Many of our provisional psychologists find that the voluntary placement at Learning Links can open up opportunities to work in paid employment.

Highlights include:

- We moved our group supervision and training sessions online via Zoom.
- We launched a dedicated website and Facebook page for the provisional psychologist program.
- We introduced our first part-time paid position for a provisional psychologist at our Peakhurst Centre, providing assessments, intervention services and training.

CHARITY HOUSIE

Charity Housie is a form of low-cost entertainment, similar to Bingo, where friends can meet and play together at clubs. All proceeds made from these sessions go towards a charity such as Learning Links. Housie is a key contributor to funds raised for Learning Links which provides much needed support to children with learning difficulties and their families. Learning Links leads the way in Charity Housie in NSW, running sessions in 38 clubs across Greater Sydney, Central Coast, Illawarra Region and Wagga Wagga.

The contribution from Charity Housie to Learning Links is significant. Our customer-focused approach has not only seen an increase in this contribution but has also provided pathways to work with clubs in other areas such as community-based programs. A professional, hardworking Housie team who are dedicated to raising funds for the charity is behind the success in this area.



MEET OUR TEAM



OUR BOARD



Gregory Wallace
Chair

Greg was appointed as Non-Executive Director to the Learning Links Board in October 2012 and appointed Chair in November 2015. Greg currently provides consultancy services and is also a Non-Executive Director of Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd. Previously, Greg was a Program Director at Service NSW and the Business Lead for Digital Customer Information Services at Transport for NSW. Greg is an experienced senior executive with over 20 years of experience including in senior marketing leadership roles at Telstra Corporation. He brings dedication and expert marketing and communications expertise to Learning Links and has a demonstrated passion for excellence in marketing and business. Greg is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Sarah Donald
Secretary

Sarah joined the Board of Learning Links as a Non-Executive Director in April 2015. She is currently serving as the Company Secretary and the Chair of the Governance and Risk Committee. Sarah is an experienced commercial lawyer with post graduate qualifications in contract law, risk management and corporate governance. Sarah has significant experience in private practice and is currently leads a team of lawyers as the General Counsel for the Sunshine Coast Council. Sarah has a passion for the education sector and ensuring that all people have access to supportive leading environments. Sarah is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Michele Adair
Non-Executive Director
(Retired November 2019)

Michele was appointed to the Learning Links Board in February 2013. She has made sustainable contributions at executive level on boards and advisory committees in complex community, health and social environments. Michele is the CEO of Housing Trust and serves on the Member Services Committee of Local Government Super. Michele is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Clive Cuthell
Non-Executive Director

Clive was appointed to the Board of Learning Links in July 2017. Clive is currently the CFO of Real Pet Food Company and prior experience includes global CFO at Nuplex Industries and five years with the global cement major, Holcim. With extensive experience in commerce and finance, both in Australia and internationally, Clive enjoys supporting and leading organisations through growth and change. Clive is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland and a member of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. He is also a Graduate and Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Jackie Gambrell
Non-Executive Director

Jackie joined the Board of Learning Links as Non-Executive Director in 2019. Jackie is an experienced senior executive having worked in strategic and operational roles in both the commercial and not-for-profit sectors. She has held positions at Macquarie Bank, Goodstart Early Learning and Black Dog Institute. She is currently General Manager for Tuberous Sclerosis Australia, a rare disease patient organisation. Jackie enjoys supporting organisations through growth and is passionate about social justice and high quality, evidence-based service delivery.



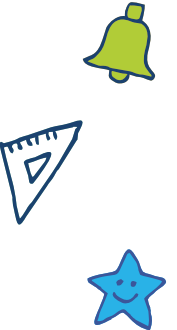
Helen Hu
Non-Executive Director

Helen joined the Board of Learning Links in May 2017 and serves as Chair of Finance and Audit Committee. Helen is currently the CFO and Company Secretary for Grain Growers. She has previously worked for large universities and held senior executive roles in sports organisations. She has solid knowledge of corporate governance regulation, risk management and extensive experience in managing finance for not-for-profit and membership-based organisations. Helen is a Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and New Zealand, a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a graduate of the Governance Institute of Australia.



Jennifer Wilson
Non-Executive Director

Jennifer joined the Board of Learning Links in July 2019. Jennifer is an internationally recognised and awarded creative digital leader, board member and strategic consultant. She is passionate about seamless engagement across multiple platforms and delivering measurable outcomes in the areas of healthcare, behavioural change, education and consumer focussed entertainment. She currently provides creative strategic and commercial consulting solutions across a number of start-ups, is an active mentor, coach and investor, and has keen interest in new developments in the creative/media tech landscape. Jennifer is the author of several papers and books and a TEDx presenter. In 2013, Jennifer was awarded 'Outstanding Contribution to the Digital Industry' by the Australian Interactive Media Industry Association.



OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM



Birgitte Maibom
Chief Executive Officer

With over 20 years' experience in market-driven not-for-profits across children's services, health care, disability and education, Birgitte has a strong track record in delivering successful, innovative business strategies to achieve social outcomes. Birgitte holds a BA/MA and an MBA from Macquarie Graduate School of Management, is a qualified teacher and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors with executive education from Harvard Business School. Birgitte has a deep commitment to social justice and is a strong believer in the transforming power of education.



Don Tilley
General Manager,
Corporate Partnerships
and Marketing

Don has had a distinguished and diverse career with senior roles in the corporate sector and as a retail business owner. Don brings extensive experience and success in growing sales and the bottom line to his role at Learning Links. Don has a Business Management degree and strong interest and expertise in business development and developing customer service excellence. Don was awarded an Australian Sports Medal for his services to junior sport and his strong commitment to supporting children is a key driver of his contribution to the future of Learning Links.



Diane Peacock-Smith
General Manager,
Early Education and Care

Diane has worked in senior management positions in the NFP sector for over 20 years. She has a Grad Dip in Community Leadership, MA Special Ed, Dip Special Ed, BA Special Ed, Dip Business Management. Key achievements include the establishment and accreditation of a Best Practice Early Intervention Setting and co-writing a Functional Skills Curriculum (DET NSW). Diane brings extensive experience and expertise in working across the education, health and community sectors to provide all children with access to education relevant to their individual needs.



John McCormack
General Manager,
Corporate Services

John has a diverse skill set developed over 20 years in senior finance roles in a variety of industries and more recently in the NFP sector. He also brings experience in project management in implementing IT software, infrastructure systems and facility management. John has a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) from the University of Technology Sydney and is a member of CPA Australia. John has a strong focus on optimising efficiencies by utilising a combination of leading edge technology and streamlined business processes to help achieve strategic outcomes. John is committed to supporting the future of children with learning disabilities through the work of Learning Links.



Simone Montgomery
General Manager,
Education and Allied Health

Simone brings a broad and valuable perspective to the organisation, having worked in senior management roles in the NFP sector for over 26 years across youth, housing and mental health. She holds a Bachelor of Adult Education and a Masters in Social Development as well as qualifications in management and project management. She has spent her working life supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged communities across the lifespan to envisage and reach for their goals. At Learning Links, she is dedicated to providing innovative, high-quality services for children and families, particularly those who struggle to learn and face disadvantage.



Jennifer Woodrow
Manager, People and Culture

Jennifer is a HR professional with over 20 years' experience in leadership roles within the FMCG, education, public health, and NFP sectors. She brings expertise in project management, culture, development and learning, employment relations, and WH&S. Jennifer is driven by her desire to serve employees and leaders alike, helping them think through changes and working with them to build and implement effective solutions aligned with Learning Links objectives and mission. Jennifer's strengths are managing effective client relationships, engagement and inclusion. Jennifer holds a Master of Business (Employment Relations).



Rachel Henze
Manager, Marketing

Rachel has worked in a diverse range of B2C marketing communication roles for over 20 years, including FMCG, food and lifestyle. She brings a wide range of commercial experience with a strength in branding and creatively delivering fully integrated marketing strategies. Her experience in market research and digital communications supports her drive to gain a deeper understanding and connection with customers to improve their overall experience. Rachel is focused on raising awareness of Learning Links and feels a strong commitment to support families through their journey. Rachel holds a Bachelor of Communications (Marketing and Advertising).



OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS



Dr. Samantha Hornery
Manager, Education

Samantha is a primary and special education teacher who has worked in school and community settings teaching, developing, and managing educational programs for students with learning difficulties. She has extensive experience in the development and implementation of professional learning opportunities for teachers and health professionals. Samantha appeared as an educational advisor in the ABC documentary, Kids on Speed? supporting children with ADHD and their families. She completed her PhD evaluating Learning Links' Reading for Life Program and won the NSW Institute for Educational Research Outstanding Thesis in 2012. Samantha has been with Learning Links since 1999.



Michelle Button
Manager, Psychology

Michelle has over 15 years' experience working in educational psychology. She is an educational and developmental psychologist and a member of the College of Educational & Developmental Psychologists with the Australian Psychological Society. Michelle completed a Masters of Psychology majoring in Education and Development and a Masters of Education majoring in Special Education. She is an authorised supervisor allowing her to supervise provisional psychologists. She has lectured and tutored students in subjects including educational psychology and inclusion support. Michelle's passion is helping children with learning difficulties and disabilities especially in assessment and diagnosis as well as helping them access the social and emotional support they may need. Michelle joined Learning Links in 2002.



Liz Bell
Manager, Therapy

Elizabeth Bell is a qualified Speech Pathologist with 7 years' experience working with preschool and school aged children. She has worked with children with Hearing Impairment and is fluent in Australian Sign Language. Liz also taught English to pre-schoolers in Germany for 3 years. Since 2017 she has managed a growing team of Speech Pathologists and Occupational Therapists at Learning Links. She also works as a senior clinician, working directly with children at our Peakhurst centre, and providing supervision and mentoring to early career therapists. Liz is passionate about making the language of a Speech Pathologist accessible to parents and teachers and is committed to translating the most recent evidence into clinical practice to make a difference for children with speech and language difficulties.



Melissa Murphy
Manager, Early Childhood

Melissa has worked in the early childhood sector for over 20 years as an early childhood teacher, early intervention playgroup co-ordinator, preschool manager and early childhood services manager. She has also worked as a lecturer and tutor for the University of Western Sydney and the Sydney Institute of TAFE and delivered a variety of professional development workshops for early childhood professionals and families. Melissa holds a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood 0-8 years). Melissa has a strong passion for inclusion, family centred practice and best practice approaches in early intervention and has expertise working with children with diverse learning needs and their families. Melissa joined Learning Links in 2001.

Do you like numbers?
Turn the page



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
Income		
Income	\$15,965,732	\$16,169,544
Total income	\$15,965,732	\$16,169,544
Expenses		
Expenses	\$15,934,825	\$15,849,365
Total expenses	\$15,934,825	\$15,849,365
Net surplus for the year attributable to members	\$30,907	\$320,179
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to surplus or deficit		
Gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	-	\$1,368,712
Other comprehensive income	-	\$1,368,712
Total comprehensive income attributable to members	\$30,907	\$1,688,891
Where we obtained our income		
Fee income for services	\$3,292,804	\$2,944,407
Grants, donations and other fundraising*	\$2,807,400	\$2,421,518
Charity Housie and Bingo	\$8,301,273	\$10,722,134
Membership fees	\$6,015	\$8,726
Other income	\$1,558,240	\$72,759
	\$15,965,732	\$16,169,544
How we applied our income		
Human resources costs services	\$6,537,299	\$5,045,371
Charity Housie and Bingo	\$7,297,915	\$9,216,619
Program costs	\$333,229	\$278,870
Support services and facility costs	\$1,766,382	\$1,308,505
	\$15,934,825	\$15,849,365

* Includes Government Grants \$2,170,757, Non-Government Grants \$628,288 and Donations and other Fundraising \$8,355

From March 2020 Learning Links operations and income streams were temporarily impacted by COVID-19 due to government restrictions limiting face-to-face in-school and centre-based services as well as Charity Housie fundraising activities in registered clubs. Services were delivered online where possible and from May 2020 gradually returned in a face-to-face mode as restrictions eased. Charity Housie started to run again in some clubs from June 2020.

The Financial Report for 30 June 2020 incorporates new Accounting Standards effective from 1st July 2019.

- 1) AASB15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers and AASB1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities. The changes to revenue recognition standards had no material impact on the financial results.
- 2) AASB16 Leases. All operating leases were converted to finance leases. Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss accounts were reclassified and a one-off amount of \$96,443 was expensed.

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
Current assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	\$2,384,864	\$2,192,175
Trade & other receivables	\$653,375	\$504,569
Inventories	\$125,541	\$105,635
Other current assets	\$145,669	\$177,317
Total current assets	\$3,309,449	\$2,979,696
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	\$3,442,816	\$3,581,934
Right-of-use assets	\$1,181,558	\$0
Intangibles	\$128,343	\$241,769
Total non-current assets	\$4,752,717	\$3,823,703
Total assets	\$8,062,166	\$6,803,399
Current liabilities		
Trade & other payables	\$543,908	\$536,468
Contract liabilities	\$750,023	\$969,586
Lease liabilities	\$284,378	\$0
Employee benefits	\$489,591	\$403,482
Provisions	\$98,679	\$84,169
Total current liabilities	\$2,166,579	\$1,993,705
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	\$993,623	\$0
Provisions & employee entitlements	\$91,293	\$29,930
Total non-current liabilities	\$1,084,916	\$29,930
Total liabilities	\$3,251,495	\$2,023,635
Net assets	\$4,810,671	\$4,779,764
Equity		
Reserves	\$2,362,747	\$2,362,747
Accumulated surplus	\$2,447,924	\$2,417,017
Total equity	\$4,810,671	\$4,779,764

A copy of the Detailed Financial Report and Auditor's Report will be sent to any member free of charge upon request.

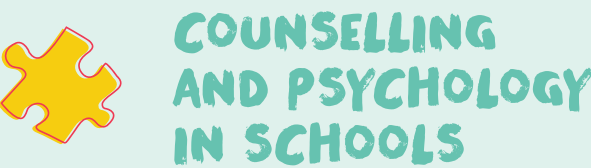
YOU CAN SUPPORT A CHILD'S LEARNING BY DONATING TO ONE OF OUR PROGRAMS TODAY.



An evidence-based program for children in Years 2-4 who are falling behind in reading. This volunteer run program provides one-on-one weekly support for 15 weeks to children and is proven to increase children's literacy skills.



Our team of specialist teachers provide literacy and numeracy sessions for children and work collaboratively with families, schools and other professionals to address the road blocks that prevent children from learning at school.



Psychologists assist children with social, emotional and behavioural concerns which can impact on learning, friendships and daily life functioning. They provide assessments, specialist intervention programs and counselling.



A numeracy program for children in Years 3-5 who are falling behind in maths. This volunteer run program provides one-on-one weekly support for 10 weeks to children and is proven to increase children's numeracy skills.



Our speech or occupational therapists work with a primary school to build teachers' capacity to help children with learning difficulties. The therapist will work in the school for one day each week with children who require intensive support, helping them in the classroom on a group or one-on-one basis.



We provide essential support to disadvantaged children with learning difficulties including literacy and numeracy support, speech or occupational therapy and psychology-based services. Our aim is to ensure equity of access to support services to promote participation and inclusion in school and help each child reach their full potential.



LEARNING LINKS CENTRES

Alexandria

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Peakhurst

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