



Hopscotch

Creating pathways into paid work for parents via Child and Parent Centres



CommunitySkills WA Facilitating a skilled workforce for WA



Child and Parent Centre Dudley Park

SHIFT

/LAB



Acknowledgement of Country





Ngaala kaaditj Noongar moort keyen kaadak nidja boodja

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal peoples of Western Australia as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Anglicare WA works.

We are privileged to work with and alongside Aboriginal families and communities and pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders, past and present.

The Hopscotch team would particularly like to acknowledge the strength and resilience of the Bindjareb Noongar people, and their continuing connection to the land and waters of Mandjoogoordap/Mandurah.

We welcome and support the proposal of the Voice and accept the invitation made to us through the Uluru Statement of the Heart.



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The Challenge





We have heard again and again from families (100 Families WA, The Sunshine Project) that good work contributes to a good life. But parents looking for paid work opportunities often face multiple barriers to participating in the workforce.

These can include:

- Access to affordable childcare in the area (including for evening/weekends, irregular hours)
- Transport to access paid work (often at hours where public transport is not available)
- Lack of flexible work which enables them to also fulfil their other caring responsibilities
- Traditional recruitment pathways can be intimidating, hard to access and

lonely and can exclude those who have potential to do well but lack qualifications or work history

- Household obligations and attitudes to paid/unpaid work, roles, money mindsets
- Other challenges which may limit the ability to take on paid work
- For those from families in intergenerational unemployment, job readiness soft skills may not have been passed down and need to be learned.

The Challenge



With cost-of-living pressures continuing to mount, many families are finding it harder than ever to put food on the table and are seeking opportunities to increase household income.

Meanwhile, some sectors of the economy, especially the community and care sectors, are currently struggling to find sufficient employees to do the work, and this need is projected to grow over time, along with our ageing population.

The challenge is to bridge the divide between those seeking employees and those seeking work, to create flexible pathways that accommodate the needs of both employers and prospective employees, while considering sustainable career options that will survive in the broader context of the future of work. In 2023, Anglicare WA ShiftLab set out to test an innovative pathway to meet this community and workforce need, based at Dudley Park Child and Parent Centre, creating a low stress, accessible pathway into paid work in the care work sector.



What might be possible if we could situate a work readiness program somewhere more convenient for parents, with existing trusted relationships, and where their young children can be cared for?

Ageing population, care sector growth



Over the next 40 years, the number of Australians over 85 is set to triple, while those over 65 will double overall.

- Intergenerational Report, 2023

In this report, Treasurer Jim Chalmers commented that the needed growth in the care economy would be "one of the most prominent shifts in our society over the next 40 years".



Source: ABS, National, state and territory population, September 2022, 2023; Treasury.

Research findings from 100 Families WA



Quantitative and qualitative data drawn from fortnightly interviews for a year with 100 families and an annual survey of 400 families.

Intense desire by families to find employment

- Of those on JobSeeker, 48% are actively looking for work.
- Hopes for the future rise when the prospect of paid work emerged in their lives, including 'setting a good example' for children, being able to afford more or better necessities, forming friendships and social connections, and having structure and purpose in life.
- Felt dejected when unable to find or sustain employment, as social status, income, service needs, and access were all adversely affected by unemployment.

Practical and social barriers to employment

- 51.2% reported they did not have a motor vehicle because they couldn't afford it.
- 39.6% could not afford access to the internet at home.
- 52.4% could not afford dental treatment when Other barriers to employment including illness or disability (46%), discrimination (29%), having the wrong qualification/not enough education (28%) and child caring responsibilities (17%).
- Other social barriers included a lack of confidence and/or experiencing fear or anxiety.

Learnings from The Sunshine Project



Insights drawn from a 2-year project working closely with families in Kwinana/Rockingham facing significant hardship and complex challenges.

- People have a strong driver for purpose and to contribute.
- Parents have a strong motivation for their kids to have a better life
- Many families are already doing caring work, helping friends with school pickup, cooking/sharing meals for neighbours, etc
- Many parents have been burned by years of failed attempts to gain employment and are cynical of the Jobseeker hoops and courses which lead nowhere.
- Families in poverty are so exhausted from the time/effort of meeting basic needs there is little time left for other pursuits.

- A web of other interlinked life factors can impact on a person's ability to seek and maintain paid work (including childcare, transport, internet access, suitable qualifications, family dynamics including FDV, secure housing, mental health, selfconfidence and more).
- The vision for a Good Life is compelling at a deeper level than "goal setting".
- Many parents want to work school hours but struggle to match with employers who will accommodate.
- Families are at school drop off and pick-up each day, and school is a familiar site.

Key insights from projects working with young people who had been homeless and seeking employment (D4IF) or in the care system (HomeStretch).

- Different segments of jobseekers have different levels of motivation and job-readiness.
- This motivational capital can fluctuate differently for different segments throughout the job-seeking process.
- Successful services work to grow (and not diminish) motivational capital through the ways that their service engages with clients.
- Understanding your gifts and what you have to contribute forms a deeper basis

- In the absence of formal training or previous paid work, focusing on life skills, values and gifts can showcase a candidate's match for a job role.
- The traditional job seeking pathway involves being prepared for rejection. Many people need help to prepare for how to bounce back after multiple rejections.
- An "Invest in Me" fund can invest in an individual's development towards their desired pathway. Clients are encouraged to "chip in" towards costs or in other efforts. This is more flexible and generous than traditional Jobseeker brokerage.

Learnings from other employability projects: HomeStretch, JobHive, and others





The continuum of work readiness





Where does Hopscotch meet parents on their journey into work?

There is a missed opportunity to support parents of children aged 0-12 in the space between their kids getting a little older, having some motivation or interest to enter the workforce, but facing barriers to accessing work and other supports.

Our design project tested out ways to scaffold the employability journey, offering personal development, formal training and other in-reach supports delivered in a friendly group environment, in the familiar setting of the Child and Parent Centre with onsite creche provided, along with work experience during school hours.



Project Governance



Hopscotch Advisory group

Hopscotch was developed with advice from representation from Department of Communities, Department of Training and Workforce Development and a Lived Experience consultant with current experience seeking employment/learning opportunities while single parenting young children.

Project Working Group

Our Project Working Group included Service Designer and Innovation Manager from Anglicare WA. Following our initial scoping to identify suitable sites, we matched with the values-driven team at the Dudley Park Child and Parent Centre (CPC) in Mandurah, who were open to the idea of exploring work readiness for parents accessing their services.

We also partnered with Community Skills Western Australia (CSWA), a not-for-profit care Industry Training Council with a focus on Community Services, Health and Education who connected us with training and work placement providers.

Our Lived Experience consultant also sat on the project working group. After spending some time helping us to plan the program and participating in our collaborative learning approach, she decided to apply as a participant.

Other program contributors

This iteration of Hopscotch created touchpoints with over 20 services and work placement providers, as well as a number of internal Anglicare WA service teams.

Through these contributors, the participants had access to laptops, emergency relief, service referrals, and information about no interest loans; were given interview outfits; and had support to build their sense of self-worth, confidence and purpose.

Project Governance





Program Partners & Contributors



Work placement partners

Hosted participants for their work placements and provided guidance



Guest presentation and outreach partners

Shared their knowledge with participants through visiting the CPC and presenting as part of the scheduled program



Local school and service partners

Assisted with recruitment or provided other services accessed by participants through Hopscotch



What is Hopscotch?



'Hopscotch' was chosen as an approachable name to represent the fun and social nature of the program, while positioning it within a safe environment for families. It serves as a metaphor for the different ways to navigate one's journey into work – paving your own way forward, one step at a time.

HCD approach – methodology

The Hopscotch prototype was co-designed using a human-centred design approach, and provided an opportunity to learn with and from parents what works best for them, and refine the model, with the view that it could be scaled for other cohorts.

Personal Development

We offered a variety of opportunities and activities to support personal growth and surface gifts and strengths, through the exploration of selfdiscovery themes, such as growing the good life, new routines and supports, and helping others.

Units of formal training and work placements

The participants also completed 3 units of formal training comprising the Community Support Skill Set, along with 4 days of work placement in the care sector.

Freeing up time 'to spend on me'

Hopscotch helped to free up some of the mental load of making ends meet/travel etc through offering a \$50 voucher for each day of participation.

Mentoring and support

The women each had access to 1:1 mentoring, wraparound supports and brokerage, alongside an onsite creche, and the program took place during school hours. In addition to rebuilding their sense of purpose and self-belief, participants were supported to update their personal ID and resume, gain required work clearances, and prepare for interviews.

Design Principles



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- **Familiarity-** CPCs are a familiar and convenient setting as parents are nearby every day dropping their kids off at school.
- **Good Life-** Starting with a vision of the good life connects families with what motivates them and builds their enthusiasm to pursue growth.
- Contribution- Unpacking who they are, their identity in relation to contribution/work and what they have to offer, put into practice with helping activities to build confidence and achievement.
- **Safe and Delightful-** Consciously creating a low-stress, accessible pathway that is social and enjoyable.
- **Stabilised transition-** Understanding of families' dynamics and what is needed at the whole household/family level for a person seeking employment to succeed. Brokerage and other supports to stabilise the family through the transition period of adjusting to work, different routines with money, childcare, transport, chores.
- Investing in Growth and Development- Equipping people with helpful tools, mindsets, and concrete skills to prepare them for the workforce. Freeing them up to be present and enjoy being rewarded for their work.

How did we make things easier?



Common Barriers	Hopscotch Approach		
Access to affordable childcare in the area	Creche available onsite every day, paid for gap in childcare subsidy for one parent during work placement		
Access to transport	Voucher for participation. Picked up some parents from home, provided Uber vouchers during work placements, facilitated learner's permit for 3 parents, collected hampers on parents' behalf, took parents to get personal ID documents		
Lack of flexible work which enables them to also fulfil their other caring responsibilities	Program took place during school hours, during school term, near school / home, 2 days per week Job Design- Work at the employer side to look at flexible options such as carving out blocks of work tasks which could be done during school hours.		
Household attitudes to paid/unpaid work, roles, money mindsets	Access to referrals for financial counselling and energy coaching, information about no interest loans		
Traditional recruitment pathways can be intimidating, inconvenient, and can exclude those who have potential to do well but lack qualifications or work history	Familiar, social setting for learning with peers- easy to access after dropping kids at school. The program didn't jump straight into formal training but gave participants time to warm up first. Warm Introductions- placements provided a soft entry and introduction to workplaces with employers who are keen for new employees, understand their needs and are willing to offer flexible roles and on the job opportunities.		
Other challenges which may limit the ability to take on paid work	Brokerage helped with things like prescription glasses, outfits for job interviews, and service referrals		
Job readiness skills may not have been passed down, and need to be learned	Adult Learning- modules included core competencies relevant for any job- to get a taste of learning and where it could lead. Practical help was provided to update CVs and prepare for interviews, as well as social supports and encouragement		

Key program components





Learning modules



The Community Support Skillset is a fee-free tertiary qualification that is available through registered training organisations (RTOs) funded by the Department of Training and Workforce Development.

This Skillset was chosen as it builds capabilities to provide care and wellbeing support to individuals in a community setting. It can be done in a relatively short timeframe, and opens doors directly to employment or traineeships, without the need for further study. It also offers useful life skills such as First Aid.

Alongside 12 days comprising theory, training and work experience, we designed the remaining 8 days of the program around self discovery themes, to learn more about what kinds of topics, mindsets, workshops and activities could be helpful along the journey to work.

Competencies

- Follow safe work practices for direct client care
- Provide first aid
- Communicate and work in health or community services

Self-discovery themes

- Growing the good life
- Exploring possibilities
- Gifts discovery
- Helping others
- Growing in confidence
- Thinking about money
- New routines and supports
- Reflecting and celebrating progress

I knew I needed to find a career that suited family life and have friends in the industry. I was however extremely nervous to try and get a job. I have never ever done this type of job. Would I be able? Would I be too emotional? Would I like it? - Participant

Recruitment



There are 22 Child and Parent Centres (CPCs) across WA, including 13 in the Perth metro area.

With expertise in child development, plus access to group work spaces and onsite childcare, CPCs are well positioned to support work readiness for local parents. They are trusted by families and co-located with primary schools, making them easy to access post school drop off.

Dudley Park CPC led participant recruitment, leveraging connections at the 3 schools they service, and their broader community networks. The CPC hosted information sessions, and candidates were asked to fill out an online application form.

A total of 7 applicants were recruited through the CPC for the 10 week (1 term) design prototype.



Who is in this cohort?



Hopscotch was offered to parents connected to the CPC (current or past). This cohort comprised all Mums, although Dads were also welcome.

Some of the women were Aboriginal and others had migrated to Perth from the UK, Ireland and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Aged from their 20s through to 50s, they represent a range of family configurations. They are all based in Mandurah, some within walking distance of the CPC.

Due to cost-of-living pressures, several Mums were living with a parent and/or caring for other kids in multigenerational housing arrangements.

> "After you have children, you can lose a bit of yourself. You give so much to your kids that you yourself can fall by the wayside. This is such an important course to allow women to get that confidence back in relation to work and financial freedom."

- Participant



Design Question



By reducing the barriers to employment by freeing up time (covering cost of basics which would otherwise be time consuming to access), transport, childcare, personal development & confidence building and low-stress introductions to employers...

Will participants experience a greater sense of their purpose and contribution, and will they feel equipped to make the jump into paid work?

- Vouchers for time: Reduced mental load and enabled parents to spend time thinking about their future
- **Transport assistance:** Three parents started their journey to driving independence by attaining their learner's permit; Uber vouchers and lifts helped them show up to the program
- **Childcare:** Allowing parents to study onsite at the CPC meant they could stay close to their little ones while they prepared for longer term childcare solutions
- **Personal development and confidence-building:** Increased self-awareness around one's own gifts and strengths, as well as opportunities to share them with others in a safe environment
- **Low-stress introductions to employers:** Visiting a workplace ahead of placements, or having a team member on hand to do introductions helped with nerves after a long break from the workforce

"I have so much confidence now. You all made me realise that I can do anything I set my mind to do." - Participant



Design Question



Anglicarewa

By working with care industry employers to understand the needs and capabilities of prospective employees (work during school hours, entry level opportunities, with opportunities to learn and progress on the job), and brokering soft entry into work...

Will organisations be willing to adapt, and will this see potential benefits for their workforce?

> "Hopscotch provides a happy balance between depth of program and wanting to get out there (into the workforce)." - Community Skills WA

- The work placement providers approached were open to adjustments to accommodate the Hopscotch cohort (later starts and earlier finishes to fit within school hours, pop-up daycare onsite).
- A provider allowed the group to tour the facility and meet staff ahead of their placement.
- The requirements for the placements were minimal (i.e. Police Clearance, NDIS worker screening).
- One of the workplaces, a residential aged care facility, agreed to design a rotating placement for participants, enabling them to try out different tasks and areas of work within the organisation alongside their experience in helping to deliver personal care to residents.
- Post-program, lack of personal transport remains a barrier for those wishing to get into disability care work. In residential care settings, a 7am start is expected due to getting clients up and out of bed each morning.
- One participant has gained employment post-placement as part of a pool of support workers, and the workplace has indicated they are open to working around her (more limited) availability.
- Traineeships are an option for those who did the 4-day aged care placement, regardless of their relatively short work experience. This presents a very low barrier to entry, i.e. 12 x 6-hour days of training and work placement.

Design Question





By building the social fabric between schools, child and parent centres, volunteering and the care sector in a local community...

What additional unintended consequences may come?

"What makes the journey to work easier for parents is knowing that there are people who want to help us and that we are not alone."

- Participant

Early observations:

- One participant has joined the school P&C committee and recruited several other participants to join- the P&C had been at risk of closing down due to lack of interest
- Local support services had the opportunity to visit the CPC for the first time and meet the staff, strengthening connections between services
- The CPC is in the process of registering as a Work and Development Permit (WDP) site, directly participating in the wider network supporting parents with court fines
- The CPC team welcomed and encouraged visitors to use the space as a community hub, with the intent of diversifying offerings for families
- Money Mentors invited several participants to volunteer in their office to get further work experience and help others, which one person decided to try in February.
- Conversations have opened up between the CPC and neighbouring aged care provider Coastal Care Community around exploring the idea of an intergenerational playgroup or joint picnic on the shared oval.
- The group was exposed to volunteers from other community services who attended outreach through Dress for Success and Foodbank WA

What did we notice?



We know that it can be hard for parents to access existing employability programs, learning opportunities and appointments. Childcare and transport can often be challenging, and individually focused programs can be lonely and stigmatising.

Constant overwhelm

Some parents feel overwhelmed and have no breathing space to think about their own potential or take steps towards a better future for their family.

Family challenges

The Hopscotch parents were ready for an opportunity to thrive, but their families were facing various challenges, such as food and housing insecurity, kids being suspended from school, excess rubbish at home requiring cleanout, and family conflict.

Financial pressures

Some families are coping with massive court fines (\$10K) – Hopscotch is an opportunity for these to be reduced through the Work and Development Permit (WDP) scheme to provide some relief.

Digital access and literacy

The majority of participants don't have computer access at home, and some have intermittent access to a working phone. Some don't have internet at home so may tether to a friend or family member's phone to get online.

Health and mental health

Participants and their families face various assessments and diagnoses, expensive treatments and chronic health conditions. Sometimes this means waiting until things get bad before addressing them, due to a lack of resources and seemingly no viable options. No access to private health care and a reduction in medical practices that bulk bill can mean having to go without.

What did we notice?



Motivational capital

The easier it is to access a program (convenient time, location, catering, transport, content pitched at the right level), the more participants' motivation multiplies.

A sense of possibility

Participants not only showed themselves that they could complete something challenging, but also that they could do so despite the many challenges they had in their lives, building their sense of possibility that they could do the same with a paid job.

Relationships first

Recruitment and program development benefited from the CPC team's existing relationships. The program leads and trainers developed trusting relationships with the participants and the strong group dynamic further contributed to individual success.

Strengths of parents

Some of the collective strengths that showed up in the group included accountability, cohesion and support. Among the individual strengths that showed up were resilience, ability to prioritise, pride, generosity, wisdom, empathy, resourcefulness and self-sufficiency.

A 'feelgood' space

Everyone who encountered the project left feeling lighter and more hopeful, including participants, staff and community partners.

Job Design ("Job Carving")

There is interest from participants in testing out a range of roles and responsibilities. Further resourcing would be needed on the work provider side to more creatively explore job design for work placements and beyond.

"The space was one of non-judgement, kindness, tolerance, making people feel heard and included." - CSWA

Outcomes



100% of participants completed the entire program

Participant	Distilled intent	Confidence (pre, 1-5)	Confidence (post, 1-5)	Steps taken/barriers/ development	Results so far
	Get a new job	FFF	FFFF	Units of competency complete, NDIS clearance, Working with children check, new glasses	Started working in disability care; enjoying her new role
	Get into a traineeship	€¥	J.J.J.	Units of competency complete, NDIS clearance, Working with children check	Exploring traineeship opportunities actively job-seeking
	Study Cert III		LLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL	Units of competency complete, chose a new direction, Attained learner's permit	Commenced Cert 3 study in February; doing very well
	Get a promotion	DE D	¥\$\$\$	Units of competency complete, prescription glasses, Working with children check	Attained a promotion
	Start own Family Daycare business	P.P.P.	FFFF	Units of competency complete, NDIS clearance	Exploring further study pathways with Jobs & Skills Centre
	Get into a traineeship	¥¥.	LLLL	Units of competency complete, learner's permit, prescription glasses, Working with children check	Getting further support with her resume; exploring traineeship opportunities
	Get a new job		LL LL	Units of competency complete, Working with children check, prescription glasses, learner's permit	Moved out of the area; got a job in regional WA

What did it cost to test out?



Item	Cost
Service Designer and Manager (in-kind FTE x 6 months)	\$45,279 \$13,884 \$59,164
Facilitation (in-kind 3 days p/week x 6 months) CPC staff support (in-kind 1 day per week x 6 months)	\$28,399 \$9,466 \$37,865
Org overheads Anglicare WA (in-kind across both Design and CPC staff)	\$47,125
RTO & Community Skills WA costs (in kind - covered through Job Ready program)	
Vouchers and brokerage	\$9,300
Creche, catering, speaker fees, materials	\$9,900
Guest speaker fees (in kind)	\$1,200
Venue and laptop hire (in kind)	\$2,800
TOTAL	\$167,354

Note – The annual budget to scale up the model would be closer to \$400k p/a as the final model includes an additional mentor role, recharges for mentor and facilitator role and is costed for multiple cohorts per year, as opposed to single cohort tested over just a few months as above.



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This was an excellent program , thank you to those who organised it. I feel very lucky have been part of it and am now employed again and loving my new role.



Recommendations



Child and Parent Centres across WA have access to cohorts with the most to gain from a family-friendly employment pathway program such as Hopscotch. Contemplating work options after kids can be an overwhelming transition for many, and the CPC is an ideal site from which to scaffold this exploration in a supported way. This project has demonstrated that the Hopscotch approach could add value to the work CPCs do to leverage relationships with parents to support their development in additional life dimensions alongside parenting. Positive outcomes for parents, including employment or further education are proven to also benefit and improve prospects for their children.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That funding contracts for Child and Parent Centres include scope for Hopscotch-like personal development programs as a value-add to their core parenting offering.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That fidelity to core components of the model are retained, but with resourcing/flexibility to tailor programs to each unique CPC cohort or community.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That suitable program partners are determined on a hyper-local basis first and foremost, to nurture ongoing local networks and relationships, and longevity of outcomes for participants.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That further co-design and testing work is done at the employer-side to understand and support employers to design new job roles which make best use of an untapped workforce who want to work during school hours.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That further co-design and exploration is done around intermediary enterprises, which can offer paid work for people who are not quite ready for the jump into open employment and can pe paid to learn some additional employability skills on the job.

> "This brings out the best person in me, it makes me want to be better and do better." - Participant

What next?



A Hopscotch practice model and service blueprint based on the insights from this trial is being produced.

We intend to further explore additional pathways into livelihoods for cohorts who face difficulty accessing paid employment.

"Funders should know the difference Hopscotch makes to a person's life. It gives a great opportunity to women to gain skills and confidence to get back into the workforce."

- Participant







Thank you

More questions? Get in touch:

Joni.Sercombe@anglicarewa.org.au

Kira.Rikkers@anglicarewa.org.au

