



Child Engagement Project

Final Report

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BACKGROUND

As part of a community wide consultation for *Logan Together*, we engaged with young children in Logan in school-based workshops about wellbeing. We based our conversations and activities on the Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY) indicators for child wellbeing:

- Being loved and safe
- Having material basics
- Being Healthy
- Learning
- Participating

Aim

The main aim of the engagement process was to acquire children's ideas about life in Logan, and to contribute those ideas as the children's voice for the development of the roadmap for *Logan Together*.

Process

Child Engagement Workshop Program

A two-step process was used to work with groups of children (4 to 9 years) in early learning centers and schools:

1. Guided discussion with groups about wellbeing.
2. Workshop program where children paint, draw and tell stories about wellbeing with the support of arts workers and teachers.

The full lesson plan is included in Appendix 1.

Participants

In September 2015, we worked with four groups of young children (4 to 9 years) to gain their ideas about wellbeing in Logan. The children were enrolled in schools and early learning centres, and sessions were conducted as part of normal activity with the support of school personnel and our child engagement team.

According to our discussions with the principals and directors, all children were eligible participate in the workshop as a normal part of their school day with their ideas valued and counted in dialogue and art/story. Only those with valid parental permission have been included in photographs and images.

A total of 69 children (37 girls and 32 boys) were involved in the workshops:

| | Children | Ages | Boys | Girls |
|---------------------------------|----------|------|------|-------|
| Daisy Hill – Rosie’s ELC | 16 | 4-5 | 5 | 11 |
| Woodridge State School – Year 1 | 22 | 5-6 | 11 | 11 |
| Beenleigh State School – Year 2 | 13 | 7-8 | 7 | 6 |
| Woodridge State School – Year 3 | 18 | 8-9 | 9 | 9 |

The children’s ideas

Children’s ideas are considered as data to help inform community understanding of how children see their world now and into the future.

These data include:

- Ideas gathered from classroom discussion
- Drawings
- Stories

The children’s work is held in *Logan Together* as original materials and in a digital database.

A data analysis workshop was held with *Logan Together* staff and the child engagement team. Data (including discussion notes, art and story) were sorted by age, locality, gender and content. The content analysis searched for patterns in children’s drawings and words. We found emergent themes relating to: family and home, play, safety, learning, nature and the environment, health and lifestyle, the future, and big picture thinking.

OUR FINDINGS

Discussions with young children

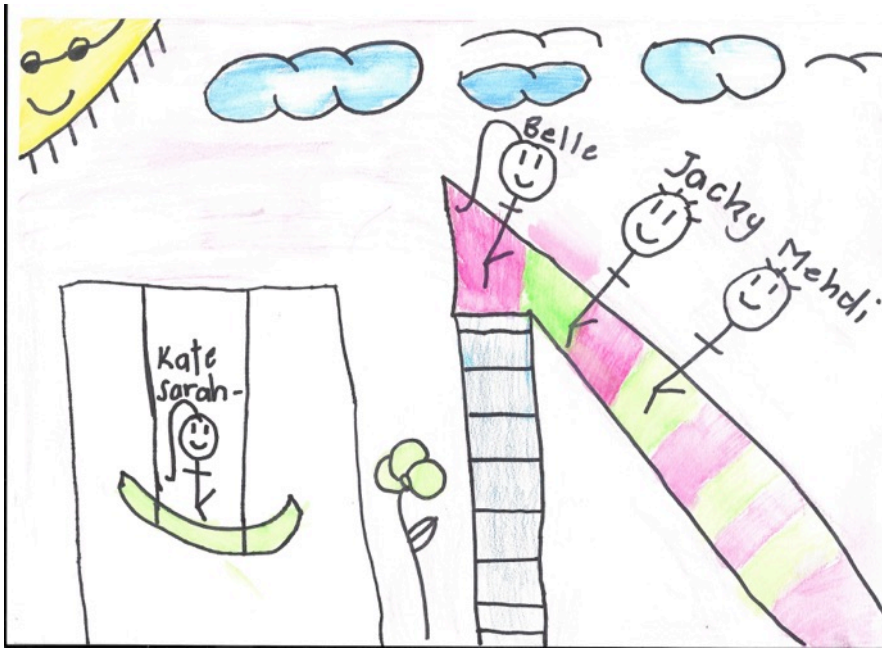
We held one-hour long discussions with groups of children and discussed their lives today in Logan (see lesson plan – Appendix 1). The children told us about what was good and bad about living in Logan, and told us how to make things better now and into the future.

Material Basics

In classroom discussion, children were very focused on distinguishing between material basics (needs) and luxuries (wants). The word cloud shows the fundamental material basics they saw as necessary for all children.



| Daisy Hill Rosie's ELC | Woodridge SS Year 1 | Beenleigh SS Year 2 | Woodridge SS Year 3 |
|--|--|--|---|
| Bed Furniture TV House Food Water School | Food Toys Sanitation Shoes Medicine House Bed Rest Clothes | Water Food Clean environment Clothes Shoes House Bed Transport Holiday | Food Water Clothes Shelter Bath Cooking gear Chairs |



I drew a park because it's fun! I can play anything with my whole family and friends and you can run around.

Girl, Year 1
W006



I like going to the park because it's my favourite place. My Dad and Mum take me there and my brothers and sisters play with me and we can have a rest.

Boy, Year 1
W008



I love playing with my sister Elizabeth in our backyard. We like picking flowers.

Girl, Prep
DH007



I'm throwing the stick to my dog for him to catch. We're outside at the park. There are lots of sticks at the park. It's important to have my dog at the park in case strangers come, my dog will guard me.

Boy, Prep
DH011



My picture is at the football field. I'm on the Beenleigh and we're playing the Gold Coast roosters. I'm running with the ball and palming someone. If you get a try you have to kick a goal. If it goes in it's a goal, or if it doesn't it isn't. In the future I'll stay here because it's a good team or move to Sydney because it looks fun and the Logan team is hard to play. One time I played them I got hurt and had to keep playing. They're a bit rough. I drew a moon because I'd like to play at night because it wouldn't be as hot. I usually have my games in the day.

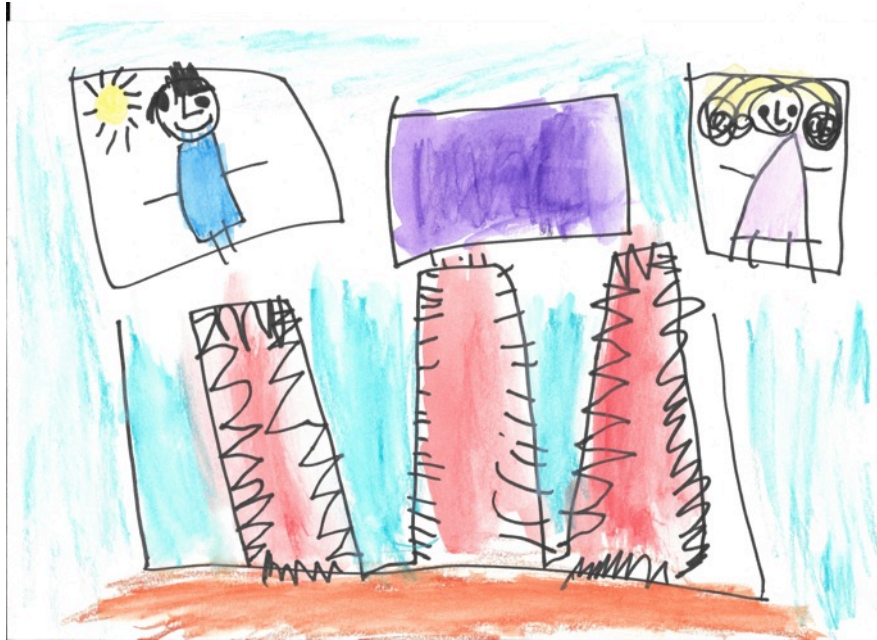
Boy, Year 2
B006



I'm playing in the park with my best friends. I like having a clean park to play in. I like to play especially on the flying fox.

Girl, Year 2
B007

Home and **family** are central to young children's lives with the vast majority depicting houses and family members in their drawings and stories (25 girls and 19 boys).



I'm sitting on the sofa with Mum and Dad and Nana and Papa. My brother Max is asleep but me and Mum are still awake watching a movie and eating popcorn.

Girl, Prep
DH001



I am with my whole family playing outside and picking flowers. We're playing under a big rainbow.

Girl, Prep
DH013



My picture is my family going home. Going home makes me feel happy because I get to spend more time with my family.

Girl, Year 1
W005



This is my backyard with a house, trampoline, garden, pool and swing set. I love my house because my family are great people because they take care of me.

Boy, Year 3
W024



I am with my family and friends. My brother is playing football, my friend and I are dancing and my mum, aunty and dad are talking. I feel a lot of love in my home. I love spending time with my family and friends.

Girl, Year 2
B009

In their drawings and stories, boys were more aware of and concerned about **safety and security** than girls – 11 boys and 3 girls drew and wrote about general safety, police, surveillance, alarm systems and robberies.



In my drawing there are buildings, hotels, bus stops and a welcome to streetsville. In the background there are mountains and a lake for the animals. The police car is making sure the city is safe. This is my dream about driving around the city and keeping people safe.

Boy, Year 2
B003



I am inside the house and about to go to work but I forget that I was not going to work but it was my turn to look after the girl twins but I did not want to get hurt so I stayed home instead of going to the park or beach.

Girl, Year 3
W023



My drawing has a criminal stealing jewellery. I am the police person who is going to stop him.

I want Logan to be a safe place. I feel safe in Logan.

Boy, Year 2
B005

In discussion, children said they learned in many places, including the family home, school, community and church, but only 3 chose to draw or write about **learning**.



School is important because you learn there. I feel good when I am at school. I like to learn about science.

Boy, Year 1
W015



I'm going to church with my family and learning about Jesus and his life. It helps me to become a better person, because it teaches me to help other people around me, and be compassionate.

Boy, Year 2
B012

Caring for the environment, **nature**, pets and plants was a recurring theme in children's drawings and stories (15 girls and 21 boys). Children were very articulate in discussing the need for a clean environment and talked about their responsibility to do their part in keeping their environment clean.



It's a forest and it has lots of trees. The forest makes me happy.

Boy, Prep
DH009



This is my family at the waterfall, we go swimming.

Girl, Prep
DH014



I'm feeding my pets at my house; I have a horse and two guinea pigs. I live next to a waterfall. My brother and my friend are feeding the guinea pigs and I'm feeding the horse. It's important to look after your pets otherwise they might die like my bird.

Boy, Year 2
B010



There's a flock of birds flying over my vet surgery. I'm a vet and I'm looking after the animals. The dog is sleeping in a cage. I want to be a vet so I can help animals when they're sick or hurt.

Girl, Year 2
B013



I'm picking up rubbish in the school playground with my friend Beni. We have a scarecrow taking care of the wheat in the planting area. There is a storm coming to help make the plants grow. At my house we used to grow lettuce but the rats and worms ate it. Every time we go downstairs there is lots of rubbish so we pick it up, sometimes people throw rubbish over our big white fence. Sometimes my brother throws rubbish from the balcony.

Girl, Year 3
W027



I am watering the garden and I want to live in a big house and I will be living with my big brothers.

Boy, Year 3
W039

Health and healthy lifestyle was well understood by children during discussions. Few chose to draw about health, but it was of equal importance for boys (5) and girls (5). This topic could be more fully explored.



I like strawberries.
These are the roots.
Strawberries need
water and rain and
sun to grow.

Boy, Prep
DH005



Elia and me play
soccer and it makes
us happy and
healthy.

Girl, Prep
DH006

Children portrayed their **future** lives, with more boys (11) than girls (3) choosing this strategy.

Future life options include: having material basics and luxuries, participating in the workforce (scientist, miner, police, nurse, veterinarian), participating in clubs (sport, church, craft), living in big cities, having large homes, caring for gardens, and living in safe communities.



I want to be a nurse and I want to make people better and recover from injuries. In my picture I'm in hospital and looking after injured and sick people. I'm making people feel better. I love to help people. I think it's important that the hospitals are more colourful because when you're there lying in the bed it's really boring. At our school dentist they have flowers on the roof. I want that in my hospital.

Girl, Year 2
B004



Once upon a time there was a boy called Noah. He worked in a science lab. The animals were not well, they were very hurt. I had to see what the problem was. I started with a monkey and the tail was broken and so I put a cast on it. Next was a Jaguar who swallowed a bottle because someone littered. I did an X-ray, and then put the metal stick to hold its mouth open and put my hand in to get it. The next is a parrot, it had a broken wing so I cut it off and put a new wing on with the cast to stroke it. After one year it was better so I took it off. When the animals are better they leave.

Boy, Year 2
B011



I wish I went to Sydney because I want to see Sydney harbour bridge and dive through the bridge. The best place around Logan is Garden City because there are lots of things to buy.

Boy, Year 3
W030



One day I was going to eat a sandwich but my mum was going up the ladder and my friend was at the beach and my mum and my friends keep me safe.

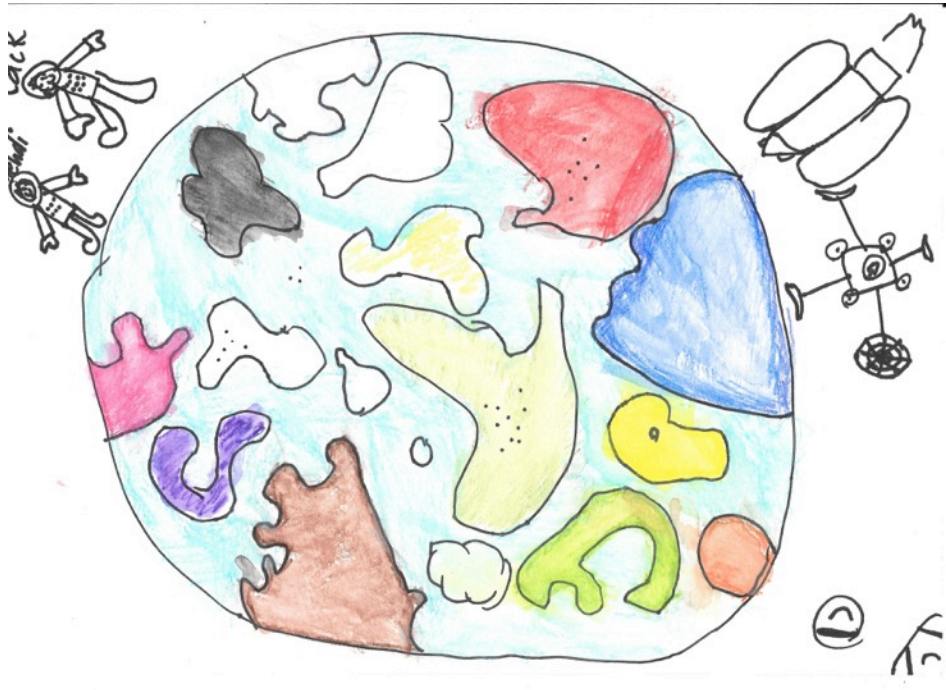
Boy, Year 3
W031



I currently have a pile of textas and pencils on my bed. My sister Emma usually watches Youtube and I play Minecraft and Sims and Sims3. Our dog, Sunshine, always sleeps on my bed because Emma's is too high.

Girl, Year 3
W033

A few children were **big picture thinkers** who looked at community-wide needs and global perspectives.



I drew Australia, Afghanistan and every other country. The world is important because of all the people in the world are important.

Boy, Year 1
W016



The water treatment plant cleans the water so we don't swallow the yucky water. Today the sun is shining brightly on the water treatment plant.

Girl, Prep
DH015

CONCLUSIONS

As the road map for *Logan Together* is constructed for the next decade, the ideas of Logan's children will be vital to planners in making sure that children's voices are heard and their needs are placed in the centre of the work.

All parties enjoyed being involved in the child engagement strategy, and we all learned a considerable amount about children's ideas in a very brief time frame. The children were fully engaged and willing participants in the project, offering a fresh look into the way they see their lives today and into the future. The school personnel were gracious and welcoming to the *Logan Together* child engagement team, and expressed interest in deeper and further involvement with *Logan Together*.

The theoretical perspective underpinning *Logan Together* is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development. In this theory, the child is the centre of the developmental challenge, and the child's views and ideas are central to understanding their values, needs, dreams, destinies, and life worlds. We hope this report clearly articulates the views of some of Logan's children.

Recommendations

The child engagement strategy brought us closer to understanding the ideas and views of children in Logan, but the views are limited to a small number of children in selective areas of Logan city. Our school based child engagement strategy works well to engage with children and we recommend that the strategy is used more broadly in schools and community groups to gather more ideas about children's lives from children themselves – to gain deeper understanding of the diverse life options experienced in cultural and socio-economic groups in the city of Logan.

1. Recognise and support children's home and family life as the base from which to expand support programs. Involve families as collaborative partners to children's growth and development. Use collaborative family-learning strategies.
2. Respect children's overwhelming value for play in their lives, and provide for play in schools, communities and homes to promote children's social, emotional and physical wellbeing. Build more places for play in children's lives. Encourage play as a vital part of learning as well as family and community cohesion. Establish more clubs and playgroups for children in their early years.
3. Form strategic partnerships with Education Queensland and the non-governmental sector to work with a greater number of children in Logan on defining their vision and creating a road map for the future.
4. Adopt a child-centred planning method and framework. Build long-term relationships with children to track their developmental changes over the next decade.

5. Promote the voices of Logan children regarding wellbeing – expose their stories and pictures about the safety and security of a loving home and family, a playful and clean environment, and productive futures in safe cities.
6. Expand the engagement with children to include participation of a greater number of children from diverse backgrounds (culture, language, socio-economic).
7. Broaden the discussion about wellbeing to focus more fully on children’s understanding of “the family”, learning”, participating” “making” and “play”, among many potential topics.
8. Establish a database of children’s ideas, stories and pictures for further research.

Appendix 1

Session Plan - Child Engagement Workshops

Duration – 2 hours

Introductions (5 minutes)

Meet and greet children and teachers: put on nametags, group children.

Part 1: Discussion (30 minutes)

What is Logan Together?

Collecting the voice of children to provide to Logan Together

What is good about living in Logan? (List ideas on the board)

What is bad about living in Logan? (List ideas on the board)

What can we do to make life better in Logan? (List ideas on the board)

ARACY indicators

Feeling loved and safe

Being healthy (read “Food” by Jan Pienkowski)

Having material basics (List ideas on the board)

Learning

Participating

Read: “Whoever You Are” by Mem Fox

Part 2: Drawing and Story Workshop (75 minutes)

Tell Logan Together what is important to you growing up in Logan

Draw, colour and paint a picture

Write a story about your picture

Drawing

Black permanent pen drawing with watercolour pencils and brush wash

Story

Write/dictate a brief story about your drawing.

Close (5 minutes)

Thanks, farewell