

## Case study | Connecting with families

# Get Connected Morning Teas

This case study presents the journey of Mable Park State School Hub located in Logan Queensland, who are at the early stages of establishing their Community Hub, in engaging and creating a soft entry point for their families through a regular morning tea activity.

### What was the challenge?

Creating enough interest for families to attend and having the safe space for this to occur was a challenge initially. There is a limit to space at Mabel Park State School Hub and it requires creativity and forward planning to make sure that the space used for different Hub activities can still feel welcoming and accessible to the families. Also, breaking down the stigma of accessing services was a challenge.

### What worked? What didn't?

The Get Connected Morning Teas are held on a weekly basis, every Monday morning after school assembly, for families, school staff and service providers to meet informally and chat. We have creatively utilised the limited space available in the school to engage families in spaces where they haven't previously felt comfortable. This has been achieved by the collaborative efforts of the school leadership team, teaching and support staff including the School Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Indigenous Liaison Officer and Speech Pathologist.

Over the period of a month, the morning teas attracted eight families (mainly mothers) attending on a regular basis from various backgrounds, including Maori, Tongan, Samoan, Somali and Australian. The informal nature of the morning teas allowed families to feel comfortable and seek information based on their needs and interests. We are observing our families broaden their social networks, strengthen their relationship with the school and increase their knowledge of the services available to them. As we are building trust with our families they are also becoming more comfortable in attending other activities we recommend them.

We invite one local service provider each week, which may be of interest to families based on their demographics and needs (for example employment assistance, financial assistance, free child-related activities, mental health support and counselling), to give a short informal introduction and then join in the food sharing and chatting. It worked really well because the families felt that they were on the same level as the service providers and allowed potential soft referrals to be made.

"I never really get a chance to just sit down, relax and have a chat with other parents so this is nice"

A parent from Mabel Park State School Hub

### Your advice?

Be clear about your purpose and this will attract a strong team. Build a strong support network within your school community, who can champion the same vision and support you in building trust and relationships with your families. Keep everyone updated with what's happening each week and start with very informal activities to engage your families.

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