

Stronger Smarter Jarjums

high-expectations partnerships and relationships in the
Early Years



"Be the change you want to see in the world."

Ghandi

Our Vision

Stronger Smarter communities enabling all people to honour and affirm positive identities and cultures, whilst thriving in contemporary societies

Our Philosophy

The Stronger Smarter philosophy honours a positive sense of cultural identity, and acknowledges and embraces positive community leadership, enabling innovative and dynamic approaches and processes that are anchored by High-Expectations-Relationships.

High-Expectations-Relationships honour the humanity of others, and in doing so, acknowledge one's strengths, capacity and human right to emancipatory opportunity.

Our Approach

The Stronger Smarter Approach builds a strong positive identity for children and their families through High Expectations Relationships. We ask everyone to take responsibility for change. We ask everyone to join us in raising our expectations for children, parents, communities, and of ourselves.



Stronger Smarter Jarjums

Our **Stronger Smarter Jarjums** program is based on the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program and caters specifically to Early Years educators to ignite conversations, build relationships and embed the Stronger Smarter Approach to create lifelong learning futures for our Jarjums. We invite all Early Years professionals, educators and community members who have an impact on Jarjums up to 8 years old to invest in **Stronger Smarter Jarjums**.

Stronger Smarter Jarjums supports the Early Years Learning approach by:

- ▶ building a sense of **Belonging** using the language and approach of Stronger Smarter to promote a positive sense of identity for our Jarjum
- ▶ building a sense of **Being** by providing tools and strategies to use with Jarjum to build their resilience and develop their relationships with others, and
- ▶ supporting **Becoming** by igniting conversations and building partnerships across sectors to build High-Expectations Relationships with families and communities that will ensure strong support for Jarjum during the rapid and significant change of the Early Years.

Why Stronger Smarter Jarjums?

Learning starts the day we are born. A high-quality education early in life will give our Jarjums the best start. Early Years educators are in a powerful position to provide our Jarjums with the foundation for the rest of their lives.

Coolamon



The Coolamon is a metaphor used in the Stronger Smarter Jarjums as a vessel to carry our Jarjums safely, proud, strong, smart and deadly through the sectors of the Early Childhood Years.

Coolamons vary in size and shape depending on their use. They can be an oval cut out of bark or a chunk of trunk or root that is scooped out to form a bowl.

Coolamons are used for carrying food or water or for separating seed and can be used as a digging tool. But most importantly, Coolamons are also used for cradling and rocking babies.

Jarjum

Jarjum is an Aboriginal word for children used in a number of languages on Australia's eastern coast.

Jarjum throughout this brochure refers to all Australian children.

Stronger Smarter Jarjums will assist you to:

- ▶ build High-Expectations Relationships which are nurturing and supportive, built on respect, and work with each Jarjum's unique qualities and abilities
- ▶ build High-Expectations Relationships with all families, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, which value the knowledge and build on the strengths that all groups bring to the relationship
- ▶ challenge your own beliefs and assumptions and understand how these might impact on our Jarjums' learning
- ▶ enhance your leadership capacity and your culture of professional inquiry for the pursuit of educational excellence for all Jarjums, and
- ▶ build strong partnerships with other Early Years educators within your area.

High-Expectations-Relationships

In the Early Years, relationships are at the heart of everythingⁱ. The best outcomes occur when educators and family members work together. Nurturing relationships, positive interactions, and a strong sense of identity are all vital to the self-esteem and emotional wellbeing of our Jarjums.

Stronger Smarter Jarjums introduces the concept of High-Expectations-Relationships to build stronger relationships with Jarjums and

their families and ensure greater collaboration in decision-making.



Partnerships

Transitions between the Early Years sectors can be challenging and stressful for Jarjums and their families. Partnerships between schools and Early Years services play an important role. **Stronger Smarter Jarjums** brings both educators and community members together and introduces the language and concepts of Stronger Smarter that can be used across all Early Years settings. Stronger Smarter Jarjums supports the collaboration needed to create innovative transitions for local contexts.

What can I expect?

Intense, stimulating, challenging and engaging – our face to face programs provide a highly experiential learning experience with a multi-modal delivery that you can see, hear and feel. Be prepared to be an active participant and draw on your own knowledge and experiences.

You will be challenged to explore your beliefs, behaviours and assumptions in a safe and supportive environment. We offer new learning frameworks, tools, and processes to enhance your leadership capacity, with examples, activities and conversations specifically directed to the Early Years setting.

We structure the program over a period of time to allow you to integrate new learning into your workplace. The initial residency is supplemented by a later follow-up which provides an opportunity for you to share your

learning with others. We expect you to commit to two leadership challenges:

Leadership Challenges

We ask you to commit to three leadership challenges.

- ▶ **Personal Challenge:** Apply Stronger Smarter practices to your individual situation
- ▶ **Workplace Challenge:** Use an action research model to analyse an existing workplace situation
- ▶ **Transition Challenge:** Apply strategies to build relationships and support transitions that will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for our Jarjums.



What will I learn?

Enhance your capacity to identify complex challenges and understand how the shift to a High-Expectations Relationships mindset can help you to actively engage with Jarjums, their families and the local community to co-create the way forward.

High-Expectations Relationships

Strengthen your connections with other educators, and with Jarjums, their families and communities, to support collaborative interactions and challenging conversations.

Reflective Leadership - Responsibility for change

Develop a high level of critical self-knowledge, unlock your beliefs, and uncover habitual patterns that impact on your own ways of thinking, seeing, talking and doing. Draw on your existing strengths and knowledge, stretch and challenge yourself intellectually and emotionally, and build the confidence and courage to activate change.

Facilitative Leadership – a strength-based approach

Enhance your listening skills and increase your understanding of individual and group behaviours. Learn strategies to facilitate group awareness, challenge perceptions, and develop genuine partnerships built on trust, respect, and valuing others.

Learning through culture

Learn *through* culture, not just *about* culture. Understand how everyone has a unique cultural identity made up of our experiences and beliefs that are influenced by the communities, traditions or ways of being into which we are born. Use tools for cultural analysis and understand how cultural patterns and cultural lenses shape the way we see the world.

Stronger Smarter Meta-strategies align closely with the Early Years Learning Framework

- ▶ Acknowledging, embracing and developing a positive sense of student identity
- ▶ High expectations leadership to ensure high expectation classrooms, with high expectations teacher/student relationships
- ▶ Innovative and dynamic school and staffing models in complex social and cultural contexts
- ▶ Acknowledging and embracing Indigenous leadership in schools and school communities

What does the program involve?

Stronger Smarter Jarjums requires a 12-month commitment to incorporate a ‘workplace challenge’ in addition to attending the face to face components. We ask you to report back to the group on your progress after two months and again after 12 months to share your practice with others, and we will invite you to join the national networks of the Stronger Smarter Institute.

Phase 1 - Stronger Smarter Leadership

Development Forum: The first face to face component is a five-day residential program. The program is led by us and incorporates a presentation from school or community leaders working in the Early Years space.

Phase 2 - Taking the message back: In the periods between the face to face components, we ask participants to ‘take the message back’

to their workplaces. This requires you to design and commit to a personal and a workplace challenge.

Phase 3 - Leadership for School

Transformation forum: Phase 3 is a two-day follow-up session where you will reconnect with your group and the Stronger Smarter team, and share, review and discuss your workplace challenges.

Phase 4 - Transforming workplaces

implementation: Over the remainder of the year, you will be asked to continue with your leadership challenges, supported by us. At the end of the year we will invite you to share your workplace experience with us to share your practice with others.



Supporting the National Quality Framework

The Stronger Smarter Jarjums program will support you to:

<p>1 Educational program and practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ explore underlying cultural values and Australian perceptions of Indigenous people and reflect on and apply this knowledge to better meet the learning needs of Jarjums ▶ explore the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background and promote your Jarjums' agency through positive cultural identities ▶ use the strategies of High-Expectations Relationships to understand each Jarjums abilities and interests
<p>4 Staffing arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ develop respectful High-Expectations Relationships with colleagues ▶ initiate and engage in professional discussions with colleagues to challenge disabling attitudes or behaviours and enable collective sense-making ▶ analyse your communication skills to develop deep listening and recognising the strengths of others
<p>5 Relationships with children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ build responsive and trusting High-Expectations Relationships with Jarjums ▶ use the strategies of High-Expectations Relationships to support Jarjums to manage their own behaviour and build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other Jarjums and adults ▶ explore what it means to demand high expectations for all Jarjums
<p>6 Partnerships with families and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ build respectful and supportive High-Expectations Relationships with families to work effectively with families from all cultural backgrounds ▶ establish collaborative relationships with local Indigenous leaders to provide local input into programs that develop understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages
<p>7 Leadership and service management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ understand how your own beliefs and assumption might impact on your workplace practice ▶ probe deeply into issues and challenges for leaders implementing Stronger Smarter leadership ▶ support your colleagues and lead them in initiatives to promote enabling cultures and a positive student identity and build a professional learning community

Supporting the Early Years Framework

The Stronger Smarter Jarjums program supports the Principles of the Early Years Framework

<p>1 Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The strategies of High-Expectations Relationships support relationships that are both supportive and challenging. We provide educators with ideas and strategies to help learn more about the Jarjums and to understand the expectations and wishes of families for their child’s learning. This becomes the basis for building secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.
<p>2 Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stronger Smarter Jarjums focuses on building partnerships across the Early Years sectors to help develop smooth seamless, transitions for Jarjums from home to preschool and through to school. We encourage participants to think about who else needs to be involved in your learning space, so you can understand the learning environments the Jarjums are coming from and going to.
<p>3 High expectations and equity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stronger Smarter Jarjums takes a strength-based approach to create a space where all Jarjums can be themselves, have a sense of belonging and have the strength to become the great learners they deserve to be.
<p>4 Respect for diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Our program is based around Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. In taking a strength-based approach, the Stronger Smarter Approach is based around acknowledging and valuing the different strengths and abilities that all Jarjums bring to the classroom.
<p>5 Ongoing learning and reflective practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Participants in our Stronger Smarter Jarjums programs need to be ready for something different – to challenge their beliefs and behaviours, develop a critical self-knowledge and uncover underlying assumptions. How do your beliefs, values and perspectives and the way you see the world differ to those of your Jarjums? Your values and beliefs will impact on the foundational learning for every Jarjums’ education journey. Educators are active participants in the learning, but we do this in a safe environment.

Register online

For program dates and registration see

<http://strongersmarter.com.au/leadership/stronger-smarter-jarjums/>

For more information, please:

- ▶ Email us on enquiries@strongersmarter.com.au
- ▶ Phone us on 07 5499 4135
- ▶ Website: www.strongersmarter.com.au

Program accreditation

The Stronger Smarter Leadership Program is recognised in NSW as an Accredited Professional Learning Program. On completion of the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program participants can register with:

BOSTES Quality Teaching Council

Completing the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program will contribute 60 hours of QTC Registered PD addressing 1.3, 1.4, 2.4, 3.7, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.3, 7.4 from the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers towards maintaining Lead Teacher Accreditation in NSW.

Our Team

The Stronger Smarter Jarjums Leadership Program honours difference and diversity. This is reflected in the composition of our teams.

Our team has both male and female, Indigenous and non-Indigenous members, some with teaching backgrounds and others with other workplace and community experiences. All are experienced in the Stronger Smarter approach to co-



facilitation and share a strong commitment to ensure a lifetime of learning outcomes.

The Stronger Smarter Jarjums program is led by Darumbal woman, **Fiona Bobongie (L)** who has 30 years' experience as an Early Years educator.

This has been the best professional development that I have ever done. Everyone has had so much growth and development. The process for schools to make changes has been very thought out and makes sense.

Kurri Kurri Jarjums program 2016

Excellent – I wish I had done this years ago. Many tools to move towards change!

Ballina Jarjums program 2018

About Us

We are an independent and Indigenous led Not-For-Profit company.

It has taken several decades of passion, belief and commitment to create Stronger Smarter classrooms and communities.

Our founder and chair, Professor Chris Sarra developed the Stronger Smarter Philosophy through his studies and work at Cherbourg State School to embrace a strong and positive sense of what it means to be Aboriginal in contemporary Australian society.

The success of his work with the students and community of Cherbourg led to the formation of the Stronger Smarter Institute which has spent over 10 years successfully transforming Australian education.

*I have learnt so much about myself this week.
It is empowering to me. I feel like I can make a
change in my community and have the
courage and strength to make a change now.
Sydney Jarjums program 2017*



*I feel like this is just the beginning. I'm
ready to go back to school with courage
and patience to work through the
challenges I've set. I've been inspired and
motivated both personally and
professionally.
(Kurri Kurri Jarjums program 2016).*

*Really good opportunity to discuss our
transition to preschool and start planning
how to strengthen this.
(Kurri Kurri Jarjums program 2016).*

*The challenges are exactly that –
challenging. I have taken positive steps
relating to each challenge, but I foresee
this journey continuing and evolving for
many years to come.
(Ballina Jarjums program 2018).*

ⁱ Early Years Learning Framework Practice Based Resources – Connecting with families: Bringing the Early Years Learning Framework to life in your community.

^j Hirst, M., Jervis, N., Visagie, K., Sojo, V. & Cavanagh, S. (2011). Transition to primary school: a review of the literature. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.