



# Try, Test and Learn Fund

## *Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens*

Using insights from the Priority Investment Approach, the Try, Test and Learn Fund is trialling new and innovative approaches to assist groups of people at risk of long-term welfare dependence.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund will help achieve the objectives of welfare reform — that is, to develop a modern welfare system that increases the capacity of individuals, reduces the risk of welfare dependency and maintains a strong welfare safety net.

### What does the evidence tell us?

- In 2016, there were 3,760 young parents in Australia aged 18 or under receiving Parenting Payment. On average, such young parents are likely to be on income support for around 48 years over their future lifetime.
- If nothing changes for these young parents, 79 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 10 years, and 57 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 20 years.
- In addition, analysis shows, around 620 current young parents will remain on income support for the rest of their lives.

### What is *Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens*?

Trusted mentors work intensively with expectant or teenage parents to link them to support they need to achieve their goals.

Young parents have access to a flexible funding package that they can use prior to the birth of the baby and during the early stages of parenthood. The funding goes towards supports that help to address their individual barriers, and that better prepare them to return to education or search for a job.

A national online platform also provides information and links to local support services.

### What are we trying to achieve?

This initiative aims to support successful adjustment to the responsibility of being a new parent by reducing isolation and supporting development of self-confidence and resilience.

### Fast facts

**Priority group:** Young parents

**Target participant number:** 556

**Location:** Melbourne & Geelong, VIC; Brighton, Clarence and Derwent Valley, TAS; Darwin, NT; Wyong & Newcastle, NSW; Ipswich & Logan, QLD

**Trial period:** 37 months

**Total funding:** \$5.25 million

**Co-designers:** Brave Foundation, Jenny Aiello, Anglicare WA, Anglicare VIC, The Benevolent Society, Caboolture Hospital, Cape York Partnership, DALE Young Parents School, Drummond Street Services, Jewish Care, Micah Projects, Mission Australia, Royal Women's Hospital, Royal Children's Hospital, Sanderson Alliance, The Smith Family, SYC, YFS and Zoe Support

**Service provider:** Brave Foundation

**Potential future saving:** The purpose of these initiatives is to test whether an intervention works to reduce long-term reliance on welfare. If 6 per cent of participants (32) move off welfare, the savings to the welfare system are likely to outweigh the costs.

**Note:** Due to changes in circumstances, adjustments have been made to target participant numbers, trial period and total funding.

By helping young parents adjust to the responsibility of parenting in a healthy, safe environment, we aim to have young parents in a better position to engage with education and the workforce in a positive, ongoing way, thereby also reducing intergenerational welfare dependency.

## How is this initiative new and innovative?

This is an early, pre-ParentsNext initiative, aimed specifically at expecting and parenting teenagers who may experience barriers to good parenting and future workforce participation.