



Try, Test and Learn Fund

Initiative: *Young Carer School Accreditation*

Location: Victoria

Using insights from the Priority Investment Approach, the Try, Test and Learn Fund is gathering evidence on new or innovative approaches to addressing barriers to work.

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 are we trying to achieve?

This project is designed to improve retention and engagement in education, or transition to employment, for young carers through improved awareness within school communities of issues that school-age carers face and supports available.

What is *Young Carers School Accreditation*?

An early intervention project designed to raise awareness, reduce stigma and support young carers to complete secondary school and navigate the transition from school to the workforce or further study. The project supports a number of secondary schools across Victoria to become carer accredited.

The project takes a whole-of-school approach by working with young carers, school staff and the general student body.

What does the evidence tell us?

Young carers are less likely to complete Year 12 or its equivalent compared to those of the same age who do not provide care. This project is partly based on evidence that there is a significant number of 'hidden' young carers in schools, many of whom struggle to attend and fully engage in education due to their caring responsibilities.

Departmental analysis indicates that the number of young carers in the welfare system trebled in the last decade to 11,200 people.

If nothing changes for these young carers, over 52 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 10 years and around 40 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 20 years.

How is this initiative new and innovative?

Unlike many programs that focus on supports for individual carers, this initiative adopts an innovative whole-of-school approach to supporting young carers. It does this by strengthening the awareness and understanding of all students, teachers and parents of the issues young carers face at school and promotes behaviours at the broader school level that leads to a young carer feeling more supported and therefore likely to be more engaged at school.

Fast facts

Priority group: Young carers
Target participant number: 103
Location: Victoria
Trial period: 28 months
Total funding: \$794,228
Service provider: Little Dreamers
Potential future saving: The purpose of these initiatives is to test whether an intervention works to reduce long-term reliance on welfare. If this project prevents 9 per cent (9) of participants moving onto welfare, then 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.