



## Parent engagement in child learning: Linking education and parenting

**Associate Professor Christine Woodrow, Professor Margaret Somerville and Associate Professor Loshini Naidoo, from the Centre for Educational Research, are working in partnership with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) to explore the ways families and schools can work together to support children's learning and wellbeing. The research will focus on understanding the many ways families are already engaged in their children's education and are supporting their learning at home. It will explore strategies to help families and schools work together.**

**ARACY's work has been commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. Parent engagement is one of the four key pillars of the Government's *Students First* policy. Through the project, ARACY will use the best available evidence to facilitate a shared understanding of what parent engagement is and why it matters. It will build and share information about 'what works' to strengthen parent engagement, and contribute to a shared approach to measuring parent engagement.**

'There is a large body of research showing that the more involved, informed and enthusiastic parents are about their children's education, the better their children's school performance, attendance, and feelings toward school will be', Associate Professor Woodrow explains. This study will ensure the voice of parents and families are at the centre of ARACY's work, and will be used to develop resources to equip families and schools to work in partnership to support children's learning and wellbeing.

The researchers will gather data on the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that Australian parents have



about their role in their children's learning, and ways educators can assist with increasing parent engagement. Focus groups with parents and education staff will be recorded and analysed using qualitative methods. 40% of participants will have or work with children in primary school, and 60% secondary school, in order to assess the differing factors of parent engagement across a child's time at school. A report on the different factors and barriers involved will be produced.

Special attention will be given to parents from Indigenous or CALD backgrounds, those with children with a disability, and families of low socioeconomic status in order to understand their priorities in engaging with their children's learning.

**Project Title:** Parental Engagement – Qualitative Research

**Funding has been set at:** \$159,845

**Contact Details:** [c.woodrow@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:c.woodrow@westernsydney.edu.au);  
<http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/cer>

**October 2015**

*In partnership with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth and funded by the Australian Government of Education and Training*

