

**Title:** Using a multi-phased design to review the implementation of the Let's Read community program.

**Type:** Oral presentation  
**Theme:** Theme 5: Methods, measures and tools for evaluating implementation processes.  
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## Background

Let's Read, a national, evidence based early literacy initiative that promotes reading with children from birth to five years, was developed by the Centre for Community Child Health at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute (MCRI) and the Royal Children's Hospital. The Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) and The Smith Family (TSF) have partnered to implement Let's Read with communities across Australia.

Let's Read has developed a multi-tiered model to engage families, professionals and communities in a range of messages relevant to children's early literacy development from birth to five years. This includes:

- disseminating and coordinating national universal messaging about the importance of early childhood literacy
- building capacity through professional development and training for effective program delivery
- supporting disadvantaged communities through the implementation of the Let's Read community program
- a continued focus on research and the evidence base

The implementation of the Let's Read community program, designed to empower families to read with their children from birth to five years, began in 2005 as a partnership between MCRI and TSF. Since this time the Let's Read has been delivered in over 100 disadvantaged communities, across seven Australian states and territories, with over 200,000 children and their families participating in the program.

## The Let's Read community program review

In the first half of 2014, MCRI and TSF undertook a review of the implementation of the Let's Read community program. This review has been informed by previous evaluation findings including the Let's Read Cluster Randomised controlled trial and 2012-13 Let's Read community program evaluation (across 8 sites in Victoria and New South Wales). In particular, the 2012-13 Let's Read community program evaluation highlighted "on the ground" variations to the intended implementation of the Let's Read community program model

The purpose of the review was to clarify and articulate the current Let's Read community program model (including "on the ground" variations in delivery model, identified areas for improvement, challenges and best practice) and provide recommendations as to how the program model and processes could be improved, based both on research evidence and practice-based evidence.

## Methods of the review

This review used a multi-phased design that involved three data collection activities: document analysis; an online survey to gather data from implementers and deliverers; and a two-day continuous improvement workshop involving researchers, implementers and deliverers to explore implementation and delivery challenges, and engage all stakeholders in developing solutions that deliver program fidelity and impact.

The results of the review will inform the revision of the Let's Read community program model and processes to better align with both the current research and practice-based evidence to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the program.

## What we will present

In this presentation we will describe the process and methods used in the Let's Read community program review, discuss the successes and challenges experienced, and share its findings. The issue of aligning practice, policy and research is a common one for all program implementers and our journey of reviewing the practice of a program, and improving its practice based on policy, research and practice-based evidence may prompt others to consider one or more of these approaches to bridge this gap in their own work.

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