

# Anangu Mobile Children's Services Funded by DEEWR - SA

- Program operating since 2006
- Started as a result of issues encountered by communities in developing early childhood services





***Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi***  
***"Doing Good Work With Families"***

- based in Alice Springs and services the central desert region
- works with Aboriginal communities in a 700,000km radius
- has been working with women and families to establish, support and maintain community based childcare services for the last nine years
- now delivers childcare services in the APY Lands in far northern South Australia

## Background to Project

- In 2001, Facsia funded Waltja to talk with communities about Anangu and Yapa ways of bringing up children. This project was first known as the Aboriginal Child Rearing Strategy (ACRS).
- In 2001, Wendy Nungarrayi Brown, Senior Yapa woman from Yuendumu, gave the project a new name – Warrki Jarrinjaku Jintangkamanu Purananjaku – Working together everyone and listening.



# Background to Project

- Women from Kintore, Mt Liebig, Yuendumu and Balgo Hills came to a workshop in 2000 and started talking about the differences between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal ways of growing up children.
- At this workshop, plans began for an Aboriginal child rearing conference which would bring together many women from Aboriginal communities.

# The conference in Alice Springs – 2001

- Waltja brought together about 200 women for the Aboriginal child rearing conference. Women from many different communities and language groups talked about child rearing.
- Senior women agreed on Aboriginal child rearing practices and the four key principles for bringing up strong children
- Even though people from the different languages used different words, there were many similarities in the child rearing practices.

# Aboriginal child rearing in remote communities

## **Care of children by extended family**

- This means that children are often living in houses with extended family, not just parents
- Older brothers and sisters (this includes cousins who are also viewed as brother and sisters) have a strong responsibility for younger children.
- Aunties and uncles are also seen as mothers and fathers to children and are expected to take on the responsibility of caring for them

# Aboriginal child rearing in remote communities

## **Grandparents**

- play a major role in child rearing
- live with their grandchildren.
- Some are primary care givers due to disability or absence of parents. They take on this role happily as they see it as their obligation.
- In this case children are growing up with really strong Anangu child rearing practices.

# Child rearing in remote communities

## **Sleeping**

- Babies and small children fall asleep whenever they like and where ever they happen to be.
- Children can fall asleep in noisy busy places.
- Babies sleep in bed with their mother.
- Children often lie down together sharing mattress and blankets



# Child rearing in remote communities

## **Feeding**

- Babies and small children are fed when they are hungry
- Children are breast fed until they want to stop
- Sometimes another mother breast feeds a relation's baby

# Child rearing in remote communities

## **Children learn:**

- to share with others at an early age
- to deal with being teased by others
- by experience, by touch, by listening and watching
- about their culture from stories, inma (dance and song), oral histories and from everything that goes on around them
- to use sign language from an early age

# Child rearing in remote communities

## **Discipline**

- Children are rarely disciplined for minor misbehaviour
- Laughter is used by parents as a response to naughty behaviour
- Family members share the discipline

# Possessions

- Children share their toys and clothes
- There are rules within kinship relationships which govern who you can ask for things, who you might give things to and who has equal access to possessions
- When you are given something, it is with the understanding that you might give something back at some stage
- Family like to give little kids presents and big money, e.g. \$20 or \$50 when they have it

# Child rearing in remote communities

## **Sense of place and direction**

- Babies are taken everywhere with the family and they are carried upright so they can see where they are going and their surroundings.
- Children learn a sense of direction early. Little children move in small groups between houses, and services, e.g. school, store, clinic

# Child rearing in remote communities

## **Noise levels**

- Where there are children, there is noise
- When kids play they make noise. Families worry that something has happened if there is no noise
- TV's and music are played loud
- Noise levels do not drop for children to sleep

# Child rearing in remote communities

## Time

- Time is not taught or kept to in a formal manner.
- Time in hours and minutes is not used in speech with children

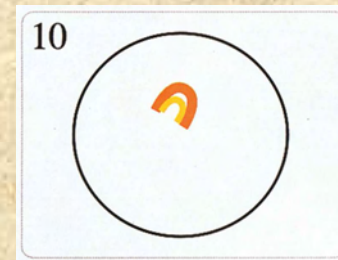
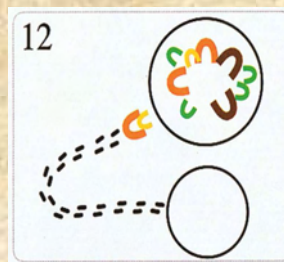
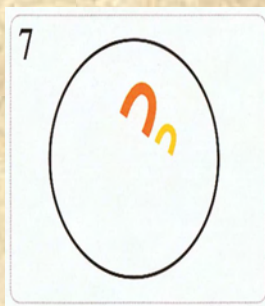
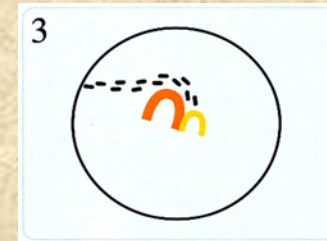
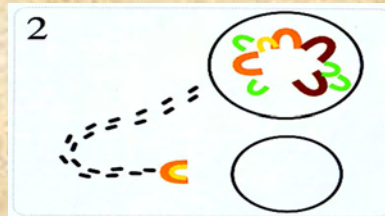
# Family Mapping



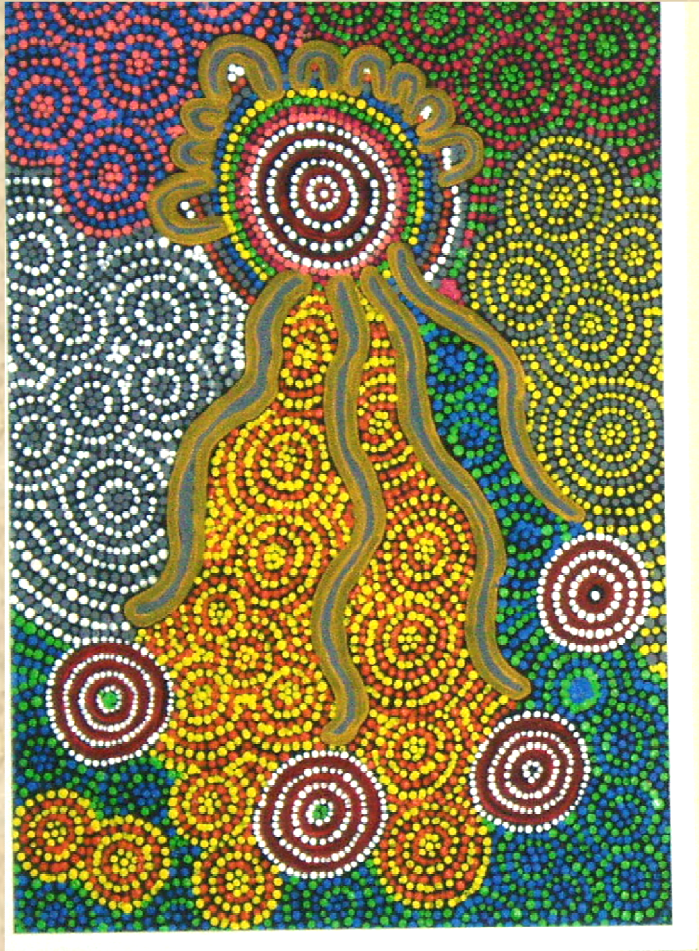
- During 2000, a special project was undertaken at Kintore. Waltja Field worker, Katie Allen recorded stories and visual information about child rearing
- Senior Anangu men and women explored and developed an innovative research technique known as 'family mapping' to describe their child rearing practices. They used the drawing and designs seen in the Western Desert paintings to tell their stories



# A short story using mapping exercise



# The 4 Principles



The on the ground research at Kintore and the information gathered at Waltja workshops at Yuendumu, Ross River, Alice Springs and Adelaide during 2000 was published in a book – ‘Pipirri Wiimaku – for the little kids’, Innovative Child Care Report 2000 – 2001. This told stories of the meetings and presented important information about Anangu and Yapa child rearing practices

# Waltja (family)

- Children are constantly told of the relationship of everyone around them, to identify who is in their family and how they are related
- This knowledge helps the children to understand how these relationships work and how they can strengthen it as they grow older

- When people look at a baby, they see small adults. These 'little people' have a set place in the family and community with all the responsibilities of law and culture. They are addressed as 'my auntie', 'my mother again' or 'my young grandfather'.

# Ngura (home, land, country)

- Children are taught about looking after their country, the names of places and which parts of country they belong to



# TJUKURPA (Dreaming, Law)

- Tjukurpa is taught to children gradually when they are ready to learn it
- They learn through story telling, songs, dance, ceremony, drawing and paintings

# KANYINI (Holding, keeping of everything together – Tjukurpa, Waltja and Ngura)



# Kanyini (holding everything together)

- While non-Aboriginal people usually have religion, houses, heritage they never have the Kanyini
- This is the vital part of Anangu culture that gives meaning to everything and gives everything a place
- It is a holistic view of life which holds together the Tjukurpa and relationships between people and the land



# Since then...

- The Waltja Anangu and Yapa child rearing work has continued to grow stronger
- Knowledge about the Aboriginal child rearing practices now forms the foundations of all Waltja projects to do with children and families
- The child rearing research and documentation has also informed many projects for Aboriginal children around Australia and overseas

# How the Mobile Children's Service on the APY Lands reflects and includes Aboriginal child rearing practices



## How grandparents are involved

- Many Grandparents attend the playgroups with their grandchildren
- They encourage other family members to get involved and are consulted as key carers of children
- Grandmothers attend workshops/forums and other training and encourage and identify young ones to participate in training



# Fathers get involved

- Fathers often come along to playgroups and enjoy spending time with their children
- Because the sessions are often held outside and not fenced in, fathers come along and will participate in activities that the children are doing
- Many will stay at playgroups with their children and have lunch



# Involvement of older brothers and sisters

- During weekend playgroups and school holidays, lots of older brothers and sisters come along
- They enjoy doing activities and interacting and will care for the younger children
- The family expects the older brothers and sisters to keep an eye on the younger ones

# Involvement of Mothers

- Many of the mums are very young and come along to learn with their children
- They have a lot of energy and really get involved with activities and helping out e.g. with food





# How the 4 Principles are reflected through the playgroups

- Waltja
- Tjukurpa
- Ngura
- Kanyini
- We are always thinking about how the four principles can be incorporated into our programs for children



# Waltja

- Waltja – all family members are welcomed to the playgroups and are encouraged to participate with their children and other family members
- Playgroups are held in neutral places so that everyone feels welcome

# Tjukurpa

- We do not go to communities when cultural business is on
- Sand stories – telling stories in the sand.
- Munni-munni – using leaves to tell a story in the sand



# Ngura

- Children and carers go on bush trips to get bush tucker or visit special places



# Kanyini

- Kanyini is part of everything we do at playgroup



# What happens during our trips to communities?

- Outdoor and indoor venues
- Activities/resources include craft, baby toys, books, lego
- We cater to all children under 5
- On weekends, school aged children are invited
- Parents are encouraged to help prepare and serve meals/snacks

# What happens during our trip to communities?

- Children and carers go on bush trips
- Children help parents to look for bush tucker
- Mothers will help to cook kangaroo tails and lots of vegies in the ground



# TRAINING



# Training

- Waltja is developing training material to deliver Certificate III in Children's Services in response to community interest and the need to develop workforce capacity in early childhood services on the APY Lands in the far north west of SA
- The training is being developed so that participants fulfill the requirements of the qualification
- Participants will be able to bring together their own knowledge and experience and learn useful and relevant knowledge from the wider early childhood field

# The training also reflects:

- Anangu knowledge of children
- Anangu child rearing practices
- Conditions in remote communities
- English language/literacy capabilities
- Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara language

# Anangu milestones

- An example of how Anangu knowledge can be incorporated into training is to acknowledge Anangu ways of referring to milestones.
- The following terms in Pitjantjatjara language are used to refer to babies and children at their different stages of development.

*iti wirkananyi*  
baby arrives, is born



*iti nguli-nguli*  
tiny baby who can't sit up



*iti nyina-nyina*  
baby who can sit up



*itj mara-mara*  
baby who can crawl



*iti tjunta-tjunta*  
baby just starting to walk





*tjijti it̩*  
big baby, toddler



*tjitji kulunypa*  
little child



*tjitji pulka-pulka*  
child almost able to look after themselves



*tjitji pulka* - child able to look after themselves  
and to mind other children



# Many faces of childcare



# Children at play

