

# Schools Plus

**Schools Plus is a national not-for-profit that helps children facing disadvantage succeed at school. Our unique approach empowers teachers with funding, coaching and knowledge to create lasting change in their school and beyond. Our purpose is to close the education gap and ensure all young Australians reach their potential through access to a great education.**



**Together, we can help close the education gap.**



# Education improves lives and underpins a thriving society.

People with a great education have better standards of health, wealth, wellbeing, social mobility and have fewer interactions with the justice system. A well-educated workforce also fuels a nation's economic performance.

## What is the education gap?

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to start school behind, struggle to catch up, and leave school before Year 12.

The education gap is the difference in achievement between different groups of students at key stages in their development. Researchers have measured the gap's impact on children and young people at critical times in their lives:

### Early years (age 4-11)

Children facing disadvantage are:

**twice as likely** to be unprepared for school.

**22% or 68,000**

**4-5 year olds** start school developmentally behind.

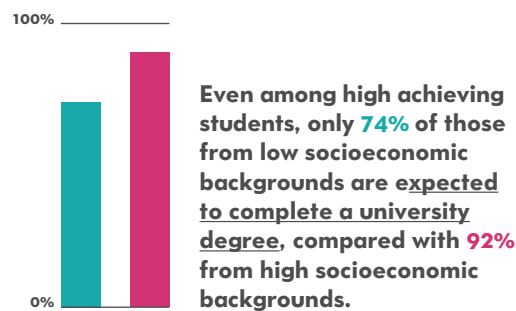
### School years (age 12-19)

**1/4 of Australian 11 and 12 year olds** don't have the literacy and numeracy skills they need.

By the **age of 15**, children facing disadvantage are about **3 years** behind their peers.



### After school (age 19-24)



Just over **1/4** of young Australians at the age of **24** are not earning or learning.

## Key factors that influence the education gap

1. Low socioeconomic status

2. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background

3. Rural, remoteness

4. Whether English is the child's first language

5. Students with additional needs

Schools Plus was founded following a recommendation in the Review of Funding for Schooling (Gonski Review) to deliver philanthropic support to help children facing disadvantage succeed at school. Working with teachers and schools, we empower them with [funding](#), [coaching](#) and [resources](#) to implement initiatives to **help close the education gap**.

## Empowering school leaders with the right support for their schools

School leaders are best placed to identify which programs will help their students to achieve. A targeted and strategic approach, driven by the school, helps tackle the barriers that are stopping children from succeeding. Schools Plus works with teachers and schools to identify and implement the most appropriate solution. Examples include:



### 1. Supporting core skills: literacy, numeracy, STEM

Research shows that children who begin their education with oral language deficits are significantly more likely to perform poorly in reading and numeracy later in school.

To improve the reading levels of its students, Elizabeth Park Primary School received funding to appoint a specialist Reading Coach to lead teacher and parent workshops, to embed a quality reading instruction program. The school went from having many students not meeting year level benchmark in reading, to all Yr2-7 students surpassing all of the school's reading targets and 70% at or above SEA (Standard of Education Achievement).



### 2. Mental health and wellbeing

Students with good mental health and wellbeing are better able to learn and succeed at school.

Bowral High School teachers received funding from Schools Plus to help support their students' mental health and wellbeing after the local area was impacted by bushfires and a loss of tourism related income. The money was used to train teachers to increase the resilience and social and emotional wellbeing of the school community by utilising evidence-based drama methods.



### 3. Teaching practice

Developing teachers' skills so they are more effective in the classroom is the number one thing schools can do to improve student outcomes.

COVID exacerbated the digital divide and the need to support teachers to be able to effectively teach using digital technology. Invermay Primary School used Schools Plus funding for professional development to introduce a digital technologies' curriculum into their school, with opportunities for all students to engage in coding, animation and robotics.



### 4. Family engagement

A supportive family environment is proven to have a positive impact on student learning and engagement with school.

To increase its family and community engagement, Granville East Public School replaced written Kindergarten to Year 6 student reports with half-hour, three-way Learning Conversations that involve the student, teacher, family and often interpreters. The GEPS Connects program has driven average family attendance per semester to 97%.



### 5. Embracing the culture of First Nations Australians

An inclusive environment and encouraging students and their families to feel welcome and safe at school is fundamental to helping them engage and learn.

Mossman State School wanted to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance. It co-designed a program with Kuku Yalanji Elders to bring the local Aboriginal language, Kuku Yalanji, to the school. Enrolments to the school have increased by 17% since the program launched, and NAPLAN data shows that writing is significantly ahead of the average for the region.




# Help close the education gap with Schools Plus


## Choose to support an eligible school\*

For questions, more information, or to arrange an introductory conversation, please call us on **02 8880 0296** or email **info@schoolsplus.org.au**

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**“Every young Australian is worthy of the greatest respect and should have equal opportunity to succeed. Being ‘disadvantaged’ is not a quality of people, it is a feature or an outcome of what happens to some young people by virtue of their experiences in some of our institutions.”**

\*Eligible schools have a value below 1000 on the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) or are defined as special schools by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).