What makes for Well functioning Aboriginal families in Brisbane

PhD Research Summary

Dr Gerald Featherstone
Acknowledgements: My families, the Elders, Dr D Hafner, Dr D Walsh, Dr Y Darlington, Kummara management
About the research

- Interest started on the assumption that surely not all of my culture are struggling to parent
- What do we know of the good, the strong and the ‘doing well’ families
- Rather than a deficits approach, the focus was on strengths
- Firstly what did well functioning even mean?

- In 3 minutes or less this is what I did
What did I find

Findings centred around 4 key areas

- Aboriginal ways of child rearing
- Child centric parenting
- Culture
- Methodology as an aspect of significance
Aboriginal ways of child rearing

- Hamilton
- Grandparents (Grandmothers)
- Extended family or multiple mothering
- Resource sharing
- Strong kids
- Sleeping
- Child play
Grandparents - Grandmothers
Aboriginal ways of child rearing

- Grandparents (Grandmothers)
- Extended family or multiple mothering
- Resource sharing
- Strong kids
- Sleeping
- Child play
Child centric parenting

- Exploration
- Responding to emotions
- Managing behaviours
- Expectations (familial)
Culture

- Pride
- Grandparent role
- Language impact
- Autonomy and self reliance - tough environments require tough attitudes preparing for life
Methodology and its significance

- Indigenist research
- Suspending judgement and engage through exploration
  - Where did you learn that, what do you hope your child learns from these actions, what are your hopes for your child, Yourself, what has this been like for you to talk to me about the how's, why's and hopes of parenting
- Participant observer as method
- Focus on strengths
- Also came with its difficulties (participants fear, struggle to get families)
Wrap up

- Change the story, it is not the default pattern for Aboriginal families to be bad parents, challenge these stereotypes everyday.
- Physical discipline, relationship with those impacted on by stolen generations and the way they parented (similar to what they experienced in care).
- Multi-generational approaches – grandparents (grandmothers advice).
- Early learning.
- Have we addressed the role of race in decision making and the perceptions influencing.
Bus driver: you can’t get on

Dad: it’s because I’m black hey

Bus driver: no its because you’ve got no money

Dad: Yeah that’s because I’m black hey

Thank you