

SMART FUN PROGRAM MANUAL



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**SMART FUN PROGRAM
MANUAL**

WELCOME

Dear Facilitator,

Welcome to your manual for the SMART Fun Early Childhood Program.

The SMART Fun Program was developed through years of clinical work within my role as a psychologist in private practice and within both preschool and school settings. It takes into consideration information through research, clinical experience, collaboration with educators, communication with parents, and implementation trials over a period of ten years. It brings together Social eMOtional And Reflective Thinking skills development in a play-based learning and pedagogical approach for Early Stage 1 children within the pre-school and kindergarten settings.

The games are designed to give you detailed instruction and process on implementation, with clear alignment to the learning goals, objectives and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework V.2. It gives you a step-by-step explanation on how you can facilitate vital skills development within the social, emotional, cognitive and metacognitive areas by conducting the games, and also communicates how these games achieve the objectives of the programme and how you can cement these skills within your pedagogical approach. It allows you to enrich and extend learning for children who need a little extra and also how some accommodations can be implemented for children who require a scaffolded approach.

The program engages learners in skills such as critical and logical thinking, self-awareness, perspective taking, listening skills, non-verbal communication, collaboration, problem solving, curiosity and empathy, to name a few. These skills are embedded in the activities and aspects of the different games, therefore facilitating the learning through a fun, engaging, and meaningful way, making it best positioned for cementation and recall.

Through implementing the program, you will be given suggestions and prompts for facilitating the children's learning within the game, and how to transfer that learning into everyday life. You will also have supports of posters to display around your centre or classroom to refer to as well as communication sheets to support you to have discussions with families about their child's progress and skillsets, especially if there is some need for additional support or assessment.

Each child will learn and develop skills in their own way and pace, though we expect through implementing the SMART Fun Program consistently, that you will notice gains across the board through more positive social interactions overall and less instances of anxious or challenging behaviours. We expect children to learn how to understand and interact with themselves, their peers, and their world better, and to learn the skills of how to be more independent and self-directed in their ability to think laterally, problem solve, and think flexibly.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working on this program and I hope you have just as much enjoyment.

Have Fun!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Gow', written in a cursive style.

Catherine Gow

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SMART FUN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM – AT A GLANCE

Target Group

- Children aged between 4 and 6 years old who are attending regular preschool or kindergarten within a mainstream setting (Early Stage 1).

Description

- Game-based program for group implementation
- Delivered by educators or support staff
- Daily implementation over one lesson duration (typically up to 15 minutes)
- Early Childhood Educator directed by Suggested Term Outline

Areas of Focus

- Social Skills
- Emotional Skills
- Cognitive Skills
- Metacognitive Skills

Aims

- Provide age-appropriate education and experience of social, emotional, cognitive, and metacognitive skill development
- Increase capacity for children to cope with, and adjust to, difficult social and emotional situations, developing perseverance
- Stimulate and develop child self-awareness and awareness of others
- Stimulate and develop resilience and problem-solving skills
- Improve child self-expression, healthy self-esteem, and self-efficacy
- Reduce incidence of isolation
- Develop social skills employable across all contexts
- Increase child engagement in group activities and individual academic learning

SMART Fun incorporates the following characteristics:

- **Explicit skills instruction:** Each activity has been carefully curated to ensure that integral social and emotional skills are being taught at appropriate developmental times.
- **Opportunities to practise social and emotional skills:** SMART Fun is built on the premise that learning is most effective when active, meaningful, and applied. All lessons offer children opportunities to apply and reflect on their newly learnt social and emotional skills, and also prompt for their application outside of the preschool environment.
- Teaches children to apply social, emotional, cognitive and metacognitive skills in daily life.
- **Promotes instinctive social behaviours to aid in group situations:** By incorporating a search for social SMART Fun Clues across each activity, SMART Fun helps form productive and considerate social habits and social and emotional literacy.

- Involves families as partners. SMART Fun offers high-quality workshops and information sheets for all school staff, peers, and parents, allowing integration and reinforcement of skills across contexts.
- **Offers organisational supports and policies that foster success:** SMART Fun addresses factors that support long-term success, such as transferring learning and environmental reinforcement.
- **Integration with Early Years Learning Framework V.2 (EYLF) outcome areas:** SMART Fun outlines link each lesson plan to updated EYLF outcomes, ensuring the goals and relevance of each activity is clear and easy to interpret.

Incorporates continuing evaluation and improvement: SMART Fun incorporates child evaluation over the course of the program, providing longitudinal and individualised assessments for each child as well as across each classroom or stage.

