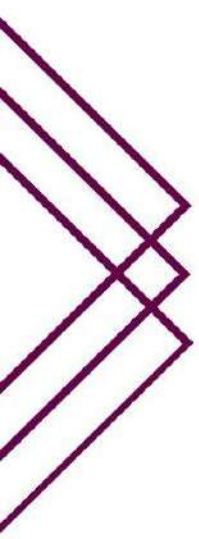




Evaluation Report: First 1000 Days

Australia Training Program

For the information of Department of Health, Victoria, Commonwealth Department of Health and Commonwealth Department of Education for Connected Beginnings



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First published June 2023

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Managing Director, First 1000 Days Australia at:

E: info@first1000daysaustralia.com

T: Toll Free – 1800 We Yarn (1800 939 276)

W: www.first1000daysaustralia.com

Author/s: Professor Kerry Arabena

Suggested citation: Arabena, K. (2023), *Evaluation Report: First 1000 Days Australia Training program*, First 1000 Days Australia, Melbourne.

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First 1000 Days Australia training in Lutruwita/Tasmania this week with Connected Beginnings Lutruwita/Tasmania partners.

An amazing learning experience and opportunity to learn about child-centred strategies for the First 1000 Days, and the cultural determinants of health and wellbeing during the early years.

Thank you Kerry for such a transformational learning experience!

#first1000days #connecttobeginnings #lutruwita #kutataynacollective #paawayzcollective #kanamakacollective



Alex Zurawski and 26 others · 4 comments · 2 reposts

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671 followers
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Thank you from Tweddle to Prof Kerry Arabena for the opportunity to participate in the wonderful First 1000 Days Australia training. The team enjoyed the Aboriginal led, strengths-based training where we explored fostering resilience, leadership, and innovation.

This will be an asset for our health service, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children that we care for, and our Reconciliation Action Plan (innovate) progress.

<https://lnkd.in/dB7ECfxA>



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Executive Summary

The transformative impact of investing in early childhood development has gained recognition worldwide. A clear example of this is the First 1000 Days Australia training course, which advocates for holistic, culturally sensitive, and interdisciplinary strategies within the crucial initial 1000 days of a child's life. This report summarises the outcomes of these initiatives, underscoring their strategic relevance for local, state and Commonwealth funders and investors.

First 1000 Days Australia, with its unique model, has effectively navigated the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural landscape, addressing the unique contexts and challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Simultaneously, the training course has generated a ripple effect, amplifying the reach of these pioneering principles across different professional disciplines, namely healthcare, social work, early years, entrepreneurship and education. The impacts are far-reaching, encompassing enhanced health, socio-emotional development, cultural well-being of children, along with the empowerment of families and communities.

The evaluation of more than 120 evaluation forms from participants who were scholarship holders funded by Victorian Government Department of Health and the Tasmanian implementation sites of the Commonwealth Government Connected Beginning initiative, identified the following strategic benefits:

Culturally Appropriate Approach: The distinctive culture-centric approach of First 1000 Days Australia has resonated strongly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, facilitating increased engagement and positively impacting developmental outcomes.

Comprehensive and Collaborative Approach: The encompassing multidisciplinary strategy fosters an environment that addresses the myriad influences on early childhood development, driving broader and deeper impacts.

Empowerment and Capacity Building: The project has equipped parents, caregivers and communities with the skills and knowledge to effectively support their children, fostering self-reliance and resilience.

Future-proofing Society: An investment in the first 1000 days of life pays long-term dividends in the form of improved health outcomes, enhanced school readiness, and reduced societal costs.

In view of these strategic benefits, the enduring value of the First 1000 Days Australia training course is irrefutable. Their continued relevance and effectiveness, however, hinges on the long-term strategic vision and commitment of stakeholders, including local, state and Commonwealth governments.

This evaluation attests to the strategic worth of this training initiative. The report offers a unique opportunity for stakeholders to review the impact of their investment, leverage their resources optimally, achieving the dual objectives of societal upliftment and long-term improvement in professional and personal capabilities and in creating the circumstance for self-determining families. This training course provides course participants with a chance to shape the future trajectories of our children, our communities, and ultimately, our nation. The strategic resonance of such an opportunity is compelling, catalytic and a widely sought after training experience.

About First 1000 Days Australia

The Model

First 1000 Days Australia is a First Nations model aimed at strengthening all families so they can give their children the best start in life. We work with Elders, researchers, community members, front-line workers, policy makers and early childhood program developers to provide coordinated, comprehensive, culturally informed interventions to support families in identifying and meeting their own aspirations and those they have for their children.

Workforce Development: Face to Face Training

First 1000 Days Australia: Early life strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families training provides participants with the capacity to address intergenerational trauma and promote strategies for family resilience, mental health, cultural safety, and social and emotional wellbeing.

The training has been developed by Professor Kerry Arabena for those working with parents and families to understand the importance of the period from preconception to a child's second birthday. First 1000 Days Australia uses an ecological framework of social, cultural, place-based, and family-based interventions. Participants are enabled to provide comprehensive strategies that support families to be the best they can be. The international and the Australian Model of the First 1000 Days Australia movement recognises the importance of strengths-based approaches and identifying and responding to family aspirations.

Our First 1000 Days Training is RACGP CPD approved for 13 hours, ACRRM PDP Accredited, ACM CPD Endorsed and ACWA accredited.

Day 1 Teaching and Training Sessions	Day 2 Teaching and Training Sessions
The journey of the F1000DA Movement	Men's health and wellbeing
Key concepts used in F1000DA Work	Father inclusive practice
Self Determining families	Parenting in the 21st century
Child Centred strategies	Regional activities and workforce development
Cultural determinants of health and wellbeing	Entrepreneurship and IPP targets
Ceremonies	Creating a movement
Reflections	Certificate Presentation

Workforce development online modules

This pre-recorded online course may be of interest to those working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in health and early childhood services, community services and agencies, the not-for-profit and private sector, government and research institutions.

The course consists of five modules and a bonus Aspirations, Hopes and Ambitions (AHA) masterclass. Each module is detailed and has accompanying resources and worksheets, one day per module should be allocated. Our suggested time frame is 13 hours for the online course and an additional day for the bonus masterclass. This activity will inform participants on specific knowledge and skills relating to cultural, ecological and anthropic principles that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early life-interventions, in particular:

<p>Impact of out-of-home care</p> <p>Maternal nutrition</p> <p>The neuroscience of infants</p> <p>Understanding the lifelong impacts of early childhood experiences</p> <p>Importance of kinship and other relationships, conception and extended concept of family</p> <p>Epigenetics</p> <p>Infant learning capacities (much earlier than predicted)</p> <p>Building capabilities for parents in vulnerable families (adolescence)</p> <p>Developing executive functioning and self-regulation skills in children</p> <p>Inclusion of men and what does fathering look like from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective</p>	<p>Building cultural security in engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families</p> <p>Group pregnancy care</p> <p>Interventions during pregnancy and up to two years for parents experiencing complex trauma.</p> <p>Improving parenting capacity for socio-emotional wellbeing to reduce the stressors and provide information about social and cultural determinants that will help protect them</p> <p>Addressing racism, cross-cultural learnings that focus on building rapport, understanding content and background, suspending judgement and working in partnership</p>
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Our Masterclass focuses on Aspirations, Hopes and Ambitions. The masterclass teaches participants how to work and facilitate workshops with people in the community and help them identify their aspirations, hopes and ambitions. Our suggested study time is one full day to complete.

Introduction

This report outlines the outcomes of the two-day training course facilitated by First 1000 Days Australia for scholarship holders funded by the Department of Health and Connected Beginnings. It endeavours to identify key elements of the training that resonated with the participants, drawing extensively on their direct quotations.

On 23 December, 2022 the Victorian Government Department of Health provided funding for the delivery of First 1000 Days Australia (F1000DA) training and coaching to early years services and providers across Victoria. Funding of \$250,000 (GST inclusive) was provided to deliver:

- training and coaching to 110 participants via 2 days face-to-face training
- on-line coaching
- regional planning workshops across 5 - 6 regional areas
- consultancy and/or face-to face workshops with regional catchments during strategy implementation to advise on emerging themes and issues, provide evidence-based guidance on implementation and evaluation activities, and development of communications and resources.

Additionally, staff from the Connected Beginnings implementation sites in Tasmania contacted First 1000 Days Australia to facilitate training to their staff in Hobart and Burnie. Connected Beginnings, Lutruwita/Tasmania, aims to improve health, educational, developmental, and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-5 years to ensure every child is ready for the transition to school. Utilising an innovative Collective Impact framework that aims to elevate the Aboriginal community's voice, First 1000 Days Australia was invited to work with different agencies to support integrated service provision, advocate for culturally safe and appropriate services and facilitate positive actions to improve community outcomes.

Finally, the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council engaged First 1000 Days Australia to provide onsite training and facilitate a regional planning workshop to demonstrate how community-driven change can be made within the new Closing the Gap partnership arrangements. The resultant *Preparing for the Treaty Generation Activation Plan*, is a guide for services in the region that have a shared vision, trust, and commitment to co-creating meaningful and lasting systems changes for Aboriginal children.

Operational since 2014, First 1000 Days Australia has over the past nine years, shifted from a research project based at the University of Melbourne to an Indigenous profit for purpose business, registered with Supply Nation and Kinaway Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce. Prior to COVID 19, First 1000 Days Australia offered face to face training courses in Northern Territory, Queensland and Victoria. During COVID, the Managing Director Kerry Arabena pivoted to an online course. Since 2023, face to face offerings have been made available again, and a newly updated online course is now available to people as part of the training package.

This report focuses specifically on the implementation of the two day training courses offered for workers across Victoria and Tasmania. Scholarships for the course were targeting Maternal and Child Health Nurses and the Connected Beginnings workforce. This report does not explicitly mention

which workforces were involved in the First 1000 Days Australia training. The comments and feedback shared do not provide specific details about the participants' occupations or workforces.

However, it can be inferred that the training attracted professionals and practitioners from various fields who work with families and communities. Some participants mentioned their roles as social workers, practitioners, nurses, health promoters, policy makers, program designers, Aboriginal community workers, health care providers and other professionals, or individuals working in the health and early childhood sectors. The training seemed to have attracted a multidisciplinary focus, bringing together individuals from different workforces who share a common goal of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families during the critical first 1000 days. While the specific workforces or sectors represented in the training are not explicitly mentioned in the feedback, the diverse perspectives and experiences of the participants likely enriched the learning environment and fostered collaborative discussions on topics related to the First 1000 Days Australia program.

Who participated in the course?

Department of Health Funded Participants

Organisations	Organisations
Maroondah Shire Council MCH Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation Mitchell Shire Council Horsham Rural City MCH Centre Frankston Council Bunurong Health Service Salvation Army Youth and Family Services Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) West Wimmera Shire Council New Directions Indigenous Australians Health Program Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) Grampians Health Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Services Early Parenting Centre Expansion Project Bunurong Health Service Bendigo and District Aboriginal Corporation (BDAC) Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative Gippsland Lakes Complete Health	Grampians Health Golden Plains Shire Council City of Booroondarra Glen Eira City Council City of Greater Geelong City of Monash City of Wodonga Dandenong and District Aboriginal Corporation Limited (DDACL) Brimbank City Council Ballarat and District Aboriginal Corporation (BADAC) Monash City Council City of Melbourne Council Gannawarra Wyndham City Council Central Goldfields Shire Council Safer Care Victoria Maternal and Child Health Line Wathaurong Aboriginal Corporation Njernda Aboriginal Cooperative Queen Elizabeth Centre Northern Health Koorie Service Department of Health

Connected Beginnings Funded Participants

No.	Organisations
Burnie	
1	HIPPY
5	Department of Education, Children and Young People
1	University of Tasmania
2	Tasmanian Department of Health
6	Tasmanian Aboriginal Council Incorporated
1	Libraries Tasmania
1	Playgroups Tasmania
1	Bungawitta Discovery
1	Burnie Works
1	Burnie Community House
1	Tasmanian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
1	Personal
1	Northern Early Years Group
Hobart	
12	Department of Education, Children and Young People
1	Tasmanian Department of Health
9	Tasmanian Aboriginal Council Incorporated
2	Discovery ELC
1	Uniting Church
1	Department of Premier and Cabinet
1	54 Reasons
1	Mac Killop Family Service
1	Personal
1	Georgetown Child and Family Learning Centre

Mornington Peninsula Participants

Numbers	Organisations
4	Willum Warrain
20	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
1	Good Shepherd
5	Department of Education, Victoria

How and why participants enrolled in the course

The pathways leading to the First 1000 Days Australia training course are diverse and nuanced, shaped by personal and professional motivations and an overarching desire to enhance practice in relation to First Nations families. The analysis of the pathways leading participants to the course revealed a complex mix of curiosity, professional development needs, interest in First Nations culture, and direct encouragement or referral from colleagues and management. The diverse motivations provide a comprehensive understanding of the pathways leading to the training and the individual aspirations driving attendance. The need to foster a culturally safe environment, empower

communities, and contribute to improved health outcomes resonates strongly among participants. This report signifies the course's alignment with the participants' needs and aspirations, demonstrating its value and relevance in the current health and social landscape.

Curiosity about the concept first 1000 days

The curiosity about the concept of First 1000 Days, especially in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and health, was prevalent among the participants. One stated, "I was encouraged to attend the course by my manager at the Department of Health as an introduction to the policy and program landscape". Many expressed interest in broadening their knowledge, with one participant saying, "the email came through and I felt it would be interesting to broaden my knowledge". Another participant simply declared, "Curiosity about the first 1000 days".

Enhanced professional development

The impetus to enhance professional practice was another dominant theme. This was particularly pertinent to those working directly with First Nations families, or those engaged in primary health care, maternal, and child health sectors. One participant highlighted this by saying, "Working with the community and wanting to learn more. Australian focused! Curiosity". Another asserted, "Having worked in the community and on country I wanted to find a different way to deliver services that are inclusive and self-determining". This demonstrates a strong motivation to improve practice and deliver culturally appropriate and effective services.

Referred by Colleagues

Several participants expressed that they had heard about the course from colleagues or read about the First 1000 Days concept in articles, indicating the strength of word-of-mouth in encouraging participation. One participant shared, "a friend encouraged me to do the course", while another revealed, "Word-of-mouth from colleagues shared that it was an incredible course". This emphasis on peer recommendations signifies the positive reputation of the course within professional circles.

Strengthen and empower families

In addition to the various pathways leading to the course, participants also articulated the key experiences they hoped to gain from the training. Many were looking for ways to strengthen and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, hoping to gain a deeper understanding of the crucial early life period. As one participant mentioned, "I wanted to gain an understanding on how to support Indigenous families in the Early Parenting sector". This aligns with the core mission of the First 1000 Days Australia initiative, highlighting the participants' motivation to contribute towards transformative change.



Policy Formulation and Policy Outcomes

Several participants in the training course mentioned aspects that could be interpreted as contributing to the formulation of policy and policy outcomes.

"I was encouraged to attend the course by my manager at the Department of Health as an introduction to the policy and program landscape." This participant implies that the course provides useful knowledge for those working within the policy sphere.

"Managing a team within the Early Parenting Centre at a managerial level I would like to help influence and implement and help the team put learning into practice further policy development and further education for the first thousand days as this is the target group of our workplace." This participant explicitly mentions that the course provides insights that would help in policy development.

"An opportunity to learn and grow personally and professionally and to be able to develop a more human experience for our families." While not explicitly stating it, the mention of professional growth and providing a "more human experience for our families" could be seen as a step towards policy formulation and outcomes, as understanding the human aspect of service provision is crucial for creating impactful policies.

"The alignment to the Connected Beginnings Framework and the importance of early childhood." This participant indicates that the course aligns with the Connected Beginnings (CB) framework, a policy and practice framework that focuses on improving the health, education and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

"Invited to attend due to interest in early years + passion for infant mental health + wellbeing." The connection between the course and the participant's interest in early years could suggest the course's importance in shaping policy related to early years' health and wellbeing.

"Working within a community in the health sector with a passion for children and improving their outcomes for the future." The course could be seen as supporting the policy outcomes related to improving children's health and development.

"A partnership first 1000 days project in Burnie. Wanted to make sure our work aligns with this course." This participant suggests that the course could influence their work, which could potentially include policy-related tasks.

It is clear that the course is not just a learning experience, but a resource that has significant implications for policy development, implementation, and outcomes. Its content seems to resonate with participants in a manner that allows them to apply their learnings directly to their work, which, for many, includes policy-related responsibilities.

Practical Implementation Skills and Strategies

The training feedback contains several references to practical implementation skills and strategies that could be inferred, although not always explicitly stated:

"Gaining a deeper understanding of how to reframe or alter my gaze and how to look at preconception through to 2 years old and how to strengthen and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families." This statement suggests an implementation strategy focused on altering perspectives and strengthening the families they serve and they have acquired skills that can help them influence and implement new strategies in their team.

"Improving my knowledge to ensure I can best walk alongside my families [clients], to be culturally safe, and know how to support creativity and to understand the influence of my way of thinking and doing." This reflects the acquisition of practical skills to ensure cultural safety and creativity in working with families. Other participants seemed to indicate that sharing learnings with colleagues is a practical strategy for implementing knowledge gained. *"A desire for nourishing learning and sharing and colleagues who implored me to do this work."*

"To understand the importance of the first 1000 days of human life and to gain a deeper understanding of First Nations culture and issues," outlines an understanding that can lead to practical strategies, especially around early childhood care. *"I wanted to gain an understanding of how to support Indigenous families in the Early Parenting sector."* The participant indicates a desire to use the training to implement practical support strategies for Indigenous families.

"Working directly with Aboriginal clients within a midwife/ paediatric nurse role. This directly spoke to me. Is a valuable course to help reshape my practice and support my workplace to better support families." Here, the participant shows that they have learned new ways to reshape their practice to better support families. *"I need to learn so much more in regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait*

Islander culture, history and how community-led action can be supported." The participant points towards the practical strategy of supporting community-led action.

These responses suggest that participants wanted to gain practical skills and strategies related to cultural understanding, effective communication, community-led action support, and knowledge implementation in their respective roles.

First Nations Led

Yes, there are specific references to the training being First Nations-led that seem to have inspired participants:

"I heard wonderful things about the initiative. As it is First Nations led I knew it would be a worthwhile investment of my time."

"I came across the First Thousand Days initiative through my work and after seeing it was First Nations-led, I wanted to participate and learn more."

These participants specifically mention that the First Nations-led initiative was a motivating factor in their decision to attend the training. This indicates the importance they place on learning from sources that are authentic, culturally informed, and led by the communities they aim to support.



Team Building

Several evaluation reports mention teamwork, team building, or coordinating activities with colleagues:

"I was encouraged to attend the course by my manager at the Department of Health as an introduction to the policy and program landscape"

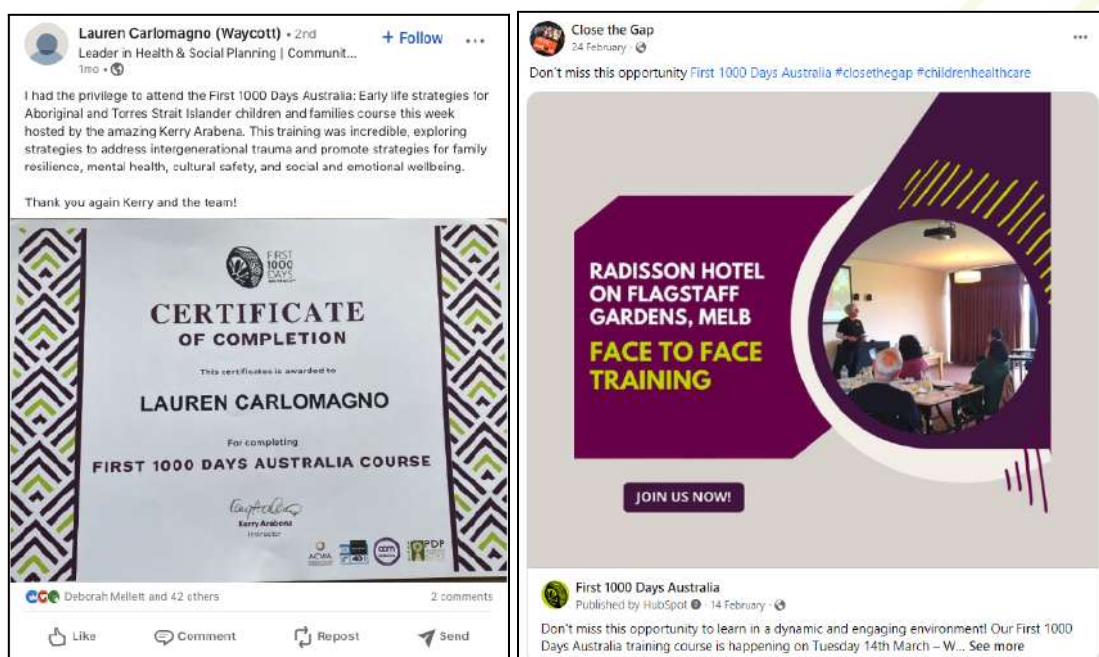
This quote suggests that participants who were part of a team looking to get trained together to enhance their collective understanding of the policy and program landscape, implying team building. Another finding was the participants expressed an intention of taking the learning from the training back to their team, potentially to coordinate the application of new strategies and knowledge.

"My centre leader Kylie, she has been a great support in developing my personal development."

Participants who have supportive team leaders were encouraged in their development and felt that they may have the opportunity to implement this work. There were others that wanted other colleagues to have the opportunity to participate in this training as well. *"A colleague of mine attended and talked to it at a meeting I was at. She talked about ways in which it had changed her practice. When the opportunity came up. I was very happy to experience it for myself."* Here the participant notes that information shared by a colleague about the training led them to attend it as well, indicating the influence of team discussions on individual training decisions.

"My boss. She believes in this training and embedding these practices into our centre, as F1D has been our focus for a couple of years now." This quote suggests an organisational commitment to the training and its principles, with the boss actively promoting it among the team.

These examples suggest that teamwork, sharing of information, and coordinated learning are significant elements in participants' experience of the training.



Orientation to new roles

Several participants mentioned the course as a useful resource for their orientation into new roles or to deepen their understanding in their existing roles. Here are some excerpts that highlight this aspect: *"The opportunity presented itself to me as part of my new role with the Garinga Bubup Program."* This participant specifically mentioned that they enrolled in the course because it was related to their new role. *"I recently started in MCH so the course was a good idea and very helpful to someone new in the field."* Here, the participant was new in the field and found the course very helpful, suggesting the course could be useful for orientation.

"In my new role at work I needed to understand CLFC's and younger children and babies and their families." This quote suggests that the participant felt the course would give them the knowledge they needed for their new role. *"Working in an Early Parenting Centre and was grateful enough to get the opportunity to attend this course with a funded spot. My colleague who attended this training before me gave very positive feedback from the training to our organisation."* In this instance, the participant was using the training to gain insights relevant to their role in the Early Parenting Centre.

"Working directly with Aboriginal clients within a midwife/ paed nurse role. This directly spoke to me. Is a valuable course to help re-shape my practice and support my workplace to better support families." The participant is identifying the course as valuable for enhancing their practice in their role, implying the usefulness of the course for professional development.

These responses indicate that the course was considered useful for those entering new roles or those seeking to enhance their understanding in their existing roles.

Word of Mouth

Several responses that indicated participants were encouraged to attend the training due to positive reviews or recommendations they had heard from others, suggesting that observing the positive impact on others motivated the participant to attend. Here are some excerpts from the responses:

"Word-of-mouth - I had read some articles about the first 1000 days from the US and from Australia."

"Seeing how others were empowered from the experience."

"A friend encouraged me to do the course."

"A colleague raved about it."

"Had heard of the training and was excited the employer was bringing the training and allowing us to attend."

These quotes indicate that previous knowledge about the course and its endorsement by their employer influenced the participants to attend. Other participants were influenced by a colleague's positive review about how the course had changed their practice.

"A colleague of mine attended and talked to it at a meeting I was at. She talked about ways in which it had changed her practice. When the opportunity came up. I was very happy to experience it for myself."

"Another colleague had attended and said how good it was. Interest in F1000D. Invitation from Connected Beginnings and the opportunity to be more educated in culture."

"I have heard fantastic feedback from people who have participated already."

"Hearing how good it is."

This quote succinctly captures how positive reviews about the course motivated the participant to attend. These responses suggest that the reputation of the course and positive word-of-mouth played a significant role in attracting participants.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the participants' enrollment in the First 1000 Days Australia training course was driven by a range of factors and motivations. The pathways leading to the course varied, reflecting the diverse backgrounds and interests of the participants. Curiosity about the concept of the first 1000 days, a desire for enhanced professional development, referrals from colleagues, the opportunity to strengthen and empower families, and the course being First Nations-led were among the key drivers that influenced participants' decision to enrol. The training course was perceived to be engaging and useful by the participants. Participants identified specific opportunities to enhance pre-course engagement, preparedness to participate, and learning outcomes. Suggestions included providing more in-depth exploration of the first 1000 days, offering pre-course reading materials or website resources, and ensuring clarity in academic language usage. Participants also emphasised the importance of check-ins to ensure understanding and the value of a glossary of terms to support comprehension.

Recommendations

1. Provide people the online course upon enrolment so they can familiarise themselves with the course content and information prior to the 2 day training program.
2. Better identify the qualifications and roles that participants hold, to better understand the multidisciplinary effects of group work and the contribution to an overall learning environment.
3. Develop a glossary of terms for the course participants to refer to during their course.



What did you want to experience as a result of this course?

Summary

Based on the participant feedback, we can discern several key themes about expectations, experiences, and learning outcomes from the First 1000 Days Australia program.

Confidence and Empowerment: Participants expected to gain confidence in their skills as practitioners and leave with diverse tools to better support families in their communities. This expectation was not only met but exceeded.

Transformative Learning: Many participants expected to learn about the importance of the first 1000 days in working with families but were pleasantly surprised by the depth and transformative nature of the learning.

Cultural Connection: The course was expected to, and did, provide insight into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views on parenting and the importance of cultural connections.

Surpassing Expectations: Many participants expressed that the course was nothing like they expected, exceeding their expectations in terms of content and delivery.

Open-minded and Adaptive Learning: Some participants came in without specific expectations but with an open mind, ready to learn. They found the course fulfilling and more than they could have anticipated.

Practical Application: Participants expected to gain practical knowledge that they could apply to their work with families in their communities. The course provided these tools and more.

Understanding First 1000 Days: Some participants wanted to understand more about what occurs during the first 1000 days for babies, and although the course met this expectation, they also learned much more than anticipated.

'I had no expectations'

When participants stated they didn't come with expectations, it implies they were open to whatever the course could teach them about the First 1000 Days Australia program. Without predefined expectations, they were open to learning and absorbing new information and perspectives. Their feedback often reflects an appreciation for the breadth and depth of knowledge they gained, frequently noting the course surpassed any expectations they might have had.

For example, one participant stated, *"I came without many expectations but was mostly interested in the approach F1000DA took to community engagement. Expectations exceeded! Well and truly!"* This demonstrates the value of coming to the course with an open mind and readiness to learn, a sentiment echoed by several participants.

Exceeded Expectations

In the context of this course evaluation, when participants state that the course "exceeded my expectations," they are conveying that the course delivered more value, learning, insights, or benefits than they initially anticipated. This could relate to a variety of factors, such as:

- **Depth and Breadth of Content:** The course may have covered more topics or provided a deeper level of insight into the subject matter than the participant initially thought it would.

- **Quality of Delivery:** The course might have been presented or facilitated in a way that was more engaging, informative, or impactful than expected.
- **Personal Impact:** The course may have had a more significant personal impact on the participant, such as inspiring new ways of thinking, providing transformative knowledge, or promoting professional growth, beyond what the participant anticipated.
- **Practical Utility:** The participant might have gained more practical skills, tools, or strategies than they expected to, which they can use in their work or personal life.

Overall, the phrase "exceeded my expectations" is a strong positive endorsement of the course, indicating that the participant found the course to be of high value and more beneficial than they initially anticipated.



Confidence and Empowerment

From the provided comments, the theme of confidence and empowerment is clearly central to the participants' experience. This theme can be broken down into several sub-themes:

Enhanced Self-Confidence

Participants frequently mention leaving the course with a newfound confidence in their abilities. They express feeling more capable and prepared to utilise what they've learned in their professional roles, especially in the context of supporting families within their communities. This boost in self-confidence implies that the course not only equipped participants with knowledge but also with the belief in their ability to effectively apply this knowledge. Example: *"I was hoping to walk away confident in my skills as a practitioner that I can meet the needs of families in my local community."*

Empowerment Through Knowledge and Understanding

Participants express a sense of empowerment that arises from the depth and breadth of knowledge gained. This empowerment enables them to better support families, navigate through the first couple of years with them, and ultimately bring about positive changes. They're empowered to make a difference in their communities. Example: *"I've learnt so much more and developed deep understanding in supporting families to transform their life experience and in early childhood space."*

Skills and Tools for Empowerment

Participants mention acquiring a diverse set of tools and skills, which they can implement in their respective roles and organisations. This equips them to be agents of change, instilling a sense of empowerment and agency. Example: *"The course has given me such a diverse set of tools and skills that I can take back to my organisation."*

Empowerment to Challenge Existing Practice

Some participants reflect that the course has prompted them to reassess and challenge their existing practices. This represents a form of empowerment as they feel inspired and capable of driving change and implementing new frameworks in their work. Example: *"This course has made me challenge my practice and how I can encompass the 1000 days framework into my work."*

In essence, the course appears to have succeeded in not just transferring knowledge but also in cultivating a sense of confidence and empowerment among the participants. It has equipped them with the tools, knowledge, and belief they need to make a positive impact in their respective roles and communities.

Transformative Learning

The theme of transformative learning is prominent in the feedback received from the course attendees. This can be understood as profound changes in the way participants perceive themselves and their world, leading to a shift in their beliefs, attitudes, and understanding. It typically involves "a-ha" moments, deep introspection, and can often challenge previously held assumptions.

Paradigm Shifts

Participants express how their expectations were not only met but significantly surpassed. The knowledge and insights gained from the course led to substantial shifts in their perspectives. For some, this even meant changing their entire understanding of what the First 1000 Days program was, from a mere program to a heartfelt movement. Example: *"I was expecting a program but learnt that it is actually a movement from the heart."*

Enhanced Understanding

The course deepened attendees' understanding of key topics such as the impact of the first 1000 days, cultural nuances, parenting perspectives, and the significance of community engagement. This enhanced understanding can lead to more effective, empathetic, and culturally sensitive practices, indicating a transformative learning experience. Example: *"I was hoping/curious to understand the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander view of parenting - but learnt so much more about what it means to belong and how colonisation has interrupted this."*

Self-Reflection and Personal Growth

Participants mentioned that reflections on a personal level were eye-opening and powerful to identify. This aspect of self-reflection is a crucial element of transformative learning, as it encourages individuals to examine their biases, beliefs, and assumptions. Example: *"The course has really exceeded my expectations, the reflections on a personal level were really eye opening and powerful to identify."*

Expanding Scope of Knowledge

Many participants acknowledged learning about a broad range of topics, not just those they initially expected. This exposure to diverse information and ideas promotes cognitive flexibility, an important aspect of transformative learning. Example: *"I was expecting more around the child from birth to 2 years old, rather than talking about mum, dad and support around."*

In summary, transformative learning in this context appears to entail substantial changes in participants' perspectives and understanding, resulting from deep introspection, broadened scope of knowledge, and paradigm shifts. These profound changes likely empower participants to bring about positive changes in their professional roles and communities.

Cultural Connection

The theme of cultural connection is central to the feedback received from the participants of the course. Cultural connection in this context refers to the understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and lived experiences. This theme emerges in several ways throughout the comments:

Understanding Indigenous Perspectives

Several participants mention their increased understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views on various topics, such as parenting and community engagement. This indicates that the course facilitated a deeper connection with Indigenous perspectives. Example: *"I was*

hoping/curious to understand the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander view of parenting - but learnt so much more about what it means to belong and how colonisation has interrupted this."

Culturally Safe Practices

Many comments mention the importance of culturally safe practices, indicating that participants learned practical strategies for working with Indigenous families and communities in a respectful and safe manner. The skills they gained from the course will help them foster cultural connections in their professional roles. Example: *"Ways to support women + families in a loving culturally safe way. Yes!"*



Appreciation of Cultural Significance

The course appears to have deepened attendees' recognition of the importance of cultural factors in the First 1000 Days program. For example, understanding the impact of cultural experiences for families and the influence of external factors on the First 1000 Days are aspects that participants mentioned. Example: *"What I got was so much more in depth cultural experiences for families."*

Embracing Diversity

The course seems to have facilitated an understanding of diversity, not only within the First Nations communities but also within the attendees' own communities. Participants mentioned the diversity of tools and skills they gained, pointing to a more comprehensive and inclusive approach. Example: *"The course has given me such a diverse set of tools and skills that I can take back to my organisation, into group work, into our collaborative work, and in my 1:1 role in family support and parenting education."*

In summary, cultural connection in this context is about fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, perspectives, and experiences. It involves both gaining knowledge and insights about Indigenous cultures and learning to apply this understanding in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner in professional practice.

Surpassing expectations

The theme of "Surpassing Expectations" is repeatedly emphasised by course participants. This theme speaks to the idea that the course went beyond what was initially expected by the participants in multiple dimensions.

Content and Quality of the Course

Participants expected to learn about the importance of the first 1000 days in early childhood, but many found that the course delivered much more than that. For instance, some mention gaining a comprehensive and deep understanding about supporting families, transforming life experiences, preconception care, and the impact of colonisation, among other things. Example: *"I was expecting to learn how to raise awareness of the importance of the 1st 1000 days in working with parents/families. I've learnt so much more and developed a deep understanding in supporting families to transform their life experience and in early childhood space."*

Broadening Perspectives

Some attendees who had specific expectations, such as focusing on clinical aspects or neuroscience, mention that the course took a broader approach and provided motivational and thought-provoking content. Example: *"I was expecting more neuroscience and trauma education but instead it was more motivational and thought provoking."*

Personal and Professional Development

In addition to developing a deeper understanding of the importance of the First 1000 Days, participants found that the course offered a wealth of skills and tools they could use to better support families in their local communities. Some mention the course challenged their existing practice and enhanced their capacity to create culturally safe and inclusive spaces. Example: *"The course has given me such a diverse set of tools and skills that I can take back to my organisation, into group work, into our collaborative work, and in my 1:1 role in family support and parenting education."*

Course Delivery and Facilitation

The way the course was delivered also seems to have surpassed expectations. Participants commended the delivery and presentation style, with some praising the presenter and describing the experience as "incredible" or "exceptional." Example: *"The course was nothing like I expected, but I absolutely loved every aspect of it, and the way that Kerry presented it was exceptional."*

In summary, "Surpassing Expectations" as a theme underscores the significant impact and value of the course, which delivered more than the attendees anticipated in various ways, leading to deeper knowledge, enhanced skills, broadened perspectives, and appreciative feedback on course delivery.

Open-minded and Adaptive Learning

This theme refers to the willingness of the participants to embrace new concepts, question their existing understanding, and adapt their thinking in response to new information. The course has been described as challenging and thought-provoking, which suggests that participants were exposed to fresh perspectives that required them to engage with new ideas. Several respondents arrived without preconceived notions or specific expectations, and these participants often reported an enriched learning experience.

"Came in with an open mind, not knowing but loved the cultural connections."

Participants reported challenging their current practices and beliefs. This self-reflective process is a critical aspect of adaptive learning, as it allows for the integration of new concepts and ideas.

"This course has made me challenge my practice and how I can encompass the 1000 days framework into my work."

"It has given me so much to think about/change/explore."

Participants noted the transformative nature of the course, implying that their thinking evolved as a result of their participation. This underscores the adaptability in their learning process.



Practical Application

This theme indicates that participants perceived the content of the course as directly applicable to their work and personal lives. They gained not just theoretical knowledge, but practical skills and strategies that they could implement in their roles. Participants highlighted the usefulness of the tools and strategies they acquired through the course. They expressed confidence in applying these skills in their roles as practitioners and educators. The course content is seen as applicable to participants' professional practices. They also mentioned the potential influence on policy, underscoring the course's broader relevance.

"I was hoping to walk away from this course with knowledge and strategies on how to incorporate them into my work practice. I definitely have some ideas now so thank you!"

Some participants mentioned the impact of the course on a personal level, suggesting that the learning outcomes extended beyond professional contexts.

"I didn't have expectations, but have come away feeling more connected to my "work" families and my own children, and the strength in culture and moving forward."

In conclusion, these themes highlight the dynamic learning experience of the participants who approached the course with an open mind and found practical applications of the course content in their professional and personal lives.

Understanding the First 1000 Days

The "Understanding the First 1000 Days" theme reflects the knowledge, insights, and new perspectives that participants gained about the initial stages of a child's life. This crucial period from conception to the age of two has a significant impact on a child's growth, development, and long-term health outcomes. The First 1000 Days approach incorporates not just physical health and development, but also cultural, social, and environmental influences. Participants developed an understanding of the significance of the First 1000 Days and how this period affects a person's life trajectory. They learnt about its impact on childhood development and its lasting influence throughout a person's life.

"What are the first 1000 days? Why are they so important? How do they affect a person's life trajectory. What can we do to help birth the Elders of the future."

The course seemed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the First 1000 Days. Rather than focusing narrowly on biological or clinical aspects, it touched on the broader context including familial, cultural, and societal factors, which are crucial for supporting healthy child development.

"I was expecting more around the child from birth to 2 years old, rather than talking about mum, dad and support around."

The First 1000 Days Australia program, being an Indigenous-led initiative, offers a unique cultural perspective on early childhood development. Participants learnt about the importance of cultural connection and the potential impact of colonisation. As a result of their enhanced understanding, many participants expressed a desire to apply the First 1000 Days approach in their professional roles and practices, suggesting its practical implications.

"Learning strategies and approaches to support first nation peoples/families. More! This course has made me challenge my practice and how I can encompass the 1000 days framework into my work."

In conclusion, the theme "Understanding the First 1000 Days" is about participants gaining a deep and comprehensive understanding of the early stages of human life, appreciating its significance from a cultural and holistic perspective, and finding ways to apply this knowledge in their professional practices.

What was liked about the course

Participants found value in the course's focus on deconstructing preconceived notions and reconstructing their understanding. This transformative learning allowed them to appreciate the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing and reshape their professional practice. Participants consistently noted that the course stirred them to be agents of change. The course didn't just inspire them to make changes, but to embody those changes, reinvigorating their passion for their work and their commitment to making a difference.

"This course is the first time I have felt inspired to not only make change, but be the change, since I graduated my social work degree 4 years ago."

Feedback indicated that participants greatly appreciated the course facilitator, Kerry Arabena. Her engaging, passionate, and knowledgeable presentation style was repeatedly praised, contributing to a rich and transformative learning experience.

"Kerry is an absolute power house. She is so engaging and inspirational."

Participants valued the tangible tools and materials provided during the course, including gift bags, tool cards, and merchandise like T-shirts. These items served as valuable reminders of the course and its teachings, facilitating continued learning and connection beyond the classroom.

"Cohort. Gift bag. Teaching. Take home materials."

The course's ability to foster a sense of community among like-minded professionals was highlighted. Participants appreciated the networking opportunities and the chance to share ideas and experiences within this supportive space.

"The course really provides me a space for a community of practice, sharing ideas and experiences with like-minded professionals & practitioners."

Participants found great value in the discussions around connecting to culture and the environment. They appreciated learning about the importance of cultural practices, kinship, land connection, and environmental stewardship.

"Discussions on connecting to culture, the environment. Discussions about the impact that our environment has on our children."

The course was repeatedly praised for being a safe and welcoming space that encouraged openness, honesty, and vulnerability. Participants felt comfortable to discuss ideas, challenge assumptions, and engage in transformative learning.

"I felt in a safely held space. My thoughts/brain has been opened up to a new way of looking at how to best nurture + share this message."

These themes highlight the course's effectiveness in delivering a transformative and inspiring learning experience, facilitated by a passionate and knowledgeable presenter, within a supportive and inclusive community setting.



Unlearning and Relearning

The theme of "Unlearning and Relearning" was a key component of the course and made a significant impact on participants. This theme reflects the process of challenging, deconstructing and moving beyond existing, potentially biased or incomplete understandings to embrace a new, more holistic and nuanced way of thinking. Unlearning can be a complex, challenging process as it involves questioning and letting go of deep-seated beliefs or preconceived notions that individuals have been socialised into, either consciously or unconsciously. It can often confront personal and professional identities, challenging an individual's self-perception and worldview.

In this course, unlearning was an important first step that opened up space for relearning, where new knowledge and perspectives could be absorbed. This transformation was particularly crucial given the focus of the course, which centred around indigenous knowledge and practices. By unlearning mainstream, potentially Eurocentric views of social work, participants were able to relearn from an Indigenous perspective, gaining a deeper understanding of the community they are working with, and the complexities of the issues they face.

Relearning, then, was not merely an acquisition of new knowledge but the reshaping of thought processes and approaches to align with a new understanding of the world. This involves incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, cultural practices, environmental consciousness, and a fresh perspective on social structures into their professional practice. Participants reflected they experienced transformation, that they were on a transformative journey during the course – breaking down old paradigms and rebuilding new ones. It also demonstrates the power of the facilitation style which effectively guided participants through this intense, personal process.

Ultimately, the theme of "Unlearning and Relearning" in the course represents a critical shift towards inclusivity, equity, and respect for Indigenous knowledge and practices. By guiding participants through this journey, the course empowered them to bring about more effective, culturally sensitive changes in their work and the wider community.

Inspiring Change

The theme of "Inspiring Change" encapsulates the transformative effect of the course on its participants. It underscores the empowering, galvanising impact of the program, as it equipped the participants with new knowledge, perspectives, and tools to effect meaningful changes in their professional practice and personal lives. The course seems to have ignited a spark in participants, prompting them to be not just observers, but active contributors to societal change. Profound statements captured through the evaluation process reflect a sense of personal agency and commitment, emphasising the shift from passive learning to active implementation of knowledge for the betterment of society.

The theme of "Inspiring Change" is not confined to altering one's professional practices but also extends to personal transformation. Participants found themselves rethinking their own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. They were inspired to implement new ways of interacting with families, particularly males, reflecting on their use of language and understanding of culture and kinship. This alludes to the depth and breadth of change the course inspired, extending beyond professional boundaries into personal and interpersonal realms.

Moreover, the course seems to have fostered a strong sense of community among participants, which further enhanced their motivation and ability to enact change. This sense of belonging to a community of like-minded professionals who share similar aspirations for change adds another dimension to the theme of "Inspiring Change." The group offered a collective source of inspiration, serving as a supportive network for shared learning and collaboration.

The course seemingly ignited a desire for change, not just as an abstract concept, but as a tangible, actionable goal. It empowered them to challenge existing structures and norms and instilled in them the confidence and capacity to effect meaningful change in their professional and personal lives.

Engaging facilitation style

The theme of "Engaging Facilitation Style" portrays the dynamic and impactful approach adopted by the course facilitator, Kerry, to deliver the course content and foster a conducive learning environment. This theme is prevalent throughout the participant feedback, reinforcing the key role played by Kerry's engaging style in creating an enriching and effective learning experience.

Participants praised Kerry's passion, knowledge, and authenticity, as well as her depth of expertise. One participant mentioned, "*Kerry, your brain, wisdom, humour, authenticity and years + years of knowledge has absolutely blown me away.*" The intersection of enthusiasm, expertise, and genuine connection with the course content was key in creating an engaging and impactful learning environment. Kerry's facilitation style fostered a highly interactive and inclusive atmosphere. Participants appreciated the open discussions, the freedom to share without pressure, and the opportunity to learn from one another's experiences. The course was described as a 'community of practice', suggesting a shared, collaborative learning space where everyone's voice was valued.

Kerry's approach was also characterised by an encouraging, safe and respectful atmosphere that enabled participants to challenge their beliefs and explore new ideas. Participants felt safe to discuss, question, and reflect on the topics at hand. For instance, one participant stated, "*Didn't feel like I was being taught - great facilitation. Ideas/solutions/thoughts came from the collective.*" Kerry utilised a variety of teaching methods to maintain interest and facilitate understanding. These included storytelling, the use of visual aids such as "board work", and the distribution of practical tools like affirmation cards and the charters. The variety in teaching methods catered to different learning styles, enhancing the overall engagement and retention of information.

Kerry's facilitation was not just about delivering content, but empowering participants. Her style inspired change, sparked curiosity, and encouraged critical thinking, prompting participants to reframe their perspectives and apply new knowledge in their professional and personal lives.

In sum, the "Engaging Facilitation Style" theme underscores the vital role of an effective facilitator in enhancing learning experiences. Kerry's passionate, inclusive, encouraging, versatile, and empowering approach resulted in a highly engaging and impactful course, leaving a lasting impression on the participants.

Thoughtful merchandise and tangible materials

The theme "merchandise and tangible materials" refers to the physical resources, tools, and merchandise provided throughout the course, which significantly contributed to the learning experience and overall satisfaction of the participants. The course included practical tools like affirmation cards, workbooks, and resources that not only facilitated the understanding of the course content but also offered a useful reference for future application. These tools were noted by the

participants to be particularly beneficial in translating theory into practice. For instance, one participant stated, *"Loved all of the information, her tools, Charters and affirmation cards etc."*

The provision of take-home materials allowed participants to continue their learning journey post-course, reinforcing the lessons learnt, and aiding in the implementation of new strategies and techniques in their respective fields. Unique merchandise, like the t-shirt with the logo that one participant planned to wear and explain to their clients, helped strengthen participants' connection to the course content and its mission. It served as a physical reminder of the learning and inspiration experienced during the course. Moreover, it provided an opportunity for participants to take their learning into their communities, sparking discussions and spreading the message of the course.

The tangible materials also seemed to create an emotional connection for the participants. They added an element of surprise and delight, which enhanced the overall experience and made the course more memorable. This was echoed in the participant's response, *"The gift bag, the Tea... Kerry's kind aura and intentional/inspiring manner."*

By providing physical materials and merchandise, the course transcended traditional lecture-based learning. The merchandise served as an interactive element, promoting engagement and a deeper understanding of the course content. The "Merchandise and Tangible Materials" theme emphasises the importance of tangible resources and merchandise in creating an immersive, engaging, and memorable learning experience. The materials not only supported the learning process but also fostered a deeper connection to the course content, its mission, and the larger community.



Community Building and Networking

The theme "Community Building and Networking" reflects the significant value participants found in building connections with like-minded individuals, sharing ideas, and fostering a sense of community throughout the course. Many participants reported the course's communal nature, with diverse individuals coming together, allowed for the sharing of experiences, wisdom, and ideas. For instance,

one participant remarked, *"This course provides a space for the community of practice, sharing ideas and experiences with like-minded professionals & practitioners."*

The course facilitated an environment where collective ideation could occur, contributing to a sense of empowerment and a shared commitment towards achieving social change. This theme was echoed in comments like, *"The collective ideas about how we would connect Aboriginal children to land...created a powerful group of women who could combine knowledge, experiences and power to actively plan change."* The course provided a unique opportunity for networking, which participants found valuable. They appreciated meeting other individuals from various organisations and professions, providing them a broader perspective and establishing potential professional connections. One participant said, *"Loved meeting other women from different organisations."*

The formation of a supportive, engaged community was a significant aspect of the participant experience. The feeling of being a part of a community fostered a sense of belonging and mutual understanding, making the learning process more inclusive and enriching. A participant acknowledged this by saying, *"The environment fostered (it supported networking and a sense of community) created a powerful group of women."* Participants found the course to be a platform for collaboration, providing them the opportunity to work collectively towards common goals. This aspect was appreciated as it instilled a sense of teamwork and collective responsibility.

In conclusion, the "Community Building and Networking" theme underscores the importance of building a strong, supportive community in the learning environment. The shared experiences, collective ideation, networking opportunities, and a sense of community significantly enriched the participants' experience, facilitating deeper learning and a sense of empowerment.

Cultural connection and environmental consciousness

The theme "Cultural Connection and Environmental Consciousness" captures the significance placed by course participants on understanding and connecting with Aboriginal culture, alongside an appreciation of the environment as an integral part of this understanding. Participants deeply valued the course's emphasis on understanding and connecting with Aboriginal culture. By engaging with these cultural perspectives, participants gained valuable insights into family dynamics, community, and values that are integral to Aboriginal societies. One participant noted the *"Discussions on connecting to culture"* as a standout feature of the course.

Participants found the integration of Aboriginal cultural practices into the learning process as transformative. The discussions surrounding kinship, the importance of building the village, and the significance of language illustrated a new perspective on societal structures and communication. One participant mentioned appreciating *"the environmental discussion and all of the above built into cultural practices."* The course placed a strong emphasis on the importance of the environment, encouraging a deep connection to the land. Participants appreciated this perspective, as it not only linked to Aboriginal cultural practices but also encouraged a broader understanding of environmental stewardship. One participant pointed out their appreciation for the *"collective ideas about how we would connect Aboriginal children to land."* Participants acknowledged the course's contribution to

understanding and regaining aspects of culture that have been lost over time. This process was viewed as part of the unlearning and relearning theme, offering a new appreciation for cultural practices. One participant mentioned how they learned about *"how amazing the culture is and how much has been lost. Slowly being regained."*

Participants appreciated the course's emphasis on the interconnectivity between cultural practices and environmental consciousness. This understanding facilitated a comprehensive appreciation of Aboriginal culture and its inherent connection to the environment. In conclusion, the theme of "Cultural Connection and Environmental Consciousness" highlights the transformative learning experiences participants had by engaging with Aboriginal cultural practices and deepening their environmental consciousness. The fusion of cultural understanding and environmental stewardship fostered a holistic learning experience that enriched participants' professional and personal perspectives.



Safe Spaces

The theme "Safe Spaces" reflects the high value course participants placed on the creation of a supportive and inclusive environment during the course. This facilitated open dialogue, vulnerability, exploration, and shared learning, which were crucial to the course's impact. Participants noted that the environment fostered by the course allowed for a significant degree of trust and openness. This was instrumental in facilitating honest discussions and promoting learning. One participant noted how they appreciated that *"everyone felt the safe space and shared some heartfelt stories."*

The safety and support of the course environment enabled participants to engage emotionally and personally with the content. They could access and share feelings of vulnerability, which deepened their engagement and understanding. A participant appreciated the course's capacity for allowing them to access their vulnerability. Safe spaces provided the backdrop for candid conversations and

sharing of personal experiences. The non-judgemental atmosphere encouraged participants to learn from each other and feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas, contributing to collective knowledge.

The safe space created allowed for tackling uncomfortable or challenging topics head-on. This type of environment made it possible to engage with such themes constructively, leading to more in-depth understanding and learning. In a safe environment, participants felt empowered to challenge existing ideas and think differently. One participant noted, *"It was engaging, makes you think outside the box, challenges your thoughts,"* indicating the positive effects of the course's supportive atmosphere. Participants also praised the course's inclusivity. The safe space extended to all participants, regardless of their background, promoting a culturally appropriate and highly inclusive environment.

In conclusion, the "Safe Spaces" theme represents the critical role that a supportive, open, and inclusive environment plays in facilitating learning, vulnerability, and growth among course participants. The creation of such a safe space was crucial in enhancing the effectiveness of the course, allowing for meaningful dialogue and emotional engagement.

What would you change about the course?

Summary

Participants felt that the course was well-designed and delivered, leaving no significant areas for improvement. Opportunities to enhance pre-course engagement, preparedness to participate, and learning outcomes could include:

In-depth Exploration of the First 1000 Days: Participants expressed a desire for more in-depth information about what happens during the first 1000 days from a child's perspective. This could involve providing additional content or activities that delve deeper into the developmental milestones and experiences of children during this critical period.

Pre-course Engagement: Some participants suggested offering pre-course reading materials or directing them to relevant websites to familiarise themselves with the course content and concepts. This would help participants come to the course with prior knowledge and be better prepared to engage in discussions and activities.

Glossary of Terms: A few participants mentioned the use of complex academic language and suggested providing a glossary of terms to aid understanding and comprehension. This would support participants in navigating and comprehending the course materials, especially for those who may be less familiar with academic terminology.

Check-in on Understanding: One participant suggested periodically checking in with participants to ensure they understand the academic language and concepts being presented. This could involve regular opportunities for participants to ask questions, seek clarification, or engage in discussions to enhance their comprehension and learning experience.

Opportunities to enhance engagement with course content

This section of the report focuses on opportunities to enhance participants' involvement and preparedness before the start of the course. This aspect aims to create a meaningful and productive learning experience from the very beginning. To optimise pre-course engagement, the following strategies can be considered:

Pre-Course Communication

Establish effective communication channels to connect with participants prior to the course. This may include sending welcome emails or letters that provide an overview of the course objectives, expectations, and any necessary pre-reading materials. Clear and timely communication sets the stage for participants to understand what to expect and come prepared.

Pre-Course Questionnaire or Survey

Design a pre-course questionnaire or survey to gather information about participants' backgrounds, experiences, and specific learning goals. This enables instructors to tailor the course content and activities to the diverse needs and interests of the participants. It also demonstrates an investment in individual participants, making them feel valued and heard.

Pre-Course Resources

Provide participants with pre-course resources, such as articles, videos, or online modules, that introduce key concepts or foundational knowledge relevant to the course. This prepares participants by familiarising them with the core ideas and terminology, allowing for more in-depth discussions and exploration during the course.

Engaging Pre-Course Activities

Incorporate interactive pre-course activities that stimulate participants' curiosity and encourage them to start thinking about the course topics. This could involve online forums, discussion boards, or virtual meetups where participants can introduce themselves, share their expectations, and engage in preliminary discussions. These activities foster a sense of community and generate excitement for the upcoming learning journey.

Access to Learning Platform

Grant participants early access to the course's online learning platform or materials, if applicable. This allows them to explore the platform's features, navigate the resources, and become comfortable with the technology before the course officially begins. It reduces any potential technical barriers and enhances participants' confidence in using the learning tools.

By implementing these strategies, pre-course engagement can be strengthened, ensuring participants feel prepared, motivated, and connected before the course commences. It sets a positive tone for the learning experience and creates a supportive environment that maximises participants' opportunities for growth and active participation.

Overall, while many participants expressed satisfaction with the course and found no need for changes, opportunities to enhance participant's preparedness, and learning outcomes exist by providing more in-depth content, offering pre-course materials, providing a glossary of terms, and actively checking in on participants' understanding throughout the course.

In-depth Exploration of the First 1000 Days

The theme of "in-depth exploration of the First 1000 days" highlights participants' desire for a deeper understanding of what happens during this critical period from a child's perspective. Participants expressed a specific interest in gaining comprehensive knowledge and insights into the developmental milestones, experiences, and impacts on children during the first 1000 days of life. To enhance this aspect of the course, several strategies can be considered:

Extended Content

Provide additional content and resources that delve deeper into the specific stages of child development within the first 1000 days. This may include detailed information on physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development, as well as highlighting key milestones and potential challenges that children may encounter during this period.

Case Studies and Personal Narratives

Incorporate real-life case studies and personal narratives that illustrate the experiences of children and families during the first 1000 days. These examples can help participants connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications, deepen their understanding, and foster empathy.



Expert Insights and Research

Invite guest speakers or subject matter experts who can provide in-depth insights and research findings related to the first 1000 days. These experts can share their expertise, research findings, and evidence-based practices, further enriching participants' understanding and knowledge.

Interactive Activities and Reflection

Design interactive activities, such as group discussions, reflective exercises, and scenario-based simulations, to encourage participants to actively engage with the content and reflect on the implications for their practice. These activities can promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and application of knowledge in real-world contexts.

Resources and References

Compile a comprehensive list of resources, references, and recommended readings related to the first 1000 days. This empowers participants to further explore the topic independently and deepen their understanding beyond the scope of the course.

By incorporating these strategies, the course can provide participants with an in-depth exploration of the first 1000 days, ensuring they gain a comprehensive understanding of child development, challenges, and opportunities within this critical period. It allows participants to apply this knowledge effectively in their professional practice, supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

Glossary of Terms

The theme of "glossary of terms" emphasises the importance of providing participants with a comprehensive list of key terms and definitions related to the course content. Including a glossary enhances learning outcomes by ensuring a shared understanding of terminology and facilitating effective communication. Here are some considerations for implementing a glossary of terms:

Comprehensive Terminology

Develop a comprehensive list of terms that are relevant to the course content. This includes specialised vocabulary, concepts, acronyms, or jargon that participants may encounter during the course. The glossary should cover a wide range of terms to address various aspects of the subject matter.

Clear and Concise Definitions

Provide clear and concise definitions for each term in the glossary. Avoid using overly technical language and strive to make the definitions accessible and understandable to participants with diverse backgrounds and levels of prior knowledge. Consider using examples or illustrations to further clarify the meaning of terms.

Accessible Format

Present the glossary in a user-friendly format that is easily accessible to participants. This could be in the form of a printed handout, an online document, or an interactive webpage. Ensure that participants can easily navigate and search for specific terms as needed throughout the course.

Integration with Course Materials

Integrate references to the glossary of terms within the course materials. For instance, hyperlink or highlight relevant terms within the course modules or readings, allowing participants to access the glossary directly when encountering unfamiliar terminology. This promotes active engagement with the glossary and reinforces its importance in understanding the course content.

Periodic Review and Updates

Regularly review and update the glossary of terms to incorporate new concepts or terminology that emerge over time. Encourage participants to provide feedback and suggest additional terms for inclusion, fostering a collaborative approach to maintaining an up-to-date and relevant glossary.

Additional Resources

Consider providing additional resources, such as further readings, articles, or videos, for participants who wish to deepen their understanding of specific terms or concepts. These resources can supplement the glossary and offer more in-depth explanations or examples.

By providing a glossary of terms, participants can quickly reference and clarify unfamiliar terminology, promoting a shared language and understanding among all learners. This enhances the overall learning experience, reduces confusion, and fosters effective communication and engagement throughout the course.

Checking in on Understanding

The theme of "check in on understanding" emphasises the importance of regularly assessing participants' comprehension and comprehension levels throughout the course. By checking in on understanding, facilitators can ensure that participants are grasping the content, address any areas of confusion or misunderstanding, and make adjustments to optimise learning outcomes. Some strategies for implementing effective check-ins on understanding include:

Real-time Feedback

Incorporate interactive activities, discussions, or quizzes during the course sessions to gauge participants' understanding of the material. Encourage active participation and provide immediate feedback to reinforce correct understanding or clarify misconceptions.

Question-and-Answer Sessions

Allocate dedicated time for participants to ask questions or seek clarification on specific topics. This can be done in person or through online platforms, allowing participants to voice their concerns, share their perspectives, and receive direct responses from the facilitator.

Formative Assessments

Integrate formative assessments throughout the course to evaluate participants' comprehension. This can include quizzes, short assignments, or reflective exercises that allow participants to apply their knowledge and demonstrate their understanding of the course content. Provide constructive feedback on participants' work to support their learning journey.

By regularly checking in on understanding, facilitators can create a supportive learning environment that values participants' comprehension and promotes active engagement. This approach enables facilitators to identify areas that require further explanation, adjust the pace or delivery of the course, and provide additional resources or support to enhance participants' learning outcomes. Ultimately, it fosters a collaborative learning experience that empowers participants to grasp the course content more effectively.

Was the Course Engaging and Useful? Why?

Summary

Based on the responses provided, several key themes emerge pertaining to the perceived utility and engagement of the course.

Relevance and applicability: One of the most frequently cited reasons for finding the course useful was its relevance to the participants' professional roles. The course content was seen as directly applicable to their work with families in the community, equipping them with new tools and strategies for practice. Furthermore, the course prompted participants to reflect on their current approaches and consider ways they might change their practices moving forward.

Diverse and interactive instructional methods: The course's engagement factor was strongly linked to the varied and interactive teaching methods employed by the presenter, Kerry. These included the use of PowerPoint presentations, whiteboards, butchers paper, meditation, cards, group work, and various other activities. This diverse approach was highly appreciated and fostered a highly participatory and inclusive learning environment.

Quality of facilitation: The efficacy and charisma of the course facilitator, Kerry, were frequently highlighted. Her engaging presentation style, insightful content delivery, and overall persona were recognised as vital factors in creating a stimulating and enjoyable learning experience.

Creation of a supportive learning community: Many participants mentioned the sense of community and camaraderie that developed over the course. This sense of 'teamwork' and 'sisterhood' contributed to the engagement with the material and with each other, which enhanced the overall learning experience.

Content richness and depth: Despite being occasionally described as 'content heavy', the depth and breadth of information provided in the course were viewed positively. The content was described as practical, informative, thought-provoking, and even 'disruptive', prompting participants to broaden their knowledge and challenge their existing beliefs and practices.

Positive impact on motivation and inspiration: The course was frequently described as motivational, inspiring, and empowering. Participants expressed increased confidence, enthusiasm, and readiness to implement what they had learned into their work and personal lives.

Integration of cultural perspectives and holistic views: The course's incorporation of cultural acknowledgement, community bonding, and a broad perspective on health, environment, family values, and the interconnectedness of these elements was greatly appreciated. This holistic view was considered not only engaging but also a vital contribution to the participants' professional practice.

Emotional engagement: Participants noted that the course stimulated a range of emotions, including enjoyment, inspiration, and even laughter and tears. This emotional engagement was considered to enhance the overall impact and resonance of the course.

In conclusion, the course was highly regarded for its practical relevance, engaging delivery, inclusive environment, depth of content, motivational impact, and integrative and emotive approach. Future iterations of this course should aim to maintain and enhance these valued aspects.

Relevance and applicability

The theme of 'Relevance and Applicability' emerged as a significant factor contributing to the course's perceived usefulness and engagement. Participants frequently underscored how the content was pertinent to their professional roles and directly applicable to their work with families and communities. Many participants alluded to the practical value of the course, suggesting that they could readily apply what they learned in their professional settings. For instance, one participant claimed, *"The course is the most engaging I've been a part of. Despite being the only worker here in a role like mine, everything covered and discussed was relevant to my work with families in the community."* This quote captures the sentiment of many course participants, who found the course content to be directly germane to their professional needs.

Similarly, another participant said, *"Yes, very useful. I have new tools to use with family and a new way to practise. I will definitely be more mindful of the words I use."* This comment underscores the course's practical value, suggesting it provided not only theoretical insights but also tangible tools and strategies to enhance their professional practice. The course also prompted reflection and self-examination. As one participant noted, *"Yes, I did - it made me think and question the way in which I work."* This comment indicates that the course encouraged participants to critically assess their current practices and consider alternative approaches.

Another aspect of the course's relevance was its ability to inspire change. One participant remarked, *"Very engaging, useful and positive. It has given me a new energy to make changes for the better in our local community."* This sentiment suggests that the course not only provided practical insights but also fostered a sense of agency and motivation to effect positive changes in their local communities. Furthermore, the course's focus on cultural elements and community bonding was considered particularly pertinent. For example, a participant reflected, *"All the key messages, integrating welcome/acknowledgement to land with families. Community bonding activities. Changing language used."* These elements of the course were highly valued and seen as directly applicable in the participants' professional contexts.

In summary, the theme of 'Relevance and Applicability' emerged as a prominent aspect of the course's perceived value. The course content was seen as directly applicable to the participants' work settings, providing practical tools and strategies, fostering reflective practice, inspiring change, and integrating important cultural and community considerations. These aspects of the course were key in facilitating both engagement and perceived utility among participants.

Diverse and interactive instructional methods

The theme of 'Diverse and Interactive Instructional Methods' was also prominently featured in participants' feedback, denoting a significant contributor to the course's engaging nature. This theme encapsulates participants' appreciation for the varied and interactive teaching approaches adopted during the course, which facilitated active learning, inclusivity, and heightened engagement. One participant elaborated on the various teaching methods used, stating, *"Yes, very engaging with the PowerPoint, whiteboard, butcher's paper, meditation, cards, group work."* This diversity in

instructional techniques seemed to appeal to participants, offering varied means of engagement with the course content, and catering to different learning styles.

The course's group work was frequently highlighted for its role in fostering active participation and engagement. For instance, one participant noted, *"Very engaging as we all came together and learned from each other and engaged with our presenter."* This statement underscores the value of interactive group activities in facilitating collaborative learning and shared understanding. Moreover, the course's innovative and unconventional teaching methods were also viewed positively. As one participant reflected, *"Yes, loved the 'disruptive' theme throughout."* This comment indicates that the unique and 'disruptive' teaching approaches used in the course provided an engaging and refreshing change from more traditional instructional methods.

The integration of practical activities also appeared to enhance the course's utility. A participant mentioned, *"Yes, good mix of content, activities, base, reflection etc."* This mix of theoretical content, practical activities, and reflective exercises facilitated a comprehensive and experiential learning environment. Importantly, the diversity of teaching methods was also recognised as inclusive, accommodating different levels of comfort and willingness to participate. The course's diverse instructional methods fostered an inclusive learning space that encouraged and valued participation from all attendees, regardless of their self-perceived 'voice' or confidence.

In conclusion, the 'Diverse and Interactive Instructional Methods' theme signifies the appreciated use of varied, interactive, and inclusive teaching approaches in the course. These methods fostered active participation, collaborative learning, and inclusivity, which contributed significantly to the course's overall engagement and utility.



Quality of facilitation

The theme of 'Quality of Facilitation' emerged as a significant factor contributing to the course's success and overall positive reception. This theme centred on the proficiency, charisma, and effective teaching style of the course facilitator, Kerry, which fostered a vibrant and impactful learning environment. Numerous participants lauded Kerry's engaging presentation style, demonstrating her success as a facilitator. One respondent asserted, "*Kerry, a very engaging presenter and excellent human being.*" This remark reflects a common sentiment among the participants, who frequently praised Kerry's charisma and instructional efficacy.

Kerry's instructional skills were also recognised as a key factor in maintaining participants' interest, even when the course content was dense. A participant stated, "*Yes. Content heavy at times but unavoidable so. Mix activity/learning/listening. Kerry is a very engaging presenter.*" Here, the quality of facilitation counterbalanced the intensity of the course content, helping to sustain engagement. Beyond merely providing engaging presentations, Kerry also fostered a positive and supportive learning environment, which participants found encouraging. For instance, one respondent said, "*Entirely! Kerry, you are the most engaging, powerful and beautiful facilitator. We laughed, cried, danced with you! A true inspiration!!!*" This comment underscores Kerry's ability to evoke emotions and foster a multi-dimensional learning experience.

Moreover, Kerry's genuineness and passion seemed to enhance the authenticity of the course experience. As one participant observed, "*Yes. I met amazing people and heard from experienced knowledgeable woman. The presenter was positive and genuine and her take on things was amazing.*" This perceived authenticity likely contributed to the sense of connection and respect between the facilitator and participants, further enhancing the learning experience.

Finally, Kerry's effective facilitation was considered instrumental in inspiring participants. For example, a participant noted, "*Absolutely - an awesome course. should be mandatory training for all working with families.*" Such remarks suggest that the quality of facilitation not only made the course enjoyable but also instilled a belief in the course's vital relevance and impact. In conclusion, the 'Quality of Facilitation' theme emerged as a critical factor in the course's success. Kerry's engaging presentation style, ability to manage dense content, fostering of a supportive learning environment, authenticity, and capacity to inspire participants were all instrumental in facilitating a positive and impactful learning experience.

Creation of a supportive learning community

The theme of 'Creation of a Supportive Learning Community' surfaced as a critical aspect of the course's effectiveness. This theme encapsulates participants' experiences and sentiments regarding the creation of an inclusive, supportive, and interconnected learning community, which appeared to enhance both engagement and learning outcomes.

The sense of communal learning was underscored by many participants, emphasising the benefits of shared knowledge and experiences. One respondent noted, "*Very engaging as we all came together and learned from each other and engaged with our presenter.*" This quote highlights the

development of a collective learning experience, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among participants.

Participants also spoke of the strong bonds formed during the course, with an acknowledgement that the feeling of camaraderie contributed significantly to participants' overall course experience and sense of engagement. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of the learning environment facilitated participants' ability to generate ideas and stimulate thought. As one participant suggested, "Yes. Lots of ideas percolating - lots of people to connect with!" This indicates that the supportive learning community fostered intellectual stimulation and creative thinking, further enriching participants' learning experiences. Lastly, the supportive learning community fostered a sense of empowerment among participants. For instance, one participant reflected, "Absolutely as well as empowered." This sentiment demonstrates how the supportive learning environment facilitated not only knowledge acquisition but also a sense of self-efficacy and empowerment.

In conclusion, the 'Creation of a Supportive Learning Community' theme underlines the significance of fostering a supportive, inclusive, and collaborative learning environment. Such an environment enhances engagement, fosters relationship-building, promotes mutual respect, stimulates intellectual engagement, and nurtures a sense of empowerment among participants. These elements collectively contribute to a more enriching and impactful learning experience.



Content Richness and Depth

The theme 'Content Richness and Depth' emerged as a significant component contributing to the value and appeal of the course. Participants repeatedly remarked on the extensive and profound nature of the course material, recognising the course's depth of content and its utility in providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Several participants noted the wealth of knowledge imparted in the course. As one participant reflected, "*Incredibly, a wonderful two days of information.*" This comment highlights the perception of the course as information-rich, offering an abundance of knowledge and insights.

Moreover, the richness of the content was perceived to complement the practical elements of the course. One participant mentioned, *"Very. Lots of great practical information. Ideas to take into the workplace."* This demonstrates that the rich content was not merely theoretical but was tied closely to practical application, enhancing its relevance and usefulness. The course's deep exploration of various topics, including cultural elements and community bonding, was appreciated by the participants. One commented, *"All the key messages, Integrating welcome/acknowledgement to land with families. Community bonding activities. Changing language used."* These comments suggest that the course's deep and thorough treatment of these topics significantly enhanced their understanding and appreciation of these complex themes.

While some participants found the course content-heavy at times, they also acknowledged its necessity. For instance, a participant noted, *"Yes. Content heavy at times but unavoidably so."* This demonstrates the recognition that the richness and depth of the course content were essential for a comprehensive understanding of the complex and multifaceted topics covered. Lastly, the rich content also seemed to provoke reflection and stimulate new ideas among participants. The content encouraged participants to think critically and generate new ideas, enhancing the course's overall impact. In conclusion, the theme 'Content Richness and Depth' highlights the extensive and profound nature of the course content as a significant factor in the course's value and engagement. The rich content facilitated a comprehensive understanding of complex themes, practical application, reflection, and idea generation among the participants, thereby enriching their learning experience.

Positive Impact on Motivation and Inspiration

The theme 'Positive Impact on Motivation and Inspiration' emerged as a prominent aspect of the course's effectiveness. This theme encompasses the participants' experiences of feeling inspired and motivated by the course, influencing their professional practices and fostering personal growth.

Participants often shared their newfound motivation and inspiration derived from the course. As one participant noted, *"Yes. Very motivational."* This direct remark underlines the course's ability to inspire and encourage participants, thereby enhancing their engagement and receptiveness to the course content.

Furthermore, the inspiration from the course was not only tied to their professional roles but extended to personal values and actions. One respondent revealed, *"More engaging than I thought it would be and I can see where and what I can change in my own work and home practices."* This comment suggests that the course prompted self-reflection and inspired change on both professional and personal levels.

Participants also suggested that the course inspired them to implement what they had learned, indicating the real-world applicability of the course content. As one participant stated, *"So engaging and useful, so inspired and now feeling equipped to implement some of this stuff."* This remark signifies that the course not only provided theoretical knowledge but also inspired participants to apply these insights in their work.

Moreover, the course's ability to spark change was often remarked upon. One participant expressed, "Yes! Very engaging! Very useful for work! Will drive future change/positive work in our community." This sentiment underlines the course's role as a catalyst for positive change, indicating its potential for broader societal impact.

Furthermore, the course seemed to empower participants, providing them with confidence and conviction in their roles. As a participant noted, "Absolutely as well as empowered." This statement suggests that the course inspired participants to feel more self-assured and capable in their professional capacities.

In conclusion, the theme 'Positive Impact on Motivation and Inspiration' indicates the significant role of the course in inspiring and motivating participants. The course successfully stimulated personal and professional growth, prompted the application of learned content, acted as a catalyst for change, and fostered a sense of empowerment among participants, thus enhancing its overall impact and value.



Integration of Cultural Perspectives and Holistic Views

The theme 'Integration of Cultural Perspectives and Holistic Views' emerged as a crucial component of the course's pedagogical approach. Participants highlighted the importance of integrating cultural considerations and adopting a holistic perspective, which broadened their understanding of families and communities, and encouraged them to view issues from various angles.

Participants noted the course's focus on integrating cultural aspects into the learning process. For instance, one participant stated, "*All the key messages, Integrating welcome/acknowledgement to land with families.*" This highlights the course's intention to intertwine cultural aspects, such as

acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land, thereby fostering a deep respect and understanding of cultural values and practices.

Moreover, the integration of cultural perspectives led to a more comprehensive understanding of communities and kinship systems. As one participant pointed out, *"Yes. Very informative, Broadened my knowledge of kinships, anthropocene & planetary health."* This participant's response underlines the course's success in broadening their knowledge of complex concepts through the integration of cultural perspectives.

The course was also recognised for its holistic views, which encouraged participants to view issues from multiple dimensions. A participant reflected, *"Yes. I met amazing people and heard from experienced knowledgeable women. The presenter was positive and genuine and her take on things was amazing. It puts culture, environment, health outcomes, family values all into a big interconnected movement and way of being in the world."* This comment illustrates the course's effectiveness in presenting a holistic view of issues, thereby fostering a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of culture, environment, health outcomes, and family values.

In addition, the course's integration of cultural perspectives and holistic views encouraged participants to consider how they could apply these concepts in their practices. A participant shared, *"Yes. A lot of trainings can get over complicated and confusing. This course didn't!!"* This feedback suggests that the course was successful in demystifying complex cultural concepts, making them accessible and applicable to participants' professional practices.

In conclusion, the 'Integration of Cultural Perspectives and Holistic Views' theme underlines the importance of incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and a comprehensive, interconnected view of issues. This approach deepens participants' understanding of cultural values, broadens their knowledge of complex systems, and encourages the application of these concepts in their practices, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience.

Emotional Engagement

The theme of 'Emotional Engagement' consistently emerged as a crucial factor in the course's effectiveness. This theme encompasses the course's ability to emotionally engage participants, fostering deep connections with the content and enhancing the overall learning experience. Many participants indicated that the course reached them on an emotional level, increasing their investment in the material. For example, one participant expressed, *"Absolutely, the knowledge passed on will be so valuable for my practice. Very engaging and interesting."* This quote underscores the emotional connection to the material, amplifying its perceived value and relevance.

The facilitator's emotional connection with participants was also a significant element. One participant declared, *"Entirely! Kerry, you are the most engaging, powerful and beautiful facilitator. We laughed, cried, danced with you! A true inspiration!!!"* This comment not only emphasises the strong emotional bond between the facilitator and participants but also showcases how such emotional engagement contributed to a more enriching and inspiring learning experience. Moreover,

the course's ability to elicit strong emotional responses was frequently noted. As one participant reflected, *"Absolutely. VERY engaging! EXTREMELY useful!"* The use of emphatic language indicates the intense emotional engagement the participant felt during the course, suggesting that the course was not only intellectually engaging but also emotionally stimulating.

Emotional engagement was also fostered through the course's supportive and inclusive learning environment. For example, a participant noted, *"Yes. I learned a lot and was challenged a lot. I think I'm leaving with more questions than I came with - particularly about my role/my services role in the movement going forward."* This comment indicates that the course fostered a safe space for emotional exploration, encouraging participants to grapple with challenging concepts and reflect on their roles. The 'Emotional Engagement' theme highlights the crucial role of emotional connections in enhancing the overall learning experience. The course's ability to foster emotional connections with the material, elicit strong emotional responses, and create a supportive learning environment contributed significantly to its overall effectiveness and appeal. It suggests that learning can be a deeply personal, emotive journey that goes beyond mere intellectual stimulation, providing a holistic and enriched learning experience.



Dissatisfaction of information provided

Based on the provided responses, there are no explicit indications of dissatisfaction with the course. However, it is essential to note one comment that may suggest room for improvement: *"Yes. Content heavy at times but unavoidable so."* This statement implies that the participant found the volume of content presented during the course to be overwhelming at times, which might suggest the need for pacing adjustments or additional support to help participants digest and retain the information. Nevertheless, the participant does acknowledge the necessity of this extensive content, indicating an overall satisfaction with the course despite the intensity of the material. This lone remark is far outweighed by the overwhelmingly positive responses from the participants, demonstrating a high level of satisfaction with the course. It is essential for course organisers to consider all feedback,

including this remark, to ensure that future iterations of the course continue to improve and cater to the participants' diverse learning needs.

Mode of Delivery

Summary

From the comments provided, two main themes can be identified:

Preference for Face-to-Face (F2F) Delivery: Many participants expressed a clear preference for face-to-face interaction, which provided opportunities for active engagement and dynamic exchange of ideas. This mode of delivery is underscored in comments such as, *"I specifically chose F2F for the engagement and it was absolutely worth it"*, *"Face to face is amazing"*, and *"Face to face. Definitely more powerful"*. Participants also appreciated the interactive nature of F2F sessions, with one participant noting, *"I loved how interactive they were. The active approach to learning really kept me engaged"*.

Anticipation for Online Content: Some participants indicated that they had not yet accessed the online content at the time of feedback, but were looking forward to it. This is reflected in comments like, *"Have yet to do the online sessions, and looking forward to it"*, and *"I have loved the face-to-face delivery and am excited to get into the online learning and resources"*. This demonstrates an expectation of finding value in the online components and resources, even though their preference leans towards F2F delivery.

A complementary approach was also flagged by some, suggesting that they appreciate both delivery methods for different reasons. For instance, one participant commented, *"Love F2F but love the online course access for supporting material/resources."* Similarly, another participant said, *"Face to face - online for post review and consolidation."* These comments indicate that while F2F delivery was valued for its immediacy and dynamic interaction, the online content was anticipated for its potential to supplement learning, provide review opportunities, and consolidate understanding after the course.

Given these responses, it would seem that **access to the online course at the commencement of their enrolment could enhance the learning experience for participants**. This early access might allow them to familiarise themselves with the content before attending F2F sessions, engage more actively during these sessions, and then review and consolidate their learning after the sessions.

Future research could probe this suggestion further, exploring the potential benefits and challenges of such an approach in more detail.

Face to Face Modality Preferred

The comments collected from the participants demonstrate a clear preference for face-to-face (F2F) course delivery. This delivery method was viewed as particularly effective due to its inherent ability to foster direct and active engagement, encourage vibrant interactions, and facilitate dynamic information exchange among participants and instructors. As one participant highlighted, *"I specifically chose F2F for the engagement and it was absolutely worth it."* This statement not only attests to a personal preference for F2F learning but further recognises its unique capacity to stimulate productive engagement. Another participant succinctly captured their preference for this

mode of learning: *"Face to face is amazing."* The brevity of this comment reflects a direct and emphatic appreciation for the F2F experience.

The power of F2F instruction to create an immersive and impactful learning environment was also noted. A participant reflected, *"Face to face. Definitely more powerful."* Here, the comparison to other methods of delivery is implicit, and the designation of 'powerful' indicates the perceived value of F2F learning experiences. The interactive aspect of F2F instruction emerged as another important element, with one participant stating, *"I loved how interactive they were. The active approach to learning really kept me engaged."* This comment underscores the important role of interaction in maintaining participant engagement, a feature that F2F delivery uniquely fosters.

Finally, some participants appreciated the collective and shared nature of the F2F experience, remarking, *"Face to face. Lots of experiences in the room"* and *"Was face to face! Was great to be with others."* These comments underline the social aspect of F2F learning, which not only enhances understanding but also promotes a sense of community among learners. Overall, these remarks reveal that F2F learning continues to hold a unique and essential place in educational settings, valued for its power to foster engagement, facilitate interaction, and cultivate a shared learning community. This appreciation for F2F learning should inform future course design and delivery decisions to enhance participant satisfaction and learning outcomes.



Anticipation for Online Learning

While the participants overwhelmingly expressed their preference for face-to-face instruction, they also displayed an anticipatory sentiment towards the online portion of the course. This anticipation suggests that the online modules are seen as a complementary extension of the learning experience, providing a resource to consolidate, reflect upon, and further extend the knowledge gained during the face-to-face sessions. Several participants acknowledged that they were yet to access the online content, but they were looking forward to the opportunity. As one participant commented, *"Have yet to do the online sessions, and looking forward to it."* This sentiment mirrors the excitement and

eagerness to continue the learning journey beyond the confines of the classroom and at their own pace. Another respondent stated, *"I have loved the face-to-face delivery and am excited to get into the online learning and resources."* This suggests that the online component is viewed as a valuable resource for reinforcement and further exploration of the course content.

One participant pointed out that they preferred the face-to-face mode of instruction but were also looking forward to the online content, stating, *"Face-to-face, but I haven't done online yet."* This signifies an open-minded approach to the variety of instructional methods and displays an eagerness to embrace the online component. Additionally, a participant optimistically predicted, *"I have not done online yet, but I think it will be great to go back to when I need it."* This comment underscores the perceived value of the online content as a flexible and enduring learning resource. It also hints at the participant's intention to revisit the content in the future as a means to reinforce their understanding or inform their practice.

In summary, the participants' responses reflect a broad and enthusiastic anticipation for the online content of the course. They are looking forward to the flexibility, self-paced learning, and the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the course materials. This suggests that the combination of face-to-face and online instruction has the potential to cater to varied learning preferences and needs, thereby enriching the overall learning experience.

Would you recommend this course to someone else?

Summary

The feedback collected regarding whether participants would recommend this course to a friend can be categorised into several clear themes.

Enthusiastic Endorsement: There was an overwhelmingly positive endorsement of the course. The majority of participants indicated that they would recommend the course to friends, colleagues, and within their professional networks.

Catalyst for Change: Many respondents saw the course as a powerful tool for promoting positive changes within their communities and professions.

Targeted Recommendation: While most participants stated they would recommend the course broadly, others specified that they would recommend it to individuals within certain roles or sectors, such as those working with families or within the early childhood space.

Widespread Application: Participants emphasised the broad applicability of the course content, asserting that the knowledge it imparts is critical for everyone, not just those working in related fields.

Anticipation of Future Impact: Many participants noted that they anticipate the course's teachings will have a positive impact on their future practice and interactions with families and communities.

The course's perceived value is high among participants, with an overwhelming recommendation rate. There's a strong belief that the course content can lead to positive change within communities and professional practices, and is applicable to a broad range of individuals and roles.

Enthusiastic Endorsement

The theme of enthusiastic endorsement emerged strongly within the collected responses, reflecting an overwhelmingly positive reception of the course by its participants. Many respondents enthusiastically indicated they would not only recommend the course to a friend, but also promote it within their professional circles and organisations. This passionate advocacy highlights the perceived value and effectiveness of the course, demonstrating its impact on the participants. Quotes such as *"Absolutely, I plan to speak to my organisation about funding this training for ANY professional working within an early childhood space,"* and *"Most definitely. I think the more that do this course and the more it gets out to our communities, the better,"* express the participants' excitement and eagerness to share their positive experiences and the benefits they have gleaned. They signify the participants' strong belief in the course's ability to effect positive change on a broader scale, amplifying its influence by extending its reach.

Another participant expressed their endorsement by saying, *"Yes 100% thinking of a family member who works in the early years space, I will definitely be encouraging her to do it."* This statement suggests that the course had a profound impact on the participant, so much so that they wish for their family members to also experience it. It not only indicates a personal endorsement, but also demonstrates a belief in the course's potential to beneficially influence their family members' professional practices. These endorsements showcase participants' satisfaction and confidence in the course content and delivery. The level of enthusiastic endorsement reflects the overall effectiveness of the course in meeting its intended outcomes and having a meaningful impact on the participants. It also signifies the perceived potential of the course to effect change in the wider professional community, extending beyond the individual participants to influence broader practices and perspectives.

Catalyst for Change

The theme 'catalyst for change' was prominently featured in the participant responses, highlighting the course's ability to inspire transformation, both at a personal level and in the broader professional context. The participants considered the course a powerful tool to challenge existing norms, stimulate reflective practice, and encourage a shift in thinking and behaviour. One respondent demonstrated this theme when they stated, *"This course is inspirational and has provided strength to ask more questions and to bring about change in my own practice but also my workplace."* This quote embodies the course's transformative influence on the participant, inspiring them to be more inquisitive and initiate changes in their professional conduct and organisational practices.

The quote, *"Yes, life changing. Will change the way I practise from being transactional to relational,"* is another strong affirmation of this theme. Here, the participant acknowledges the profound impact the course had on them, indicating that it has significantly transformed their professional approach from a transactional to a more relationship-centred practice. Similarly, the quote, *"Absolutely. Very powerful content. Changed my practice, language and cultural lens,"* underscores the substantial influence of the course, leading to considerable changes in the participant's practice, language use, and cultural perspectives.

Yet another participant expressed the course's potential to effect broader change by stating, *"The more colleagues that participate, the more power to make change."* This statement highlights the perceived collective power of the course in instigating changes when more individuals within an organisation or community engage with it. Overall, the 'catalyst for change' theme exemplifies the transformative power of the course. The ability to inspire change at personal, professional, and organisational levels underscores the course's effectiveness and its potential to shape healthier and more culturally sensitive communities. The participants' responses suggest that they view the course as not merely an educational experience, but a powerful agent for instigating meaningful and lasting change.



Targeted Recommendations

The theme 'targeted recommendations' is evidenced through responses that suggest specific sectors, professions, or roles that would particularly benefit from the course. These recommendations speak to the perceived applicability and relevance of the course across various areas of practice and engagement. One participant responded, *"Absolutely, I plan to speak to my organisation about funding this training for ANY professional working within an early childhood space, and my colleagues at VACCA."* This quote emphasises the potential value of the course for professionals in the early childhood sector, underscoring its potential impact on work with young children and their families.

Another participant stated, *"Yes. I will be requiring my colleague and my direct manager to attend."* This suggests the perceived relevance of the course at different levels within organisations, including both peers and leadership. It highlights the perceived value of having shared understandings and approaches across team members. One participant shared, *"For anyone who works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families would be beneficial."* This targeted recommendation emphasises the course's value for those working with specific communities, in this case, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. The quote, *"Yes, my management,"* indicates that the participant sees value in those in managerial positions undertaking the course, reinforcing the notion that a shared understanding and approach at all organisational levels can enhance overall effectiveness.

Overall, the theme 'targeted recommendations' reflects participants' view that the course holds specific relevance and applicability across a range of sectors and roles, particularly those working closely with families and communities, including management roles. These recommendations highlight the wide-reaching potential of the course to influence and improve professional practices and organisational approaches.

Widespread Applications

The theme of 'widespread applications' resonates through the responses, suggesting that the course has far-reaching applicability across a range of fields, roles, and settings. This theme recognises that the learnings from the course can influence not only professional work with families and communities but also personal interactions and attitudes. The training seems to hold promise for enhancing professional practices with young children and their families.

Quote	Widespread Application
<i>Yes. The more colleagues that participate, the more power to make change...</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underscores the potential for the course to foster collective action and change within professional settings. • This suggests that the course's influence can be amplified when taken up by a larger group within an organisation or field.
<i>100 % I would. Life changing and informative both professionally and personally</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicability to personal as well as professional life. • The course's content resonates on a personal level, influencing not only professional practice but also individual attitudes and understandings.
<i>Yes - because Australia as a country needs it</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks to the potential of the course to contribute to social change on a national level • Capacity to influence attitudes, policy, and practice around issues related to family, community, and culture.
<i>Yes, and it will be because it's eye-opening</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course has potential to change perspectives, a change that could have widespread implications in both personal and professional contexts.

Overall, the theme of 'widespread applications' underscores the perceived potential for the course's content to be relevant and influential across various contexts, from personal attitudes and understandings, through to professional practices, organisational change, and even wider societal attitudes and policy.

Anticipation of future impact

The theme of 'anticipation of future impact' conveys an optimistic outlook from respondents, highlighting their belief that the training's effects will ripple outward, both in their own lives and the communities they work with. This theme is characterised by a sense of hope, future change, and empowerment.

Quote	Widespread Application
<i>Absolutely, I plan to speak to my organisation about funding this training for ANY professional working within an early childhood space</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A clear intention to carry the learnings from the course into their professional realm. ● Anticipate that the course's teachings could positively influence their organisation and the early childhood sector more broadly.
<i>Yes. This course is inspirational and has provided strength to ask more questions and to bring about change in my own practice but also my workplace.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Applicability to personal as well as professional life. ● Suggests a powerful expectation that the course has transformed their practice ● Expectation that it will also lead to changes in their work environment.
<i>This course will change the way I practise from being transactional to relational...</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This shows the anticipation of a shift in their own approach, transitioning from a transactional to a relational style of work. ● It implies a significant future impact on their professional conduct.
<i>The more colleagues that participate, the more power to make change...</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foresees a multiplication effect as more colleagues participate in the training. ● Reflects an anticipation of collective action leading to systemic change within their professional environment.
<i>Because we need more health professionals and service providers to think in this way,</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Signifies a hope for a broader paradigm shift in health services and service provision. ● Anticipates the course's impact could extend to transforming mindsets within healthcare settings ● Leading to better, more culturally-sensitive service delivery.

These comments embody a sense of optimism and confidence about the course's future impact, foreseeing transformations on individual, organisational, and even sector-wide scales. This 'anticipation of future impact' could act as a powerful motivator for others to engage with the course and become part of this envisioned change.



Final testimonials

“Just want to say that I shared some of the key messages from the training with my team this week and have suggested we consider a whole of centre approach in terms of re-imagining the work we do with families here to come from a healing focus. To begin that conversation, we did an activity with the affirmation cards and everyone was really moved by it (and immediately asked when we would be buying more)”.

“We will now take steps to carefully consider what this new perspective means for us and how we begin the work of shifting focus and allowing First Nations wisdom to lead us to view healing as a foundation for supporting families...”

“Needless to say the training had a profound impact on me, and the potential for it to guide a new way of being with families is really exciting...”

“Deep thanks for the entire experience...”

Conclusion

In conclusion, the First 1000 Days Australia training program stands as a compelling and potent initiative that holds immense potential in catalysing transformative change within the field of early

childhood care and community engagement. Our analysis of participant feedback reveals themes that each carry its own significant implications for the success and future directions of the program.

Enthusiastic endorsements from participants signal an overwhelming appreciation of the program's contents and delivery methods, coupled with the profound sense of personal and professional growth experienced. This resonates strongly with their heightened motivation to recommend the course to colleagues, thus enhancing its potential outreach and uptake within diverse professional communities.

The theme of the program as a catalyst for change further underscores its potential in inspiring a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally sensitive approach to early childhood and family engagement. Participants' comments reflect a renewed commitment to shifting their practice from transactional to relational, a change likely to precipitate profound improvements in the ways families and children are supported.

The program has wide appeal across a variety of sectors, including education, health, community services, and beyond. This wide applicability signifies the program's capacity to influence practice and policy at multiple levels, reinforcing its broad societal relevance and potential to incite sector-wide transformations.

Lastly, the future visioning embedded in the course paints a compelling vision of the program's long-term contributions. Participants express a conviction that the ripple effects of the program will extend beyond immediate transformations in personal practice, influencing broader systemic changes within organisations and sectors.

A case for further funding

The synthesis of these themes paints an authoritative picture of a program that is not just beneficial, but essential. In light of the immense value and potential impact identified, there is a clear case for further funding, particularly for scholarships. Scholarships can broaden access to this transformative training, especially for professionals who may otherwise struggle to afford it. By investing in scholarships, funders will not only support individual professional development but contribute to a more inclusive and equitable societal shift towards better outcomes for families and children during their First 1000 Days.

This potential for societal transformation, built on the robust foundations of cultural respect and understanding, lends itself to an irrefutable argument for the expansion of funding. It will enable greater access to the program, thus amplifying its impact across Australia, within its diverse communities, and among the professionals committed to creating meaningful, positive change.

Addressing the need for additional training resources

The evaluation of the First 1000 Days Australia's two-day training has delivered pivotal insights, underscoring the necessity for a diversified array of trainer-led educational resources to meet the evolving needs of the workforce.

A significant topic of interest was 'Cultural Parenting.' Participants expressed a desire to understand this concept more thoroughly, seeking knowledge about its recognition and support in the context of their professional responsibilities. To accommodate this, the prospect of a one-day workshop, supplemented with additional online resources, is under consideration.

Another domain that emerged strongly was the need for resources to foster and engage with fathering practices. The call for information and guidance to bolster the workforce's engagement with fathers and promote fathering practices was evident. Similar to the Cultural Parenting topic, this could be potentially addressed through a dedicated one-day workshop, complemented by readily available additional resources.

The role of cultural healing in the early years was also identified as an area of interest. Participants expressed a need for guidance to implement these practices and to empower parents to activate these in their families. Furthermore, there was a request for more information on transitioning from casework to coaching families, indicating an evolving approach to family support.

The concept of facilitating entrepreneurship was identified as a strategy to counteract the impact of poverty on families. Participants requested a deeper understanding of how to align their work with their organisation's Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) targets. This is particularly critical for those who are justice-involved or grappling with drug dependencies and may face challenges in securing traditional employment.

Lastly, participants showed interest in 'Eco-parenting' and other modern parenting strategies suitable for the 21st-century challenges. This comes in response to the transformative impacts of increased heat, unpredictable weather patterns, and biodiversity loss on parenting. Participants were keen to explore the intersections of these environmental factors and parenting across diverse settings, including urban, regional, and remote landscapes.

The insights gained from the evaluation of the two-day training reiterate the importance of these workshops in the professional development of the workforce and emphasise the need for continuous adaptation and expansion of the training programs to meet evolving needs.

Where to from here

As a concluding element of the First 1000 Days Australia training program, we have extended an invitation to all participants to join the F1000DA Facebook group. This online forum not only fosters a sense of community among the Alumni but also provides a platform for ongoing access to valuable resources. These resources encompass a broad range of topics, from promoting pristine pregnancies to supplying further information and material related to the training course.

In terms of regional engagement, we have made significant strides with the completion of the Draft Mornington Peninsula Regional Activation Plan. It is our intention to present this plan at the forthcoming Best Start forum in Mornington. The plan stands as a testament to our collaborative

efforts, having been developed in conjunction with regional activation planning workshops involving various regional agencies.

To further advocate for our cause and stimulate interest in our regional planning activities, we have produced two promotional videos. These visual assets underscore the significance of regional planning activities and the face-to-face training we provide. We intend to disseminate these videos on social media platforms to boost attendance at future regional planning workshops.

Having concluded this round of training, we are set to initiate and evaluate a coaching program within the next month. Feedback from our participants is of utmost importance to us, and as such, we will be circulating surveys to gather their insights on the most impactful aspects of the training course and the progress they have made within their respective organisations.

In our continued commitment to regional engagement, we have planned the facilitation of three additional regional planning workshops across Victoria, both in metropolitan and regional areas. These initiatives mark the conclusion of our deliverables for the current funding cycle and are slated for completion in the first quarter of the forthcoming financial year. This report stands as a testament to our ongoing dedication to enhancing the proficiency of our workforce, advancing our regional planning initiatives, and ensuring the success of the First 1000 Days Australia training program.

