

RESTACKING THE ODDS

RSTO IN ACTION

Delivering high-quality parenting programs locally



RSTO in action uses hypothetical scenarios to showcase how RSTO partnerships—with services and communities—can drive meaningful change in service provision. These scenarios are informed by real challenges, opportunities and RSTO partnerships.

Each scenario illustrates how a service provider in antenatal care, parenting programs or early childhood education and care (ECEC) have used the RSTO indicators to improve their practices and optimise the benefits for children and families.

SCENARIO

RSTO's partnership with a community initiative identifies a need for high-quality parenting programs locally. Using RSTO data, the community initiative secures enough funding to set-up additional parenting programs to support parents of children with behavioural concerns.

Service focus:

Parenting programs

RSTO indicator focus:

Quality, **quantity** and participation

The community

Community B is a located in regional Victoria. The community is experiencing some of the highest levels of disadvantage in the state. For more than decade, a group of local community leaders have been working together, through a community initiative, to enhance the lives of children and families. The initiative brings together multiple organisations across diverse sectors to work together to enable change.

The challenge

The community wanted to identify the most pressing issues facing local children and families, and what action the community initiative could take to make the biggest difference. They have access to population level data that shows many children are arriving at school with multiple developmental vulnerabilities. While this data has been instrumental in understanding the broader problem, it has been challenging to understand what action to take. For example, is the issue a lack of access to key early years services? Is it the quality of services? Or is that families are not attending services?

Prioritising community action

RSTO was invited to present to the community. After a series of discussions between RSTO and community and service provider leaders, it was agreed that the RSTO Learning Action System would be adopted to build an evidence base to identify the most pressing issues in the community, and to support service providers and community leaders to work together on an ongoing basis to collect and review data, set priorities, and implement and monitor strategies.

Initially, RSTO’s team engaged closely with community initiative leaders to identify key service providers to engage across local early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and parenting programs (PP). The team, including RSTO members and the community initiative leaders, worked with service providers to understand what data was being collected, and how to extract de-identifiable data and map it to the RSTO indicators. All partners were provided access to the RSTO platform to help them collect and report on data at a service and community level.

By working closely with service providers and community leaders, the team was able to develop a data dashboard. This dashboard helped to visually illustrate how the community was performing against the RSTO framework of quality, quantity and participation indicators (Figure 1).

One of the key gaps the dashboard helped to illustrate was the lack of evidence-based parenting programs available in the region. While parenting programs were being delivered locally, there wasn’t enough to support the number of families with children experiencing behavioural issues. Some parenting programs did not meet RSTO’s quality targets, and the families who would benefit to most from attending were underrepresented.

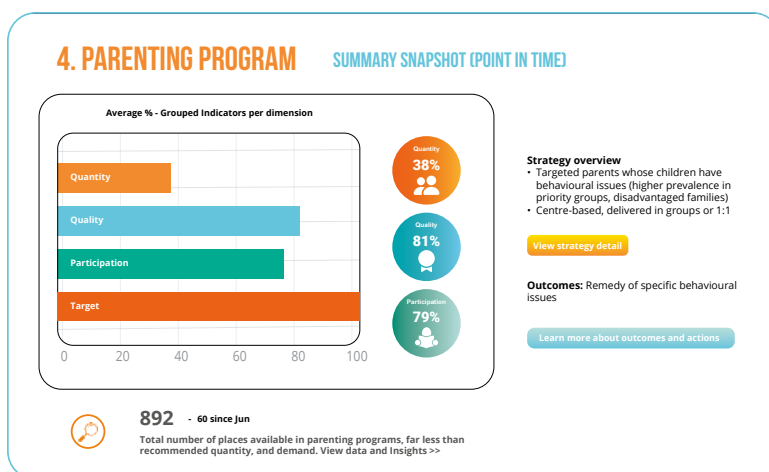
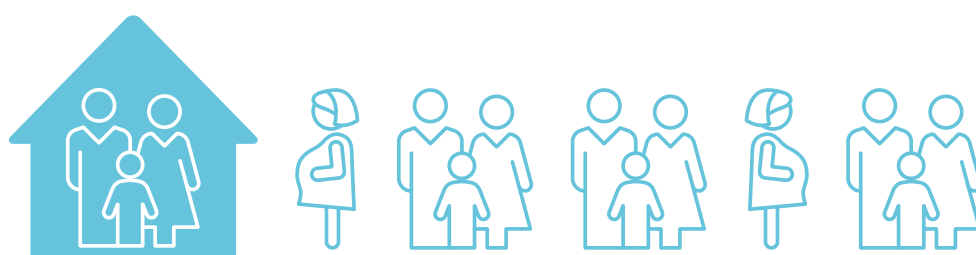


Figure 1: Sample RSTO Community dashboard



Using RSTO data to demonstrate need and secure funding

The data identified through the RSTO dashboard corresponded with the anecdotal information the community leaders were hearing from community members. This combination of evidence — RSTO dashboard data and community experiences — contributed to the overwhelming consensus that efforts needed to be focused on increasing the number of parenting programs in the area.

The RSTO team worked with relevant stakeholders to implement the Learning Action System. This enabled stakeholders to identify and prioritise change ideas to improve quality and participation for parenting programs. These change ideas included:

- building program facilitator skills and knowledge in strengths-based and family-centred practices
- offering evidence-based online and in-person programs options at multiple convenient locations
- ensuring programs were more culturally inclusive by providing specialist linguistics support where possible.

All ideas were implemented using existing resources from within organisations. The RSTO team worked with all stakeholders to develop a plan to roll out the activities and track them using the RSTO indicators.

Ongoing use of the Restacking framework

Services that provide parenting programs are now embedding the RSTO indicators into their practices and actively using the data. The community leaders are also actively using the data to understand what other priorities should be actioned to ensure children and families throughout the region have access to the right combination of high-quality services when they need them.



Interested in partnering with RSTO?

Learn about opportunities to engage with the project at www.rsto.org.au/partnering-with-rsto/

RESTACKING THE ODDS

RSTO is a collaboration between the Centre for Community Child Health at Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Bain & Company, and Social Ventures Australia.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.