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# Miracle Babies Nurturing Connections in a Rural Context


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1

## Who are the Miracle Babies?

- Babies and Children 0-6 years
- Challenged by prematurity or sickness
- Post-birth time in Neonatal Intensive Care Units and/or Special Care Nurseries
- AND! they come attached to families who usually suffer extreme emotional distress and hardship.



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2

## What is NurtureGroup?

- NurtureGroup is a supportive playgroup for families and carers who have experienced the birth of a premature or sick newborn
- Research clearly identifies that parents whose babies endured prematurity or sickness are at risk of significant mental health concerns, disruptions to attachment and bonding, and isolation

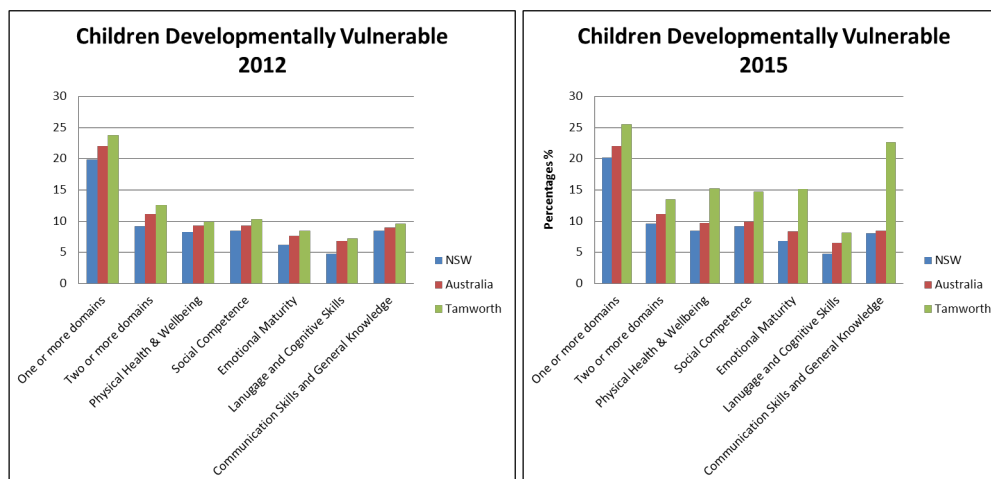


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3

## Why Tamworth?



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4

## History

- An initial NurtureGroup was held in Tamworth in 2010 with the hope that there would be a couple of parents able to take on the organising and facilitating of the group
- The parent-led model has not been successful in Tamworth over the long term
- However...

**“Every year, in Australia approximately 45,000 babies are born requiring the help of NICU or SCN”**



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5

## And it looks and sounds like this



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6

## NurtureGroup Offers Children & Parents



**“Easy access to allied health clinicians”**

**“We get to see allied health therapists in a laidback casual setting not in an office”**

**“Here it feels ok and I see from other parents that I will be ok.”**



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**“A place free from judgment”**



**“Relaxed time for play”**

**“The NICU experience is completely different so NG makes a hell of a lot of difference”**

**“It’s fun, good food, I might learn something & my wife likes to talk to other mums”**

**“Meeting parents with similar stories”**

7

## Tweaking the Model



- Free, safe, and appropriate space
- Coordination & communication (and morning tea!)
- Led by a health team to take pressure off time-pressed parents
- Facilitated drop-in visits each time by local professionals and/or community groups, cultural support (AHEOs)
- Tailored to the changing and unique needs of our parents/carers and children (prematurity doesn’t stop when you leave the hospital)
- Continuum of care from SCN to community



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8

## Outcomes

- The Tamworth vibrant and i
- Knowledge t attendance € questions an
- Provide guid manner
- No demands
- Sustainable -



grown into a

ls will be in  
answer  
/ experiences  
pressure-free



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9

## And we have grown

From this



To this



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10

## Future Directions

Nurture Time ? Ward Nannies  
Other  
playgroup  
spaces

11

## Take Home Message

Sometimes rural contexts  
require "doing things  
differently" but outcomes can  
be so valuable for  
communities

12