



MEDIA RELEASE

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COAST'S AWARD-WINNING PRIMARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

An initiative of Coast Children's Charity, SunnyKids, Supporting Children in Primary Schools (SCIPS) is an award-winning early intervention program for students experiencing social and emotional barriers to their education.

SCIPS connects families with relevant community resources and professional services to strengthen and support them in overcoming root causes of issues that are resulting in a child's learning or schooling difficulties.

Initially starting in Maroochydore State School, the SCIPS program has grown with remarkable speed; attracting local and national attention since winning a **\$100,000 Award** at the inaugural **School's First Awards** for its successful partnership with Maroochydore State School. School's First is a partnership between the Foundation for Young Australians, Australian Council for Education and NAB; established to encourage best practice in school and community partnerships.

As a direct result of the profile the School's First Awards has afforded the program, SCIPS has been able to expand its current level of services. In addition to Maroochydore State School, SCIPS now operates from Pacific Paradise State School, Stella Maris and St Joseph's Catholic Schools on the central Sunshine Coast. A donation from the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation has allowed the program to be rolled out in the Glasshouse Mountains area including: Beerwah State School, Beerburrum State School, Glasshouse Mountains State School, Peachester State School, Elimbah State School and Landsborough State School.

SCIPS Project Officer, Becky Hyde said research shows that when children disengage in Primary School they experience increased negative life outcomes including higher rates of crime association and incarceration as well as reduced life chances in general.

"SCIPS aims to re-engage disengaged children in education by building a platform from which they can reach their full potential. This involves forming meaningful, long-lasting connections and partnerships between schools and community organisations. Through regular monitoring of progress with school authorities, an integrated, comprehensive support structure can be constructed around the child.

"Outcomes in schools with the SCIPS program have been positive and compelling with more than 40 per cent of all identified issues resolved or showing significant improvement and a further 30 per cent showing improvement. Also, 64 per cent of identified absenteeism issues were resolved or showed considerable improvement with a further 14 per cent showing some improvement," said Ms Hyde.

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SunnyKids is looking to further expand and replicate the SCIPS program into several more schools in a number of areas with strong interest from Logan, Gold Coast and Melbourne schools.

SunnyKids CEO, Chris Turner, said SunnyKids and SCIPS look forward to benefiting an ever-widening community through a broad range of positive outcomes.

“SCIPS currently has a referral database of around 80 different community organisations, services and businesses and is garnering substantial attention from the Department of Child Safety and a wide range of paediatricians.

“Having witnessed the effectiveness of the program, we are actively seeking to secure fresh funds and develop a sustainable funding model which will support the high demand for SCIPS and expansion of the SCIPS program into schools around the country,” said Mr Turner.

At the forefront of providing solutions in response to issues facing at-risk children and families, SunnyKids has developed integrated support systems and child focussed programs including: **Najidah** - Homelessness Services, **Head High** - Young People Living Beyond Suicide and **SCIPS** - Supporting Children In Primary Schools.

For more information about SunnyKids and their award-winning SCIPS program, contact CEO, Chris Turner, on 07 5479 0394 or 0412 895 187 email chris.turner@sunnykids.org.au or visit the website www.sunnykids.org.au

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