

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the formative evaluation of the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program which is presented more thoroughly throughout ensuing chapters of the thesis. The chapter briefly describes the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program including its aims, objectives and initial inception. Definitions of key terms which are used throughout the text are provided. This is followed by a brief overview of the current study's aims and objectives and the rationale for the research. An outline of the following chapters is then provided.

### ***Dabble 'n' Dance***

*Dabble 'n' Dance* is a group program which offers music and visual art activities, reflective of music and art therapeutic interventions, to parents and their young children. The program operates in a secondary school in regional Victoria and sessions are hour long, taking place once weekly during school terms. *Dabble 'n' Dance* is attended by young parents who have returned to or are continuing at their education and their child/children who are aged zero to five years. It began in term three of 2010 and so far has run each term through 2011 and participants (most of whom are parents at the school) can attend any number of program sessions (Bluebird Foundation Inc. 2011). *Dabble 'n' Dance* utilises facilitators who are trained in art and music to provide structured activities designed to meet program aims. These aims include: to strengthen the relationship between parents and their children; to support positive parenting behaviours, strategies and self confidence; to expose children to the wonder of the Arts; and to empower young parents to utilise the arts and share in the arts with their children in their homes (Lawson 2010). *Dabble 'n' Dance* is run by collaboration by partner agencies, The Bluebird Foundation Inc. (a not for profit charitable organisation which aims to make quality arts programs accessible to all) (Bluebird Foundation Inc. 2011), and the Young Parents Access Program (a program supporting young parents who have returned to or are continuing at education) (Young Parents Access Program 2008). The *Dabble 'n' Dance* program receives funding to operate from various community organisations.

Throughout this thesis, the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program is referred to either in full or as 'the program'.

### **Rationale of the Research**

During my third year of the Bachelor of Social Work degree at Deakin University I was employed as a Child Development worker in Child Protection. In my role, I supervised and facilitated access visits between parents and their children who were usually residing in out of home care. This experience provided me with an insight into the complicated nature of parent-child interaction and the formation of attachments and maintenance of relationships between children no longer living at home and their parents. It also instilled in me a passion to continue working with families and children who are experiencing complexity in their lives. Upon reading information about the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program in a letter of invitation to complete the Honours program at Deakin University, I was excited about the opportunity to undertake an evaluation of this program. I have always been passionate about music and art and, although it is by no means an area of skill or speciality for me, the opportunity to combine and consider creative interventions with parents and children was ideal.

The *Dabble 'n' Dance* program was initially implemented within the regional secondary school in which it currently operates in late 2010. In order to offer a program that was effective and appropriate, program developers considered it important that *Dabble 'n' Dance* be independently evaluated. The evaluation of a program's processes and form, during its early stages of inception, assists to ensure its appropriateness and suitability for the population to whom it is being offered (DePoy & Gilson 2003; Royse, Thyer & Padgett, 2010). It also allows for improvements, changes and developments should they be required, to a programs operation (DePoy & Gilson 2003; Marlow & Boone 2005).

As discussed in the Literature Chapter (below) it is important to note here that no literature was found explicitly discussing the combined use of music and art therapy with parents and children. Although these therapies are discussed in isolation, no consideration of a program which uses them together could be ascertained within a search of the literature (discussed in more detail in Chapter 2). *Dabble 'n' Dance*

therefore appears to be a unique program an evaluation of which could contribute to what is considered a significant gap in the literature.

### **Research Aims and Objectives**

This study was particularly concerned with undertaking an evaluation of the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program through considering the experiences of those who attend it (Marlow & Boone 2005). A formative evaluation methodology was utilised to gain in-depth and descriptive data (D'Cruz & Jones 2004) and explore the following question: "How are various aspects of the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program experienced by those who have previously or do currently attend it"?

This study had two aims. The first was to answer the research question by undertaking a formative evaluation of *Dabble 'n' Dance*. The second was to contribute to the available literature pertaining to music and art group programs with parents and their children.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

#### *Music Therapy*

This study utilises the definition of "music therapy" accepted by the Australian Music Therapy Association, which describes and defines Music Therapy as "the planned and creative use of music to attain and maintain health and wellbeing. People of any age or ability may benefit from a music therapy programme regardless of musical skill or background. Music Therapy focuses on meeting therapeutic aims, which distinguishes it from musical entertainment or music education. Music Therapy allows an individual's abilities to be strengthened and new skills to be transferred to other areas of a person's life" (Australian Music Therapy Association 2011).

#### *Art Therapy*

Similarly, the Australian and New Zealand Arts Therapy Association definition of "Art Therapy" has been adopted here. That Association notes that "Art Therapy uses creative processes, including art making, drama and movement to improve and enhance physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. It is considered to be suitable for all ages and many life situations and can be done with individuals or groups. Art

therapy works by accessing imagination and creativity, which can generate new models of living, and contribute towards the development of a more integrated sense of self, with increase self awareness and acceptance” (The Australian and New Zealand Arts Therapy Association 2011).

These definitions are taken directly from the official websites of the Australian Music Therapy Association and The Australian and New Zealand Arts Therapy Association respectively. These definitions provide a guide for these key terms and have informed the researcher’s understanding of this area. These terms also may not have informed the development of *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* as the researcher was not associated or affiliated with the program developers, and so their definitions and understanding of art and music therapy are unknown.

### **Outline of Thesis Chapters**

This thesis is structured into five chapters followed by appendices and references. Chapter Two of the thesis provides an overview and analysis of the available literature pertaining to music and art group programs with parents and children, identifying gaps in the literature and the contribution of the current study. Chapter Three provides a discussion of the research methodology. Chapter Four presents the findings of the research and discusses the major themes identified by participants relating to their experiences of various aspects of the *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* program. The final chapter, Chapter Five, provides a comparison of the findings to existing literature and suggests implications for future research, and draws this thesis to a close.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

The following chapter includes a summary and analysis of the available literature pertaining to art and music therapy group programs with families. An introductory overview of the utilisation and effectiveness of music and creative arts therapies and interventions is provided. A more specific account of the growing phenomenon of interactive family music therapy (Edwards 2011) analyses the contribution of an increasing evidence base supporting music and arts therapies as successful modalities of intervention and prevention with parents and their children (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; Olfield & Bunce 2001; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003; Shoemark 1996). Also considered is the effectiveness of group work intervention with mothers, particularly those considered to be “at risk” (Dickinson & Joe 2010; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; McDonald, Conrad, Fairtlough, Fletcher, Green, Moore & Lepps 2009). An analysis of the literature reporting on the evaluations of programs similar to *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* is also undertaken. Limitations and gaps in the existing literature are outlined.

### Music and Art Therapy and Parent Child Interactions

It has been argued that family systems (Shoemark 1996) play an integral role in child development and that positive parent-child interaction, attachments and bonding opportunities may increase positive developmental outcomes (Sanson & Wise 2001; Shoemark 1996). Programs utilising music therapy with parents and infants have principally intervened with families who are considered to be at risk, marginalised and vulnerable seeking to utilise music therapy to increase interactions, strengthen parent-infant bonds (Edwards 2011) and parent-child relationships and thus promote positive developmental outcomes (Abad & Edwards 2004; Lyons 2000; McIntyre 2009; Nicholson, Berthelsen, Abad, Williams & Bradley 2008; Oldfield & Bunce 2001; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003; Shoemark 1996).

One such program, *Sing & Grow*, first implemented in Queensland, Australia in 2001 (Abad & Williams 2007), is widely reported upon (Abad & Edwards 2004; Abad & Williams 2007), has been rigorously evaluated (Nicholson et. al 2008) and is now implemented Australia wide (Abad & Williams 2007). *Sing & Grow* provides a short-

term early intervention group program to families with children three years and under who are considered to be at risk as a result of socio-economic circumstances (Abad & Edwards 2004; Abad & Edwards 2007; Nicholson et. al 2008). The program uses music therapy interventions and aims to strengthen parent-child relationships; increase parent capacity and self esteem and provide developmentally stimulating activities to children (Abad & Edwards 2004; Abad & Williams 2007; Nicholson et. al 2008; Williams & Abad 2005). An initial evaluation of *Sing & Grow* undertaken three years after its implementation found that parent-child interactions increased over time and that parents reported having developed new skills, confidence and knowledge of how music could be implemented as a positive parenting strategy (Abad & Edwards 2004; Abad & Edwards 2007). A more in-depth outcome evaluation of *Sing & Grow* undertaken in 2005 reportedly supported findings from previous research (Abad & Edwards 2004; Abad & Williams 2007; Nicholson et. al 2008). This second evaluation suggested *Sing & Grow* had been effective in increasing parent-child relationships, providing parents with efficacious music interventions and improving parent and child behaviours, parental mental health, and child outcomes including social skills and communication (Nicholson et. al 2008). *Sing & Grow* was also implemented with Indigenous families and although attendance was at first poor, alterations to the program including the development of trust and rapport between facilitators and participants as well as placing emphasis on creating a welcoming and appropriate program context, increased participation and enjoyment (Williams & Abad 2005).

Earlier programs have aimed to strengthen the relationship between mothers and their children (Oldfield & Bunce 2001; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003) as well as the broader family unit (Shoemark 1996). In the United Kingdom for example, music therapy was implemented with a mother and toddler group in order to increase mother's self esteem relating to their parenting skills and the management of their children's at times difficult behaviours (Oldfield & Bunce 2001). Music was used as a technique to target specific areas requiring intervention relevant to individual families and also to provide mothers with positive and effective behavioural interventions (Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2001). Research considering the effects of this United Kingdom program which is not named, was undertaken in the period 1996-1998

(Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003) and results suggest that music therapy was effective in providing mothers with positive parenting strategies and assisting them to understand their children and their relationships with them (Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003). Music therapy has also been used in family centred models which have worked with children who are at risk of developmental delay (Shoemark 1996) or who have an existing disability (Allgood 2005). In the United States of America in 2000 a music therapy program, also not named was implemented in a private therapeutic setting for families in which a child had autism spectrum disorder (Allgood 2005). Music was utilised because it was considered to be engaging and familiar and allowed for self-expression. A discussion considering parents perceptions of the program suggests music facilitated engagement between parents and children; assisted parents to gain a better understanding of their relationships with their children and enabled parents to learn about how music could be used to assist their child's development and growth (Allgood 2005).

In Australia, a music therapy component was implemented within *The Playgroup Program* not as an intervention, but prevention with families who had a child at risk of developmental delay (Shoemark 1996). Within the music therapy sessions in *The Playgroup Program*, parents, the targeted child and siblings interacted together in a relaxed environment and engaged in musical activities together. This encouraged positive shared experiences between them, elicited creative self-expression amongst family members and thereby facilitated the development of strengthened relationships (Shoemark 1996). Also in Australia, an *Interactive Family Music Therapy* program focusing on the relationships and interactions between family members is discussed by McIntyre (2009). This author describes the use of interactive music therapy as an effective intervention with family systems in which a child is experiencing mental illness. It is suggested in discussion of this program that music therapy can provide an opportunity for self expression and communication in families where a connection to one another has been eroded, thus enhancing relationships (McIntyre 2009).

A program in America targeting mothers and children from ethnically diverse backgrounds who had experienced poverty and marginalisation, is discussed by Lyons

(2000). In this program music was used to enhance group processes such as cooperation and cohesion. Music was seen as an effective way to achieve the aims of the group which included creating healthy parent-child interactions and contributing to the growth and learning of both parents and children (Lyons 2000).

As is apparent from this review, much of the existing literature discusses music-based programs with families who are considered to be in some way at risk. By contrast, Mackenzie and Hamlett (2005) contribute a differing perspective in their consideration of the applicability of music based activities with families considered to be “well”. These authors present a discussion of the *Music Together* program in Australia which used music to increase early attachment between parents and children and increase the availability of social supports to them (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005).

Although there exists a body of literature pertaining to the use of group music therapy with parents and children, minimal literature could be found discussing the use of art therapies with families, the evidence base for art therapy is considered to be limited in general (Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008; Kelly 2010). However, one such program is discussed by Proulx (2002), who has undertaken art therapy intervention with parent-child dyads with the aim of increasing their interactions and relationships. Proulx (2002) used experiential art activities within these groups to increase the emotional attachments and shared experiences between parents and infants.

Only one study could be found in the available literature discussing the use of music and art activities in combination (McDonald et. al 2009). This study evaluated the effectiveness of a group program for teenage mothers and their babies known as *Families and Schools Together [FAST] babies*. The use of music and art and craft activities within this program is briefly mentioned in participant feedback which suggested that these activities were one of the most enjoyable elements of the program (McDonald et. al 2009). Beyond this however, no more elaborate or descriptive information is provided about the music and art activities specifically.



### **Music, Art and Child Development**

Music and art-based activities are considered to play an important role in children's development and learning (Johnson 2007; Nicholson et. al 2008 and Standley, Walworth & Nguyen). Much of the literature pertaining to the use of music and arts activities across a wide range of settings is theoretically informed by developmental and psychological perspectives (McIntyre 2009; Nicholson et. al 2008 Oldfield & Bunce 2001; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003; Shoemark 1996) and as such several art and music programs aim to increase child developmental outcomes and enhance developmentally appropriate skill acquisition (Abad & Edwards 2004; Lyons 2000; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; Nicholson et. al 2008; Williams & Abad 2005).

In primary school-aged children for example a correlation has been established between music activities and memory and literacy development (Salmon 2010), and so too has the relationship between visual art experiences and the acquisition of literacy skills (Johnson 2007). Research undertaken by Standley, Walworth & Nguyen (2002) considered the impact of music on developmental outcomes in children up to two years of age. Comparing results between an experimental and a control group, researchers found that by attending four to seven music sessions those in the experimental group obtained significantly increased developmental skills scores (Standley, Walworth & Nguyen 2002, p. 13) relating to cognitive skill development, social skill development and motor skill development. In addition, Proulx (2002) discusses the use of art therapy with parents and children as a means to promote emotional development in children and enhance communication skills. Further, several studies which measured child engagement with developmentally stimulating music activities, suggest that engagement with these increased over time (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; Nicholson et. al 2008; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003). Thus, music and art activities have been found to be linked with social, emotional, cognitive and physical development (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; Nicholson et al. 2008; Proulx 2002; Standley, Walworth & Nguyen 2002).

### **Music and Art Therapies as a means of Expression and Communication**

Music and art-based activities are espoused as effective therapeutic techniques in work with children (Coholic, Loughheed & Lebreton 2009; Lefevre 2004). In particular, experiential and visual art-based activities have been considered efficacious in providing children in foster care with the opportunity to enhance self awareness and self esteem and provide a platform for increased communication (Coholic, Loughheed & Lebreton 2009). An evaluation of an art-therapy workshop in America, found that engaging with the arts allowed for increased self-expression through the art making process (Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008, p. 180). Similarly, in a discussion and summary of available literature, Kelly (2010) suggests that art-based activities are experienced as therapeutic because they allow for a mode of expression alternative to verbal therapies. Musical activities also, are considered to both enhance communication (McIntyre 2009) and provide a form of communication alternate to verbalisation (Lefevre 2004). Where children cannot verbalise, elaborate upon or describe their feelings and experiences these can instead be expressed through the use of creative arts and music and thus may have powerful therapeutic qualities (Coholic, Loughheed & Lebreton 2009; Lefevre 2004).

### **Music and Art Therapies as Group Programs**

In the main, family music therapy programs are generally implemented within a group context (Abad & Edwards 2004; Allgood 2005; Coholic, Loughheed & Lebreton 2009; Dickinson & Joe 2010; Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008; Lyons 2000; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; McDonald et. al 2009; Oldfield & Bunce 2001; Proulx 2002; Shoemark 1996; Williams & Abad 2005). It is theorised that the provision of programs within a group context assists to increase participants' experiences of social connectedness and decrease social isolation and exclusion (Dickinson & Joe 2010; Lyons 2000; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; McDonald et. al 2009; Shoemark 1996). A group context has been found to be beneficial for the infants and children attending group programs (Lyons 2000; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005) as the group structure provided an environment which was conducive to social development.

A central aim of the *Music Together* program was to assist families in developing supportive networks and decreasing their experience of social isolation (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005). Similarly, Shoemark (1996) discussed the implementation of music in a group setting in order to increase the formal and informal supports and networks made available to families through learning from each other. Lyons (2000) discussed specifically the use of social group work with marginalised families, highlighting the importance of groups for providing support, co-operation and mutuality among peers. Other programs utilising similar therapies though not using music specifically have also been implemented within a group context with the aim of decreasing the isolation and exclusion experienced by those attending (Dickinson & Joe 2010; McDonald et. al 2009). In an evaluation of a group work program with young mothers, participants identified that “being connected socially to other young mothers was the most important aspect of the group” (Dickinson & Joe 2009, p. 42). The young mothers enjoyed being together with peers in a similar situation and some formed friendships which extended and were maintained beyond the group (Dickinson & Joe 2009). In like vein, the development of friendships also ensued for many participants attending the *Music Together* program with attendees indicating that they had developed supportive relationships, which extended beyond their actual participation in the program (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005). Another group program targeting teenage mothers is discussed by McDonald et. al (2009) who considered the impact of attending a group program, the evaluation of which suggested that participants experienced increased social supports through participation in the group and meeting other mothers in similar situations to their own (McDonald et. al 2009).

The development of friendships and supportive relationships in group programs has contributed to participants’ enjoyment of them. Participant feedback from previous studies has also indicated that another important aspect of the success of group programs include the quality of facilitation (Dickinson & Joe 2010), the development of trust and rapport with facilitators (Williams & Abad 2005) and supportive therapeutic relationships (Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008).

While studies into group programs suggest that a group context can increase social connectedness and decrease social isolation and exclusion, a contrasting report is

provided by Mulcahy, Parry and Glover (2010) who examined the experiences of women attending informal grass roots mothers' groups in what the authors described as a middle class district of Canada. This study concluded that while women attending the groups did experience social connectedness, they were also likely to experience exclusion, judgement and gendered expectations attributed primarily to differences in parenting styles and beliefs (Mulcahy, Parry & Glover 2010).

### **Previous Evaluations**

Studies have been undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of art and music therapy programs discussed above using a variety of evaluative methodologies (Adams & Edwards 2004; Dickinson & Joe 2010; Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; McDonald et. al 2009; McIntyre 2009; Nicholson et. al 2008; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003; Proulx 2002; Shoemark 1996).

Studies evaluating the *FAST babies program* (McDonald et. al 2009) and *The Young Mothers Support Group* (Dickinson & Joe 2010) for example used mixed method designs to evaluate both the processes and outcomes of these programs. Other evaluations have utilised outcome methodologies alone to assess the extent to which programs such as *Sing & Grow* (Nicholson et. al 2008) and *The Music Together Program* (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005) met therapeutic aims. Others still have used qualitative methodologies such as in-depth case studies (Abad & Edwards 2004; McIntyre 2009; Proulx 2002; Shoemark 1996), case vignettes (Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003) and questionnaires (Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008) to consider the perceptions and experiences of participants relating to various elements of art and music therapy programs.

While methods of data collection and analysis have included, either separately or in combination, participant observation (Nicholson et. al 2008; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003; Standley, Walworth & Nguyen 2002) and verbal feedback during informal interviews (Adams & Edwards 2004; Dickinson & Joe 2010; McDonald et. al 2009; McIntyre 2009), the most commonly used method of data collection was questionnaires (Adams & Edwards 2004; Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; McDonald et. al 2009; Nicholson et. al 2008; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003; Shoemark 1996). What all studies had in common is that they evaluated

programs based upon researcher created categories and use deductive analytical methods, rather than considering the program attendees own perceptions and experiences as they themselves describe them

### **Gaps and Limitations in the Research**

There exists a growing body of literature reporting on and evaluating programs which utilise music-based therapies with children and families as a means of intervention and prevention (Abad & Edwards 2004; Abad & Williams 2007; Edwards 2011; Lyons 2000; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; McIntyre 2009; Nicholson et. al 2008; Oldfield & Adams 2001; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003; Shoemark 1996; Williams & Abad 2005). A significant gap in the existing research, however, has been identified as relating to the use of experiential creative art-based activities with families (Kelly 2009). This is an area of research which Feen-Calligan and Nevedal (2008) believe demands further evaluative attention. Additionally, save for McDonald et. al (2009) no literature could be found discussing in-depth the use of music and art therapies in combination, identifying a substantial limitation of available research. This study aimed to begin to address this absence from existing literature. As well as undertaking a study which considered the experiences of individuals who attended music and art programs with their children from their unique perspectives and perceptions rather than measuring researcher imposed experiences.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This study, essentially a formative program evaluation, had two aims. The first was, through undertaking an evaluation of the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program during early/initial stages of its implementation to provide feedback to facilitators as to how it was experienced by those attending it (DePoy & Gilson 2003 and Marlow & Boone 2005). The second aim was to contribute more information to the body of literature available on the topic of arts and music group programs for parents and their children and address the identified gap relating to the use of music and art activities in combination. In order to achieve these aims the study sought to answer the research question: "How are various aspects of *Dabble 'n' Dance* experienced by those who are currently or have previously attended it?"

To answer this question a qualitative methodology was utilised, and specifically a formative program evaluation was the most appropriate (Marlow & Boone 2005; Royse, Thyer & Padgett 2010). A formative evaluation considered the experiences of program participants (Marlow & Boone 2005) and was an appropriate methodology preceding the initial implementation of *Dabble 'n' Dance* (DePoy & Gilson 2003). A qualitative methodology allowed for the collection of data rich in description and detail from the perspectives of those attending the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program (D'Cruz & Jones 2004; Marlow & Boone 2005 and Royse, Thyer & Padgett 2010).

### Ethical Considerations:

In accordance with the requirements for conducting ethically sound research (Rubin & Babbie 2011) prior to beginning the research process ethical approval to do so was gained from Deakin University's Human Ethics Advisory Committee (see appendix A) on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011 (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). In this instance, particular consideration was given to the protection of participants' confidentiality and anonymity (Kreuger & Neuman 2006; Rubin & Babbie 2011). As the participants were being recruited from within a small group context, in which they were well known to both their peers and program facilitators it was imperative to emphasise a method of

recruitment that would, as much as was within the researcher's control, allow for voluntary and confidential participation (Kreuger & Neuman 2006).

### **Sampling and Recruitment:**

The formative evaluation of *Dabble 'n' Dance* considered how various aspects of the program were experienced by those who had previously or were currently attending it (Marlow & Boone 2005). The research population, is considered by Marlow and Boone (2005 p.136) to be a "theoretical construct and refers to people with certain characteristics that the researcher is trying to understand". In this instance the research population was constructed and defined as "all individuals who are currently or have previously attended at least one session of *Dabble 'n' Dance*". This allowed for the experiences and perceptions of all past and present program attendees to be considered (Marlow & Boone 2005). In order to conduct ethically appropriate research, participation was strictly voluntary and as such a form of purposive sampling known as voluntary sampling (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005) was utilised. Although the researcher aimed to study the entire population as defined above, participants were only recruited from within this population if they themselves volunteered during the recruitment process and in this sense sampling was purposive (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005).

Particular emphasis was placed upon observing the requirements of confidential, anonymous and voluntary participation during the recruitment phase of the research (Royse, Thyer & Padgett 2010; Rubin & Babbie 2011). The site of recruitment was the secondary school at which *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions were held. Support to undertake recruitment and other stages of the research at this site was provided by the Principal of the school (see appendix B). Representatives of Bluebird Foundation Inc. also provided support to conduct the research, this included acknowledgement of the requirements of confidential participation, the protection of participant's privacy and the intellectual property rights of the research (see appendix C).

Immediately after ethical approval was gained to undertake the study, contact was made with the *Dabble 'n' Dance* facilitator and approval gained for the researcher to attend a *Dabble 'n' Dance* session and begin recruiting participants (see appendix D).

The researcher attended a *Dabble 'n' Dance* session on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and presented a five minute discussion outlining the evaluative study of *Dabble 'n' Dance* detailing what participation in the study would involve, how privacy and confidentiality would be protected as well as the voluntary nature of participation. All individuals present during this discussion were provided with a flyer (see appendix E) which included an outline of the research, an invitation to participate in the study and the researcher's name and e-mail address. Participants were invited to contact the researcher via e-mail in order to volunteer in the study. It was considered that by recruiting in this way, individuals present would not be required to volunteer as participants in front of either their peers or program facilitators, thus protecting their privacy and alleviating any outward pressure they may have felt to participate (Kreuger & Neuman 2006). However this method of recruitment also contained some uncertainty given that potential participants were likely to be busy after the introductory discussion by the researcher and so may not have time to make contact with her. In addition to this, only three out of a potential eight individuals were present at *Dabble 'n' Dance* on the day when the introductory discussion took place. Consequently, flyers were left for distribution with a staff member at the facility who had regular contact with potential participants.

This method of recruitment proved troublesome as after a period of some weeks the researcher had not been contacted by any potential participants. An amendment was therefore put forward to the Deakin University Human Ethics Advisory Committee (see appendix F) who provided approval for a change to the method of recruitment (see appendix G). The researcher again attended a *Dabble 'n' Dance* session on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2011, but this time at the end of the program session, and handed all who were present a tick box sheet (see appendix H). This sheet allowed for individuals to indicate that they either "yes" wanted to be contacted by the researcher to obtain further information about participating in the study, or "no" they did not wish to be contacted. A section on this sheet was available for individuals to provide an e-mail address or telephone number so they could be contacted by the researcher. These sheets were then collected by the researcher from all individuals. This allowed for every individual present to confidentially opt into or decline participation in the study without any



person other than the researcher knowing who had volunteered. This recruitment method was far more appropriate as it allowed for participants to respond anonymously (Krueger & Neuman 2006) and placed the impetus for making contact with those who wished to be involved in the hands of the researcher. Each individual present, irrespective of their desire to participate, was provided with a plain language statement (“PLS”) which set out the rationale for the study and the processes involved in participation (see Appendix I). The PLS also set out how participants’ confidentiality would be protected, and what needed to be done should a participant wish to withdraw from involvement.

Individuals who returned a sheet with a ticked “yes” were contacted by the researcher via telephone or e-mail and a date, time and location was arranged for an interview to take place. Before the interview commenced both signed and verbal consent was gained from participants.

### **Participants**

In total four participants, of the potential eight who were involved at the time in *Dabble ‘n’ Dance*, volunteered to take part in the evaluative study. All participants were female aged between 18 and 35 years. All participants had attended at least one session of *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* with their child/children, and all were engaged in some form of education while attending *Dabble ‘n’ Dance*. Specific demographic data pertaining to participants’ and their children were purposefully excluded. Participants were only considered to have volunteered to take part in the research after their verbal and signed consent had been obtained.

### **Data collection**

In order to answer the research question in depth descriptive data was gathered relating to participants’ experiences of *‘Dabble n Dance’* sessions. To obtain this descriptive data the four participants were interviewed (Marlow & Boone 2005; Esterberg 2002; Royse, Thyer & Padgett 2010; D’Cruz & Jones 2004). The use of alternative data collection methods was considered, including specifically participant observation (Esterberg 2002; Marlow & Boone 2005) and this was listed as a possible data collection method in the PLS provided to participants. Participant observation did

not occur however as it was decided that this was not the most appropriate method to obtain data which discussed participant's individual experiences (Esterberg 2002). Instead, one on one interviews were undertaken to give individual voice to each of the research participants. The interviews allowed for in depth exploration of how *Dabble 'n' Dance* was experienced, and enabled the researcher to consider the views and perspectives of participants from within their own context (Esterberg 2002; Marlow & Boone 2005).

Prior to the interviews being conducted the researcher created a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix J) incorporating general themes (Esterberg 2002; D'Cruz & Jones 2004). This semi-structured interview schedule provided flexibility enabling elaboration and exploration into different topic areas and themes as they arose throughout the interview (Royse, Thyer & Padgett 2010; Marlow & Boone 2005). A conversational interview style was adopted in which participants were considered as partners in the interview and research process, directing the discussion and leading the interview (Rubin & Rubin 1995). Within this partnership the researcher used probing to gain a more in depth and explanatory understanding of participant's experiences (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005; Rubin & Rubin 1995). A grounded theory approach was utilised and enabled the exploration of new themes as they arose during interviews as well as incorporating new themes that had emerged from previous interviews (Charmaz 2006).

With the participants' consent, these interviews were voice recorded using audiotapes; notes were also taken throughout the interview providing support to the researcher in pursuing lines of questioning and probing for elaboration and explanation (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005; Royse, Thyer & Padgett 2010).

During recruitment informal conversations with potential participants indicated that they would prefer to attend interviews that were conducted at the site of *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions for ease of participation. This suggestion was adopted by the researcher and all four interviews were undertaken at this site. The length of interviews ranged from twenty minutes to forty five minutes and took place during July 2011. A limiting factor for the length of some interviews included the time

constraints participants were under because of other school/educational commitments.

### **Data analysis**

The voice recordings of each interview were transcribed verbatim by the researcher into a word document. Interview transcription allowed for a precise and accurate analysis of the data (Esterberg 2002; Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005) and assisted in particular with the initial coding phase of data analysis (Charmaz 2006). At the end of each interview, participants were asked if they would like to receive a copy of their interview transcripts via e-mail. Two out of four of the participants indicated that they would like to receive such a transcript, which was subsequently forwarded with the request that they respond to the researcher within two weeks if they requested any changes be made to the transcript. Neither of the two participants responded requesting any changes be made to their transcript during their respective two week periods. Each of the four transcripts was de-identified and any names removed from the data.

The transcribed interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, and specifically grounded theory methods (Charmaz 2006; Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). An inductive analytical method involved several steps of data analysis which loosely followed the guidelines for grounded theory analysis described by Charmaz (2006). This method of data analysis allowed for the development of themes as they emerged from within the data, rather than analysing data based on researcher imposed categories and ideas (Charmaz 2006; Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). In the initial stages of data analysis full interview transcripts were coded line by line (Charmaz 2006) using open coding (Esterberg 2002). Focussed coding was then undertaken to identify common themes and analyse data within these themes (Charmaz 2006; Esterberg 2002; Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). Axial coding was then undertaken to identify links between each theme, category and sub-category identified within data sets (Charmaz 2006; Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). Data analysis began during the data collection stage and emerging themes were explored within interviews (Charmaz 2006). Themes were then finalised based on axial coding procedures.

Pseudonyms selected by the researcher were given to each data set (Esterberg 2002) to further reduce the likelihood that participants' identities would become known, and in the chapters which follow these pseudonyms are used whenever participant quotes have been included.

### **Chapter summary**

A formative evaluation of *Dabble 'n' Dance* was undertaken using qualitative research methodologies. One-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted and data collected from four participants utilising a semi-structured interview schedule. Inductive analytical methods (D'Cruz & Jones 2004) and specifically grounded theory methods (Charmaz 2006) were utilised to identify central prominent themes emerging from the data. These themes assisted to answer the research question "How are various aspects of the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program experienced by those who attend it?" Findings and themes which answer this question are discussed below.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the central themes which were identified using thematic analysis, specifically grounded theory analytical techniques (Charmaz 2006) from participant interviews. These themes provide insight into the research question “How are various aspects of the *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* program experienced by those who attend it?” Sub-headings used throughout this chapter represent each of these themes and a description of each theme is provided, reflecting the experiences and perceptions of participants. Participant quotes are provided throughout, the names used on these quotes are pseudonyms chosen by the researcher (Esterberg 2002). In addition, the number of children and gender of children attributed to each participant throughout the findings are not accurate these too were chosen by the researcher.

### Experiencing Passionate Facilitation

All of the participants expressed the view that the facilitators of *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* had a significant effect on their positive experiences of the program, unanimously identifying their impact as one of the most enjoyable aspects.

Participants described a positive program “vibe” (Aurelia and Sasha) attributed to facilitators’ expressions of chirpiness and happiness, evidenced in their “bubbly personalities” (Lucy). The professionalism of facilitators was also appreciated by participants who explained that facilitators knew what they were doing and did it well, which helped the program to run smoothly. Facilitators’ expertise enabled them to adapt the program as they needed to, allowing for the inclusion of all children irrespective of mood, preference or behaviours.

“um I think Bron and Neisha do a great job...they show that they’re happy about doing the program”. (Rosie)

“They know what they’ve gotta do and they know how to talk to the kids”.  
(Lucy)

Participants also identified that *Dabble 'n' Dance* was more than just a job to facilitators and the program was something they were passionate about and vested in.

“It’s really professional but then it’s really like you don’t walk in and feel like oh yeah this is like a business or volunteer thing, like they put everything into it”.

(Rosie)

Lucy compared *Dabble 'n' Dance* to another music program she had attended, explaining that what made *Dabble 'n' Dance* a better experience was the warmth and inclusiveness of facilitators. The experience of inclusive facilitation was reiterated by all participants who described facilitators as welcoming and including of every person attending *Dabble 'n' Dance*.

The development of supportive and meaningful relationships was identified as being important to the welcoming atmosphere created by facilitators. Participants and their children were treated as individuals by facilitators who were open and transparent in sharing information about their own lives. This contributed to participants and their children feeling they were “special” (Lucy) and “a part of something” (Aurelia).

“I think that cause we sort of have that connection with Bron and Neisha now, that when someone else steps in, we’re just like mmm this is a bit bizarre, like it’s, it’s different”. (Rosie)

Facilitators’ obvious passion for their roles was recognised by participants who identified this as impacting upon their own enthusiasm and engagement in the program. All participants experienced facilitators’ positivity and happiness as infectious, influencing their and their children’s own experience of enjoyment and happiness while at *Dabble 'n' Dance*.

“She’s [Program facilitator] just friendly, like she’s always smiling...she just looks really happy all the time and it’s a good thing to have, like that quality...cause if they’re happy, they make everyone else feel happy”. (Sasha)

### **Engaging with and Enjoying Art and Music**

The art and music activities used in *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions were considered by participants to be in themselves uniquely engaging and interesting. All of the participants identified the art and music as “enjoyable” for both them and their children. All commented that their children’s joy was evident through their level of engagement and attentiveness. Participants believed that their children sat and listened only because of their interest in the activities, and described that they continued to attend *Dabble 'n' Dance* because of their children’s attentiveness and if this was not as evident they would no longer attend. The use of engaging songs and puppetry and various new and exciting art activities all contributed to the engaging elements of the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program. Participants described that attending the program provided their children with an opportunity for self expression and creativity.

“It’s good for my [children] to learn a way of expressing themselves that they can’t be told is right and wrong”. (Aurelia)

Art and Music activities in combination were experienced as enjoyable, exciting and engaging. Participants discussed that it was a combination of these two mediums of activity that were beneficial. All participants felt that combining music and art activities during sessions meant that children were more engaged and interested than if only one medium was used in isolation. Participants discussed that art activities were varied each week and that there were several activities to choose from, which was stimulating for the children and allowed children to exercise choice and creativity. Participants described the excitement their children displayed each week as a new activity was presented to them.

“It’s exciting, to see what they’re actually doing on that week”. (Rosie)

Having only the music or the arts in isolation was felt to be less beneficial for participants and their children. Sasha compared *Dabble 'n' Dance* to a different program she had attended which used only music and she described this as “boring” because it did not use a variety of activities that were interesting to everyone. Participants discussed the importance of inclusion - because both music and art activities were used if a child had a preference for one over the other they were not

excluded. Everyone had a chance at some time in the session to be involved in something they enjoyed maintaining children's focus and enthusiasm.

"It's good how they have the music side and the arts side...its good they can suit like every child cause one might not like the music but they like painting so they still get to enjoy it, yeah, it's really good". (Sasha)

### **Learning and Growing Together Through Music and Art**

A combination of activities which targeted differing areas of children's development and learning were also considered beneficial by all participants.

All identified witnessing their children growing, learning and developing both while at *Dabble 'n' Dance* and in the home environment as a result of *Dabble 'n' Dance*, as a positive and beneficial aspect of the program. They discussed how the music and art activities at *Dabble 'n' Dance* enhanced their children's social, physical and cognitive development and lead to skill acquisition. *Dabble 'n' Dance* was considered a beneficial activity because it provided a fun and enjoyable way for children to learn through music and art.

"another way of learning, but a fun way for them to learn...coming here's more beneficial than just going to a park and letting them play". (Rosie)

Cognitive development was discussed by participants as resulting from songs that lead to an increase in learning and memory. They described observing their children learning animal names, remembering songs and actions, and using words at home that they had heard in songs at *Dabble 'n' Dance*. Participants identified physical skill acquisition, including motor skills, arising from art activities such as drawing and painting and musical activities including puppetry and hand clapping songs.

"she's learnt how to use her hands to do it, and to be able to hold a brush and hold other stuff". (Sasha)

"I think it's really good cause it incorporates motor skills with music". (Aurelia)

Social learning and the acquisition of social skills was also considered beneficial by participants, who identified that their children were interacting with other children and learning to share, to be friendly and to co-operate. The use of different music and



songs for specific purposes taught the children such social skills as when it was time to sit in a circle, when it was time to be quiet, and when it was time sing and dance. Participants discussed observing their children remember and develop these skills over time, so that now when a song is played they immediately know the behaviour required of them.

Participants also emphasised that *Dabble 'n' Dance* provided their children with an opportunity for self expression and creativity. This was considered important by Rosie because she felt it gave her daughter an opportunity to express herself in a way that she could not be told was right or wrong. Similarly, Aurelia explained that art activities were important for her son because (she believed) he needed to think about what he was producing and was able to express himself through the production of art.

The program provided an opportunity for parents to learn alongside their children. Participants described positively the opportunity for them to learn not only about music and arts in the home, but also to learn more about their children. They described having more information about their children's developmental achievements and capabilities through the experience of *Dabble 'n' Dance*, and about observing the children learn through music and art activities. Participants described feeling proud as they watched their children, grow, learn and achieve.

“It [Dabble 'n' Dance] just makes me more confident and yeah able to express myself a bit better, and see that, see they make me proud cause, see what they're doing and what they're making”. (Lucy)

### **Providing Time**

Having a lack of time to spend with their children was common among participants. Participants described having multiple demands on their time including education, employment and familial obligations. The children of these four participants had all been in day care from a young age for a minimum of three days per week. Attending *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions was considered to reduce some of this separation and to provide time, where it was otherwise lacking. They felt that *Dabble 'n' Dance* -

“breaks it [the day] up so that it’s not just stressing, you know, not just stressing about schooling and like about the kids being in day care away from me” (Rosie).

“It just gives me some more time, like to spend with her together” (Aurelia).

All of the participants experienced *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* as an accessible, weekly routine activity allowing for the provision of time with their children, something they looked forward to and planned for. Because *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* sessions were held at the school participants could easily attend and this was identified as important to them.

“I love that every week I come here, it’s at school so I don’t have to drive anywhere, I don’t have to do anything, it’s here and the music really incorporates you” (Sasha)

### **Interacting Together**

Not only did *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* allow participants and their children time together but, because of the interactive nature of the art and music activities provided, this was experienced as quality and meaningful time. The interactive nature of the activities incorporated the children and parents together, enhancing the “bond” between them. For example, Sasha began describing that one of her younger children had difficulty with art activities but explained, however, that her child’s need for assistance meant she (Sasha) was required to become involved to help, leading to a shared experience between them. Participants described that all of the activities including art and craft, painting, singing and dancing required that parents and children be involved together. Parents described this interaction as being different to what they would usually do at home - as a different kind of togetherness.

“We spend all day together when she’s not at daycare but she’s just not with me, with me”. (Lucy)

This togetherness was experienced and described in different ways by the various participants. For some, bonding ensued from sharing in activities, creations and achievements, providing memories and a common ground. For others, bonding was attributed to physical closeness and connection, including hugging, children sitting on their parents’ laps for songs, helping to hold paint brushes and singing and dancing together.

“cause we’re here we have cuddles here, we paint here, we listen to music together here and she sits on my lap here”. (Aurelia)

All participants expressed feelings of pride when they were able to engage with their children and share in their creativity. The experience of being together was considered by participants to be a central element of *Dabble ‘n’ Dance*, contributing to the overall enjoyment and benefit of the sessions.

### **Fitting into a Group**

The group context of *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* session delivery was described by three out of four of the participants to at times be a negative experience for them. The negative aspects of attending the group were attributed to participants’ relationships within *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* and their experiences outside of this group. However, participants acknowledged that the *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* group and group structure were not in themselves negative.

“There’s been a few hiccups, but that’s like separate...the people that come here, they’re students as well, so sometimes that gets transferred into this a little bit”. (Sasha)

“It’s nothing to do with *Dabble ‘n’ Dance*, I’ve just had some issues at the school”. (Aurelia)

The one participant who did not comment on the group context did not regularly attend at the school, unlike the other three for whom the experience of attending a group program was influenced by the broader school context in which they were located. Participants’ identities and relationships within the group had been constructed within the wider school setting and these pre-existing relationships were at times brought into the group setting impacting on how *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* was experienced.

Participants’ identities and experiences in the group were also associated with their roles as parents and their identification with and commitment to their individual notions of what constituted appropriate parenting. Participants expressed feeling pressure when their children did not behave as they were expected to do, or when as parents they made decisions regarding their children with which others did not

necessarily agree. Three out of four participants reported at times feeling judged by others within the group and this was principally as a result of differences in personality, and in parenting styles and expectations.

“It’s hard to kind of you know, like all the other kids are behaving and then you’ve got your child and it kind of distracts a little bit” (Rosie)

“I dunno, I feel that they look down on me a bit sometimes”. (Lucy)

### **A Sense of Belonging**

Although participants identified that the group context of *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* was at times negative for them, they all identified a sense of belonging at *Dabble ‘n’ Dance*. Participants reported feeling comfortable to attend *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* when they would not attend other programs, and discussed the safe and supportive environment created at *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* at which children could express themselves freely and parents could be themselves and feel welcomed and supported. This sense of belonging was attributed to the warmth and inclusiveness of facilitators and the fun and enjoyable interactive nature of art and music.

### **Conclusion**

In short, many of the themes discussed above contributed to this overall sense of belonging, of feeling special and a part of something, which participants in *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* experienced. This was aptly summarised by [Rosie] -

“It’s a good environment, it’s nice and cosy and homely and yeah...and welcoming”. (Rosie)

A discussion of these findings is presented in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

### Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings from data gained through participant interviews. A comparison of these findings in relation to current literature relevant to the research topic is discussed. The implications of the findings and recommendations are presented as they relate both specifically to the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program and more broadly to future programs which utilise music and/or art therapies with parents and children in a group context. The limitations of the study are then considered along with a discussion of how each of the aforementioned sections, impact upon and provide an impetus for, future research studies.

### Summary of Major Findings

As presented more fully in the preceding chapter, the findings from this study suggest that for these four participants *Dabble 'n' Dance* was experienced overwhelmingly positively and was an enjoyable and exciting program to attend. Participants attributed their positive experiences to the skills of the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program facilitators, the engaging and exciting nature of music and art activities in combination, and the opportunity to spend increased time and to interact meaningfully with their children. For these participants music and art activities were considered to aid in their children's cognitive, physical and social development and learning, as well as enhancing the bond between parents and their children. Although the group context of *Dabble 'n' Dance* was at times a negative experience for program attendance and enjoyment this was attributed to the high school context of *Dabble 'n' Dance* rather than the sessions themselves. Overall participants developed a sense of belonging within *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions and found that the setting of sessions allowed for ease of access. No changes in the program were recommended by participants, save for one participant only who believed sessions could go for longer.

### **Comparison to Existing literature**

The findings from this study support the assertions of previous research that interactive family music therapy may enhance the meaningful interactions between parents and their children and therefore contribute to strengthening these relationships (Abad & Edwards 2004; Edwards 2011; Lyons 2000; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; Nicholson et. al 2008; Oldfield & Bunce 2001; Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003). Similarly, the findings also support the limited body of research which suggests that art therapy, specifically engaging in experiential art activities including painting and drawing, can increase emotional development and attachment between parents and children (Proulx 2002).

The observations of these four participants of their own children's engagement with and attentiveness to music and art activities, contributes to the argument that this form of therapeutic intervention can be particularly engaging (Lyons 2000; Shoemark 1996). Here participants reported that music and art activities were fun and enjoyable for both parents and their children and contributed to a relaxed and welcoming environment, supporting the earlier findings of Shoemark (1996), McIntyre (2009) and McDonald et. al (2009). The importance of an appropriate space for music therapy intervention was identified by Williams and Abad (2005) and this study supports these previous findings that the environment in which programs are held need be considered. Similarly, as with earlier research findings, participants in this study felt that participation in music and creative art therapies in particular were an effective means for children's creative self-expression (Coholic, Loughheed & Lebreton 2009; Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008; Kelly 2010; Lefevre 2004; McIntyre 2009; Proulx 2002; Shoemark 1996).

The use of art and music activities in *Dabble 'n' Dance* was experienced as promoting child development, an outcome which has been an objective of other music therapy programs (Abad & Edwards 2004; Lyons 2000; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; Nicholson et. al 2008; Standley, Walworth & Nguyen 2009). Participants in this study felt that music and art activities may enhance children's learning in relation to such areas of development as cognition (as was concluded by Standley, Walworth & Nguyen 2007) including memory and thinking (Johnson 2007; Salmon 2010), social learning and

development (Standley, Walworth & Nguyen 2007; Nicholson et. al 2008), the development of motor skills (Standley, Walworth & Nguyen 2009) through the acquisition of art and instrumental skills (Proulx 2002), and emotional growth through the development of parent-child interactions and ensuing bonding (Proulx 2002).

The findings here also contribute to and affirm what is less evident in the considered literature that the experience of quality and passionate facilitation (Dickinson & Joe 2010), along with the development of positive therapeutic relationships (Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008) and trust and rapport with facilitators (Williams & Abad 2005) contributes to positive experiences within group based programs and continued program attendance (Williams & Abad 2005). This was an especially important factor for the participants in the current study.

However, regarding the experiences of attending group-based programs, the conclusions drawn from this study are contradictory to what is predominantly reported in the literature. The existing research suggests that attending a program in a group context can assist in the development of friendships (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; Dickinson & Joe 2010), in reducing experiences of isolation and social exclusion (McDonald et. al 2009), in assisting to develop supportive informal networks (Shoemark 1996) and in developing supportive relationships with peers (Lyons 2000). In contrast, for three out of four of these participants the group context of *Dabble 'n' Dance* was at times experienced negatively due variously to the high school context and differences amongst program attendees. The findings here are perhaps more reflective of research conducted by Mulcahy et. al (2010) whose study of informal mothers groups found that those mothers variously experienced social exclusion from as well as inclusion in the groups to which they were affiliated. Mulcahy et. al (2010) concluded that mothers' experiences of exclusion were often related to differences in mothering style and personality, particularly to the judgements both felt and made by mothers holding different or minority beliefs about appropriate discipline and upbringing of children. The findings from the current study reflect these experiences.

### **Implications and recommendations for *Dabble 'n' Dance* program facilitators**

Analysis of the feedback provided by these four participants suggests that the processes involved in the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program were experienced overwhelmingly positively.

In particular the passion and exuberance of program facilitators had a significant impact on participant's engagement in and enjoyment of *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions. The development of friendly, mutual and meaningful relationships was also considered beneficial. It may therefore be considered beneficial to continue facilitation in this way with current facilitators where possible. Where new facilitators are required, their development of similar relationships with group participants would appear to be critical.

The structure of *Dabble 'n' Dance* and its program aims and objectives are similar to other group family music therapy programs reported to be currently operating in Australia, including the *Sing and Grow* program (Abad & Edwards 2004; Nicholson, et. al 2008) and *The Music Together* program (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005). Where *Dabble 'n' Dance* differs significantly is in the use of creative and visual art therapeutic activities in combination with music. Excepting research conducted by McDonald et. al (2009), a review of the literature did not elicit reports of any other programs which explicitly described the utilisation of these activities in combination, suggesting that *Dabble 'n' Dance* is a unique program. This unique feature was appreciated by these four participants for whom the combination of art and music activities was identified as an important element of their enjoyment of the program. It is recommended therefore that this combination of activities be continued.

The combination of music and art provided variety and excitement which may be considered a crucial aspect of children's engagement and enjoyment in *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions and the benefits which ensue from this.

Although the findings suggested that the school context of *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions was a negative factor for these participants, delivering the sessions within a school context also allowed for ease of participant access and so was a significant contributing factor to attendance. The convenient time and location of sessions provided a socially



inclusive experience for participants who otherwise could not access similar programs because of their busy schedules. Continuing to deliver programs in this context in the future is important in order to ensure access to what is considered to be a worthwhile experience that all participants indicated they hope to engage with in the future. Providing sessions on a day and at a time during school terms which is accessible for the majority of students would therefore continue to be beneficial in the future.

*Dabble 'n' Dance* provided an opportunity for these four participants, all of whom were experiencing competing demands on their time and identified as time-poor, to interact meaningfully with their children, to engage with art and music and to utilise these mediums as a means of growing and developing together. Based on feedback from these four participants, *Dabble 'n' Dance* has thus far been an appreciated and special experience.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Future Art and Music Therapy Programs**

The findings from this study suggest that music and art activities are engaging, exciting and enjoyable for the children who undertake them. In particular, the use of these activities together and the use of varying and changing activities is an important element of maintaining attentiveness. The exciting nature of art and music may assist to engage children with activities which are educative and enhance learning and growth, therefore contributing to positive developmental outcomes, a method of engagement which may be beneficial when implemented in other areas. For these participants, ease of access to *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions was an important contributing factor to attendance. Future programs may benefit from considering the ease of access and availability of such programs to young parents, particularly mothers who are juggling multiple educational, employment and familial demands as well as parenthood. As the nature and structure of Australian families continues to change (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005) and women's involvement in the workforce continues to increase (Sanson & Wise 2000) the assistance to access programs such as *Dabble 'n' Dance* may become increasingly important.

Additionally, for these participants sharing in art and music activities with their children enhanced their interaction and contributed to their opportunity to bond,

arguably therefore strengthening parent-child relationships. This is also particularly relevant considering the changes in Australian families as the time available for parents to interact with their children becomes increasingly less (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005). Programs similar to *Dabble 'n' Dance* may become increasingly relevant to a range of Australian families (Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005), irrespective of their definition as “marginalised” (Nicholson et. al 2008) or not.

Of note, feedback from these participants indicates that the implementation of a program in a group context does not necessarily lead to the development of friendships and supportive relationships, though other research reached a differing conclusion (Dickinson & Joe 2010; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005 and McDonald et. al 2009). Although the program was experienced as supportive and predominantly participants experienced a sense of belonging, the group context was experienced as negative at times. Whilst it has been previously found that providing a context in which peers who share common experiences or similar attributes may lead to the development of friendships and increase social networks (Dickinson & Joe 2010; Lyons 2000; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005 and McDonald et. al 2009), for these participants this was not the case. Conversely, in this instance the shared circumstance of motherhood could be considered as a contributing factor for experiences of judgement and exclusion. Further, for this group of participants, their identities and relationships had been formulated in the informal setting of a secondary school. Perhaps, therefore, social cohesion is more opportune in a formal group than an informal group, accounting for the different experiences of individuals attending *Dabble 'n' Dance* who had developed friendships in an informal setting, compared to those in other groups who have developed friendships in a formalised setting (Dickinson & Joe 2010; Lyons 2000; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005). Where these findings may hold relevance for the development of future programs is the caution that shared common experiences amongst participants' does not necessarily lead to the development of cohesive and positive relationships. Facilitators need to be aware of the potential development of tenuous relationships amongst any group, and to monitor and be aware of these, perhaps especially in a longer term program such as *Dabble 'n' Dance*.

The validity and generalisability of these assertions are somewhat limited however, based on several limitations to the research and therefore the applicability of its findings (D’Cruz & Jones 2004; Marlow & Boone 2005). The limitations to these findings and their implications, as well as the need for future research to further explore, explain and describe them, are now discussed.

### **Limitations of the research**

There were several limitations identified in relation to the current study. In particular, as a result of the small sample size of only four participants, as approximately only half of *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* attendees participated in the research, and because *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* is an open group with changing attendance, the findings may not accurately represent or reflect the experiences of parents in general, and are therefore not generalisable to the wider population (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). It is acknowledged however that the study did not aim to produce generalisable results but rather to gather in-depth information pertaining to individual experiences (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005; Marlow & Boone 2005). Further however, the small sample size and use of single interviews mean that it is not possible to determine if theoretical data saturation did occur, although this would seem unlikely (Charmaz 2007). Although the themes and experiences were accurate for these four participants, other group members whose experiences were not provided may well have experienced the group differently, and therefore this study’s findings do not necessarily reflect the overall experiences of individuals who have previously or do currently attend *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* sessions (D’Cruz & Jones 2004). Additionally, as a result of the time restraints on some participants who were usually attending interviews in between classes, some questions and emerging themes could not be explored to any great depth or length (Marlow and Boone 2005). Ideally, a larger sample size and greater number of participants, and the opportunity for more in-depth discussions in some interviews, could have provided more insight into the experiences of those attending the *Dabble ‘n’ Dance* program (Esterberg 2002; Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005 and Marlow & Boone 2005).

Thus, many of the findings are tentative and although they support the literature and may offer new insights are by no means conclusive. The findings are based upon the

experiences, perceptions and beliefs of participants and are not based upon objective or measurable outcomes. In relation to the use of art- and music-based activities as a means to enhance child development, this limitation is especially pertinent. There is no measurable evidence to suggest that enhanced development ensued from attending *Dabble 'n' Dance* or that this was an outcome of the program alone, though this was clearly a perception held by the parents who participated in this study.

### **Future research**

This study was not an outcome evaluation, rather it was undertaken to gain in-depth and descriptive data exploring how the processes of *Dabble 'n' Dance* were experienced during its early stages of implementation (Marlow & Boone 2005; Royse, Thyer & Padgett 2010). The feedback provided by four participants who attend *Dabble 'n' Dance* sessions provides some incidental insight, however, into the extent to which the program is meeting its stated aims. The use of an inductive research methodology (Charmaz 2006) obtained information from participants relating to and reflecting program aims without the explicit or deliberate questioning of these topics. This study provides an introduction based on the beliefs of participants and therefore suggests the undertaking of a larger scale outcome evaluation of the *Dabble 'n' Dance* program, in order to consider more fully the extent to which the program meets its aims (DePoy & Gilson 2003; Royse, Thyer & Padgett 2010).

This study makes a contribution to what is considered a lack of research into the effectiveness and use of art therapy (Kelly 2010; Feen-Calligan & Nevedal 2008), and specifically art therapy with children and families. The study further suggests that the use of music and art activities in combination may be valuable for group members. Although the evaluation of this unique aspect of *Dabble 'n' Dance* is pertinent, the methodological flaws of a small sample size and findings which cannot be generalised mean these findings are tentative (D'Cruz & Jones 2004). Further research into group programs which utilise art and music activities in combination with parents and their children would be required to shed more light on this interesting and developing topic. Further research is also required to explore the situations in which the group context of program delivery is or is not experienced positively or beneficially.

Much of the information relating to participant's personal and demographic data was purposefully excluded from this study. This was to protect the confidentiality and privacy of participants who may be easily identifiable given the small sample size from which they are participating. In further research and with suitable privacy protections, such data may prove useful to provide a more contextual understanding of participant's experiences.

## **Conclusion**

Findings from this study support the notion that music and art therapy programs may have a range of benefits for parents and children who attend them together (Abad & Edwards 2004; Abad & Edwards 2007; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; Nicholson et. al 2008 and Proulx 2002). What is particularly pertinent about the current study is the extent to which the utilisation of inductive analytical techniques elicited similar results to other evaluations which have utilised deductive analytical methods and research designs (Abad & Edwards 2004; Mackenzie & Hamlett 2005; Nicholson et. al 2008; Oldfield & Bunce 2001 and Oldfield, Adams & Bunce 2003). This suggests that participants own experiences and perceptions of *Dabble 'n' Dance* identify the extent to which the program is potentially meeting its aims. Certainly these four parents perceived that participation in *Dabble 'n' Dance* had important social, relational and cognitive value for themselves and for their children. Whilst a larger more rigorous study would be useful to confirm whether such views are generalisable to the population at large as well as considering the extent to which the program is meeting its aims, the preliminary conclusion which can be drawn is that *Dabble 'n' Dance* is a valued program whose continuation for parents and children is important.

As Lucy concluded –

“From a parents perspective you might see some proudness, like of their art..., even their participation like just being able to sit in the circle and sing the songs or you know use the puppets, um that's a good feeling, to see, you know reflect on your own children, you know that they're actually learning and growing” (Lucy).

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A** - Ethics Committee Approval to Undertake Research

**APPENDIX B** - Letter of Support to Undertake Research from school Principal

**APPENDIX C** - Letter of support from Bluebird Foundation Inc.

**APPENDIX D** - E-mail from *Dabble 'n' Dance* facilitators

**APPENDIX E** - Information flyer

**APPENDIX F** - Application to Ethics Committee for amendment to recruiting strategy

**APPENDIX G** - Approval from Ethics Committee to change method of recruitment

**APPENDIX H** - Tick-box sheet

**APPENDIX I** - Plain Language Statement and Consent Form

**APPENDIX J** - Outline of Interview

## APPENDIX A

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Human Ethics Advisory Group – Faculty of Health,  
Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences

221 Burwood Highway,  
Burwood Victoria 3125 Australia  
Telephone +61 3 2517174  
Facsimile +61 3 9251 7425  
hbsethic@deakin.edu.au



## Memorandum

To	Dr Sophie Goldingay School of Health and Social Development	Date	11 May, 2011
From	Secretary – HEAG-H Faculty of Health		
Subject	HEAG-H 36 _2011: Formative evaluation of the Dabble n Dance Program		

**Approval has been given for Dr Sophie Goldingay, School of Health and Social Development, to undertake this project for a period of 1 year from 11 May 2011, with the following condition**

**Sampling may only commence once support from Principal received**

The approval given by the Deakin University HEAG - H is given only for the project and for the period as stated in the approval. It is your responsibility to contact the Secretary immediately should any of the following occur:

- Serious or unexpected adverse effects on the participants
- Any proposed changes in the protocol, including extensions of time
- Any events which might affect the continuing ethical acceptability of the project
- The project is discontinued before the expected date of completion
- Modifications that have been requested by other Human Research Ethics Committees

In addition you will be required to report on the progress of your project at least once every year and at the conclusion of the project. Failure to report as required will result in suspension of your approval to proceed with the project.

HEAG-H may need to audit this project as part of the requirements for monitoring set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). An Annual Project Report Form can be found at <http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/admin/ethics/human/forms/> which you will be required to complete in relation to this research. This should be completed and returned to the Administrative Officer to the HEAG-H, Dean's office, Faculty of Health, Burwood campus by **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2011** and when the project is completed.

Good luck with the project!

## APPENDIX B



Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011

'Dabble n Dance' is a music and arts based program that operates in the Young Parents Access Program facilities at Corio Bay Senior College. 'Dabble n Dance' is run by partner agencies including the Bluebird Foundation Inc. and the Young Parents Access Program. Participants in the 'Dabble n Dance' program are students at Corio Bay Senior College.

A formative evaluation of the 'Dabble n Dance' program is being undertaken by Deakin University, Bachelor of Social Work (Honours ) student, Sarah Baudinette.

The evaluation of 'Dabble n Dance' will involve participant interviews and may involve some observation of 'Dabble n Dance' sessions. This observation will occur at Corio Bay Senior College in the Young Parents Access Program facilities. Prior to the researcher attending a 'Dabble n Dance' session to undertake observation permission to attend will be obtained from 'Dabble n Dance' facilitators. Observation may take place at any time between the period 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011 and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011(Term two of the Victorian school year). Observation of specific 'Dabble n Dance' staff and students will not occur. Observation will be undertaken only to obtain an overall understanding of the group dynamics and program processes.

At the completion of the research process a summary of results will be provided to the aforementioned partner agencies and 'Dabble n Dance' facilitators. The raw data, collected in the form of audio-taped and transcribed interviews and observation field notes will not be available. This information will be available only to the researcher and research supervisor Dr Sophie Goldingay, Lecturer, Deakin University.

The results of the research will be published in a Thesis document by the researcher. It is also the intention of the researcher to publish the results of the research in a relevant academic journal. The researcher along with Deakin University owns the intellectual property rights relevant to this research.

I acknowledge that I have read the above information and provide my support for the Formative Evaluation of 'Dabble n Dance'.

Signature

Lu Temelkovski  
Campus Principal  
Northern Bay College  
Goldsworthy Campus.



## APPENDIX C

D E A K I N U N I V E R S I T Y

Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences

Social Work Geelong Waterfront campus  
Geelong Victoria 3217 Australia  
Telephone +61 3 52278461  
Facsimile +61 3 5227 8356  
sophie.goldingay@deakin.edu.au



28 April 2011

Bluebird Foundation Inc.  
2 Aberdeen Street  
Geelong West  
Victoria 3218

Dear Bronwyn

re Research Project – Formative evaluation of the Dabble n Dance program

I am the academic supervisor of Sarah Baudinette, a student of Deakin University, who will be conducting a research project which will evaluate the Dabble n Dance program at Corio Bay Secondary College (Project) in conjunction with the Bluebird Foundation.

The purpose of this letter is to confirm the conditions relating to ethical conduct of research and access to data arising from the Project.

Ms. Baudinette will conduct the Project in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, a joint publication of the Australian Research Council, the National Health and Medical Research Council and Universities Australia. Ms. Baudinette has obtained approval from the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC) for the Project, which will include data gathered primarily through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with individuals who have consented to participate in the research. Interview data will be collected using audiotapes which will subsequently be analysed by Ms. Baudinette. In accordance with the terms of the approval, the results of the research will be made available to program facilitators and partner agencies including the Bluebird Foundation and Corio Bay Secondary College (specifically Young Parents Access Program), however raw data in the form indicated above will not be available to and cannot be accessed by third parties. This information will be available only to Ms. Baudinette in order to protect the identity and privacy of research participants.

Ms. Baudinette will own all intellectual property rights in the data and outcomes of her research, in accordance with Deakin University's Intellectual Property legislation and policies, and will be publishing the outcomes in the form of a thesis. Additionally, Ms. Baudinette anticipates that the outcomes may be published in academic journals or other formats as appropriate.

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DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

I have enclosed two copies of this correspondence and ask that you sign the acknowledgement below to confirm your acceptance of these conditions and return the signed duplicate copy to me.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions with respect to the project.


Yours sincerely,


Sophie Goldingay, PhD  
Lecturer in Social Work

The Bluebird Foundation Inc. confirms its agreement with the conditions set out in this correspondence.

Signed for and on behalf of Bluebird Foundation Inc. by its duly authorized officer this

11<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2011.

  
witness

  
authorized signatory

LUCY JONES  
Print name

Bronwyn Lawson  
Print name

## APPENDIX D

### Re: 'Dabble n Dance' evaluation

Bron Lawson [blawson@ncable.net.au]

**Sent:** Thursday, 19 May 2011 1:49 PM

**To:** Sarah Elizabeth Baudinette

**Cc:** Lorraine Armstrong [armstrong.lorraine.a@edumail.vic.gov.au]; Neisha Smider [little.picasso@optusnet.com.au]

Hi Sarah,

That is great news about the ethics approval - well done!

Now - I will be interstate next week so Neisha is running the session with another facilitator who works with visual arts so it would be the perfect week to come along and chat to the parents etc. We won't be having any music at the start of the session so you can have the floor straight away! The session only starts at 10am so I hope that is OK if you are a late to class. If not, we can reschedule your visit for another week that is better for you.

On 18/05/2011, at 9:58 AM, Sarah Elizabeth Baudinette wrote:

Hi Bron,

Exciting news, I have received approval to undertake the evaluation of 'Dabble n Dance' pending receipt of a letter of support from the Corio Bay Senior College Principal!

I am hoping that I'll have this by the end of the week and will therefore be able to start recruitment. I am wondering if it would be possible to attend next week's DnD session to introduce the project and hand out flyers etc. If that is okay, would it be possible to attend at the beginning of the session? It's just that my only class is on a Tuesday at 10am and next week is the second last week so I'd like to attend. I completely understand if this is difficult for you and the program attendees and am still happy to attend after the session if that's okay and works better for you.

Please let me know if that will be okay and my fingers are tightly crossed that by then I'll have the letter of support I require!

Thanks so much,  
Sarah

## APPENDIX E

### Do you attend or have you previously attended **'Dabble n Dance'** sessions?

If so, I would like to hear from you!

My name is Sarah and as part of my Bachelor of Social Work degree at Deakin University I am conducting a research project which involves an evaluation of the 'Dabble n Dance' program. The aim of this research is to understand how various aspects of the 'Dabble n Dance' program are experienced from the perspective of individuals who are currently attending or have previously attended 'Dabble n Dance' sessions.

If you are one of these individuals and would be interested in participating in a research project I would like to invite you to contact me and find out more about the participation process.

It is important that you know the following about the research:

- Participation is voluntary
- If you agree to participate but later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the research before data analysis begins
- Participation will involve attending an interview that will last no longer than 45 minutes
- Should you choose to participate in the research your confidentiality and privacy will be maintained at every step of the research process

If you would like to know more about participating in the research or would like to volunteer as a participant please contact **Sarah Baudinette via e-mail at [seb@deakin.edu.au](mailto:seb@deakin.edu.au)**

You will be provided with a Plain Language Statement which outlines everything about the research project. You will also be provided with a consent form which you can choose to sign after reading the Plain Language Statement if you wish to participate.

Please feel free to ask Sarah any other questions you may have, or to clarify what you have read in the Plain Language Statement.

Thank you for your time,

Sarah Baudinette

(Associate Researcher)

[seb@deakin.edu.au](mailto:seb@deakin.edu.au)

## APPENDIX F



**Deakin University  
Faculty of Health  
Human Ethics Advisory Group - Health**

### Request for Modification Form

#### 1 Project Details

Project ID (e.g. HEAG-H 21/2010)	HEAG-H 36_2011
Project Title	Formative Evaluation of Dabble n Dance
Original approval date	11 May 2011
Date of expiry of approval	11 May 2012
Expected completion date of data collection and analysis	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2011
Other HREC's involved	

Please note that if you expect to complete any data collection or analysis after the date of expiry of approval, you are required to complete Section 7.

#### 2 Researchers' Details

Title and name of Principal Investigator / Supervisor	Dr Sophie Goldingay
Faculty	Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences
School / Centre	School of Health and Social Development
Campus	Geelong Waterfront Campus
Contact phone number	52278461
Email	Sophie.goldingay@deakin.edu.au

(Please copy and paste table for all additional researchers)

Title and name of Co-investigator / Student	Ms Sarah Baudinette
Institution (if not Deakin)	
Faculty	Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences
School / Centre	School of Health and Social Development
Campus	Geelong Waterfront
Contact phone number	0448605066
Email	seb@deakin.edu.au

3 Details of proposed modification(s) to project (e.g. change of sample size, addition of research instruments, change to research team)

The researcher proposes to make changes to section 6.5.3 of the NEAF. This change relates to participant recruitment and how contact with participants will be made. The NEAF application states that recruitment will be undertaken by providing participants with Plain Language Statements and flyers which list the e-mail address of the researcher. These were to be handed to participants during an oral presentation and participants informed that they could contact the researcher at a later time to indicate their desire to volunteer as participants.

The researcher proposes that instead of recruiting participants in this way, the researcher provides each individual present at the Dabble n Dance session with a Plain Language Statement along with a document prepared by the researcher which is attached. This document will be given to each participant and will state:  
 "Do you wish to be contacted by the researcher to arrange an interview time and return your signed consent form?  
 Yes or No

If you indicated yes, can you please provide a contact e-mail address so you can be contacted by the researcher to organise an interview time"

Attendees can indicate whether they would or would not like to participate by ticking either yes or no.

4 Reason(s) for proposed modification(s) to project

Participant recruitment has thus far been unsuccessful using the method of contact listed in section 6.5.3 of the NEAF. However a lack of contact with the researcher by individuals does not necessarily mean individuals do not wish to volunteer to participate in the research. Participants may find it easier to volunteer when the onus is not on them to make initial contact with the researcher. This is particularly the case given the population that is being interviewed- mothers with young children who are engaged in education.

5 Do the modifications relate to data collection?

Double-click on the appropriate box and select "checked".

	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please answer the questions below.		
Is there collection of identifiable <i>health</i> information?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is there collection of identifiable <i>personal</i> information?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Is the collection of identifiable <i>sensitive</i> information?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the researcher obtaining identifiable personal information from another organisation?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Has the individual whose information it is, consented to the collection, use or disclosure of identifiable personal information?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**6 Attachments**

Please attach all documentation relevant to the proposed modification (e.g. Plain Language Statement(s), Consent Forms, questionnaires etc.)

Please ensure that any changes to previously approved documents are made using track changes.

**7 Request for extension**

Please complete the following section if you expect to complete any data collection or analysis after the date of expiry of approval.

Revised completion date	
-------------------------	--

Reason for extension:

--

Please note that following the initial three-year approval period, an extension of one additional year can be granted. If you wish to request a further extension, you may do so but approval is at the discretion of the Chair and/or the Committee.

**8 Other comments**

--

**10 Signatures**

Principal Investigator / Supervisor		Date: 6/16/2011
-------------------------------------	---	-----------------

(Please copy and paste table for all additional researchers)

Student / Co-investigator		Date: 6/6/2011
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Please note that if an investigator is being added to or removed from the research team, they must also sign this form

**Please complete and return to:**

**Secretary HEAG-H  
Dean's Office  
Faculty of Health  
Level 3, Building E  
221 Burwood Hwy  
Burwood VIC 3125**

Enquiries should be directed to:  
Telephone: (03) 9251 7174  
Email [hbsethic@deakin.edu.au](mailto:hbsethic@deakin.edu.au)



## APPENDIX G

**DEAKIN UNIVERSITY**

Human Ethics Advisory Group – Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and  
Behavioural Sciences

221 Burwood Highway,  
Burwood Victoria 3125 Australia  
Telephone +61 3 2517174  
Facsimile +61 3 9251 7425  
hbsethic@deakin.edu.au



**Memorandum**

To	Dr Sophie Goldingay School of Health and Social Development	Date	8 June, 2011
From	Secretary – HEAG-H Faculty of Health		
Subject	<b>HEAG-H 36_2011: Formative evaluation of the Dabble n Dance Program.</b>		

Approval has been given to Dr Sophie Goldingay, of the School of Health and Social Development, to undertake this project with the modifications that were requested on the 7 June, 2011.

**Steven Sawyer**  
**Secretary**  
HEAG-H

cc Ms Sarah Baudinette

**APPENDIX H****'Dabble n Dance' Evaluation**

**Would you like to be contacted to arrange an interview time and return your signed consent form?**

**Yes**

**No**

**If you indicated yes, can you please provide a contact e-mail address so you can be contacted by the researcher to organise an interview time.**

**Could you also please provide your first name**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions, or change your mind about participation please contact me at any time via my e-mail address which is [seb@deakin.edu.au](mailto:seb@deakin.edu.au)

Thankyou

Sarah Baudinette

## APPENDIX I

**DEAKIN UNIVERSITY  
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**



TO: Participants

Plain Language Statement

**Date:**

**Full Project Title: Formative Evaluation of the 'Dabble n Dance' program**

**Principal Researcher: Dr Sophie Goldingay**

**Student Researcher/ Associate Researcher: Ms Sarah Baudinette**

---

This Plain Language Statement and Consent Form is 8 pages long. Please make sure you have all the pages.

**1. Your Consent**

You are invited to take part in this research project.

This Plain Language Statement contains detailed information about the research project. Its purpose is to explain to you as openly and clearly as possible all the procedures involved in this project so that you can make a fully informed decision whether you are going to participate.

Please read this Plain Language Statement carefully. Feel free to ask questions about any information in the document. You may also wish to discuss the project with a relative or friend or your local health worker. Feel free to do this.

Once you understand what the project is about and if you agree to take part in it, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form. By signing the Consent Form, you indicate that you understand the information and that you give your consent to participate in the research project.

You will be given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep as a record.

**2. Purpose and Background**

The purpose of this project is to undertake an evaluation of the 'Dabble n Dance' program. The evaluation will be undertaken by providing answers to the research question which is "How are various aspects of the 'Dabble n Dance' program experienced by those who attend it?" It is the aim of the researcher to answer this question by obtaining an in-depth and descriptive understanding of how 'Dabble n Dance' is experienced by individuals who have previously attended or are currently attending the program. By evaluating the 'Dabble n Dance' program feedback will be provided to program organisers which may help to develop the program. This research will also add to the existing information about the use of music and arts based activities in a group setting.

Some research suggests that the use of music and/ or arts based activities with parents and their children in a group setting can have positive effects on wellbeing. Although previous research suggests some positive outcomes, the reasons for why and how these programs may be beneficial are relatively unknown. Previous evaluations of programs similar to 'Dabble n Dance' consider the

outcomes of programs rather than discussing how people experience the programs while they participate in them. It is important to understand both the strengths and weaknesses of a program and how programs might be changed to make them better for people attending them.

This program is being evaluated because it is a new program and feedback from participants may assist in developing the program to ensure it is meaningful and appropriate for those who attend it.

You are invited to participate in this research project because you have previously attended or are currently attending 'Dabble n Dance' sessions and can provide important information about how you have experienced various aspects of the program. All individuals who are attending 'Dabble n Dance' sessions at Corio Bay Senior College will be invited to volunteer as participants in the research project. It is estimated that a total of six to ten people will participate in this project.

This research will help the researcher to complete the Deakin University Undergraduate Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) degree.

### **3. Funding**

This research is totally funded by Deakin University, School of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences.

### **4. Procedures**

Participation in this research project will involve attending a one-on-one interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. Interviews will be conducted at a public but confidential location decided upon by you and the researcher.

Interviews will be conducted by the student researcher. Interviews will involve an informal discussion in which you will be asked a range of questions covering broad themes. This discussion will provide you with the opportunity to explore with the researcher how you have experienced various aspects of the 'Dabble n Dance' program. At the beginning of the discussion you will also be asked some brief questions about yourself such as your age, how many children you have and how old your children are. You may choose not to answer any of the questions you are asked at any time. Interviews will be voice recorded using audiotape devices and will later be typed into word document format. Some notes may also be taken during the interview in order to assist the researcher throughout the discussion. It is aimed that these interviews will take place at the end of May and start of June and that all participant interviews will be completed no later than the 3rd of June in 2011. After all of the interviews have been completed and typed into a written document you may be asked to participate in a second informal discussion with the researcher. This discussion will help to clarify what you have said during the interview, or may ask some new questions. During this process you will be provided with the transcript of your interview and asked some questions about it. These discussions will take no longer than 20 minutes and will not be voice recorded.

All participants will be provided with a copy of their typed interview. This will be sent to you via e-mail. If you would like to make any changes to the transcript you can do this. The changed transcript must be returned to the researcher via e-mail within two weeks of the date that you receive it. If you do not return the transcript within this time it will be assumed that no changes need to be made to the original document.

Some 'Dabble n Dance' sessions may be observed by the researcher. During this process, although notes will be taken, these notes will not be about you or any other participant specifically. Observations will be undertaken to assist in developing an understanding of how 'Dabble n Dance' sessions are run and what occurs during them. Nothing you do specifically during the session will be

researchers. All computer documents will be stored on a computer that is secured by a password known only to the principal and associate researcher. If data is stored in USB format this will also be secured with a password known only to the principal and associate researcher. The information you provide will not be shared with any other person.

If you give us your permission by signing the Consent Form, we plan to publish the results of this research in a thesis, in a summary of results provided to 'Dabble n Dance' partner agencies and funding bodies and as an article in an academic peer reviewed journal. All information collected in this research will be de-identified through coding and the use of false names, your name will never be used. In some cases information you provide may be excluded from the research results if this information may make you easily identifiable or re-identifiable to those who know you.

In accordance with Deakin University's requirements, data will be kept for six years after the date of publication of this research. During this time data will be stored at Deakin University in a locked filing cabinet. Only the principal and associate researcher will have access to this information. After the six year period, all information will be destroyed.

In any publication, information will be published in such a way that you cannot be identified. Your name will not be used, nor will any of your personal characteristics.

#### **8. Results of Project**

Results of the research will be published in an Honours Thesis document, as part of the researcher's involvement in the Deakin University Bachelor of Social Work Honours program. This thesis will be stored at Deakin University in the Faculty of Health, Nursing, Medicine and Behavioural Sciences and will be available for access to students and staff of the University. The thesis will also be available to 'Dabble n Dance' program facilitators should they wish to view it. 'Dabble n Dance' facilitators, partner agencies and funding bodies will be provided with a summary of results.

If you would like to be provided with a summary of the research results please contact the researcher via e-mail requesting a copy. A summary of results will then be sent to your e-mail address.

It is also intended that results of the research may also be published in an academic peer reviewed journal at the researcher's discretion. Your information will be de-identified in the results.

#### **9. Participation is Voluntary**

Participation in any research project is voluntary. **If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to.** If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. If you choose to withdraw before the information you provide is analysed, the information you provide cannot be destroyed however will not be used in the research. You are not able to withdraw from the research after the information you have provided has been analysed. This is because the researcher will no longer know which information is the information you have provided.

Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the facilitators of 'Dabble n Dance' sessions or the Young Parents Access Program staff or Corio Bay Senior College. You should not feel pressure from any of these organisations to participate in the research.

Before you make your decision, a member of the research team will be available to answer any questions you have about the research project. You can ask for any information you want.

Sign the Consent Form only after you have had a chance to ask your questions and have received satisfactory answers.

---

If you decide to withdraw from this project, please notify a member of the research team or complete and return the Revocation of Consent Form attached. This notice will allow the research team to inform you if there are any health risks or special requirements linked to withdrawing.

#### **10. Ethical Guidelines**

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

The ethics aspects of this research project have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Deakin University.

#### **11. Complaints**

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

Secretary HEAG-H, Dean's Office, Faculty of Health, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood, Vic, 3125,

Telephone: (03) 9251 7174, e-mail: hmnbs-research@deakin.edu.au

Please quote project number HEAG-H 36/11

#### **12. Reimbursement for your costs**

You will not be paid for your participation in this project.

#### **13. Further Information, Queries or Any Problems**

If you require further information, wish to withdraw your participation or if you have any problems concerning this project (for example, any side effects), you can contact the principal researcher Dr Sophie Goldingay or the associate researcher, Sarah Baudinette.

The researchers responsible for this project are:

Dr Sophie Goldingay  
Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences, School of Health and Social Development  
Deakin University, 1 Gheringhap Street, Geelong Vic 3200  
ph: 52278461

And

Sarah Baudinette  
Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) student  
Deakin University  
e-mail: seb@deakin.edu.au

**DEAKIN UNIVERSITY  
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**



**TO: Participants**

**Consent Form**

**Date:**

**Full Project Title: Formative evaluation of the 'Dabble n Dance' program.**

I have read and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

Participant's Name (printed) .....

Signature ..... Date .....

**DEAKIN UNIVERSITY  
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**



**TO: Participants**

**Revocation of Consent Form**

**Date:**

**Full Project Title: Formative Evaluation of the 'Dabble n Dance' program.**

---

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the above research project and understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University or facilitators of the 'Dabble n Dance' program or the Young Parents Access Program.

Participant's Name (printed) .....

Signature .....

Date .....

**Please mail or fax this form to:**

Dr Sophie Goldingay  
Deakin University, 1 Gheringhap Street,  
Geelong, Vic, 3200  
Ph: 52278461



## APPENDIX J

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### Semi-Structured Interview

#### List of Questions

- How do you experience Dabble 'n' Dance sessions?
- What does participation in Dabble 'n' Dance sessions involve for you and your child?
- How do you experience the music and arts at Dabble 'n' Dance?
- How do you experience the delivery of sessions? ie: the level of support and assistance?
- Can you tell me about how Dabble 'n' Dance relates to other areas of your life?
- How do you experience the group aspect of Dabble 'n' Dance?

## LIST OF REFERENCES

### References:

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