






FAST INFORMATION

## What is FAST?

FAST is a family-strengthening program working with families and communities.




Families partner with a local team, schools and community agencies so that children can grow up to succeed.

Success is achieved through strengthening relationships

-  between parents and children
-  between families
-  with families, schools and other community agencies



### FAST Programs

-  **Baby FAST:** Infants 0-3 years old with young parents
-  **Kids FAST:** Primary school children and their families
-  **Teen FAST:** High school students and their families



### Theoretical Foundations

Developed in the US in 1988, now established in 20 countries and effective across cultural, language, socio-economic strata, and urban and regional settings. Based on:

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Social Ecological Theory | Family Stress Theory |
| Family Systems Theory    | Parent Empowerment   |
| Community Development    | Brain Development    |
| Social Capital           | Risk and Resiliency  |

Research reports and RCTS: <http://www.familiesandschools.org/why-fast-works/theoretical-foundations/>

## What a FAST session looks like...

### First Hour

Family meal and activity time where kids are encouraged to respectfully listen and take turns. Parents are empowered to be in charge of their family, explain and direct children in each FAST activity.

### Second Hour

Peer group time for adults and children in separate groups. Parents take part in Buddy Time and Parent Self-Help Group. Children take part in fun Kids' Time group activities.

### Last 30 Minutes

Includes quality play time between parents and their children. Each session then ends with community-building activities.

### Program Structure

- FAST parents enrol through home visits, outreach and open enrolment
- After being shown the program content, parents who commit to FAST meet together weekly for 8 weeks
- Each session lasts approximately 2.5 hours. Parents and kids constantly tell us they wish they could meet more often
- FAST programs are typically held in primary school halls, libraries or community centres
- Program cycles conclude with graduation ceremonies
- After graduation, parents work together as a virtual community; and
- Families continue to meet regularly in the two year follow-on to support each other while their children grow and learn

### Program Incentives

- Free transport
- Free meal
- Door prizes
- Free child care



### FAST achieves the following goals...

- Improves attendance and participation in school by students and families
- Improves learning outcomes
- Strengthens the partnership between family and school to improve outcomes
- Empowers parents
- Strengthens family functioning
- Prevents school failure by the selected child
- Prevents substance abuse by the child and other family members
- Reduces stress from daily life situations for parents and children
- Builds multi-level supportive relationships

# FAST Flowchart

## Team Recruitment

The team consists of:  
 Coordinator  
 2 x parent team members  
 2 x agency representatives  
 School representative/s  
 Volunteers

## Training

Two days  
 Includes Program, Recruitment, Kids' Time and FASTWORKS

## Family Recruitment

Families are referred by the school  
 Parent team members and other team members visit families  
 Evaluations are completed

## 8 Week Program

Families meet for 2.5 hours a week after school  
 Trainer visits at least week 1, 4 and 8

## FASTWORKS

Consists of monthly family meetings for two years  
 Includes at least one FAST element, e.g. Special Play

## Review and Reflection

Team accreditation  
 Evaluation reflection  
 Future planning  
 Referral to community services

## FAST Training Structure and Team Member Commitments

<b>Phase I – Planning</b>	Training days and planning sessions = <b>20 hours</b>
<b>Phase II – Do</b>	Session preparation, home visits, outreach, 8 weekly FAST sessions and debriefs = <b>50 hours</b>
<b>Phase III – Reflection</b>	Community based team reflection and planning day following the program = <b>6 hours</b>

## Coordinator Role and Time

Estimated 12 hours per week for a 16 week period for the FAST coordinator to do the pre, during and post program work. **Total hours = 194**



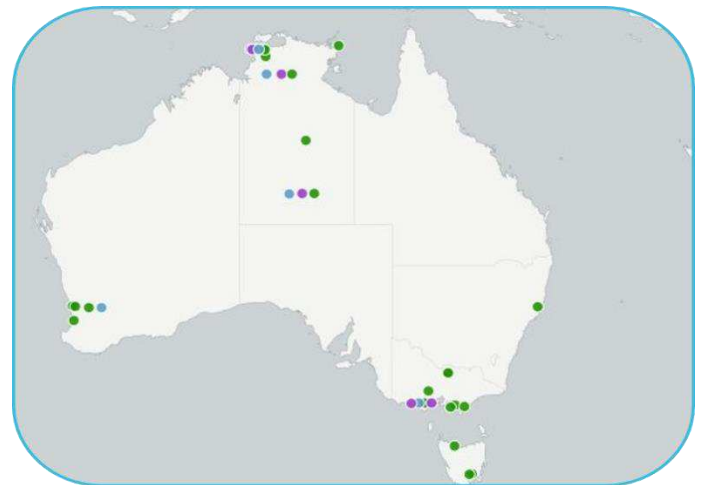
**An evidence-based program**  
 FAST Australia is on the Australian Institute of Family Studies' Communities for Children Facilitating Partners evidence-based program listing.

### Program evaluation

- Pre- and post-program surveys conducted with parents and teachers
- Process evaluation conducted to test program fidelity
- Program adapted to Australia, including remote Aboriginal communities
- Evaluation adapted to be culturally and linguistically appropriate

### What gets measured

- Social relationships
- Social support
- Parent involvement at school
- Family environment
- Parental self-efficacy
- Child strengths and difficulties



### FAST Australia

**Mark Boonstra (Hobart)**  
 (03) 6262 5400, 0419 367 528  
 markb@impactcommunities.org.au

**Mal Galbraith (Darwin)**  
 (08) 8920 4355, 0437 798 805  
 mal.galbraith@fastnt.org.au

**Fiona Lee (Perth)**  
 (08) 9250 6335, 0449 717 623  
 fiona.lee@clanmidland.org

