Impact Update

BE CENTRE FOUNDATION

Prepared by Be Centre in **April 2023**
For the period **1 October 2022 - 31 March 2023**

be centre

Our shared partnership vision

Michelle Mott has been a parent counsellor with Be Centre for over 11 years. Michelle has an extensive background in nursing, counselling and applied psychotherapy. She is also a qualified trainer in parent programs such as Tuning Into Kids and Tuning Into Teens.

Play therapy can change a child's developmental path and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.

200

Play therapy sessions

[Partner name] funded [200] play therapy sessions.

15

Children supported

[Partner name} enabled [15] children to receive a play therapy scholarship.

Six month period from 1 Oct 2022 - 31 Mar 2023

News snapshot

Demand for our services keeps growing

Compared to our last **Impact Update** (1 Apr 2022 to 30 Sep 2022) our numbers have increased - more play therapy sessions delivered, more parent support delivered, and more children supported via scholarships.

While it is wonderful that we've been able to support more children, the upward trend of more children presenting with mental health issues is alarming.

A new electronic records management system

In January 2023, Be Centre switched from a mostly manual client records management system to a new electronic records management system that is cloud-based. Our client appointments, invoicing, session notes etc. are now fully digital.

Better reporting means we can provide donors/funders with more data relating to impact. Digitising not only creates efficiencies for staff everyday but it also provides Be Centre with vital insights and information about our services.

For example, our play therapists connect with parents regularly during a child's play therapy program. We've not captured this data before, but we'll be able to now, providing a much better picture of how Be Centre is providing systemic support.

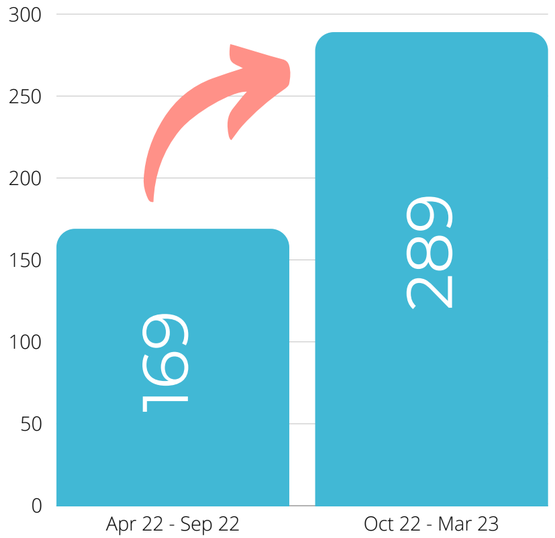
Natural disaster recovery support

In October 2022, Be Centre delivered 714 therapeutic play bags to the Lismore region. They were distributed through schools to children who had been impacted by floods. One hundred more play bags made their way to the Snowy Mountain region which has been impacted by bush fires.

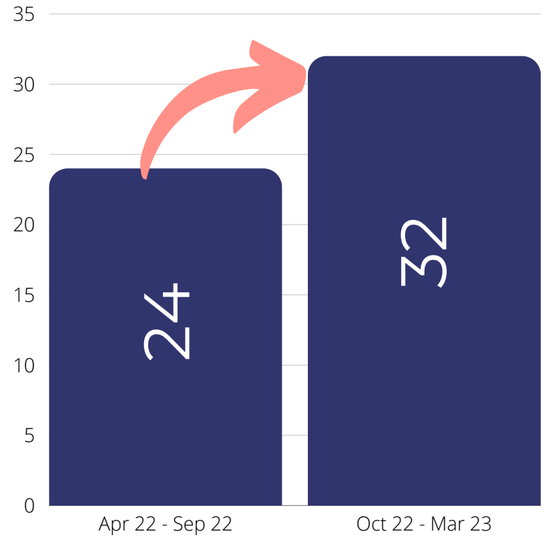
Therapeutic play bags provide an opportunity for children to 'play out' traumatic experiences. Parents/carers play a vital role in supporting a child to heal through play. Included in each child's play bag was a link to our free short online course for parents/carers called the 'Need to Play'.

Supporting children get the help they need - at no cost to their families

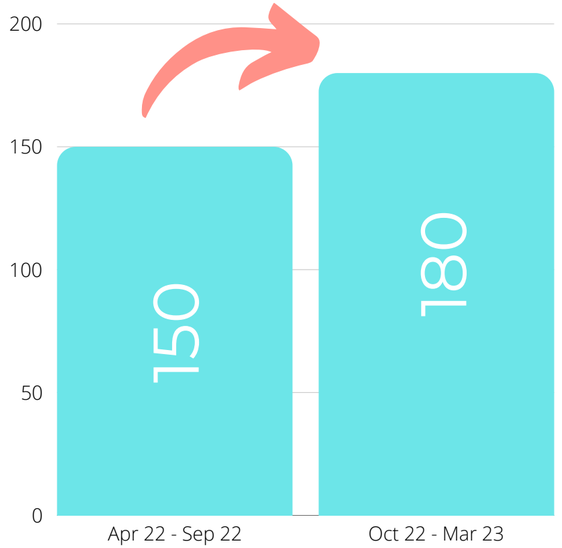
Donors provide funding to support children and families who otherwise would not be able to afford early intervention play therapy services. Below provides a snapshot of all scholarship recipient data from 1 Oct 2022 to 31 Mar 2023 with a comparison to the previous six (6) months.



289 **play therapy sessions** delivered over the last 6 mths without cost to the family.



32 **children** over the last 6 mths attending play therapy at no cost to them.



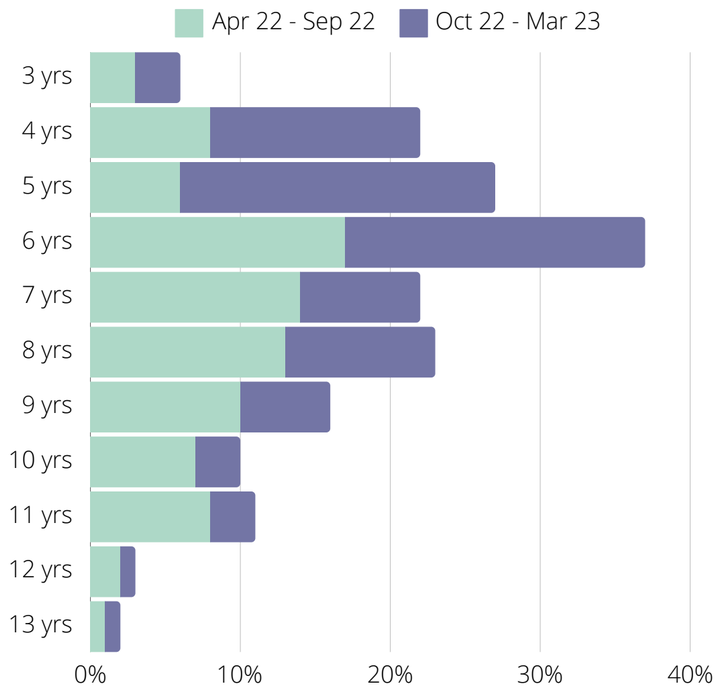
180 **parent support sessions** over the last 6 mths were delivered to all* families attending play therapy at no cost to them. Our goal is for 50% of parents to receive an average of 3 parent support sessions.

*Fee paying and scholarship

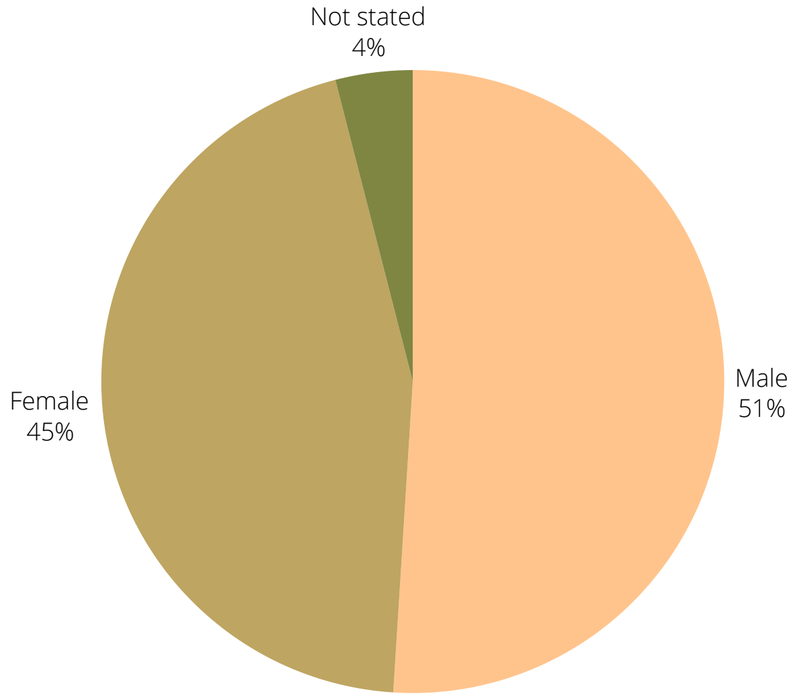
The number of children supported, the number of play therapy sessions delivered, and the number of parents receiving support from our parent counsellors have all increased over the previous six months. This increase in demand meant we had to put a temporary pause on our waitlist over Dec 22 / Feb 23. In Mar 2023 the waitlist re-opened and the demand for early intervention has not slowed down.

Together we are helping children to heal

How old are they?

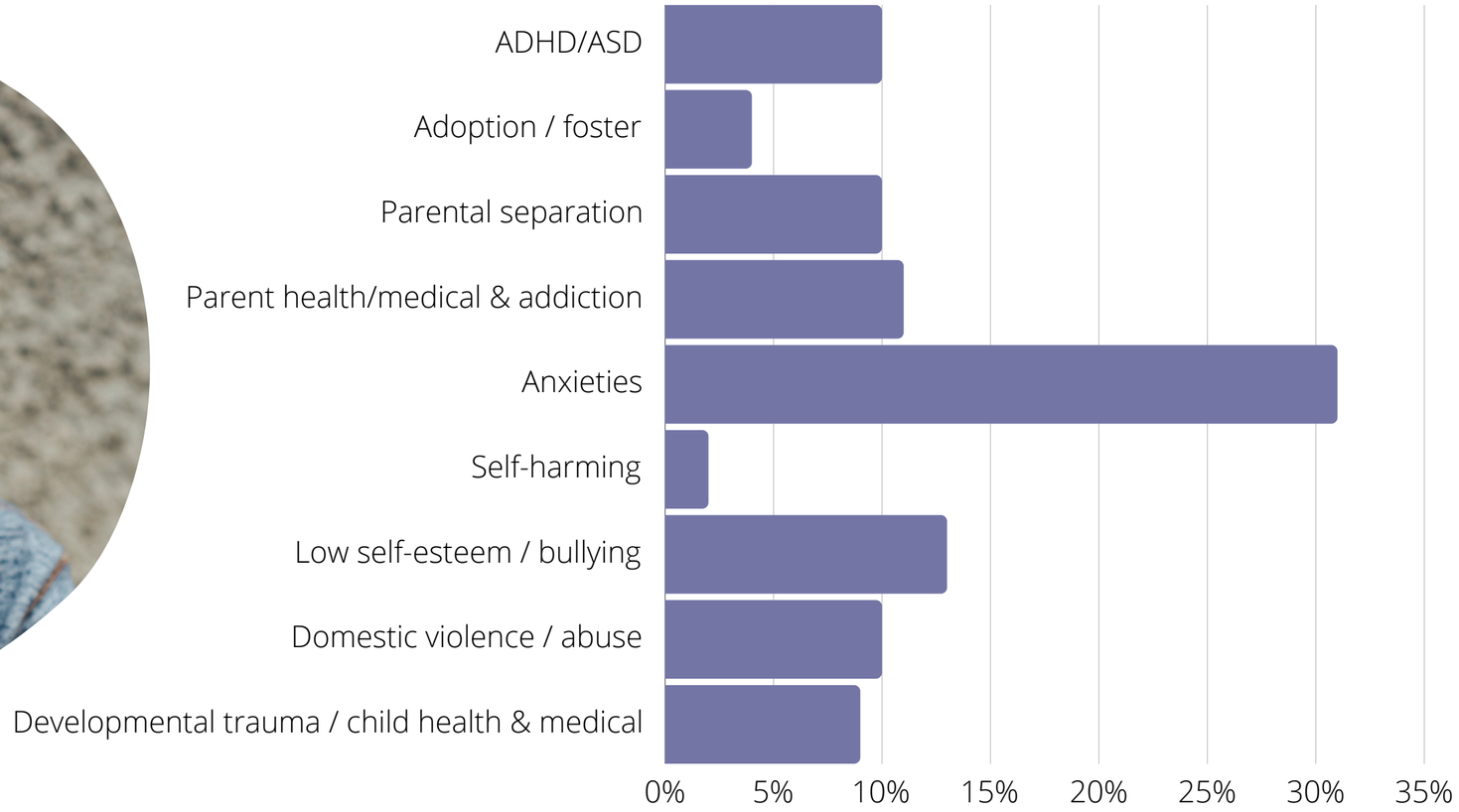


What gender are they?



In the last six (6) months, we've continued to see a percentage increase in children <7 years attending Be Centre.
The gender split continues to remain fairly even.

Why do children come to Be Centre?



Anxieties includes: fears, phobias, generalised anxiety, separation anxiety, social anxiety, sleeping difficulties, toileting issues, and death in the family/friendships.

Be Centre's Theory of Change

Be Centre's model is guided by its Theory of Change, which outlines an understanding of the key issues faced by children, families and the wider system, the activities Be Centre undertakes in response, the consequences that can be expected and the desired outcomes and impacts.

IMPACT

Children are able to make sense of their earlier or current life experiences, creating future adults who are resilient and thriving, and whose earlier or current experiences do not inhibit them from reaching their potential.
Family members are better able to connect with each other, building stronger, more cohesive family units.

Issue

Children may have a range of challenging experiences in their early lives that they're not able to make sense of.

Traditional therapeutic interventions don't always allow children to fully engage with the experiences and resulting emotions, as they rely on a cognitive level that many children haven't yet developed.

There is also a tendency in the **system** towards traditional cognitive intervention and medication for these children, an approach that's not always necessary or appropriate.

The impact of these challenges can often be felt by the **whole family and even the broader community**.

Strategic Response

In contrast to traditional cognitive therapy, Be Centre relies on giving children a voice through their natural language of play.

Addressing childhood trauma at an early stage, through early intervention, prevents this trauma from compounding throughout their life.

Our next Impact Update will include survey data highlighting outcomes achieved. Our new electronic records management system will enable us to measure impact on-goingly.

Activities

- Deliver **play therapy programs** for children
- Deliver **ancillary programs** for children and parents
- **Advocate for change**
- Contribute to **evidence-based research**
- Work with partners to **enhance each others' initiatives**

Priority Outcomes

For children

- Children are able to better make sense of their past and current experiences, including trauma
- Children are able to better express themselves
- Children experience greater self-awareness (of personal strengths and difficulties)
- Children are able to better self-regulate

For parents

- Parents feel more supported
- Parents have an improved recognition of the important role they play in their child's wellbeing

Shorter-term outcomes

- Children are able to build more positive family relationships and develop secure attachments
- Children experience better overall mental health and wellbeing

- Parents experience more positive interactions with their child, building a secure attachment

Longer-term outcomes

Impact story

Lucy. Aged 7.

Referred by: General Practitioner. No. of weeks attending play therapy: 17 sessions completed.

Seven-year-old Lucy has been attending play therapy at Be Centre for several months now.

Unfortunately, Lucy has experienced many upheavals (moving house, school, country) and traumatic medical experiences in her life and as a result became anxious and sensitive with lots of big feelings. Lucy's parents were concerned about her self-esteem. They said "Lucy often says that she doesn't like herself and she is very clingy at school drop off."

But after her initial 12 sessions of play therapy her parents said "her self-esteem is now very good. She never says negative things about herself anymore. Drop offs are rarely difficult now, which is a massive change. This morning, she literally ran off from the car to her classroom without a backward glance, which was unheard of!"

Lucy's behaviour has had a knock-on effect on her younger brother too, who would often struggle with school drop-offs if his sister did.

Before Lucy started play therapy, her mum just wanted her daughter to be happy. Now, Lucy's mum says that "she is mainly happy, rather than the other way around". She added "We wish we had had access to this kind of therapy when we were children and have recommended it to many others."

"Our daughter was asked by her teacher to perform at a recent event with other children; many children that she didn't know. She had the confidence to say yes, which I'm sure she wouldn't have a few months ago. She knows she will be nervous but also knows she has the tools to get through that and enjoy the experience."

Lucy's mum reports that play therapy has been a life changing journey for her daughter.

Impact story

Alex. Aged 8.

Recipient of a Flood therapeutic play bag.

“Hi Be Centre,

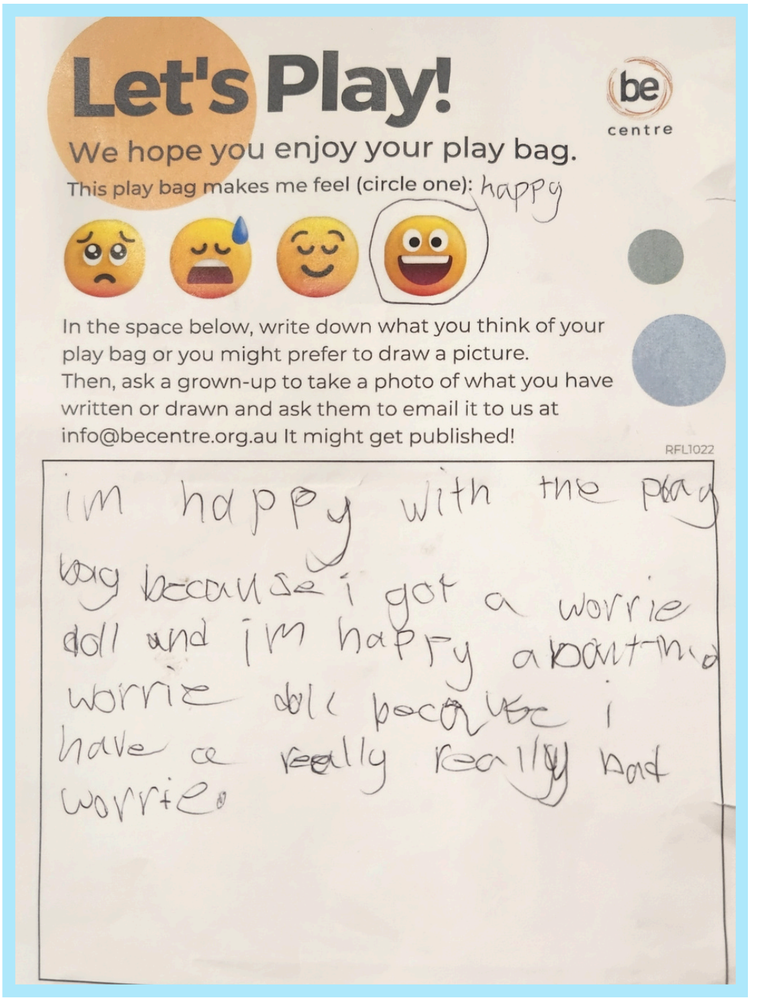
My daughter (8) ... came home with one of your Play Bags. She was over the moon. I have attached a photo of the note. In case you don't understand what she has said (as she wrote it in the car whilst we were driving home from school) ... it goes like this:

'I'm happy with the play bag because i got a worry doll and I'm happy about the worry doll because I have a really really bad worry.'

As soon as we got home she put it under her pillow.

Thank you for providing this bag. It has helped her a lot.”

From
A grateful parent



Parent thanks

I would just like to say thank you so very much for enabling my child to participate in play therapy at Be Centre. It would have been financially impossible for me to fund at this time and it has helped my child so very much to develop healthy emotional skills and tools that will be the foundation for his future.

It has not only been helpful to my son but to myself as well, as I have learned many new strategies to cope with challenging behaviours. I really can never thank you enough for helping us both to grow and have access to the wonderful therapists at Be Centre. It has provided enormous stability in a very challenging time for us.

Thank you once again for your generosity.

Thank you so much for helping our child. She has a lot to put up with an aggressive sibling at home and has struggled with how to manage it. Her time at Be Centre has really allowed her to work though how to manage her emotions. It will take some time for sure but we are already seeing some great improvements and greater self-belief and self-esteem. We've been really happy!

Future funding goals / opportunities

We're focused on continuing to support those most in need with early intervention. Please let us know if you would like more information on how you can continue to support critical initiatives.

FY23

- Continued support of therapy for children in our one-to-one **Hear Me Play** program
- Development of new programs for children including **Hear Us Play**
- Clinical team training on new trauma-informed approaches

FY24

- Funding of new CRM (donor management) for first 5 years
- Development of new school-based program for teachers based on a trauma-informed approach

FY25

- Establish new centre in high demand areas such as the inner west and south east regions of Sydney
- Funding more play therapists and counsellors

Continued support of disaster impacted regions within Australia in need of early intervention / trauma-informed support.

About Be Centre Foundation

Be Centre is a children's mental health charity offering an innovative Play Therapy Program for children age 3-12 years who have been impacted by trauma or other serious life challenges.

Be Centre is dedicated to early intervention and stopping cycles of harm - helping children heal so they can move forward and create the best possible future for themselves, their families and the community.

www.becentre.org.au

ABN: 58 128 050 037
CFN: 21168

Be Centre is a Registered Charity. All donations over $2 are tax deductible.

be centre