

## For the sake of the baby

Baby FAST™ is a widely used multifamily group intervention model for young parents and their infants and toddlers (age 0-3). It works especially well for first-time mothers, and is intended to protect vulnerable families with risk factors, such as single-parent families, teen mums, isolated families, or within communities with higher risk factors.

**Baby FAST is unique in its ability to draw grandparents, fathers, and other supporters into the family care process.**

This model is the strongest intervention program because while it is preventive for the babies, catching them early in their cognitive and behavioural development, it also supports identified risks and provides a more assertive coaching approach than in other FAST models.

Although Baby FAST is supported by school systems and preschool programs as a way to help parents ready their small children for their first learning steps, it is normally sponsored by local community agencies and maternal health professionals to support parents, especially mums during this critical time in the family lifecycle. It is often used to supplement home visitations for isolated and at risk families. Baby FAST has been embraced by families from all walks of life across in many locations in Australia and the U.S.

Baby FAST is a great program for young, isolated families in insecure family environments and within challenged communities. It is a much needed, collaborative approach to caring for vulnerable infants.

Our programs are 100% evaluated, resulting in strong evidence that our program objectives are consistently met.



### Family outcomes:

- reduced compulsive/impulsive behaviours in families
- reduced aggression, anxiety, depression in families
- reduced family conflict and stress
- improved baby skills and awareness
- improved family unity and communication
- improved extended family communication
- strengthened child development and care efforts
- revived parenting skills
- improved parental self-esteem, social skills
- strengthened coping skills of young parents
- child brain and neural stimulation



# BabyFAST

## Program structure:

- Baby FAST parents enrol through outreach programs and open enrolment.
- After being shown the program content, parents who commit to Baby FAST meet together weekly for eight weeks.
- Each session lasts approximately 2 ½ hours. Parents consistently tell us they wish they could meet more often.
- Baby FAST programs are typically held at churches, hospitals, clinics, and early childhood centres.
- Program cycles conclude with graduation ceremonies.
- After graduation, parents work together as a virtual community and meet regularly to support each other while their babies grow.

## FAST team leaders include:

- Health nurse
- Occupational therapist or baby massage therapist
- Community Agency representative
- Young mother leader -- often FAST graduate
- Young father leader
- Mother or father (or support person) of young mother or young father
- Father specialist

We thoroughly train FAST teams and coach them through the process of delivering this exciting and absorbing program.

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## Long term evaluation data from pre and post surveys shows strong and statistically significant positive outcomes (2002-2007):

- **34% of parents showed improvement in post-program family relationships**
  - **7% of parents describe increased networking and support from community, nurses, or other parents**
  - **Parents and grandparents consistently report increasing family cohesion after the program**
  - **Parents and grandparents consistently report reduced stress and aggression in the household**
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For Further information on Baby FAST or on other FAST models please contact Families And Schools Together Australia.

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