|  |
| --- |
| **Title of Research Presentation:** Co-location of early childhood services in Child and Family Centres and its impact on service collaboration: an ethnographic study. |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title)**  **Background/Objectives:** There is a global trend towards place-based initiatives (PBIs) to break the cycle of disadvantage and promote positive child development. Service integration is a common element of early childhood PBIs designed to address multiple disadvantages under one roof. The Tasmanian government adopted a place-based service delivery model in 2009 where early childhood services (ECS) were co-located in Child and Family Centres. The aim was to deliver a more coordinated and comprehensive service for families of young children. This paper presents qualitative findings from the Tassie Kids Study, focusing on collaboration between services.  **Methods:** Using an ethnographic study design, over 100 naturalistic observations were recorded in health and education ECS settings in 4 Tasmanian communities between April 2017 and August 2018. In addition, 43 ECS providers and 38 parents/carers with pre-school aged children participated in semi-structured interviews.  **Results:** Both health and education service providers were seeking more effective collaboration with services in their own sectors as well as enhanced collaboration between sectors. Co-location of services was facilitating local cooperation and coordination between services. Collaborative practice remained dependent on the commitment and practice of individual service providers with support from local systems and structures. Policies relating to sharing information between services and a lack of regular shared professional development were factors inhibiting greater collaboration. For parents, co-location had enhanced access to services, but services were viewed as independent of each other.  **Discussion:** The establishment of Child and Family Centres has contributed to greater cooperation and coordination between ECS and this has enhanced access to services for families. However, the results showed that Centres have not yet fully realised their potential of delivering collaborative practice and identified information sharing as the main barrier to overcome.  **Keywords:** Early childhood services, Place based,Ethnography, Co-location, Collaboration |