



## The music and wellbeing programs transforming Aussie childcare centres

**S**uccessfully running a childcare centre requires a lot of passion and hard work; but when the market gets tough, one of the ways to stay strong is to find a point of difference.

We hear a lot about oversupply of childcare services across Australia and the challenges they face week in, week out – low occupancy, and difficulty motivating staff and engaging families, for instance.

But what about some good-news stories? Are there centres that are doing well, and how?

Some centres have discovered that putting music and wellbeing at the heart of their curriculum has been a breakthrough. Many services have been turning to the award-winning Bonkers Beat programs to transform their centres, boost occupancy and stand out from the crowd.

Now, many centre owners who have experienced firsthand the impact of the Bonkers Beat programs are sharing the secret to their success stories.

A dramatic increase in occupancy and smiles all round

Ellina from Smart Oz Kidz, Victoria, started the Bonkers Beat music program in her centre around eight months ago – and that's all it took to start reaping the rewards!

In less than a year of running the program at her service, the centre's occupancy has seen a huge increase.

'Occupancy was sitting at around 60–65 per cent, but since implementing the Bonkers Beat music program at our centre, we have reached just over 95 per cent of our capacity,' says Ellina.

She believes that the program plays a big part in attracting families to her centre, adding weight to its curriculum and making a strong point of difference.

Directors, owners and educators love the links to National Quality Framework (NQF) and Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) outcomes.

Ellina particularly enjoys the way in which the Bonkers Beat content links to the NQF and the EYLF outcomes – not to mention the visible benefits for children's learning.

'The Bonkers Beat program supports the wellbeing of children, and music is a proven factor that plays a big part in the earliest stages of brain development,' says Ellina.

The inclusion of the program in the curriculum at Smart Oz Kidz has also made the programming for educators easier.

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'Bonkers Beat has enhanced our educators' approach to programming. The way the Bonkers Beat songs are connected to the world around us gives educators great links to our curriculum, and ties in beautifully with the EYLF,' Ellina explains.

Early childhood programs that everyone can benefit from

For Kay from The Forest Childcare Centre, New South Wales, the Bonkers Beat programs have brought everyone at her centres together over the last four years – and that's what she loves most.

'[I love] the fact that it brings everyone together and they all participate: the children, the staff and the parents. To me it's all-encompassing, and really spreads through the centre.'

And when Kay says 'everyone', that definitely includes the children!

When it comes to bringing the teams together, Bonkers Beat training has a point of difference, too! The bi-annual Wellness Summits for each service, ongoing support and access to the programs online will benefit every educator, and can be reached by any service across Australia.

Sonya from Central Gardens Child Care, New South Wales, believes that Wellness Summits are the best way to learn. Inspirational presentations by Galina Zenin, the founder of the Bonkers Beat programs, and other guest speakers help educators with their personal and professional growth.

'My educators actually told me that the Wellness Summit is the one they like to attend to get motivation,' Sonya explains. 'One of my staff members was actually on holidays, but her response to the Summit was "I'll be there. That's the training I never want to miss!"'

When Kay initially sought out the support of the Bonkers Beat programs, it was to build on her own understanding of how powerful music can be for children's development.

'I really think music is essential for early childhood development, so I did a lot of music myself but really needed some structure to implement it at our centres. I heard Galina speak and thought, that's the sort of program I want in my centres', says Kay.

Enriching families' lives all the way home  
The reaction from families to the addition of the Bonkers Beat programs has been overwhelmingly positive and has created a noticeable shift.



'Everyone is just so happy to see children going home singing the songs and listening to music together. Parents are now more involved, because with the music and the resources for home, they get to explore it together and it's a family activity,' says Ellina.

The broad scope of the benefits that the Bonkers Beat programs bring is exciting and inspiring, within the centre and beyond.

'For one of our families, their oldest child is learning to play piano and is now learning to play the Bonkers Beat songs – the whole family is participating, which is so fantastic to see! Another child with us who is visually impaired is also participating. Well, the Bonkers Beat music has brought about such confidence and joy for him, and to see that is just so rewarding and priceless,' says Ellina.

When it comes to creating a special childcare centre culture for all, the Bonkers Beat success stories speak for themselves.

Kay, Ellina, Sonya and many other owners and directors have found that Bonkers Beat programs have really been embedded at the heart of their services, offering benefits to everyone. And the songs just keep creating memories to last a lifetime.

As Ellina puts it: 'Jump on board with Bonkers Beat; you will never regret it!' ●

To learn more about the Bonkers Beat programs, call 1300-B-BEAT or visit [EarlyChildhoodEducationalPrograms.com.au](http://EarlyChildhoodEducationalPrograms.com.au).