

Parents as Partners in Junior Rugby League



Final Report
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Parents as Partners in Children's Sport

Parents play a crucially important role in positively influencing their children's development through sport, as teachers, life skills coaches, role models, supporters and enablers, spectators, officials, administrators, and financiers.

Team sports, such as junior rugby league, are an important context for influencing the development of young people.

However, children's development in and through sport depends upon the quality of adult involvement, especially from parents. This is not surprising as the family and the parent-child relationship is a basic unit of socialization and has a pervasive impact on many different aspects of children's development.

Aims of Project

The present research aimed to extend our knowledge and understanding of how parental involvement influences children's sporting experience in Australia.

The Play Well Triple P project aimed to develop and test a parenting support intervention that would promote positive parental involvement and decrease negative parent behaviour in junior rugby league.

We used co-design principles to develop and evaluate a brief, universal online and text messaging parenting program designed to assist parents develop practical strategies to support their children's enjoyment and participation in junior rugby league.



Overview of Project Phases

The project was conducted in three phases (see Figure 1). The study applied a consumer-focused, iterative process of program design and development and drew on co-design principles (Sanders & Kirby, 2015). This process has been used successfully in the dissemination of population health approaches to parenting support (Sanders et al., 2014).

Phase 1: Online survey. We conducted an online survey of a socioeconomically and culturally diverse sample of 1,418 parents of children playing junior rugby league. The survey aimed to better understand the parenting and family factors that contribute to children's experience of junior rugby league. We also sought to identify the prevalence of problematic parenting behaviour during training or on game day. This information was used alongside consultation and feedback from the NRL to develop the content of the online program.

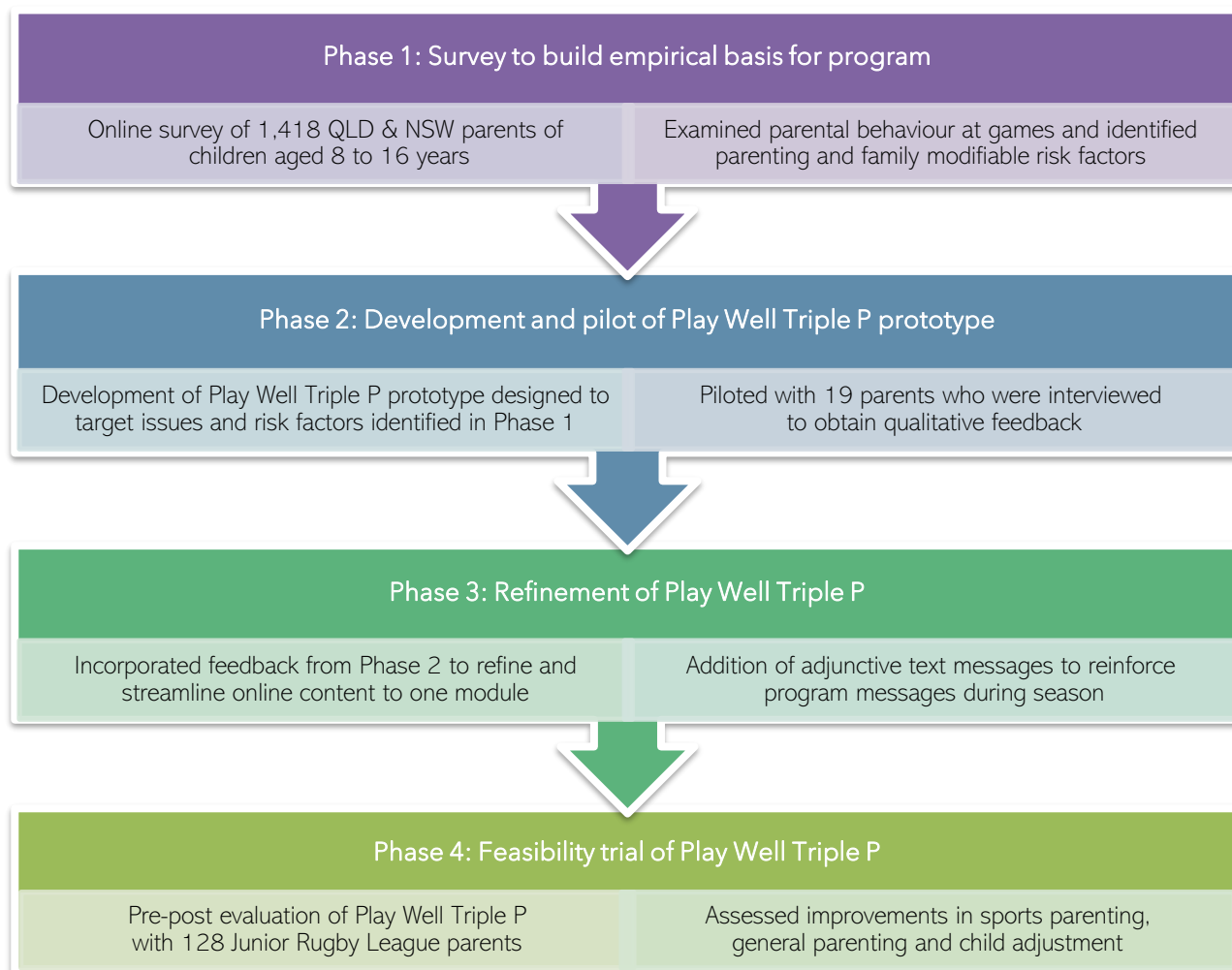
Phase 2: Development and piloting of Play Well Triple P. This phase aimed to develop and pilot the Play Well Triple P online program. Interviews were conducted with 19 participating parents to identify the acceptability and usefulness of the program. Based on this feedback, the program was further refined and streamlined.

Phase 3: Refinement of Play Well Triple P. This phase involved the development of the final version of Play Well, which comprises one 30-minute online module plus a series of biweekly text messages designed to support parents' implementation of the Play Well strategies across the season.

Phase 4: Feasibility trial of Play Well Triple P. Phase 4 involved a quantitative evaluation of Play Well during the 2022 season, with 128 parents of Junior Rugby League players. The trial examined changes associated with taking part in Play Well in sports parenting behaviour, general parenting practices and child behaviour from pre- to post-intervention.



Figure 1. Overview of phases in the Play Well Triple P project



Phase 1: Online Parenting Survey

The details and findings from this survey were presented to the NRL in a previous report (Sanders, Mallett, Rynne, Kirby & Dittman, 2020) and have been submitted for publication (Mallett, Sanders, Dittman, Kirby & Rynne, under review). An outline of the study is provided below.

Research Questions

The study employed an anonymous online survey to better understand and document parental beliefs and behaviour in Junior Rugby League, and to identify the sociodemographic and family risk factors associated with inappropriate parental behaviour in children's sport. The study addressed the following major key research questions:

- 1) What is the prevalence of inappropriate parental responses as spectators and in interactions with their children before, during and after games?
- 2) Which potentially modifiable factors within the family, particularly ineffective parenting, parental emotional functioning and parental sporting beliefs and attitudes, are associated with inappropriate spectator behaviour and negative emotional reactions at games?



Participants

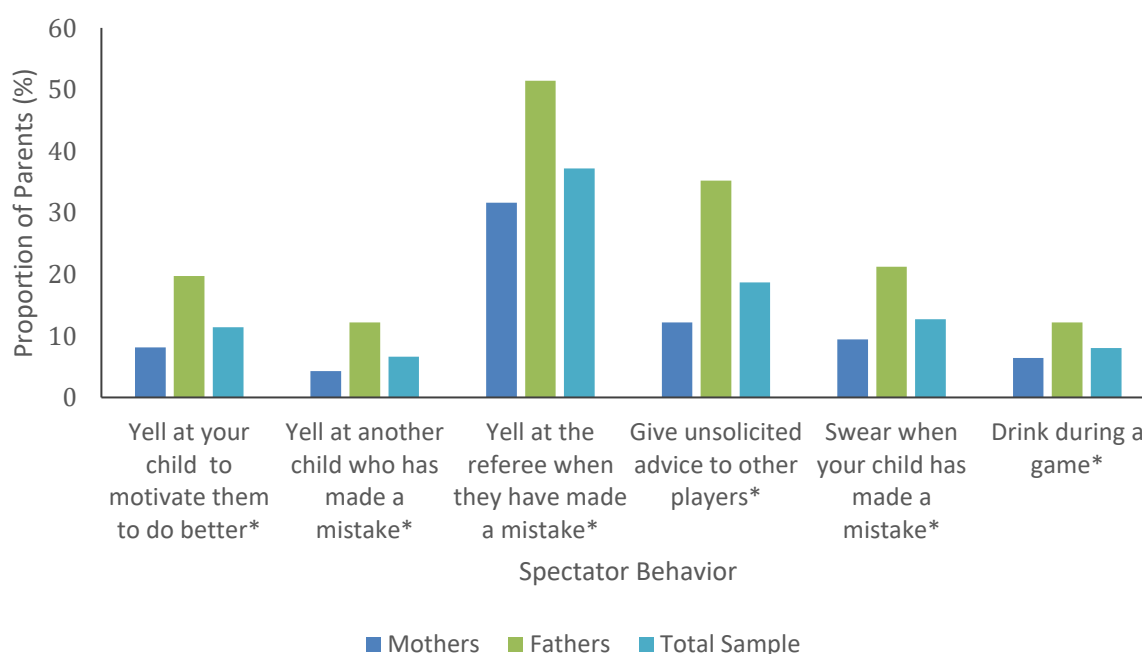
Respondents to the survey were 1,418 Junior Rugby League parents. Parents were recruited from across Queensland and New South Wales via social media and email outreach from the NRL. Parents ranged in age from 24 to 74 years (mean age = 41.22 years), with both mothers (72%) and fathers (28%) taking part in the study. Parents who completed the survey were a socioeconomically, culturally, and ethnically diverse group. Most parents identified their cultural background as Australian (76%), with representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (8.4%), New Zealand Māori (6.4%) and Polynesian (3.5%) cultural backgrounds. Most parents were in paid employment either full-time (58%) or part-time (29%), with personal annual income ranging from under \$10,000 to over \$100,000.

Main Findings

This research revealed many parents were strongly emotionally invested in their children's sport and socially identified with the sport of rugby league. However, the findings indicated that a significant minority of parents use harsh and inconsistent parenting practices with their children and engage in inappropriate behaviour as spectators at their children's games. Fathers were more likely than mothers to become upset or behave inappropriately at their children's games (see Figure 2).

The self-reported negative behaviour and emotions of parents were predicted by individual parent factors, including ineffective and controlling parenting practices and parental emotional wellbeing, as well as factors more specific to sport, including competitive attitudes, beliefs about winning, and investment in rugby league. Overall, the findings of this phase of research provided justification for the need for a parenting support intervention in Junior Rugby League, as well as identified the parenting factors to be targeted in the design of such an intervention.

Figure 2. Prevalence of Inappropriate Spectator Behaviour at Junior Rugby League Games by Parent Gender



Note. *Denotes significant differences between mother and father proportions, $p > .001$.

Proportions calculated based on responses of 2 or above on a scale from 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*Always*).

Phase 2: Development and Piloting of Play Well Triple P

Program Development

Drawing on the findings of Phase 1, Phase 2 involved the development of the initial prototype of Play Well Triple P. This included designing program content, script development, and the filming of footage to be embedded within two online modules. Program content drew on the theoretical framework of the Triple P system and was adapted to focus on increasing positive parenting practices in sport, and reducing or eliminating parenting practices that have an adverse effect on children's enjoyment and participation. The two online modules took 30 to 45 minutes to complete and contained video demonstrations and explanations of concepts and strategies, "vox-pop" testimonials from parents, children and officials about their experiences, and background shots of games and training sessions. The videos were designed to ensure representation of children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds, and both girls and boys playing rugby league. Each video segment was accompanied by a brief activity to facilitate learning and engagement (e.g., multiple choice questions, responding to scenarios, checkboxes to select personal goals).

Participants

A sample of 19 parents were recruited via outreach to 2 Junior Rugby League clubs in Southeast Queensland during the 2020 season. Participants ranged in age from 30 to 56 years (mean age = 41.67 years) and were the parents of at least one child aged 6 to 18 years enrolled in the 2020 rugby league season. Ten (52.6%) of the respondents were fathers. Thirteen (68.4%) of the respondents identified as Australian, three as New Zealand Pākehā (15.8%), with one respondent identifying as being from a Polynesian cultural background and the two other from a North-Western European background. All but one of the parents (94.7%) volunteered in some capacity with their child's club, with a third of the sample serving as their child's coach.

Methodology

Parents completed the Play Well Triple P online prototype and then took part in an interview via Zoom. The semi-structured interview included questions to assess parents' acceptability and reactions to the program, usefulness and relevance of the content, and their intention to use the strategies and tips presented in the online modules. Each interview was recorded and transcribed for subsequent thematic analysis.

Note that the start of the 2020 season was delayed until July and was truncated to run over a shorter period due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This context is important in understanding parental responses to the program.

Main Findings

Two themes and six subthemes were generated from the reflexive thematic analysis (see Table 1). Participants discussed *the nuts and bolts of participation* in the program as well as the *program's impact* on parents.

The nuts and bolts of participation: Parents' perceptions of the program were aggregated into three subthemes: (1) program endorsements, (2) considerations for program refinements, and (3) participation barriers and hesitations. First, the participants provided *endorsements for the program*, indicating that the information covered was important for all individuals in attendance at youth sporting events. Parents described an appreciation for the content and the importance of disseminating this information to parents. Participants reported that they liked the relatively short duration and the interactive nature of the program. As a summary:

I liked the interactive nature of [the program], particularly the videos. And I like the fact that it didn't take too long to go through it and that you got feedback straightaway on your answers. And I like the fact that it was local sports. I could understand and I could see myself in those spaces and recognise how my children act and see those same events and things like that in my own community. PA19



Table 1. Overview of the themes derived from the interviews

The nuts and bolts of participation	
Program endorsements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents liked the content and interactive format, and felt the program was important ▪ Everyone involved in the sporting environment should participate, including both parents and grandparents, regardless of their level of experience
Considerations for program refinements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants provided alternative responses to conflict intervention with parents ▪ Program implementation was suggested to take place prior to the start of the season or early in the season
Participation barriers and hesitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents have busy schedules, which may serve as a barrier to voluntary participation in the program ▪ Some parents may lack an initial interest and/or feel as though the information is not applicable to them, which may reflect an overarching closed mindedness to change
Program impact	
New and reinforced knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents learned the importance of keeping a positive attitude and ensuring a fun and enjoyable sporting experience for the kids, which can be fostered via volunteering their time ▪ Parents emphasized the importance of constructive communication in the sporting environment as a strategy they developed for promoting effective communication with their child. ▪ Parents described the necessity of modelling appropriate behaviours, such as emotional regulation and demonstration of respect towards others.
Behavioural intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As a result of delayed program implementation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, some parents reportedly did not have an opportunity to implement changes to their behaviours ▪ Some parents reported changes, however those who did not reported intentions to change their behaviours
It's not just for rugby league	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents expressed that the value of the program extends beyond rugby league and could apply to any other sporting context ▪ Many of the parents described how what they learned can apply to contexts outside of the sporting environment

Corroborating the perceived value of the program, both coaches and parents emphasized the importance of having all new members participate. Other parents advocated that the program should be offered to all parents regardless of their level of experience. According to PA4:

I think it's probably a good idea that a new parent coming to Rugby League sit down and do [the program] before they start. Whatever sport that their child is going to participate in, all parents should

have to do that, especially if they are new parents to sport, because that shows them how to react and how to encourage a child and how to act on the field and all that sort of stuff.

Despite positive comments about the program, parents offered *considerations for program refinements*. There seemed to be varying perspectives about some of the content related to parents' conflict intervention and diffusion, that led a few participants to suggest alternative responses to ensure program content was consistent with Junior Rugby League regulations.

Nonetheless, most parents were pleased with the quality and accuracy of the content. For example:

I think for your average parent, the [program] content hits all the major issues. But even with my social work background, I didn't feel like anything was missed. I think it's a really good summary, and most parents will be like "Oh I don't need to do that, I behave myself at games." But when they actually go in and do it, I think they'll be a little bit surprised. (C28)

All participants provided their opinions about the scheduling of the program, which was generally suggested to take place before the season or early in the season, providing the opportunity to learn about positive parenting behaviours early on:

Well, we've finished football now. So, when we actually did that program, it was really, you know, sort of three quarters of the way through the season. So had it been at the start of the season, it might have been more beneficial. And I might have been able to, I guess, put those tips into practice and maybe focus on those a bit more. (PA7)

Importantly, this suggestion was largely reflective of some of the challenges faced with the uncertainties, delays, and restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the participant's suggestions reinforced the value of implementing Play Well Triple P before the season or early in the season. Some participants felt the program could be shorter, while others felt the program could have benefited from more depth. Some participants offered alternatives for the method of implementation, such as offering the program in a group format and/or providing a specific time and location for participants to complete the program (e.g., during a training session), whereas others appreciated the independent, self-paced nature of the program.

Finally, participants offered some possible *barriers and hesitations of participation* that might limit parent involvement in the program. Participants indicated that most parents have extremely busy schedules and indicated that time constraints might cause some parents to not participate unless it was mandated. For instance, B10 explained:

Parents feel like they're busy enough as it is with work and school. To be able to make that time to take your child to training is a big enough ask as it is. Around dinner time, you've still got dinner to provide, you know, two nights a week. So, I think that's what one of the biggest challenges is. (B10)

Another barrier that was commonly brought up by parents and coaches is how some parents may not feel the information is applicable to them or that they are already adept enough. For instance, when asked about possible barriers, (PA19) offered the following: "Some people think that they're perfect parents, and don't need to do any further training. I don't agree with that." A number of participants added how it may be the parents that need it the most that might be the least interested, reflecting a lack of open-mindedness to change. For instance:

It's a struggle to get to get people to look at their own behaviours in a way that they think they need to change, I think people can be pretty naive and don't see themselves as the ones that are doing those behaviours. That's very hard to self-analyse. The right type of person is going to take the most from [the program] but the wrong type of person may not. I think parents should be willing to participate, but whether they are or they aren't, who knows? They should be. Hopefully they are. (PA15)



Program impact. Parents discussed the various ways the program had an impact on them, which resulted in three subthemes: (4) new and reinforced knowledge, (5) behavioural intentions, and (6) it's not just for rugby league.

Parents talked about the *new and reinforced knowledge* they gained from the program. Sometimes the knowledge was new, challenged prior thinking, and/or opened their eyes to new ideas. Other times the knowledge reinforced existing behaviours and/or served as an important refresher. Parents described the importance of keeping a positive attitude and how they should stay focused on making the sporting experience fun and enjoyable for the kids. For instance:

I think it was all about me. I feel as though I thought it was about the children. But I think 80% of my thinking around the kid's sports was more around me. I should have been focusing more around the children. (PB16)

This also included the necessity of taking an active involvement in the creation of the environment by volunteering. Parents emphasized the importance of communicating in a way that is constructive with everyone in the sport environment, including with coaches, other parents, and most importantly with their children. The participants discussed learning about the importance of modelling appropriate behaviours, such as emotional regulation and being respectful towards coaches and officials, and how this contributed to a more positive environment for the children. For instance, when asked to provide some of the takeaways from the program, PA9 described:

You've also got to be your child's number one role model. And I think that fundamentally your behaviour is the thing that's probably going to be the most important thing that really shapes your child's thoughts on their sport to a degree. So, if for you, it's, you know, all about encouragement, and let's have fun and enjoy the day and not too much pressure or, or getting upset with results and, and, you know, decisions and just behaving yourself, you know, in an in a nice way. Your kid's going to get the most out of sport.

When asked about their *behavioural intentions* to try out the strategies in the program, some participants described that they had some opportunities to apply the knowledge learned. However, the majority explained that they hadn't started to apply the knowledge only because they had not yet had the opportunity in the short time frame since participating in the program, once again reflecting some of the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example:

I didn't get a chance. And that sort of goes back to my point about when this survey should be done. And that's why I say at the start of the year because it was done for me at the end of the season, so I didn't get a chance to engage any of the learning ideas and the ideology of your program. (PA6)

Despite the limited time frame for applying the material between the program completion and participating in the interviews, many of the participants emphasized their *intentions to engage in behaviours* that aligned with the knowledge they gained, such as positive affirmations, emotional regulation, constructive feedback, having a greater focus on enjoyment, and letting their child approach them before providing feedback. As an example, PB16 explained:

No, I haven't applied anything yet. We actually had a bye this weekend, so [child] didn't even play this weekend. So, no I haven't had any opportunity to put anything into action. But, I would definitely try to get more involved with the volunteering and be the best supporter I can be. And that's, and that's all that the kids want. Showing positive reinforcement that we are there to watch him play the game and we know that he's doing his best.

Finally, parents emphasized that their takeaways from the program were not just for Junior Rugby League and extended to other sports. They described how they thought the content of Play Well Triple P applies to any sport at any level. For instance:

I think the program is terrific. I've always really liked the Triple P programs. I'd love to see it rolled out across all Junior Rugby League clubs, so that they can make it available to their parents. I think, you know, ultimately, you'd be doing it for netball and basketball and all the other junior sports too. (PA9)

Parents also strongly felt that they would be able to transfer the knowledge to contexts outside of sport. This reinforced the idea that the program can be generalized across other sport contexts and that the parents gain knowledge that extends to the home environment. This was well exemplified by PB9 who described:

The tips were helpful, yes, not necessarily just in terms of how I engage with my child directly associated with NRL but at home even. One of the things I did like, and it does still relate to the sporting example, was about picking and choosing the time to actually talk to my son about his game. I felt that that might actually translate at home, to when mistakes are made. Because he, of the three of my boys, gets very hung up on when he makes a mistake, and can get quite upset. So, I've actually taken that away as a really big thing to let that temperature cool and let him come to me when he is ready to talk about things.

Conclusions from Phase 2

Overall, there was a high level of positive endorsement and satisfaction with the program, suggesting that the brief online format used in the Play Well program was viewed by parents as helpful and efficient.

Phase 3: Refinement of Play Well Triple P

Two major changes were made to Play Well Triple P in this phase: 1) condensing of online content from two modules to one; and 2) addition of text message prompts.

Refinement of Online Component

Several important changes were made to the online modules based on the feedback on program content, length, and accessibility obtained from parents in Phase 2, as well as an external review of the module content. It was decided that to maximise parent completion, the online component needed to be distilled into one module. The goal was to do this in a way that maintained the key knowledge, messages, and strategies embedded in the two-module version of the program.

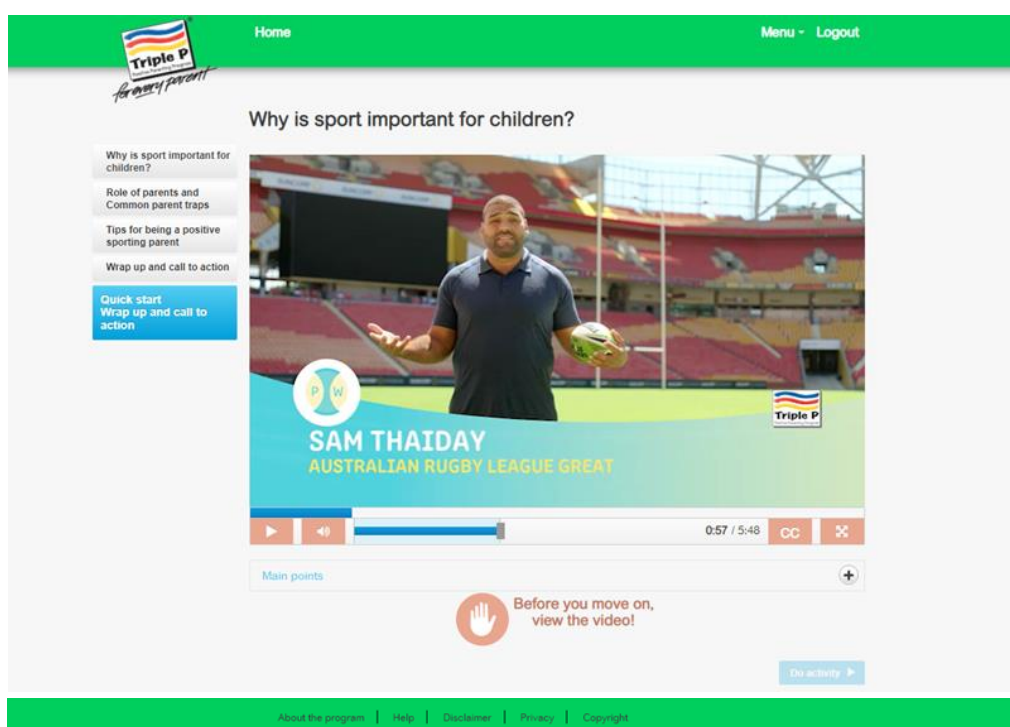
To accomplish this, the research team worked alongside a professional film production team to revise the script, streamline the footage and voiceover content, and better organise the content in a way that ensured program messaging was clear, engaging, and regularly reinforced during the video footage. Further, additional footage was filmed at Suncorp Stadium that combined 'expert' input from two of our research team with narration from rugby league great, Sam Thaiday, as the 'host' of the program.

This footage was then embedded within the Triple P Online bespoke internet platform. Like the prototype version of Play Well Triple P, this final version involved parents working through a series of videos and interactive activities (see Table 2 for an overview of program content). However, the use of the Triple P Online platform afforded a number of benefits for widespread distribution of Play Well Triple P for this trial, including streamlined registration and accessibility into the program for parents and coaches; a dedicated back-end management platform for monitoring parent registrations, progress and completions, and contacting parents; incorporation of Play Well Triple P and NRL branding; and a user-friendly and engaging interface for parents to complete the program.



Table 2. Overview of Play Well Triple P online content

Segment 1	Why is sport important for children?
Segment 2	<p>The important role of parents in sport</p> <p>Common parent traps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kids watch others (being a poor role model) ▪ Negativity and criticism ▪ Ignoring positive behaviour ▪ Too much focus on winning (unhelpful beliefs) ▪ Too high expectations (unrealistic expectations) ▪ Pressure to perform ▪ Difficulty managing emotions ▪ Outside influences on children's behaviour
Segment 3	<p>Tips for being a positive sporting parent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be a good role model ▪ Keep thoughts and emotions in check ▪ Be an interested, tuned in observer ▪ Give support and encouragement ▪ Be a positive and respectful supporter of the game ▪ Give helpful feedback at a time that is right ▪ Be an active family ▪ Be prepared and reliable
Segment 4	<p>Wrap up</p> <p>Accessing further parenting support</p> <p>Call to action</p>



The screenshot shows the Triple P website interface. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with 'Home' and 'Menu - Logout'. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is 'Tips for being a positive sporting parent'. On the left side, there is a sidebar menu with the following items: 'Why is sport important for children?', 'Role of parents and Common parent traps', 'Tips for being a positive sporting parent', 'Wrap up and call to action', 'Quick start', and 'Wrap up and call to action'. The main content area features a video player. The video title is 'TIP 1 BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL'. The video player shows a man in a blue cap and a woman in a yellow shirt interacting with children in green sports uniforms. Below the video player, there is a 'Main points' section with a hand icon and the text 'Before you move on, view the video!'. At the bottom of the page, there is a green footer bar with links for 'About the program', 'Help', 'Disclaimer', 'Privacy', and 'Copyright'.

Addition of Text Messages

A text message component was added to the online module. This decision was consistent with strong evidence for the efficacy of text message interventions for promoting behaviour change (Armanasco et al., 2017; Head et al., 2013). The addition of the text messages maintained the brevity of the program, while aiming to achieve the following: a) reinforce key program messages throughout the season; b) prompt parents to implement the strategies described in the online module and act on personal goals set during the online module; c) help ensure any immediate positive effects of the online module were sustained over the course of the season.

The text messages were delivered using the propelo™ platform on a biweekly schedule, with the first designed to be delivered in the lead-up to the game (e.g., at weekly training, or on a Thursday before a weekend game) and the second to be delivered after the game. The lead-up messages prompted parents to try out strategies in upcoming games, while the game day messages prompted parents to reflect on their behaviour (including efforts to try out strategies) and their child's reactions after the game. The messages were tailored to the parent (i.e., by addressing them by name, referring to specifically to their child's name), and incorporated responses entered in the online module related to the specific goals the parent had set for their behaviour. Depending on the timing of parent's completion of the online module, up to 12 pairs of lead-up and game day messages were delivered to parents, along with 2 follow up messages to access further parenting support if needed, and to thank parents for their participation in the program.



Phase 4: Feasibility Trial of Play Well Triple P

The final blended modality version of Play Well Triple P was then evaluated in a feasibility trial during the 2021 Junior Rugby League season. The trial involved a pre-post evaluation of Play Well Triple P. The major research questions for the trial were:

- 1) What are the effects of participating in Play Well Triple P on sports-related and general parenting, child behaviour, and parental emotional reactivity?
- 2) What is the level of satisfaction and acceptability of Play Well Triple P?
- 3) Is the program feasible to roll-out with parents within a Junior Rugby League season?

Participants

In total, 128 parents took part in the evaluation by completing both the pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys. Parents were recruited via outreach through social media, traditional media, and emails sent from the NRL. All outreach targeted parents with children registered in Southeast Queensland clubs.

The sample of parents ranged in age from 25 to 56 years (mean age = 38.69 years), with both mothers (72.4%) and fathers (27.6%) taking part in the trial. While most of the sample identified as being Australian (77.6%), there was representation from Indigenous Australian (9%), New Zealand Pākeha (3.7%), New Zealand Māori (3.0%) and Polynesian (3.0%) cultural backgrounds. Most parents were in paid full-time or part-time employment (83.6%), with annual household incomes ranging from \$20,000 to over \$200,000. Approximately 41.8% of parents reported an annual household income below the median Australian household income in 2020. Most parents were married or in cohabiting relationships (82.1%), with 11.9% identifying as single parents, and 6.0% as being separated or divorced. Finally, three quarters of the sample (76.1%) volunteered at their child's club in some capacity, including 17.8% who were coaches.

Parents were asked to nominate a target child to focus on when completing the program and the evaluation surveys. Target children ranged in age from 4 to 12 years (mean age = 8.56 years), and most were male (92.6%). This was the first Junior Rugby League season for 27.6% of the target children, with relatively equal proportions of children participating in their second up to their fifth seasons.



Assessment of Outcomes

To evaluate the effects of Play Well Triple P, parents completed a series of well-validated and change sensitive questionnaires before beginning the program and at the end of the season. The questionnaires were embedded within an online survey, that also included questions to assess parents' sociodemographic background.

Two questionnaires were used to assess parenting behaviour. To measure *sports-related parenting*, parents completed the Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (Lee & Maclean, 1997). This questionnaire assessed helpful and unhelpful behaviours that parents might display towards their child's junior sport. The questionnaire comprised three subscales: directive behaviour (i.e., directive, controlling or intrusive behaviour), active involvement (i.e., constructive, helpful parenting behaviour) and praise and understanding. *Usual parenting practices* were measured using the brief, 10-item version of the Parenting Scale (Reitman et al., 2001). This scale assessed levels of ineffective and problematic parenting behaviours across two domains: over-reactivity (i.e., hostility, negative verbal and emotional reactions), and laxness (i.e., inconsistent, permissive parenting).

Child adjustment was assessed using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997). This parent-report measure assesses children's level of disruptive behaviour, hyperactivity, peer problems and prosocial behaviour. Finally, parents also completed the Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale (Preece et al., 2019) to assess their ability to *control negative emotions*.

Once parents completed the initial, pre-intervention survey, they were provided access to the Play Well Triple P Online program. Completion of the online module then triggered the series of text messages to begin.

Main Findings

Effects on Sports Parenting Behaviour: The results suggested that taking part in Play Well Triple P was associated with declines in negative sports parenting behaviour and increases in positive sports parenting behaviour (see Figure 3). Specifically, there was a significant improvement in levels of active parental involvement ($F(1, 127) = 18.63, p < .001$; Cohen's $d = 0.38$) following participation in Play Well Triple P. This finding indicated that participation in Play Well was related to increases in positive and constructive parental behaviours. There was also a significant decline in parental directive behaviour from pre-intervention to post-intervention ($F(1, 127) = 25.62, p < .001$; Cohen's $d = 0.45$). Parents' completion of Play Well was associated with a reduction in controlling and intrusive parental involvement in their child's junior rugby league. There was no change in parents' levels of praise and understanding over the course of the program ($F(1, 127) = 0.03, p < .866$; Cohen's $d = 0.15$).

Effects on General Parenting Practices: The results indicated that involvement in Play Well was related to declines in ineffective parenting practices in the home (see Figure 4). There was a significant decline in parental over-reactivity ($F(1, 120) = 5.20, p = .024$; Cohen's $d = 0.21$), with parents displaying lower levels of hostility and excessively negative reactions in response to their child's problem behaviour at post-intervention. There was also a marginally significant decline ($F(1, 120) = 3.79, p = .054$; Cohen's $d = 0.18$) in parental laxness, suggesting that parents displayed lower levels of permissive and inconsistent parental behaviour at post-intervention.

Effects on Children's Behavioural and Social Adjustment: There were no significant changes from pre- to post-intervention in children's behaviour or peer relations across the domains of disruptive behaviour ($F(1, 119) = 0.19, p = .889$), hyperactivity ($F(1, 119) = 0.46, p = .497$) and peer problems ($F(1, 119) = 1.92, p = .169$). These findings are not surprising given that scores on these subscales of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire were in the normal range of functioning prior to intervention. Thus, there was little room for improvement in these aspects of child adjustment following participation in the intervention.

Effects on Parents' Emotional Reactivity: There were no changes in parents' negative emotional reactivity from pre- to post-intervention ($t(117) = 1.29, p = .200$).



Figure 3. Play Well Triple P decreased parents' negative sports parenting behaviour and increased their positive sports parenting behaviour

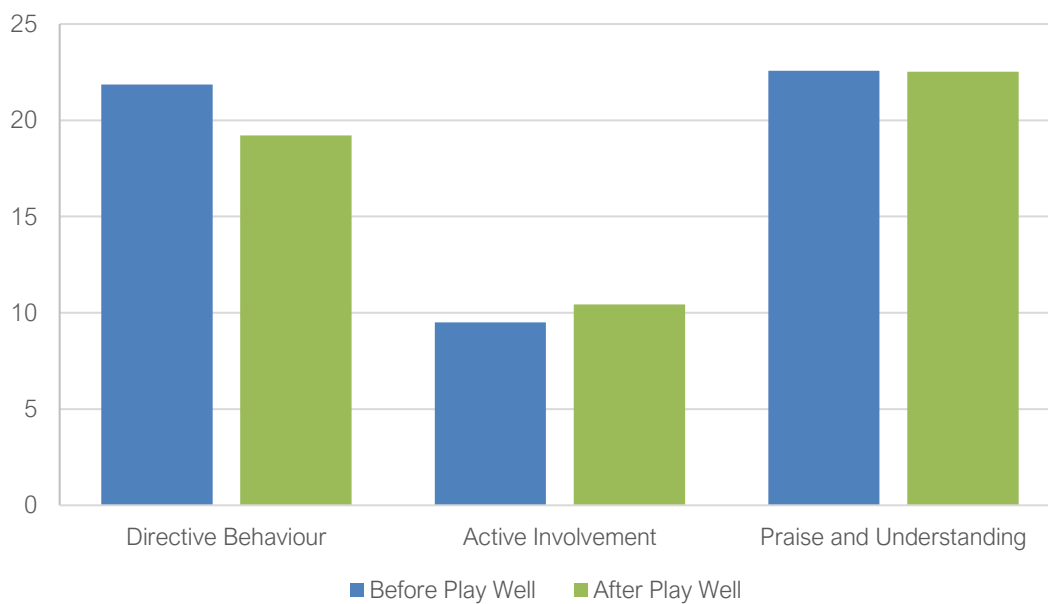
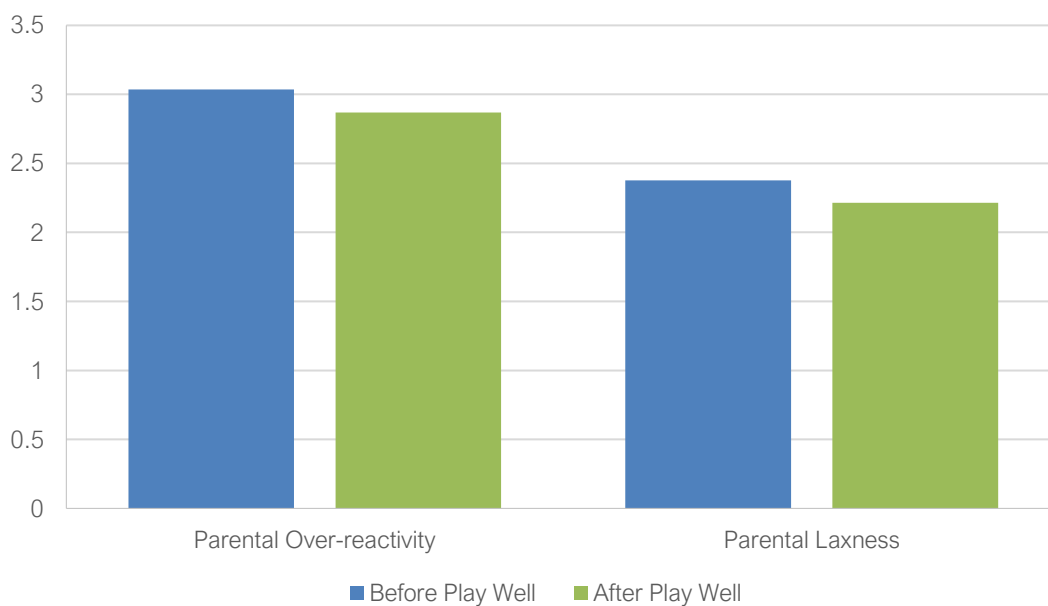


Figure 4. Play Well Triple P decreased parents' ineffective parenting practices at home



Parent Satisfaction with Play Well Triple P: Parents also completed a questionnaire at the end of the season to assess their level of satisfaction with the program and its usefulness and relevance to them as Junior Rugby League parents. These results of this survey along with illustrative comments are provided in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Parent Satisfaction with Play Well Triple P



Summary of Key Findings

- Play Well Triple P is a promising, low intensity parenting program that increases positive parental involvement in junior rugby league.
- The program appears to decrease negative parent involvement in sport and coercive parenting practices more generally.
- The program was well accepted and viewed as helpful by all parents regardless of gender or cultural background.

Recommendations

- The NRL introduces Play Well Triple P as a universal offer to all parents of Junior Rugby League players in Queensland in an ongoing manner starting with the 2022 season.
- The NRL works with UQ's industry partner, Triple P International to develop the necessary commercial arrangements to ensure a sustainable bespoke online platform for routine delivery of the program.
- The NRL embeds a mechanism for evaluation within the routine deployment of the program to ensure that the program continues to meet its objectives and allows for quality improvement in the future.
- The NRL funds a further program evaluation project in 2022 to ensure that the promising findings from the piloting and feasibility testing of the program are replicated as the program is scaled and a wider range of parents participate in the program. This evaluation will enable predictors (moderators) of response to the program to be identified and for further program refinement as required.

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