

CASE STUDY:


Refugee Child Outreach





The Refugee Child Outreach program works with children and their families to assist them in meeting their needs in their new home.


The Refugee Child Outreach (RCO) program works with young children and families who have recently arrived in Australia. It aims to support families in their settlement journey by connecting them to Australian early childhood services, and is supported by the Leith Foundation.


AT A GLANCE

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Target Participants
Refugee and asylum seeker families who arrived in Australia within the past three years and have children aged 8 years and under
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Aim
To support newly arrived families to navigate services around their settlement needs
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Organisations Involved
Brotherhood of St Laurence, the Leith Foundation, local government, maternal and child health services,
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Location
Cities of Hume and Whittlesea, Melbourne, Victoria.
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Funding
RCO is funded through multiple philanthropic trust and faith communities.

RCO is free and runs two days per week. It offers:

- support in accessing services such as playgroups, childcare, kindergartens, and maternal and child health centres
- assistance to understand Australian health care services
- play sessions in the home to encourage healthy parent-child relationships
- assistance with parenting and child development
- help to access early years activities in the local community
- assistance in finding support for families who have a child with special needs, such as a disability
- assistance to parents to understand employment and education services
- information sessions and group work to assist families with their early years needs.

Since July 2019, the RCO has supported 36 families and 41 children. Brotherhood of St Laurence's wraparound services mean families in the RCO program can also connect into a wider social network, with employment and education, as well as other opportunities to settle and thrive.

"Before I met the RCO worker I have been waiting for so long for my life to start again. When I came to Australia I feel like it's a puzzle. Now after only six months, the puzzle pieces are in place. I understand about playgroups for our baby, we are learning English to get a job, getting transport. We can finally start our life again. I have never experienced a worker like RCO one who stays so in touch and checks to make sure they are communicating well with us"

A Refugee Child Outreach parent

For More Information Visit:

<https://www.bsl.org.au/services/refugees-immigration-multiculturalism/refugee-child-outreach/>

