



The INFANT Program: Implementation in local health organisations

The Program

The Infant Feeding Active play and NuTrition (INFANT) program is a group based program aimed at providing parents/carers with children between 3-18 months old with information about healthy eating and active play from the start of life.

Trained facilitators offer support and practical advice to help parents through various stage of their child's development.

The program's content is based around 6 key messages:

- Feeding is a learning curve
- Eat together, play together
- Parents provide, kids decide
- Snack on veg and fruit
- Colour every meal with veg and fruit
- Tap into water
- Off and running

Parents do not need to be first time parents. Other caregivers such as grandparents are welcome to attend.



Implementing INFANT

The program has a flexible model of delivery and can be implemented as a stand alone model or in partnership with other organisations. Examples of models include:

Maternal Child Health (MCH) services promoting, engaging and delivering the program independently using MCH nurses as facilitators.

Community health (CH) and MCH working in partnership to implement the program. MCH promoting the program through their first time parent groups. CH then taking the lead with the last session of parent group becoming the first session of INFANT. The program is facilitated by CH staff including dietitians, health promotion officers etc.

CH and MCH work in partnership to facilitate the program on a rotational basis. One half of the year CH, second half of the year MCH.

MCH, CH and/or a relevant service or hub in the region eg., Family and Child Hub, Parents Early Education Partnership.

Use existing groups in the community, such as supported playgroups, to increasing engagement with a more diverse range of parents (CALD, low SES etc)

Benefits

Maternal and Child Health

In MCH, the introduction of first foods, transitioning from milk feeds to family foods and promoting activity are common discussions and areas of concern for first time parents. INFANT can be seen as a natural extension to first time parent groups.

INFANT may result in a decreased need for additional consultations between current key age and stage consultations. The booking of additional sessions with MCH nurses may no longer be required as questions can be answered during the INFANT program.

INFANT can accommodate up to 10 parents in a 2 hour program where in a 2 hour diary a MCH nurse can only see 4 parents.

The INFANT program can be integrated into Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Resources for Implementing INFANT

INFANT Training:

6 hours online training offered throughout set times of the year as a series of interactive modules focused on setting up local delivery of INFANT, INFANT content and group facilitation skills.

INFANT Implementation guide:

Guidance on how to sustainably embed delivery within local services, local promotion and recruitment and learnings from current INFANT models

INFANT Facilitator manual:

Session outlines for facilitators including referencing to supporting information.

Support for implementation from the INFANT project team

Support from INFANT project team on how to embed INFANT into existing services and to provide support to troubleshoot issues post implementation.



Community Health

Introduces parents to the services provided by community health. This may result in new referrals from clients who have not or would not typically access CH services.

The program can be implemented as an evidence based strategy within CH integrated health promotion plans and as a first 1000 days intervention.

INFANT content has been described as 'bread and butter' for some facilitators such as dietitians to deliver.

The programs key messages are clear and concise which is of benefit to both facilitators and parents.

Any additional relevant information can be added to the program content as seen fit eg., dental health for children.

New Parents

INFANT provides support for new parents in an informal non-clinical setting.

It allows for parents to share information, reflect and normalize challenges experienced by parents.

Provides an environment that encourages peer support among participants.

INFANT provides evidence based content and consistent messaging and resources for parents including one page session summary handouts and access to the My Baby Now app.

May introduce new parents to a range of different service options available in their community eg., community health, parenting support.

Considerations for Implementation

The number of births in a region will help determine the model. Where a region has a <700 births in a year recruitment and implementation of the INFANT program would be difficult.

Recruitment and training of facilitators in INFANT - who to train and how many to train. Establish whether a train the trainer mode will be used in conjunction with the online training modules to train staff.

How the INFANT program will be promoted to new parents and whether the program will be implemented in partnership using any of the models outlined above.

How the time of facilitators delivering the program will be accounted for within the organisation.

Who will be responsible for the program's administration. Administration required for delivering the program typically includes and is not limited to:

Marketing and communications material to promote program

Client registrations;

Development of any promotional material or additional information for participants eg., a showbag for them to take home after the first session

Recording of group time on client management systems;

Venue/room bookings;

Sending text message reminders to participants;

