

EVALUATION OF TUTTI KIDS PROGRAM

Tutti Inc
August 2009

'One of the most beautiful and profound things in the world is the liberation of people who never thought they'd be free'¹

This evaluation of Tutti Kids was undertaken by Sophia Poppe, a final year Master of Social Work student at Flinders University, Adelaide, and formed the major part of her four-month fieldwork placement with Tutti Ensemble Inc in early 2009.

¹ Maria A, (2004), 'The power of A.R.T.', Exceptional Parent, Vol. 34 Issue 7, p 56

PROLOGUE

Being involved in music and the arts opens the door to the world we live in and the history of who we are. It is a magic carpet ride into other cultures and the history of ideas, allowing us to glimpse and recognise all that is wonderful about being human. It helps us accept difference and connect with others. In short it is our birthright, and I fervently believe children living with disabilities deserve equal access to a full, rich music education, rather than the watered down version they are offered.

To be truly effective, music and the arts need to be absorbed from an early age, for as with language, the optimum time for brain development is early childhood. The colourful palate of sound provided by music can attract and strengthen concentration and listening abilities across the board, stimulating the left and right hemispheres of the brain, enhancing and develop cognitive, affective, creative and fine motor skills.

Tutti Arts began in 2004 to give school leavers a belated opportunity to benefit from an intensive arts program; and Tutti Kids began in 2007 to provide an early intervention program for young disabled children using music and drama activities.

In the long term our goal is to show how ongoing exposure to music and related arts in the hands of highly skilled teachers opens the door for disabled children to broader achievements at school, at home and in the community.

This evaluation is an important step in that journey and I thank Sophia Poppe for her invaluable formal research into what has been achieved so far.

Pat Rix

Artistic Director
Tutti Ensemble Inc

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Tutti Inc - Where it all Began

To understand the history of Tutti Kids, it is necessary to look at the history of Tutti Ensemble Inc, its umbrella organization. Pat Rix, the Artistic Director and founder of Tutti, summarises the context of Tutti Inc succinctly:

There is a struggle going on in Australia. It is happening in our cities and suburbs, in our regional centres and small towns. It goes to the heart of what we as Australians believe is a 'fair go' because it is a struggle between commitment and indifference, between inclusion and exclusion, between fairness and injustice, and ultimately between right and wrong. It is moreover a one-sided affair in which the strugglers are for the most part invisible.²

According to Rix, medical and charity models have impacted on the way the community and services have been conditioned to feel when they address disability. This thinking had to change to make it possible for disabled artists to be seen and heard; to inform mainstream philosophy; and to influence social policy.

It must be acknowledged that steps have been taken in this direction as seen in government initiatives of the 1990s of de-institutionalisation and social inclusion. However, Rix felt that there was still a huge gap for talented young disabled people, in particular, in the transition between school and work. There were very few, if any, avenues in the creative arts for these young people to pursue a future. One of the major barriers was the myriad formalities and assessments that people were required to go through to access government funded services, and many simply gave up and disappeared from the system. Rix, a talented and internationally renowned playwright and composer herself, wanted the arts to be recognised as a productive employment avenue for people with a disability. Unfortunately, the lack of adequate funding for arts related training programs, and the absence of other forms of transition to employment services, reflected that this was not so.

Rix's belief in social inclusion, and exposure of the talents of people with a disability to the wider community, was the impetus behind the establishment of a small singing group of nine people with intellectual disabilities at Minda Inc in 1997. The wider community was encouraged to join in and by 1999, the group became a choir of about forty members with a distinct identity, drawing on music and theatre for inspiration. Performances delighted audiences and resulted in huge interest in its unique style. As the choir's popularity grew nationally and internationally, Rix's dream of acceptance and celebration

² Rix, P (Nov 08 – Jan 09), 'Tutti: A Case Study, Enabling People with Disabilities to Participate in the Mainstream', Music Forum, Vol 15, p33

of difference was being realized within only two years. By this time the choir had 60 members, fifty per cent of whom identified with a disability.

The choir incorporated in July 2001 to become the Tutti Ensemble; *tutti* being a musical term meaning ‘everyone will perform together’, reflecting the organisation’s identity and vision ‘to challenge and change society’s view of people with a disability, from one of deficit to one of respect.’

In the following years, Tutti grew in popularity and also in its support from the community and the arts sector. It performed in local and international mainstream arts and music festivals, including award winning performances in partnership with major arts organisations such as the State Theatre and the State Opera. Tutti’s international connections also resulted in formation of sister choirs in Vancouver and Minneapolis.

2. Tutti Arts

In 2003, continuing her pursuit of pathways for talented young people with a disability, Rix began addressing the need for a post school performing arts program for talented young people in the Tutti choir who were classified as having moderate to high support needs. These students faced a future which offered either a non-arts based day program or in some cases a placement within packaging, laundry, catering or maintenance at Minda Incorporated³ or Bedford Industries⁴.

In 2004 Rix approached Minda with the idea of creating Tutti Arts, a new program to develop the skills and professionalism of young adults. This partnership program would support aspiring artists to grow creatively and intellectually in a stimulating environment, thus building their confidence and enhancing life-skills. Minda recognised the value of the initiative and agreed to a program which would sit within its existing ‘day options’ policy. In October 2004, Tutti Arts was established to meet the needs of young disabled adults, initially offering music, singing, movement and drama; its stated aim to place disabled artists firmly in the public eye and challenge public thinking about disability. Within a year the program expanded to offer Visual Arts and in 2007 expanded again to offer animation and film making.

According to Rix, this program has produced benefits beyond expectations – it provides a space for disabled artists to work creatively, and as the work is displayed in mainstream festivals and exhibitions, it provides an opportunity for artists to gain recognition for their work and earn an income. It also adds to the body of local and international performances by other artists with a disability, using professional artists as tutors as well

³ Established in 1898 to provide a home and environment for children with an intellectual disability, Minda has progressed into one of South Australia’s largest not-for-profit disability organisations. In the rest of this document, Minda Inc will be referred to as ‘Minda’.

⁴ South Australia's largest and most diverse training and employment organisation for people with a disability

as volunteers from the community. Tutti artists have their own personal assessment plans to enable them to achieve their goals within the limits of the program and budget, and the program offers opportunities to improve in the areas of literacy, speech, songwriting, musical instrument proficiency and digital animation.

3. Club Tutti

In 2003, Club Tutti was established to offer older people with learning disabilities the opportunity to enjoy choral singing in a smaller choir. In the same year a joint project with Arts in Action, enabled the Tutti model to be adopted in Clare, Wallaroo, and the Barossa region through the Big Country Choir program. Since then, with ongoing mentoring from Rix and experienced Tutti community members, these groups have established their own strong identities and audiences. The Choir of Earthly Delights in the Barossa is regularly booked for regional performances and the Clare Choir is a highly successful integrated choir in its own right which regularly joins the Tutti Choir for major concerts and music-theatre events. More recently in 2006 and 2008 other groups based on the Tutti model have been established in Mount Barker (The Gathering Wave) and Elizabeth (The Harmony of Hearts and Minds).

4. Tutti Kids

Having achieved such success in a relatively short period of time, it was not long before the question would arise – why not provide the same access to music and the arts for disabled children? If singing is the key to awakening the spirit so essential to mental and physical health, influencing how people see, hear and feel life, would this, combined with drama, enhance the intellectual and social development of children living with a disability? Together with the support these children were receiving through their families and schools, the additional influences of music and the arts in the hands of expert tutors would surely be beneficial. Rix was aware of the literature that supported such an approach and decided it was an idea to pursue at the first opportunity. Like pieces of a puzzle fitting together, the first Tutti Kids was formed in 2006 with experienced professional music and drama practitioner Karen Inwood as tutor.

This is their story:

Karen Inwood, Tutti Kids coordinator and tutor for Tutti Babes and Tutti Kids Metro

Inwood's involvement with children with developmental⁵ and intellectual disabilities⁶ came from her own experience as a parent of a child with a disability, and as a teacher at Suneden special school. She was frustrated at the lack of after school activities for such children and felt that the system was not fair as it excluded those that most needed support. Her determination to do something about this gap led her to design and conduct a survey of parents of children with a disability in 2006 (*Appendix 1*). The results of her survey confirmed that not only was there a gap in after school activities for children with a disability, but that parents were ready to immediately enroll their children in such an activity if made available.

Encouraged by the survey results, Inwood successfully applied for one-off funding from Community Benefit SA, established the program at Lower Mitcham and ran it personally for a year. Aware that the funding would soon run out, and considering that a number of the children attending her program were clients of Novita Children's Services⁷, Inwood approached Novita for support. Novita, aware of Rix's interest in expanding Tutti's program to be inclusive of children, encouraged Inwood to discuss her proposal with Rix. Their joint proposal to Novita for the establishment of a Tutti Kids program was successful and Novita provided \$10,000 in 2008. That same year, Tutti Kids received a further \$10,000 in grants and donations from the public and corporate bodies, and Tutti Kids expanded to include three more branches – Tutti Babes at Lower Mitcham, Tutti Kids Northern at Parafield Gardens, and Tutti Kids Southern at Christies Beach.

In early 2009, a new branch was added for children aged 11-14 years old at Brighton with Bree-anna Worthington-Eyre as tutor.

Maria Bernard, tutor Tutti Kids Northern

Bernard had been teaching art and music in mainstream schools for many years and she was aware of Tutti Arts through her work. Her interest in the disability sector was sparked by a visit to Elizabeth Special School following an advertisement for a music and arts teacher, for which she was successful. In 2008, she received a call from Inwood, asking her if she would be interested in setting up an after-school art and music program

⁵ Dept of Families & Communities (DFC) refers to developmental disability as including: Acquired Brain Injury, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental delay, Intellectual disability, Physical and neurological disabilities, Sensory disability, Syndromes

⁶ According to Disability SA (DFC), the international definition for intellectual disability has three criteria:

- significant limitations in intelligence, that is an intelligence quotient (IQ) of 70 or less as measured on a standardized intellectual assessment
- significant limitations in the skills needed to live and work in the community including difficulties with communication, self-care, social skills, safety and self-direction
- Limitation in intelligence and living skills that are evident before the person is 18 years old

All three criteria must be present for a person to be considered as having intellectual disability.

⁷ Will be referred to as 'Novita' in the rest of this document

for children with a disability. A parent in the northern suburbs had alerted Inwood to a new arts and music teacher at Elizabeth Special School where her child attended. The parent knew that Inwood was planning to establish new Tutti Kids programs and needed tutors.

Tutti Kids Parafield Gardens was established at Novita premises and has been running for three school terms – two in 2008 and one in 2009.

Trish Herreen, tutor Tutti Kids Southern

Herreen is a drama tutor and has worked in this profession for 20 years. She teaches drama to children as an after school activity and to adults at community theatres. Herreen also works with the Urban Myth Theatre as a youth tutor and has worked in the disability sector for 6 years.

Herreen knew Inwood when they worked together in the early 90s at 'On-Shore Drama', Somerton Park. Her involvement with Tutti Kids followed a chat with a colleague at the Urban Myth Theatre about her interest in arts and the disability sector, and led to a referral to Rix, who she was told was doing some great work with the arts and disability. In a subsequent discussion with Rix where she expressed an interest in being involved in Tutti, Rix informed her of Tutti Kids and that they needed a tutor for the South, Herreen's locality. Tutti Kids Christies Beach began in the fourth term of 2008.

Tutti Kids Program – a creative pathway to achievement and acceptance

Tutti Kids was established in 2007 and officially launched in February 2009 at the Odeon theatre in Norwood. The program consists of a one hour weekly session during school terms, as an after school activity, with five programs across metropolitan Adelaide – one Tutti Babes and four Tutti Kids.

Tutti Babes is for 2-4 year olds and is tutored by Karen Inwood at Lower Mitcham. Inwood is also coordinator of the overall Tutti Kids program.

The four Tutti Kids programs are for 5-14 year olds. The Lower Mitcham program tutored by Karen Inwood has 6 children; the Christies Beach program tutored by Trish Herreen has four children; and the Parafield Gardens program tutored by Maria Bernard has six children. The fourth program at Brighton for 11-14 year olds is a very recent addition so is not included for analysis in this evaluation.

Tutti Ensemble Inc subsidises the program and parents/carers meet the remaining costs at a fee of \$9.00 per one hour session. The coordinator and tutors receive a small remuneration.

Each program is designed by the individual tutor using music and drama. A typical session has a theme which is explored using percussion instruments, drama, creative movement, play therapy and songs; involving composition of a rhyme or poem, listening

to sound effects or music, free expression, and relaxation using calming music. The program is designed to assist children develop skills which foster learning, socialisation and creativity, enhancing both their education and career opportunities in later life. Siblings and parents are encouraged to attend and participate.

The tutors are experienced drama and music teachers and are sometimes supported by assistant tutors from the Tutti Arts group; themselves accomplished young adults with a disability. The children have opportunities to perform in a range of events through the Tutti Ensemble's various activities.

5. Tutti Inc: Tutti Ensemble, Tutti Arts, Club Tutti and Tutti Kids

The education and empowerment of disadvantaged people is fundamental to successful social inclusion and participation in the mainstream, and is reflected in Tutti's motto 'Unlocking creativity, building human potential'. Pat Rix's dream to recognise and reward talent has become a reality through Tutti Inc.

Tutti Ensemble Inc is now a multi-level community arts organisation providing activities in drama, music, visual arts and design, and film making and animation - reaching over 200 people with a disability in South Australia each week. It is primarily through music and music-theatre that Tutti has created this cultural microcosm of mutual acceptance and in the process won national awards and become internationally recognised as a model of artistic excellence and social inclusion.

Singing remains Tutti's core community activity and main inspiration. According to Rix, singing is everybody's birthright and should be accessible to everybody who wishes to participate, because it is a way of supporting what is good and right about the world and a way of speaking out at what is wrong. It is the key to awakening the spirit so essential to mental and physical health, and influences how people see, hear and feel life.

Since the establishment of Tutti Arts in 2004, the Tutti team has observed significant improvements in the artists' abilities in language, literacy and social skills; mental and physical wellness; capacity to concentrate on set tasks and achieve goals; progress towards self-care and independence; and willingness to publicly contribute to the community.

How can this be measured? It is measured by the number of artists being invited to perform and present at conference and events, by individual artists being sought overseas as soloists, by individual artists being nominated for awards, by the purchase of artists' work, and by the number of 'hits' their original work is attracting on *You Tube*.

Although Tutti Kids has not been long established, now is the time to evaluate the gains achieved in terms of the program's original purpose, and to plan for future directions.

Tutti Kids was established to:

1. Address rights of people with a disability to be part of the wider community and enjoy the same access to music and the arts
2. Enhance the intellectual and social development of children living with a disability, using singing, music, drama and play. Tutti believes that singing is the key to awakening the spirit - essential to mental and physical health, and it influences how people see, hear and feel life.

The evaluation will look at progress towards the achievement of these two aims. It is divided into five chapters:

1. Chapter 1 is the Introduction providing a background of Tutti Kids
2. Chapter 2 is the Evaluation Process which describes the purpose and methodology
3. Chapter 3 is Questionnaire Outcomes where the responses to the questionnaires are summarized
4. Chapter 4 is the Discussion. In this chapter, responses to questionnaires, interviews, and observations are analysed. Reference to literature is also made.
5. Chapter 5 is the Conclusion

Chapter 2

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

1. Why Evaluate?

Evaluation is the process of putting one's finger on the problem. Weissman, R. et al (1996)⁸ point out four domains that are important in the evaluation of any early intervention program:

- (i) The child's developmental progress as the goal of early intervention is the progress of the child through controlled, directed change. It is therefore important to monitor the child's status at various intervals so that change can be controlled effectively.
- (ii) Family desired outcomes
- (iii) Consumer satisfaction. If people are not happy with the system or the program, they are likely to drop out or go looking for something better. This part of the evaluation is about how parents feel.
- (iv) Overall program outcome. The evaluation should be undertaken with a view to program improvement - what to do next to improve whatever one is evaluating.

The evaluation will focus on the four domains in assessing progress towards enhancing the intellectual and social development of children living with a disability, where singing, music, drama and art are integrated as the major form of structured delivery.

2. Methodology

The evaluation process was undertaken in nine stages:

- (i) Reviewing the literature on disability and early intervention
- (ii) Discussions with Tutti's staff
- (iii) Interviews with Tutti Kids coordinator and tutors
- (iv) Observation and participation in the four Tutti Kids programs
- (v) Informal discussions with parents attending the programs and by phone
- (vi) Questionnaire for parents and carers
- (vii) Informal discussion with teachers
- (viii) Questionnaire for teachers
- (ix) Evaluation write-up

3. Ethics

⁸ Weissman R and Littman D (1996), 'Early intervention', in McLaughlin, P and Wehman, P (eds), Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities 2nd ed, Pro-ed Inc, Austin.

The evaluation of Tutti Kids program was undertaken at the request of Tutti Ensemble Inc and with the permission of the Tutti Board. The evaluation coordinator took into consideration a number of aspects in relation to ethics, and also whether there were ethical processes that the evaluation was required to comply with in relation to the ethics policies and guidelines of relevant organizations. The following outlines the steps undertaken to address ethical issues:

- (i) The coordinator met with Tutti's General Manager to discuss the organisation's ethical guidelines. The manager advised that while Tutti does not have formal ethical guidelines in relation to an evaluation process, all proposals are referred to the Board for approval. The Board takes into consideration any ethical issues in this process. The proposal to evaluate Tutti Kids program was presented to and approved by the Board and no other processes were required in relation to ethics.
- (ii) The coordinator considered that as a student of Flinders University undertaking the fieldwork placement under the University's authority, there may be ethical guidelines that the University would require the student to comply with. The coordinator sought the advice of her fieldwork supervisor who checked with the university about its ethical guidelines. The advice was that since the evaluation was not being undertaken under the auspice of the university, the process was not bound by the ethical guidelines of the university.
- (iii) As some of the participants of Tutti Kids program are clients of Novita, the evaluation coordinator consulted with Novita⁹ about any ethical requirements that Novita may have in relation to undertaking the evaluation. Novita advised that it does not require the evaluation to be bound by its ethical guidelines for the following reasons:
 - the evaluation is not being undertaken at the request of Novita
 - the children will not be directly interviewed
 - the evaluator will not require access to the children's files
 - the evaluator will not require any information held by Novita.
- (iv) The evaluation coordinator made a decision not to interview the children directly because the necessary information could be obtained from the parents/carers and teachers of the children.
- (v) The evaluation process involved questionnaires to be completed by parents/carers and teachers of children participating in Tutti Kids programs, in which they were requested to provide information about the children. In accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), the coordinator informed the parents/carers that their

⁹ Director of Client Services

identities, and the identities of their children and the children's teachers would be kept confidential.

- (vi) The coordinator sought the approval of parents/carers to discuss their children's progress with the relevant teachers by asking parents/carers to sign a consent form. The coordinator only contacted the teachers for whom consent had been provided.
- (vii) In abiding by the requirement of confidentiality, this evaluation document does not contain information that identifies the parents/carers, teachers, or children.

4. The Process

Parents

The three tutors of the four Tutti Kids programs at Lower Mitcham, Christies Beach and Parafield Gardens, informed parents of participating children about the evaluation, and the role of the evaluation coordinator who would visit the programs to meet the parents and children, and send out questionnaires to parents and carers.

Following the program visits, the evaluation coordinator sent out 17 questionnaires to 15 parents and carers currently participating in Tutti Kids programs (2 parents had more than 1 participating child), and to four families whose 4 children were no longer participating. Included in the questionnaire package was:

- (i) A letter from the Artistic Director of Tutti Ensemble Inc explaining the purpose of the evaluation and requesting cooperation and support. The letter stressed that completion of the questionnaire was voluntary and that the identities of children, parents and teachers would be confidential.
- (ii) a consent form to grant permission to contact the child's teacher
- (iii) a sample questionnaire that would be sent to teachers after parental consent
- (iv) a return stamped envelope to assist in returning the questionnaire to Tutti Inc

The evaluation coordinator contacted the parents by phone one week after the questionnaires were sent out. The purpose of the contact was to:

- (i) confirm parents/carers had received the questionnaire
- (ii) provide the opportunity to ask questions
- (iii) establish if the preference was to complete the questionnaire at a face-to-face meeting, by phone, or without assistance.

- (iv) restate the deadline date for return of the questionnaire

Teachers

After receiving the completed questionnaires from parents and carers, the evaluation coordinator contacted teachers who had been granted permission to provide relevant information about the children. A questionnaire package was then sent to the teachers consisting of:

- (i) A letter from the Artistic Director of Tutti Ensemble Inc similar to that sent to parents/carers and giving a deadline of 2 weeks
- (ii) a consent form signed by the parent/carers
- (v) a questionnaire
- (vi) a return stamped envelope to assist in returning the questionnaire to Tutti Ensemble Inc

Chapter 3

QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOMES

1. Responses

Parents/Carers

All 15 parents and carers of 17 participating children received questionnaires. All except one preferred to complete the questionnaire on their own. The exception made an appointment for a telephone interview.

All 4 parents of the 4 children no longer attending the program had received the questionnaires. Two preferred to complete the questionnaires on their own, and two wanted to provide the information by phone, but only responding to the reason why they withdrew from the program.

By the deadline date, 9 questionnaires had been returned (53%). Of the 4 non-participants, all 4 had provided responses to the questionnaires; two providing only information on why they exited the program.

The highest responses from participating families were from Tutti Babes (3 out of 4), followed by Parafield Gardens (3 out of 5) and Christies Beach (1 out of 2). The poorest response was from Tutti Kids (2 out of 6)¹⁰.

The two fully completed responses from non-participating families came from the Christies Beach program and from Tutti Babes program at Lower Mitcham.

Of the 9 responses received, 6 were of primary school aged children whose parents were requested to provide consent for the teachers to be contacted to provide additional information. Of these, 5 signed the consent form.

Teachers

Although five consent forms were signed, one was returned well after the deadline and it was too late in the process to contact the child's teacher. The remaining four teachers were contacted and three agreed to complete a questionnaire; however, one teacher informed that her student had three teachers in four terms so did not think that any of the teachers would be in a position to provide useful information regarding the developmental progress of the child since joining Tutti Kids. It was decided therefore not to send a questionnaire to this teacher.

¹⁰ Tutti Kids at Lower Mitcham was the only program with a full quota of regular participants (6 being the maximum number of children considered appropriate for the program to be efficient in terms of the coordinator being able to give equal time to all the children).

Questionnaires were sent to 2 teachers and both responded by the deadline of two weeks.

2. Outcomes

The outcomes are provided in three sections: general information, teacher feedback, and specific parent/carer feedback relating to the four evaluation domains of:

- The child's developmental progress
- Family desired outcomes
- Consumer satisfaction
- Overall program outcome - what to do next to improve the program

2.1 General Information

Impairments

The majority of the children attending Tutti Kids programs have primary as well as secondary impairments¹¹ that limit their day to day functioning in terms of movement, learning, language, hearing and social skills.

External factors

There are a number of factors that must be taken into consideration in noting the developmental progress of the child, as they may have some contributing influence on this development:

- (i) The duration of the children's participation ranged from three months (Parafield Gardens) to two years (Lower Mitcham). It may not be reasonable to assess a child's progress for a participating period of three months.
- (ii) Most of the children have close relationships with significant 'others' such as siblings and grandparents. Such relationships and the close interactions resulting from them, could be contributing factors to the developmental progress of the child.
- (iii) Most of the participants attend other programs at school or outside school in addition to Tutti Kids. These programs include occasional care, swimming,

¹¹ As indicated in the questionnaire responses:

Primary: Global developmental delay, intellectual disability, muscular dystrophy, Cornelia de Lange syndrome, balance, neuronal migration disorder, cerebral palsy left hemiplegia and diaphragm, autism.

Secondary: Autism spectrum, vision impairment, eating and swallowing difficulties, floppy muscle tone, arthrogyposis, bilateral dislocated hips, shunted hydrocephalus, seizures, obsessive compulsive disorder, hearing loss

conductive education, horse riding, music and choir, learning support, out of school care, hydrotherapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

Information

The respondents revealed that information about the program came from various sources - friends, local newspaper, personal recommendation, Novita, Carer Support and Respite, school teachers, and Minda outreach. Novita was the main source of information for over 50% of respondents.

Participation

Tutti Kids at Lower Mitcham is the best attended of the Tutti programs with an existing intake of 6 children, the recommended capacity for the efficient conduct of such a program. Christies Beach has the lowest number of participants with only 2 recorded as currently participating. This is only 30% of the recommended capacity.

The four children who dropped out were from Tutti Babes (1), Christies Beach (1) and Parafield Gardens (2). Although the children and parents enjoyed the programs, the reasons given for leaving were that the program was held on an unsuitable day - Friday. It was unsuitable because:

- (i) It was at the end of the week when the children (and parents) were already tired from a full week
- (ii) There were competing activities such as work, or other programs the children attended.
- (iii) One parent indicated that in addition to the above, she did not feel the program was worth the effort because while she was on the waiting list for a long time, when she did join, there were too few children participating.

All but 2 of the participating respondents indicated that they would like their children to continue attending Tutti Kids for as long as the service was provided, and if there was a continuum right up to adulthood, they would like their children to be involved in such a program.

2.2 Teacher feedback

Questionnaires were sent to the 2 teachers who agreed to provide feedback. Both teachers completed the questionnaires.

The first teacher knew of Tutti Kids program and had referred the parents to the program for the developmental support of their child. The teacher commented that she had noticed progress in the child's functioning in the areas of confidence, willingness to cooperate and capacity to listen.

She commended the program and supported any plans for the child's participation in such a program through-out the school years due to the benefits it could provide to the child in developing their confidence, social and communication skills.

In terms of suggestions to improve the program, the teacher suggested that it would be good to have such a program implemented in schools that have special needs classes.

The second teacher was not aware of the program, nor the child's involvement in it. However, she noticed that the child showed marked progress in a number of developmental areas since July 2008– willingness to cooperate, creative problem solving and confidence. On checking the date of enrolment into the program as shown in the parent's questionnaire, the progress in the child's functioning coincided with the child's enrolment in Tutti Kids – 2nd term of 2008.

In response to the question that relates to improving the program, the teacher suggested that information about such programs should be widely communicated to schools as it may be beneficial for other students in similar circumstances.

2.3 Outcomes in relation to the four specific evaluation domains

Each domain will show the responses provided by the 8 parents/carers and 2 non-participating parents/carers:

(i) Domain 1 - The child's developmental progress

Question - What progress have you noticed (or not) towards developmental areas such as:

Willingness to cooperate

- *variable*
- *As confidence has grown, X has begun to participate more in the group. Loves to help setting things up and putting away. Also being taught turn taking.*
- *Still getting used to the group, music program, structure.*
- *Improving*
- *Getting better at waiting and waiting for her turn*
- *X would not join in at all when we first started, but the last term, term 1 2009, she has started to do it!! It is such a pleasure to see her do this.*
- *X is quite determined, if she wants to do something she will otherwise she will ignore.*
- *Biggest improvement here. Happy to copy others and teacher. Has helped in her physio as she did not like being touched but now seems to cope better with touching. Also better at doing things.*
- *Only when he wants to*

Non- participants

- *Listening and following instruction. Able to focus and thus participate more in structured activities.*

- -

Capacity to listen

- *variable*
- *X starting to listen more to instructions and follow commands*
- *Further built on. X has good listening skills*
- *Yes*
- *Still struggles with listening and concentration*
- *She is listening much better to the teacher, even though sometimes she will not do things straight away, she eventually does.*
- *X listens, processes everything like a normal child and will select what to respond to as she sees fit.*
- *Can be disrupted easily but in the groups she is listening more*
- *No more than before*

Non- participants

- *Able to sit and listen when being read a story. Listens and waits for their turn*

- -

Creative problem solving

- *N/A*
- *Tutti Babes has certainly helped X in this area but she still has difficulties*
- *Enhanced*
- *Yes*
- -
- -
- *Given time she will nut out a problem, the issue is her willingness to solve the problem*
- *Has found ways to adapt e.g. when doing walking activities she now asks for my help*
- -

Non-participants

- *Understands cause and effect e.g. during role playing as a shopper he has to give money before he can get the apple.*

- -

Confidence

- *Not seen*
- *Definite improvement in all aspects of X's confidence*

- *Enhanced*
- *Yes*
- *Her confidence to do things in the group has improved hugely, she still struggles when they go on stage or she has to do it on her own*
- *X's confidence is only just beginning and this is lovely to see*
- *X has developed a show production capability and wants to perform for whomever so long as she can direct*
- *Excellent. Now communicating with other kids and coordinator. Calls their names and allows people in her space.*
- *Always confident*

Non-participants

- *More social now. Able to play nicely with other children. Improves emotionally – used to cry when we sing the 5 little ducks song, but now he understands it's just a song.*
- -

(ii) Domain 2 - Family desired outcomes

Question: Why did you enroll your child in Tutti Kids?

- *Wasn't anything else out there. I wanted to see how she'd go in a group because I want to move her to mainstream*
- *Develop expression, interrelationship with peers. If did not have disability would have gone to dance/drama.*
- *To help X to listen and follow instruction, and to communicate with other children, to share, to take turns*
- *So X could enjoy social dancing and singing without having expectations put on her by other children, something she could do*
- *To improve her balance, she loves to dance and sing and play, and be with other kids*
- *She loves music, noise, dancing, playing musical instruments, mix with other kids*
- *To help develop social skills – aid communication. X loves music, dancing, and musical instruments*
- *Improve concentration and social skills*
- *Because he loves music and dance*

Non-participants

- *For more out of school activity*
- *To find out if the program can help stimulate and encourage him to do more*

(iii) Domain 3 - Consumer satisfaction

Question: Has Tutti Kids met your expectations?

- *Not really as yet. Have only had 2 lessons.*
- *Yes, enjoyable class. X has gained confidence and is being taught the early steps of beat, pitch, rhythm. It has been absolutely fantastic for X and gone beyond my expectations (X's favorite class!!)*
- *Yes definitely*
- *Yes X loves it. Too soon to see improvement, time will show.*
- *Yes*
- *Yes*
- *Yes*
- *Yes*
- *Yes*

Non-participants

- *Unfortunately X did not adapt to the program. He did enjoy going back but has problems following instructions, but he was getting there.*
- *Yes and more*

(iv) Domain 4 - Overall program outcome

Question: What do you and your child like about Tutti Kids?

- *The program and the various instruments*
- *Enjoyable, fun, sociable, new music, tunes and games. X really looks forward to the sessions.*
- *Watching X clearly enjoying herself – smiling, laughing, actively listening and looking at coordinator*
- *She loves music, singing, loves the company of kids.*
- *The warm friendly feel the teacher provides to the group. The children are all treated the same no matter what their disability is, but at a level the children can cope with. X loves her biscuit at the end of the session.*
- *X loves the fact it is a social outing and loves her biscuit at the end. We love the warm and friendly atmosphere.*
- *Fun environment, learning new songs, movement, beat. Practicing for performance.*
- *Its something geared towards people with a disability and they accommodate that. It fun and routine and X is happy. Tutti coordinators and others totally accept the way she is.*
- *The music, making new friends, performing. It is a safe and accepting environment. Teachers with understanding and patience.*

Non-participants

- *The space to run around in*
- *We had fun – lots of learning (direct and indirect), learnt to participate in group play.*

Question: What do you and your child not like about Tutti Kids?

- *Instructor too loud and tends to discipline my child when I feel I should be able to. Would prefer not to have lesson at instructor's house.*
- *Nothing to comment – everything has been great! The coordinator relates well with the different kids and handles the sessions beautifully.*
- *Nothing*
- *-*
- *They love it*
- *X struggles with listening, waiting her turn, she always says 'I'm not doing it'. Once she gets there and warms up she enjoys it.*
- *Sometimes an hour is too short*
- *Nothing*
- *-*

Non-participants

- *Having to join in with the others! (X needs one-on-one to join in new activities)*
- *Nothing*

Question: Do you have any suggestions to improve the program?

- *Offer the program elsewhere e.g. hall (not in home)*
- *Due to the diversity and needs of the children, I feel it is important that the group be kept to a manageable size (no more than 5/6 kids).*
- *No*
- *The break was too long I felt (1 week) was not enough time to practice for November concert. Would be good if was on during school holidays!*
- *-*
- *-*
- *-*
- *In a year or two they might need to change to adapt to the children's level of development. Important to have a continuum according to age and developmental needs so that X can be more challenged*
- *-*

Non-participants

- *a program for kids with autism (that meets their needs) would be good*
- *-*

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

By establishing Tutti Kids, Tutti Ensemble Inc has attempted to do something for children with an intellectual and developmental disability, aiming to address ‘...the struggle between commitment and indifference, between inclusion and exclusion, between fairness and injustice, and ultimately between right and wrong’.¹² This struggle has been going on for years with significant changes in thinking only starting to happen about forty years ago. A brief look at the literature will shed some light into the historical context of a program like Tutti Kids.

In his work, Cocks (1998)¹³ describes the past negative attitudes and low expectations held in the Australian community and by people in the very services that our society has provided to support people with a disability. According to Cocks, even though there was progress by the late 90s, the negative thinking still existed, perpetuated by myths and assumptions which had negative consequences for the lives of thousands of Australian citizens whose developmental and educational needs, and many basic rights were often neglected (p 3). Rix’s¹⁴ experiences, the questionnaire responses, and the discussions the evaluation coordinator had with parents/carers and Tutti Kids coordinators, show that progress in changing negative attitudes is excruciatingly slow even today.

Cornish (1992)¹⁵ worked in this negative environment, instructing students with intellectual disabilities in Ireland and Australia, from the 50s to the 90s. She describes the role that institutions and the general public played and how these had an impact on the lack of opportunities for people with an intellectual disability. The thinking of that era reflected in terminology such as ‘mental defectives’ and statements such as ‘they are here, my child might catch something’ (p 75) by a passenger in public transport. Cornish (1992) observed that the attitudes of the time had not changed much since the 1800s – they were kept in institutions for the protection of the public, not for their own protection. Cornish (1992) was one of many workers in the sector who believed that the children needed to be allowed to develop their capabilities to the maximum, ‘create the environment to be stimulating enough for them to want to learn, give them a go, including exposing them to the real world and to people from the wider community’ (p 79). Unfortunately, the entrenched thinking of the time governed what happened in terms of services.

The literature shows that attitudes started to change in the 1960s, a social phenomenon that happened simultaneously across the western world. Academics started to question things; there was talk of rights; parent groups were more organised. This change in thinking picked up speed in the 70s, and by the 90s, training and education provided people with an intellectual and developmental disability, many of the same opportunities

¹² Pat Rix (Nov 08 – Jan 09), op cit.

¹³ Cocks, E (1998), An Introduction to Intellectual Disability in Australia (3rd edition), Australian Institute on Intellectual Disability

¹⁴ Pat Rix, op cit.

¹⁵ Cornish, S (1992), Why Me? Understanding Intellectual Disability, Australian Down Syndrome Association Inc

as the wider public. Wolfe P, et al (1996)¹⁶ referred to this as the ‘normalisation’ approach of the late 60s where ‘patterns and conditions of everyday life were as close as possible to the norms and patterns of the mainstream of society’ (p 3). By the 70s and 80s many human service programs adopted this approach as the guiding philosophy, and it had ‘a tremendous impact on the lives of millions of individuals’ (p 3).

The 90s saw the development of a new philosophical basis underlying the programs - consumer empowerment, encompassing self-determination, control and self-advocacy. According to McLaughlin et al (1996) changes in policy were based on the assumption that discrimination is the greatest obstacle confronting people with disabilities as they attempt to live independent and productive lives. Pressure from individuals with disabilities, parents and friends, to move away from the paternalistic human services bureaucracy which created a dependent community, led to the current system.

The change to a social systems paradigm, which considered the influence of broad physical and social environments in which the person functions, reflected the thinking that people with an intellectual or developmental disability are people first and foremost; that they are developing individuals in need of social and educational experiences, opportunities, and typical life experiences; that they are entitled to be accepted as valued and worthwhile citizens with the associated rights and responsibilities to make a real contribution to their communities (Cocks, 1998). This brought about different strategies and methods of support through change in government policy and influenced residential and educational alternatives.

This change in thinking also brought about changes in the way people with an intellectual and developmental disability were labeled - from a clinical diagnosis perspective to a functionality definition with emphasis on adaptive life activities.

However, as Pat Rix, the Artistic Director of Tutti Ensemble Inc found out in her efforts to find avenues for support and recognition for young artists with a disability, the struggle for inclusion still continues. Rix’s belief in, and commitment to social inclusion, and the ‘can do’ attitude of Rix and the people who shared her belief, made it possible for Tutti Inc to exist today. It is within this kind of environment that Tutti Kids was established.

Looking at the background of Tutti Kids and where it all began, this ‘can do’ attitude and commitment of those who felt the same about social inclusion for children with intellectual and development disabilities¹⁷, made it possible to establish a program like Tutti Kids. This single factor addresses the first of Tutti’s aims, the rights of people with a disability to be part of the wider community and experience the same access to music and the arts.

¹⁶ Wolfe P, Kregel J, Wehman ,P (1996), ‘Service Delivery’ in McLaughlin P and Wehman P, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 2nd ed, Pro-ed Inc, Austin

¹⁷ The efforts and dedication of the coordinator of Tutti Kids and the tutors of Tutti programs reflect this commitment.

So how well has Tutti Kids enhanced the intellectual and social development of children living with a disability by using an integrated singing, music, play and drama model?

While the questionnaire responses and other observations provide some basis on which to evaluate against the four evaluation domains, the program does not have a formal structure or detailed outline of purpose and planned outcomes, to which an evaluation process can refer. Additionally, besides the overall aim of the program to enhance the intellectual and social development of children living with a disability, Tutti Kids does not have a stated claim on any type of therapeutic intervention for its program through which it would achieve this aim; nor specific outcomes it aims to achieve for its individual participants; nor a description of a service model in which to achieve it. Without these kinds of references, an evaluation would tend to be quite general and not very useful.

Therefore, in addition to the four evaluation domains that were outlined in Chapter 2, it was also necessary to see if the Tutti Kids program had a close fit to any form of service or support model, which could then be formally adopted by Tutti Kids as a model that reflects its philosophy and aims. This is something that Tutti Kids will need to seriously consider, if it does not wish to be seen as just a ‘fun’ place for its participants to be in.

In observing Tutti Kids’ client application forms, activities, session structure, client group and composition, and the method of program delivery, it can be concluded that Tutti Kids aligns itself closely to the application of a ‘dramatherapy model’¹⁸ within an early intervention structure.

‘Beginning early’ is the best time according to Lilly, T et al (1987)¹⁹, where intervention focuses on treatment of identified developmental delays and prevention of developmental delays that are secondary to the identified delays. Early intervention activities for instance can enhance cognitive development which can result from motor delay or a lack of exploration opportunities. Weissman, R et al (1996)²⁰ agree with the view that early intervention works, citing research results and demonstrated practice which show that the earlier a problem is detected, and the earlier treatment begun, the more effective intervention becomes. The research shows that early intervention can alter, in a positive direction, overall development and learning. Notwithstanding the controversy about how effective different early intervention types may be, ‘well considered professionally delivered services can help virtually any child with a disabling condition’ (p 30), saving money, time and pain.

¹⁸ Chesner, A (1995), *Dramatherapy for People with Learning Disabilities : A World of Difference*, Jessica Kingsley, London

¹⁹ Lilly T & Shotel J, (1987), ‘Legal Issues and the Handicapped Infant: From policy to reality’, *Journal of the Division for early childhood*, Vol 12, p 4-12

²⁰ Weissman R and Littman D (1996), ‘Early Intervention’ in McLaughlin P and Wehman P, *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 2nd ed, Pro-ed Inc, Austin

Although Tutti Kids program is not a ‘treatment’, its applied model does aim to focus on early intervention to enhance development and learning. This outcome is also supported by the responses provided by parents/carers to the questionnaire.

The dramatherapy model has its clinical origins in the pioneering work of Sue Jennings’ ‘remedial drama’²¹ which was influential in establishing dramatherapy as a recognised profession in the United Kingdom in the late 70s. Dramatherapy is described by Chesner, A (1995)²² as an immensely flexible and creative method, the most inclusive of art forms, incorporating elements of music, movement, design, story and performance. It was initially used in mental health and in educational and training environments, but gained recognition as a specialisation for people with a learning disability in the 90s. Using drama and theatre, dramatherapy influences people with learning disabilities by its holistic therapy - engaging the body, senses, mind and verbal function - and allowing people with a learning disability (whose verbal skills are often limited and who tend to have fewer options for self-expression through action in everyday life), to express themselves through various modes. Dramatherapy offers a variety of working methods that are applicable to a wide variety of clients within the full spectrum of learning disabilities.

Tutti Kids applies all aspects of the dramatherapy model as described above, with ‘play’ and ‘play acting’ being the equivalent of the more formal ‘drama’ of the dramatherapy model. But is Tutti Kids aware that it is implementing something similar to a highly reputable model? The evaluation coordinator observed the flexible use of this model as described by Chesner (1995), across all four Tutti Kids’ venues, with music and the use of instruments applied as constant themes within. Nisenson, K (2008)²³ is a strong proponent of the benefits of music integrated with other art forms, in creating new patterns of learning and neurological processes that stimulate sensory, cognitive and emotional development. He attributes language development in babies and toddlers to the ease of vocalisation through music. Duffy, B et al (2000)²⁴ support this view. They undertook a study on the effectiveness of a music therapy program in the enhancement of the social skills of children with moderate intellectual disability, focusing on turn-taking, imitation, vocalisation, initiation and eye contact. They found that the ‘synchronization of acts to musical rhythm helped both stimulation and coordination, enabling greater skills development’ (p 77).

If Tutti Kids is aware of a formal therapeutic model for the achievement of developmental outcomes, or that it is applying such a model, it does not explicitly state or promote this. There is no indication that parents and carers have this knowledge either. The questionnaire responses to the ‘family desired outcomes’ reflected a mixed understanding of the program, with some respondents looking for an after school type

²¹ Jennings S, (1978), Remedial Drama, A.C. Black, London

²² Chesner, A (1995), op cit.

²³ Nisenson, K (2008), ‘Arts for Healing: The importance of integrated music and art in therapy and special education’. Exceptional Parent, Vol. 38, No. 3; pp. 42-44.

²⁴ Duffy, B & Fuller, R (2000), ‘Role of music therapy in social skills development in children with moderate intellectual disability’, Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, Vol. 13 No. 2

music and singing activity that catered for children with a disability, while others were wanting a program that would assist in the child's development.

Tutti Kids needs to be very clear on:

- what it is
- why it is there
- what it aims to achieve
- how it will measure these achievements, and
- how it will evaluate that it is on the right track

This brings the evaluation to propose the first three recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – That Tutti Kids clearly describes its vision, purpose, expected outcomes, measurement tools, and model utilisation, so as to guide the program and its clients. This will provide clarity to parents and carers in their expectations when they enroll their children in Tutti.

Recommendation 2 – That Tutti Kids provides a detailed description of its program. The description should include an outline of how the program is designed in terms of composition of participants (number, inclusion of a spectrum of different abilities, family participation), staffing, locations, policies and guiding principles.

Recommendation 3 – That Tutti Kids outlines a monitoring and evaluation process to ensure that it is achieving what it seeks to achieve. The evaluation of services according to explicit criteria is a necessary process in achieving and maintaining quality.

Interviews and Questionnaire process

The evaluation notes that although all parents/carers had agreed to complete the questionnaire, and had reflected an understanding of the importance of this evaluation for the opportunities it could provide for their children, only half did so.

News of the evaluation and its process were met with much enthusiasm by the program coordinators and parents/carers so the evaluation coordinator does not believe that the parents/carers lacked interest. The lack of responses could reflect the 'lives' of the families – busy, full, stressful. In their order of priorities, the questionnaire may have been relegated, seeming less in importance in relation to other matters in their lives. This 'full-on' atmosphere was also observed during conversations with parents/carers at the Tutti sessions, on the telephone, and in the absence of booked participants and/or parents/carers at some of the sessions. It was also observed in the responses from participants who had left the program. All four non-participating families indicated that they either had competing activities, the session was too far to get to, or that the specific session day at the end of the week was not feasible due to exhaustion for the child and parent.

This reflects something very relevant for Tutti Kids – that its focus group should not only be the children, but in an indirect way, the parents and carers, as both impact on the program’s functions. Stressed or busy parents could mean stressed or busy children; absence of parents could mean absence of children; on the other hand could it mean an assumption on the parents/carers part that Tutti Kids is a ‘drop-off’ centre as opposed to its ‘therapeutic’ function? This in turn raises many more questions:

- What actual knowledge do parents and carers have about the program and the importance of their participation?
- Are they aware that a missed session still costs Tutti Kids whose resources are extremely limited?
- What is in place to strongly encourage parents and carers to be part of the program?
- Do they contribute in any way and feel some sense of ownership?

There are no immediate solutions except for Tutti to have an awareness of the impact these issues could have on the efficiency and continuity of the program, and perhaps with consideration to maintaining strong supportive links with parents and carers.

Recommendation 4 – That Tutti Kids have a parent/carer consultation workshop regarding a number of issues that have been raised in the questionnaire responses and above, to try and work out a collaborative and inclusive program.

Recommendation 5 – That Tutti Kids undertake regular workshops with its client group to provide support; updates in information; reinforce policies; and to receive feedback.

Recommendation 6 – That the program be effectively promoted through schools, disability programs, and in the wider community, with clear information about its purpose, structure, and the important participatory role of parents/carers.

The Four Evaluation Domains

Despite the absence of specific outcomes and model, there were overwhelmingly positive responses relating to the four evaluation domains of the child’s developmental progress; family desired outcomes; consumer satisfaction and overall program outcome

In particular, the responses to the domain of the child’s developmental progress were exceptional. The best progress was noted in the developmental areas of ‘willingness to cooperate’ and ‘confidence’ which relate directly to the stated program aims of enhancing the intellectual and social development of children living with a disability.

A point of importance here is that the respondents noted this progress after the children started participating in Tutti Kids. It can therefore be concluded that the progress was very likely a result of the program and not the influence of external factors described in Chapter 2. Developmental progress was noted even for the child who had been attending

the program for only 3 months. This is evidence that the dramatherapy model within an early intervention structure is working, as supported by literature.

However, the progress level in the development of the child would have been more accurate if Tutti Kids had baseline information for its participants, against which developmental progress could be assessed. It is acknowledged that Tutti Kids was not established through a formal process in which a monitoring and evaluation plan could be put into place at the time. It is now timely to do so as a necessary part of the program structure and evaluation.

Recommendation 7 – That baseline data on impairment be collected for all current and new Tutti Kids participants, which will be used to gauge progress of clients as a result of an early intervention focus. The type of data will depend on what aspects of development the program, parents and carers wish to address and evaluate.

While the responses for ‘consumer satisfaction’ and ‘overall program outcomes’ were very positive, there were a number of suggestions from respondents on how the program could be improved. The evaluation coordinator also observed that Tutti Kids has a staffing issue in that there is an absence of support/relief staff for the program coordinator or tutors. Not only is this an occupational health issue for current staff who would find it exhausting to run a full quota of 6-7 children, a program could not run if the tutor was ill or otherwise unable to conduct a session. There is also the issue of succession planning should a tutor wish to move on.

Recommendation 8 – That Tutti Kids takes note of the parents/carers suggested improvements for the program such as keeping the group to a manageable size of no more than 6 children, providing adequate rehearsal time for performances; providing a next level for participants as they grow and need more challenges; and offering the program in a venue other than someone’s residence.

Recommendation 9 – Tutti Kids needs to ensure that the program is well resourced in terms of staffing, equipment and operating budget.

Recommendation 10 – Tutti Kids should develop a plan for growth and expansion, including more locations for service accessibility, in response to its commitment to address rights of people with a disability to be part of the wider community and enjoy the same access to music and the arts. Such a plan should take advantage of other resources and services by incorporating collaborative and integrated service mechanisms.

In looking at the evaluation outcomes from the school point of view, although the evaluation received only 2 responses out of a potential 6 from teachers, the comments from the teachers are worth taking into consideration.

The teachers noted progress in the children’s confidence, communication and social skills. Such progress would have obvious positive impacts on the child’s school life and

learning, their ability to be part of the mainstream school population, and on the teachers' ability to further support the child's learning and socialisation. This is supported by the teachers' suggestions to expand a program like Tutti Kids to schools, and to provide more information of such programs so that more children could benefit. Further evidence-based work would need to be done in this type of analysis to get a clearer picture of the benefits but to do this requires a close collaboration between Tutti Kids and the education sector.

Recommendation 11 - Tutti Kids to look at collaborative opportunities with the education sector to implement the program in schools with a special needs education focus. An example of such collaboration could be that Tutti Kids supplies the model and trained staff and the education sector supplies the venue (school) and resources. This is a cost-efficient model that would be more inclusive of the target group, better managed in terms of resources and data, and can be trialed and evaluated as a best-practice service.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

It is without doubt, based on evaluation domains and on observations during the evaluation process, that Tutti Kids is an effective program and has achieved progress towards:

1. Addressing the rights of people with a disability to be part of the wider community and enjoy the same access to music and the arts
2. Enhancing the intellectual and social development of children living with a disability, using singing, music, drama and play..

Parents, carers and to some extent teachers, have made it clear that Tutti Kids is a much-needed program for young children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who could not participate in mainstream programs. Before Tutti Kids was established, there was no program available for such children to support the child's development through music, dance and play. In however small measure, Tutti Kids is providing that access in the same way that the wider community has. However, there are opportunities for this program to be provided in a more efficient and inclusive way through a more structured model and collaboration with other services.

The program's benefits far exceed its shortcomings, many of which are within Tutti Kids' immediate capacity and ability to address.

The best conclusions can be drawn from the parents and carers themselves. The responses provided by two parents to the question 'why would you want your child to continue in a program like Tutti Kids to adulthood?' sums up the essence of Tutti Kids:

'I would like him to have an opportunity to develop and to gain confidence, and like any child, it takes more than one set of parents to raise them through to adulthood',

and,

'Challenge the kids so that they can develop further and improve. Don't know what she could be capable of. She has surprised us with what she can do given the opportunity like Tutti Kids. For instance, she was discouraged by a psychologist to attend mainstream but she is now going to.'