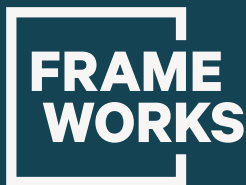


Measuring Early Years Mindsets:

Patterns of Thinking that
Shape Australia's Future

**FrameWorks Institute, in partnership with
CuriJo and Minderoo Foundation**

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The FrameWorks Institute acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We extend our respect to Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we conduct research, to Elders past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whose wisdom contributes to our future. The research for this report took place online with participants from across Australia, including from the traditional lands of some 500 different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This report focuses on findings from a nationally representative survey conducted online in February 2026. We recognise the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of communities across Australia. We acknowledge that people from different backgrounds have varied experiences. The findings presented in this report reflect the views of participants who speak English and were able to take part in an online survey. As such, they do not fully capture the experiences of all communities in Australia. Including this rich diversity would require appropriate translation into various languages and survey hosting on platforms supporting those languages and is beyond the scope of the research undertaken at this time.

We use the terminology Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this report. We recognise there is diversity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, with approximately 250 languages and complex links to different Country and kin throughout Australia. We also recognise differing preferences regarding the use of terminology and that many people prefer to be known by their specific group name, their Country, as Traditional Owners and Custodians and/or as First Nations People.

Content Warning

One mindset described in this report (*Otherism*) includes harmful racist and bigoted thinking about certain groups of people. Some readers may find descriptions of this type of thinking traumatic and triggering. For a list of national support services, including culturally safe services, see Appendix C.

We include descriptions of this mindset because it is present in public thinking in Australia. We understand that describing this mindset is complicated and not without risks. However, we also feel that it is important to understand these harmful assumptions so we can develop framing and narrative strategies to counter and overcome them and ensure that these mindsets aren't unintentionally triggered by the way we communicate about the early years. By describing this mindset, we are in no way condoning it; on the contrary, we recognise this thinking as highly toxic and describe it in service of finding ways to push it out of public thinking to advance justice, equity and inclusion.

Executive Summary

Advocates and communicators working to promote the wellbeing of young children and families in Australia face critical challenges and significant opportunities. While our research shows there is broad public recognition that children and families need greater support,¹ understanding of the specific factors that shape early development and support for actions necessary to improve the wellbeing of all children and families in Australia remains uneven.

Advancing better policies and changing child- and family-serving systems depends on shifting the cultural mindsets that shape how Australians think about the early years. These deeply held patterns of thinking influence what people see as the problem, which solutions seem appropriate and viable, who they see as responsible and the extent to which they expect and demand change from leaders.

This report is part of a multiyear project undertaken by the FrameWorks Institute in partnership with Curijo and Minderoo Foundation. It is written for advocates and communicators working in and on the systems that affect children and families in Australia — including the early years, housing, employment, justice, health, education, transportation and more.

The larger project aims to measure mindsets about the early years over time, test framing and narrative strategies that can shift them to build demand for change and collaborate with our partners to use project findings to change the public conversation and policy context (see Acknowledgements for the full list of partners).

In this report, we outline a set of findings from a nationally representative descriptive survey conducted in February 2026. In the survey, we measured the strength of a set of mindsets Australians use to think about early childhood and examined how these mindsets vary across groups, how they interconnect or ‘cluster’ and how they relate to support for solutions. Based on these findings, we offer initial recommendations for how to navigate the complex terrain of mindsets that shape public thinking.

In upcoming research, we will begin testing specific framing strategies and develop applied toolkits that support communicators in using recommendations in their communications and strategies.

Advancing better policies and changing child-and family-serving systems depends on shifting the cultural mindsets that shape how Australians think about the early years.

Our findings show that individualistic ways of thinking — such as the idea that parents are narrowly responsible for early years outcomes — remain strong. But we also find evidence for a set of more collective and systems-oriented mindsets that people can and do use to make sense of the early years and that lead to dramatically different conclusions about what needs to be done.

We also find important differences in mindset strength across demographic groups. For example, mindsets related to collective responsibility and racism vary significantly when we look across demographic groups, while other mindsets — such as *Individualism* and *Family Bubble*, the idea that parents are narrowly and exclusively responsible for children's outcomes — are held at similar levels across groups. In addition, some demographic differences (for example, age) correspond to significant variation in mindset strength. These differences can help guide the choices we make when we communicate and the common themes that we embed into and use to advance our stories.

We find that mindsets are closely tied to support for policy change. Certain mindsets, such as *Government as Partner* and mindsets that recognise the impact of racism on children and families, are strongly associated with increased policy support. The stronger these mindsets are in people's thinking, the more they support policies and solutions. Other mindsets — such as *Fatalism*, *Otherism* (the idea that there is a superior 'us' and an inferior 'them' that compete for resources) and *Racial Progress* (thinking that leads people to the conclusion that racism is no longer a problem) — erode support for solutions. This shows that using framing strategies to activate more productive mindsets can help build support for change.

The report identifies two broad groups, or what we call 'clusters', of interrelated mindsets. These mindsets are connected to one another — meaning that the stronger a mindset is in thinking, the more likely a set of other mindsets are strongly endorsed. When we activate one mindset in a cluster with our framing, it is likely that all the other mindsets in the cluster also become active and shape thinking. One cluster focuses on individual responsibility and a sense that there is a natural order to the world. When this cluster is active, people are resistant to change. They hold on to the status quo and have difficulty seeing the effects of context and systems in shaping the lives and development of young children and families. The other cluster opens people up to a sense of collective responsibility and allows people to see the role of context and systems. This cluster leads to the recognition of a shared, social responsibility for the wellbeing of children and of the need to look at and alter contexts to provide it. Both of these clusters exist in people's thinking, and people can (and do) move between them based on how issues are framed. The presence of these mindset clusters unlocks a new layer of strategy by revealing a range of mindsets that can be activated through communications to strengthen solutions support — and a set of traps to avoid.

These findings present a set of implications for those working on the early years and related issues:

- **The power of framing (avoid/advance):** We find clear evidence that people hold multiple mindsets and that some of these mindsets help to build support for solutions while others undermine it. We also know that these mindsets are frame-sensitive; they are activated by the decisions communicators make about how they say what they have to say. Communications activate mindsets in the moment but can also shift the relative dominance of mindsets over time. Together, this points to the importance of using communications to activate certain mindsets and avoid cueing others effectively in the moment and strategically and persistently over time.
- **How to use limited resources:** Communicators might spend less time and fewer resources trying to strengthen already dominant mindsets that increase support for policy solutions. These mindsets require only minimal cueing to become active in thinking and boost policy support. On the other hand, activating and strengthening productive mindsets that are not as dominant — for example, the *It Takes a Village* mindset, the idea that responsibility for children's outcomes is collective — should be a focus for those working on the early years and related issues.
- **A new look at segmentation:** Significant differences in mindset support between demographic groups can help communicators select segments of the population to target with messages, engagement and campaigns. Communicators can either focus on segments that might be near a tipping point in their endorsement of a mindset or focus their efforts on groups where significant shifts in thinking are needed.
- **Clusters and cascades:** Clusters show that activating single mindsets can turn on broader systems of understanding — for better or worse. Understanding these connections opens up a broader set of potential strategies by expanding the mindsets that are relevant to and shape public thinking.
- **Central lynchpins:** All mindsets are not created equal; certain mindsets are central to broader ways of understanding and are thus key to consider in framing and narrative strategy. Focusing communications efforts on activating lynchpin mindsets in productive clusters can be a highly efficient way to shift thinking. At the same time, it seems important to be extra careful to avoid activating core mindsets in the unproductive cluster.
- **Spillovers:** Mindset clusters are used to think about multiple issues related to the early years and beyond. Realising that communications about a broader set of issues influence thinking about the early years and, in turn, that work on the early years has spillover effects on a wider set of issues points to the importance, power and potential of coordinated, cross-sector framing and narrative efforts.

These implications reveal a set of initial ideas for how to build support for policy and systems change in Australia:

- **Focus on the role of government in supporting children and families:** Navigate multiple mindsets on government while remaining honest and specific about where and when government isn't doing its job and the Australians that it's failing to serve.
- **Advance & strengthen:** Focus on using framing to activate the *It Takes a Village* mindset.
- **Avoid & weaken:** Avoid inadvertently cueing unproductive mindsets (*Otherism*, *Racial Progress*, *Fatalism*) and be attuned to subtle cues that may activate this thinking.
- **Expand & stretch:** Leverage the strength of the *Passive Development (Sponge)* mindset, the idea that children develop through passively absorbing things (for example, language, behaviours and values) from people and the environment, to activate its productive aspects while overcoming its limitations.
- **Build on policy support:** To normalise and further increase support for change, highlight how policy solutions are widely supported across groups. Communicators can also connect familiar policies to less-supported ones and should be clear about why different types of support are required in different contexts and for different groups.
- **Harness clusters and look for lynchpins:** Because mindsets exist in clusters, activating one can activate and strengthen others in a cluster. Central mindsets — such as *Government as Partner* — can be particularly strong cluster activators, and communicators should target them in their framing efforts.

We hope you will engage with us as we continue this research and ramp up our efforts to use findings to support the framing and narrative efforts of those working to ensure the wellbeing of all young children and families in Australia.

GET UPDATES ON THE PROJECT



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Introduction

Why measure mindsets?

Advocates and communicators working to promote the wellbeing of young children and families in Australia face a moment of critical challenges and significant opportunities. While our research shows there is broad public recognition that children and families need greater support, understanding of the specific factors that shape early development and support for actions necessary to improve the wellbeing of all children and families in Australia remains uneven. How can those working on systems that affect children and families leverage this important moment to make meaningful policy reforms to better support children and families? Part of the answer lies in understanding the cultural mindsets that underpin people's support for change and developing strategies to shift these deeply held patterns of thinking. Our research has repeatedly shown that people hold multiple mindsets about the early years. Some are more accessible or dominant than others, and there is certainly variation at the individual and group levels in terms of how strongly people hold certain mindsets. We also know that mindsets are activated by the framing and narrative choices communicators make — that is, choices about *how* they communicate information and ideas.

Looking at the relative strength of mindsets, seeing how they differ across groups and understanding the ways they affect policy support is vital for developing framing and narrative strategies to activate them in the moment and shift them over time. When we know which mindsets are at play, what these mindsets do and what activates them, we can build demand for change and alter the policy context.

Who and what is this report for?

This research report lays out the findings from a descriptive quantitative survey designed to understand how people in Australia think about the early years, including the following:

- The **relative strength** of mindsets in public thinking
- How mindsets **vary across demographic groups**
- How mindsets are **connected to policy support**
- How mindsets **hang together** in groupings we call 'mindset clusters'
- **Initial implications and ideas** for strategic framing and narrative work.

The quantitative survey was conducted with a nationally representative sample of the Australian population in February 2026 (see Appendix A for a full description of the sample and methods). The survey was informed by qualitative research FrameWorks previously conducted, the results of which can be found in [*Listening to Mindsets: Cultural Mindsets of Early Childhood in Australia*](#).

The current report is intended for those working to improve the systems that shape child and family wellbeing in Australia — including the early years, housing, education, transportation and more. It offers initial ideas for how to talk about the early years that can help shift public thinking about children and families.

This report is part of a multiyear project called Moving Mindsets. The project is conducted by the FrameWorks Institute in partnership with Curijo and Minderoo Foundation. It aims to measure mindsets about the early years over time, empirically test framing and narrative strategies that can shift them to build demand for change, and collaborate with our partners to use project findings to change the public conversation and policy context (see Acknowledgements for the full list of partners).

For the next three years, we will continue to track and measure mindsets about the early years, and we will begin testing specific framing strategies and develop applied tools that support communicators in using recommendations in their communications and strategies.

WHAT ARE CULTURAL MINDSETS, AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

While there are many ways to make sense of the concept of culture, one useful way of understanding it is through cultural mindsets. **Cultural mindsets** (or mindsets, for short) are **deep, implicit patterns of thinking that shape how we understand the world and how we make decisions**. In shaping how we think, mindsets **structure and produce our beliefs and attitudes and how we act in the world**.

The mindsets that we hold can normalise or problematise the existing social order and, in turn, shape whether we support social change and which sorts. For example, individualistic mindsets lead people to assume that life outcomes are the result of individual choice and willpower and that solutions involve people cultivating self-reliance and pulling themselves up by their bootstraps. Individualism affirms that people have control over outcomes but also makes it difficult to see how broader environments, contexts and systems affect our lives. When people think individualistically, it can lead them to conclude that policies designed to change systems—for example, the systems that produce wealth and income inequalities—are unnecessary or misguided.

We all have multiple mindsets that we can use to think about a given issue. For example, while people in Australia often think individualistically, they also have access to mindsets that allow them to see that what surrounds us, shapes us. When these more contextual mindsets are activated, they bring social systems into view and highlight the ways that context shapes outcomes alongside individual choices. They also lead us to recognise the need for policies that change contexts and systems.

Cultural mindsets are highly durable. They emerge from and are tied to cultural and social practices and institutions with deep historical roots. While we typically focus on cultural mindsets that emerge from common social practices and institutions on a national level, it's important to recognise that **different people and groups will engage with these common mindsets in different ways.** For example, a mindset can be more salient—more frequently drawn upon and more consistently used in thinking—for one group than for another. In addition, cultural subgroups within society also have access to distinctive mindsets that emerge from institutions and practices specific to those groups.

The following are ways that mindsets can shift:

- A **temporary switch** in the mindset that is active in someone's thinking
- An **enduring shift** in the relative salience or dominance of a mindset within a culture
- An **enduring change** in the contours or bounds of a mindset
- A **permanent displacement or replacement** of one mindset by another mindset.

These types of shifts are not mutually exclusive. If the contours of an existing mindset change sufficiently, it can reasonably be considered a new mindset that has displaced the old one. For example, the bounds of existing understandings of marriage have shifted and stretched as same-sex marriage came to be understood as part of the concept of marriage. In other words, the contours of at least one mindset about marriage shifted to encompass same-sex marriage and marriage equality. Those who work on mindset shifts generally focus on enduring or lasting changes in thinking—everything except the temporary shift listed above. As part of social change, shifting mindsets matters insofar as they enable other changes in the world, such as policy or systemic change. While mindset shifts aren't the only piece to the puzzle of social change efforts, they are necessary to enable other lasting changes that lead to meaningful reforms and improve outcomes.

How does cultural mindsets research differ from public opinion and other social survey research?

Public opinion research examines the explicit attitudes and preferences that people hold about specific issues. Cultural mindsets research explores the deeper, underlying ways of thinking that shape and explain these patterns in public opinion. Where public opinion research examines what people think, cultural mindsets research examines how people think. For example, public opinion research might show that parents are concerned about children's screen time and social media use. Cultural mindsets research explains why this is, revealing the role that the *Threat of Modernity (Technology)* mindset — which assumes that modern technology is inherently dangerous and threatens children's wellbeing — plays in driving these opinions. In addition, public opinion and other survey research often segment people into distinct groups with the understanding that there are some people who hold one view and others who hold another. While cultural mindsets research can and should attend to group differences in how mindsets are held and used, it is premised on the idea that to some extent, people across groups within a society have access to

common mindsets and that people can and do draw on different mindsets at different times. This focuses our attention on common ways of thinking and the strategic importance of shared ways of making meaning, while also acknowledging and making room for differences among individuals and groups in how they think about social issues.

Pairing mindsets research with segmentation research can be powerful. Mindset work can reveal the shared ways of thinking that guide understanding, emotional engagement and solutions support, while audience-specific research can help with figuring out how to best activate or deactivate these mindsets for different groups of people. In presenting findings, we focus on shared mindsets, but we are also careful to highlight variations in the ways that groups use mindsets to inform their thinking. This work in understanding mindsets can help inform strategy and drive follow-up research.

For more on cultural mindsets and mindset shifts, see [*Mindset Shifts: What Are They? Why Do They Matter? How Do They Happen?*](#)

Mindsets People Use to Think about the Early Years

The mindsets we measured in the survey are listed in Table 1. They come from [qualitative research](#) we conducted to identify the ways that people in Australia think about child development and outcomes.

Table 1: Summary of Mindsets Measured

Foundational Mindsets	
<i>Individualism</i>	Assumes that what happens in life is primarily or exclusively due to individual choice and willpower
<i>Otherism</i>	Assumes there is an 'us' and a 'them'; that the 'them' is in some ways inferior to the 'us' and that these groups compete for limited resources
<i>Fatalism</i>	Assumes that the problems we face as a society are too big to overcome and that there is no way to solve them
Mindsets Used to Think about Children and Families	
<i>Naturalism</i>	Assumes that child development happens naturally and that biology is more powerful than experiences in shaping how children grow and develop
<i>Passive Development (Sponge)</i>	Assumes that children develop through a passive process of absorbing things (for example, language, behaviours, values) from those around them
<i>Early Years Are Pivotal</i>	Assumes that the first five years of life are critical for lifelong learning and health
<i>Family Bubble</i>	Assumes that parents are narrowly and exclusively responsible for children's development and wellbeing and that parental effort and caring are all that matter
<i>It Takes a Village</i>	Assumes that childhood and development are shaped by a network of actors in a community and that responsibility for children's outcomes is shared
<i>Maternal Gender Essentialism</i>	Assumes that caregiving is a natural role for women, with mothers primarily responsible for children's development and wellbeing
<i>Financial Constraints</i>	Assumes that financial constraints can affect access to opportunities and shape a child's development

Mindsets Used to Think about Government and Society	
<i>Government as Partner</i>	Assumes that government can and should play a role in supporting children and families
<i>Government Interferes with Parenting</i>	Assumes that the government interferes with parenting and development
<i>Government as Threat</i>	Assumes government is a threat to the wellbeing of children and families
<i>Threat of Modernity—General</i>	Assumes the modern world has become dangerous and threatens child development and wellbeing
<i>Threat of Modernity—Technology</i>	Assumes that modern technology — especially screens and social media — is inherently harmful and threatens child development and wellbeing

Mindsets Used to Think about Race and Racism	
<i>Racial Progress</i>	Assumes racism is something that has been addressed through laws and policies and is largely no longer a problem
<i>Interpersonal Racism</i>	Assumes that racism is about individual biases, stereotypes and prejudices
<i>Structural Racism</i>	Assumes that the way laws, rules, policies and society are set up can create inequity and racial disparities

FINDING #1

People Hold Multiple Mindsets

It is important to note at the outset that evidence from the survey clearly shows that all the mindsets we measured in the survey — even those that seem contradictory — are held by the Australian public, albeit to varying degrees.

For example, we found that people hold *Family Bubble* (the idea that parents are entirely responsible for children's development and wellbeing) and *It Takes a Village* (the idea that responsibility for children's development and wellbeing is shared among a network of actors in a community) mindsets to similar degrees, even though they are contradictory and lead people to different conclusions when thinking about who's responsible for children's outcomes.³ Other contradictory mindsets were also similarly strongly held: *Government as Partner* (the idea that government can and should play a role in supporting children and families) and *Government Interferes with Parenting* (the idea that government interferes with parenting and development).⁴ These two mindsets lead to completely different conclusions about the role of government, yet they were endorsed at similar levels.

What This Means

The idea that people hold multiple, and sometimes conflicting, mindsets and that these mindsets lead thinking in very different directions underscores the importance of framing and using communications to foreground and background different mindsets. Developing framing strategies that selectively activate certain mindsets is key to expanding collective responsibility and building greater public recognition that what surrounds children and families shapes their wellbeing.

FINDING #2

Some Mindsets Are Stronger than Others

The strength of a mindset involves how accessible different assumptions are in how people think about the early years and how some ways of thinking can expand and crowd out other ways of reasoning. The stronger a mindset is, the more top of mind, easily accessible, and influential its core assumptions are to how people think about the early years and the more likely it is to crowd out other ways of thinking once it has been activated. Mindsets that are relatively strong also tend to be present and highly visible in public discourse and narratives about an issue.

In the survey, participants were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with statements that represent core assumptions of each mindset. They indicated their support by using a Likert scale — a seven-point scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. To more easily interpret the scale, we have translated mean scores into a 100-point scale. **Zero indicates the strongest possible level of disagreement, 50 indicates the midpoint of the scale (‘neither agree nor disagree’), and 100 indicates the highest level of agreement.** As scores get closer to zero, this indicates increasingly strong rejection of the mindset. As scores get closer to 100, this indicates increasingly strong agreement with the mindset. These numbers **do not represent the percentage of participants who agreed with statements, but rather the average level of agreement with them.**

Table 2 shows the relative strength of each of the mindsets that we measured in the survey.

Table 2: Relative Strength of Mindsets about the Early Years

Name of Mindset	Mean Score5	Name of Mindset (cont.)	Mean Score5
<i>Passive Development (Sponge)</i>	80.4	<i>Financial Constraints</i>	62.9
<i>Interpersonal Racism</i>	75.0	<i>Threat of Modernity—General</i>	62.2
<i>Government as Partner</i>	72.9	<i>Structural Racism</i>	56.2
<i>Individualism</i>	68.9	<i>Maternal Gender Essentialism</i>	56.1
<i>Threat of Modernity—Technology</i>	68.4	<i>Government as Threat</i>	52.2
<i>Early Years Are Pivotal</i>	68.3	<i>Naturalism</i>	50.7
<i>Government Interferes with Parenting</i>	68.0	<i>Otherism</i>	48.8
<i>Family Bubble</i>	67.1	<i>Fatalism</i>	48.3
<i>It Takes a Village</i>	63.6	<i>Racial Progress</i>	37.6

What This Means

- **The *Passive Development (Sponge)* mindset is a dominant way people think about early childhood:** The *Passive Development (Sponge)* mindset is easily accessible and highly relevant when people think about the early years. This mindset assumes that children develop passively by absorbing language, values and behaviours from those around them. In the past, we have found that it can limit understanding of the active role that children, caregivers and communities play in early childhood and can lead people to question the role and importance of intervening to address developmental issues. At the same time, the mindset productively and powerfully opens people up to the role and importance of contextual factors in shaping child development, increasing people's sense that what surround us, shapes us. The strength of this mindset — and its relationship to support for policy solutions that we discuss below — makes these nuances crucial to understand in order to develop strategies to expand this thinking to include a deeper understanding of development as an active and dynamic process between children and their environments of experience.
- **Individualistic thinking about the early years remains dominant, yet more collective understandings are also present:** The relatively strong endorsement of *Individualism* and *Family Bubble* mindsets is consistent with our previous research on children and families in Australia and underscores the importance of developing strategies to counterbalance these mindsets to build support for policy and systems change. At the same time, people endorsed the collective *It Takes a Village* mindset at a similar level. This shows that while people draw more readily on individualistic mindsets when thinking about the early years, there are openings and opportunities to activate more collective understandings.
- **Interpersonal relationships continue to be the dominant way people think about racism:** The *Interpersonal Racism* mindset had stronger endorsement than the other mindsets about race and racism in the survey. This indicates that interpersonal relationships remain the dominant way people think about racism. While interpersonal bias and discrimination are important parts of how racism is experienced and perpetuated, they are not the whole picture. The *Structural Racism* mindset — grounded in the understanding that our public policies, norms and institutions reproduce racial disparities — is available but less strongly endorsed than the *Interpersonal Racism* mindset.⁶ This suggests that there is more work to be done to expand people's understanding that systems and structures perpetuate inequities — and to build support for what must be done to address these inequities.
- **Thinking about government is complicated:** The *Government as Partner* mindset has stronger endorsement than the other mindsets about government,⁷ but the *Government Interferes with Parenting* mindset was also relatively strongly endorsed. It is interesting to note that both of these mindsets received stronger endorsement than the *Government as Threat* mindset, indicating that seeing the government as actively threatening children and families is less dominant among the Australian public as a whole. Despite its lower endorsement, our qualitative research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants suggests this is a complicated mindset and likely has much stronger endorsement among First Nations groups.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVED EXPERIENCE IN SHAPING MINDSETS

It's important to acknowledge that the mindsets people employ to think about how government can or should support the early years depends in part on their lived experiences with government. In [previous qualitative research](#), we found that *Government as Threat* was especially strong among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and deeply tied to their experiences with government. While the representative sample of First Nations participants in the survey is not sufficient for us to investigate this question, this highlights the need for those working on systems to improve the wellbeing of young children and families to dig deeper into the role that lived experience plays in shaping how people think about the early years and related issues.

- **Harmful mindsets are clearly present but are not as strong as other mindsets:** At first glance, the relative weakness of *Racial Progress*, *Fatalism* and *Otherism* compared to the other mindsets appears to be good news for those working to improve early-childhood systems and address persistent inequities. However, the weaker endorsement of these mindsets in the survey does not mean they are absent in people's thinking. These mindsets remain part of how people make sense of the early years and can be readily activated by cues in communication. Even subtle messages that evoke fatalism, othering, or racist assumptions can bring them to the forefront. As such, communicators still need to be careful when framing to avoid activating these mindsets.

SOCIAL DESIRABILITY BIAS

It may be the case that lower levels of endorsement for more explicitly racist and bigoted mindsets, such as *Otherism* and *Racial Progress*, are in part due to what is called 'social desirability bias'. This is a well-documented phenomenon in social science research wherein research participants may respond to explicitly problematic statements with answers they believe are socially endorsed or acceptable, rather than what they actually think. The potential influences of social desirability bias are important to consider when making sense of lower endorsement levels for mindsets that our earlier qualitative research suggested were prominent in public thinking about the early years. For example, while *Racial Progress* received the weakest endorsement in the survey, it emerged as a pervasive mindset in previous focus groups. This may be because in a quantitative survey, participants are responding to explicit, blunt statements reflecting these mindsets, which might feel riskier to endorse. Meanwhile, in qualitative research, there is more space for participants to voice more subtle or indirect statements that evidence this thinking. This underscores the importance of mixed methods research in which methodologies are designed to counter or check the biases inherent in other methods. In this case, ongoing qualitative research is important to unearth the implicit, deeper assumptions that inform people's thinking about race and racial groups in subtler ways.

FINDING #3

The strength of some mindsets varies across groups, while other mindsets have little variation

Understanding how mindset strength varies across demographic groups reveals strategic framing opportunities and challenges. The mindsets that are more variable across and between demographic groups represent sites of contention. Meanwhile, mindsets that are the most stable among demographic groups represent entrenched and stable patterns of thinking. It's important to note **the variation in endorsement described below reflects the relative salience or currency of mindsets across groups, rather than fundamentally different ways of thinking between groups.**

Mindsets with the Most Variation across Demographic Groups

It Takes a Village, *Structural Racism*, *Otherism* and *Racial Progress* have the most variation in strength when we look across demographic groups.

Both the *It Takes a Village* mindset — in which responsibility for children's outcomes are seen as shared by a network of people in a community — and the *Structural Racism* mindset — which recognises that laws, policies and systems can create and maintain racial inequities — were endorsed in meaningfully different ways across age, parental status and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) status. In both cases, younger people, parents of young children,⁸ and people from CALD backgrounds endorsed these mindsets more strongly compared to older people, people who are not parents of young children and people from non-CALD backgrounds.

Figure 1. The Strength of the *It Takes a Village* Mindset Varies Significantly across Demographic Groups

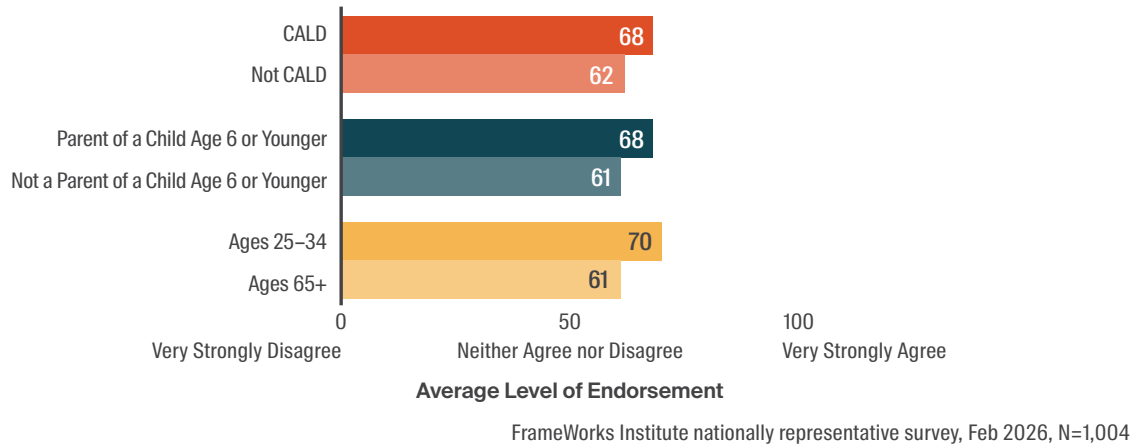
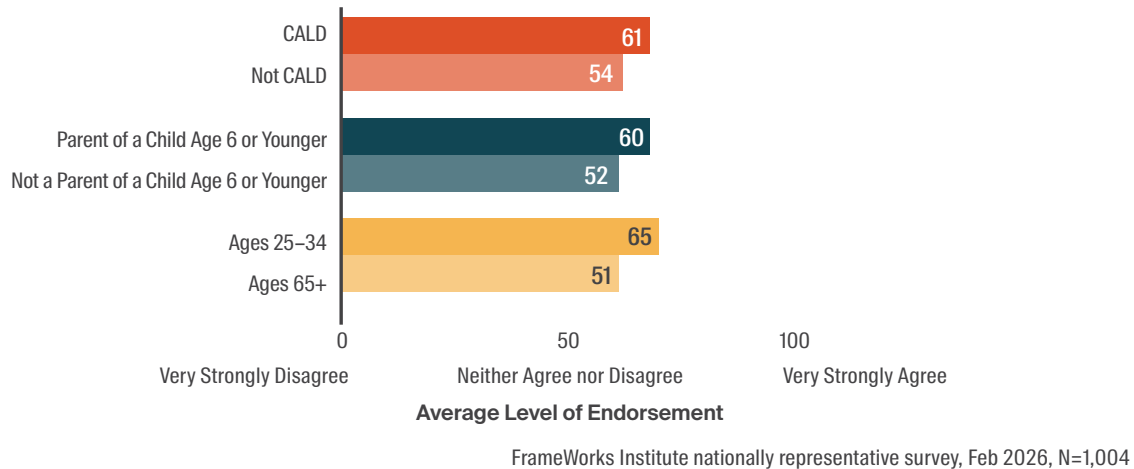
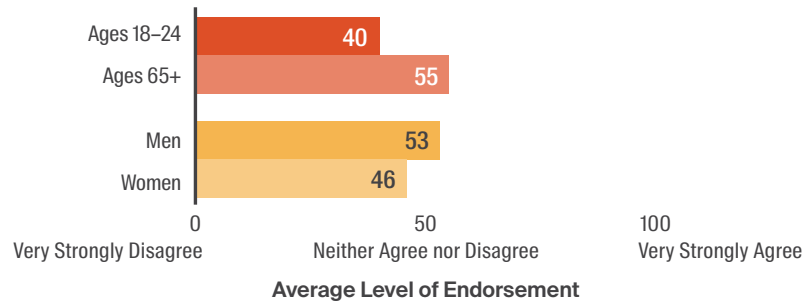


Figure 2. The Strength of the *Structural Racism* Mindset Varies Significantly across Demographic Groups



The *Otherism* mindset, which assumes that there are ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’ in society that are fundamentally different and opposed to one another, varied in strength by age and gender, with older people and men holding the mindset more strongly than younger people and women.

Figure 3. The Strength of the *Otherism* Mindset Varies Significantly across Demographic Groups

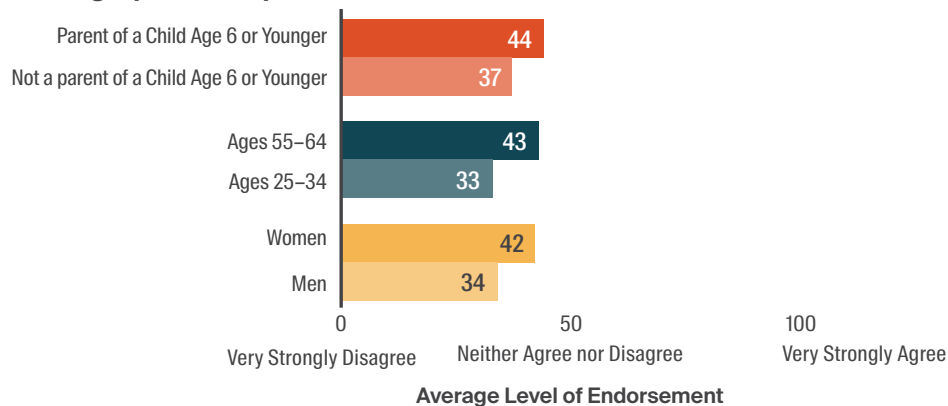


FrameWorks Institute nationally representative survey, Feb 2026, N=1,004

There were also differences in mindset endorsement of ‘otherism’ across political affiliation.

The *Racial Progress* mindset (the assumption that racial discrimination and disparities are things of the past) varied in strength by age, gender and parental status, with younger people, men and parents of young children holding the mindset more strongly than older people, women and those who are not parents of young children.

Figure 4. The Strength of the *Racial Progress* Mindset Varies Significantly across Demographic Groups



FrameWorks Institute nationally representative survey, Feb 2026, N=1,004

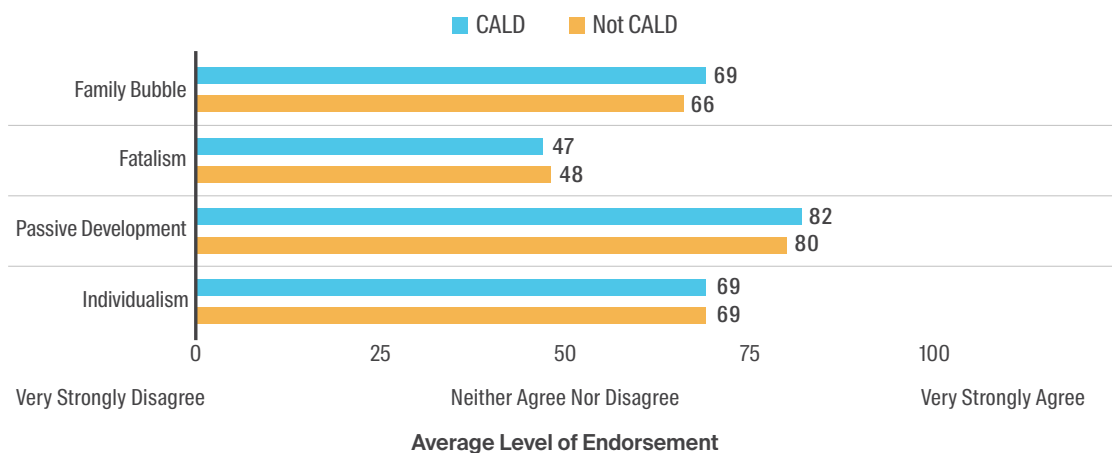
Mindsets with the Least Variation across Demographic Groups

Family Bubble, *Fatalism*, *Passive Development (Sponge)* and *Individualism* were the mindsets with the least variation across demographic groups.

The *Family Bubble* mindset — which sees parents as solely responsible for their children's development and wellbeing and not affected by the broader context — and the *Fatalism* mindset — which assumes that society's problems are too large to fix and cannot be solved — showed a striking lack of variation in strength when we looked across groups, including CALD status, parental status, age, gender and political party affiliation.

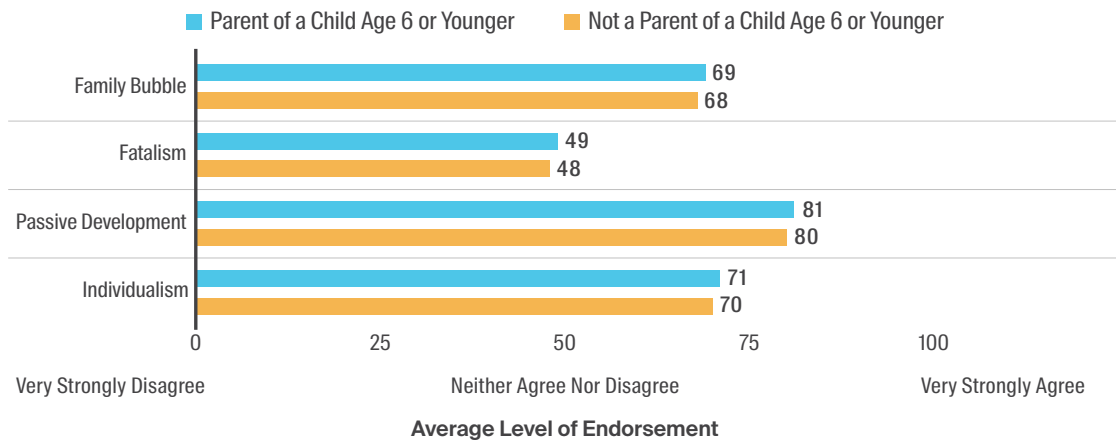
The *Passive Development (Sponge)* mindset — which assumes that children develop by passively absorbing language, values and behaviours from those around them — and the *Individualism* mindset — which assumes that life outcomes are the result of personal choices and willpower — also showed relatively consistent strength across groups.

Figure 5. Certain Mindsets Are Consistently Held by CALD and Non-CALD Groups



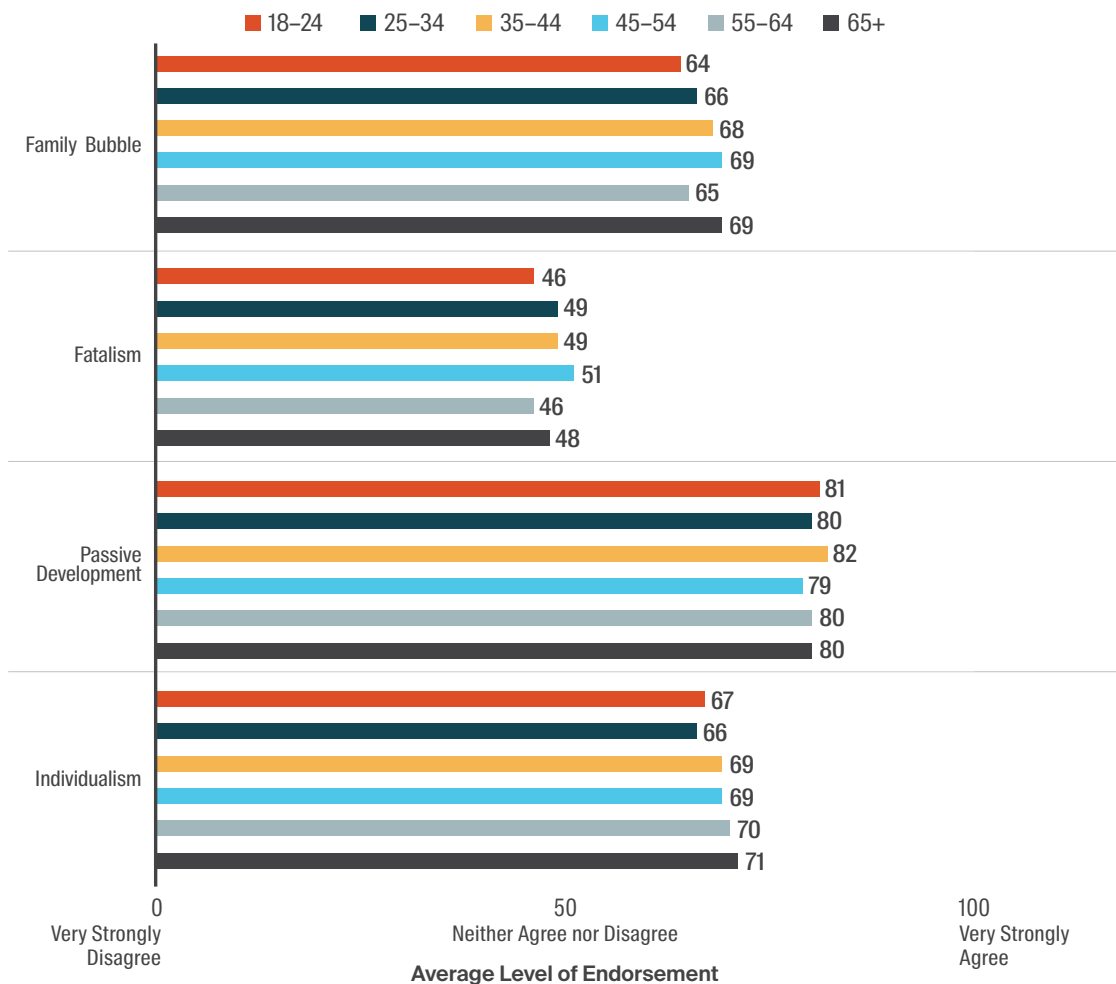
FrameWorks Institute, nationally representative + CALD oversample,
Feb. 2026, N = 1,105

Figure 6. Certain Mindsets Are Consistently Held across Parental Status



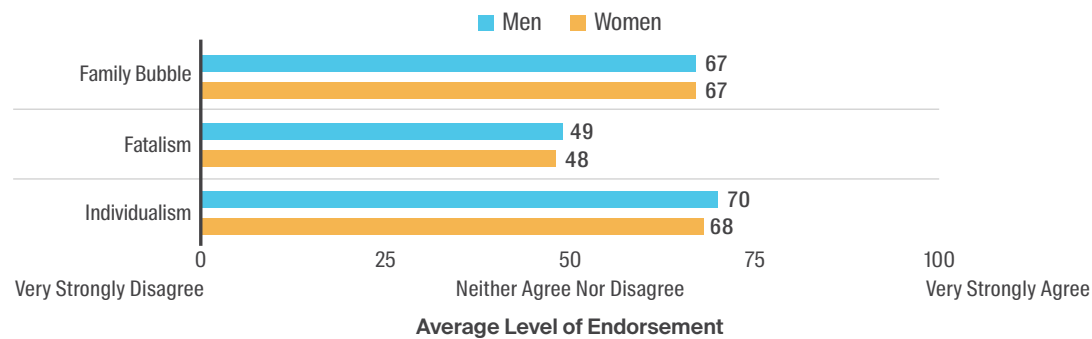
FrameWorks Institute, nationally representative survey,
Feb. 2026. N = 1004

Figure 7. Certain Mindsets Are Consistently Held across Age Groups



FrameWorks Institute nationally representative survey, Feb 2026, N=1,004

Figure 8. Certain Mindsets Are Consistently Held by Women and Men



FrameWorks Institute, nationally representative survey,
Feb. 2026, N = 1,004

MINDSET ENDORSEMENT AND POLITICAL PARTY

Many mindsets show variations in strength when we look at people's political party affiliation. This indicates a relationship between political party and strength of mindsets.

On the other hand, some mindsets are consistently held across political party. This underscores the importance of looking at mindsets — they give us a more nuanced look at public thinking than solely focusing on political party. As we discuss below, mindsets are connected to policy reforms and solutions support beyond political affiliation.

What This Means

- **Mindsets with variable strength are sites of contention.** Mindsets that show more variable strength across groups can be understood as key sites of contestation in the public discourse. The variation we see in endorsement of *It Takes a Village*, *Structural Racism*, *Otherism* and *Racial Progress* suggests that these are not settled or uniformly held ways of making sense of the early years; instead, they are areas where different people are being pulled in different interpretive directions. This contestation suggests that these mindsets may be especially important leverage points for communications and engagement efforts because they mark places where understandings are still in flux rather than firmly entrenched across the population. At the same time, the uneven distribution of these mindsets suggests the value of targeting interventions towards groups that are more strongly oriented towards unproductive ways of thinking, where there may be the greatest need — and opportunity — for movement. Conversely, groups that are already more productively situated in terms of mindset strength may require less intensive effort, allowing resources to be focused where they can have the most impact.

- **Stability is a marker of mindset strength.** When mindsets have both overall strong endorsement and a lack of variation across groups — such as *Family Bubble*, *Passive Development* and *Individualism* — it further indicates their dominance in Australian public thinking. On the other hand, *Fatalism* shows low variation but is relatively less strong, suggesting that it remains present in people's thinking and continues to pose a challenge, particularly because its stability means it is less open to contestation than more variable mindsets. However, stable does not mean immovable. Stable and dominant mindsets such as *Family Bubble* and *Individualism* may take time to shift, but framing can go a long way to downplay these mindsets and activate more productive ones, such as *It Takes a Village*.

FINDING #4

Mindsets Shape Policy and Solutions Support

Mindsets shape how people think, feel and act — and their support and demand for change. In this section, we discuss public support for a set of early years policies and how mindset strength affects this support. We find that certain mindsets are positively related to policy support — meaning the stronger a person holds the mindset, the *more* they support the policy — while other mindsets are negatively related to policy support — meaning the stronger a person holds the mindset, the *less* they support the policy.

Support for Early Years Policies

Our survey shows that Australians generally support early years policy reforms (see Appendix B for a full list of the policies included in the survey and the mean scores showing the strength of support for each policy). Policies with the most support included those aimed at improving access to child and family health services for families in rural and remote areas, making quality childcare available to all families, and investing in early-childhood services for children with disability. There was also support for free three-year-old preschools; support for families to access health, education, housing and other services all in one place; tax rebates to help families afford the cost of raising children; 24 weeks of paid parental leave; and investing in early-childhood services for CALD communities. People broadly understand the need for and benefit of a range of policies intended to support children and families in the early years.

Participants were less supportive of the policy geared towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled and culturally appropriate early-childhood services received the lowest level of support out of all the solutions included in the survey.

We found variation in policy support across demographic groups. Individuals from CALD groups, parents of young children, and women more strongly supported all of the policies included in the survey than other demographic groups. Differences in policy support across age groups was not as straightforward.

What This Means

- **People see the need for targeted early years support for specific communities and groups.**

Policies geared towards supporting rural and remote communities and children with disability received widespread support in the survey. This suggests that people understand that there are groups who face unique challenges and would benefit from additional resources to support the early years.

- **But more needs to be done to extend this understanding of targeted support for specific communities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.** The fact that investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled organisations (ACCOS) received the least support suggests that there continues to be a lack of widespread understanding of how past and present barriers facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities makes culturally appropriate support necessary. This may also be connected to a lack of widespread understanding about what Community- Controlled or culturally appropriate support means, which emphasises the need to build understanding of why specific culturally appropriate support is necessary and crucial to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community wellbeing.

BUILDING UNDERSTANDING OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS (ACCOS)

Explain what ACCOS are – organisations that deliver services, including land and resource management – and the vital role they play in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' empowerment, strength and self-determination.¹⁰

This can help shift thinking away from reactionary or exclusionary ideas and towards collective thinking about our shared responsibility to support the wellbeing of young children and families in Australia.

'ACCO services come from the community and are intrinsically part of the community. [...] This work shows us the mindset[s] that need shifting/influencing [are] in the general population overall. The power rests with governments to make the change, and they of course are influenced strongly by the attitudes of voters.'

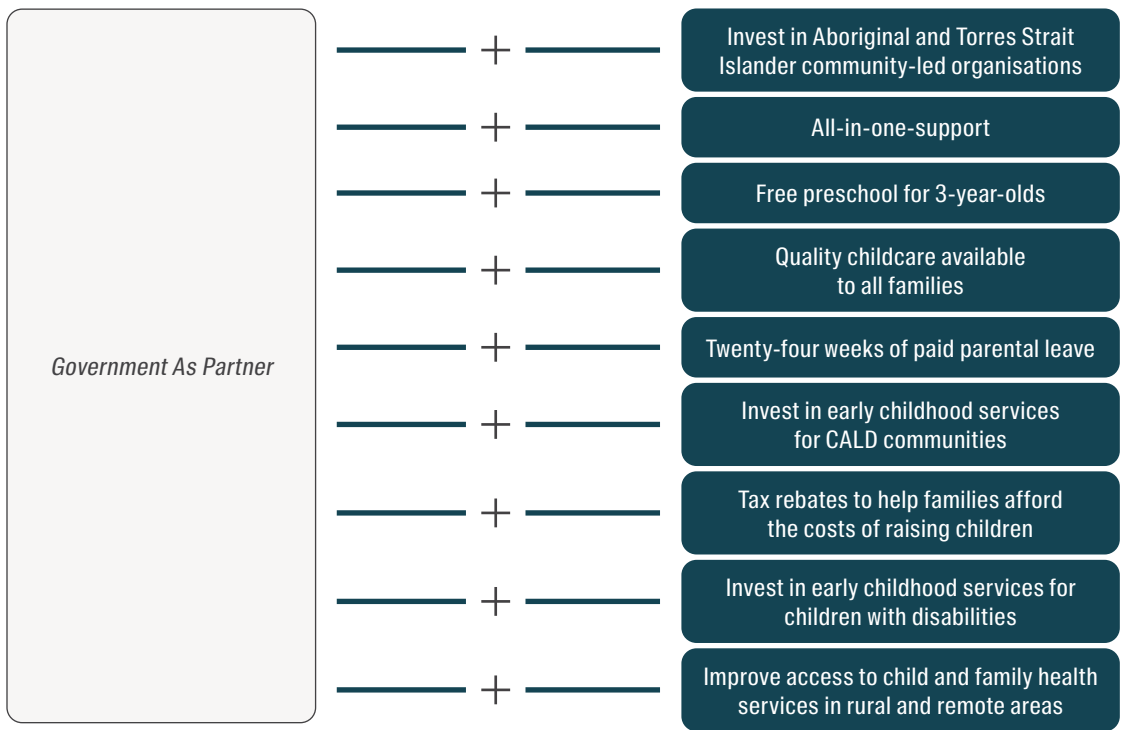
–Mandy Taylor, Executive Director, Office of the CEO,
National Voice for our Children (SNAICC)

Mindsets and Policy Support

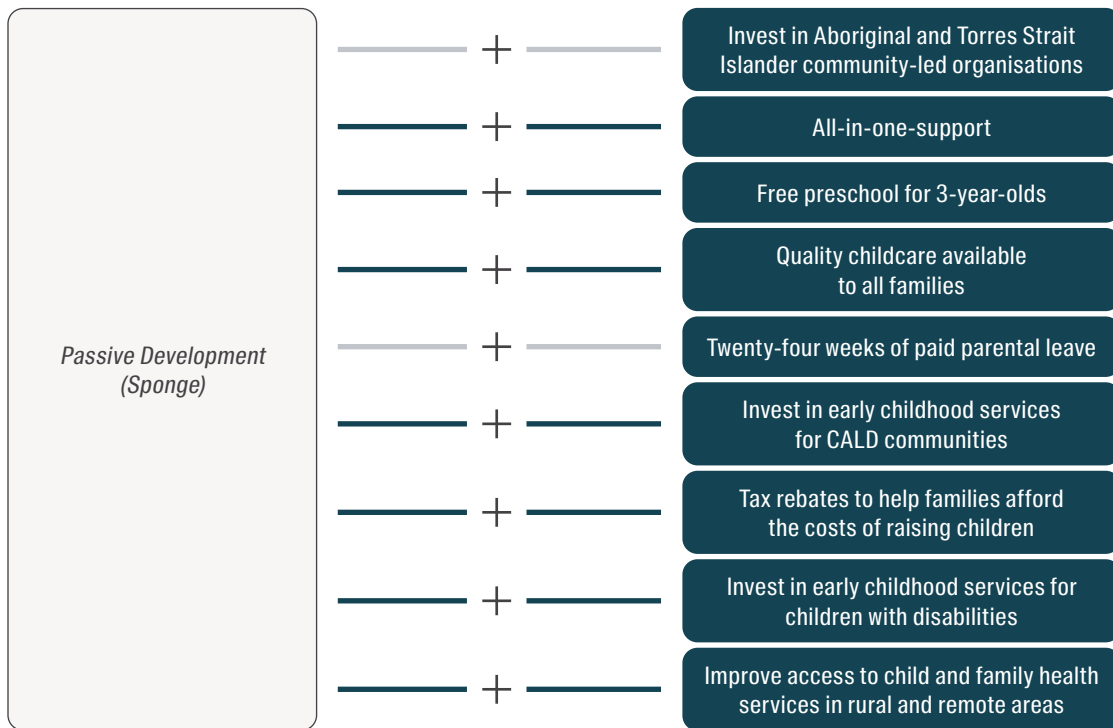
Correlations between mindset endorsement and support for policies demonstrates the ways in which mindsets shape not only how people think but also the solutions they see as necessary to make change. In the survey, mindsets that emphasise collective responsibility and recognise inequities are positively connected to policies that would improve governmental services, whereas mindsets that are divisive and reactionary are negatively connected to policy reforms, especially those that are targeted for specific communities.

The mindset with the strongest positive relationship to policy support was *Government as Partner*. The *Passive Development (Sponge)*, *Interpersonal Racism* and *Structural Racism* mindsets were also strongly related to policy support.

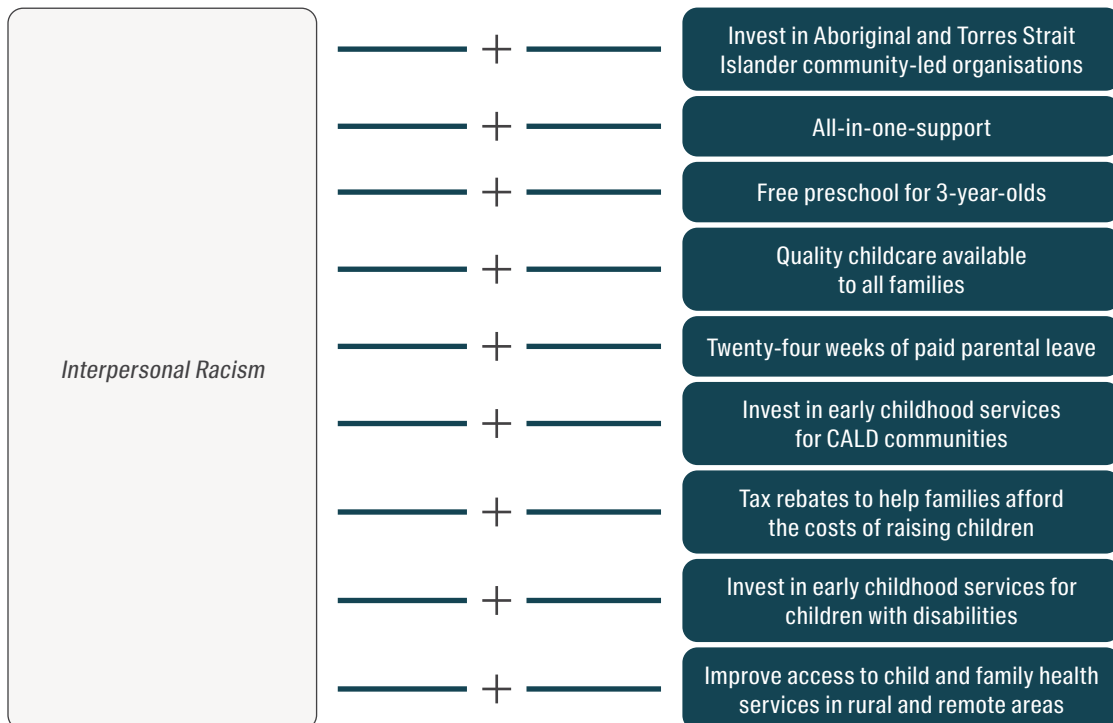
Government as Partner is strongly related to policy support¹¹



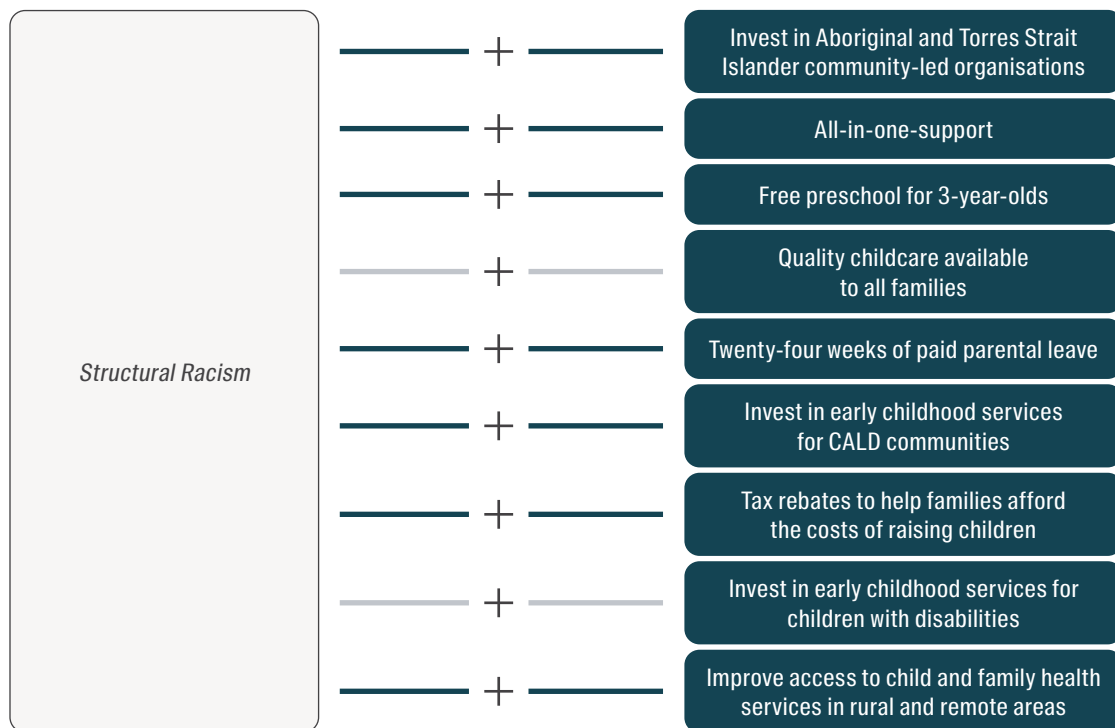
***Passive Development (Sponge)* is strongly related to policy support**



***Interpersonal Racism* is strongly related to policy support**



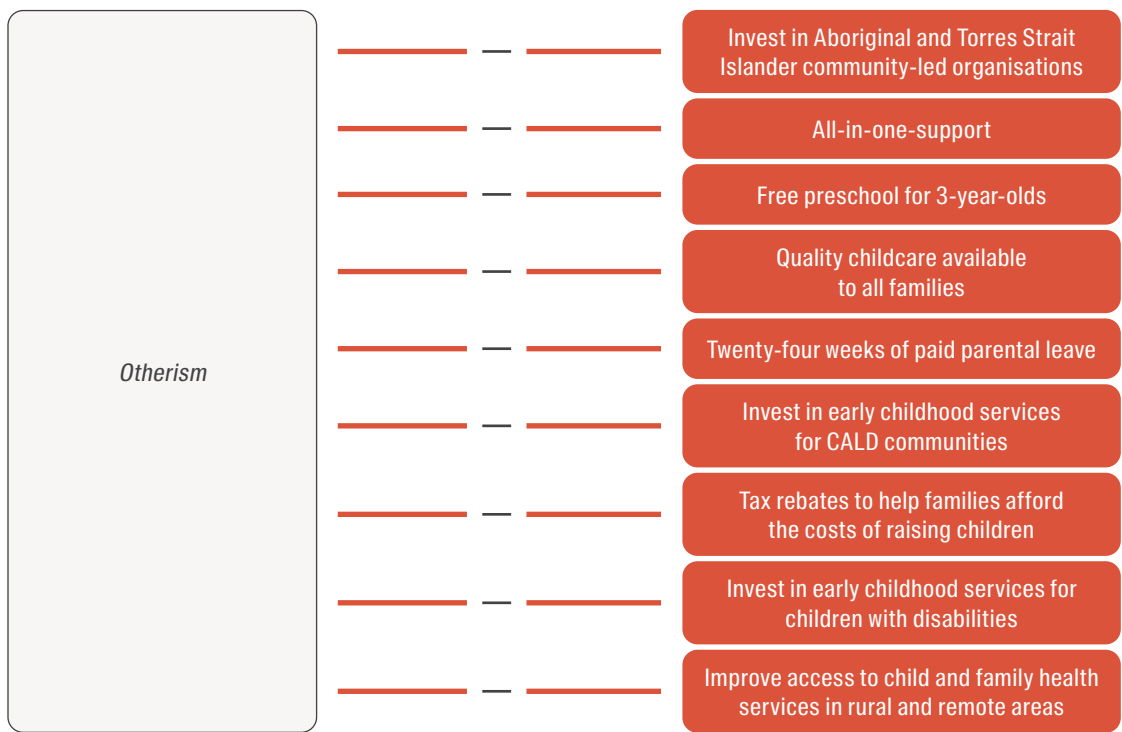
Structural Racism is strongly related to policy support



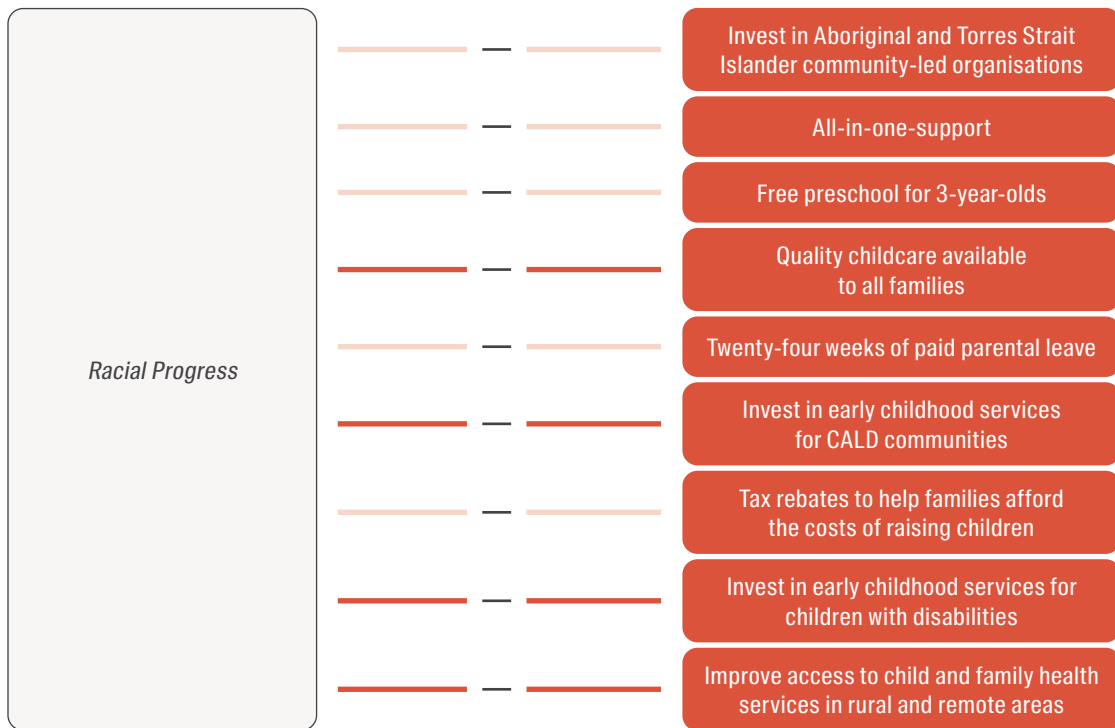
The stronger these mindsets are in people's thinking, the more they support early years policies. This means that the more communicators can use messages, frames, stories and narratives to activate these mindsets in the moment and strengthen them over time, the more people will support and demand the policies necessary to ensure the wellbeing of all of Australia's children.

There are also certain mindsets that are strongly *negatively* correlated with policy support. When these mindsets are strong in people's thinking, they are less supportive of early years policies. *Otherism* has the strongest negative relationship to policy support, with a particularly strong negative connection to support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled early years reforms. *Racial Progress* and *Fatalism* also reduce support for early years policies.

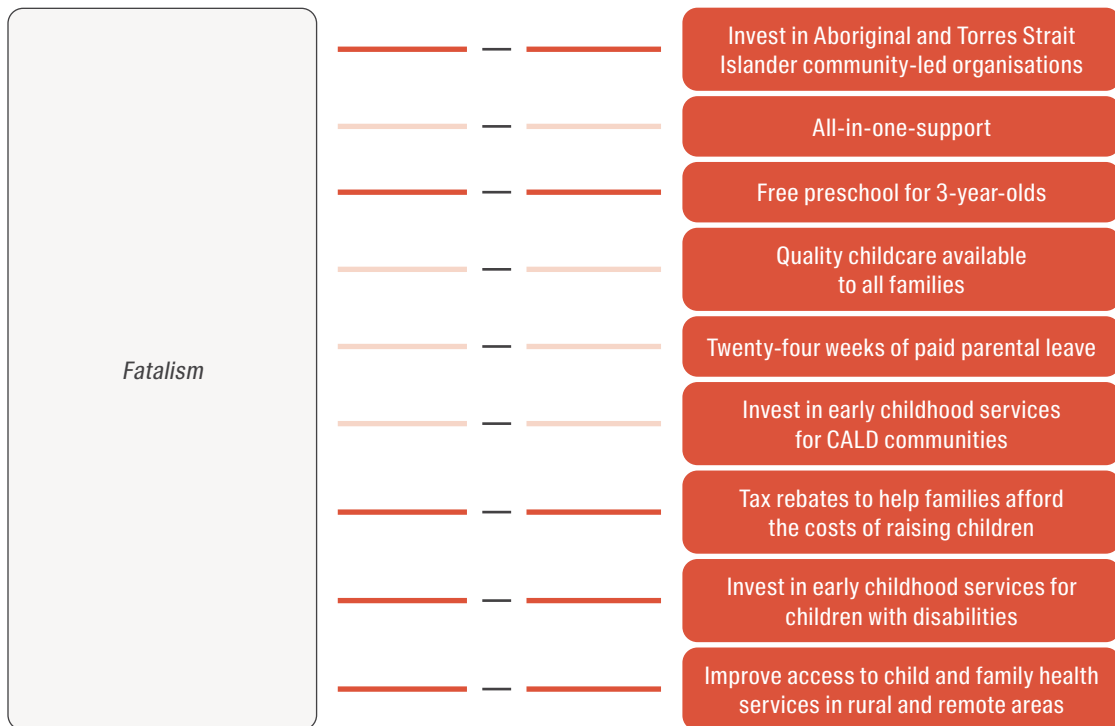
***Otherism* is strongly negatively related to policy support¹²**



***Racial Progress* is strongly negatively related to policy support**



***Fatalism* is strongly negatively related to policy support**



What This Means

- **Government as Partner is strongly connected to solutions by helping people think about what the government should do.** It is likely that the mindset's effect in increasing policy support comes from the way it shapes thinking about what government should do rather than how it currently acts. In activating the mindset, communicators need to be clear that while government should be a source of support for all children and families, this is not always nor currently the case. Communicators should balance aspirational messaging about the role of government in supporting children and families with a sense of how it is currently coming up short in delivering on this role.
- **Passive Development is positively linked to policy support, yet there are limitations of this mindset.** The mindset powerfully helps people see that what surrounds children shapes their development, and it increases support for measures that ensure these surroundings are as positive and supportive as possible. At the same time, the passive process entailed in the mindset is at odds with what we know about development — that it is an active process where children *engage* with their environment of relationships and caregivers, and communities do things to create experiences. In this way, the mindset might lead to immediate support for policy while entrenching thinking that could, over the long term, work against efforts to ensure positive development. Passive development makes ideas of child agency and the importance of engaging in communities to find meaning and purpose harder to get behind and support. As such, future framing work should focus on ways to activate and expand this mindset to take advantage of the sensitivity to context that it entails. At the same time, framing needs to push and stretch the mindset to include a more active role for children, caregivers, and communities in the developmental process.
- **Interpersonal Racism and Structural Racism help people see the need for change.** Both mindsets are positively connected with policy support and can be activated to build demand for change. While people's thinking about racism continues to centre individual experiences rather than structural dimensions, the fact that *Interpersonal Racism* is connected to support for policy change suggests that this thinking can be connected to more structural solutions.
- **Overcoming harmful and unproductive mindsets remains a key challenge.** Although *Otherism*, *Fatalism* and *Racial Progress* are not as strong as other mindsets in the survey, these ways of thinking strongly reduce support for solutions. The racist dimensions of *Otherism* and *Racial Progress* dampen people's support for diverse, inclusive and culturally appropriate early years services. *Fatalism* leaves people feeling that problems are too big to fix and results in disengagement and decreased support for solutions. These mindsets are clearly harmful and unproductive — communicators need to avoid cueing them in the moment and work to overcome them over time.

FINDING #5

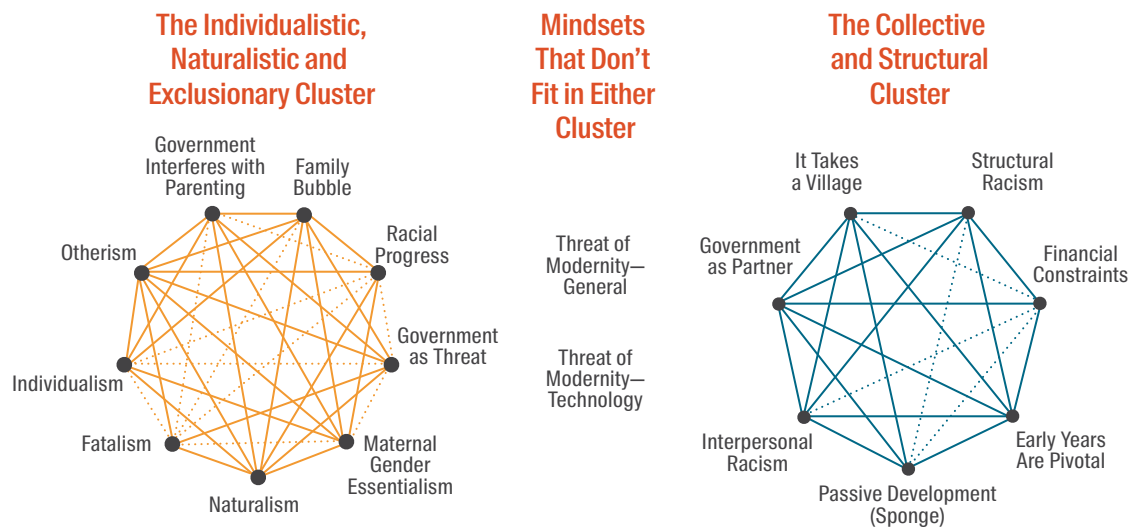
Mindsets Interrelate and Form Clusters

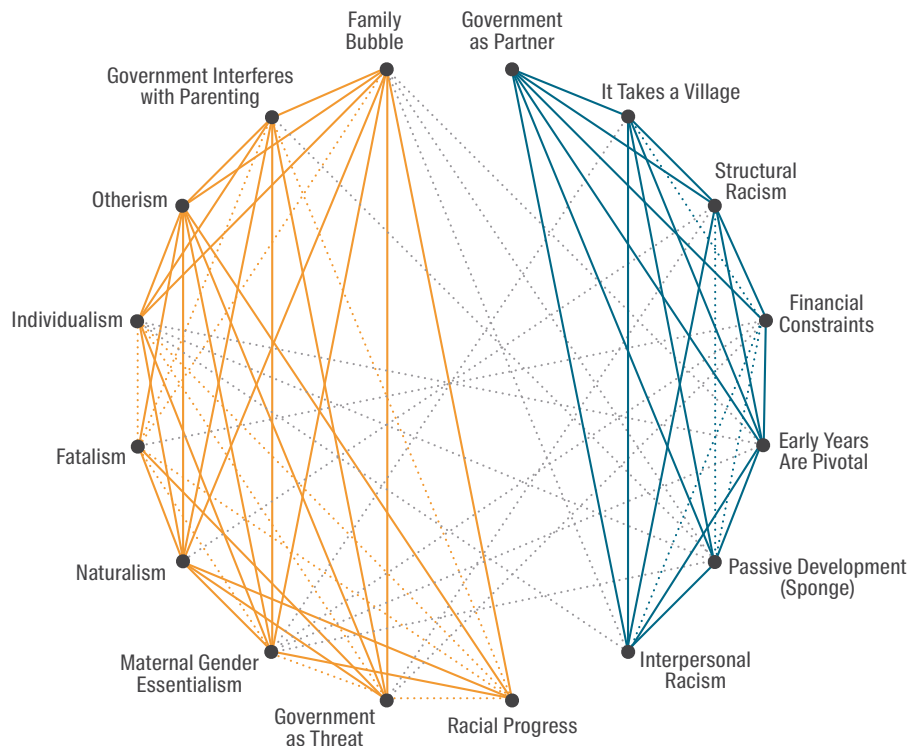
Many of the mindsets we use to make sense of the world are connected to each other and form clusters of interrelated assumptions and understandings. For each cluster, the more strongly people endorse one mindset, the more strongly they tend to endorse other mindsets in the cluster.¹³

The mindsets Australians use to think about the early years form two clusters: the Individualistic, Naturalistic and Exclusionary cluster (in yellow in the following figures) and the Collective and Structural cluster (in blue).

Two mindset clusters about the early years

Figure 9. Certain Mindsets Are Consistently Held across Age Groups





The Individualistic, Naturalistic and Exclusionary Cluster

This cluster includes mindsets that are naturalistic, individualistic, and othering. These mindsets create a mutually reinforcing logic. Individualism and choice are seen as the natural way that things do and should work, and government efforts to change the social order are seen as interfering with or threatening to this natural state.

This cluster includes the following interrelated mindsets:

- *Government Interferes with Parenting*
- *Otherism*
- *Family Bubble*
- *Individualism*
- *Fatalism*
- *Naturalism*
- *Maternal Gender Essentialism*
- *Government as Threat*
- *Racial Progress*

Two mindsets — *Government Interferes with Parenting* and *Otherism* — are central to this cluster. This means that of all the mindsets in the cluster, *Government Interferes with Parenting* and *Otherism* are the most strongly connected to the other mindsets in the cluster and are not connected or negatively connected to mindsets in the other cluster.

The Collective and Structural Cluster

We identified another cluster that includes mindsets oriented toward collective responsibility and the importance of context. These mindsets are also mutually reinforcing. When people think of social issues such as parenting and child development as the product of collective choices, they tend to see how social systems and structures shape people's outcomes in life. These assumptions lead people to see a role for collective responsibility and action to address social problems. This thinking also makes it easier to see why and how we should demand changes to better support children and families.

This cluster includes the following interrelated mindsets:

- *Government as Partner*
- *It Takes a Village*
- *Structural Racism*
- *Interpersonal Racism*
- *Passive Development (Sponge)*
- *Early Years Are Pivotal*
- *Financial Constraints*

Government as Partner is the central mindset in this cluster — meaning that of all the mindsets in this cluster, it is most strongly connected with the other mindsets and is not connected or negatively connected to mindsets in the other cluster.

Both Clusters Are Available to People

Mindset clusters are not mutually exclusive ways of thinking; instead, both clusters are accessible to people across Australia. Mindset clusters are loosely linked networks rather than tightly organised ideologies or worldviews. There are some connections across clusters — some mindsets in each cluster are weakly connected to mindsets in the other. And mindsets from both clusters are widely held across the population, meaning that they are used by people across demographic groups. In one moment, someone might draw on mindsets from one cluster, and in the next, draw on mindsets from the other.

Mindsets That Don't Fit in the Clusters

Two mindsets about modernity don't neatly fit into either cluster: the *Threat of Modernity* — *General* mindset, which assumes the modern world is dangerous and threatening to positive development and child wellbeing, and the more specific *Threat of Modernity* — *Technology* mindset, which assumes that modern technology, especially screen time and social media, is inherently harmful and threatens children's development and wellbeing. These mindsets are loosely connected (weakly correlated) to some of the mindsets in both clusters, but they don't fit into either one.

What This Means

- **Since both clusters are available but have different implications for solutions support, framing matters.** When mindsets in the Individualistic, Naturalistic and Exclusionary cluster are activated, people are less likely to support early years policies. On the other hand, mindsets in the Collective and Structural cluster have strong positive relationships with policy support; activating the mindsets in this cluster is likely to boost support for early years policies. Framing strategies that can activate the Collective and Structural cluster are therefore key to expanding support for early years policy reforms.
- **The meaning of mindsets that don't fit into either cluster is contested.** Both *Threat of Modernity* mindsets connect to the *Fatalism* and *Government as Threat* mindsets. But they also connect to mindsets about systems — for example, the *Financial Constraints* mindset that recognises how financial situations can affect a child's development and the *Early Years Are Pivotal* mindset that recognises the role of the early years in child development.¹⁴ These mindsets can be activated in ways that lead people to more fatalistic or reactionary thinking, or towards more collectivist and systemic thinking about the role of society in child development. Which way these mindsets go depends on how they are consistently evoked and framed in one or the other direction. As their meaning is up for grabs, framing will be pivotal in determining which direction they take and how they shape thinking.
- **Central mindsets reinforce other mindsets in the cluster.** Because central mindsets have the strongest connections to the other mindsets in the cluster, they can be powerful in activating and reinforcing them. This means that framing strategies that activate the *Government Interferes with Parenting* or *Otherism* mindsets will likely activate mindsets in the Individualistic, Naturalistic and Exclusionary cluster, whereas framing strategies that activate the *Government as Partner* mindset will likely activate mindsets in the Collective and Structural cluster. Framing strategies that focus on central mindsets are likely to bring a fuller set of understandings into people's thinking and create a more powerful cultural logic about how things work and what needs to happen.
- **Tracking research will help us better understand these clusters and the role of particular mindsets in them.** As we continue to track mindsets about the early years, the shape of these clusters and the mindsets that are particularly important within them will become clearer. We will be able to see more precisely how mindsets in a cluster are connected and which mindsets drive endorsement of other mindsets.

Initial Implications and Ideas

These findings present a set of broad implications for those working on systems that shape the wellbeing of children and families:

- **The power of framing (avoid/advance):** We find clear evidence that people hold multiple mindsets and that some of these mindsets help build support for solutions, while others undermine it. We also know that these mindsets are frame-sensitive — they are activated by the decisions that communicators make about how they say what they have to say. Communications activate mindsets in the moment but can also shift the relative dominance of mindsets over time. Together, this points to the importance of using communications to activate certain mindsets and avoid cueing others effectively in the moment, as well as strategically and persistently over time.
- **How to use limited resources:** Communicators might spend less time and fewer resources trying to strengthen already dominant mindsets that increase support for policy solutions. These mindsets require only minimal cueing to become active in thinking and boost policy support. On the other hand, activating and strengthening productive mindsets that are not as dominant — for example, the *It Takes a Village* mindset, the idea that responsibility for children's outcomes is collective — should be a focus for those working on the early years and related issues.
- **A new look at segmentation:** Significant differences in mindset support between demographic groups can help communicators select segments of the population to target with messages, engagement and campaigns. Communicators can either focus on segments that might be near a tipping point in their endorsement of a mindset or focus their efforts on groups where significant shifts in thinking are needed.
- **Clusters and cascades:** Clusters show that activating single mindsets can turn on broader systems of understanding — for better or worse. Understanding these connections opens up a broader set of potential strategies by expanding the mindsets that are relevant to and shape public thinking.
- **Central lynchpins:** All mindsets are not created equal; certain mindsets are central to broader ways of understanding and are thus key to consider in framing and narrative strategy. Focusing communications efforts on activating lynchpin mindsets in productive clusters can be a highly efficient way of shifting thinking. At the same time, it is important to be extra careful to avoid the activation of core mindsets in the unproductive cluster.
- **Spillovers:** Mindset clusters are used to think about multiple issues related to the early years and beyond. Realising that communications about a broader set of issues influence thinking about the early years — and that work on the early years, in turn, impacts a wider set of issues — highlights the importance and potential of coordinated, cross-sector framing and narrative efforts. For example, shifting naturalistic thinking about the early years can spill over to shift thinking about adolescent development. Similarly, shifting gendered essentialist thinking about parenting young children can spill over to shift thinking about gender in care work. This speaks to the importance of doing cross-sector mindset shift work at scale.

These implications reveal a set of initial ideas for how to build support for policy and systems change in Australia:

- **Focus on the role of government in supporting children and families:** Navigate multiple mindsets on government while remaining honest and specific about where and when government isn't doing its job and the Australians it's failing to serve. For example, talk about how government *can* and *should* act like a partner to support children and families — and what should be done differently so it can act like the partner children and families across Australia need.
- **Advance and strengthen:** Focus on using framing to activate the *It Takes a Village* mindset. This mindset can be leveraged and strengthened in different ways — for example, by connecting it to the *Government as Partner* mindset to expand understanding of how government should be part of the 'village' supporting children and families across Australia. A segmented approach to strengthen *It Takes a Village* — using framing that expands this mindset and connects it to other productive mindsets and policy reforms for groups that already strongly endorse this thinking (such as CALD groups, parents of young children, and younger people) — can be especially effective.
- **Avoid and weaken:** Avoid inadvertently cueing unproductive mindsets (*Otherism*, *Racial Progress*, *Fatalism*) and be attuned to subtle cues. This is particularly important for groups that more strongly endorse this thinking (such as older people). To keep from activating these harmful and unproductive mindsets, tap into aspirational thinking that emphasises what we all gain when systemic changes take place.
- **Expand and stretch:** Leverage the strength of the *Passive Development (Sponge)* mindset — the idea that children develop through passively absorbing things from people and the environment — to activate its productive aspects while overcoming its limitations. Extend the thinking of this mindset to include a deeper understanding of development as an active and dynamic process between children and their environments. Framing that stretches the boundaries of this mindset — to include an understanding that what surrounds us and shapes us — can tap into the strength of this mindset and its strong connection to policy support while overcoming its currently limited view of development.
- **Build on policy support:** To normalise and further increase support for change, highlight how widely supported policy solutions are across groups. Communicators can also connect familiar policies to less-supported ones and should clearly explain why different types of support are required in different contexts and for different groups. For example, connect the need for increased access to services for families in rural and remote areas — which is broadly supported — to the need for Community-Controlled and culturally appropriate policies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

TAP INTO THE *STRUCTURAL RACISM* MINDSET TO EXPLAIN AND EXPAND UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE EARLY YEARS POLICIES

Explain what Community-Controlled and culturally appropriate approaches are and why they are necessary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Tap into the *Structural Racism* mindset to help explain how top-down governmental policies further entrench systemic injustices — and how Community-Controlled approaches can help address those injustices. This will help fill gaps in understanding and boost support for culturally appropriate policy reforms.

- **Harness clusters and look for lynchpins:** Because mindsets exist in clusters, activating one can activate and strengthen others in a cluster. Central mindsets — such as *Government as Partner* — can be particularly strong cluster activators, and communicators should target them in their framing efforts. Framing that activates *Government as Partner* can activate other productive mindsets in the Collective and Structural cluster, such as *It Takes a Village* and *Structural Racism*. Similarly, framing that counters *Otherism* can undercut other individualistic and reactionary mindsets, such as *Government Interferes with Parenting* and *Family Bubble*.

Conclusion: Tracking Mindsets — Where We Go from Here

Measuring mindsets about the early years is an important part of building public demand for change. Understanding patterns of thinking, how they are changing, for whom and with what impact on policy support can both inform and help measure the effects of work being done to better support children and families. The insights and recommendations we offer in this report can help guide and inform messaging, framing and narrative efforts.

For the next three years, we will be continuing this descriptive work to understand and track mindsets about the early years. We will deepen the analysis by seeing how these mindsets shift and change over time — or document their persistence in the face of efforts to change them. Our understanding of clusters and lynchpin models will advance and develop as we build a fuller view of mindsets rather than just looking at a snapshot in time.

We will pair this ongoing tracking work with research to empirically test how specific framing strategies like values, metaphors, issue connections and messengers can help strengthen certain mindsets and build their connections to policy support. At the same time, we will investigate strategies that can push unproductive mindsets further into the background of public thinking, where they have less of an effect on undermining will for change and support for solutions. We will implement these strategies through close collaboration with partners who are well positioned to shape and shift the public conversation (see the Acknowledgements for the full list of partners).

We hope you will engage with us as we continue this research and ramp up our efforts to use findings to support the framing and narrative efforts of those working to ensure the wellbeing of all young children and families in Australia.

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Appendix A: Research Methods and Sample Composition

The findings in this report are based on an online survey we administered to gather data from a total sample of 1,105 participants (aged 18 and over) from Australia. The survey received ethics approval from Bellberry Limited (application number 2024-12-2101-A-1). We set target quotas according to national benchmarks for age, gender, household income, education level, region and political party affiliation. We included a nationally representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants (3.8% of the total, or 43 participants). Participants voluntarily self-identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander through the recruitment process completed by the survey provider, Lightspeed (details on the recruitment process are provided later in this section). This recruitment process was reviewed and approved by the ethics review board at Bellberry Limited. This ethics approval allowed us to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants at the rates that these groups are represented in the Australian population. Our ethics approval did not allow us to oversample Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.

We oversampled CALD participants above national benchmarks to support subgroup analyses. Participants voluntarily self-identified as CALD through the recruitment process completed by Lightspeed (see details later in this section). This recruitment process was reviewed and approved by the ethics review board at Bellberry Limited. All analyses regarding CALD participants were conducted using the nationally representative sample and the oversample to ensure adequate power for stratified analyses. Full sample analyses were conducted using only the nationally representative sample. More information about the sample composition is provided later in this appendix.

Participant recruitment and survey hosting was completed by Lightspeed in February 2026. Participants were recruited from a combination of the following sources: proprietary loyalty panels, open invitation or integrated channels that recruit from partnerships with external sources, such as publishers or social networks. N=1,094 respondents were from Lightspeed's proprietary networks, and N=48 respondents were from an external partnership. All participants opted in to complete the survey. Participants received Lightspeed points for completing the survey, which they could then exchange for various rewards such as airline miles or gift cards. All participants received the same number of points based on the survey being run as a singular audience (one incidence rate and length of interview was applicable to all participants). Participants are required to verify their identity at multiple points during survey enrolment and routing. Lightspeed uses a variety of methods, including third-party validation and digital fingerprinting, to detect fraud, identify bots and monitor for suspicious activity.

Participants were not allowed to complete the survey more than once. Participants who did not fully complete the survey were removed from the data and were not paid. In addition, participant data was removed if they completed the survey within one-third of the median survey time, straight-lined their responses or provided nonsensical responses to the open-ended questions included in the survey.

All surveys began with participant consent and a series of standard demographic questions, followed by batteries measuring the endorsement of various cultural mindsets and items measuring support for policy solutions. Participants were provided with a short debrief after they completed the survey.

Each battery consisted of multiple questions, primarily using Likert-type items with seven-point response scales. The survey also included several forced-choice items wherein participants were presented with statements representing two cultural mindsets and asked to rate which cultural mindset they agreed with more. All batteries within each section were randomized.

Exploratory factor analysis with oblique promax rotation was used to determine the psychometric quality of each battery. Items with rotated factor loadings below $|.40|$ were dropped from each battery. After concluding psychometric testing, Cronbach's alpha (α) was used to assess internal consistency among the items in each battery. Given that there are various heuristics for determining acceptable internal consistency, we determined that batteries with internal consistency scores approaching .60 or above would be considered acceptable. Internal consistency scores for each battery can be found later in this appendix. After assessing internal consistency, items within each battery were combined into composite scores that indicated participants' average level of agreement with the statements that articulate the core assumptions of each mindset. All composites have been transposed to a 100-point scale, so 50 represents the midpoint of the scale ('neither agree nor disagree'). As scores get closer to zero, this indicates increasingly strong explicit rejection of the mindset. As scores get closer to 100, this indicates increasingly strong explicit endorsement of the mindset.

We ran correlations to determine the relationships between cultural mindsets and between cultural mindsets and policy items. A threshold of $p < .05$ was used to determine whether two variables were significantly correlated. A correlation coefficient within the range of .10–.30 was considered a small association; a correlation coefficient within the range of .30–.50 was considered a medium association; and a correlation of .50 or higher was considered a large association.

We used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine whether participants from various demographic backgrounds differed significantly in their endorsement of cultural mindsets. Further, we used Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (HSD)-corrected pairwise comparisons to identify where significant differences between demographic groups occurred. An effect size within the range of 0.20–.49 was considered a small effect; an effect size within the range of .50–.79 was considered a moderate effect; and an effect of .80–1.09 was considered a large effect. Additionally, we considered an effect of 1.1 or larger a very large effect.

As with all research, it is important to remember that results are based on a sample of the population, not the entire population. As such, all results are subject to margins of error.

Survey Demographic Information

Demographic Variable	Main Sample n	Main Sample %	Total Sample ¹⁵ n	Total %
Age				
18–24	99	10%	9	9%
25–34	173	17%	37	37%
35–44	176	18%	18	18%
45–54	167	17%	12	12%
55–64	157	16%	6	6%
65+	232	23%	19	19%
Gender				
Man	475	47%	28	28%
Woman	521	52%	73	72%
Trans Man	2	<1%	0	0%
Trans Woman	1	<1%	0	0%
Genderqueer	4	<1%	0	0%
Other	0	0%	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	<1%	0	0%
Region				
New South Wales	293	29%	38	38%
Australian Capital Territory	17	2%	4	4%
Victoria	266	26%	30	30%
Tasmania	24	2%	0	0%
Queensland	209	21%	16	16%
Western Australia	101	10%	6	6%
Southern Australia	81	8%	5	5%
Northern Territory	2	<1%	1	<1%
Prefer not to say	11	1%	1	<1%

Political Party				
Labor	364	36%	35	35%
Liberal/National	227	23%	29	29%
Greens	96	10%	14	14%
Independent	66	7%	6	6%
Other	100	10%	2	2%
None/no political affiliation	122	12%	11	11%
Prefer not to say	29	3%	4	4%
Income (AUD)				
<\$20,799	40	4%	5	5%
\$20,800–\$67,999	365	36%	21	21%
\$68,000–\$135,999	342	34%	34	34%
\$136,000–\$207,999	132	13%	24	24%
\$208,000+	85	8%	10	10%
Prefer not to say	40	4%		
Education				
Year 10 or below/no formal qualification	131	13%	8	8%
Year 12 or equivalent	237	24%	10	10%
Certificate/diploma	313	31%	17	17%
Bachelor's degree	216	22%	40	40%
Graduate diploma/postgraduate degree or above	102	10%	26	26%
Prefer not to say	5	<1%	1	1%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Identity				
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ¹⁶	43	3.8%	0	0%
Not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	953	95%	100	99%
Prefer not to say	18	<1%	1	<1%

Culture and Linguistic Identity				
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	267	28%	101	100%
Not Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	714	72%	0	0%
Prefer not to say			0	0%
Parental Status				
Parent of a child any age	618	62%	56	55%
Not a parent of a child any age	382	38%	44	44%
Prefer not to say	4	<1%	1	<1%
Parental Status by Age				
Parent of a child 6 years or younger	161	26%	24	44%
Not a parent of a child 6 years or younger	457	74%	31	56%

Survey Items

Below is a list of dependent variables tested in our survey experiments. Unless otherwise noted, participants responded to survey questions on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Participants did not see the headings of these variables.

Individualism $\alpha = .83$

1. What happens to an individual in their life is primarily the result of the choices they make.
2. How well people do in life is mostly determined by how much willpower and drive they have.
3. Anyone can succeed in life if they work hard enough.
4. How we do in life is our own responsibility, and no one else's.

Otherism $\alpha = .83$

1. Certain cultural groups are so different that they will never fully belong in our society.
2. People from different cultural backgrounds make our society worse off.
3. When certain groups struggle in society, it's because of their own culture or traditions.

Otherism Forced Choice

Which perspective more closely aligns with your views?

1. People from different cultures make our society better.
2. People from different cultures make our society worse off.

Fatalism $\alpha = .89$

1. No matter what we do, it's almost impossible to fix our society's biggest problems.
2. The problems we face as a society are too big for us to overcome.
3. Our society has so many problems, there's no way for us to solve them all.
4. It's impossible for us to come together and fix our society's biggest problems.

Naturalism $\alpha = .85$

1. A child's development happens naturally—there is not much parents and caregivers can do to change it.
2. Kids will develop at their own pace, no matter what parents and caregivers do.
3. Child development is a natural process—trying to change how it happens usually doesn't work.
4. Children's development follows a natural path that's very hard to change.

Passive Development (Sponge) $\alpha = .87$

1. Children naturally absorb skills and behaviours from watching others.
2. Children learn by soaking up the things they hear from others.
3. Children naturally learn by copying what they see and hear.

Family Bubble $\alpha = .67$

1. The way a child develops fully depends on what happens with their family, inside their home.
2. Parents and caregivers are the only ones responsible for how well a child develops.
3. In the first few years of life, having a loving and stable home is the only thing that matters.

It Takes a Village $\alpha = .83$

1. Parents and communities share equal responsibility for a child's development.
2. Communities are just as responsible as parents for ensuring that children do well.
3. When it comes to child development, communities play just as important a role as parents do.

Threat of Modernity — General $\alpha = .76$

1. Australian society is in decline.
2. Growing up in Australia today is scary and threatening.
3. Life today has become too complicated.

Threat of Modernity — Technology $\alpha = .88$

1. The internet and social media have ruined childhood.
2. Social media has taken away the joys of growing up.
3. Social media is the single biggest challenge to healthy child development.
4. Children are losing touch with the real world because of the internet.

Financial Constraints $\alpha = .82$

1. The amount of money a family has shapes the opportunities their children have.
2. A family's income determines a child's access to opportunities that support development.
3. Children from low-income families will never access the same developmental opportunities as children from wealthy families.
4. Enriching activities that support child development are only available to the wealthy.

Racial Progress $\alpha = .87$

1. There was a time when racism was a problem in Australia, but not anymore.
2. Racial discrimination isn't currently a big issue in Australia.
3. Racism isn't an issue anymore because all groups now have access to the same opportunities.
4. Australia has now passed enough laws to successfully eliminate racism.

Structural Racism $\alpha = .81$

1. Racism is present in our laws, policies, and institutions.
2. Racial discrimination is primarily the result of how our society is set up.
3. Our laws and policies disadvantage people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
4. Our institutions have historically worked to advantage people of European descent.

Interpersonal Racism $\alpha = .82$

1. Racial discrimination is the result of individuals' bias and prejudice.
2. Racial discrimination is when one person treats someone unfairly because of their skin colour.
3. Racism is the product of biased thoughts and feelings towards others.
4. Racism is mostly the result of individuals having prejudiced thoughts towards others.

Government Interferes with Parenting $\alpha = .86$

1. The government shouldn't tell families how to parent.
2. Parenting is a private matter.
3. Families, not government officials, should decide what's best for their children.
4. How to parent is a family choice, not a legal one.
5. The government needs to stay out of parenting decisions.

Government Is a Threat $\alpha = .86$

1. The government puts families at risk when it gets involved in children's wellbeing.
2. When it comes to child development, government agencies usually do more harm than good.
3. Government officials usually act in ways that disrespects families.

Government as Partner $\alpha = .83$

1. The government should help make sure that all children in Australia do well.
2. The government should ensure that children and families have what they need to live well.
3. Ensuring all children have what they need to thrive requires support from the government.
4. Children thrive when the government plays a role in supporting their wellbeing.

Maternal Gender Essentialism $\alpha = .86$

1. When compared to men, women have a stronger natural instinct to care for children.
2. Compared to men, women are typically more dedicated to caring for their children.
3. Caring for children just comes naturally to women.
4. Mothers are the ones most responsible for how their children turn out.
5. A child's wellbeing depends more on the mother than anyone else.
6. Mothers should spend most of their time at home raising their children.

Early Years Are Pivotal $\alpha = .86$

1. The first five years of life are the most critical period for lifelong learning and health.
2. What happens to a child by age 5 will affect the rest of their lives
3. What happens to someone from the ages of 0 to 5 shapes their entire life.
4. The ages of 0 to 5 are the most important stage of childhood.

Aging Up

Please select the groups that come to mind first when you think of 'early childhood'.

**Allow participants to select only one item*

1. Babies
2. Toddlers
3. Preschoolers and Kindergarteners
4. Primary school students
5. Secondary school students
6. Senior secondary school students

Policy Items

How much do you favour or oppose the following policies? *[seven-point Likert scale: 'strongly oppose'; 'oppose'; 'somewhat oppose'; 'neither favour nor oppose'; 'somewhat favour'; 'favour'; 'strongly favour']*

1. Do you support or oppose having 24 weeks of paid parental leave for both parents, regardless of their gender?
2. Do you support or oppose making safe and quality childcare available to all families?
3. Do you support or oppose making three-year-old preschools free to all families across Australia?
4. Do you support or oppose having all-in-one support for families to access health, education, housing, and other services all in one place?
5. Do you support or oppose investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led organisations to deliver culturally appropriate early childhood services?
6. Do you support or oppose investing in early childhood services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Australia?
7. Do you support or oppose investing in early childhood services that meet the needs of children with disabilities?
8. Do you support or oppose improving access to child and family health services to reach families in rural and remote parts of Australia?
9. Do you support or oppose introducing tax rebates that help families afford the costs of raising children?

Appendix B: Mean Scores and Correlations Tables

Tables that correspond to graphs showing variation in strength of mindsets across demographic groups

Many mindsets vary in strength across age groups

Mindset	Age					
	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–55	55–64	65+
<i>Otherism</i>	40.2	41.8	47.5	52.1	51.1	54.8
<i>It Takes a Village</i>	65.6	69.8	64.0	61.8	61.6	60.5
<i>Racial Progress</i>	36.8	42.5	38.6	36.3	33.1	37.5
<i>Financial Constraints</i>	67.8	67.1	63.7	64.7	59.8	57.9
<i>Structural Racism</i>	64.9	65.4	55.1	55.5	50.6	50.6

Many mindsets vary in strength by parental status

Mindset	Parental Status	
	Parent (of a child 6 years or younger)	Not a Parent (of a child 6 years or younger)
<i>It Takes a Village</i>	68.4	60.8
<i>Structural Racism</i>	59.5	51.9
<i>Maternal Gender Essentialism</i>	62.1	56.0
<i>Racial Progress</i>	43.9	37.0
<i>Financial Constraints</i>	67.4	61.1

Tables that correspond to graphs showing consistency of mindsets across demographic groups

Mindset	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	Not Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
<i>Family Bubble</i>	69.0	66.0
<i>Fatalism</i>	47.4	48.3
<i>Passive Development</i>	81.5	80.2
<i>Individualism</i>	69.3	68.9

	Parent (of a child 6 years or younger)	Not a Parent (of a child 6 years or younger)
<i>Family Bubble</i>	69.3	68.4
<i>Fatalism</i>	49.4	48.4
<i>Passive Development</i>	80.9	80.1
<i>Individualism</i>	70.7	70.4

	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–55	55–64	65+
<i>Family Bubble</i>	64.3	65.8	67.8	68.5	65.3	69.0
<i>Fatalism</i>	45.9	48.7	48.6	51.2	46.3	48.1
<i>Passive Development</i>	80.8	80.4	81.9	78.5	80.4	80.3
<i>Individualism</i>	67.1	65.8	69.3	68.8	70.2	71.0

	Men	Women
<i>Family Bubble</i>	67.4	66.9
<i>Fatalism</i>	48.5	48.1
<i>Individualism</i>	69.5	68.4

People are generally supportive of early years policies

Policy	Mean Score
24 weeks of paid parental leave	68.8
Quality childcare available to all families	81.1
Free 3-year-old preschools	75.2
All-in-one-support	74.7
Invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled organisations	66.1
Invest in early childhood services for CALD communities	68.8
Invest in early childhood services that meet the needs of children with disabilities	81.1
Improve access to child and family health services to reach families in rural and remote areas	81.7
Tax rebates that help families afford the cost of raising children	72.4

Mindsets are interrelated and form clusters

Family Bubble																		
Individualism	0.46																	
Maternal Gender Essentialism	0.38	0.32																
Government Interferes with Parenting	0.34	0.41	0.2															
Naturalism	0.25	0.27	0.29	0.26														
Otherism	0.25	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.28													
Fatalism	0.16	0.11	0.21	0.17	0.3	0.38												
Government as Threat	0.25	0.15	0.15	0.45	0.3	0.39	0.32											
Racial Progress	0.17	0.17	0.27	0.12	0.25	0.32	0.07	0.19										
Threat of Modernity -- General	0.19	0.12	0.14	0.21	0.13	0.32	0.41	0.42	-0.05									
Threat of Modernity -- Technology	0.19	0.17	0.14	0.11	0.07	0.12	0.2	0.14	0	0.4								
Early Years Are Pivotal	0.29	0.16	0.23	0.08	0.09	-0.01	0.08	0.06	-0.05	0.18	0.19							
Passive Development (Sponge)	0.23	0.24	0.14	0.12	-0.03	-0.08	-0.05	-0.07	-0.16	0.13	0.2	0.3						
Interpersonal Racism	0.15	0.19	0.09	0.03	-0.08	-0.17	-0.06	-0.11	-0.18	0.04	0.15	0.21	0.38					
Government as Partner	0.08	0.06	0.17	-0.07	-0.03	-0.13	-0.02	-0.11	-0.09	0.05	0.09	0.29	0.35	0.36				
It Takes a Village	0.08	0.06	0.16	-0.08	0.06	-0.05	0.01	-0.04	0.02	0.05	0.15	0.3	0.19	0.25	0.44			
Structural Racism	0.12	-0.05	0.14	0.03	0.15	-0.13	0.13	0.1	-0.15	0.08	0.14	0.23	0.13	0.24	0.35	0.3		
Financial Constraints	0.08	-0.1	0.17	-0.04	0.1	0.01	0.17	0.12	-0.04	0.21	0.11	0.27	0.15	0.12	0.34	0.21	0.33	
	Family Bubble	Individualism	Maternal Gender Essentialism	Government Interferes with Parenting	Naturalism	Otherism	Fatalism	Government as Threat	Racial Progress	Threat of Modernity -- General	Threat of Modernity -- Technology	Early Years Are Pivotal	Passive Development (Sponge)	Interpersonal Racism	Government as Partner	It Takes a Village	Structural Racism	Financial Constraints

Mindsets are connected to policy support

[illegible]

Appendix C: List of National Support Services

Below is a list of national support services, including local and culturally safe services.

Name	Description	Contact Information
Lifeline		Tel: 13 114
13YARN		Tel: 13 92 76
Brother to Brother	A 24-hour crisis line staffed by Aboriginal men, including Elders, with lived experience.	Tel: 1800 435 799
Beyond Blue		Tel: 1300 224 636
Mental Health Triage Line		Tel: 13 14 65
Indigenous Suicide Postvention Services	Support for individuals, families and communities affected by suicide or other significant trauma.	Tel: 1800 805 801
headspace		Tel: 1800 650 890 Online: headspace
Care Leavers Australasia Network		Tel: 1800 008 774
Domestic and Family Violence Helpline		Tel: 1800 671 458
ReachOut		Online: au.reachout.com
Black Dog Institute		Online: blackdoginstitute.org.au
1800 RESPECT	A national sexual assault and family and domestic violence counselling line for anyone who has experienced, or is at risk of, physical or sexual violence. This service is designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, Indigenous Australians, young people and individuals from CALD backgrounds. Online counselling is also available.	Tel: 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) Online: 1800 RESPECT
Blue Knot Helpline	Staffed by trained, trauma-informed counsellors, this support line offers information, support and referral to adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse and to partners, family and friends of survivors.	Tel: 1300 657 380 Online: Blue Knot Helpline

Bravehearts Information and Support Line	Open to anyone wanting information, advice, referrals and support regarding child sexual assault.	Tel: 1800 272 831 Mon–Fri: 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. (AEST) Online: Bravehearts Information and Support Line
Counselling Online	A free online and SMS/text-based service for Australian residents concerned about or affected by alcohol and other drugs.	Online: Counselling Online
DrugInfo (Alcohol and Drug Foundation)	A telephone and online service for anyone who needs relevant, up-to-date information about alcohol and other drugs.	Tel: 1300 858 584 Online: DrugInfo
eheadspace	A free and confidential telephone and online service for young people aged 12–25. Qualified youth mental health professionals provide support to young people worried about their mental health or experiencing issues such as depression, bullying and isolation. Support is also available to concerned parents or carers.	Tel: 1800 650 890 Daily: 9 a.m.–1 a.m. (AEST) Online: eheadspace
Family Drug Support Australia	A telephone support service for users, families and carers in crisis due to alcohol and other drug use.	Tel: 1300 368 186 Online: Family Drug Support
Family Relationships Online	Provides information on family relationship issues and advice on parenting arrangements after separation. It is for anyone — including stepparents, young people and friends — affected by family relationship or separation issues. Referrals to local services are also offered.	Mon–Fri: 8 a.m.–8 p.m.; Sat: 10 a.m.–4 p.m. (AEST) (excluding national public holidays) Online: Family Relationships Online
Gallang Place	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation providing counselling, advocacy and support services in Brisbane.	Tel: (07) 3899 5041 Online: Gallang Place

Griefline	Provides support to people experiencing loss and grief at any stage in life. Online counselling is also available.	Tel: (03) 9935 7400 (national) 1300 845 745 (national landline only) Mon–Sun: 12 p.m.–3 a.m. (AEST) Online: Griefline
Kids Helpline	Provides confidential telephone and online counselling services to young people aged 5–25 years old for any reason.	Tel: 1800 551 800 Online: Kids Helpline
Kurbingui	Aboriginal community organisation providing social and emotional wellbeing and youth services in Brisbane.	Tel: (07) 3235 9999 Online: Kurbingui
MensLine Australia	A telephone and online support service for men with family and relationship concerns. MensLine is staffed by professional counsellors who are experienced in men's issues.	Tel: 1300 789 978 Online: MensLine Australia
Men's Referral Service	Offers a confidential telephone service provided for men by men. Intended for men who want to stop their violent or abusive behaviour towards their family members. Women can also seek information and help for their male partner, husband, relative or friend.	Tel: 1300 766 491 Mon–Fri: 8 a.m.–9 p.m.; Sat–Sun: 9 a.m.–5 p.m. (AEST) Online: Men's Referral Service
Mind Australia Carer Helpline	Provides free, confidential information, support and referral for family, carers and friends of people with a mental illness.	Tel: 1300 554 660 Online: Mind Australia
National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline	Provides confidential advice about alcohol and other drugs to individuals, family and friends, general practitioners, health professionals, and business and community groups. The hotline will automatically redirect you to the Alcohol and Other Drug Information Service operating in your state or territory.	Tel: 1800 250 015 Online: National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline

QLife	Provides early intervention, peer-supported telephone counselling and referral services for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex.	Tel: 1800 184 527 Mon–Sun: 3 p.m.–12 a.m. (AEST) Online: QLife
Samaritans	Provides anonymous crisis support for issues such as relationship or family problems, loss and bereavement, financial or job-related worries, illness, addiction and suicide.	Tel: 135 427 Online: Samaritans
SANE Australia	Provides information, guidance and referrals to people who are affected by or need support to manage mental health concerns.	Tel: 1800 187 263 Mon–Fri: 9 a.m.–5 p.m. (AEST) Online: SANE Australia
Suicide Call Back Service	Provides telephone, video and online counselling to people 15 years and older who are affected by suicide — which can include feeling suicidal, being worried about someone or caring for someone who is suicidal or being bereaved by suicide — and health professionals supporting people affected by suicide.	Tel: 1300 659 467 Online: Suicide Call Back Service
Sydney Aboriginal Family Support Service	Aboriginal-owned counselling and support service in Sydney.	Tel: 0410 539 905 Online: Sydney Aboriginal Family Support Service
Wellways ListenWell	A peer-led, volunteer support and referral service that provides information to people experiencing mental health issues, as well as their families and friends.	Tel: 1300 111 400 Online: Wellways ListenWell
Beyond Blue	Provides information and confidential telephone and online counselling for young people aged 12–25 years old who may be experiencing anxiety, depression or suicidal ideation.	Tel: 1300 224 636 Online: Beyond Blue

Endnotes

1. We found broad support for early years policy reforms in the survey, indicating that people can see the need for more to be done to support children and families. See Appendix B for more details.
2. We found broad support for early years policy reforms in the survey, indicating that people can see the need for more to be done to support children and families. See Appendix B for details.
3. In the survey, *Family Bubble* had a mean score of 67.1 (out of 100), while *It Takes A Village* had a mean score of 63.6. Zero indicates the strongest possible level of disagreement, 50 indicates the midpoint of the scale ('neither agree nor disagree'), and 100 indicates the highest level of agreement. These numbers do not represent the percentage of participants who agreed with statements, but rather the average level of agreement with them. See Table 2 for details.
4. In the survey, *Government as Partner* had a mean score of 72.9 and *Government Interferes with Parenting* had a mean score of 67.0. See Table 2 for details.
5. Mean scores are represented on a 100-point scale. Zero indicates the strongest possible level of disagreement, 50 indicates the midpoint of the scale ('neither agree nor disagree'), and 100 indicates the highest level of agreement. These numbers do not represent the percentage of participants who agreed with statements, but rather the average level of agreement with them.
6. The *Structural Racism* mindset had a mean score of 56.2 in the main sample. This means this mindset was endorsed, but not as strongly as the *Interpersonal Racism* mindset (with a mean score of 75.0).
7. This finding aligns with our previous research on parenting in Australia. For more information, see: Kendall-Taylor, N., O'Neil, M., & Volmert, A. (2018). *Talking about the science of parenting: A FrameWorks MessageMemo*. FrameWorks Institute. <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/resources/talking-about-the-science-of-parenting/>
8. This refers to parents of a child or children 6 years old or younger, which was one of the demographic categories in the survey to which participants could self-identify. For simplicity of language, this category is referred to as 'parents of young children' throughout the report.
9. See Appendix B for details.
10. For details on ACCOs, see: National Agreement on Closing the Gap, (2020). https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-05/ctg-national-agreement_apr-21.pdf
11. Lines that are fully shaded in represent moderate or strong significant correlations with a policy. Lines that are not fully shaded in represent weak (yet still significant) correlations between the mindset and the policy. For more information about the correlations between mindsets and policies, see Appendix B.
12. Lines that are fully shaded in represent moderate or strong significant negative correlations with a policy. Lines that are not fully shaded in represent weak (yet still significant) negative correlations between the mindset and the policy. For more information about the correlations between mindsets and policies, see Appendix B.

13. For another example of mindset clusters, see *The State of American Culture: 2023–2024* from our Culture Change Project: <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/resources/the-state-of-american-culture-2023-2024/>
14. See Appendix B for the table that shows the correlations between the *Threat of Modernity — General* and *Threat of Modernity — Technology* mindsets and the mindsets in both clusters.
15. Total sample includes oversample of CALD participants.
16. Ethics approval from Bellberry Limited allowed us to include a nationally representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants (not an oversample).

About FrameWorks

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Measuring Early Years Mindsets:

Patterns of Thinking that
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