Mixed method research designs use “the what and how” to answer questions on complex social research issues. Further, mixed methods provides a basis for a more comprehensive understanding of the interactions between the influences on, and patterns of; health, welfare, educational access and service delivery. Although quantitative data can describe the situation, such as attendances at a service, it fails to explore the deeper needs of a population group, the nuances of addressing complex and multiple disadvantage, or explain the influences behind the aspects of service access, use and behaviour change promoting the care of children. Mixed methods research processes provides information, data, resources and methodologies that enables deeper understandings of complex factors involved in providing services to children. Additionally, mixed methods research design have the potential to provide an evidence-informed understanding of public policy application. Mixed methods achieve the aims of research that seek to address a deeper understand of more complex social structures and social interactions, occurring through the enhancement of parenting by attending the Communities for Children programs.

Mixed methods often provide the best approaches to investigate acute care, community based services, and program evaluations. Mixed methods uses several processes, such as multiple sources of information e.g. theoretical bases, literature reviews, interviews and quantitative measures which best investigate programs, services, and application of theoretical and literature components to service provision. This poster highlights some of the brief but relevant aspects of mixed methods which are:

- Appropriate uses of mixed methods
- Sequential and concurrent mixed methods
- Investigating community care programs via evaluation

Along with an exploration of appropriate statistical analysis and qualitative analysis techniques.

Dr Parry et al used the sequential mixed methods approach as it has the essential elements of incorporating qualitative and quantitative data in the same research study. This allows for the inclusion of the family story along with the service delivery, and program qualitative and quantitative outcomes, in addition to demographic data, to describe the benefits of the Communities for Children programs. They conducted a robust literature review, collected service attendance data, pre and post program scores, narrative parent interviews and focus groups, staff interviews and focus groups, and community service provider and interprofessional referral services interviews. This process best meets the aims of the Third Action Plan by:

- Helping parents look after their babies and little children
  - Community programs that are evidence based and robust using mixed methods research
- Help organisations to look out for children and young people and know how to protect them
  - Mixed methods provides an effective and widely inclusive evaluation process for capturing the nuances of the community service sectors.