



Logan Lockyer, 7, and Mikayla Wally, 5, tuck into a healthy snack at Gumala's new playgroup. Picture: Ben Leahy

Group boosts confidence

■ Ben Leahy

A new playgroup aiming to improve early learning among Karratha pre-primary children was launched at Tambrey Primary School last Wednesday.

The 3A Early Learning Centre run by Gumala Aboriginal Corporation uses a program of intensive interaction to boost young children's confidence and communication skills.

Gumala education field officer Bromwyn Haworth said parents and children read stories in an interactive way at the playgroup, played learning

games and took part in engaging conversations.

"Parents and children are learning together, it is very hands-on, which stimulates conversation, communication, self-worth and confidence," Ms Haworth said.

The Tambrey centre is the fourth Gumala 3A playgroup to open in the Pilbara.

There are centres in the Wakathuni Community, Paraburdoo and South Hedland.

The centres use an education style called the Abcedarian approach, developed based

on results from research in the US by professor Joe Sparling.

Gumala executive manager of education Lynne Beckingham said reports had been written on the approach's success, particularly in remote or disadvantaged communities.

She said the approach placed emphasis on developing learning skills at a younger age and on building links between playgroups and primary schools to help children transition to formal learning.

"There is clear evidence that 3A students are more likely to

go to university, more likely to succeed and even parents feel the benefits," she said.

Gumala's 3A program was developed in 2011 in partnership with the University of Melbourne.

Ms Haworth is keen to get as many children and parents as possible to the group.

"We will go and pick up anyone that wants to come," she said.

The 3A centre at Tambrey Primary School is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9.30-11.30am.