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Charity helps kids catch up

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Software solution . . . 13-year-old Andrianna is one of the young people in Campsie who Barnados is hoping get back on track using new interactive educational software.

YOUNG people in Campsie facing poverty, unemployment and welfare dependence due to a lack of literacy skills are being offered a lifeline through new educational software being trialed by children's charity Barnados.

Barnados has been donated the new interactive educational software by Queensland based firm Eduss which specialises in computer based educational solutions.

The program helps children catch up with normal school work by creating an individual learning scheme and allowing them to work at the level and pace that suits them best.

International and local research shows that children and young people who have experienced abuse, trauma or neglect are on average three to four years behind other students in both literacy and numeracy by the time they enter high school.

Campsie Barnados senior manager Deirdree Cheers said that violence, trauma and instability at home could mean that children may be too disturbed to concentrate on school work.

"They may also have poor school attendance records due to their disruptive behaviour," Ms Cheers said. "Children come to Barnados with very poor skills in even the most basic subjects such as maths and English.

"Not only is moving them from school to school not the answer but it makes the essential problem for these children even worse - that is the lack of certainty and stability in a frightening hostile world where they have no control."

Barnados believes once the children and young people are placed in a more secure and nurturing home environment the Eduss software can work wonders in helping them catch

up on missed school work.

Young people in care with the Barnados Adolescent Services Community placement program in Campsie will be individually assisted through the use of the computer software.

Ms Cheers said that Barnados has been providing solutions to this problem for many years through specialist volunteer programs and careful assessment of each young person's developmental and educational status.

"But more needs to be done. We know that children and young people respond to computers and can learn very quickly from them. As a technological aid Eduss software may prove to be the most effective way of providing the educational support they need," she said.

"We are very much looking forward to seeing how the software can be used in the Adolescent Service program."