2022 Graduate Scholarship Recipient: Emily Munro

Telethon Kids Institute

About me

 Growing up, I've always had a strong passion for helping others. After completing my Bachelor of Health Sciences in 2020 and having studied many health promotion units, I had a strong sense that this field is where I can make the most difference to people's lives. I have experience working in clinical trials for cancer research, medical reception, disability support work, and several volunteering opportunities in the health promotion field. I love the idea of researching new ideas and strategies, implementing widespread systemic change, and empowering people to improve their own health in order to prevent health issues that cost the health system billions.

I aspire to help improve people's education and skills to discuss mental health and practise good mental health behaviours, free from stigma. I believe this is especially important to instil in children, through role modelling from parents and promoting positive mental health behaviours from a young age. If COVID-19 has brought anything good to the world, it is the raised awareness and appreciation for preventative measures, health promotion and mental health. However, mental health issues have increased exponentially during these difficult times and many children and parents are facing the challenge of e-learning with the closure of schools and isolation requirements. This presents a new challenge, as parents are struggling to manage their children's online usage and the risks and harms that come with it.

About my project

This is what the Beacon app aims to help with, by providing educational resources for parents to help guide their children to utilise digital technology in a positive way, and to reduce the risk of harms such as accessing inappropriate content, cyberbullying and online addictions. My project 'investigating the usability, acceptability and feasibility of the Beacon cybersafety app' will evaluate the end-user experience of the app by conducting in-depth interviews with parents who have used the app, obtaining opinions through a survery, and quantitative data from the user metrics within the app. I will then help synthesise and analyse the data to identify themes and to provide recommendations about future changes to the app to make it more effective. This could help the app reach more people and become a tool widely used by parents to reduce online-related harms and make the online world a positive and educational experience for children, thus significantly improving mental health.