Minister for Education, Peter Chandler, has launched a resource to support an innovative teaching strategy that will help shape early childhood education in remote Indigenous communities across the Territory.

Speaking at the launch at Gunbalanya School today, Mr Chandler said the resource promotes interactions between children and parents to improve cognitive and communication skills, social and emotional behaviour and pre-school readiness for children aged under four years.

“The Northern Territory Learning Games resource provides a set of culturally adapted, stimulating games that educators, Indigenous staff and families can use to promote healthy early childhood development,” Mr Chandler said.

“The Learning Games are a component of the world renowned Abecedarian Approach, which focuses on fundamental literacy and numeracy, orientation to school programs and parental engagement.

“Over the past two years the Northern Territory Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS) has been working with the University of Melbourne to implement the Abecedarian Approach in 45 remote Families as First Teachers programs.

“The approach has shown great promise in supporting children’s development and has contributed to their readiness for school success.

“The strategy will be evaluated in a three-year study through an Australian Research Council grant of $740,000.

“The study, a partnership between The University of Melbourne and DECS, provides the unique opportunity to work with leading international and Australian academics in rigorously assessing progress in closing the gap on Indigenous educational disadvantage in the Northern Territory.”

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