



'FAMILIES MATTER' – in Greater Shepparton

Edition 7
May 2007

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SHOWCASING OUR MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH SERVICE

Last week I had the opportunity to attend the National Conference for Maternal and Child Health Nurses. In conjunction with Goulburn Valley Health we presented a paper on some of the Best Start achievements in the maternal and child health area. This was well received by a receptive audience.

Listening to what is happening in other areas, it is very reaffirming that the MCH service is doing an excellent job in Victoria and in Shepparton particularly.

Despite this there still are many challenges ahead in this area. Beyondblue is developing a strategy for screening for perinatal depression. Whilst this is a welcome development and much needed we need to ensure that we are able to support families identified with appropriate support services. So often pilot projects build up a "community expectation" only to be affected when funding ceases or support services not available.

It is disappointing to note that such a valuable service has no unified national strategy nor common name. In some states the service supports children and families until school, in others it has a much broader age range.

Challenges continue throughout especially engaging those families that fall outside the service system and increasing attendance amongst the older preschool ages.

This month sees our annual early years conference (16 May) and this will be another stimulating day for all those attending.

I recently received the state government "National Reform Agenda-Victoria's Plan To Improve Outcomes in Early Childhood". It makes interesting reading and sets the early childhood agenda for the state. I would encourage you to get a copy.

Till next time

Steve Dawkins
Manager Family and Children's Services



BEST START MUNICIPAL EARLY YEARS PLAN

The Best Start Municipal Early Years Plan forum was held on Thursday 22 February with approximately 30 people attending from a number of early childhood, family support, disability, community health and child protection services. The purpose of the day was to discuss and explore the context of the Early Years within Greater Shepparton, develop a shared vision that guides the development of Greater Shepparton's Best Start MEYP and to identify Early Year priorities that will inform and progress the development of Greater Shepparton's Best Start MEYP.

Early presentations from Steve Dawkins (Universal Early Childhood Services), Sue Medson (Secondary, Tertiary Services and Family Support) and Sally Wright and Belinda Whitelaw (Best Start – Learnings, Achievements and Unfinished Business) set the scene for a day of intense discussion and debate.

Robyn Clark did a fantastic job facilitating the forum, working on an agreed shared vision and age group for the plan and exploring local key priorities (as considered by the audience) and workshopping these priorities into areas of action or interest.

The age range of the plan created much discussion, with the group finally agreeing that the Greater Shepparton Best Start MEYP cover the ages of zero to eight with the primary focus on the zero to three age group. It was also acknowledged that whilst the age range started from 0 years of age, it actually included pre birth.

Feedback from the day has informed the development of the draft version of the plan, which has been presented to the Best Start MEYP Partnership for further refinement. It is anticipated the plan will be discussed at a practitioner level with several local organisations to ensure input from all levels of services.

NEW HOME FOR THE BRIDGE YOUTH SERVICE

The Bridge Youth Service has moved house! Their new location is 94 Wyndham Street Shepparton (near the ambulance station). The phone number remains the same 5831 2390.

Their recent open day was extremely well attended with staff and community members celebrating the move.

Any correspondence will need to be sent to PO Box 1954, Shepparton 3632, so please update your contacts and any databases.



SAFEEKIDSNOW INJURY PREVENTION INFORMATION FOR CALD PARENTS

Kidsafe Victoria is pleased to advise that the Safekidsnow injury prevention parent information sheets that were distributed in English late in 2005 are now available in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin) Somali, Turkish and Vietnamese. The farm safety sheets are not available in languages other than English.

The sheets offer developmentally appropriate and practical advice to parents on preventing burns and scalds, dog bites, drowning, suffocation, poisoning, falls and road trauma. The sheets are free of charge.

Nurses and (preferably) Service Coordinators are invited to fill in the order form on page eight and return it by fax or post.

AGENCY PROFILE – RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA



Providing a range of services to families, couples and individuals.

Our counseling program is probably the best known as the service we offer. Some of the issues commonly seen are relationship problems, separation, family violence, loss and grief, depression, anxiety and parenting.

Our Family Violence Prevention Program includes a 12 week Men's Behaviour Change Program which runs regularly and incorporates an ongoing support group after the 12 weeks has been completed. The Women in Recovery Group runs regularly as well and is suitable for women who have been affected by family violence.

Mediation services are provided for families or couples who have separated. Mediation aims to assist couples to reach agreements in regard to their children and property. In most cases mediation is required prior to any legal proceedings.

The Relationship Education program provides specific programs to enhance couple and family relationships.

Examples - A one day workshop for couples "Relationship Rescue"
- A seven week course for people recovering from the ending of a relationship.
- Family and children's "in school" events

The Drought program provides free counseling in person or by phone. We are also providing community based family events in partnership with local schools and community groups.

For further information please phone Marg or Lisa on 5820 7444 Monday to Thursday

VICTORIA'S PLAN TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

On 14 July 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) reaffirmed its commitment to the National Reform Agenda. COAG also agreed that early childhood and child care should be initial priority human capital reform areas.

International experiences show that investment in the early years of life delivers particularly strong returns for the community through successful outcomes and reduced need for costly interventions in later life. Enhancing the early childhood experience of Victoria's youngest children will increase labour market participation; support men and women to balance work and family responsibilities; and combat the impact of demographic change.

On 10 April 2007, Victoria released its plan for improving outcomes in early childhood. The paper sets out a ten year vision for the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to work together to:

- improve **antenatal services**;
- strengthen the **health, development and learning** of all children from birth to five years;
- enhance the provision of **early childhood education and care** services in Victoria; and
- improve the **early years workforce**.

To view the full plan please go to <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/CA256D8000265E1A/page/Listing-Home+Page+News-Victoria%27s+plan+to+improve+outcomes+in+early+childhood!OpenDocument>

GOULBURN VALLEY PREGNANCY SUPPORT SERVICE

A free and confidential service for expectant parents, families, guardians and carers with children to the age of six years in the Shepparton area.

- Pregnancy Testing
- Material Aid-Clothing, Bedding, Nursery Items and Furniture
- Telephone and face to face support and counselling with either a trained volunteer and/or professional staff
- Information, Advocacy & Referrals

71A Wyndham St.
Shepparton 3630
(03) 5821 0826

GIVING CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE

A report by Auditor-General, Des Pearson, titled "**Giving Victorian children the best start in life**" was recently tabled in the Victorian Parliament.

The report examined whether the "municipal early years plans", "Best Start" and "children's centres" initiatives implemented by the DHS were leading to an increased number of children using maternal and child health centres, and attending kindergarten. The report, and media statement, may be viewed at http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/reports_mp_psa/psa118cv.html

If you require further information on the contents of this report please contact: John Olesky, Manager, Reports and Communications email: john.olesky@audit.vic.gov.au

Child FIRST CONTACT NUMBER

Due to a technology error between Telstra and FamilyCare when the dedicated phone line was set up for Child FIRST, the number published in all the forum materials (INCLUDING THE LAMINATED WALL CHART) was incorrect, with two digits in the wrong order.

A corrected version of the wall chart with different colours and a highlighted section for the correct number for Child FIRST (to avoid confusion with the old chart) has been attached. Please distribute this new chart to relevant staff/carers/agencies or services who will be working with Child FIRST and ask them to destroy the old one.

For more information please contact Sue Lorains, Project Office Child FIRST, on 5832 1743

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING CALENDAR

Moving & Muching: Healthy Schools for Healthy Kids!

When: Friday 25 May

Where: School of Rural Health, Melbourne University, Graham Street, Shepparton

Cost: FREE

Time: 9.15am to 3.30pm

For school principals, teachers, staff, parents and those interested in improving childhood nutrition and physical activity.

For more information or to register please contact Jenny Burrows, Project Officer at Greater Shepparton City Council on 5832 9863.

Flyer included on page 6.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING CALENDAR CONTINUED.....

Making Connections – Supported Playgroup Conference 2007

Friday 22 June

A Playgroup Victoria conference sponsored by the Department of Human Services

Playgroup Victoria invites you and your agency to participate in an exciting professional development opportunity.

Keynote Speaker: Professor Margaret Brown from the University of Melbourne

Guest Speakers: Mick Naughton from the Office for Children and Paul Pritchard from Good Beginnings

Conference features: Interactive workshops showcasing practical ideas and resources for starting and sustaining supported playgroups

Who should attend:

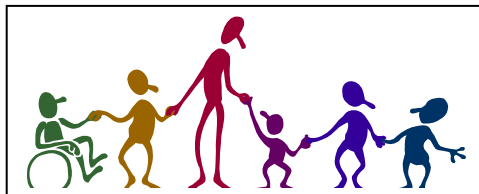
- Representatives from Supported Parent group and Playgroup Initiative (SPPI) sites
- Best Start sites and LGAs
- Supported playgroup leaders and coordinators
- MCH professionals
- Family support agency workers
- Early intervention staff
- Specialist Children's Services staff
- Parenting centre and agency staff... and more.

When: Friday 22 June

Where: Hemisphere Conference Centre, 488 South Road Moorabbin

What's on:

- The latest update on 'Working with Children' legislation and supported playgroups
- Great information and resources available from innovative agency information stalls
- Fantastic opportunities to share skills, experiences and network with other professionals working with families through supported playgroups across Victoria
- This year's conference builds on the success from 2006. This year we have added practical workshops, as requested in participants' evaluations in 2006
- To register please go to www.playgroup.org.au and click on 'What's On'



NEWSLETTER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Do you have information to contribute to the Greater Shepparton Family and Children's Services Newsletter? It could be an upcoming conference, staff movements, funding opportunity or anything to do with family and children's services. If so please send it through to the contact person listed below.

Contact person – Belinda Whitelaw, Best Start Service Development and Resource Officer
5832 9790 or email belinda.whitelaw@shepparton.vic.gov.au
Next edition due – July 2007
Due date for articles – 22 June 2007

go
for
your
life

goforyourlife.vic.gov.au



Moving & Munching:



Healthy Schools for Healthy Kids!

'Go for your life' Forum

Mark this date in your diary:

Friday 25th May, 2007

School of Rural Health - University of Melbourne,
Graham St Shepparton

Cost: Free

Who should attend this FREE conference?

School principals, teachers, staff, parents and those interested in improving childhood nutrition and physical activity

The conference will include:

- Leading experts in childhood nutrition & physical activity
- School based nutrition and physical activity programs and initiatives
- What other schools are doing
- What services are available to support schools
- Getting started and maintaining momentum

More information will be forwarded to you shortly.

To express an interest in attending or if you have a nutrition or physical activity initiative that you would like to share with your peers, we would love to hear from you.

Please call: **Jenny Burrows**, Project Officer

Greater Shepparton City Council Ph: **58329 863** or

Email: jenny.burrows@shepparton.vic.gov.au



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your
life

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Caring 4 Kids

Caring 4 Kids is a short-term program incorporating home visits and four group sessions tailored to meet the needs of your family.

Topics include:

- Life as a parent
- Play for fun, play to learn
- Communication & Behaviour
- It takes a village to raise a child.

Join other parents, share your experiences and together we can explore new ways of making parenting a more enjoyable experience.

If you'd like to find out more about this program, call **Familycare** on 5823 7000

When?: Thursday 31 May, 7,14 and 21 June

Time?: 9.15-11.45am

Where?: Bouchier Street Primary School

How much?: Free

Who do I contact?: To enrol phone 5823 7000

Safekidsnow injury prevention information for CALD parents

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The sheets offer developmentally appropriate and practical advice to parents on preventing burns and scalds, dog bites, drowning, suffocation, poisoning, falls and road trauma.

Nurses and (preferably) Service Coordinators are invited to fill in the order form below and return it by fax or post to:

VicRoads Bookshop
60 Denmark Street
KEW 3101

Fax: 9854 2468

Name:

Address:
.....

Post code:

Phone:

Age & stage	Arabic	Chinese	Somali	Turkish	Vietnamese
Birth – 9 months					
9 – 18 months					
1½ to 3½ years					
3½ to 5½ years					

CONCERN FOR AN UNBORN, A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

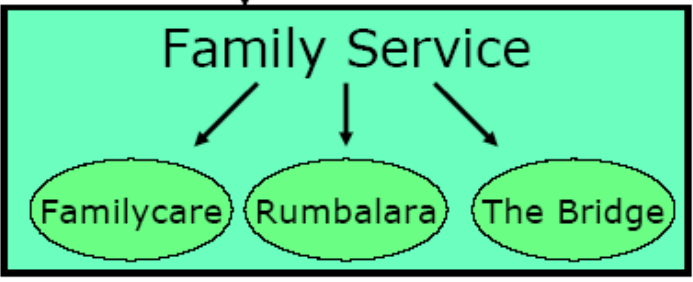
"the concerns currently have a low to moderate impact on the child and where the immediate safety of the child is not compromised."

"the concerns currently have a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development, or the concerns are persistent and entrenched and likely to have a serious impact on the child's development."

REFERRAL
Child FIRST
***Tel: 1300 854 944**
9am-5pm (Mon-Fri.)

Community Based Child Protection Worker

REPORT
Child Protection Intake
Tel: 1800 650 227
(8.45am-5pm)
After Hours: **1800 135 135**
(for 02 Area codes)
After Hours: **131 278**
(For all other areas)



Child Protection Teams

* Please note amended Child FIRST contact number

May 1, 2007