

Children, Young People and Family Services Providers Newsletter February 2018

Department of Health and Human Services

To: Children, Young People and Family Services Providers

- Child FIRST and Family Services
- Early Childhood Development Coordinators
- Cradle to Kinder and Aboriginal Cradle to Kinder
- Early Parenting Centres
- Parenting Assessment and Skill Development Services (PASDS)

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

Children's Resource Program

Youth Support:

- Leaving Care and Springboard
- Finding Solutions
- Adolescent Support Program

DHHS, DET, FSV:

- Local Connections Teams
- Child Protection
- Children and Families Policy Branch
- Children and Youth Area Partnership
- Family Safety Victoria

Introduction

Welcome to our Children, Young People and Family Services Providers Newsletter.

This newsletter has been prepared by the Early Pathways Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services to provide updates in statewide policy and service development to our funded organisations and department programs that deliver services to vulnerable children, young people and families. We hope that you find this informative and useful to the valuable work in your organisations.

We encourage you to please distribute this to staff and managers across your services.

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Child Safe Standards training sessions

All Department of Health and Human Services funded organisations that provide services or facilities for children must comply with the Child Safe Standards.

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare is running free training sessions for DHHS funded agencies on the Child Safe Standards.

CEOs, executive staff, managers and board members should attend.

Registrations for training in the CBD are now open:

Tuesday 6 March 2018	9.30 a.m. - 11.30a.m.	please click here
Tuesday 6 March 2018	1.00p.m. - 3.00p.m.	please click here
Thursday 8 March 2018	9.30a.m. - 11.30a.m.	please click here

Future sessions will be announced in Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Wangaratta and Dandenong.

For more information on the Child Safe Standards, visit the department’s website at <http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>

Increasing support for Aboriginal children and families

The Department of Education and Training is investing in a new suite of parenting and education initiatives to provide more support for Aboriginal families and their children.

The new Koorie Families as First Educators is a \$3.9 million initiative. As part of this initiative, two Koorie educators at five sites in Ballarat, Bendigo, Latrobe Valley, Wodonga and Melbourne’s north will work with Aboriginal families on parenting programs that support their children’s learning and development from pre-birth to school age.

An additional \$1.51 million will deliver Koorie Supported Playgroups in five locations across Victoria – Shepparton, Mildura, Swan Hill, and west and south-east Melbourne.

Each playgroup will be supported by a dedicated worker employed through an Aboriginal organisation and help parents build their confidence, skills and support networks, and help children with speech and cognitive development, and social skills.

The improved Aboriginal participation rates in kinders now sits at 94 per cent.

Advancing self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) are invited to apply for funding to help them improve the services they deliver to their community.

The \$21.7m Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Fund opened for applications on 5 February 2018 and close on 14 March 2018.

For more information about the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Fund or to apply for the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program or the First Mortgage and Community Infrastructure Program, visit vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria.

Tackling bullying to help students be their best

Funding is being provided to tackle bullying, improve the mental health of students and help them achieve their best in the classroom.

The *Victorian Anti Bullying and Mental Health Initiative* – is a \$7 million plan to address bullying in schools, support every students' mental health and wellbeing, and reduce the rate of suicide.

A \$4.8 million boost will go towards mental health services for government schools to respond to complex issues.

For more information go to <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/educationstate/Pages/antibullying.aspx>

Funding boost to keep our students safe online

\$2.5 million funding has been announced to enable all Victorian schools – including government and non-government – to use the Alannah and Madeline Foundation's eSmart program for free.

eSmart cyber-safety program provides support for government, Catholic and independent schools to create cyber-safe environments for their students through policies and practices encouraging students to use technology responsibly.

For more information go to <https://www.esmart.org.au/esmart-schools/>

Calling Victoria's future parliamentarians

An investment of more than \$100,000 aims to support 2018 Victorian Youth Parliament program, which encourages young people to participate, speak out and introduce mock Bills that could shape state legislation.

Teams of young parliamentarians will draft, debate and vote on Bills during the three-day event in the Victorian Parliament's parliamentary chambers in July.

The young parliamentarians will also attend a YMCA intensive training camp in May, where they will develop their skills in relationship building, teamwork, public speaking and leadership.

Applications open today and close on Thursday, 8 March. For more information or to apply, visit youthcentral.vic.gov.au.

Gearing up for the first ever Victorian Youth Week - 13 to 22 April

The successful grant recipients for Victorian Youth Week 2018, which will run from 13 to 22 April were announced on 12 February 2018. They will organise activities that engage young people and provide them with opportunities to express their ideas and be heard in their community, such as art exhibitions, musical performances, cultural celebrations and forums.

It includes over 50 activities in metropolitan Melbourne and nearly 60 in regional Victoria.

Some activities include:

- Giving Everyone a Fair Go - Wheelchair Basketball – which invites young people to facilitate a wheelchair basketball workshop with Year 5 and 6 students

- Horsham Skate Park Jam – which is an opportunity for riders and skaters to showcase their skills and abilities

Activities are aimed at those aged 12 to 25 and will be held in safe environments that are alcohol, drug and smoke free.

For more information about 2018 Victorian Youth Week, visit youthcentral.vic.gov.au/vyw.

Community grants to boost social cohesion

The Community Harmony Program for 2017/18 was announced on 21 February 2018.

The grants will support community groups to:

- Identify and respond to local challenges to social cohesion and community harmony
- Increase intercultural and interfaith engagement and understanding
- Build shared values and the foundations of common humanity that transcend cultural and religious differences
- Support diverse groups, including smaller or newer community groups, to develop relationships with one another and deliver initiatives that promote social cohesion and belonging through genuine partnerships between community organisations.

The successful community groups are listed on www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Celebrating Victoria's valiant volunteers

Equality advocate Riley Briese has been named the Premier's Volunteer of the Year for his work supporting young transgender people in regional Victoria. The 20-year-old is helping change the landscape of care and support for transgender Victorians through the founding of his Gateway Health Gender Service, which provides information and referrals for children questioning their gender and other young people.

The outstanding achievements of 60 volunteers across the state were formally recognised at the ceremony, spanning support for a range of different communities and causes as well as a range of services and activities.

The Volunteer Champions Awards celebrate the extraordinary contributions of all Victorian volunteers, in areas such as health, sport, education, culture, community, environment, science and animal welfare.

For more information to go <http://volunteer.vic.gov.au/about-volunteering/victorian-premiers-volunteer-champions-awards>

Victorian mums and dads urged to look before you lock

A new campaign to warn parents about the risk of accidentally leaving their child in a car due to short term memory failure has been launched. The campaign is raising awareness about a phenomenon known as fatal distraction, which can affect any parent or carer experiencing extreme tiredness, stress or a change in routine.

Research shows short term memories can only hold six to eight items at a time, and added to stress and exhaustion, may cause parents to leave their child behind in a car, which can result in serious injury or death.

The *Look Before You Lock* campaign encourages mums, dads and carers to establish habits that minimise this risk and was developed in response to recommendations of the Victorian Coroner.

Fact sheets on short-term memory failure and advice on how parents and carers can minimise the risk of fatal distraction have been sent to Maternal and Child Health Services and kindergartens across Victoria.

For more information, visit education.vic.gov.au/looklock

Family Violence Reform: Information sharing scheme begins

New legislation which will allow greater information sharing will be in place from 26 February 2018 to keep women and children safe and hold perpetrators to account for their actions.

The laws allow for authorised workers to share information relating to safety, to be able to keep perpetrators in view and make more informed risk assessment and management.

Workforces are taking part in training to prepare for the new legislation.

More than key 500 practitioners and managers across all prescribed workforces will be trained prior to the commencement of the scheme.

Training has been delivered to women's and men's Specialist Family Violence Services, Child FIRST, community based Child Protection, Victoria Police, Courts Victoria and Sexual Assault Support Services, and Support and Safety Hub launch sites have been prioritised in the training scheduling.

Find Ministerial Guidelines, fact sheets and other tools developed by Family Safety Victoria on the [Information sharing and risk management page](#).

Family violence reform: CIP prepares to launch

A new way of bringing data together to keep perpetrators in view will be available in Victoria from next month. The Central Information Point is one of the most transformative parts of key reforms to help keep women and children safer.

The CIP centralises key information held by government agencies about a perpetrator into a single report to support better risk assessment and management.

The CIP is made up of an IT platform and data custodians. It is supported by new information sharing laws and will be ready to launch in the first five Support and Safety Hubs from March.

The first CIP staff have been recruited from Corrections Victoria, Victoria Police, Court Services Victoria and the Department of Health and Human Services.

New commissioner to improve accessibility

The appointment of Colleen Furlanetto as Commissioner at the Taxi Services Commission was announced on 1 February 2018.

As a Commissioner, Ms Furlanetto will be responsible for a diverse range of disability and accessibility issues in the commercial passenger vehicle industry, including wheelchair accessible services.

An investment of \$25 million aims to improve and expand accessible point-to-point services in Victoria.

A review of subsidies and incentives for accessible point-to-point transport services is also underway to provide users with better access to convenient, reliable transport which will complement the rollout of the NDIS.

For more information about the taxi and hire car reforms visit transport.vic.gov.au/ride-share.

Please feel free to send this newsletter onto all staff within your organisation.

Regards

Early Pathways Team

Children Families Disability and Operations Division
Department of Health and Human Services Victoria