

Communities for Children In Broadmeadows

No.1 August 2006

MISSION STATEMENT

Optimising the health, development, learning and wellbeing of children living or participating in the Broadmeadows community.

Communities for Children is a project of the Australian Government funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. Communities for Children works to support the health and early development of children and families.

Broadmeadows Communities for Children is locally based in six suburbs within the City of Hume; Broadmeadows, Dallas, Jacana, Coolaroo, Meadow Heights and Campbellfield. As a "place based" initiative it aims to develop a sense of belonging and support within the local community for children, parents and families.

The Project draws on the expertise of the Broadmeadows Early Years partnership; a local partnership of 28 agencies working together to carry out their vision.

In order to have a clear understanding of the needs of families in the Communities for Children area the project consulted with parents and children and early childhood professionals. We spoke with over 300 community members and service

providers and used their knowledge about the strengths, hopes and needs of the community to develop a Strategic plan.

The priorities parents and professionals identified for children in Broadmeadows were

Parents

1. Health and nutrition
2. Language and literacy
3. Meeting parents
4. Playgroups

Professionals

- Health and nutrition
- Language and literacy
- Early childhood development
- Parenting education

These priorities are reflected in the five strategies developed and the 24 activities funded for 18 months from February 2006.

The strategies are complementary and overlap, so that they form a cohesive whole and there is no 'gap' for community groups to fall through. Each strategy has been given a catchy title that the community has come to recognise.



**Stronger Families and
Communities Strategy**

An Australian Government Initiative



Broadmeadows UnitingCare



Dianella
Community Health Inc



orana family services

Strategy 1

Setting the Hubs Humming: Inclusive meeting places for family engagement

The “Setting the Hubs Humming” strategy is about collaboration and responsiveness of services that support early childhood health, development, learning, and wellbeing. This strategy works with existing community venues including schools and Maternal and Child Health Services to make them more active and engaging places for families.

Activities

Jacana Juniors (*Jacana Primary School*) – playgroup and school working together as the hub of Jacana.

Meadowbank Early Learning Centre (*Meadowbank Primary School*) - Further strengthen links between families, community groups and support services.

Breaking Cycles by building Community hubs (*Brotherhood of St Laurence*) – demonstration projects in MeadowFair North, Broadmeadows and Campbellfield where services will be delivered with an integrated approach, to culturally appropriate program delivery and minimisation of barriers to services.

Meadow Heights Language and Literacy Program (*Hume Global Learning Village*) – Bilingual workers use VisyCares Learning Centre to work in partnership with existing services to outreach to families in literacy and language activities.

Broadmeadows Early Years Program (*Hume City Council*) – Weekly activity based program for three year old children.

Strategy 2

Playgroups Rule – Ok!

The Broadmeadows community values playgroups as important meeting places for parents. Playgroups provide ideal venues to gain information and education and allow parents opportunities to discuss parenting issues including those that may be sensitive and/or have a cultural component. This strategy increases the number of playgroups and provides a coordination role for the more than 90 playgroups in the municipality.

Activities:

Playgroups for parenting amongst Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (*Victorian Co-operative on children Services for Ethnic Groups*) – Enhance and develop existing and emerging playgroups for families from Assyrian/Chaldean, Iraqi/Shi'ite, Chinese, Pacific Islander, Sudanese, Lebanese, Kurdish, Vietnamese, Hmong, Turkish, and Somali communities. Playgroup facilitators have been recruited from within these communities and provided with training.

Hume playgroup strengthening project (*Banksia Gardens Community Centre*) – Coordinate playgroups in the City of Hume.

Strategy 3

Connecting Dots and Neurons: Promoting health and wellbeing



Increased coordination and collaboration between services for families can promote the ongoing health and wellbeing of all family members.

Parents and professionals agreed that children's health and development were a major priority for families in Broadmeadows. This group of projects provides activities that work collaboratively with parents to promote healthy child development.

Activities

Community Links (*Women's Community Links at Broadmeadows*) – Post natal support for Arabic and Turkish families.

Early Years Language and Literacy Enrichment Program (*Upfield Primary School*) – Enhance language development and support oral language and literacy enrichment.

Together, we can make a difference (*Broad Insight*) – Establishment of an integrated and coordinated support structure for young children who have special needs.

Child Care Links (*Melbourne Citymission*) – Developing links across child care centres and providing information to parents.

Breastfeeding support for families (*Tweddle Child & Family Health Service*) – Supporting and assisting mothers in establishing and maintaining breastfeeding.

Developing Physical Independence (*Broad Insight*) – Providing education in early childhood settings about toilet training children.

ATSI Antenatal and Postnatal Women's Social Support Group (*Dianella Community Health Service*) – A support program of social health activities for young women accessing Antenatal and Postnatal Programs.

Strategy 4

We are ALL Community: Parents and Professionals working together for the community

This Strategy works to create a child and family centred local community. The Strategy identifies, celebrates and builds on local strengths. The strategy provides opportunities for community members and professionals to work together to develop truly child friendly communities.

Activities

Parents as Partners (*Migrant Resource Centre North West*) – A training program for early childhood professionals, including cultural competence and working in partnership with parents.

CALD Fathering (*Migrant Resource Centre North West*) – Promoting the value of fathers playing an active parenting role and providing opportunities for fathers of young children to meet regularly.

Developing Local Capacity (*Crossroads Salvation Army*) – Develop the skills and resources of emerging community leaders and community groups to enable them to work independently within the community.

Managing the Money (*Migrant Resource Centre North West*) – Provide information and training to young and newly formed families on issues about costs of raising children, basic budgeting and income support services for families.

Bilingual Storytelling in the Community (*Hume Global Learning Village*) – Provides first language and cultural experiences to young children and their parents through storytelling.



Strategy 5

Catching them ALL: Connecting the most vulnerable and most isolated into the community



Community members who are socially isolated and vulnerable may find it difficult to create strong links with community health and education services. The “Catching them All Strategy” aims to increase community connectedness between disadvantaged families and services, with a view to build on families, abilities to participate and become active members in their community.

Activities

Outreach Support to Isolated and Newly Arrived Arabic-speaking Families (*Victorian Arabic Social Services*) – Build parenting skills and capacity of isolated and newly arrived Arabic-speaking families.

Supporting Children who are Homeless or at Risk of Being Homeless (*Homeground Services*) – Provide continuity through a time of significant upheaval for children by working with families to provide support and assistance in early learning.

Aboriginal Partnership (*Aboriginal Child Care Agency*) – To build on the partnership with the Aboriginal community established by Best Start.

Confident Parenting in Challenging Times (*Orana Family Services*) – Aims to prevent the exclusion of children who are displaying challenging behaviours from pre-school and child care settings.

Evaluation Framework: Communities for Children in Broadmeadows

Overarching outcomes:

1. Parents and professionals as partners: supporting parents and families
2. Sustainability of new initiatives that “work”
3. Collaboration and refocusing of existing resources to improve service access for families
4. Improved child outcomes: healthy young families and early learning and care
5. Child friendly communities

Humming hubs

Outcomes:

Improved child language and literacy skills
 Establish and/or strengthen community hubs
 Increased awareness of where to go for help with children/ Increased social connectedness and support
 Community members take an active interest in developing hubs
 Model developed will be shared within communities to strengthen learning

Playgroups rule

Outcomes:

Stronger links between health, education and community services around early years issues
 Parents report improvements in child wellbeing
 Improved parenting confidence, skills and knowledge
 Increased community connectedness
 Establish responsive playgroups supporting parents and children
 Develop a pool of early childhood trained culturally skilled playgroup facilitators
 Improved confidence for parents in a new culture
 Improved child language and literacy skills (school readiness)

Connecting the dots and neurons

Outcomes:

Stronger links between health, education and community services around early years issues
 Parents report improvements in child wellbeing
 Ongoing promotion of health and wellbeing for families
 Improved access to early years services Improved ongoing attendance/at program
 Increased information, education and support to parents
 Improved parent confidence
 Increased understanding amongst parents of the early years
 Improve communication between parents and early years services

We are ALL community

Outcomes:

Improved communication between parents and early years services
 Improved access to early years services
 Improved continuity of support to families from birth to school age
 Improved child language and literacy skills
 Improved skills and connections between community leaders
 Improved engagement between fathers and their children

Catching them ALL

Outcomes:

Increased participation of parents and children with complex needs in early years services
 Decreased social isolation/increased social connectedness
 Improved parenting confidence, skills and knowledge
 Parents report improvements in child wellbeing
 Stronger links between health, education and community services around early years issues
 Improved communication between parents and early years services