



VILLAGE NEWS

We believe that by improving collaboration and committing to community engagement, all children in Belconnen can be physically healthy, socially and emotionally strong, and ready to engage fully in learning and life.

THIS ISSUE

► Strengthening transitions from ECECs to primary schools - network event

What a wonderful turn out to the recent Transitions Network event. It was fabulous to see how enthusiastically everyone was engaging in conversations and sharing information.

► Early childhood services connecting and learning together

Village recently established the Early Years Community of Practice to create an environment where early years professionals can advance their learning and practice and better connect, with the outcome of improving...

► Early learning centres - supporting educators, children and families

Over the past couple of months Village has been meeting with ECECs across Belconnen to share information about Village resources and opportunities and gather insights from ECECs into the challenges being faced by children, families and Educators, specifically relating to child development.

► Child and family fun day - Kippax

On the 19th of August Village and a number of its partners participated in UnitingCare Kippax Church's Children and Family focused community event.

► What does data have to do with creating change?

Data is more than numbers. Behind facts and figures are people with lived experience of what makes life work well for themselves, their children, and their communities and what happens when things aren't working. Data alone doesn't tell the whole story.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES WITH ADHD

"The most challenging part of the journey to diagnosis has been access to the care [my daughter] needs. Paediatrician, OT, expense of OT, knowing that she would benefit from more regular sessions, but we are entirely out of pocket for every session."

Village Survey participant

There is a growing rate of diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) for both children and adults across Australia and through the recent Village survey: **'Understanding the needs of families with ADHD'**, we are hearing about the challenging journey that families are experiencing as they navigate ADHD supports and diagnosis in Canberra.



ADHD can have a profound effect on a child and their family and have a lifelong impact on all aspects of their lives. For a child with ADHD, studies have shown that they may have delays in brain executive function development of up to 40% compared with those without ADHD (ADHD Foundation, 2023).

In 2022, prescriptions for ADHD medications in Australia exceeded 3.15 million. That's two and a half times the number of prescriptions issued in 2018 (ABC, 2023). Interestingly, the clinical guidelines on the identification, diagnosis, and treatment of people with ADHD in Australia were only endorsed in October 2022. What implications this has for families on the journey to diagnosis is yet to be seen.

ADHD has become such a growing concern, that the Senate referred an Inquiry into the barriers to the consistent, timely and best practice assessment of ADHD and the role of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and its responsibility to recognise ADHD as a primary disability. Submissions for this Inquiry closed in June 2023, so it will be some time before the outcomes are known. What we do know from themes emerging from the ADHD survey is that there are major challenges for families, with very little support, prohibitive costs of diagnosis and ongoing therapeutic supports, difficulties in finding the pathway to assessment and lack of services in the ACT.

There is a strong and genuine commitment from the members of the [ADHD Action group](#) to use the survey findings to understand the needs of Canberra families and work with them to provide an appropriate and practical response. A report will be compiled from the survey findings and be made available on our website.

We encourage anyone who is affected by ADHD to complete the [Understanding the needs of families with ADHD survey](#) and to share it with others.

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*[We need]
A clearer,
documented
pathway for
families to
know where
to go and
how to go
through the
diagnosis.*

Survey respondent

”





STRENGTHENING TRANSITIONS FROM ECECS TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS - NETWORK EVENT



What a wonderful turn out to the recent Transitions Network event. It was fabulous to see how enthusiastically everyone was engaging in conversations and sharing information. Thank you to Latham Primary School for hosting and supporting this event.

Since late 2022, Village has hosted a quarterly networking event, bringing together Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Educators and primary school teachers. The key goals of the event are to:

- ✓ Foster relationships
- ✓ Form partnerships, and
- ✓ Share the role of supporting children and families in the transition process



It was great, I was able to meet teachers from schools I had no connection with and two of them rang me the next day to organise to visit our centre to meet and discuss some of the children transitioning to their school.

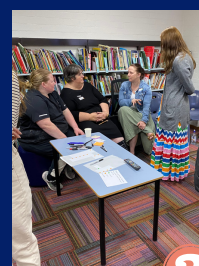
ECEC Preschool Educator



The most useful thing I gained from the network was getting an understanding from schools as to what information would be useful to know in the transition statements and learning that some schools already have social stories established and that we can access them.

ECEC Educator

There was a strong sense of the attendees commitment to improved transitions in Belconnen. By strengthening connections between schools and ECECs and enhancing information sharing, children and families can be supported more effectively as they transition into the new education setting. Together, ECECs and schools are paving the way for a brighter future for our students.





EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES CONNECTING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

EARLY YEARS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Village recently established the Early Years Community of Practice (CoP) to create an environment where early years professionals can advance their learning and practice and better connect, with the outcome of improving how the sector supports itself, children and families. The CoP has a focus on holistic child development including wellbeing, education, disability and the social determinants of health.

The first Community of Practice was delivered to over 40 teachers, educators, community service providers and health professionals. The topic - Courageous Conversations, focused on Child development and tips to effectively communicate concerns with families - spoken to by our guest speaker Stephanie Johnston, Community Capacity Building Lead, EACH ACT. The presentation information and handouts can be [found here](#).

The next Early Years CoP has been confirmed for:

3:30 PM - 5:30 PM Understanding and
supporting children with
complex behaviours
Tuesday, 17th October 2023

The topic will cover:

- ✓ understanding of the multiple causes of diverse behaviours presenting in children such as; neurodiversity, trauma, developmental delays, disability and family/environmental factors,
- ✓ understanding what children are feeling,
- ✓ strategies for supporting children with complex behaviours, and
- ✓ how to support a consistent approach across home and educational settings.

The CoP will provide ample time for attendees to talk and discuss the topic. There will be an interactive presentation, group discussion and and networking time at the end.

To stay in the loop on when and how to register for the upcoming CoP, keep an eye on the [Village website](#).

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*[A highlight was]
Meeting professionals
across a varied range
of settings. Information
on services available
for families and how
we as professionals
could upskill ourselves
to better support
families.*

CoP attendee

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EARLY LEARNING CENTRES - SUPPORTING EDUCATORS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Over the past couple of months Village has been meeting with ECECs across Belconnen to share information about Village resources and opportunities and gather insights from ECECs into the challenges being faced by children, families and Educators, specifically relating to child development. Through this data collection we aim to identify the most pressing and prevailing needs to develop a coordinated response from Village partners. Understanding these needs is core to ensuring Village can be responsive to community needs and effectively inform and direct its efforts in two of our areas of focus:

- ✓ **Improved connections between families and services**
- ✓ **Improved transitions to schools**

As Village collects information on centre, child and family experience, we are also conducting a needs analysis. This analysis provides an opportunity for ECEC staff to reflect upon the operation of their centre and particularly how their capability to support families could be improved through:

- ✓ Staff training
- ✓ Service engagement
- ✓ Access to relevant resource and information
- ✓ Networking opportunities
- ✓ Opportunities for parents

In these meetings Village is providing **Village Resource Packs**, connecting staff to useful resources including information for educators and parents on child development, transition to schools, networking opportunities and access to tools such as the **Belconnen Child and Family Program and Service Directory**.

Village has already begun to see some positive impacts arising from these meetings with many of the centres immediately able to identify potential and planned use of the **resources**.

These meetings have seen Village expand the ECEC network from 6 to 18 centres across Belconnen, with more meetings to come. If you are interested in meeting with Village please contact Bailey at Bailey@kippax.org.au.



We hope you enjoyed sharing a cuppa with Village through our first “Village Brew”, which we launched in September. The Village Brew is designed to share a blend of upcoming events, resources and partner news. The Village Brew includes four main sections:

- ✓ **What's the tea?** – includes what we are hearing, seeing and what Village is doing about it.
- ✓ **Spilling the tea** – this includes upcoming events and networking opportunities
- ✓ **Filling your cup** – includes available resources and training
- ✓ **A cuppa with our partners** – includes updates from or a ‘spotlight’ on Village partner programs or activities



Stay in the loop, get inspired, and savour the essence of Village through “The Village Brew”. If you or your organisation would like to be featured in the monthly Village Brew, email village@kippax.org.au by the third week of every month.



CONNECTED BEGINNINGS

Artwork by Chern'ee Sutton

Connecting with Community



Australian Government
Department of Education



Yerrabi Yurwang, as part of Connected Beginnings, has had a busy month continuing to successfully deliver the Women's Circle and plan for new activities in term 4. The Women's Circle group meets on Wednesday's and Sunday's during term time and has seen an increase in interest and attendance since it began. Yerrabi will be undertaking an evaluation with the group before kicking off again in term two. There is planning and designing currently underway for a children's program which will sit alongside the Women's Circle, with a view to roll out a separate playgroup program in 2024.

There continues to be some advocacy and support provided to community members to engage with a range of services. Yerrabi continues to meet with local service and program providers to find out what is available to support children and families and discuss how to partner with these organisations to deliver services together.

On Sunday 24th September from 10.30am-12.30pm, Yerrabi hosted an Indigenous Literacy Day event which included a BBQ, story readings by a community Elder, crafts and play activities for the kids, and some songs in Aboriginal language. Tilly and Cassie Koala/s from ACT Policing attended with First Nations Liaison Officers.

Connected Beginnings is an Australian Government closing the gap initiative that helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children get the best start to life. It draws upon the strength and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities.



Yerrabi at SNAICC 2023

Representatives from Yerrabi Yurwang – Ebony Joseph, Monica Harland, Dea Delaney-Thiele Lee-anne Daley and Selina Walker – attended SNAICC in Garramilla/Darwin on Larrakia Country from 5-7 September 2023. It was a safe space to learn, share and network about early childhood education and care and child protection issues that impact our communities. It was a valuable and rare opportunity to hear about some of the incredible work happening in ACCOs and other support services across the country.

[Read more](#)



OTHER ACTIVITIES

What does data have to do with creating change?

Data is more than numbers. Behind facts and figures are people with lived experience of what makes life work well for themselves, their children, and their communities and what happens when things aren't working. Data alone doesn't tell the whole story. It's what we do with the data that creates the knowledge we need to understand what needs to change and how to create that change. Such change requires everyone who plays a role, from government through to those most affected, to make sense and meaning from the data, shaping it into shared knowledge. Knowledge is power and can be used by local communities to determine the best next steps.

Village is working with many of its partners, including government, to get access to the data. Data that tells us about the demographics of the Belconnen community. Data that tells us about the patterns of services use of families and children that support child development, including maternal services and enrolment in preschool and early learning centres. This process includes collaborating with organisations like SEER Data & Analytics and those who hold the data to work with us to make data more accessible and to join community to use the data to create opportunities for change.

Kylie Burgess, Manager of Village will be part of a panel conversation here in Canberra, with other stakeholders working to create social change. Titled "How can data empower local decision-making, support equity and self-determination, and foster trust between community-led organisations, government and philanthropy?", policymakers, not-for-profits and philanthropists will discuss the power of data access and sharing to improve outcomes in local communities, particularly to improve child development and readiness to learn.

[Click here for events page/registration](#)

Child and Family Fun Day Kippax

On the 19th of August Village and a number of its partners participated in UnitingCare Kippax Church's Children and Family focused community event.

Village transformed the creche into a pop-up child-development hub, hosting stalls with child development, well-being and parenting information alongside resources and program information. Throughout the day, Village and participating partners ran children's art activities and a series of children's reading circles, including storybook reading and sing-a-longs hosted by a speech therapist from the UC Good Start team.

Village would like to thank the partner organisations who attended or contributed resources for the day; ACT Education, Libraries ACT, A Good Start Team (University of Canberra), YMCA and Mosaic Life Care.

Over the event, more than 20 families flowed through the space which allowed Village staff and partners to talk to parents, discussing child wellbeing, activities, and programs available for families to support their child's development. Child development resources were handed out to families on the day along with free books donated to Village by the church.

Being part of the UCK's Market Day allowed us to continue to grow our connections within the community. We were able to network and strengthen relationships with some existing contacts including YMCA and UC's Good Start for Life project coordinators. We shared information about the 3-year-old initiative, Pathways to Preschool and child development with a number of families. Highlights of the day were facilitating a story time and connecting with families referred into the initiative and see how their children are flourishing in person.

Aimee Hunter, Department of Education, Early Childhood Community Coordinator



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Imagination Library Launch

With over 200 children already enrolled in Imagination Library across 6 suburbs in Belconnen, we are excited to announce the official launch of Imagination Library in Canberra. The event will be held on **October 27th**. We welcome Village partners and those interested in supporting Imagination Library to the launch.

[Register here](#)



Capital Region Community Services Therapeutic Services

Did you know that CRCS offers a range of therapeutic services that include a Wellbeing's team, Cool Kids Anxiety Program, Early Autism Education and Bungee Youth Resilience Program? These services and programs are supported by a team of experienced and qualified professionals, including psychologists, social workers, an applied behavioural therapist and a speech pathologist, who have extensive experience working with children, young people, adults and families. For more information call 6264 0200 or contact@crs.com.au or go to [CRCS Therapeutic Services](#).



Parent & Carer Support Courses Term 4, 2023

Maternal Health Workshop for Carers/Parents | 05-Oct | 1000-1200 hrs | UnitingCare Kippax

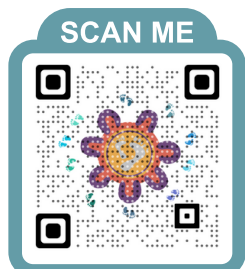
Dads Tuning in to Kids | 16-Oct | 1430 - 1630 hrs | Kippax Library

Cybersafety Workshop for Carers/Parents | 02-Nov | 1000-1200 hrs | UnitingCare Kippax



Belconnen Child and Family Program and Service Directory

The Directory is a resource for schools, ECECs, services and families in the Belconnen community, providing information about services and programs that operate in Belconnen or across the ACT to support children and families, with a focus on, but not limited to, pregnancy to five years. [Click here](#) for more information.



New and Improved pathways map

We have had a great response to the pathways map and recently made a few tweaks to the document. If you have an old version, we encourage you to [download](#) a copy of the new version.



OUR PARTNERS

Acknowledgement of country

A Village for Every Child (Village) would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work, the Ngunnawal people. Village pays its respects and celebrates the traditional owners' ongoing cultural traditions and contribution to this region. Village also acknowledges elders past and present and the children because they are our future.

Acknowledgement of participating organisations

The collective achievements of Village would not have been possible without the continued commitment and in-kind contributions from all the people and organisations, including our funders who are proud to have been part of creating the conditions for children to thrive in Belconnen.

