



A Village for Every Child | Update December 2021

What's been happening in A Village for Every Child?

We are really pleased to be finishing the year with all three of our Working Groups operational. Despite the challenging past few months and added pressures this has placed on people, there has been a huge amount of enthusiasm and continued and increasing participation in Village. We thank each of you for this and for your continued contribution as Village begins its new phase of engagement and activity.

What's been going on in the Working Groups?

The Working Groups are a critical part of Village. It is where cross-sector practitioners from government and non-government come together monthly to look for collaborative ways to try and test approaches that work towards achieving the key outcomes of each Working Group project. Each project contributes to the broader goal of Village - to improve systems across Belconnen so that **children are physically healthy, socially and emotionally strong and ready to engage in learning and life, and all parents are supported, empowered and equipped for 'best possible' parenting**. We currently have all three projects operating – **Improved Transitions to School**, **Improved Service and School Connections with Families**, and **Better Data**.

In 2022 Village will start to explore priority projects identified through conversations with Belconnen community residents.



Improved Transitions to School Working Group

This group kicked off in July and has been meeting monthly since then. Representatives from Early Childhood Education and Care, family and community services, Schools and the Education and Community Services Directorates are involved in looking at how to improve transitions into school (with a particular focus on the transition from the ECEC sector).

The improved Transitions to School Working Group is:

- Reviewing the Education Directorate's Set Up for Success Early Childhood Strategy and Action Plan with a particular focus on understanding the current transition process and Communities of Practice in the three-year-old initiative.
- Reviewing the Future of Education Framework and the work it is doing around transitions throughout schooling.

"I'm feeling really positive. What we are trying to achieve is spot on" and "Village is a catalyst to get us to where we want to go, by harnessing the energy & voice and collective opinions"

Working Group members, Improved Transitions to School

- Discussing and mapping some of the Early Childhood Education and Care services and schools and the work they are doing in the transition space and looking at what opportunities they have to contribute to improved transitions.
- Reviewing transition processes in other jurisdictions.
- Starting to implement some actions. These include:
 - ECEC services providing information to families about the importance of transition and sharing information about their child with the school.
 - Conversations with families and teachers about transitions – their understanding of it, their feelings about it and ideas they might have to improve it
 - Creating connections between schools and ECECs to discuss how together they can improve the transition process for families.

This Group is also collaborating with [ARACY](#) to undertake a small research project to understand the information needs of preschool and Kindergarten teachers in relation to the children transitioning into their classes. We will be inviting schools to participate in this opportunity in the new year and anticipate starting halfway through term 1.

Please contact us if interested in being involved in improving transitions as an 'early adopter' (trial site).



Improved Service and School Connections with Families

We held our first meeting in October which was a fantastic achievement considering we were all in the thick of lockdown. We are very fortunate to have a broad representation of services in this group which includes ACT Libraries, Playgroup ACT, Education Directorate, CRCS Family programs, Canberra Health Services, EACH, Cyclabilities, Uniting Care Kippax Parenting Program, Ginninderry, University of Canberra's *A Good Start in Life* project and schools.

The scope of this project is broad and the first *piece* of work will be to determine what area the group wants to focus on as a first project. In the first meeting a couple of areas were highlighted as critical issues observed by practitioners.

These related to three of the objectives; *Improve relationships between families and schools before formal schooling begins* and *Improve collaboration between services* so that there is *improved accessibility and relationships with child and family support services*.

Our second meeting resulted in the decision to make our key area of focus about improving connections with our children and families who experience the most vulnerability or where barriers to engaging are greater than most.



Better Data Working Group

This Working Group's initial focus is on creating a community profile of children and families in Belconnen. To support the development of this, the Working Group will facilitate a community workshop to determine what data is most relevant and tells the story of children and families in Belconnen. A range of stakeholders will be invited to inform this decision, including service providers, schools and Belconnen Community residents.

Village has partnered with [SEER Data and Analytics](#) to support the collection of data and provide a platform for hosting and managing this data and future data collection. This platform will allow Village members to interact with the data and use it to inform a range of projects and outcomes.

Other News

Village has engaged [Clear Horizon](#) to undertake a whole of initiative evaluation which will commence in late 2021 and support Village to improve practice by providing regular reporting until 2023.

About Village

Village believes children are the heart of our community and deserve the best start to life possible. Village is an initiative using a [Collective Impact](#) framework that aims to transform early childhood systems across Belconnen. Village works collaboratively with families, communities, child and family support providers and government agencies to identify and address the issues facing young families. By working together, the community is stronger, more connected and better placed to meet the needs of children and families.



Please feel free to contact us and keep an eye out for the launch of our new website



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