



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

▶ Exploring New Collaborative Ways to Support Families with ADHD

In response to an identified need in the community, an ADHD Action Group was started up this quarter. The focus is on finding opportunities in the system to co-design a program or service that provides further support for families of children with ADHD.

▶ Understanding the priorities and Challenges for Belconnen families

Village launched its community conversations with a large-scale Belconnen community survey. Thanks to our partners and broader networks for helping us reach out to the community.

▶ Early Years Community of Practice

Come along to the first Early Years Community of Practice, "Courageous Conversations" on August 8th from 3:30 -5.30pm. Learn about developmental milestones, delay and disability, strategies for building stronger relationships with families and how to have those difficult conversations with families.

▶ Improving Child Development Knowledge

A new child health & development poster has been launched! It guides families through the Blue Book child health and development milestones and encourages them to attend the health and development checks. [Download here](#)

▶ In the Spotlight - Showcasing Services, Resources and Partners

This section shines a spotlight on selected services, programs, apps and timely reminders about key events for families in relation to early years.

IMPROVING LITERACY FOR CHILDREN IN BELCONNEN

"The single most significant factor influencing a child's early educational success is an introduction to books and being read to at home prior to beginning school."

National Commission on Reading

In August Imagination Library Kippax will welcome its first families into Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a free book giving program for children aged from birth to 5 years. A committed group of people from across eleven organisations and government agencies have collaborated to create Imagination Library Kippax and secured funding to provide books to 146 children for two years. These families will receive a free age appropriate book each month delivered to their house, and a tip sheet to support them to engage in the books.



Imagination Library Kippax will commence its pilot in the Kippax suburbs of Holt, Higgins, MacGregor and Latham. These suburbs were selected because there were children identified through the [Australian Early Development Census \(AEDC\)](#) experiencing higher levels of developmental vulnerability and are near the Kippax Hub. The hub hosts partner services and facilities including the West Belconnen Child and Family Centre, UnitingCare Kippax, the Kippax Library, Early Childhood Education and Care services, schools and centralised transport.

Our phase one enrolling partners include EACH, The Smith Family, Capital Region Community Services, MACH and Early Family Support (EFS) services (Canberra Health Services), Uniting and HIPPY. These partners have been invited to enrol families because of the role they have in closely supporting families and the ability to assist them to enrol in the program as well as engage with the books outside their homes and build reading into the work they do with them.

The Kippax collaboration will use the Kippax hub as a centralised location to provide additional activities and opportunities for the Imagination Library families.

This is the first time the Imagination Library program has come to the ACT since it was introduced to Australia in 2013. The Imagination Library currently operates in every state and territory excluding Tasmania and has shown outstanding results, including increasing baby's enrolments in public libraries by 1000% in Tamworth and increasing the amount of time and days that parents read with their child.

We would like to thank 'the [Lyone Foundation](#), powered by the support of [Complete Office Supplies](#)' as one of our founding funders for providing seed money for the Imagination Library in Canberra. We will continue to seek funding to expand the number of children in the program and extend the number of years children can be enrolled for.



I am delighted to see the Imagination Library commence in Kippax and Evatt Primary. After finding out about the evidenced base for this program and the support for its implementation in NSW by the Department of Health, I was eager to see if the enthusiasm and opportunity would be present in the ACT as well. Thanks to Village for Every Child and all our government and non-government partners and funding donors, the momentum and support for this program has swelled into two regions of Belconnen, and we hope for this to continue to expand as more people find out about the benefits of the program.

Caitlin Winter, ARACY



If you would like more information on this program, please contact village@kippax.org.au





EXPLORING NEW COLLABORATIVE WAYS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES WITH ADHD



In May, a new action group was formed, bringing together 15 representatives from across 9 non-government and government organisations to address the lack of supports for families of children waiting for a diagnosis or diagnosed with ADHD.

Lee-Anne Daley from Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation had instigated the idea by raising the issue with the Village Leadership Group, highlighting *“the enormous need to support families and children who experience ADHD, which is especially needed for our Aboriginal Families.”*

The group came together quickly and agreed to identify opportunities in the system where members and other stakeholders collectively co-design a program or service that provides further support for families of children with or suspected ADHD.

Early focus is on scoping the idea, including:

- ✓ Gathering qualitative information about what families need.
- ✓ Undertaking analysis of current research relating to support for families.
- ✓ Review current resources available to families.

[Read more](#)

Check out the ADHD Foundation's *“Teachers and Educators Education Series”*

[Click here](#)

Improving Access by Connecting Schools and Early Learning Centres with Services

Following the successful trial of The Collective at Evatt, we are now inviting new schools and ECECs to host The Collective at their schools and centres. The Collective is a new and innovative way of connecting services to schools and ECECs with services co-locating on a semi-regular basis on site at a school or ECEC service. Host schools and ECECs will be asked to provide information on the needs of their families to help identify which services should be invited to attend. [The Improved Connections Working Group](#) will manage invitations, coordination, link relevant services and attend where relevant.

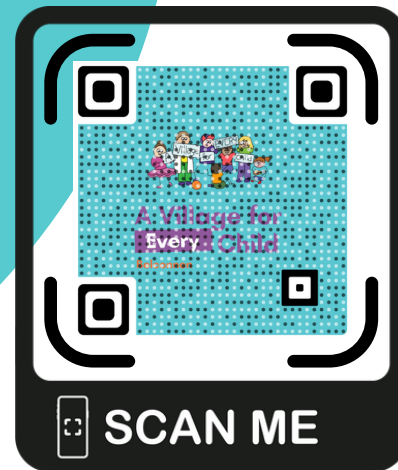
Surrounding schools and ECECs of the host sites will also be invited to attend to meet and connect with service providers. The collective aims to:

- ✓ Improve accessibility and relationships with child and family support services
- ✓ Support families to access and receive services in a coordinated, efficient and effective way
- ✓ Improve collaboration between services and organisations
- ✓ Enhance community connections and opportunities
- ✓ Overcome barriers to working collaboratively across organisations by challenging existing beliefs, funding and operational systems and processes

If you are interested in hosting The Collective at your school or ECEC service, or would like to attend as a service provider please contact village@kippax.org.au



UNDERSTANDING THE PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES OF BELCONNEN FAMILIES



Scan to
Participate
in the
Survey

In mid-July Village launched **Community Conversations**. A large-scale community engagement event designed to further develop Village's understanding of the experience, aspirations and concerns of Belconnen residents relating to child wellbeing and development.

The first phase includes the roll out of the Community Conversations survey. The data collected from the survey will contribute to the Community Profile and also be used to identify opportunities for Village to establish community-championed projects and community programs as the steppingstone towards Community-led system change.

Village's Community Development Officer, Bailey Steff said: *"We are pleased with the initial response to the survey from both stakeholders and community members. The collaboration across the sector on this project has been significant with Village partners being core to this project's success. Organisations we were yet to partner with have also come on board by supporting survey distribution and engagement with the community. Libraries ACT are promoting it across their Belconnen sites which is fantastic!"*

"We've had some real diversity in engagement across the early stages of this project and some initial themes are presenting themselves through the data. A majority of respondents have identified access to quality education as their primary consideration for child wellbeing. Additional themes emerging from the survey are community members calling for more free or low-cost activities for kids and more support for parents."

As this project continues and we begin to develop a stronger understanding of Belconnen community priorities, we look forward to further developing relationships across the sector and welcome anyone interested to contact Bailey directly and discuss opportunities to partner.

For any further information or to discuss opportunities for collaboration, please contact Bailey Steff at Bailey@kippax.org.au



SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S TRANSITIONS AND INCREASING CHILD DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE

Transitions and Child Development Campaign Phases

- ✓ Improving families understanding of the enrolment process
- ✓ Improving families understanding of child development
- ✓ Improving families understanding of transitions

The Transitions and Child Development campaign aims to improve transitions to school for children and families. The first phase focused on enrolling in government preschool and kindergartens and establishing early connections between schools and families.

Phase two is focused on improving families, educators, early childhood teachers and other professionals understanding of child development. Information covered in this phase includes brain development, child development milestones, activities to support healthy child development and wellbeing and links to resources and contact details to relevant local services. It is being developed in partnership with the Improved Transitions Working Group members and a large network of content and end user experts across community and government. This phase will be launched in late August through our partner ECECs and preschools and more broadly across our networks. It will also be made publicly available through the [Village website](#), so keep an eye out for this.



Complementing these child development resources is the recently released [child development poster](#). This poster was created to guide families to the My ACT Personal Child Health Record ([Blue Book](#)) which provides all relevant information about child health and development to the age of 5.

The development of the poster was through a collaboration led by the University of Canberra (UC) [A Good Start in Life](#) students, AEDC, Canberra Health Services (CHS) and Village.

[Read more](#)

CONNECTED BEGINNINGS

Artwork by Chern'ee Sutton

Supporting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community



Yerrabi Yurwang, as part of the Connected Beginnings program, have been focused on understanding and responding to the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. A significant outcome of this has been setting up and running their Women's Circle. This group has brought together women and children to connect and participate in a range of activities in a culturally safe and supportive environment. These activities have included weaving, dancing, yarning and connecting, with children taking part in guided cultural exploration around the cultural centre. The Women's Circle has now commenced its 3rd term and the group continues to grow.

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.

Another focus has been celebrating and participating in some of the key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events across the community to broaden their exposure and engage more with the community. These events have included Reconciliation Day at the National Arboretum, Tracks to Reconciliation in Kippax, and NAIDOC in the North at Belconnen Arts Centre. At Reconciliation Day, children joined in some creative activities run by the Connected Beginnings team. Tracks to Reconciliation was a great opportunity to engage with the community.



Yerrabi and West Belconnen Child and Family Centre staff partnered to provide craft activities for kids and Yerrabi Yurwang flyers. The team also attended the ACT Together Carers BBQ at the Cultural Centre where they provided handouts and spaghetti yarn weaving activities as well as chalk and colouring in for the kids.

At all these events, families were asked to complete a community conversations survey which asks Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members what they need for the wellbeing of their families. The responses are being collated and will be used to inform the future work of Yerrabi Yurwang as they respond to these community needs.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Early Childhood Services Connecting and Learning Together - Early Years Community of Practice

A new Early Years Community of Practice commences on Tuesday 8th August, 3.30 – 5.30 pm. It aims to bring together early years practitioners, educators, teachers and health professionals working with children from 0-8, so that they can meet, connect and learn alongside each other. This will be the first of a series over the rest of the year.

The first topic is Courageous Conversations – Partnering with families to support child development. Stephanie Johnston, Community Capacity Building Lead, EACH ACT will be presenting on

- ✓ Developmental milestones from birth to five years
- ✓ What is developmental delay and disability
- ✓ Strategies to build stronger relationships with families
- ✓ Tips to effectively communicate concerns with families
- ✓ Where to seek support

There will be ample time to participate in discussions and share ideas and good practice. [Register here to attend.](#)

The Community of Practice is hosted by A Village for Every Child, Capital Region Community Services and ACT Community Services Directorate (Australian Early Development Census and Best Start).

[Read more](#)

Services and Schools supporting primary school-aged children and their families

The first northside Forum, hosted by Kingsford-Smith school, was successfully delivered in June. This forum was focused on schools and showcased presentations from Charles Condor and Evatt Primary School who both shared insights and real-life examples of transformative work. They both talked about the structures and roles they have embedded in the school and the connections they are making with services to provide centralised and targeted support within the school to better support children and families in their communities.

The forums aim to share information and insights with and between primary schools and ECECs so that they can better support families. They are delivered each school term across range of locations.

We also heard from the ACT AEDC Coordinator about understanding the [AEDC data](#), received an update on the Education's [3 year old initiative](#) and [transitions and continuity statements](#) and learnt about a student wellbeing app developed by [Kinnections](#).

The next forum will be for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services. It will be held in mid-September. To find out more, [click here](#) and look for updates through CD-Net and Village communications.

This forum series is being delivered in partnership with the Southside Initiative and the Belconnen Network Coordinator, CRCS.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Partner Stories - The Smith Family

The Smith Family have been partnered with Village through the Improved Service and School Connections with Families Working Group since 2022. The Belconnen Family Partnership Coordinator said *"we joined the group as a way of increasing access to schools so that we could support more families into our Learning for Life scholarship program. Our involvement in this group and The Collective at Evatt has improved our relationship with the school and other services and increased participation in our programs."* Which has resulted in:

- 18 students at one school enrolling in the Learning for Life scholarship program
- Referrals of families into their Saver Plus financial education program
- Referrals of families into support services offered by UnitingCare Kippax
- Sharing information and resources more broadly across new organisations and community and gaining a greater understanding of different services in the area
- Sharing information and resources more broadly across new organisations and community and gaining a greater understanding of different services in the area
- Building strong relationships with other partner organisations

[Click here](#) to find out more about The Smith Family.



Parent & Carer Support Courses - Term 3, 2023

Workshops and courses being delivered in term 3, including:

- Road to Health Workshop - Maternal Health
- Road to Health Workshop - The Impact of Alcohol & Other Drugs have on Families/Parents.
- Bringing Up Great Kids
- Circle of Security

[Click here](#) for program information



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.



Parentline

This service aims to enhance the development, health and emotional wellbeing of children by supporting parents and carers and connecting them with the network of services available in Canberra. Parentline also provides parenting courses, parenting resources and free counselling. Check out their [website](#).



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.



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