



INVESTING IN COMMUNITY CHANGE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

PROPOSAL FOR CROSS
DIRECTORATE FUNDING
2024-2028

A VILLAGE FOR EVERY CHILD

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A Village for Every Child

Village believes that children are the heart of our community, and they deserve the best possible start to life.

It takes a Village to Raise a Child

Who we are

A Village for Every Child (Village) brings families, community members, child and family support organisations, education providers and government agencies together to improve:

- ✔ Awareness about early years development
- ✔ Connections between families and early years services
- ✔ The transition between early childhood education, preschools and schools

Village began its work in Belconnen in 2021. Village uses a place-based collective impact approach. On the ground this looks like people across the early years ecosystem working together to understand what is happening for children and families and together generate actions that will create a more cohesive system that responds to their needs. By working together, the community is stronger, the early years sector is more connected, and therefore children have the best start to learning and life.



Our Vision

All children in Belconnen are physically healthy, socially, and emotionally strong and ready to engage fully in learning and life.

Village is funded by the Directorate of Education until 30 June 2024. It is supported by partners from across the early years sectors, including the Directorates of Health, Community Services, Canberra Health, and ACT Libraries. Village has attracted funding from philanthropic organisations to support specific initiatives such as Imagination Library. Village works closely with the Community Services Network Coordinators northside and southside. This relationship and the depth of the work Village has achieved through investment in a dedicated coordinating backbone team has seen Village resources and learning be scaled beyond Belconnen to the wider ACT region.

A snapshot of the impact that Village has created in this short time is on page 18.

Community change - A proposal to build on what Village has achieved

Funding for Village will cease at the end of June 2024. The momentum and early impact of Village's work has been externally evaluated and we are able to demonstrate the value of this approach to connect Government strategies, Directorates, social and education services with community. In addition, Village has begun to engage community to be part of the decisions to create a system that will more effectively meet the needs of their children.

Sustainable and long-term core funding for the roles provided by a dedicated coordinating team is critical to embed the impact achieved and to scale the ACT Government's investment to the wider ACT. Core funding will enable the initiative to attract longer term additional funding through partnerships with philanthropic organisations, academic and research institutions, and potentially the Commonwealth Government.

Village seeks a cross-directorate funded approach from July 2024 – the end of June 2028 to connect relevant cross sector strategies with collective community action to improve child and family outcomes across the ACT. This proposal will enable Village to:

- ✓ Continue to build on these strong foundations of early impact.
- ✓ Align cross directorate strategic outcomes that relate to children and families and enable the community to be a partner in implementation actions.
- ✓ Scale its influence and learning across the ACT while continuing to work in place, through the established networks in north and southside of Canberra.
- ✓ Attract strategic partners who are leading research projects in other states that are building the capacity and capability of the early years system.
- ✓ Become a national example of a community partnership approach to implement reforms in the early years sector, aligning with the Commonwealth Government's place-based policy agenda to address entrenched disadvantage and reform priorities in education and disability.

A Village For Every Child ACT 2024 - 2028

The outcomes

Village will continue to work with its partners to achieve three outcomes. The systems change and collective impact approach will continue to underpin how Village intentionally creates change to the way that the early years systems work and build the capacity for collective action that includes the community at the centre. This is reflected in Village's approach that begins with children and families and brings together the parts of the ecosystem to create opportunities to amplify and increase the impact of the strategies and actions of each of these parts.

These outcomes deliver numerous ACT cross-directorate strategies and contribute to the work of the Education, Health, Community Services Directorates, Canberra Health Services and ACT Libraries. They also align with several Commonwealth Government strategies that are also seeking to create better systems to support children and families in the early years, including recently announced disability reforms.



The four focus areas

Village's activity to achieve these outcomes have children and families at the centre and will be focused on four areas:

- ① Child development
- ② Improved connections between families and services
- ③ Improved transition to schools
- ④ Facilitating the conditions for change

These focus areas directly relate to the following ACT Government strategies and action plans:

- ✓ Wellbeing Strategy and Framework 2020
- ✓ Best Start For Canberra's Children 2023
- ✓ Healthy Canberra, ACT Preventative Health Plan 2020-2025
- ✓ Future Education Strategy, Set Up For Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT 2020 and Valuing Educators Values Children 2023
- ✓ Closing the Gap Agreement 2019

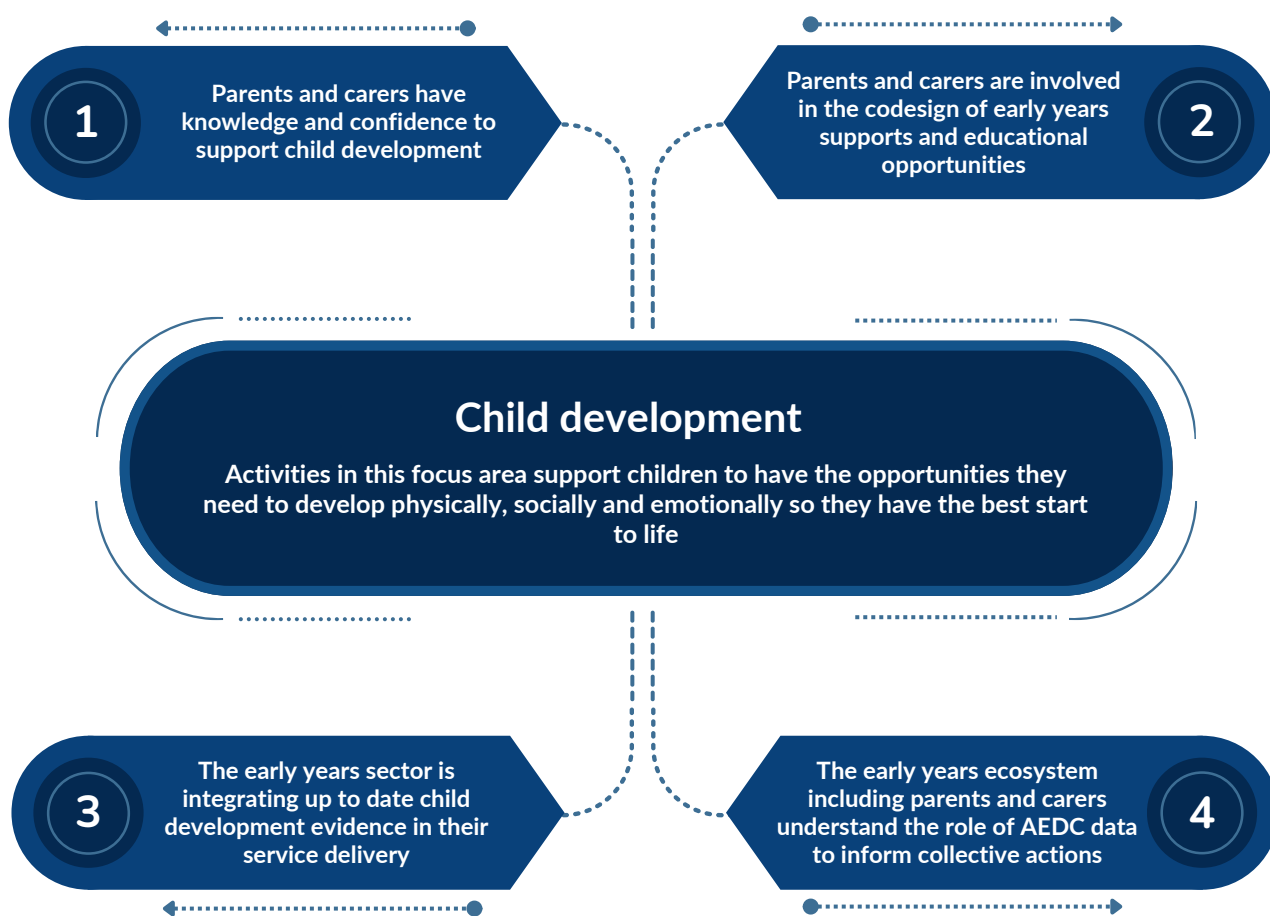
Activities also link to better outcomes for children and families outlined in reforms to early intervention and child development services and the recommissioning of Child Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP). The way of working that brings the community, services, and sectors together to identify and act to create better systems contributes to the goals set out in the Sector Sustainability Program 2022. In addition, Village's work aligns with numerous Commonwealth Government reform priorities.

Due to the synergies between ACT and Commonwealth Government Strategies, the approach and resulting actions in each focus area offers opportunities to include community in the delivery of outcomes identified as priorities by both levels of Government. This includes connecting the impact of Village and potential to scale into the place-based focus of the Commonwealth through its 2023 Tackling Entrenched Disadvantage package and the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children, a partnership between Government and philanthropic organisations to build the capacity of place-based initiatives.

In the first year, there are opportunities to scale across the ACT several Village initiatives. Decisions about priority actions in the future years will be generated through:

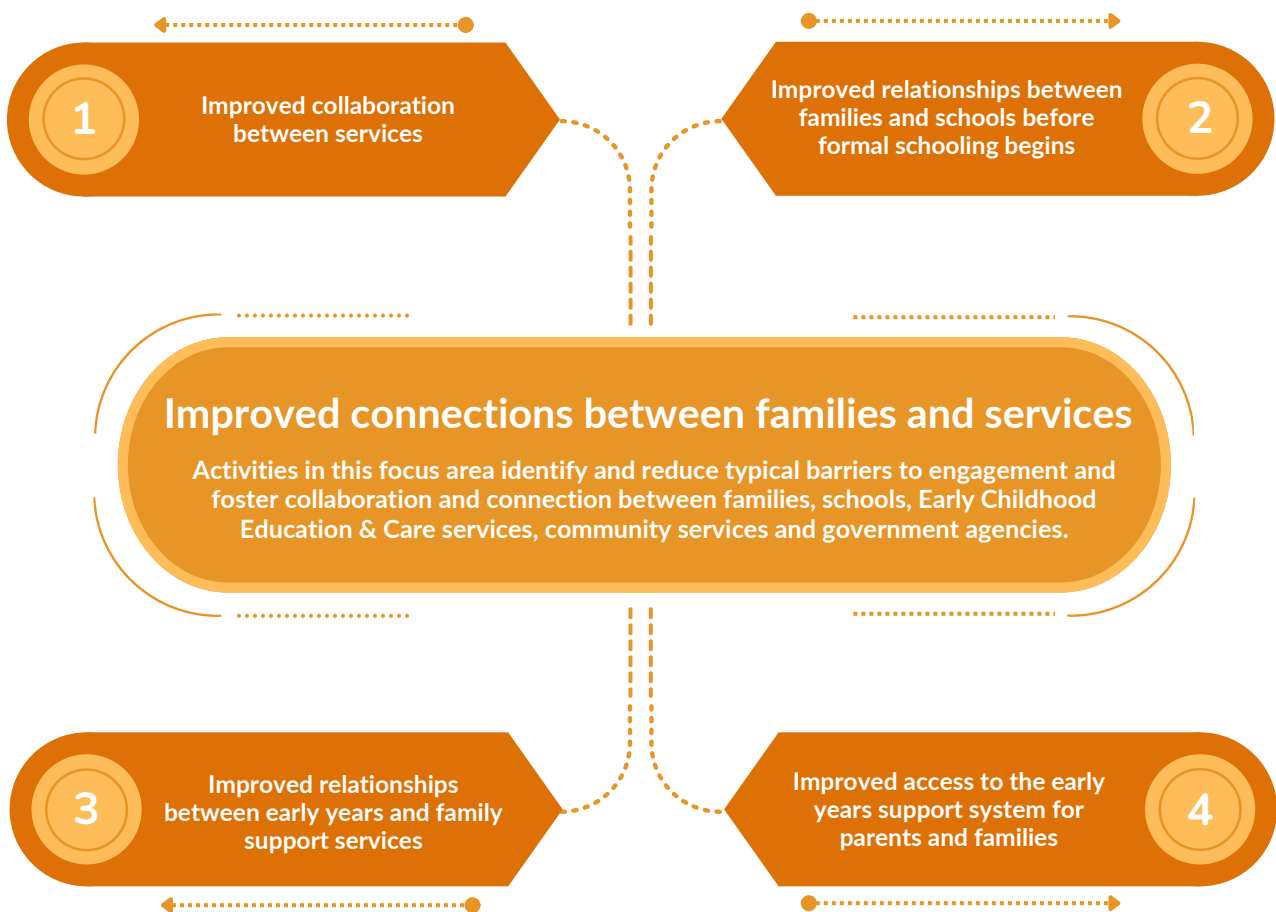
- ✔ Engaging with and involving families and children alongside Government and local service networks to co-design local actions.
- ✔ Working with various Government Directorates to align effort with priority actions in relevant strategies and support implementation through providing a link to community and local service systems.
- ✔ Engaging with Commonwealth Government Departments to connect Village's activities with related Government strategies, to create greater synergies for systems change.





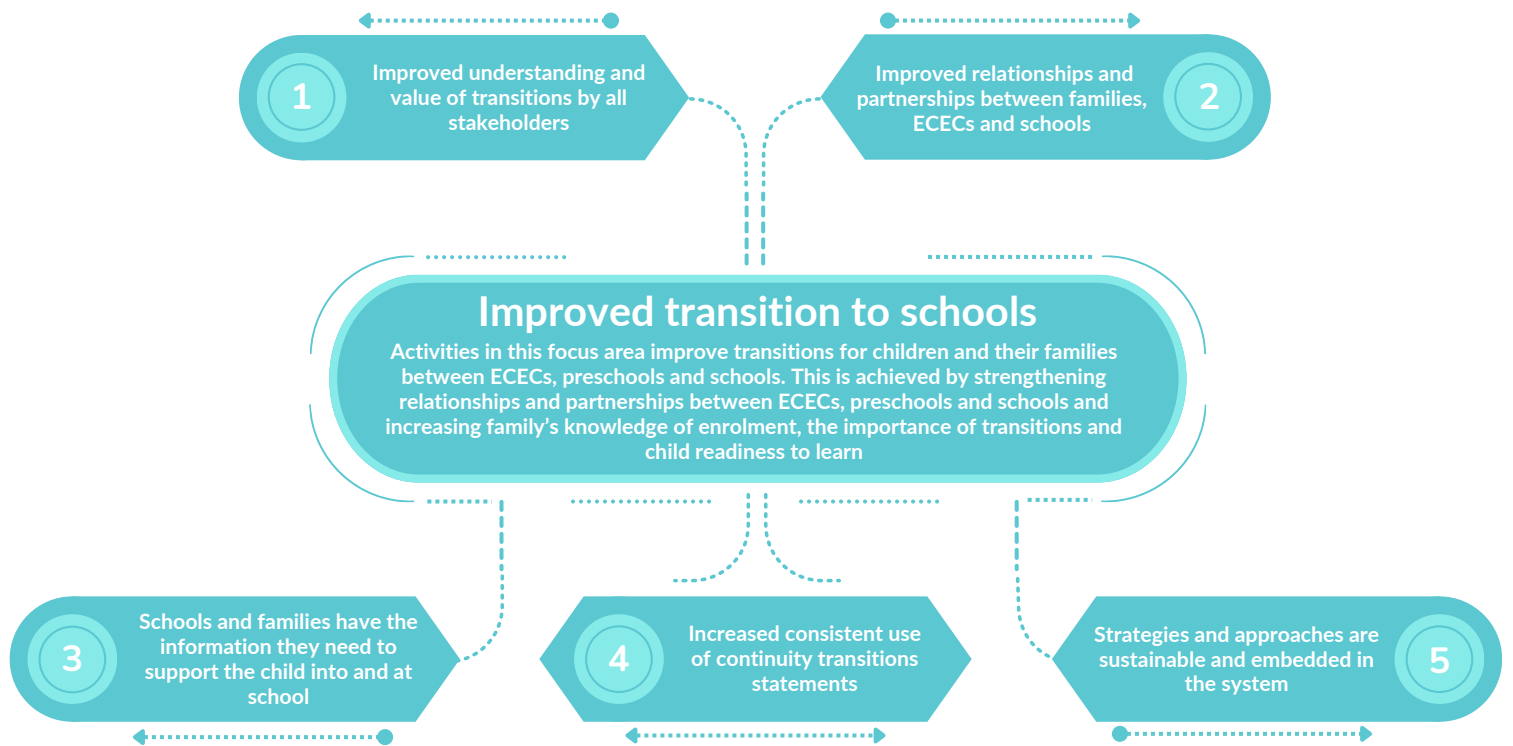
Priority actions to scale what has been achieved to date across the ACT include:

- ✓ Roll out of the Child Development Community Campaign.
- ✓ Securing increased philanthropic investment to roll out Imagination Library to other priority areas across the ACT.
- ✓ Continued implementation of ‘Look Who’s Talking’ early intervention attachment and language development program currently supported by the Southside Initiative. This would include seeking research and evaluation partners to conduct an evaluation of the impact of the program and the training to date of over 50 trainers in the ACT.



Priority actions to scale what has been achieved to date across the ACT include:

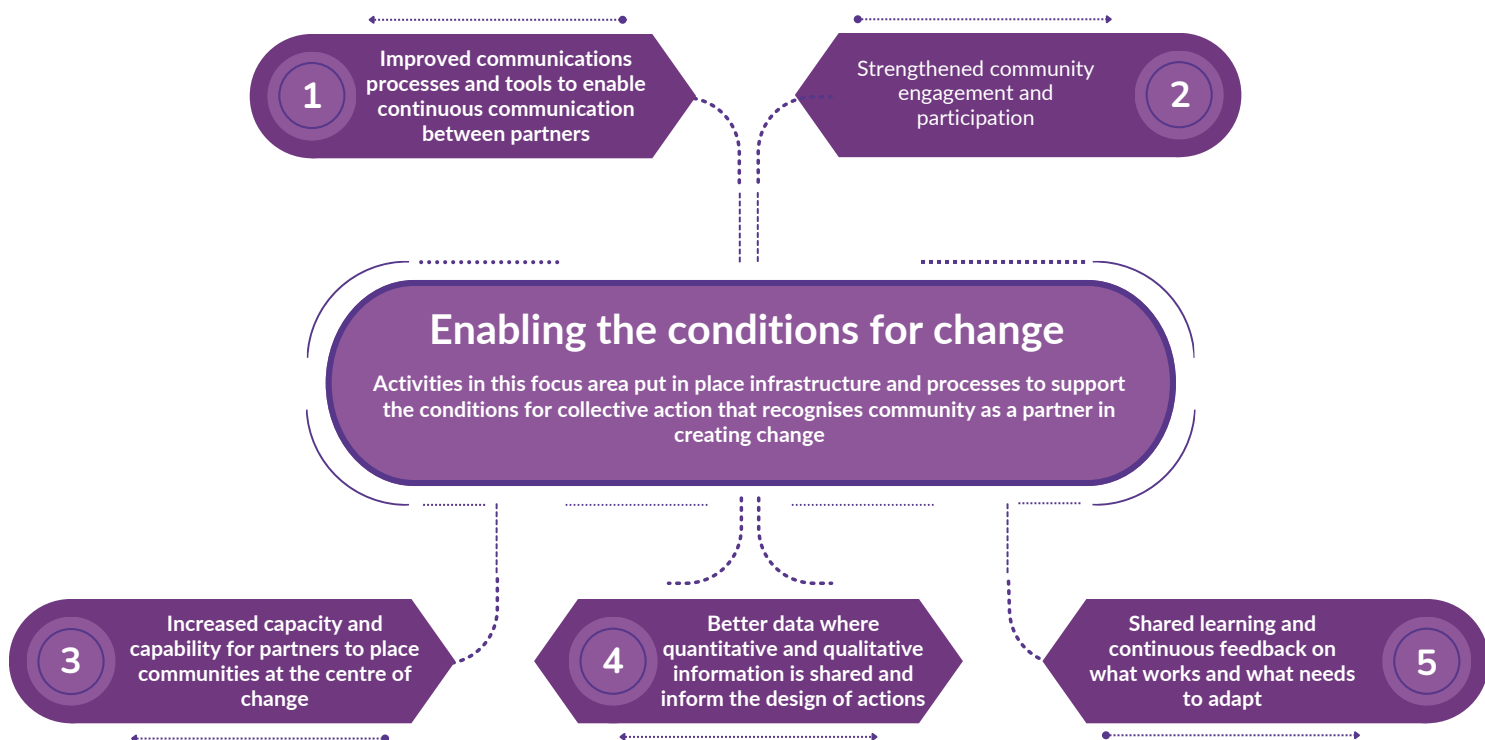
- ✓ Continuing to support the work of the Village ADHD Action Group to implement actions codesigned with families and shaping implementation to have a whole of ACT impact.
- ✓ Scaling and expanding the Early Years Community of Practice and Early Years Forums.
- ✓ Supporting the evolution of schools as community hub concept, bringing together learnings from The Collective at Evatt and other Belconnen and South Side projects that are implementing new ways to connect services with schools with families.



Priority actions to scale what has been achieved to date across the ACT include:

- ✓ Roll out and embed the Transitions Campaign.
- ✓ Scale and expand the transitions network.





Priority actions to scale what has been achieved to date across the ACT include:

- ✓ Embedding the use of data to inform community informed decision making through expanding the Village community profile.
- ✓ Capability building and enabling community members to participate in action for change alongside Government and service partners.
- ✓ Implementing a shared learning framework and ongoing data collection for monitoring and evaluation to report impact. This includes centralised monitoring and evaluation support for the network coordinators.

The model

Village partnerships and achievements are creating impact across government and sector silos beyond Belconnen to the whole of the ACT. The community change model in this proposal includes investment to support scaling beyond Belconnen by providing core functions to support child and family network activities in Gungahlin, North and South Canberra.

As a non-government partner, Village is uniquely placed to create opportunities for alignment of collective action across and beyond these strategies. The proposed model builds on what we have learned works well and what structure could strengthen the delivery of outcomes. There are 6 key features of the model.

- ① Partnership with Government. Reflected in:
 - ✔ Grant agreement managed in central agency to maximise opportunities to align social strategies that impact on the early years system and outcomes for children and families.
 - ✔ Village is seen as a partner to Government and the NGO sector as all players take on relevant actions across the reform strategies.
 - ✔ Directorates are represented in the Leadership Group.
 - ✔ Government stakeholders are involved in Working Groups.
- ② Partnership with community, including children and families. In practice this looks like providing opportunities for engagement and participation in activities, for example co-designing actions to strengthen the service system to better meet the needs of children and families.
- ③ Partnership with early years services sector stakeholders through strong relationships. Including ongoing partnership with Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal Corporation.
- ④ Operational core functions are supported by host organisation, UnitingCare Kippax.

- ⑤ Coordinating Team provides infrastructure to:
 - ✓ Support new and existing networks.
 - ✓ Implement a shared learning framework to measure impact, including data collection, use and reporting.
 - ✓ Facilitate co-design processes that involve all partners.
 - ✓ Implement actions and support project management.
 - ✓ Facilitate investment from different sources to fund specific projects and initiatives.
- ⑥ Formalised support for network coordinators should be refunded in the CYFSP commissioning process.



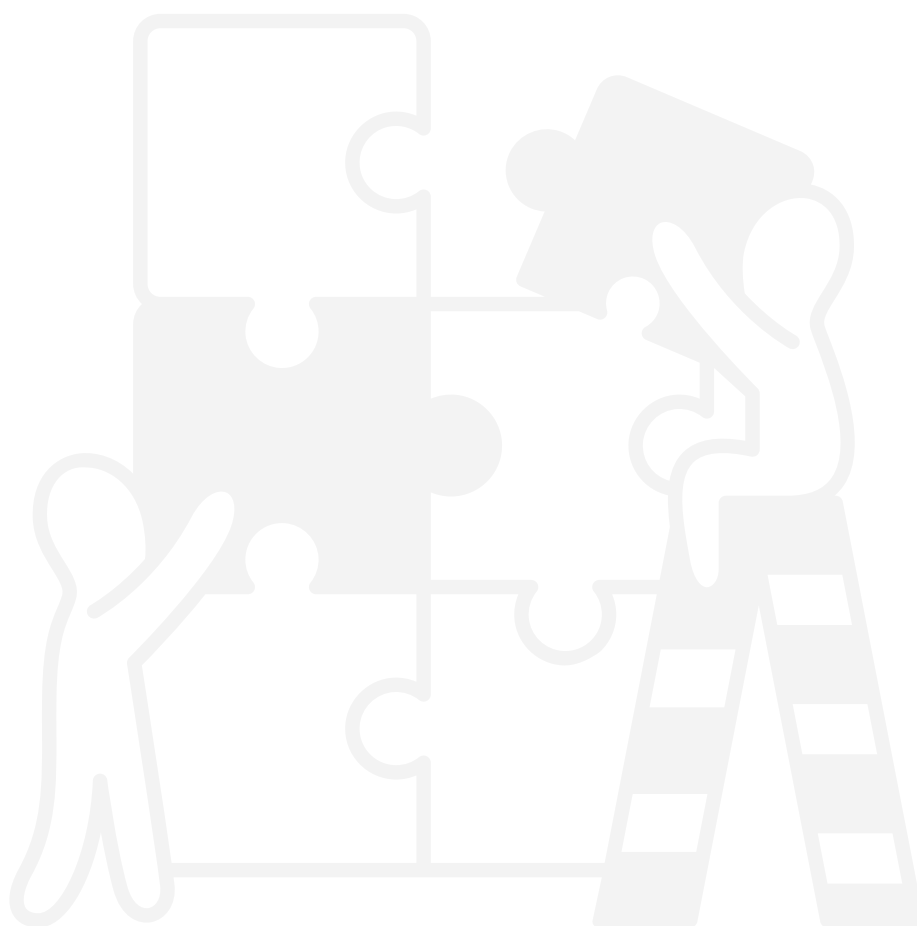
Operationalising the model



Partnership with Government

There are significant reform priorities at both levels of Government for the early years sector. This is reflected in the numerous strategies and action plans. There is no comprehensive map of these actions and the strategy outcomes measures and how they relate to one another. All are seeking to create the environment for better outcomes for children and families.

Village recommends that the first step to activate the Village 2024-2028 initiative be to involve relevant strategy owners to codesign a workplan for the priority actions, map against relevant strategies and confirm the outcomes and impact measures. This will ensure that expectations of Village are clear to all partners and investment can focus on enabling community, including families and the on the ground sectors to fully participate in the changes that they are best placed to make. The process will set the environment for authentic partnership and shared responsibility for actions.



Value for money

This proposal leverages the ACT Government's investment in Village. It builds on the groundwork and achievements to date, and consolidates partner learning, including how a, ACT-wide core funded coordination team can strengthen the work of the network coordinators. This represents efficiency and effectiveness for investment.

Longer term investment in a core team will attract co-investment from other funding partners as Village implements community-led and designed actions. Imagination Library is an example where philanthropic partners invested in an area of interest that aligns with the broader Government outcomes. This represents value for investment as Government investment is shared between a growing number of funding partners.

The place-based movement across Australia is evolving and maturing at pace. Successive Commonwealth Governments have been investing in various programs and models over the last ten years. Several communities across the country receive multiple sources of funding for this work. This proposal is less than the average funding for similar initiatives under the Commonwealth's flagship program Stronger Places, Stronger People program and will reach, involve, and impact many more people.





①
Children & Families

②
Belconnen Community

③
Village & partners

④
Early Years Strategy

Why village?

Data from the Australian Early Development Census shows that we all need to invest in children in the ACT, particularly Belconnen so that they are reaching their developmental milestones and are ready to learn.

The early years system in Belconnen is diverse. Through Village’s growing relationships with government and non-government services, early years education organisations, schools, playgroups and parents and carers, all parts of the system, we are finding that there is a high level of commitment to listening to the needs of children and families and working together to make things work better.

Village’s role is to connect these parts of the system and facilitate actions that will deliver on the ACT and Commonwealth Governments strategies that relate to supporting children to thrive.

Impacts 2021-2023

Village has four focus areas to achieve these outcomes.

Connections

The infographics at page 19 shows the early-stage impact of increased connections across the early years sector in Belconnen through Village activities including:

- ✓ Visiting early childhood education centres across Belconnen to share resources
- ✓ Facilitating the Early Years Community of Practice and Forum

The Imagination Library initiative has increased connection between services, including ACT libraries and families to give access to early literacy support and books.

Transitions

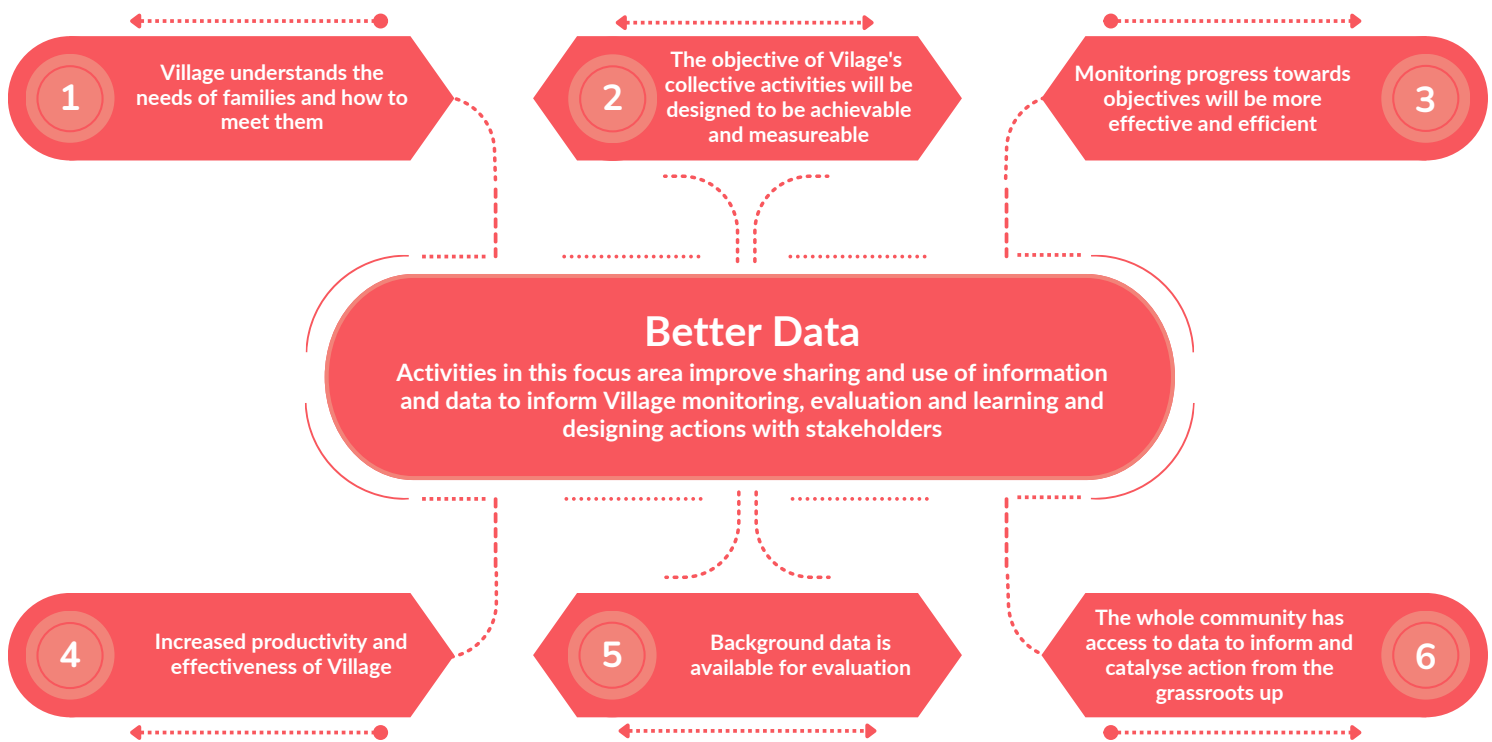
The infographics on pages 20-23 show the early-stage impact of providing support and education about what supports a solid transition from early childhood education settings to preschool and primary school through the:

- ✓ Transitions network events
- ✓ Transitions campaign and resources

Conditions for collective action

The infographics at page 24 show how the Village has increased:

- ✓ Its communication reach and quality of products
- ✓ The engagement with the number of community members, including families with children and lived experience of interacting with the early years systems in Belconnen and beyond.



Better data underpins the work of place-based systems change. Bringing the information that is needed to understand what is happening to community members, services, and government representatives so that together we can work on what is the best action to take to create change.

The Better Data working group has brought together publicly available data for 80 indicators that map to the ARACY nest. Village has collated qualitative data from more than 80 community members through community conversations. Over 100 families with experience of living with ADHD have contributed to understanding the issues they face. This qualitative data will feed into co-designing actions with families to create better systems of support.

Impacts 2021-2023

CIRCULATED
1000+
CHILD
DEVELOPMENT
RESOURCES

BUILT
RELATIONSHIPS
WITH
20+
ECECS

SCHOOL
ENROLMENT VIDEO
200+
SHARES

REGISTERED
146
CHILDREN FOR
IMAGINATION
LIBRARY

IMAGINATION
LIBRARY
10
ENROLLING
PARTNERS

IMAGINATION
LIBRARY
14
IMPLEMENTING
PARTNERS

COMMUNITY
OF PRACTICE
40+
PRACTITIONERS
FROM HEALTH, EDUCATION
EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES
ATTENDED

TRANSITIONS
NETWORK
70+
REPRESENTATIVES
FROM ECECS & SCHOOL
4 MEETINGS
HELD IN 2023

PRODUCED
30+
TRANSITIONS
RESOURCES



VILLAGE WORKING WITH ECECS & SCHOOLS IN BELCONNEN

Over **19,700** children in the ACT aged 0-5 (59%) are enrolled in early learning centres. Strengthening the connections and capability of this sector will support these children to be ready to transition to school.

Data as at 30 November 2023

ECECS VILLAGE ENGAGED IN BELCONNEN
22 OUT OF 33

SCHOOLS VILLAGE ENGAGED IN BELCONNEN
15 OUT OF 18

ECEC STAFF PARTICIPATING
70

SCHOOL STAFF PARTICIPATING
41

RESOURCES DISSEMINATED
1,097

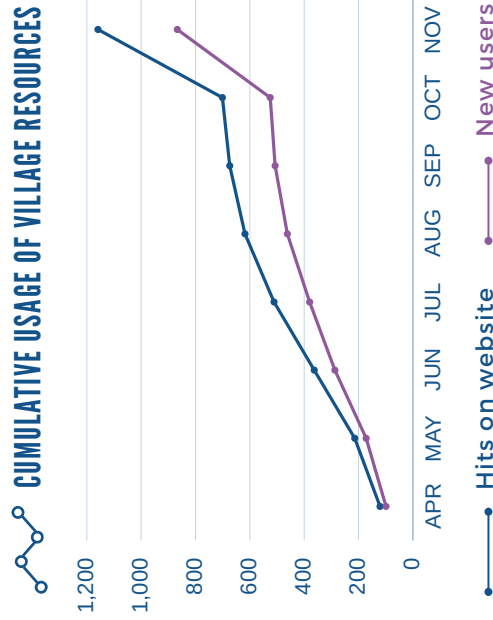
86 ATTENDED
16 ECECS **10** SCHOOLS **4** ORGS

40 ATTENDED
8 ECECS **3** SCHOOLS **12** ORGS

77 ATTENDED
6 ECECS **6** SCHOOLS **12** ORGS

COMMUNITY EVENTS
25+ ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED
80+ FAMILIES ATTENDED

30+ ENROLMENT CHILD DEVELOPMENT TRANSITIONS
RESOURCES PRODUCED



Impact ★★★★★

An ECEC director noted she has been using the transitions campaign to shift the mindset of her educators, empowering them to contribute to the transition process.

Centre Director
ECEC in Belconnen

Impact ★★★★★

An ECEC educator noted that the day after the network event two of their feeder schools (who also attended) reached out to make connections and set up meetings with the centre.

ECEC Educator
ECEC in Belconnen



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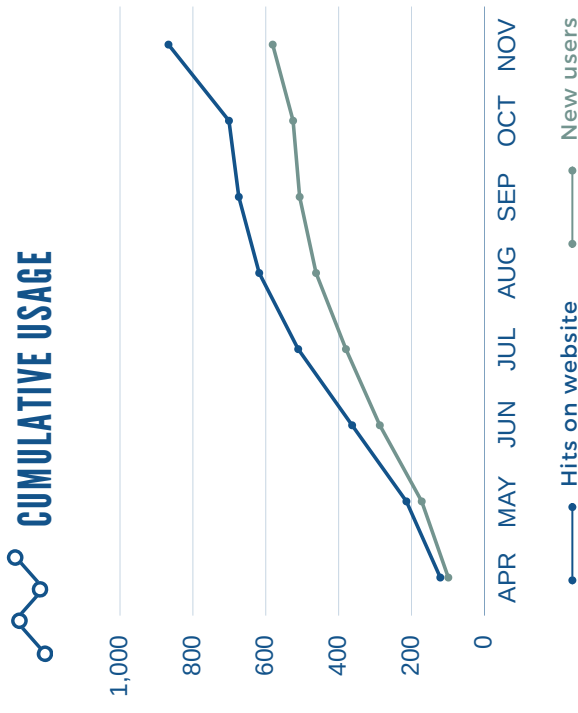


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FACTS AND FIGURES BELCONNEN SERVICE DIRECTORY

Data as at 18 October 2023



“ [The Directory] is an excellent resource. Is there one for each area of Canberra? [Has shared with approximately 200 of her staff]

Director
Community Services Directorate

“ I noticed your program directory on CD NET. I must say, you have done an exceptional job with the document. It's truly impressive!

Community Development Coordinator
Community Organisation

“ It is great to have such a comprehensive list of available services; that must have been a lot of work! I think it will be of great use to educators and frontline workers - the hard part will be getting them to realise it is available and how much it can help them!

Family & Community Liaison Co-ordinator
A Good Start in Life for Young Children

“ The directory allowed me to respond to the immediate needs of a family by supporting them to find the services they needed. It is easy to use and has a comprehensive list of programs and services tailored for children and families, all offered at free or low-cost.

Community Development Officer
Community Organisation

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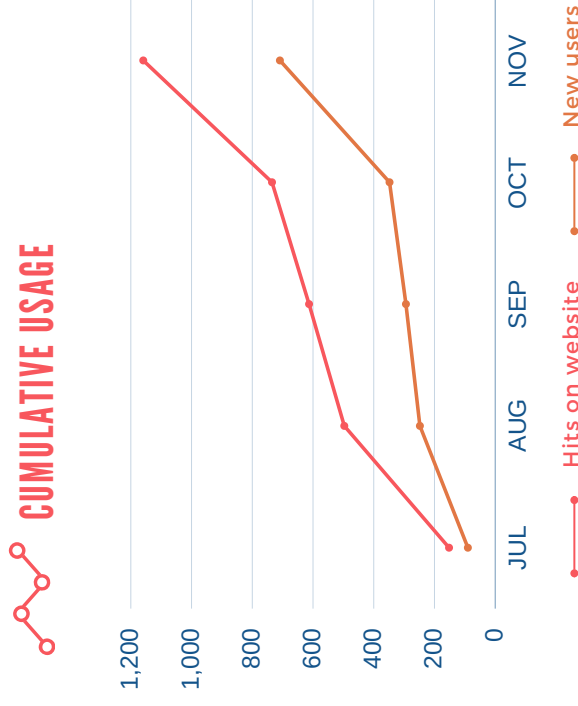


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FACTS AND FIGURES CHILD DEVELOPMENT POSTER

Data as at 30 November 2023



“ I love tracking my children’s development through the blue book. It’s such a great tool to empower parents and assist communications with health professionals. ”

Parent
Belconnen Community

“ We would love to be able to put [the posters] up in all our clinics across Canberra. ”

Clinical Nurse
Maternal, Child and Family Health Team

“ Families are eager to learn more about child development, and the Village’s resources have made a significant impact by addressing real needs for Early Childhood Education Centers, families, and children. ”

Centre Director
Not-for-profit Organization for Children and Young People

“ There is a decline in parental involvement in child development, and we see Village’s Child Development Poster as a valuable solution. We plan to feature Village resources in the next parent information session and prominently display them on the centre’s walls. ”

Centre Director
Early Learning Centre

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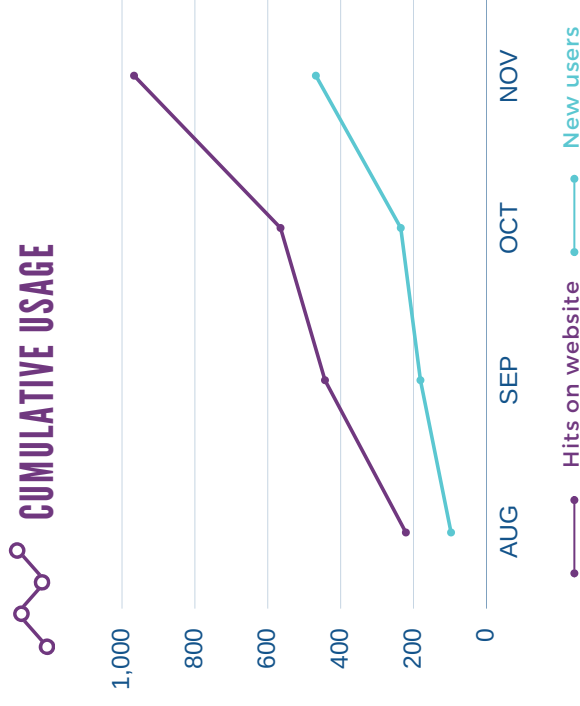


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FACTS AND FIGURES FAMILY PATHWAYS MAP

Data as at 30 November 2023



Impact ★★★★★

We are using this in every enrolment pack for new families and every executive teacher in the school has a copy which they were thrilled about sharing with their families

Executive Teacher
Belconnen Primary School

Impact ★★★★★

This is amazing, just amazing, thank you

Doctor
Canberra Hospital

Impact ★★★★★

The First 1000 Days Committee will use Village resources, specifically the Family Pathways Map, Child Development Poster, and Community of Practice Flier, as part of the collateral pack in the First 1000 Days Conference Showbags.

First 1000 Days Team
Community Services Directorate

Impact ★★★★★

There is a need for better training in identifying early signs of neurodiversity among educators. In the absence of such training, the Family Pathways Map is a valuable resource that can alleviate pressure on educators and facilitate challenging conversations with families when guiding children displaying concerning or challenging behaviors.

Centre Director
Child Care Centre

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Imagination Library Kippax

IMPROVING EARLY YEARS LITERACY AND FOSTERING FAMILY CONNECTIONS IN BELCONNEN

2.6 M
CHILDREN
REGISTERED
WORLD WIDE



218 M
BOOKS
GIFTED
WORLD WIDE

05
COUNTRIES

10
YEARS
IN
AUSTRALIA

146
CHILDREN
REGISTERED
IN KIPPAX



14
IMPLEMENTING
PARTNER
ORGANIZATIONS

4
SUBURBS
IN BELCONNEN



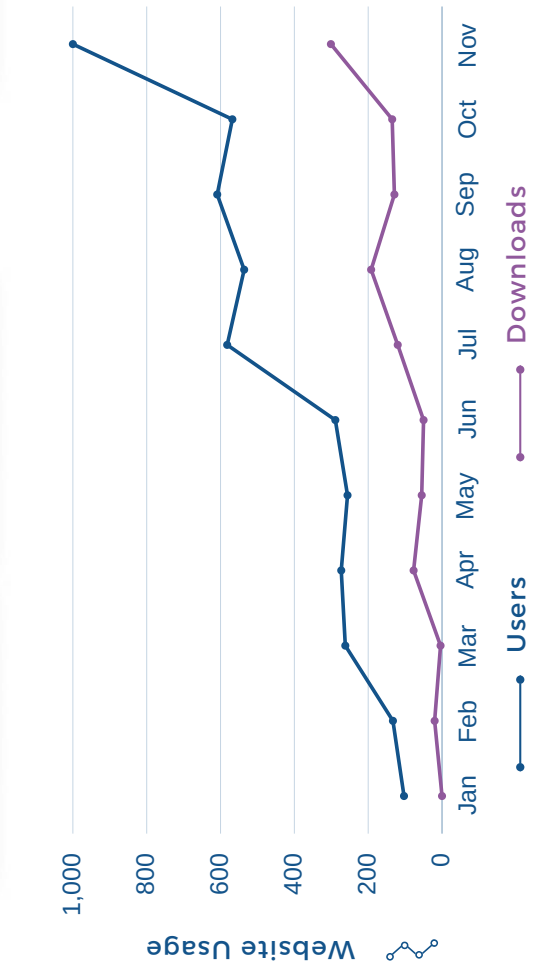
10
ENROLLING
PARTNERS



VILLAGE COMMUNICATIONS IN FOCUS - 2023

Infographic insights that capture the highlights of the Village's strategic communications and accomplishments in 2023

Data as at 30 November 2023



APRIL 2023

SEPTEMBER 2023

“ There is so much great information on the Website. Having access to information services (including Health Literacy) was a key need that came out of the community consultation for the Best Star First 1000 days strategy.

Center Director
ECEC in Belconnen

” Village has done a great job connecting the pieces, identifying those scattered in pockets, and presenting them in a more cohesive way. Village has been able to scale its impact because of being able to connect things outside of Village.

Member
Leadership Group



1

Prioritising equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

2

Supporting Aboriginal self-determination.

Commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

The Village initiative, including individual Leadership Group and Working Group members, commit to embed the following principles in our work so that they are central to our practice.

3

Listening to and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and responding through designing actions together.

4

Sharing and celebrating together.

5

Working together to share the cultural load.

Village is proud to partner with Yerrabi Yurwang to deliver the Commonwealth Government's Connected Beginnings Program. Together we are strengthening the way we work for self determination of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Collective change only happens because of the contribution and commitment of everyone involved. Village has been proud to work alongside these participating organisations.

Participating organisations

