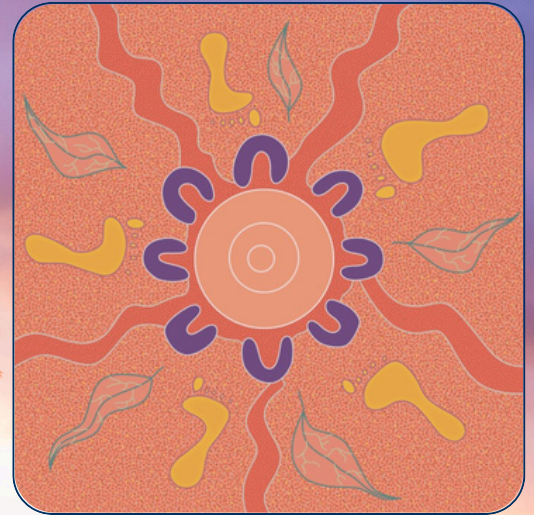




Village News



Artwork by Ngunnawal Art

THIS ISSUE

► Focus area one - Play

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► Focus area two - Connections

In our ongoing commitment to Collective Impact, Village understands that fostering collaboration and connections among families, schools, ECECs, care services, community organisations, and government agencies is essential.

► Focus area three - Outreach

By actively engaging with parents, families, communities, organisations, and stakeholders, our outreach efforts build bridges that expand opportunities for learning, growth, and well-being of children and families.

► Legacy projects that will continue to champion communities

- The ADHD Action Group
- The Early Years Community of Practice
- Imagination Library Kippax Pilot

A New Direction for A Village for Every Child

Reset, Review, Reflect and Re-engage

At A Village for Every Child (Village), our unwavering vision remains clear: every child in Belconnen deserves to be physically healthy, socially, and emotionally strong, fully prepared to engage in learning and life. The last financial year saw progress and momentum across all three focus areas, showcasing our growth from planning to impactful action. Our working groups have delivered solid programs and products that have made an impact beyond Belconnen.

As with any collective impact project, Village experienced natural shifts towards the end of the financial year, including winding down and/or transitioning of key projects.



New Focus Areas

However, a renewed funding agreement for the next four years provided an opportunity to reset, review and reflect on the past three years, and re-engage partners to refresh momentum.

In July and August, members of the Village Leadership Group held two workshops to map out our strategic direction. These workshops fostered vibrant conversations focused on advancing and sustaining our Collective Impact work. Together, the members explored how to ensure a clear and unified purpose that resonates with all partners organisations and the community.

Discussions were informed by the Belconnen Community Profile, a report rich with community voices and data. This ensured that the new focus areas and potential project ideas are anchored in the realities of the community, fostering genuine engagement among all stakeholders while adhering to the conditions of Collective Impact.



From these discussions emerged the new focus areas: **Play**, **Connections**, and **Outreach**, which will guide Village moving forward.

These focus areas reinforce the importance of Play in healthy development, building Connections among families and services, and increasing Outreach efforts to ensure that no child is left behind.

As we embark on this exciting journey, we invite you to join our mission. Together, let us create an environment where every child can learn, grow, and thrive. With energy, enthusiasm, and a strong commitment to Collective Impact, we are ready to make a lasting impact – one child at a time.



Focus Area One



The power of Play: A foundation for growth

Village and partner organisations believe that Play is not merely a leisure activity; it is fundamental to healthy development and learning in early childhood. This form of engagement offers children a dynamic way to grow and thrive, setting the stage for positive development outcomes. During the workshops, members discussed how play is essential for learning, problem-solving, creativity, and logical thinking.

Active play helps develop gross motor skills and coordination, while interactive play enriches social, emotional, and language abilities. It became clear that creating safe, supportive, and stimulating play environments is crucial for children to learn and grow outside of formal early education and care (ECEC) settings. Positive experiences during early childhood promote strong social, emotional, and cognitive development, and overall health and well-being.

Members identified the pressing need to develop intergenerational play to strengthen family bonding and children's development.

What is next?

To effectively address these needs, Village will:

- ✓ Identify potential partners and stakeholders who share our commitment to Play
- ✓ Ensure understanding and alignment of this focus area with individual organisational goals
- ✓ Invite partner organisations to form a working group dedicated to improving play opportunities
- ✓ Support the working group in developing detailed plans, milestones, and outcome measures
- ✓ Offer backbone support through continued communication, mutually reinforcing activities, and methods for measuring success and gathering feedback

With these steps, we aim to nurture the Play experiences that are vital for every child's development, ensuring that they can learn, grow, and thrive.



Focus Area Two

Connections



Building bridges: Connections for stronger communities

In our ongoing commitment to Collective Impact, Village understands that fostering collaboration and connections among families, schools, ECECs, care services, community organisations, and government agencies is essential.

During the workshops, members highlighted the necessity of creating platforms for families to exchange experiences and advice in a peer-to-peer setting. This highlights the need for improved accessibility to services and information, particularly for those navigating complex systems.

This focus on connections is vital not only for linking families to relevant services but also for enhancing the skills and well-being of professionals, which elevates service quality and support for families. We recognise that it takes a village to raise a child; therefore, we are committed to providing the support structures necessary to bring together families, communities, child and family support providers, and government agencies. Together, we can collaborate to identify and address the issues facing young families and create a better integration among services.

The following three key connection areas will guide Village's efforts:



Family to Family



Family to Services



Services to Services

What is next?

To advance this focus area, Village will:

- Share information with existing and potential members to foster deeper connections
- Consider legacy projects that align with connections focus area
- Identify service gaps and design, develop, and deploy projects that respond to community needs
- Offer backbone support through continued communication, mutually reinforcing activities, and methods for measuring success and gathering feedback

By prioritising connections, we are building a network of support that empowers families and enhances the services available to them, creating a thriving community.



Focus Area Three

Outreach



Ensuring every child's access to opportunity

Village and partner organisations know that outreach is critical for increasing access to resources and support, ensuring that every child and family benefits from available services. By actively engaging with parents, families, communities, organisations, and stakeholders, our outreach efforts build bridges that expand opportunities for learning, growth, and well-being of children and families.

When working together, our community is stronger, more connected, and better placed to meet the needs of children and families.

Members have highlighted the importance of outreach as a vital component of creating a supportive environment that fosters healthy development and positive outcomes for children aged 0-5.

Outreach efforts can help bridge gaps, address disparities, and ensure that all families possess the tools and knowledge they need to support their children's early years.

What is next?

- ✓ To strengthen our outreach initiatives, a working group comprising services that share this common agenda will be formed. Together, we will identify ways to offer better access to resources and early intervention for families from underserved communities
- ✓ Our outreach strategy may consider innovative models, such as: Schools as communities, Home interactive services and Co-location of services
- ✓ Collaborative outreach efforts from multiple organisations will help level the playing field, ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, have access to the same opportunities for growth and development. By promoting parent engagement and offering tailored support for the specific needs of individual families, we can create a more equitable future for our children.



Legacy projects that will continue to champion communities

ADHD Action Group

The Deputy CEO of Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation tabled a paper to the Village Leadership Group concerning the impact of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) on Aboriginal children, their families, and their life outcomes in 2023. In response, the ADHD Action Group (the Action Group) was formed. This Group brings together experts from both government and non-government sectors to investigate the issue, aiming to leverage available resources within the current service and support system to creatively address the holistic support needs of families.

In late 2023, The Action Group administered a survey to better understand the needs of families in the ACT with ADHD. A report titled *“Everything ADHD-related is a challenge: Supporting Families of Children with ADHD”* was published in May 2024.

Village celebrates continuation of ADHD Action Group as it addresses the much-needed support, advocacy, and resources for children affected by ADHD, along with their families and caregivers. Recent meetings explored the possibility of expanding the core team membership to include other stakeholders.

Village is also exploring ways to collaborate with local schools, healthcare providers, and organisations that work with children and adults with ADHD.

Allied Health Parent/Caregiver Information Session



In response to needs identified by survey respondents, Village in collaboration with the University of Canberra (UC) hosted an Allied Health Parent/Caregiver Information Session.

It helped me to organise my thoughts and to realise that I need to make some changes in my lifestyle in order that I can be more present and more able to cope with the impact of my son’s possible ADHD on our family.

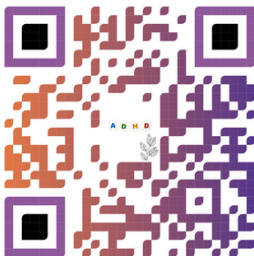
-- Participant --

The session was delivered by allied health professionals from both UC’s Faculty of Health and Faculty of Education, and it was attended by 23 families.



ADHD Pathways Map

SCAN ME



Scan here for an interactive version
of the ADHD Pathways Map

The ADHD survey results highlighted the challenging journey families face as they navigate ADHD support and diagnosis in Canberra. In response, ADHD Action Group developed an *ADHD Pathways Map* to help address challenges children and families often encounter due to lack of support systems and complexities in reaching the right services. While this map is not a pathway to diagnosis, it will guide families of children with ADHD on where to go and when to seek support, and what families can do to prepare during each stage of the process.

If you are a parent with lived experience or a professional who would like to provide feedback on the ADHD Pathways Map, please contact us at village@kippax.org.au.

The Early Years Community of Practice

Village and partners established the Early Years Community of Practice (CoP) in response to community feedback, including feedback received by the ACT Government through its consultations with early years practitioners as part of the Best Start for Canberra's Children: The First 1000 Days Strategy development.

The CoP serves as a collaborative platform where early years professionals can advance their learning and practice while better connecting with the outcome of improving how the sector supports itself, children, and families. Since its launch in August 2023, seven CoP sessions have been held, attracting over 200 practitioners from health, education, and early childhood centers. Topics covered thus far include the Courageous Conversations Series – Partnering with families to Support Child Development, the Understanding Behaviour Series – Supporting Children's Participation in Early Childhood and Community Settings, and the Educator Wellbeing and Resilience Series – Moving beyond selfcare.

Encouraged by the positive feedback and strong appetite from ECECs, schools, health, and community sector, Village and partner organisations are committed to continuing the CoP, with topics selected by the attendees. Village will also facilitate the expansion of the current membership to include educators from ECECs, schools, education officials, parents, and caregivers as well as local organisations and agencies involved in child development.

The CoP focuses on a holistic approach to child development encompassing wellbeing, education, disability, and the social determinants of health. If you have topics, you would like us to cover in future CoP sessions or resources to share with the CoP to support professional learning and enhance practice, please reach out to Village at village@kippax.org.au.



Imagination Library Kippax Pilot

In August 2023, Imagination Library Kippax pilot welcomed its first families into Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a free book gifting program for children aged 0-5. By its official launch in late October 2023, over 100 children were enrolled across 4 suburbs in Belconnen.

As at September 25, 2024, the 11 enrolling partners of the Imagination Library Kippax pilot have enrolled a total of 155 children and delivered over 1,500 books to 125 families. The combined efforts of 14 implementing partners have secured funding to provide free, age-appropriate books for 193 children for two years.

We would like to thank the funding partners, including the Lyone Foundation, Canberra Mothercraft, Belconnen Rotary Club, and Hippy Belconnen for their generous support, which made it possible to bring Imagination Library to children in Canberra.

Village and its partners are seeking more funding to support more children into the program in Belconnen and across the ACT.

The First 1000 Days Conference

The theme of this year's First 1000 Days Conference is Collaboration, Communication, and Connection. Don't miss this opportunity to share knowledge and insights on perinatal mental health and learn from leading experts in early childhood and family support.



Tuesday, November 19, 2024
8:30am - 4:30pm



Canberra Rex Hotel
150 Northbourne Ave, Braddon

Tickets are on sale now! - [Register here!](#)

'Tis the season to prepare for Christmas!

Join UnitingCare Kippax in making this holiday season special for families in need. With rising costs, many in our Canberra community are struggling. Your donations can provide families with Christmas Hampers, gift vouchers for teens and toys for children.

Give What You Can

- \$25 = 2 toys for a child
- \$40 = Teen gift voucher
- \$75 = Family Christmas Hamper
- \$140 = All of the above

Donation via EFT:

Name: UnitingCare Kippax
 BSB: 012 951
 Account: 151013976
 Reference: Christmas - Your name



After making your donation, please email confirmation to christmas@kippax.org.au with your full name and contact to receive a tax-deductible receipt. For any questions, contact Jo at (02) 6254 1733.



Village Resources



Child Development Resource Pack

A community centered, collaboratively designed child development resources for families and services. These resources were developed in response to a need identified by the community through our extensive engagement across the early years sector.

<https://belconnenvillage.com.au/child-development-resources/>

[Click here to download](#)



School Transitions Resource Pack

The Transitions Campaign provides information about the public-school enrolment process, priority enrolment areas, local public schools and resources on preschool pathways, transitions, Koori preschool, supports for parents, disability information, financial and resource assistance and learning supports.

<https://belconnenvillage.com.au/transitions-campaign/>

[Click here to download](#)



Early Years Resource Pack

This pack contains resources produced by Village and partner organisations including the Education Directorate and Community Services Directorate, Australian Early Development Census team. The resources aim to support children and families before formal schooling in areas of child development and transitioning to school. They have been collated for Early Childhood Education and Care Services.

<https://belconnenvillage.com.au/early-years-resources/>

[Click here to download](#)



Our Partners

Acknowledgement of country

A Village for Every Child would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work, the Ngunnawal people. We pay our respects and celebrate their ongoing cultural traditions and contributions to this region. We also acknowledge elders, past and present, as well as the children because they are our future.

Village is proud to have partnered with Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal Corporation to deliver the Commonwealth Government's Connected Beginnings Program 2022–2023. We deeply value the opportunity to work closely with Yerrabi Yurwang to support the self-determination of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. We look forward to continuing our partnership.

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.

