

Parent to Parent West

A newsletter for parents of children with a disability or developmental delay (0 –18) and living in the western region of Melbourne.

Term 3, 2022

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Carer Gateway Emergency Respite

If you are a carer experiencing an urgent, unplanned, and imminent event that temporarily restricts your ability to continue caring and when no other services are available, call Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737 for emergency respite.

**Call Carer Gateway 24/7
on 1800 422 737**

Welcome to the Term 3 edition of Parent to Parent West. The year is in full swing, and the winter months are here! Keep warm while learning more about resources and supports available in the Inner West of Melbourne. As always, new services and resources are included to provide you with opportunities to learn more, meet with like-minded people and gain support.

We've introduced some key sections this edition to help you navigate the newsletter more easily. We hope this helps you find what you're looking for, whether it's sector news, local events, or resources and support services. We've also added new visual icons to highlight content across the sections. Look out for these icons throughout the newsletter!

Wendy White

Strengthening Parent Support Program
Facilitator

Please email me on
wendy.white@mackillop.org.au

or sign up here:

[Strengthening Parents | MacKillop Family Services](#)



MacKillop program
or event



Multicultural content
and for families with
English as a second
language



Content for LGBTIA+
families and carers



Feature article: Communicating with professionals



Handing over your most precious gift - your child - to a new teacher, therapist, or group can be challenging. It can be especially stressful when your child has additional needs and even harder if language is a barrier to sharing key information.

When working with MacKillop's **Mandarin Strengthening Parent Support Group** on the topic, 'Communicating with Professionals', parents explained that sharing information about their child was often very stressful.

Difficulties sharing important information about their child often arose when preparing for, and during a meeting. Some challenges included:

- Ordering thoughts prior to a meeting, making sure that all relevant information is available;
- Having relevant information prepared, including an awareness of the meeting's duration, considering if an extended meeting should be requested. Prioritising information if time is limited, which is often the case;
- Being prepared with questions and notifying professionals that time needs to be set aside to ask these, or collaborate to form the meeting's agenda;
- Knowing which information is most important, depending on the meeting's audience and goals. For instance, different information would be shared with a psychologist than a podiatrist, teacher or paediatrician; and
- When English is the second language, finding it difficult to share the information.

As a group we developed the **'Two minute Story'** to address some of these challenges.

This very simple document was developed by the Mandarin Speaking and Vietnamese Families with Special Needs Groups. A big thank you to everyone involved! The templates includes topics which were identified as being the most important.

Family members, including their child or young person with a disability can complete this together. Deciding on what is most important given the **goals** of the meeting and the **audience**.

The *Interests* and *Dislikes* topics were included to provide a more rounded understanding of who the person is. *The What helps the most, Challenges and What my child dislikes*, were added to acknowledge effective ways to engage and to identify and discuss the less successful strategies.

We had a very interesting discussion regarding the diagnosis, whether this should be at the start or the end.

Through continually updating this document, including interventions, successes and current priorities, families can provide up to date information to professionals. If these are dated and stored, either in a hard copy or electronically, a history is kept.

Families for whom English is a second language benefit from having the opportunity of practicing sharing this information. Bringing an interpreter or friend can help families share this information and understand what professionals are saying. Where an interpreter is attending, informing the professional will help them allocate suitable time, while being aware of the family's needs. This is especially important at the first meeting.

It is important to note that families can complete this exercise in their first language. We have translated this tool into Vietnamese and Mandarin to help. We plan to translate it into other languages, depending on the need and requests. Please let me know if you're interested in having it translated into another language via email:

wendywhite@mackillop.org.au.

To download the Two minute story in English, Vietnamese or Mandarin, please go to www.mackillop.org.au/spsp.

Feel free to contact me directly to discuss ways to use this tool as a parent, teacher or allied health professional. I'm very happy to help in any way possible.

Wendy White

Strengthening Parent Support Program Facilitator.

2 Minute Story: Things you need to know about my child...	
NAME:	AGE: SIBLINGS:
INTERESTS:	
CHALLENGES:	
WHAT THEY NEED THE MOST:	
WHAT HELPS THE MOST:	
WHAT MY CHILD DISLIKES:	
DIAGNOSIS:	
OTHER:	For instance: What doesn't help? What you've tried already.

Disability news and information

Updates on School Inclusion funding

The Association of Children with a Disability (ACD) has up to date information about the Victorian Government's approach to funding students with disability, called Disability Inclusion. Over the next few years, it will replace the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD).

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Bayside Peninsula	Outer Eastern Melbourne	Inner Gippsland	North Eastern Melbourne	Hume Moreland
Barwon	Central Highlands	Ovens Murray	Southern Melbourne	Outer Gippsland
Loddon Campaspe	Mallee	Western Melbourne	Brimbank Melbourne	Wimmera South West
			Goulburn	Inner Eastern Melbourne

What the changes mean for your child

If your child's school is in an area that has transitioned to Disability Inclusion, they may be eligible for support. If your child's school area is yet to transition to Disability Inclusion, your child may be eligible for support through the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD).

You can read more about the PSD in ACD's fact sheet [Funding in government schools - Program for Students with Disabilities](#)

If your child already receives PSD funding, they will continue to receive this until their school transitions to Disability Inclusion. Once their school transitions to Disability Inclusion the school will contact you to start the process.

For more information, including the roll-out, what it means to your child and the eligibility criteria, visit: [Funding in government schools - Disability Inclusion - Association for Children with Disability \(acd.org.au\)](#).



Association for Children with a Disability

NDIS Tips

The Association of Children with a Disability (ACD) has up to date information about the Victorian Government's approach to funding students with disability, called Disability Inclusion. Over the next few years, it will replace the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD).



Tip #1

You can request a translated copy of your child's NDIS plan through your Early Childhood Coordinator during your NDIS planning meeting. If you have already completed your planning meeting, you can call your Early Childhood Coordinator by calling the NDIS.

[Find out more here.](#)

Tip #2

The NDIS has created a plan implementation directory: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/plan-implementation-directory>

"A team of dedicated participants, family members and carers helped us create this directory. They told us what was important to help them start and use their NDIS plans. They also gave us feedback on new and updated content we have put on the NDIS website. We thank them for their valuable help with this work. This is a test version, and we want to keep improving it to make sure it meets the needs of participants, their families, and carers. Tell us what you think about the directory and what would make it better. You can send an email to myplanfeedback@ndis.gov.au or use the feedback option at the bottom of this page."

If you need specific help with your plan, you can contact:

- 'My NDIS contact' - their name and phone number are on the front page of your plan, or you can contact the NDIS on 1800 800 110
- Local area coordinator
- Early childhood partner
- An NDIA planner may help you if there isn't a local area coordinator or early childhood partner where you live - offices and contacts in your area
- The NDIS in each state and territory.

Do you have a NDIS tip you'd like to share? Or a topic you'd like to see covered? Please email any questions or suggestions to wendy.white@mackillop.org.au.

Workshops, events and groups

MacKillop parenting workshops and groups

MacKillop's Supported Playgroups



MacKillop's supported playgroups are a fun, social outlet for parents, carers and their children. They provide parents and carers the opportunity to meet socially and for their children to enjoy activities that encourage their development and social skills.

MacKillop's supported playgroups are available to families living in Melbourne's metropolitan western region. With a focus on multicultural families, the playgroups bring together children and their families of different cultures. Staff at the playgroup can connect parents and families to MacKillop's parenting teams and supports in the community.

We provide guest speakers throughout each term to speak on topics parents have told us they would find helpful to hear. Our playgroups are free to attend, and morning tea is provided. Bookings are not required.

When: 10am - 12pm every Thursday during school terms

Where: Braybrook Community Hub, 107-139 Churchill Avenue, Braybrook VIC 3019

Contact: regionalparentingservice@mackillop.org.au
or
call 0429 787 639 for more information.

MacKillop Strengthening Parents Support Groups



For parents/carers of a child with a disability or developmental delay aged 0 – 18 years. While most of the below groups meet face-to-face, some groups have nominated to continue meeting online for the rest of this year for the flexibility this offers parents.

Wyndham Parent Support Group



For families living in the Wyndham area.

When: 10am - 12pm, first Monday of the month, next meeting is **Monday 1 August**

Where: Quantin Binnah Community Centre, 61 Thames Blvd, Werribee

Contact: Wendy on 0448 015 023 or wendywhite@mackillop.org.au to book in.

Mandarin Parent Support Group – Online and face to face



A parent support group for Mandarin speaking families with children with a disability.

When: 10.30am - 12pm, first Thursday of the Month, next meeting is **Thursday 5 August**

Where: Online via Zoom

Contact: Juliet_xnzhu@hotmail.com or Wendy 0448 015 023 or wendywhite@mackillop.org.au for more information or to book in and receive the Zoom meeting link.

亲爱的家长/看护者:

如果您有残疾或发育迟缓的孩子, 我们诚邀您参加我们的家长互助小组会议。

通过我们组织的这些会议, 大家可以一起分享各自的经历及有用的信息。

我们会互相扶持, 帮助每一个成员去应对要面临的挑战, 同时一起分享养育孩子的快乐。

如果您想加入我们, 请通过电子邮件联系Juliet。邮箱地址: cpmg.mel@outlook.com 期待您的加入!

Vietnamese Families Special Needs Group



A vibrant support group for carers of children with a disability living in the west.

When: 10am - 12pm **every Thursdays** (except school holidays)

Where: MacKillop Family Services office, 118 Commercial Rd, Footscray

Contact: Thi on 0448 417 513 or

vn.specialneeds@gmail.com

Wendy 0448 015 023 or wendywhite@mackillop.org.au

Kính gửi Phụ huynh / Người chăm sóc,
Nếu bạn có con bị khuyết tật hoặc chậm phát triển, bạn được mời tham gia với chúng tôi tại các cuộc họp nhóm hỗ trợ phụ huynh của chúng tôi. Tại các cuộc họp này, chúng tôi chia sẻ những câu chuyện và thông tin. Chúng tôi hỗ trợ lẫn nhau vượt qua một số thử thách cũng như chia sẻ những niềm vui khi nuôi dạy con cái. Nếu bạn muốn tham gia với chúng tôi tại MacKillop Families Service 118 Commercial Rd Footscray từ 10am đến 12pm xin vui lòng liên hệ Thủy để tin nhắn qua số 0448417513 hoặc email vn.specialneeds@gmail.com
Chúng tôi mong được gặp bạn.

Mackillop School (Maidstone) Parent Support Group

A newly formed support group for carers of children who attend the MacKillop School in Maidstone.

When: 10 - 11am, third Thursday of each month, next meeting is **Thursday 21 July**

Where: Meet at a local café

Contact: Wendy 0448 015 023 or wendywhite@mackillop.org.au



Home Based Care Support Group



This group is for carers of children who are in home-based care.

When: Two online groups will be offered on alternative weeks

The next evening group is on **Tuesday 19 July at 7pm**

The next morning group is on **Tuesday 2 August at 10am**

Contact: Wendy 0448 015 023 or wendywhite@mackillop.org.au

If you are interested in joining any of the above groups or would like to request a group being formed near you, please contact Wendy White on 0448 015 023 or wendywhite@mackillop.org.au

Yarraville Special Developmental School Group



This group is for carers of children who attend Yarraville SDS.

Where: Yarraville SDS, 117 Blackwood St, Yarraville (go to the office for directions)

When: 1.30pm - 3pm, first Thursday of each month, next meeting is **Thursday 4 August**

Contact: Wendy 0448 015 023 or wendywhite@mackillop.org.au

Melton Parent Support Group



For families living in the Melton area.

When: 10am - 12pm, second Monday of the month, next meeting is **Monday 8 August**

Where: Melton Library and Learning Hub, 31 McKenzie Street, Melton

Contact: Wendy 0448 015 023 or wendywhite@mackillop.org.au to book in.

MacKillop parenting workshops



MacKillop runs a range of parenting courses throughout the year, designed to support families to build strong and positive relationships. These courses are delivered through a mixture of online and face to face parenting groups and 1:1 sessions.

Program	When	Time & Location
Circle of Security 7 Weeks	Wednesday 27 July–31 August	1.00 –2.30pm Online via Zoom
Tuning into Kids 6 weeks	Tuesday 19 July–23 August	10.00–11.30am Quantin Binnah Community Center 61 Thames Boulevard, Werribee
Tuning into Teens 6 Weeks	Friday 28 August–2 September	11.000–11.30am Online via Zoom
Bringing Up Great Kids 6 Weeks	Thursday 28 July–1 August	11.00–2.30pm Mackillop Family Services 118 Commercial Rd, Footscray

Registration required, join here at www.mackillop.org.au/events

For parents and carers of young children

Maribyrnong Council offers an extensive range of programs for parents and carers of young children.

The INFANT Nutrition Program

This program helps you learn about understanding and responding to your baby's cues/signs, when and how to introduce solid foods and a sippy cup, active play you can do together, and strategies for limiting screens. There will also be an opportunity for parents to share their tips.

When:

- 6 months: Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 - 3.00pm
- 9 months: Wednesday 27 July, 1.30 - 3pm or Wednesday 28 September, 1.30 - 3pm

Presenter: Maternal & Child Health and cohealth.

Bookings: bookMCH@maribyrnongvic.gov.au

Understanding Sensory Processing

This interactive online session will provide an overview of sensory processing and how parents and carers can support their children aged 2-6 to have a well-balanced sensory diet. It will include discussion on emotional regulation and impulsivity, aspects of play, suggestions for alerting and calming activities, and when to seek additional support. There will be plenty of time for questions.

When: Monday 18 July, 7.30 - 9.00pm

Presenter: DOTS Occupational Therapy for Children

Bookings: maribyrnongvic.gov.au/Events/Sensory-Processing

Supporting Children's Behaviour: 0-5 years

Learn positive parenting strategies, why challenging behaviours exist, what stops children listening, and how to see more desirable and less challenging behaviour in this interactive online session.

When: Tuesday 20 September, 10 - 11am

Presenter: MacKillop Family Services

Bookings: maribyrnongvic.gov.au/Events/Childrens-Behaviour

Mindfulness

This session is for parents to attend with their 4-6 year olds. Children will engage in fine motor play activities while the development of children's emotional regulations skills is explained. It will also include practical ways parents and carers can support their child to manage their emotional regulation and mindfulness activities for adults and children to do together.

When: Monday 5 September, 10 - 11.30am

Presenter: Playmoveimprove

Location: Maribyrnong Community Centre, 9 Randall St, Maribyrnong

Book: maribyrnongvic.gov.au/Events/Mindfulness

Baby Makes 3

This online program provides an opportunity to talk about the changes since becoming a parent and what it means for your family. Maribyrnong parents are invited to attend this three-session program.

When: Wednesday 20 & 27 July, 3 August, 6.30 - 8.30pm

Presenter: Baby Makes 3 Facilitators

Bookings: bookMCH@maribyrnongvic.gov.au



Sensory Storytime at the Brimbank Library

Open to all children and caregivers. This storytime is especially welcoming for children on the Autism Spectrum and families looking for a smaller, adaptive storytime.

When: Every Friday between 10 - 10.45am

Where: Deer Park Library, 4 Neale Road, Deer Park

Presenter: Deer Park Library

To register: Call 9249 4660

City of Melbourne

The City of Melbourne offers the *Parenting information* program which information sessions on a range of topics. All sessions are free and families with children of all ages are invited to attend any session. These sessions currently run online via Zoom.

Current topics include:

- Baby play
- Learning through play
- Engaging in play
- The fussy eater
- Baby massage
- Setting up a play space
- Supporting your child's speech development
- Being a dad
- Bringing up great kids

To express your interest in one of the above topics please go to: [Parenting information program - City of Melbourne](#). For further information and to book, contact parentingservices@melbourne.vic.gov.au.



My Time

MyTime groups are for parents and carers of children under 18 with additional needs. The groups are free to attend, and a place where you can socialise and share ideas with others who understand the rewards and intensity of caring for a child with additional needs in a relaxed setting. Play helpers keep your children busy and active. Siblings also welcome. Bring your child and come meet the staff.

MyTime Locations

Avondale Heights

When: Mondays 10am - 12pm

Where: Rhonda Davis Centre, 54 Lake Street, Avondale Heights, Tarneit

When: Mondays 10am - 12pm

Where: Tarneit Community Learning Centre, 150 Sunset Views Bvd, Tarneit

Maidstone

When: Tuesdays 10am - 12pm

Where: Maidstone Child and Family Centre, Cnr Burns and Sonley Streets, Maidstone

Manor Lakes

When: Tuesdays 10am - 12pm

Where: Manor Lakes Community Learning Centre, 86 Manor Lakes Blvd, Manor Lakes

Newport

When: Fridays 10am - 12pm

Where: Newport Gardens Early Years Centre, 51 Maddox Road, Newport

Point Cook*

When: Wednesdays 10am - 12pm

Where: Featherbrook Community Centre, 33-35 Windorah Drive, Point Cook

*This group is currently meeting via Zoom, each fortnight, to ensure families who work from home or prefer not to venture out in these Covid times can attend. Please contact kim.mace@tweddle.org.au for the Zoom link.

Families are invited to come along, meet new friends and chat with facilitators about resources and support. Contact MyTime Coordinator Kim Mace on kim.mace@tweddle.org.au or (03) 9689 1577 for more information.



PlayConnect Playgroups

PlayConnect playgroups are for children with Autism and free for families. The playgroups run once a week in term time. In 2022 there are two PlayConnect playgroups in the west, in Braybrook and Werribee. Families can attend one group. We are currently accepting enrolments for both groups.

- **Braybrook playgroup:** Mondays 10am-12pm
- **Werribee playgroup:** Thursdays 12-1:30pm (this group currently has vacancies.)

For enquiries please contact Anne Shute on 0434 769 341 or ashute@playgroup.org.au. You can also call Playgroup Victoria on 1800 171 882.

For more information, visit <https://playgroupaustralia.org.au/national-programs/playconnect/>

Western Parents with Pride



Playgroups: For LGBTQIA+ parents and carers.

Groups are held on Tuesdays in Term 3 at the following locations and times:

- **Melton:** 38 Station Road, Melton South - July 12, 16, August 9, 23 and September 6.
- **Werribee:** 211 Watton St, Werribee - July 19, August 2, 16, 30 and September 13.

Crafternoons: For LGBTQIA+ parents, carers and their children. This group meets once a month on a Thursday afternoon in Melton for an afternoon of arts, crafts and good company. A light meal is included.

Where: 38 Station Road, Melton South

When: 6.30pm

Contact: Alex for more upcoming dates or further information on 0456824477 or email alex.brown@salvationarmy.org.au.

ACD Workshop: Support for Families in the Early Years

Do you have a young child aged 0 – 6 years with developmental delay, additional needs or disability? Are you looking for information to guide you through the early years? If yes, look at ACD's free online workshop. [Support for Families in the Early Years](#) aims to help you navigate the early years with confidence. Topics include Rethinking respite and financial support, staying connected and supporting siblings, and counselling and looking after yourself.

Workshop dates:

- Tuesday 19 July: 10am
- Wednesday 20 July: 7:30pm
- Thursday 21 July: 10am

Places are limited and registration is required.

For more information email educate@acd.org.au or call 03 9880 7000 or 1800 654 013.

To register, visit <http://acdvic.eventbrite.com>

For information regarding other programs offered by ACD, such as 'Advocating at School', please go to www.acd.org.au.

Events for older children and teenagers

First Step Solutions

First Step Solutions (FSS) is an education NDIS service provider, operating in Adelaide since 2020 and more recently in WA, QLD, NSW and VIC. They run two programs to support young people navigate the complexities of entering adulthood.

- **Financial Literacy:** one to one 12-week program that assists participants understand how they personally value money including their behaviours, attitudes and thoughts about money. Exploring how to manage bills, savings, and fun money and that of goals, whilst planning and tracking a weekly budget.
- **Date-Ability:** a program to increase safety, health and happiness while dating. FSS delivers content in a small group setting over four weeks or one to one. It is facilitated by a team of experienced clinicians exploring self-awareness, boundaries, consent and communication, in person and online dating, sexual identity, sexual health amongst others. Highly interactive with many activities and in-depth workbook provided.

Find out more here <https://fs-solutions.com.au/>

Camps and Holiday Programs

Gateways Support Services offer high quality recreation and camps to build skills while providing fun for children, teenagers and adults with a disability. Designed and led by a team with deep experience in autism, intellectual disability and complex behaviour, the programs give participants the opportunity to learn and practice real life skills with peers and within the community.

Programs for kids and teenagers include:

- After school and weekend activity programs
- School holiday programs
- Overnight camps and short breaks
- Boost 4 Kids overnight stay for children and young people with complex medical support needs (Geelong)
- Recreational overnight programs (Getaway House - Warrnambool)
- Therapy-led recreation programs tailored to each participant's individual NDIS goals
- Social groups for kids with Autism Spectrum Disorder attending mainstream schools

Families need to register to access this service which can take between 30-45 minutes. For information on how to register and what services are available, visit

www.gateways.com.au/services/recreation/recreation-camps-and-activities



Resources and support services

Supporting carers' mental health and wellbeing

EACH – Family Relationships

This is a Victoria-wide service supporting families caring for someone with a disability. EACH supports family members who care for someone with the following disabilities:

1. Intellectual
2. Physical
3. Neurological
4. Autism spectrum disorder
5. Acquired brain injury
6. Mental illness
7. Sensory

There are no costs for these services and no waiting list at the time of publication. For more information contact EACH on 1300 303 346 or email: frsc@each.com.au

Cohealth

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many people feeling anxiety, fear, sadness, and other kinds of mental distress. Some people are experiencing this for the first time, and for others, the pandemic has further impacted their mental health concerns.

Cohealth's skilled wellbeing and peer coaches are available to support you and help improve your mental health and wellbeing. Everybody is welcome to use this free service, no matter where you live. You don't need a Medicare card.

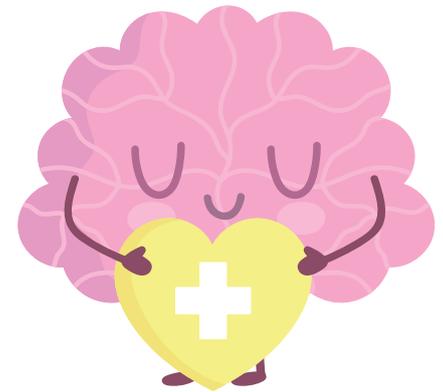
How to access: Available via phone, telehealth consultations and face-to-face. Call for an appointment on 1300 375 330 or go to: Mental Health - cohealth - Community Health consultations and face-to-face. Call for an appointment on 1300 375 330 or go to: [Mental Health - cohealth - Community Health](#)

Hub locations and hours

Melton: 95 Barries Road
Monday 10am-4pm, Tuesday 10am-1pm

Sunshine: 2 Devonshire Road
Wednesday 10am-4pm, Thursday 10am-4pm

Kensington: 12 Gower Street
Monday 10am-4pm, Tuesday 10am-4pm



Merri Health is now working in the West

Do you care for a little one with additional needs? Does your caring role affect your wellbeing or ability to work, study or socialise? Merri Health can provide free coaching, counselling, respite care, financial support and connecting with other carers.

Merri Health has supported Carers in the North Metro region of Melbourne for over 20 years. They work in partnership with carers and offer a range of supports, services and activities to strengthen carers' wellbeing and the wellbeing of the person they are caring for.

Merri Health is now offering carer supports and services through **Carer Gateway**, in the following LGAs: Brimbank, Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong, Wyndham and Hobsons Bay.

Visit www.carergateway.gov.au to find out more or call 1800 422 737 to register. It is highly recommended that you register so that you can access the range of supports including counselling and respite. For more specific information go to: [Services and support | Carer Gateway](#).

IPC Health

IPC Health provides health and wellbeing services in Melbourne's west. Their services allow individuals to access a range of care and supports through a single point of contact. Services include allied health such as medical and dental services, physical and mental wellbeing programs, and other programs to help people address alcohol addiction, gambling and more. To find out about their services and locations go to www.ipchealth.com.au.

Brimbank, Support for Carers Program

Are you supporting someone's everyday activities and living in Brimbank? Funding may be available to support you through the Support for Carers Program. For more information and a confidential chat, call 9249 0000 or email CommunitySupport@brimbankvic.gov.au.

Moonee Valley – Groups for carers

For carers in Moonee Valley, there are many ways of connecting. One example is: *Valley Carers - Together, we care*. Do you provide unpaid support to a family member or friend with a disability, psychosocial or medical condition, complex needs or ageing? The role of the carer can be stressful and lonely. It's important for carers to be cared for as well.

The Valley Carers is a friendly support group for people with lived experience of the caring role, who understand how difficult it can be. In partnership with Moonee Valley Council, information and resources are shared, wellbeing activities are offered to enable you to connect with others who understand the complexities of your lives. It aims to create a sense of community amongst carers, so you don't feel alone. Together, we care.

To join the mailing list, please send an email: valleycarers@gmail.com or call Lisa for more information on 0409 949 948. For more information about Moonee Valley groups, contact: Carers@mvcc.vic.gov.au.

For more information about what's happening in Moonee Valley, go to: <https://mvcc.vic.gov.au/live/my-family/carers>

Different Journeys

Different Journeys started as an ASD teen playgroup based in Victoria. It was born from two mothers who couldn't find any opportunities for their teenagers to connect with similar friends. For one mother, it was about friendships and the other, inclusion and getting out of the house in a safe and supportive environment. This term Different Journeys is running a Parent Info evening on 24 August the topic of "*Therapy Dogs - How they Support our Autistic Community*." It will be held at Riverside Bar & Kitchen, 75 Newsom St, Ascot Vale. To find out more or go on the mailing list, email differentjourneys@gmail.com



Queer Crew



Merri Health, Carer Gateway and Alfred Health offer Queer Crew. This group recognises that carers in the queer community have unique challenges and can benefit from connections with other queer carers. The Queer Crew will be a safe space for Carers who identify as LGBTIQ+.

It provides an opportunity to connect with and attend events with other LGBTIQ+ Carers. Talk, Learn, Share and Collaborate. This is also a chance to make new friends. The group meets monthly for informal chat sessions on the last Friday of each month. There will also be events such as going to the movies, cooking, craft and other events to get together.

Date: Meetings are held on the last Friday of the month

Time: 10:30am - 11:30am

For registration call 9076 6644 or email carerevents@alfred.org.au

Supporting carers' mental health and wellbeing

Uniting Care

Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church, delivering services and programs across Victoria and Tasmania. They are situated across 13 locations in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne. Uniting offers a wide range of services, including carer wellbeing services which you can find more about here

www.unitingvictas.org.au/services/carers

Uniting also offers an Emergency Relief service for people in crisis or experiencing hardship. Find out more here:

www.unitingvictas.org.au/services/emergency-relief

Carers Victoria

Carers Victoria is another important organisation. It is the state-wide voice for family carers, representing and providing support to carers in Victoria. Becoming a member of Carers Victoria is free and open to all carers, former carers and supporters. Membership offers many benefits such as exclusive invitations to events, workshops and programs specifically designed for carers, free digital access to the magazine *Australian Carers Guide*, special offers including Hoyts movie tickets and much more.

Find out more and join here:

www.carersvictoria.org.au/about-us/our-membership

Carer Card ('We Care Card')

This card provides discounts and benefits to carers in acknowledgement of their caring responsibilities. It's easy and free to apply for the Carer Card. Applications can be made online. Alternatively, forms can be downloaded or you can request that one be posted to you by telephoning the Carer Card team on 1800 901 958. Applications may take four to six weeks to process.

To receive this card, you **must**: receive a Centrelink Carer Payment or Carer allowance; be a DFFH foster, respite or permanent carer, or be a primary carer, including kinship carer, as nominated by a health professional. For more information go to: www.carercard.vic.gov.au

Companion Card

This is a card for people with significant and permanent disability who have a lifelong need for a high level of support to participate in community events and activities. The card allows a person's carer free entry into participating venues and events. For the eligibility criteria go to:

www.companioncard.vic.gov.au/check-eligibility

(Thanks to Vanessa who shared information about the Carer Card and Companion Card - two valuable supports for carers.)

Wanting to travel but need assistance? Travellers Aid can help.

Travellers Aid supports individuals of all abilities to connect with people and places. Their mission is to empower people with travel-related challenges to connect, engage and participate within their communities through public transport. They offer a variety of services including:

- Connection assistance,
- Personal care,
- Crisis travel,
- Mobility equipment hire,
- Luggage storage,
- Companion service and
- Time-out.

For more information go to www.travellersaid.org.au.

If you would benefit from financial assistance accessing tickets, go to: www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/myki/concessions-and-free-travel/disability-support-pensioner-and-carer-payment-recipients

You may be eligible for annual free travel vouchers if you're a Victorian resident and a Disability Support Pension or Carer Payment recipient. Find out more about eligibility and how to register here: www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/myki/concessions-and-free-travel/free-travel-vouchers



Podcasts

Podcasts are another way of accessing information. Following are some highly respected and engaging podcasts. If you enjoy them, please provide feedback to wendy.white@mackillop.org.au. We also welcome you to share podcasts you enjoy and recommend for us to include in future newsletters.

Too peas in a podcast

Listen to Mandy and Kate laugh (a lot) and cry as they chat to each other and friends about parenting multiples with disabilities and additional needs. In this episode, Mandy and Kate talk about starting school and all that it involves: [Let's go to School! \(podbean.com\)](https://www.podbean.com/mb/letsgo2school)

In this BeansTalk episode, Garry talks with Kirk Thompson - husband of Tara and dad of three gorgeous daughters. Kirk talks about their daughter Willow who lives with cerebral palsy and autism; dadness; marriage; life in a small community; dark times; and finding a way through. [BeansTalk: Kirk Thompson - Too Peas in a Podcast](#)

Emerging Minds

Emerging Minds s podcast for families and professionals interested in learning more about current research and approaches to mental health. It also provides a selection of outstanding resources, found here: [Resources - Emerging Minds](#).

I highly recommend the following episode: [The team around the child: A mum's story of her son's neurodiversity](#) on Apple Podcasts. In this episode, Bec, the parent of a neurodiverse son, describes the evolution of 'Team Wolfie': a concept developed by her partner as a way to ensure practitioners shared important understandings of his son's support and advocacy needs. It also provides great insights into the daily juggle that carers face daily.

Parental As Anything

Parental As Anything is a very accessible podcast by Author Maggie Dent. Maggie is fun and very authentic and has tips and ideas for real-world parenting dilemmas. A couple of her recent podcasts include:

- [When your kid hates school - ABC](#)
- [Winning the sleep wars - ABC](#)



Sue Larkey

Sue Larkey provides practical tips and advice for parents and teachers supporting children on the Autism spectrum. In this episode, Sue explores different strategies for developing independence:

[Sue Larkey Podcast: SLP 157: How to Create Independence for students on the Autism Spectrum using 3 Key Ingredients on Apple Podcasts](#)

Sometimes watching is fun!

The following YouTube clip is of Hannah Gadsby's graduation address. Hannah is a very successful comedian and well-known for her two Netflix shows, Nanette and Douglas. Hannah is on the Autism Spectrum. I especially appreciated her thoughts on kindness. [Hannah Gadsby Full Graduation Address - 14 August 2021 | University of Tasmania - YouTube](#)

Connecting and communicating in many languages



If you are a carer who communicates in a language other than English, the following resources will hopefully assist you when supporting your child with a disability or delay.

MiAccess

MiAccess is a resource for people with disability and their carers to access translated resources on disability and the NDIS. MiAccess can be fully navigated in 10 languages and carries information resources in 57 languages. The languages will be increased over time, and new multilingual resources are added frequently. For more information, visit: <https://miaccess.com.au/find-a-resource>

Health Translations

Health Translations is a free online library of high-quality translated Australian health and wellbeing information. While it is designed for Australian health practitioners and people who work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, it can be accessed by families and provides quick access to a wealth of reliable resources. Visit: www.healthtranslationsvic.gov.au

The early childhood approach

The early childhood approach can help you access information and supports if you have concerns about your child's development. It aims to help your child join in daily activities and participate in your community. The specialist early childhood team will also let you know about other services in your community that may be able to support you. Visit: www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/families-and-carers/early-childhood-approach

Brotherhood of St Laurence operates this service in Western Melbourne including Brimbank Melton. To find out more, visit <https://ndis.bsl.org.au/early-childhood/about-us>

NDIS interpreting services

Professionals with an interpreter, where required, can help you understand the NDIS and all its complexities. Please remember that you are entitled to as much support as you require to understand the NDIS and how it can best support you and your child. Visit: www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/language-interpreting-services

Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS)

Families can access Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) which provides operator-assisted access to an immediate phone interpreter in over 160 languages. To access this service, call the TIS National Contact Centre on 131 450. TIS can also help if you need to contact NDIS. Information is also available in other languages at: <https://ndis.gov.au/languages>

TIS can also help families contact **Autism Connect**. This is a free, national Autism helpline, providing independent and expert information via phone, email, and webchat. It supports autistic people, their families and carers, health professionals, researchers, teachers, employers, and the broader community. Advisors offer expert advice in many areas, including:

- exploring autism and autistic identity
- assessment and diagnosis support
- school and education
- the NDIS
- transition to employment
- behaviour and communication strategies
- referrals to services peer support connections, and
- finding autism-friendly places and events

Amaze has a fabulous poster about Autism, translated in Arabic, Burmese, Dari, Farsi, Hindi, Simplified Chinese, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese. View the English poster here: www.amaze.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/English_What-Is-Autism.pdf

View the Vietnamese poster here: www.amaze.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Vietnamese_WhatIsAutism.pdf

For more information call Autism Connect on 1300 308 699 or email info@autismconnect.org.au Call TIS on **131 450** if you need help accessing.

Association for Children with a Disability (ACD)

For over 40 years ACD has been supporting children with disability and their families across Victoria. Their vision is for children with a disability and their families to have the same rights and opportunities as other children and families.

ACD supports all families in Victoria with children with disability aged 0 to 18 years old. They offer a support line, workshops, information and resources. A recent translated resource is the fact sheet which helps to make the COVID vaccine more accessible for children and families.

The fact sheet is available in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Vietnamese and English: www.acd.org.au/covid-19-translated-resources

VICSEG New Futures

VICSEG works with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to build new pathways. They believe that diverse cultural perspectives strengthen the community. They offer:

- Diverse leaders and community ambassadors support to find solutions for problems, large and small
- Hands-on training, mentoring and a flexible approach to learning enables all skill levels to find a place in our programs.
- Childcare and community programs which give people the support they need to access education.
- Work placements and training creates opportunities to enter the workforce.

For more information go to: <https://vicsegnewfutures.org.au/about>

Community Connectors

Many local councils in the Melbourne's West have Community Connectors. Ginni Puri works at Wyndham City Council in this role. She works with a variety of organisations such as One tree, Best Chance, KU, ECMS services, to build strong and trustful relationships. Ginni works with communities, understanding their needs which enables her to help provide relevant and timely support. You can contact Ginni via ginni.puri@wyndham.vic.gov.au.

Other services

Yellow Ladybugs

Yellow Ladybugs is dedicated to improving the lives of girls and women on the Autism Spectrum.

Yellow Ladybugs is a volunteer community group who creates social events where girls can come together and have the opportunity to meet and bond over their similar journey.

For further information please go to:

Contact: info@yellowladybugs.com.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/yellowladybugs

Website: www.yellowladybugs.com.au



Mambourin Training Centre

Based in Derrimut, Mambourin can open the world of work for students 16 years and over living with a disability or learning difficulty.

Traineeships

Supply Chain Operations - Certificate II and Certificate III: Trainees will develop their ability to undertake a range of tasks and work confidently, effectively and safely in a modern warehouse. Eligible trainees can also obtain their Forklift Ticket by completing an eight-week intensive course.

Horticulture - Certificate II: Students gain the basic skills and knowledge needed for employment in the industry - including all they need to know about plant species, lawn management and commercial garden upkeep.

School Leaver Employment Support (SLES): SLES is an NDIS support for Year 12 school leavers. It is a two-year program to help young people build the confidence and skills they need to get ready for work. SLES is tailored to meet each person's individual employment goals.

Enrolment: Mambourin is now taking Traineeship applications for 2023. Eligible school leavers can apply for and commence SLES year-round.

Want to know more?

Phone: 9731 9200, email: hello@mambourin.org or visit the Website: www.mambourin.org

WCIG

WCIG is a community-based not-for-profit organisation committed to improving lives through practical responses to unemployment and disadvantage. Registered NDIS supports include:

- Development of daily living and life skills
- Tenancy & accommodation support
- Support workers - no wait period
- Assistance to access and maintain employment or education
- Participation in community, social and civic activities including group and centre-based activities.

Some examples include:

- WCIG Book Club: Read for Fun: Mondays 3.30 - 5pm
- Music Production & Song Writing: (Melton Location - Wednesdays and Fridays)
- Heart & Soul Creative Writing (12 weeks): Wednesdays 2 - 4pm and Fridays 10am - 12pm
- Cooking The Globe (face to face): Footscray on Fridays
- Intro to hairdressing (face to face): Footscray on Tuesdays (10 weeks) from 9am - 12pm

Please send all enquires to Josie Marchione-Djordjevic at: JosieM@wcig.org.au

Our site

Our site is a website designed by and for girls aged 15+, with disability. It is fully accessible and a wonderful resource. It provides a wealth of information including on girls and young women's rights, life choices, safety and violence, sex and your body and real stories. There is easy read and translated materials available. For more information visit <https://oursite.wwda.org.au>

Sexual Health Victoria

Family Planning Victoria recently changed its name to Sexual Health Victoria to continue to support the changing needs of the community. They offer an extensive range of programs including those for carers, carers with a child and professionals. For further information on upcoming programs go to <https://shvic.org.au>

Strong, Safe and Fabulous



The Strong, Safe and Fabulous team provides support and resources to members of the LGBTQ+ community so that they and their families can live their best and most colourful lives. They host events that connect LGBTQ+ families, particularly those that are feeling isolated because of social pressures, financial difficulty or where they live. For more information go to: <https://strongsafefabulous.online/latest-news>

Play Learn Grow, Text Message Program

Get practical tips to your phone from leading early childhood experts, for free!

Play Learn Grow is a free text message program developed in collaboration with leading early childhood experts to support parents and carers of children aged two or three. It provides practical advice and fun and easy activities to support your child's learning, development and wellbeing at home. Sign up today. It's free! Text PLAY to 0428 606 027 www.vic.gov.au/play-learn-grow-text-message-program



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Strengthening Parent Support Program
118 Commercial Rd,
Footscray, Vic 3011
Telephone: 03 9680 8444

All returned copies will be taken off mailing list

Not all events listed in this newsletter are run by MacKillop Family Services. If further event information is required, please call the hosting organisation via the contact details provided.



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