Municipal Early Years Plan 2011–2016

Building a strong foundation for health and wellbeing

A plan for services for Stonnington families with children from birth to eight years
Executive Summary

The City of Stonnington provides a range of high quality, accessible services and facilities for families with children from birth to eight years.

The Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP) aims to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and their families by providing a framework to prioritise needs, allocate resources and plan for the future of early years services using a coordinated approach.

The MEYP is informed by the City of Stonnington Council Plan, Council policies and strategies as well as State and Federal Government frameworks and policies. These have been considered in conjunction with a review of demographic data, Australian and international research and outcomes from consultation with Council staff and the community.

Input from service users and service providers has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this plan. Council’s Children and Family Services Department has committed to create opportunities for meaningful community engagement and consultation with families and with children who live in Stonnington. This will be achieved by contacting families who use early years services, in particular maternal and child health and immunisation services, as families access these services soon after the birth or their child. This commitment has been identified as a priority for future planning and delivery of early years services.

Council will continue to work in partnership with stakeholders to implement the MEYP strategies over the next five years.
The way forward – building a strong foundation for health and wellbeing

The value of investing in the early years is well documented. Positive experiences during this time, including participation in prevention and early intervention activities, have a direct link to future health and wellbeing of families and results in significant economic savings.

The provision of early years services is a partnership between all levels of government and the community. Council plays an integral role by directly providing services; resourcing other service providers, particularly non-profit community organisations; and by providing facilities where community organisations provide services. Council’s role is central to ensuring services are accessible and continue to meet the needs of Stonnington’s young children and their families: building a strong foundation for future health and wellbeing.

Strategies to support families and children

During the process of preparing the MEYP, five key themes have been identified and provide a framework for strategies and actions, these are detailed in section nine and summarised below.

1. Theme One

Healthy Communities: creating an environment and programs that promote health and wellbeing.

Strategies under this theme are designed to facilitate improved health outcomes for families with young children in Stonnington. Strategies include support and promotion of breastfeeding and early childhood immunisation as well as parent education programs. Council will expand the number of locations available for women to breastfeed by identifying and promoting “drop-in and feed facilities”.

2. Theme Two

Community Building and Engagement: engaging with the community to enable children and families to develop their potential.

This theme is underpinned by recognising children as active citizens and creating opportunities to engage and consult with them. Strategies are linked to developing an understanding of issues affecting students in the middle years and a new commitment to work collaboratively with schools to identify issues. Strategies also include supporting the development and governance of community managed early years services and responding to emerging community needs.

3. Theme Three

Advocacy and Partnerships: working with communities, children and families to identify needs, strengths and solutions.

Key strategies linked to this theme relate to advocacy to State and Federal Governments for funding in response to community needs and seeking funding opportunities and submitting applications in accordance with relevant criteria.

4. Theme Four

Strategy and Planning: developing policies and frameworks that support best practice services and family strengthening approach to service provision.

Strategies connected to this theme require promotion of events and activities for families and the implementation of Maternal and Child Health program standards. Council will introduce an E-newsletter for families and services providing an opportunity for Council to better connect with the community. The E-newsletter will improve communication with families and services, by providing regular, current information on parent education sessions, professional development, events and activities.

5. Theme Five

Infrastructure and Services: planning and developing services and facilities to respond to the needs of children and families.

Under this strategy, Council will develop a strategic plan for Council’s children’s services facilities to ensure they remain relevant to community needs and are able to respond to projected demand in future years.

The way forward – building a strong foundation for health and wellbeing

The value of investing in the early years is well documented. Positive experiences during this time, including participation in prevention and early intervention activities, have a direct link to future health and wellbeing of families and results in significant economic savings. The provision of early years services is a partnership between all levels of government and the community. Council plays an integral role by directly providing services; resourcing other service providers, particularly non-profit community organisations; and by providing facilities where community organisations provide services. Council’s role is central to ensuring services are accessible and continue to meet the needs of Stonnington’s young children and their families: building a strong foundation for future health and wellbeing.
1 Purpose of the MEYP

The MEYP aims to enhance the health and wellbeing of all children from birth to eight years of age, and their families, by providing a framework for the provision, facilitation, support and resourcing of quality, accessible early years services.

Council’s role is to provide leadership, support, advocacy and resourcing in the planning, development and delivery of early years services and facilities for children from birth to eight years of age and their families. Council will work in partnership with stakeholders to implement the strategies in the plan.

The City of Stonnington is committed to family strengthening. Council has developed strategies to support children and families. Stonnington’s Children and Family Services Department will align annual budget requests with the MEYP goals and undertake submissions to the State and Federal Governments for funding.

2 What the Research tells us

Society and communities are dynamic and there have been considerable changes over the last few decades that have affected the environments in which families raise their children. Increasing urbanisation, smaller family sizes, maternal workforce participation, longer working hours and less traditional family supports are some of the influences affecting families with young children.

Key factors that affect the developmental outcomes of children include the high expectations society has of children and the increasingly diverse composition, circumstances and cultural backgrounds of families (Boston Consulting Group, 2008).

There is significant evidence to show a clear link between positive experiences in the early years and future health and wellbeing. According to the Harvard University Centre for Developing Child “Children need positive relationships, rich learning opportunities, and safe environments, not quick fixes or magic bullets”.

As well as social and health outcomes, research from around the world shows that investment in early childhood services more than pays for itself (Boston Consulting Group, 2008). “In fact, the economic return of investing in high quality early years development consistently exceeds three to one” (Oberklaid, 2006).
3 Policy Frameworks

The City of Stonnington MEYP has been informed and draws on relevant Council, State Commonwealth and international policies and strategies.

3.1 Stonnington Council Policies

Council Plan (2009–2013)

The City of Stonnington Council Plan provides a framework and guides Council’s thinking and actions in preparing its plan for children and families. Council has committed to be a city where all people can be happy, healthy, feel safe and have the opportunity to feel part of and contribute to the community.

The Council Plan outlines broad strategies to deliver and fund quality outcomes for the community. The Council Plan commits Council to a strategic direction that guides decision-making and informs the development of all Council strategies and plans over the period. The Council Plan 2009–2013 comprises four key strategic objectives: Environment; Community; Liveability; and Prosperity – each with its own set of strategies for implementation.

Municipal Public Health Plan (2009–2013)

The Stonnington Municipal Public Health Plan aims to achieve maximum levels of health and wellbeing in Stonnington by identifying and assessing the actual and potential public health issues affecting the community and outlining strategies to prevent or minimise them. Four key health pillars have been identified: Healthy Lifestyles; Connected Communities; Positive Ageing; and Community Safety. Linked to each pillar is a range of broad health strategies to be implemented over the next four years. Council and local service providers use the Municipal Public Health Plan to set health policy development priorities.


Officers developed the Stonnington Maternal and Child Health Clinical Governance Framework to identify improvements for the Maternal and Child Health service.

The framework aims to identify, prevent, minimise and manage risk by ensuring:

• Safety for clients, staff and Council
• Informed evidence-based decisions
• High quality services delivered to families
• The interaction between the MCH service and the client results in benefit and not harm
• The service is aligned with the Council Plan and corporate objectives.


The guide identifies the key roles and responsibilities of Local Governments, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Child First agencies in the protection of children attending Council services. It facilitates a strong working relationship between the DHS and the Local Governments within the Southern Metropolitan Region.

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to ensure that the needs of children are met and they are safe within their families. It also ensures that correct procedures are followed when reporting suspected cases of abuse to protective services.

Strategic Reviews

As an organisation committed to excellent services for the community and the best use of its resources, Council regularly undertakes strategic planning and service reviews. The aim is to ensure the best use of Council resources, define the future direction for services and put in place a process and actions to achieve the strategy.

The Children and Family Services Department has undertaken a number of reviews and strategies including:

• Childcare Subsidy Review 2008
  The purpose and outcome of this review was to inform Council in relation to the level of financial subsidy provided to Council-managed and community-managed childcare services.

• Family Day Care Review 2008/2009
  The purpose of this review was to assess the service viability of Family Day Care in Stonnington. The review identified two key issues: service viability due to the ongoing small number of carers (two); and the risk to Council in the provision of home-based care. The outcome of the review was to continue with the existing carers but to cease recruitment of any new carers.

• Youth Services Strategy 2010–2014
  The purpose of the strategy was to consult with external stakeholders, including young people, schools and services to identify priority issues for young people. The Stonnington Youth Strategy 2010–2014 provides a framework within which programs and services can be facilitated and provided by Council’s Youth Services team.

• MCH Workload Review
  The purpose of this review was to provide a tool to quantify workloads and resources required to deliver the MCH service. Key outcomes included a clearly defined MCH service for Council and clients and a tool that enables assessment of existing and forecast workloads on a Council-wide and centre-by-centre basis.

• Pre-school Capacity Review
  Officers undertook a further review in late 2010 to analyse the affect of the new Federal Policy on 15 hours of kindergarten. The capacity assessment of existing kindergarten programs found that there will be adequate places to support the projected number of four-year-olds. Most services will be able to meet the requirement to provide 15 hours of kindergarten by making changes to their programming. Some services will need to put other strategies in place.

3.2 State Government Policy And Reforms

The Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (September 2008) is a plan to improve outcomes for children and young people. The Blueprint sets out the State Government’s five-year agenda for learning and development. The focus is on programs, resources and services administered by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework is designed to advance all children’s learning and development from birth to eight years. The framework identifies eight key practice principles for early childhood professionals to collaborate and work with children and families to facilitate learning and development outcomes listed above.
Maternal and Child Health Service Program Standards (2009) provides an evidence-based framework for the consistent, safe and quality delivery of the Maternal and Child Health Service. The program standards support the provision of clinical and corporate governance within the service, and provide a systematic approach to improving service delivery and safety. The Maternal and Child Health Program Standards support the vision, mission, goals and principles of the service as stated in the Maternal and Child Health Service Guidelines (2011).

The Children’s Services Regulations (2009) are the principal regulations made under the Children’s Services Act 1996 that control the licensing and operation of children’s services in Victoria. Key reforms include improved child/staff ratios in long day care for children aged less than three years, minimum training requirements for all staff and carers, minimum age for staff and carers and the requirement for services to provide children with adequate sun protection.

3.3 Commonwealth Government Policy

National Early Years Learning Framework was developed collaboratively by the Australian and State and Territory Governments, to support universal access to early childhood education. It aims to ensure the delivery of nationally consistent and quality early education. The Early Years Learning Framework is the first phase of implementing the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care. The Framework describes the principles, practices and outcomes essential to support and enhance the learning of children from birth to five years, as well as their transition to school.

The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments endorsed in 2008. The Partnership Agreement outlines a national commitment to achieving universal access for every child to an affordable, quality play-based early childhood education program by 2013. The program will be delivered by a university-trained early childhood teacher for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year, in the year before formal schooling. Barriers to access will be addressed, including distance, cost, cultural appropriateness and convenience for working families.

The National Early Childhood Development Strategy was developed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The strategy’s vision is that “by 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation”. The strategy contains an outcomes framework and outlines characteristics of effective early childhood services.

3.4 International conventions

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) sets out the basic human rights that children everywhere have. The convention protects children’s rights by setting standards in health care, education, legal, civil and social services. The convention strives to establish children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. These principles are consistent with the direction and policy frameworks accepted by governments in Australia.

Council’s Role in the Early Years

Council recognises that children and their families are valued members of the community and has a strong commitment to working with all stakeholders to provide support for children in their early years and their families.

Council’s Children and Family Services Department aims to create an environment where all children in the City are able to participate in a community that values and supports them. In this context, Council has a critical role to play in these early years and recognises the importance of high standards of practice for early childhood professionals and supports an approach that adopts and implements family-focussed practice.

- Council is committed to delivering and facilitating early years services that are accessible, affordable and responsive to needs of families and children.
- Children’s experiences and their relationships with important adults in their life have a significant impact on their development. High quality early years services provide nurturing environments and foster positive relationships with children and their families.
- Children and families are part of the broader community so it is important that the value of positive experiences in the early years is promoted and recognised within the broader Stonnington community. Early years and other community services are invaluable in facilitating social capital in local communities.
- Council recognises its role in supporting professional development of early years professionals in facilitating professional development in the contemporary curriculum frameworks. These frameworks reinforce the importance of adopting and implementing a strengths-based family focussed approach.
- Community managed services and organisations play a valuable role in strengthening social networks and producing community advocates and leaders.
- Council offers a number of children and family services including maternal and child health, immunisation, childcare, (long day care, occasional care and family day care), playgroups and the Prahran Adventure Playground.

4.1 Maternal and child health service

The universal maternal and child health service ensures that all families can access consultations at the key ages and stages of their child’s development, receive information on a range of topics and referrals to specialist health professionals as required. The Maternal and Child Health Service offers families information, guidance and support on parenting issues including:

- Breastfeeding and infant feeding advice
- Child health and development
- Maternal and family health
- Parent child relationships
- Nutrition
- Family planning
- Safety and injury prevention
- Immunisation
- Information on local support services, such as playgroups and parenting sessions
- Referrals to general practitioners and specialist services.
The service provides an initial home visit to Stonnington families following the birth of a baby and centre-based consultations for health and developmental assessments at the key ages and stages (2 weeks, 4 weeks, 8 weeks, 4 months, 8 months, 12 months, 18 months, 2 years, and 3½ years). Council also funds additional consultations at 3 months and 6 months. New parent groups enhance parenting skills, provide network opportunities and enhance community connectedness.

The enhanced maternal and child health service offers additional home visits and support for vulnerable families experiencing early parenting difficulties. The service is also available for mothers experiencing post-natal depression or social isolation and mothers with infants failing to thrive or children considered at risk. This service is fully funded by DEECD. Council also funds additional outreach services to provide a flexible and accessible service for vulnerable families living in the public housing estates.

The Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government provide funding to local governments to vaccinate infants, preschoolers and secondary school-aged children in accordance with the National Immunisation Program. Stonnington provides an immunisation service for vaccine preventable diseases to protect families and their children from various locations in the community and at local secondary schools. Both day and evening sessions are regularly available.

4.2 Council-Operated Childcare

Council owns and operates a range of quality childcare and education services as listed below:

- Grosvenor Street, South Yarra provides 20 long day places and 11 occasional care places for children six months to school age.
- Princes Close Childcare Centre, Prahran, provides 60 long day care places for children six months to three years old.
- Hornbrook Children’s Centre, Windsor, provides 52 long day care places for three to five year olds.
- Winter Street Childcare Centre, Malvern, provides 30 occasional care places for children six months to school age.
- Harold Holt Swim Centre Occasional Care, Glen Iris, provides 16 occasional care places for families using the Harold Holt Swim Centre facilities.

Prahran Adventure Playground

Stonnington Youth Services manages the Prahran Adventure Playground located on the Horace Petty Estate. Trained and experienced staff supervise playground activities after school and during school holidays. Breakfast Club and Getting to School programs also operate from the playground. The Adventure Playground caters for young people aged five to 16 years, primarily targeting residents of the local housing estates.

4.3 Community-Managed Services

Council Facilities

Council leases buildings to community early years service providers at a peppercorn rent. In 2011 Council adopted a Community Facilities Leasing Policy. This policy provides an equitable approach to services and outlines key principles guiding the implementation of the policy.

Council has made a commitment in the Council Plan to develop and maintain quality facilities that encourage community participation.

Childcare

There are 21 childcare centres in the municipality, including the Council-managed centre, six community-managed and ten privately operated centres. Council supports four of the community-managed childcare centres by leasing facilities to them for a peppercorn rent and undertaking all building maintenance.

Kindergarten

There are 22 kindergartens in the municipality; 13 are community-managed and nine are privately operated (linked to private schools). Council supports five of the community-managed kindergartens by leasing facilities to them for a peppercorn rent and undertaking all building maintenance.

Playgroups

Approximately 15 playgroups operate within the municipality. These playgroups are run by a range of community groups, including local churches and parent-run committees. Council provides support to playgroups through networks, advice and provision of facilities.

Malvern Special Needs Playgroup

Malvern Special Needs Playgroup is funded by Commonwealth Department of Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and is supported through Council’s community grants program. Council also leases accommodation to the playgroup and a community operated playgroup. The aim of the service is to:

- Support children with special needs by offering regular developmental play sessions
- Offer respite for parents and the opportunity to meet and connect with other parents and professionals.

Stonnington Toy Library

The Stonnington Toy Library has two branches, one in Malvern and one in Prahran. The toy library provides a loan service for a range of toys, puzzles and other educational equipment. This service receives significant operational funding from Council and Council provides and maintains the facilities it uses at no cost.

Pre-School Dental Program

The City of Stonnington provides annual funding to the Inner South Community Health Service to support a preschool dental program. The service conducts dental health screenings, health promotion and education sessions at local early childhood services. The service aims to identify children at risk of dental disease.
4.4 **Childrens Services' Development**

Council acknowledges the role of the community sector in the provision of early years services. Council supports community-based management committees and early years staff with training, networking opportunities, service quality advice and assistance with funding submissions. Council also provides financial and in-kind support to a range of early childhood not-for-profit organisations through the annual Community Grants Program.

Local partnerships and collaboration ensure resources are used as effectively as possible, by reducing duplication and utilising specialist skills and knowledge. Council represents the views of the community in policy development and works with all levels of government to inform key decision-making processes affecting the development of the early years system.

Council provides information to residents and service providers via the City of Stonnington website as well as a range of resources such as the Children and Family Services Guide and Early Childhood Education Calendar to support the ongoing development and provision of early years services.

Council’s Children and Family Services Department facilitates a program of professional development for the early years sector in Stonnington.

A partnership with the University of Melbourne, Masters in Teaching, Early Childhood program to develop a collaborative professional learning model is evidence of Stonnington’s commitment to achieve excellence in early childhood planning and practice. Melbourne University provided a professional development program on the National Early Years Learning Framework for staff to achieve excellence in early childhood planning and practice. Melbourne University provided a professional development program on the National Early Years Learning Framework for staff in the Council-operated and community-managed childcare services.

4.5 **GROW with US**

Council developed the Grow with Us program in 2010. It is a suite of creative and innovative programs for children and their families. Grow with Us has provided an opportunity for a range of new programs to be piloted and evaluated for children and their families.

Grow with Us initiatives include:
- Parent information sessions and parenting workshops with a focus on building family resilience, as well as sessions especially for fathers and grandparents
- A partnership with Melbourne University’s Masters in Early Childhood Education program, to provide professional development for childcare staff and further enhance Stonnington childcare services as a best practice model
- A broad range of free programs, from hip hop dance to rowing and martial arts and much more, for children and young people
- A youth activity wheel, which promotes local sport and recreation opportunities within the municipality
- A range of programs and sessions delivered at libraries, including an early learning reading program, a transition program to support students to navigate their way from primary to secondary school and a VCE study and wellbeing program
- An annual calendar, which includes key dates for families, including immunisations sessions.

Officers evaluate the effectiveness of each program and successful programs will continue to operate in the future.

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5 **Infrastructure Planning and Development**

Council is committed to maintaining and improving its assets and takes a long-term strategic direction in planning and implementing its capital works program. This ensures opportunities to redevelop, upgrade and integrate early years services receive consideration in the context of Council’s major capital works program.

5.1 **Phoenix Park Children’s Hub**

Council built a new $3.9 million family services facility at Phoenix Park and relocated a number of existing services including:
- Fernwick Street Kindergarten (60 places)
- May Armstrong Childcare Centre (increasing from 35 to 60 places)
- Dual nurse maternal and child health service
- Multi-purpose room for playgroups and community activities and agencies.

The new facility provides many benefits to the community, including:
- Increased childcare places available to families (25 new places)
- Improved accessibility
- One stop shop for families to use multiple services at one site
- Opportunities for service integration
- Functional purpose-built facility.

The hub is located in the Phoenix Park precinct, which also includes a community centre, library, adventure playground, skate park and Malvern Valley Primary School.

5.2 **Harold Holt Swim Centre**

The redevelopment of the Harold Holt Swim Centre included a new purpose-built occasional care facility. This facility is owned and operated by Council and provides occasional care places for the community using the recreation facility. The facility currently operates with 16 places, three mornings per week.

5.3 **Princes Gardens Precinct Master Plan**

This project involves developing a master plan for the future redevelopment of separate services located in the Princes Gardens precinct. The services include:
- Prahran Aquatic Centre
- Chapel Off Chapel
- Princes Close Childcare Centre
- Princes Gardens Maternal and Child Health (MCH)
- Stonnington Youth Services.

The planning stage of this project provides the opportunity to consider the benefits of co-location with existing community services and of the integration of early years services at the site.
The City of Stonnington is located in Melbourne’s inner south-eastern suburbs, alongside the Yarra River on the traditional land of the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri people. Stonnington covers over 25 square kilometres and includes the suburbs of Prahran, Windsor (part), South Yarra (part), Toorak, Armadale, Malvern, Malvern East, Kooyong and Glen Iris (part). In 2010, the population is estimated to be 98,500 people.

Stonnington has an economically and culturally diverse population and is a city of contrasts in many ways. For example, Stonnington is home to some of Melbourne’s finest mansions and is also home to large blocks of public housing. The community perception of Stonnington is that of an affluent municipality that boasts world class shopping and tourist precincts such as Chapel Street and Toorak Road. The diversity of the community is reflected by the distinct pockets of disadvantage and the number of public housing estates. The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) indicates that the number of children in Malvern, Prahran and Windsor classified as “developmentally vulnerable” is slightly higher than the State average. This diversity poses challenges for both the planning and provision of early years services to ensure inclusion, access and affordability of services for vulnerable families.

Quadruple disadvantage describes the unique experience of disadvantaged residents living in a municipality of affluence and includes concerns about:

1. Disadvantage arising from family background and experiences that have been harmful
2. Socio-economic disadvantage arising from the high cost of living in an affluent city
3. Social exclusion and isolation arising from socio-economic status
4. Difficulty in accessing support services because the municipality is perceived as affluent and is therefore unable to attract funding.

Pockets of disadvantage combined with a steadily increasing birth rate (see graph on the right) present challenges in terms of Council’s eligibility to attract State and Federal funding. Traditionally a higher proportion of funding is provided to the growth corridors in the outer metropolitan regions.

### Demographic Profile

#### Birth Rate

The number of births in the City has increased gradually, although the birth notifications for 2009/10 indicate a decrease from the previous two periods.

**Graph 1** Stonnington Birth Notifications (Number of Births)
6.2 Population Projections

Population projections suggest there will be an ongoing and gradual increase in the number of children aged 0 to 4 years and an increase in the birth rates. There are some minor variances as can be seen by the table below.

The highest increase in numbers is projected for Armadale and South Yarra. Although no significant change will be apparent in any particular area given the projections are over a 15-year period. There is likely to be a slight reduction in numbers in Malvern, although this is offset by the increase in numbers in Malvern East. South Yarra projects the largest numerical increase although, reflected as a percentage of the total population, this has slightly decreased. This reinforces the fact of a slight but steady increase numerically of the 0 to 4 years population.

Graph 2 Stonnington Children aged 0 to 4 years by Suburb

6.3 Early Years Services Across The Municipality

As shown above, it is expected that the number of children from birth to four years of age and the annual birth rate will continue to increase at a gradual, steady pace over coming years. Given the anticipated steady increase in the birth rate and number of young children residing in the municipality, demand for services is also expected to reflect the trend.

There is a greater density of four year olds in the eastern end of the municipality with a greater number of early years services operating in the western end of the municipality.

As part of its annual capital works planning, Council continues to maintain and upgrade the early years buildings and services. Opportunities for the development of further community hubs and the co-location of services will be considered as part of Council’s strategic capital works planning process and will consider demographic data and trends.

The map below shows the density of 0–4 year olds across the municipality and the locations of early years services.
The Stonnington Municipal Early Years Plan aims to enhance the health and wellbeing
of children from birth to eight years and their families by focusing on five key themes
with corresponding strategies and measures.

As part of annual service planning, Officers will review, prioritise, update and implement
the strategies via the business plans. Service Units will incorporate the themes and actions
within their 2010/11 Business Plans and prioritise actions for year one.

The coordination, consultation and implementation of the MEYP will be the responsibility
of Council’s Children and Family Services Department.

References

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EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx

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Oberklaid, Professor Frank, Director, Centre for Community Child Health (2006).
Making connections: NED early years conference, Adelaide, September 6, 2006
### Theme One continued

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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Current Actions</th>
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| **Contribute to community education policies and programs** | • Promote information on sun protection practices to early years staff, children and families.  
• Ensure all council-owned and operated centres are “Sun Smart” services. |
| **Improve access to services for vulnerable families** | • Maintain partnerships and links with relevant community agencies.  
• Utilise enhanced and outreach MCH service to engage and refer families to appropriate services.  
• Ensure services provided by Council are accessible.  
• Target specific families/groups in response to identified needs/issues. |
| **Provide high quality early childhood services that are responsive to community needs.** | • Identify system improvements and strive for best practice.  
• Ensure compliance with all standards and regulations at all times.  
• Ensure all staff are competent in the Early Years curriculum frameworks and learning and development outcomes for children.  
• Provide an annual professional development program for all staff.  
• Undertake service reviews ensuring models of delivery are responsive to community needs. |
### Theme Three
**Advocacy and Partnerships:** working with communities, children and families to identify needs, strengths and solutions

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| Advocate to State and Federal Governments for funding in response to community needs | • Participate in early childhood peak bodies to advocate for Local Governments to be recognised as a valued partner.  
• Work with peak bodies and community agencies to identify funding shortfalls/service gaps and identify suitable funding opportunities.  
• Identify any funding rounds and assess eligibility. |
| Source both State and Federal Government funding opportunities in relation to early years services | • Prepare and submit funding applications in accordance with criteria. |

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### Theme Two
**Community Building and Engagement:** engaging with the community to enable children and families to develop their potential

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<td>Recognise children and young people as active citizens</td>
<td>• Identify suitable opportunities to consult with and engage children.</td>
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| Undertake investigation into the middle years (8–12 years) and develop a strategy to address issues. | • Liaise with primary school principals and collaborate on projects in particular for Children’s week.  
New Action  
• Work collaboratively with schools to identify and analyse issues of significance to primary school students. |
| Participate in the Office of Housing, Horace Petty Estate community renewal project | • Work cooperatively with the Work and Learning broker, Prahran Urban Renewal, on relevant projects. |
| Support the capacity, development and governance of early years community managed services | • Coordinate early years training sessions.  
• Work with committees of management and provide advice and support regarding services operations.  
• Coordinate and resource early years service networks. |
| Respond to emerging community needs | • Develop programs in response to community issues or needs.  
New Action  
• Identify needs by surveying new parents using Maternal and Child Health and parents attending immunisation sessions. |
### Theme Four

**Strategy and Planning:** developing policies and frameworks that support best practice services and family strengthening approach to service provision

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| Promote opportunities for families to participate in events and activities within the municipality | • Produce and distribute an annual calendar promoting events/activities and parent education sessions.  
  • Promote Children’s Week events and activities.  
  **New Action**  
  • Introduce E-newsletter for families and services. |
| Implement MCH program standards                                         | • Regularly review and develop policies for MCH service.  
  • Introduce MCH service improvements that support best practice. |
| Develop strategic plans for early childhood services and facilities to ensure they remain relevant to community needs and are able to respond to projected demand in future years | **New Actions**  
  • Develop an early years infrastructure strategy plan to establish the suitability, viability, capacity and location of facilities to respond to future and projected demand. The process will include reviewing the current condition of buildings.  
  • Investigating the current and future service demands and needs.  
  • Consulting with community based services. |