



**childaware**

## Developing a Child Aware Local Plan: Townsville

Child Aware Local Initiative is a capacity-building initiative which supports communities to undertake early intervention and prevention activities that contribute to keeping children safe and well.

Child Aware Local Initiative is a central priority under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* and the Second Action Plan 2012-15. Endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments, the National Framework represents an unprecedented level of collaboration between Australian, State and Territory governments and non-government organisations to protect children.

The Child Aware Local Initiative is implemented through partnerships between the community sector, Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

The six supporting outcomes of the National Framework are key drivers to the initiative:

1. Children live in safe and supportive families and communities
2. Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early
3. Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed
4. Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and well being
5. Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities
6. Child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support

Key messages of the Child Aware Local Initiative:

Protecting children is everyone's business.

- Children have a right to be safe, valued and cared for.
- The best way to protect children is to prevent abuse and neglect from happening in the first place.
- Children and families should have a 'voice' in decisions affecting their lives.
- Governments, communities, organisations and individuals can work together to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families.
- Children are usually best supported within their families.
- A 'one size fits all' approach does not work across Australia's diverse communities.
- Local solutions are required for local problems.
- Culturally diverse groups need culturally sensitive responses.

**What are our community's gaps/needs?**

Communities for Children Facilitating Partner Initiative have just completed a Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2015 -19. The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) identified the key needs and service gaps in the community, developed ways to better coordinate and collaborate and outlined priority areas and strategies to address need and improve outcomes for children and families. The Healthy and Productive Children priority recognises the significance of improving childhood health and wellbeing for children's learning and future outcomes. The priority supports early intervention and healthy lifestyle choice for children and their families, part of this is to give service providers a tool to discuss with parents their child's developmental status at a stage in which early detection of issues enables early intervention for the family in a non-threatening way.

**Looking to embed PEDS into practice**

Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) is an evidence-based method for detecting and addressing developmental and behavioural problems in children aged from birth to seven years and 11 months.

PEDS is a simple, 10-item questionnaire that is completed by the parent.

After the parent completes the questionnaire the practitioner, in partnership with the parent, scores and interprets parent concerns. Skilful application of PEDS supports the early detection of developmental and behavioural concerns in babies and children. PEDS is suitable for use with children from birth to eight years.

**Who are the stakeholders we will draw together to build a Child Aware community?**

- Children aged 0-12 and their families. Particularly parents including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, young parents and those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds
- Preschools, schools and child, family and service workers
- Health providers

**What is our vision for a Child Aware community?**

*All children are able to realise their potential.  
A community where all those working with children and families, can support referrals at the earliest possible stage in a child's life and which address developmental delays that may later hinder learning outcomes at school.*

**Vision rationale**

Our Communities for Children Facilitating Partner Initiative Community Strategic Plan (CSP) set out a vision for our service area. The vision for Communities for Children Townsville West, “**A connected resilient family-friendly community**” came from the voices of children, families and the sector that services it, including the Communities for Children Committee, through conversation, surveys and group discussions. Children who are at its' heart, through drawings and words expressed a desire to be happy, healthy and playing with their families and friends while feeling safe. Parents spoke of a desire to know where to go and who they should talk to about feeling connected and supported within the place they live and are bringing up their children. Similarly community workers desire resilience for the families they work with, wanting for them to feel empowered and connected themselves with other services, and be able to provide a holistic and wrap around approach as needed.

Our vision incorporates an emphasis on collaboration and access strategies for our vulnerable and disadvantaged families, inclusive of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse families. Communities for Children Townsville West continues to work cooperatively, strengthening relationships with government, community and business sector agencies to achieve positive outcomes for our vulnerable and disadvantaged families. An inclusive approach is taken to supporting children from birth to 12 years and their families in our community.

Resources	What do we need?	Who will provide/source resources?
<p><b>Evidence:</b> AEDC NAPLAN Early childhood Statistics Kindergartens/resource Primary schools/resource</p> <p><b>Resources</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Training:</b> PEDS Training</p>	<p>A system that will pick up developmental delays prior to school entry so planning can be in place to minimise learning delays</p> <p><b>What do we need?</b> N/A</p> <p>Qualified Trainer/s underpinned by research and practice evidence</p>	<p>Staff from Community service providers, Kindergartens, pre-schools, primary schools, early childhood and maternal nursing staff and family support workers providing initial conversations with parents and warm referrals to health service.</p> <p><b>Who will provide/source resources?</b> N/A</p> <p>ACT for Kids (Townsville) will provide initial training. To improve likelihood of sustainability further training is required to create a cohort of approved PEDS trainers in the Townsville community.</p>

<b>Train the Trainer Training</b>	Obtain additional funds to deliver train-the-trainer	Families Australia will contribute funds for extension of initial PEDS training, to develop a peer network of trained early childhood, family services and health professionals who can offer PEDS training within Townsville.
<b>Tools</b>	PEDS Booklet Funds for initial booklets	CfC as part of training supplied initial set of materials including 1 administration and Score guide booklet and 1 set of 50 PEDS response forms and Score /interpretation guides.
<b>Implementation support</b>	ACT for Kids, CfC, Health, community service organisational  Schools, community services (NGO's) – FSW	Dept. Health has trained all child health nurses in PEDS within Queensland. As a result, those outside the health sector have a new referral path for families needing support as well as shared
<b>Resources</b> N/A	<b>What do we need?</b> N/A	<b>Who will provide/source resources?</b>  N/A
<b>Advocacy/using areas of influence</b>	CfC initially and later Townsville Family Support Alliance  Child and Family Maternal Health	CfC FP CCC

**How do we get there? What are we doing to realise our vision?**

- Forming small core driving group - CfC, ACT, Department of Health
- Discuss with key Orgs about project and get buy in – we have playgroups, preschools, Primary schools on board
- Organise training Dates - (Trained 32 participants October 2015)
- Provide peer support network Provide avenue for participants to get together discuss and support each other
- Provide buy in from local medical centres for warm referral pathways – ( Have Buy in from Child family and Maternal Health)
- Ongoing training system looking to organise Train the Trainer around Feb/March 2016

**What organisations/agencies/businesses are supporting this initiative?**

**What are their roles/ commitments?**

The Smith Family – Communities for Children Facilitating Partner

ACT for Kids -

Communities for Children Community Partners  
 Communities for Children committee members  
 Key schools in CfC area  
 Relevant CCC members  
 Pre-schools / Kindergartens

Key Driver / Facilitator

Providing Training through Trained facilitator in PEDS

Commitment to training and providing feedback

Will have participants feedback in 5weeks

### **How are we collecting our story/learning?**

- Survey of participants post training and group sessions feedback post training
- Collection of good news stories from participants
- Feedback through CCC

### **How are we sharing the learnings?**

- CCC organisations and networks
- Townsville Family Support Alliance
- Early Years Networks
- Child Aware website and forums

### **How will we sustain momentum into the future?**

Having enough trained individuals in an organisations embedding into practice

Trainers in the community space, locally able to run training sessions continued training through Train the Trainer workshop and requiring ongoing training session's commitment within the community to continue to spread the practice.

Nurses now have it embedded in the babies check booklet so a valuable resource for warm referral.

Form a peer network of trained interdisciplinary professionals.

Remains as an Initiative through the CfCFP Townsville West and embedded in the Strategic plan 2015 -19