



Central Goldfields Shire, Victoria, Child Aware Local Plan 2015-16

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.

Key messages of the Child Aware Local Initiative include:

- ❖ 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.

This plan has been developed by community members with support from Go Goldfields, a collective impact initiative to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

The community need we will address:

We believe babies and young children are safer and thrive when they form secure attachments with their family. This is nurtured when families feel connected with other families and their community.

We want to make it easy for families of young children to connect with and be welcomed into the Shire's various community run groups, including playgroups. We will reach young children by targeting families new to the area and expectant families.

The stakeholders we will draw together to strengthen our Child Aware community include:

- Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) (Local community convenors of)
- Mothers of Pre-Schoolers (MoPs) (mothers' group)
- Goldfields Gymnastics
- Central Vic Baby Wearers (Maryborough Convenors)
- Maryborough Toy Library
- Carisbrook Playgroup
- Maryborough Education Centre Playgroup
- Inkerman St (Nurture One) Playgroup
- Bealiba mothers' group
- Talbot playgroup
- Bush Playgroup

We will invite ante-natal, MCH and other early years professionals to partner with us.

These community groups will consult with the following early years professionals (via Survey Monkey and the Early Years Network) on the project with the view of forming stronger partnerships during project implementation:

- Goldfields Children's Centre
- Y-Cluster Kindergartens (5 kindergartens in Maryborough, Talbot, Dunolly)
- Ante-natal Clinic with Maryborough District Health Services
- Maryborough Maternal and Child Health Services
- Maryborough Education Centre
- Carisbrook Primary School

- St Augustine's Primary School
- Dunolly Primary School
- Timor Primary School
- Talbot Primary School
- Bealiba Primary School

We will also engage with other local and regional services who support local families including:

- Ballarat Health Ante-natal (as a number of mothers from the Shire birth and/or use ante-natal support through this org)
- Bendigo Health Ante-natal (as above)
- Centrelink – who can support us in reaching out to vulnerable or isolated families
- Housing Services (including public housing) – as above
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We may identify others as we progress through our project.

Our vision

Through forming strong and healthy connections with other children and their families, the children in our community will be confident, safe, happy, healthy and creatively engaged.

Our evidence

The Child Aware project group includes mothers with young children who are both new to the area, and who have also lived in the area for some time. Each project group member has a leadership role within a community run group. This group is calling upon both their personal experiences and those of other families to guide the focus of the project.

The project group is also consulting with early years professionals.

Skills and experience – improving engagement with isolated families

The collective wisdom and lived experience of the group will be called upon to explore better ways of inviting potentially isolated or vulnerable families to participate in various community groups.

Sustainability – maintaining the achievements of the group

The Child Aware work sits within the broader work being undertaken by Go Goldfields. Go Goldfields is a place-based & collective impact initiative based on a partnership across community, businesses, community services and government to improve the outcomes for children, young people and families in Central Goldfields Shire. A number of the members of the Child Aware project group are also members within the Go Goldfields governance structure, on either the Collaborative Table or the Child & Family Action Group.

The project will also develop a process to embed the developed strategies within both the community run groups and the early years services to ensure sustainability beyond the current project group.

Go Goldfields is a facilitating partner of the Central Goldfields Early Years Network which includes all organisations, kindergartens and primary schools working with children and families in the 0-8 years range. This Network meets once per term and is able to assist with sustainability of agreed actions in line with the project's vision.

Capturing and sharing our learnings

The new Go Goldfields Child & Family Action Group (comprising of community, business, services and government) will provide a forum for sharing and embedding learnings into the future work.

Strategies to realise our vision

We will meet monthly as a project working group representing a number of community run groups for young children and their families, to design and implement a way for new families to be warmly invited to join one or more local community groups.

Strategies explored to date include:

- Consulting with early years professionals in regards to what they see as being the highest needs with families.
- Inviting Maternal and Child Health, our local ante-natal support and other early years professionals to join us to develop solutions.- We will hold workshops to collaboratively brainstorm solutions – for example how we might set up introductions to the community groups through ante-natal and Maternal & Child Health classes.
- Ensuring information about community groups is accessible (by being in a variety of formats) and available for families, including brochures, fridge magnets and a DVD. A DVD (or short clips for You Tube) will show families what happens at a community group to help build their confidence in joining.
- Making information available on-line, including being able to be easily accessed by smart phones.

- Consider how to phase the delivery of information so that families receive it in a timely and manageable manner.
- Inviting state-wide services (e.g. Parentline and Raising Children's Network) to partner with us to produce promotional material that is more engaging on a local level (e.g .by using local identities and local services).
- Developing agreement across all of the community groups to more strongly promote that groups are for expectant mothers too. We believe it is best for the babies and children for their families to build supportive networks before the baby is born (at which time families then become very busy.)

Timeline

The initiative working group commenced planning in September 2015.

A more detail project plan will be developed by February 2016.

Implementation will occur from February - December 2016.

Further information

For further information about the Central Goldfields Child Aware Local Initiative please contact:

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