



# **WHEN OUR BEST EFFORTS DON'T SEEM TO BE ENOUGH**

**The Valuing Children Initiative (VCI)**

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[www.valuingchildreninitiative.com.au](http://www.valuingchildreninitiative.com.au)

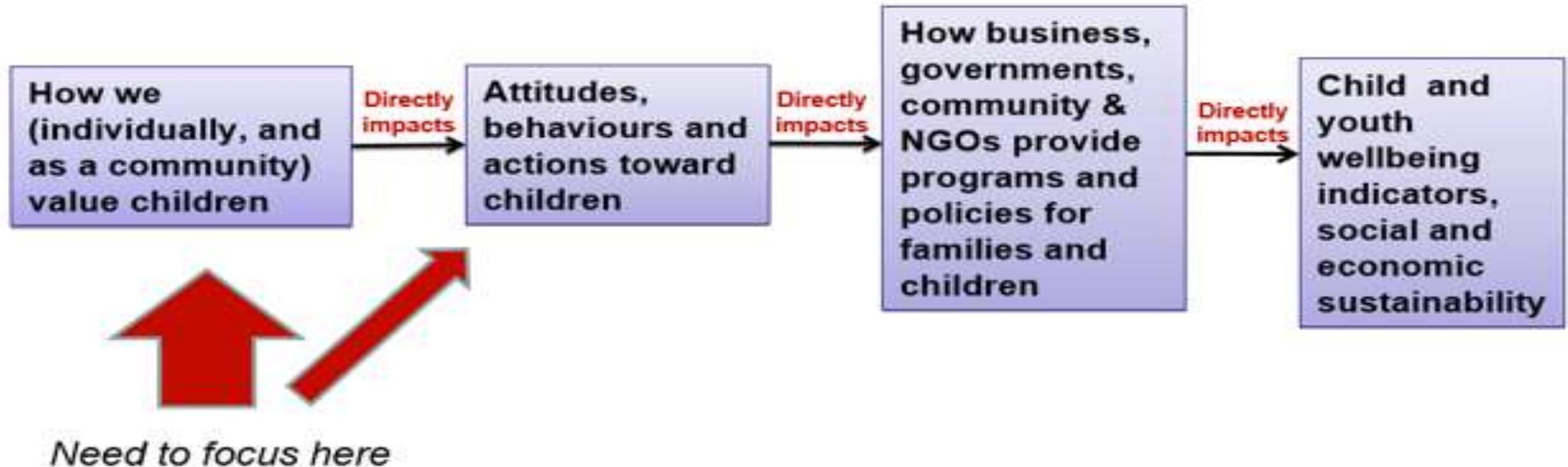


# What are we missing?

With the wealth of evidence about what makes for a safe and supportive childhood, and the unprecedented focus on children today, what accounts for the gap between what we know, what we do and the lives some children have to endure?

# How we value children matters.

Antecedents of complex problems affecting children and young people are common: they begin with our (societal) values





# **Societal attitudes can both drive and impede change.**

When there are competing rights and interests between different sections of society, who is most valued, determines whose rights and needs are given priority.



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# Australian's attitudes to children.

**Only 48% believe that children in Australia all have fair and equal opportunity to flourish, and to maximise on their potential.**

The top words used to describe children were:

1. Spoilt
2. Fortunate
3. Lazy
4. Selfish
5. Vulnerable

**70% agreed that children 'belong' to their parents until they reach the age of 18 years.**

**90% understood the significance of the early years.**

**80% were concerned about the health and happiness of future generations.**

**63% believe that even today, a child's word is less likely to be believed than that of an adult.**

**When asked to rate 10 issues in order of importance, looking after the interests of children ranked only 9th.**



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The failure to value children is glaringly obvious in retrospect.

It is however far more confronting to identify and recognise it in our own time.



The social conditions in which a child is born, their experience in the crucial early years of life, and the services and supports available to them as they grow up all rest upon the decisions and the attitudes of adults and on the cultural norms of the times.

For a better start in life  
start **COLA** earlier!



**How soon is too soon?**

Not soon enough. Laboratory tests over the last few years have proven that babies who start drinking soda during that early formative period have a much higher chance of gaining acceptance and "fitting in" during those awkward pre-teen and teen years. So, do yourself a favor. Do your child a favor. Start them on a strict regimen of sodas and other sugary carbonated beverages right now, for a lifetime of guaranteed happiness.

**The Soda Pop Board of America**  
1515 W. Hart Ave. - Chicago - ILL.

- Promotes Active Lifestyle!
- Boosts Personality!
- Gives body essential sugars!



According to repeated nationwide surveys,

**More Doctors**  
**Smoke CAMELS**  
than any other  
cigarette!



**Every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it.” - George Orwell**

**Surveys in Australia show that children identify being valued as very important to their social and emotional wellbeing.**

**In countries such as Sweden an inherent culture of valuing and respecting children is seen as playing a central role in contributing to a child's wellbeing.**

- ❖ **Do you believe it is true to say that all children in Australia today are highly valued?**
- ❖ **If your answer is no – can you identify one strategy or policy that you believe could positively change attitudes towards children and prioritise their needs and rights?**



## Imagine this scenario in a decade from now.

A Royal Commission has been established into why, despite all that was known about the critical impact of the early years, this evidence was not adequately incorporated into policy and practice. The impetus for the Royal Commission has been the increasing number of civil cases by adults who say the evidence about the almost inevitable pathway from what they experienced in early childhood, to their poor educational, health and employment outcomes was caused by the negligence of parliaments and society who failed to act.

- ❖ **You are called to give evidence. How would you explain why this happened?**



## The VCI has developed some specific policy that it has advocated for at both state and federal level.

These include:

- A) The creation of a dedicated Ministerial portfolio for Children and Future Generations, and a National Plan for Children.
  - B) The instigation of a rigorous and transparent process to ensure all policy, legislative and decision making processes actively consider the impact on children and future generations.
  - C) The creation of an evidenced based National Plan for all Children.
- ❖ **Please discuss and rank which, if any of the above, would be most effective in ensuring children are at the forefront of considerations. We welcome any thoughts or ideas you might have.**

# THANK YOU

If you would like to show your support for the work of the Valuing Children Initiative you can do so by;

- Becoming a **Friend of the VCI**.  
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