

Local Government Perspective on Best Practice and Challenges in Collaboration

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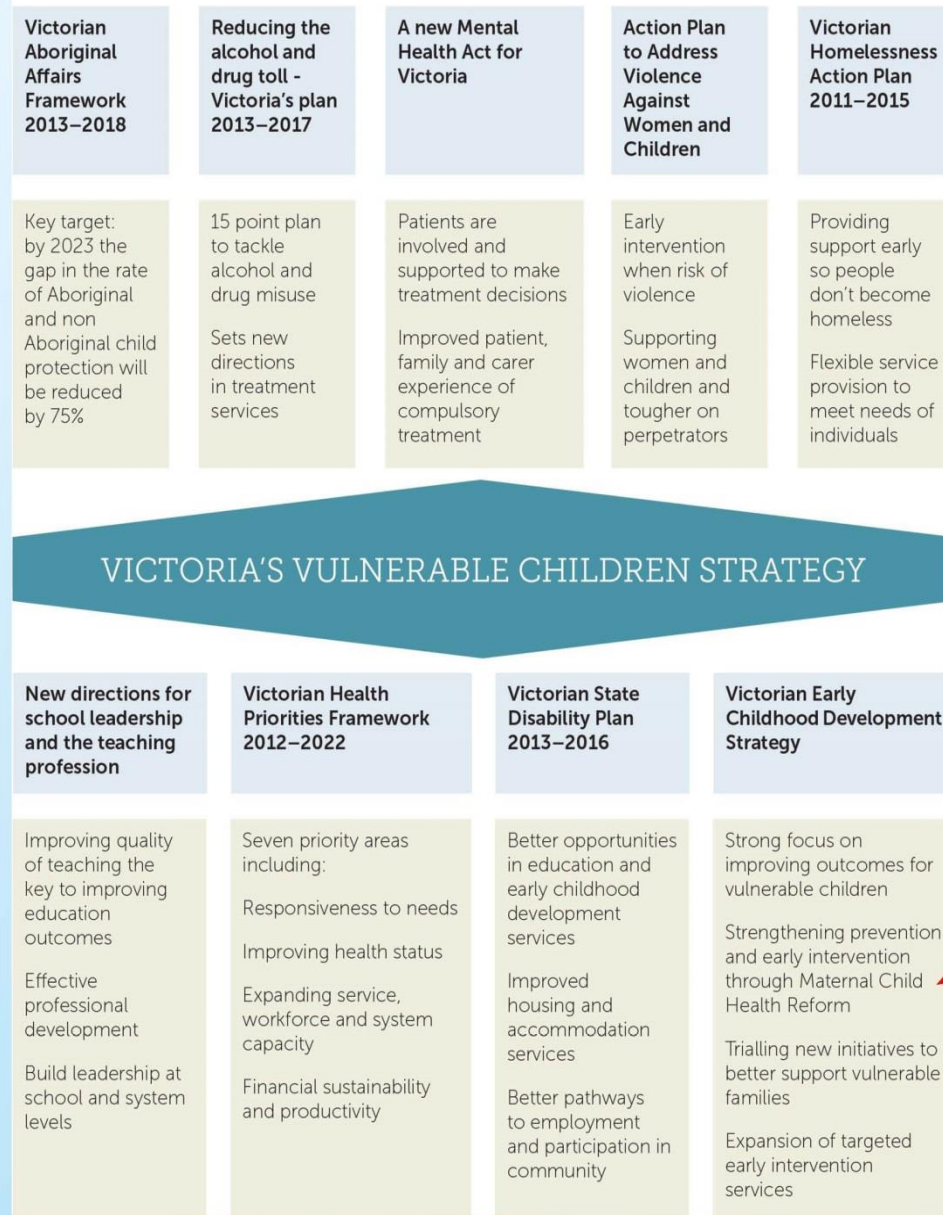
*"Children are the priority. Change is the reality.
Collaboration is the strategy." –*

Judith Billings Washington State Superintendent

Relationship to other government strategies and frameworks

This framework has been developed within the context of other plans, frameworks and strategies that are in place or currently under development, including the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*, *An Outline of National Standards for Out-of-Home Care*.

Figure 5: Related government plans, frameworks and strategies



A definition of ‘vulnerability’ was adopted by the Victorian Government, and set out in the *Victoria’s Vulnerable Children – Our Shared Responsibility Strategy 2013–2022* as:

‘Children and young people are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited’.

Collaboration and improving outcomes for vulnerable families and children - between the universal, secondary and tertiary services

5 minutes

4 Successes, 1 challenge!

Chris Widdicombe

MCH Team Leader Greater Shepparton City Council

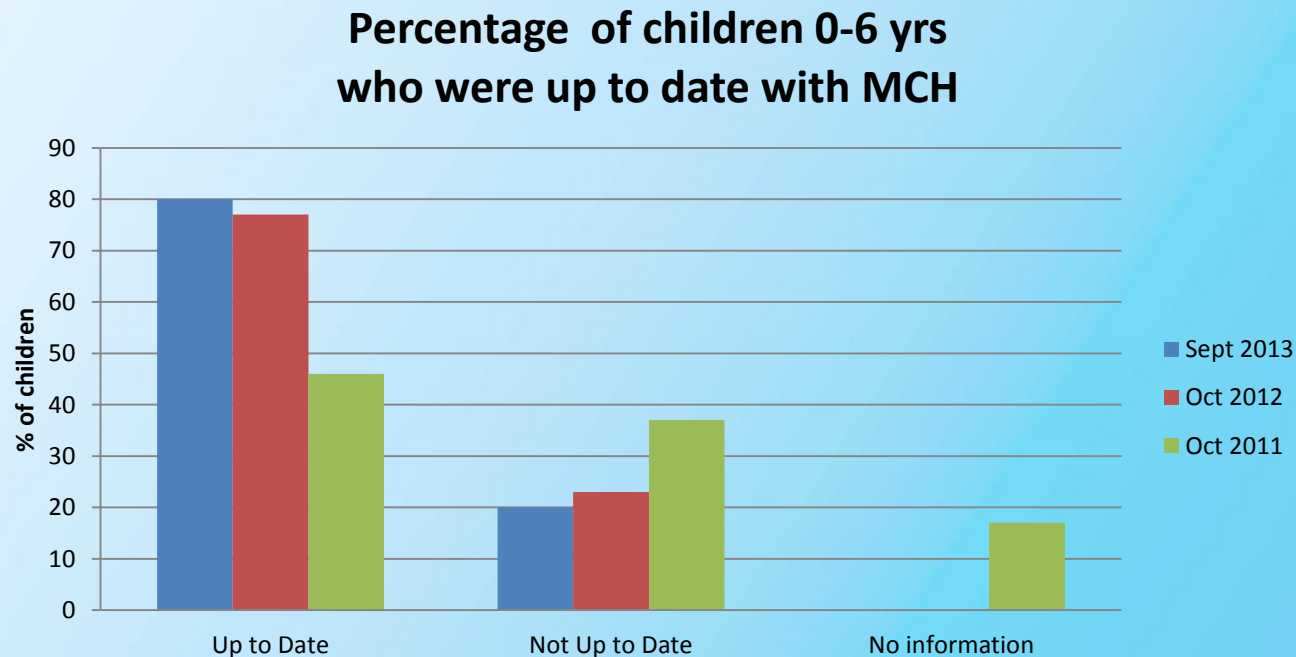
MCH Conference October 2015



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Success 1 - MCH Outreach and joint visits

Enhanced Best Start ChildFIRST Data Collection Report September 2013



Success 2 – Child and Family Vulnerability Guide

Child and Family Vulnerability Guide
Maternal & Child Health Services



The primary purpose of this Guide is to facilitate a common understanding of the dimensions of vulnerability for Maternal & Child Health Nurses, in regard to identifying and documenting child and/or family vulnerability. It is designed to inform the use of 'vulnerability/risk alert' functions contained in the current MCH client data systems.

When utilizing this Guide please consider the following information

- The dimensions of child and family vulnerability are wide ranging and complex and must always be considered in conjunction with corresponding protective factors.
- The **five categories of vulnerability and indicative reasons** on side 2 have been drawn from current research with input from practitioners.
- The existence of one or more vulnerability factors does not necessarily mean that a child is vulnerable. It is the intensity and combination of such factors that potentially place a child at risk of developmental vulnerability, in association with the balancing protective factors.
- Consideration of such a balance contributes to professional judgment as to whether a child is experiencing a **'high level of vulnerability'**, a **'moderate level of vulnerability'** or is considered to be **'developmentally on track'**. These three levels described on side 2 broadly align to the terminology used within the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC).
- The step by step method for using the Guide in association with Xpedite or MaCHs is set out in the *Greater Shepparton Best Start Vulnerability Guide Tool Kit January 2015*.
- Instructions are set out for both adding and removing a vulnerability alert.

Other benefits of the Guide

- The Vulnerability Guide has also been developed to promote consideration of when additional support is required to foster positive outcomes for children and families, and what action needs to be taken to respond to identified vulnerability issues.
- Practitioners may consider that a child or family could be in need of additional support due to a short term emergency situation, a medium term set of circumstances in which their needs cannot be met from within their own resources and networks, or an ongoing, complex situation which would be assisted by a range of longer term strategies.
- Common definitions may also assist in communicating with external organisations such as ChildFirst.
- Greater consistency in the application of a vulnerability alert will result in improved data reliability and generation of reports which can assist in identifying which families are most in need of MCH support.

Please turn over

This Child & Family Vulnerability Guide has been developed by the Greater Shepparton Best Start Program
Version date: 31.3.2015

- Communication tool for discussing child vulnerability and protective factors
- Annual data audit stimulates review of vulnerability status – contact with other agencies, use of FamilyCare protocol
- Tracking vulnerable families who have not enrolled for kindergarten
- Plan to extend use of this Guide to child care and supported playgroups



Success 3 – Stronger collaboration

- Vulnerable Children Meetings
- Best Start Early Years Partnership and Workgroups

Early Years Reference Group current focus on:

- information sharing and communication
- Child social and emotional wellbeing
- concept of progressive universalism



Progressive Universalism – a continuum of child needs and service integration



Original concept: www.everychildmatters.gov.au – now archived

Adapted by the Greater Shepparton Best Start Team November 2014



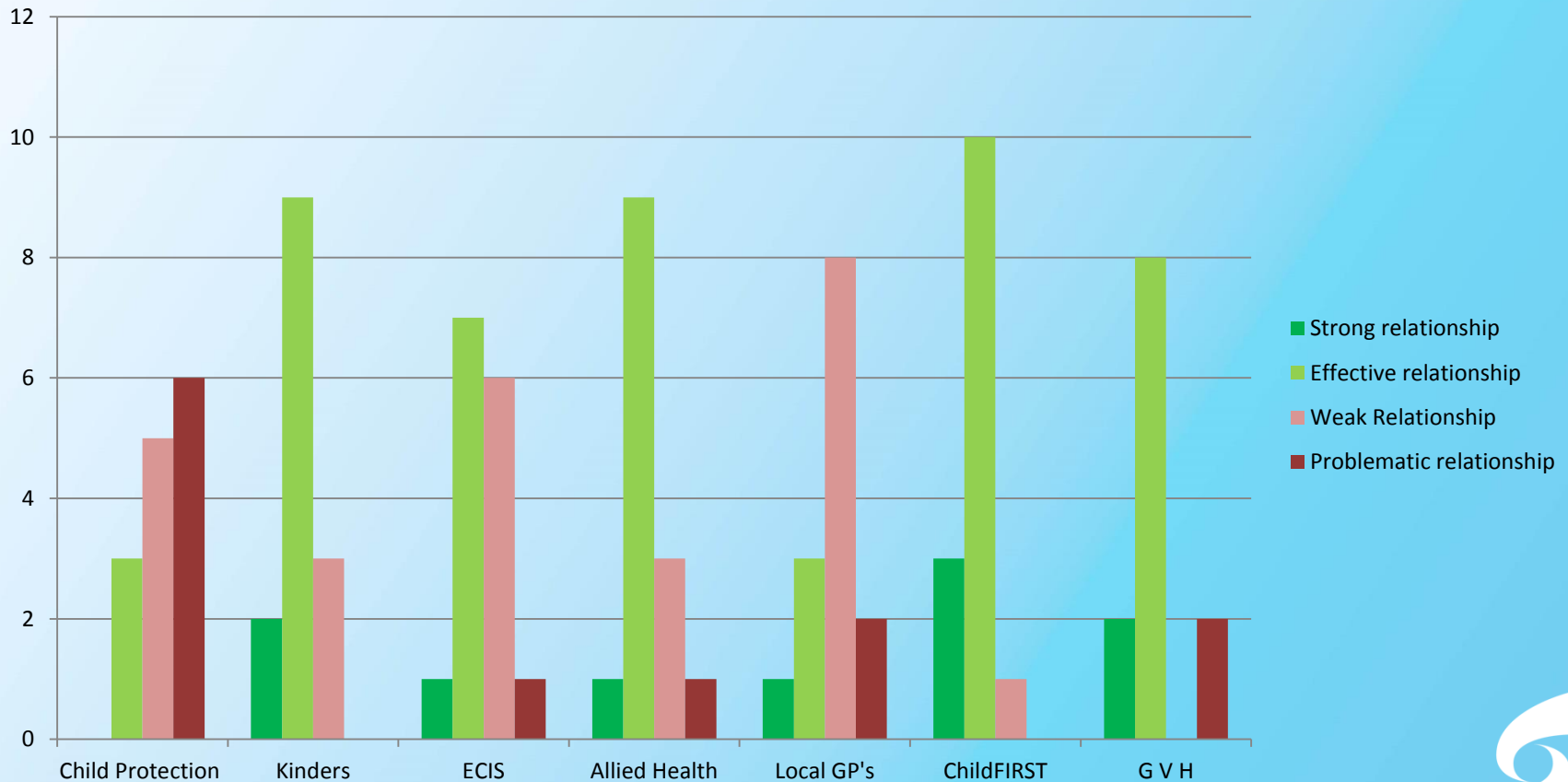
Success 4 – Integrated Practice Training

- Professional development resource developed by Greater Shepparton Best Start Program
- Key concepts of family centred practice, understanding child and family vulnerability/protective factors and professional relationship building
- Core training for all Council early years staff
- Offered annually over 2 days and delivered by local senior practitioners
- Co-ordination and ongoing development is a collaboration between Council, FamilyCare (ChildFIRST) and Berry St

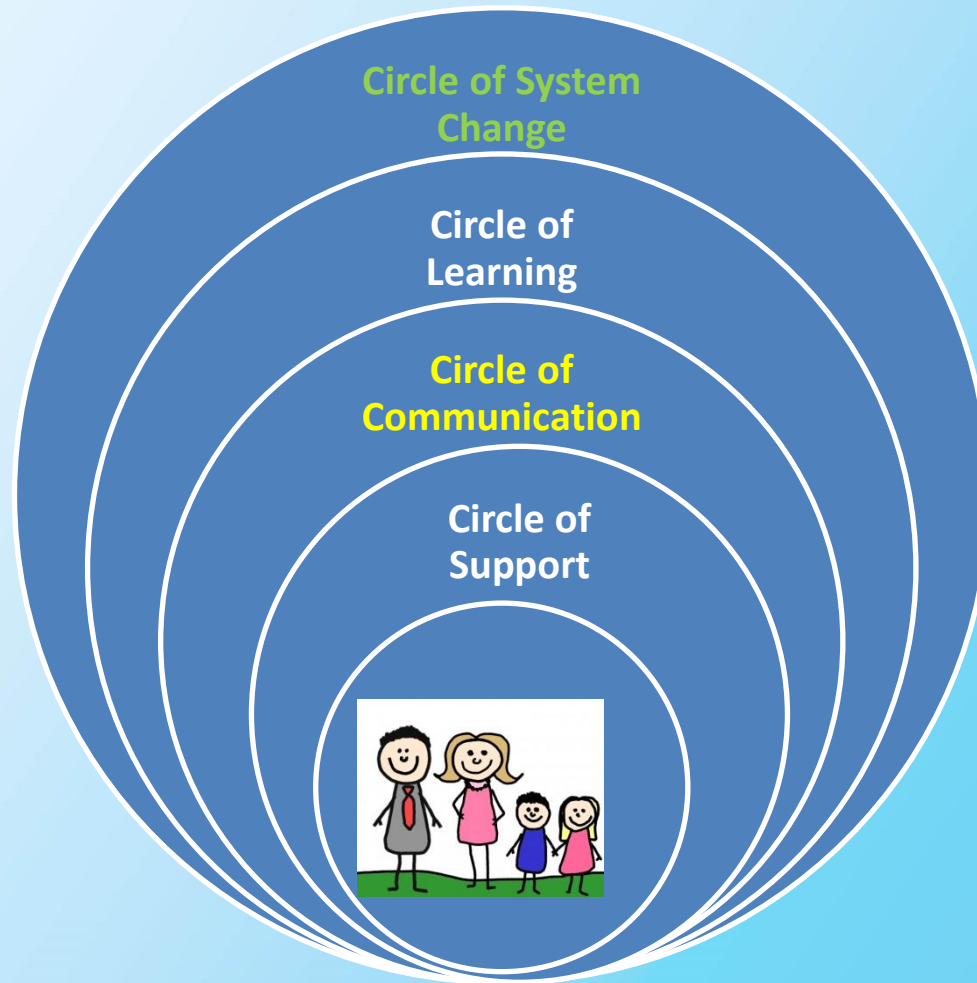


1 Challenge – improving connectivity with Child Protection

MCH Interagency Relationships 2014



It takes a systems approach

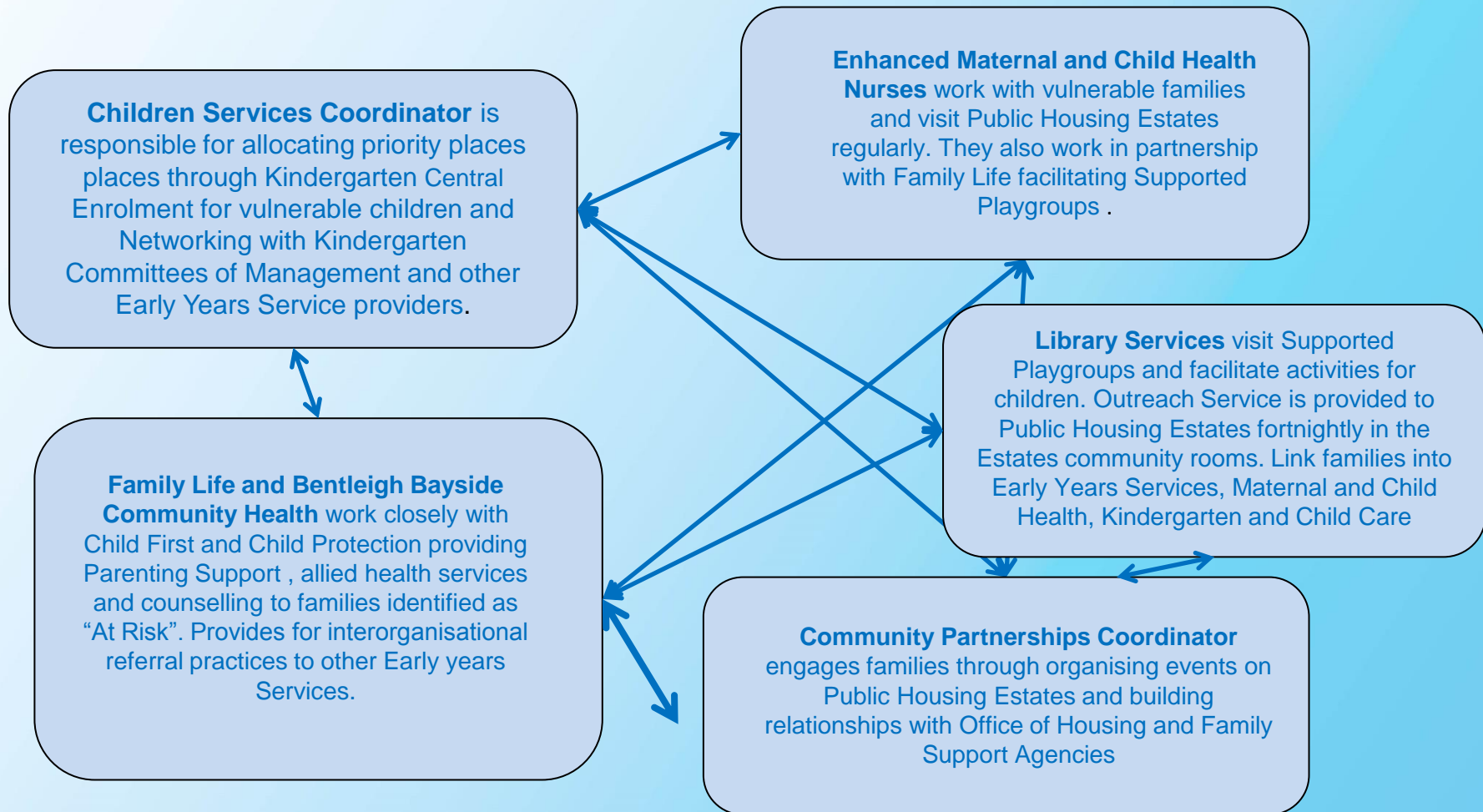


Every child enjoys the best possible start in life

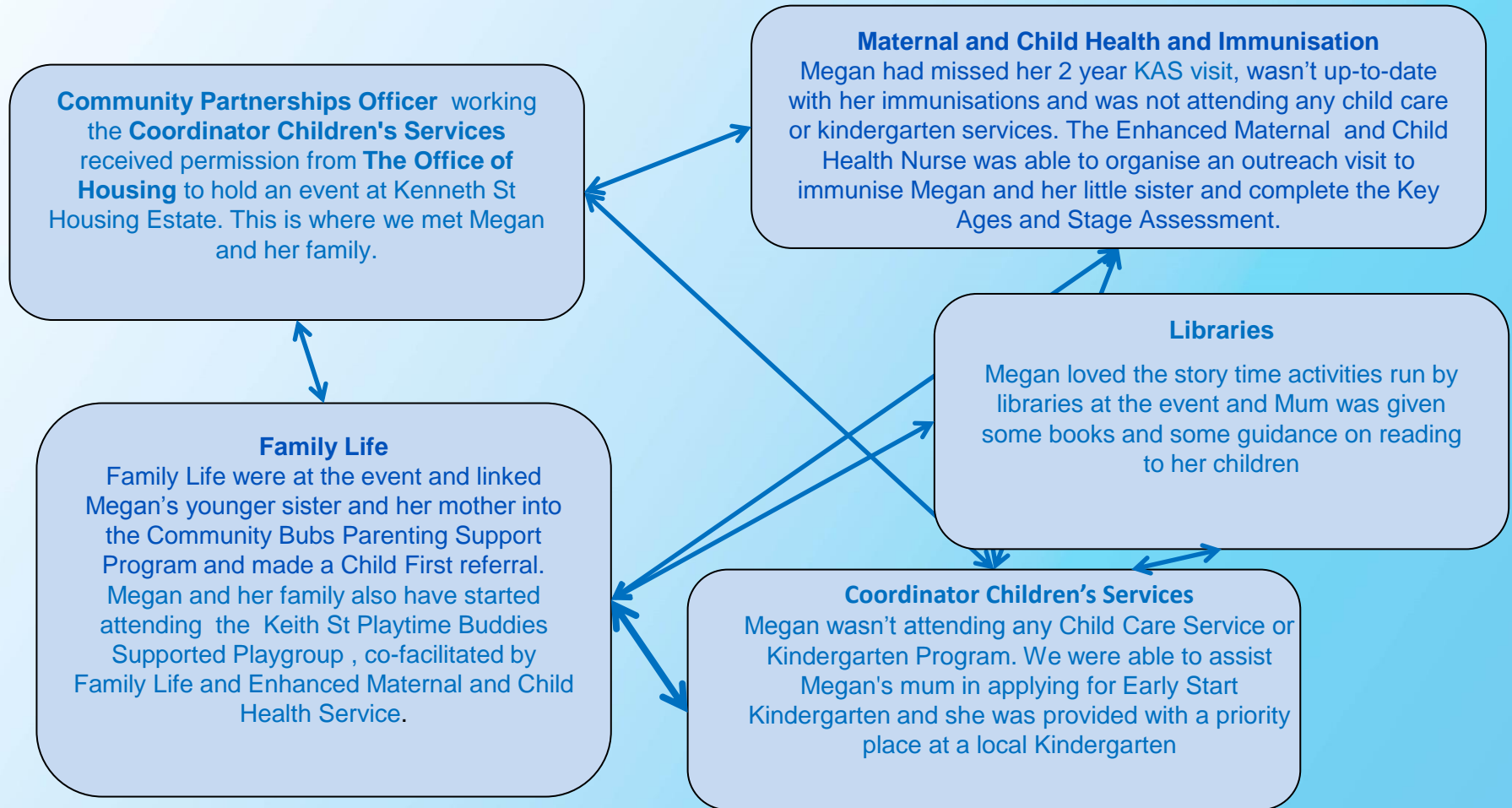


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What's the beauty of collaboration and Council led Community Development Working Groups ?



We first met 3 year old Megan at the Family Fun Day





Working Together Initiative

Casey, Cardinia
&
City of Greater
Dandenong

Improve participation
in early childhood
services

build capacity of
professionals to
work with young
children

Working Together

Child First

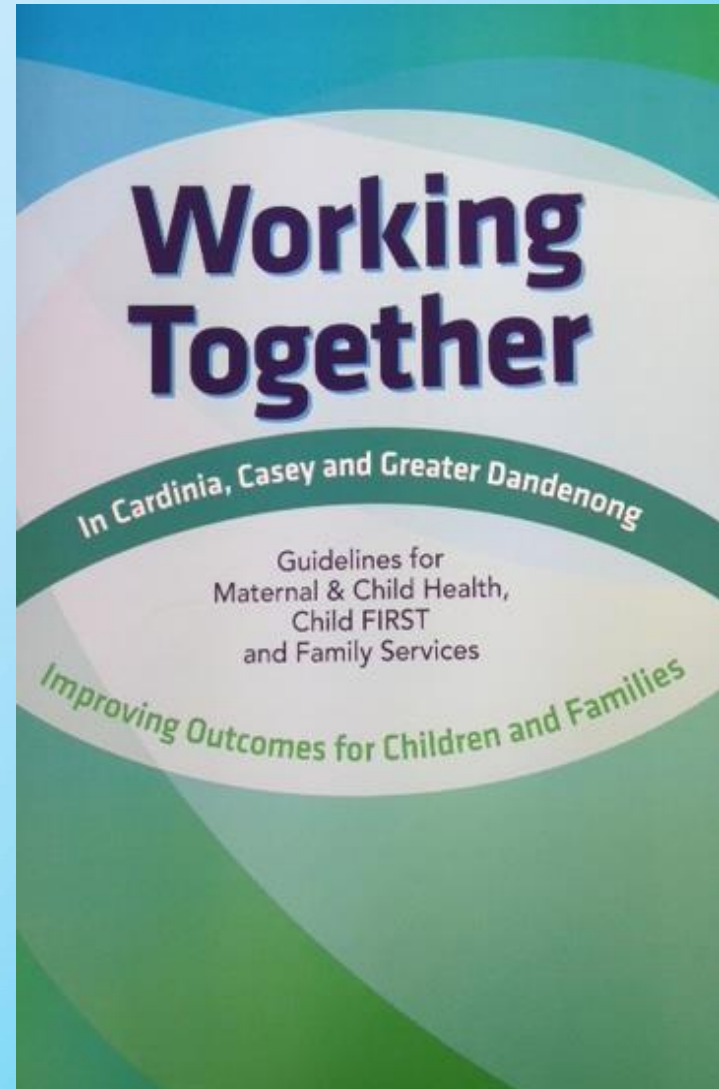
Family Services

foster links with early childhood services

Working Together Initiative

A resource was developed for each service:

- Outlining the service provision
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Referral pathways and guides
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- Workforce exchange project:
 - Professionals working together for a day
 - Improved understanding
 - Better Communication
 - Collaborative partnerships



Thank you!

