**The Practice Principles**

**Video 1 of 2**

**Partnerships with professionals**

(0.14 – 2.02)  
Anne Stonehouse: My name is Anne Stonehouse. In this video on partnerships with professionals, we’ll explore what it means for early childhood professionals to work in a collaborative way with other professionals and why collaborations matter. Partnerships with professionals is one of the practice principles in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. This video supports the practice principle and should be used in conjunction with the practice principle guide on partnerships with professionals. You can find the practice principle guide on the website of the Department of Education and Training. Collaboration among professionals is central to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, which was designed to foster co-operation and collaboration among a broad range of professionals working with children from birth to eight, promoting children’s learning, development and health is complex and requires professionals to work together with each other and with families rather than working in isolation. Professionals can work collaboratively with many different professionals and organisations in their community and in a variety of ways. Some professionals work collaboratively in an integrated service which often means they work in the same building or complex of buildings and share a common management structure. Services don’t need to be formally integrated or co-located in order for professionals to collaborate. Today we’ll be visiting three services, Milleara integrated learning and development centre, Wyndham Park Primary school and Leongatha Children’s centre. The professionals and parents at these children’s services will help us explore different models of collaboration and identify some common keys to success.

(2.03 – 3.19)  
Kirsten Herrald: Oh look, I know in the 4 year old program, been able to access the preschool field officer is a big help to me, often you can’t quite pinpoint particular concerns when it comes to children so having her as ally or someone I can rely on and I suppose to help support any concerns I might have about a child so she’s probably my biggest resource for the 4-year old kindergarten program and I certainly value her opinion enormously and she certainly gets the ball rolling in terms of supporting or accessing other networks if there’s additional support that family or child might need. The kindergarten process for making referrals is starting with Michelle Gough, the preschool field officer. So she’s my first point of contact, certainly early on in the year, there’s lots and lots of conversations with families about their child, if we all in the same page and we all trying to achieve the same thing, it makes the outcome much more positive I suppose and without having that circle of support, you know me, the parent, the professional, whoever it might be then I don’t think the outcome would be as great.

(3.20 – 3.44)  
Michelle Gough: Collaboration obviously is the key to my work, so it’s really about working with other professionals in the centre that are seeing the child for 15+ hours are week. Any good partnership or collaborative relationship has to be based on mutual respect, a respect of each other’s knowledge and that you all bring something different to the table, in terms of working with the child and a different knowledge of where the child’s at.

(3.45 – 4.57)  
Anne Stonehouse: In order to support children’s learning and development, professionals need to collect and share information with each other, whatever your professional background and role, having a more complete picture of the child, their health and wellbeing, learning and development makes it more likely that you can contribute to positive outcomes for the child and family. Understanding your responsibilities regarding privacy is critical, Victorian privacy laws permit you to share personal and health information between services with a consent of a parent or a legal guardian, if you want to disclose information about a child to another service that is also working with that child or family, you must do two things – first, obtain the parents or legal guardian’s consent and second, only disclose information that the other service or professional needs to know in order to support the child or family. If consent is not provided, then disclosing the information is still permitted in some circumstances, if you are unsure about your responsibilities regarding privacy, you should seek advice from your employer.

(4.58 – 5.58)  
Michelle Gough: As a preschool field officer in Bass Coast in South Gippsland, I actually get referred children with any need so they genuinely not children who have identified disabilities, they more children that will just enrol in the kindergarten and then the educator’s feel they have a concern or it might be we’ve had a number of children later being identified as gifted, so just anything beyond the usual realm of typical development. I find that they usually know, because they know the children so well, their innate feeling gut feeling about the child is nearly always correct. So often I just come out to confirm for them, yes I do see what you saying and there is an issue with that child and we either do need to refer on or sometimes just about know what you doing is correct, continue doing what you doing, they are making progress and perhaps having realistic goals for children.

(5.58 – 6.22)  
Anne Stonehouse: How does collaboration benefit children and their families? In short, it almost always leads to better outcomes. Collaboration is as especially important for children with disabilities or in difficult family circumstances, but all children and families will benefit through access to inclusive practices, not having to tell their story over and over, consistent advice and smoother transitions between services.

(6.23 – 7.28)  
Tenielle Bentley: We do a six-month plan of the five areas of development for him and we work on major goals that we wanna do and how we gonna do them, that plan then I forward on to every other place that I get help from, so all the other speech, OT, physio. There’s plan here as well that everyone can read and work on and add to and say well you know, and that’s where the specialist children’s services come in handy here cos they can go through the plan with the room leaders and then say, “well look we can work on this by doing this her or these sort of ideas to help and develop . Well if benefits mean the fact that I don’t have to do everything myself cos obviously there’s a lot of things to follow up with the, you know three separate services that we see every week and we gonna all the exercises and everything you need to do with him. At least I’ve got those people there knowing what I want for Jay, come in here and say where we need to take this step.

(7.29 - 7.37)  
Linda McMullan: The staff know us so there’s been a relationship built on trust.

(7.38 - 7.46)  
Kerry Conway: And it goes, good partnerships goes both ways because we certainly get a lot of information from the childcare staff.

(7.47 – 7.56)  
Linda McMullan: The parent is the centre of this partnership despite the fact that we calling it collaborative relationships with professionals.

(7.57 – 8.06)  
Kerry Conway: And yeah, another benefit for the families in the collaboration is that they really only telling their story one time and everyone else can share that.