



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies
Stronger Families Learning Exchange

The Stronger Families Learning Exchange aims to contribute to the formation of an evidence base about the effectiveness of early intervention from which to inform policy, practice and research in strengthening families and communities. It does this through the provision of a clearinghouse and action research support for Stronger Families and Communities Strategy projects. The Stronger Families Learning Exchange, based at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, is funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services.

Contents

- 2 Editorial
- 3 Stronger Families and Communities Strategy: Communities for Children
- 6 "Nice Noise": Parent education and playgroups
- 10 Being an insider and or outsider
- 15 Family-centred practice: An evaluation of an early childhood intervention Service
- 18 Parents and Kids Together: Supporting families early
- 22 Talking Realities ... young parenting: A peer education program
- PROJECT PROFILES**
- 26 Project introductions
- 32 Project Updates
- REGULAR FEATURES**
- 48 Literature Highlights
- 54 Conferences
- 59 SFLEX Services

© Australian Institute of Family Studies – Commonwealth of Australia 2004

Views expressed in Learning Exchange publications are those of individual authors and may not reflect Department or Institute policy.

Bulletin Editors: Helen Cheney, Jane Mallick and Ellen Fish.

Australian Institute of Family Studies
300 Queen Street
Melbourne 3000 Australia
Phone: (03) 9214 7888 Fax: (03) 9214 7839
Email: cafca@aifs.gov.au
Internet: www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/index.html

Designed by Double Jay Graphic Design

Cover: A playgroup picnic outside Blackstone. Photo shows Jennifer Mitchell digging for "Maku" grubs. Photograph taken by Cath Farrington.

Joshua Reid with Donna Lee Gregory (KEIS physiotherapist), and Kimberly Reid (mother) in background, Kurrajong Early Intervention Service, Wagga Wagga. Photograph taken by Lindy Maginness.

Logo developed from artwork by Louise Kyriakou

Printed by Impact Printing

ISSN 1446-8549

Print Post Approved 381624/02083



EDITORIAL

Stronger Families Learning Exchange

THE FINAL BULLETIN

Welcome to the final edition of the Stronger Families Learning Exchange *Bulletin*. We have enjoyed learning more about projects funded under the first phase of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS). It is inspiring to see such great work being undertaken and then shared with the broader community.

This edition highlights the work of projects funded in the first round of the Strategy in a number of lead articles and project reports. It also includes an update from the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services on the next phase of the Strategy and introduces more of the new projects funded under this phase.

From SFLEX to CAFCA

The role of the Australian Institute of Family Studies in this next phase of the Strategy is still unfolding. The new name, *Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia* (CAFCA) reflects a broader role. We expect to provide many of the same services, including library support and web-based resources, along with resources for community development and local research. As a member of the Strategy's national evaluation team, we will also be working with projects to identify and promote case studies of "promising practice". We would like to continue communicating with you, so please complete the covering address sheet if you want to stay on our mail list.

CAFCA team

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves as the new team working at the Institute to support projects funded under the Strategy.

Helen Cheney is the manager of the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia. She was born and raised



Helen Cheney (left) and Sana Wassouf

in Melbourne, although she has lived and worked in Queensland, Western Australia, Northern Territory and New South Wales. Helen has worked as a manager, researcher, educator and consultant

throughout Australia with a range of community, government and industry groups. Her work has focused on community development, public policy, social change and sustainability. She has particular experience working with people who are disadvantaged, including Indigenous, low-income, youth, migrant and women's groups.

Helen is keen that the Institute continues the good work of the Stronger Families Learning Exchange, to ensure that the learning and evaluation from projects can be shared with the broader community. Also, she would like to be involved in creating effective communication processes that enable good practice in the field to inform public policy and program development.

Sana Wassouf has been at the Australian Institute of Family Studies for over seven years. During this time she has worked as a librarian where she supported projects funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy enabling her to make a valuable contribution to her role with Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia. Most recently she has worked in the Strategy and Communications unit. She is currently CAFCA's Communication and Networks Development Officer. Sana's experience in the community sector involves running playgroups for children and teaching English to refugees.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the *Bulletin* – the final one in this series – and we look forward to working with you in the future.