

# Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc

## February 2010 Newsletter

View FCAV / PPSS  
Info Sheets online:

- [FCAV / PPSS Info Sheet: Financial information for carers of young people leaving care](#)
- [FCAV / PPSS Info Sheet: Leaving care—developing independence and community connections](#)

## CREATE Report Card 2009 Transitioning from care

This comprehensive National report can be accessed at the CREATE website [http://www.create.org.au/files/pdf/Create\\_ReportCard09\\_Colour\(LR\).pdf](http://www.create.org.au/files/pdf/Create_ReportCard09_Colour(LR).pdf). If you would like to support the CREATE Foundation 'What's the Plan' Campaign you can pledge your support on CREATE website!

The CREATE FOUNDATION Report Card 2009 raises serious concerns regarding young people transitioning from care. It indicates that young people are leaving care unprepared. It finds that almost 64% of young people surveyed did not have or know about a leaving care plan. It also finds that young people who do not successfully transition from care experience poor life outcomes. 34.7% of young people surveyed experienced homelessness within 12 months of leaving care. 35.3% of young people surveyed completed Year 12, compared with 74% of the general population.

### What's the solution?

All young people exiting care must have a useful leaving care plan that has been developed in conjunction with the young person.

CREATE has launched a "What's the plan?" campaign asking all carers to be active in transition planning.

Carers you can:

- Use the FCAV Info Sheets:
  1. *Financial information for carers of young people leaving care;* or
  2. *Leaving care: Developing*

*independence and community connections.*

- Ask workers what the leaving care plan is for the young person in your care – let FCAV know if you are having an issue getting traction on the development of this plan.
- Ensure that the plan is practical, timely (commencing at around 15 years of age), and is communicated clearly to the young person.

Along with effective planning, CREATE foundation believes the State and Territory Governments must improve infrastructure around:

1. Education
2. Employment
3. Housing
4. Life Skills
5. Training (for carers & workers to help them better prepare young people)
6. Monitoring

Let's ensure that the young people we care for are adequately supported.

For further details, you can download a copy of the Report Card at [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au), visit CREATE Foundation's website about leaving care at [www.createyourownfuture.org.au](http://www.createyourownfuture.org.au) or contact Cathy Carnovale, Victorian Acting State Coordinator on (03) 9918 0002.



Creating Opportunities for Children & Young People in Care

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## A Message from the FCAV Office

Welcome everyone to our new look FCAV newsletter for 2010. As well as being full of useful information we have elected to focus on an important aspect of care – **preparing to transition into independence.**

We are proud of our recent publications

- Our website is looking swish
- Our Annual Report 2008/09 was flash
- Our Info Sheet series is increasing in topics
- Our bi-monthly newsletter & bi-monthly e-news (you will therefore receive updates from us each month if we have your email address)



Katie Hooper  
FCAV Executive Officer

### A couple of updates from the office

I was in a meeting with DHS late last year and heard plan of consideration being given to **continuing carer payments** until the end of the school year for young people 19 years of age and completing high school. Stay tuned.

FCAV & PPSS are planning on doing a **survey to gather information on the support needs of carers.** This will be done over the next couple of months so if members could update their email address with us, [admin@fcav.org](mailto:admin@fcav.org) that would be a great help.

FCAV have been approached to hold carer focus groups and be part of the **Children's Court Review.** Please be in touch if you have experiences of Children's Court that will inform this work.

Our information on the Jan 2010 Code Red days and **Victorian Carers Bushfire Preparedness Response** is that approx 75 carers were impacted by this serious bushfire warning and had to relocate. We have had mixed feedback regarding the impact of this day on carers and children in their care. DHS will be reviewing the procedure to make improvements.

The **Specialised in Home Care model** addressing [reform direction 2: a better choice of placement options for children/young people across the State](#) is still being developed. Key focuses of this model include the carer being a key partner in the team surrounding the child, remuneration acknowledging this increased responsibility, carers processing relevant qualifications and therapeutic care practice, as well as an appropriate support system around them.

See back page of this newsletter for **FCAV regional seminar** plans and stay tuned for our metro learning opportunities for FCAV members.

I hope you all enjoy the following information and don't hesitate to contact us if you need any other information, clarification or updates.

## FCAV/PPSS Info Sheets—Leaving Care Series

FCAV have been aware for some time that the area of Leaving Care, and readying young people for independent living is a significant issue. In response to this growing area of concern, the Carer Information & Support Service have developed two FCAV/PPSS Info Sheets addressing some of the issues surrounding Leaving Care. The first of these Info Sheets, [Financial information to assist carers of young people leaving care](#), issued in July 2009 focuses on the financial entitlements available to young people leaving care. The Info Sheet provides detail of State & Federal Government entitlements and lists additional useful supports for young people.

The second Info Sheet in this series, [Developing Independence and Community Connections](#), provides a checklist for carers and young people to use to determine their readiness for independent living across a range of areas including education, training, employment, self care skills, managing money, parenting and many more.

Copies of these Info Sheets are available via the Foster Care Association of Victoria website at [www.fcav.org.au](http://www.fcav.org.au) or by calling FCAV on 9489 9770.

We encourage all carers to ensure the young people in your care are ready to take on the world around them.

## CREATE Report Card 2009

### Highlights of the young people's survey



Creating Opportunities for Children & Young People in Care

#### Who participated?

Surveys were completed by 471 young people aged 15 to 25 years of age:

- 275 were still in care and 196 had left care;
- more females than males participated;
- just over 60% of young people lived in capital or large cities, with a quarter being from small towns, and the rest living in rural areas;
- over two thirds of participants were non-Indigenous Australians and 22.3% were Indigenous Australians, 10.5% were from other cultural backgrounds; and
- almost a third said they had a disability, with many of them not receiving any support for their condition.

#### What we found:

##### In-care experience

- participants, on average, came into care at about age nine, remained in care about eight years and experienced almost six placements over the last five years;
- young people were living in, or had most recently lived in: foster care (36.5%), residential care (24.8%), kinship care (13.5%), and independent living (7.1%).

##### Education and/or employment

Still in-care group:

- a quarter said they did not attend school;
- of those who had left school, 12 were only 15 years old and 30 were 16 years old;
- of those still in care who had left school, 26.9% completed Year 10 and 25.6% completed Year 9.

Left care group:

- of those who had left care and school, 35.3% completed Year 12 and 33.5% completed Year 10.

All together 246 young people not in school told us how they mainly spend their time:

- almost 30% were unemployed;
- 15.4% were working full-time;
- 12.6% were in part-time or casual employment;
- 11% were studying at TAFE; and
- 2.8% were studying at Uni.

##### Finances

Those who had left care were asked some questions about financial matters:

- over half said they relied on Centrelink payments for income;
- some 16% received wages and Centrelink payments; and
- about a quarter were self supporting through employment.

Low incomes contributed to financial problems for some young people, and some wanted more help with budgeting and money management, while others identified the need for more money.

##### Housing

Some questions about housing were answered by those who had left care:

- about half said they had to leave their placement when their care order expired;
- just over 40% didn't know where they'd be living when they left care;
- those who knew where they would be going, on average, knew less than a fortnight before leaving care; and
- over one third had experienced homelessness in the first year after leaving care.

While young people still in care were fairly confident about finding accommodation, those who had left care reported some difficulty in finding and keeping accommodation.

For further information on the [2009 CREATE Record Card](#) go to [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au) .

"Just over 40% (of young people) didn't know where they'd be living when they left care"

CREATE Report Card 2009

## Foster Care Association of Victoria: Children's Court of Victoria

### Seeking your experiences and feedback about the Children's Court in Victoria

The Foster Care Association of Victoria is working in conjunction with the Victorian Law Reform Commission to look at the existing practices within the Children's Court of Victoria and how services might be improved to achieve better outcomes and experiences for children and their families. The Victorian Law Reform Commission has been requested by the Attorney-General, Rob Hulls to submit a completed report by 30 June 2010 detailing both its findings and recommendations for change.

The commission is now seeking the views of people who have had direct contact with the Children's Court. This might be as a foster carer of a young person who has been at Court or as a kinship carer looking after a grandchild, brother, sister or niece/nephew. This may be from a young person themselves. How did the experience of going to court make you feel? What were the outcomes for you and your family? What could be done better?

To help gather this feedback, FCAV is inviting carers to attend a series of focus groups to look at issues such as:

- What have your experiences of the Children's Court been?
- What did you know about the case before going to court?
- Did the outcome reached differ from what you expected?
- How did the lawyers conduct themselves?
- Did you understand all that was going on?
- How were the facilities at court?
- Have you attended Children's Court in another location apart from Little Lonsdale Street (for example Moorabbin)? Did this experience differ?
- What could be done better?
- Anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with the Children's Court or Child Protection services?

The focus groups to be hosted by the Foster Care Association of Victoria are scheduled for:

- Thursday 25th February, 2010 from 10.30 to 12.00pm;
- Thursday 25th February, 2010 from 5.30pm to 7.00pm;
- Wednesday 10th March, 2010 from 10.30 to 12.00pm;

The sessions will be conducted at the FCAV office at 48 High St, Northcote and refreshments will be available. Each group will be limited to 8 places, so please ensure you RSVP quickly if you wish to attend one of these sessions.

Alternatively your responses/feedback on any or all of the topics listed above can be sent directly to FCAV by close of business on Friday 19th March via:

**Email:** To [admin@fcav.org.au](mailto:admin@fcav.org.au), quoting 'Children's Court Project' in the subject line;

**Telephone:** Call 9489 9770 & someone in the office will record your feedback;

**Fax:** Fax through your feedback to 9489 9119;

**Letter:** c/- Foster Care Association of Victoria, 48 High St, Northcote, 3770.

Many thanks for taking part in this important project. The staff and Board at the Foster Care Association of Victoria will continue to work hard to ensure you are valued and your voices are heard.

## In Brief

### Opportunities for FCAV Members

#### 2010 Australian Grand Prix

We are hopeful of securing tickets to the 2010 F1 Australian Grand Prix at Albert Park again this year. If we do receive tickets it will be for Children's Day on Thursday 25th March 2010. While we won't know until late February if we will be given tickets, you can lodge your expression of interest to attend this event with a child/children in your care by emailing us at [admin@fcav.org](mailto:admin@fcav.org) or by calling the office on 9489 9770.

Due to the limited tickets likely to be available we will need to restrict this offer for expressions of interest to FCAV members only.



#### 2010 National Conference Wrest Point Casino, Hobart, Tasmania 27th-29th August 2010

The FCAV is offering one lucky FCAV member the opportunity to attend this year's National Conference in Hobart. FCAV will cover the return airfares, 2 night's accommodation and conference registration and in return the successful carer must be willing to share their learning with others in the form of a written summary of the sessions attended, along with an informal presentation of the summary at a morning tea at the carer's agency.

So, if you are looking to expand your learning and to then share your learning with others, tell us why we should select you to attend this year's conference. Send your 200 word "**Pick Me!**" entry submission to FCAV via:

Email: [admin@fcav.org](mailto:admin@fcav.org)

Fax: (03)9489 9119

Post: 48 High St, Northcote, 3770

Entries close Friday 30th April, 2010.

**Good Luck!**

### Kinship Care Update: Roll Out of the Kinship Care Model

While an official announcement from Minister for Community Services, Lisa Neville is still pending, we can advise that 11 service providers have been identified and selected to manage kinship services across the three metropolitan regions, and the Hume region, and a further 8 service providers will be announced in March for the remaining regional areas.

We will ensure the full announcement is posted to the FCAV website, so keep a lookout for this breaking news.

### Free kindergarten for children known to Child Protection and children in out of home care with a concession card:

The Victorian Government is committed to providing additional support to children most at risk to attend a quality kindergarten program for free. Research indicates that learning in the early years, such as quality kindergarten programs, lays the foundation for the future, and sets children on a path to success in education, work and life. For vulnerable children, an early start to kindergarten is essential.

For the following children, a kindergarten program is free:

- 3 year old children known to Child Protection;
- 3 and 4 year old Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children;
- 4 year old children who hold, or whose parent/guardian holds a health care card, pensioner concession card, Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card, Asylum Seeker or Refugee Visa.

### How to take advantage of free kindergarten for your child:

When you enrol your child in a kindergarten program at any time during the year, let the kindergarten provider know that your child is eligible for free kindergarten because:

- They are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten (for three year old children known to Child Protection);
- They are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
- They hold a valid concession card or visa (You will be asked to show them a copy)

For further information call the **Kindergarten Hotline** on **1300 731 947** or visit our website:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood)

To find a quality State funded kindergarten program in your area contact your local council or visit

[www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice) .

**"Opportunities for FCAV members and children and young people in out of home care"**

## A Message from the Carer Information & Support Service

### Reporting Summary

There were 204 contacts received to the Carer Information and Support Service for the period 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2009. These calls, emails and letters revealed 299 issues currently impacting carers including 69 issues recorded as FCAV—General Enquiry calls. It is pleasing to be able to report that of these 69 General Enquiries, 22 calls (32%) were from people keen to learn more about becoming foster carers. The breakdown of issues raised are as follows:

Category	No of issues recorded	% of issues recorded
A. Financial—Centrelink	22	7%
B. Financial—DHS	40	13%
C. Education/Health/Mental Health	6	2%
D. Agencies—Issues	77	26%
E. DHS—Issues	25	8%
F. Legal	23	8%
G. Access	15	5%
H. Challenging Behaviours	8	3%
I. FCAV—General Enquiries	69	23%
J. Permanent Care	14	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>

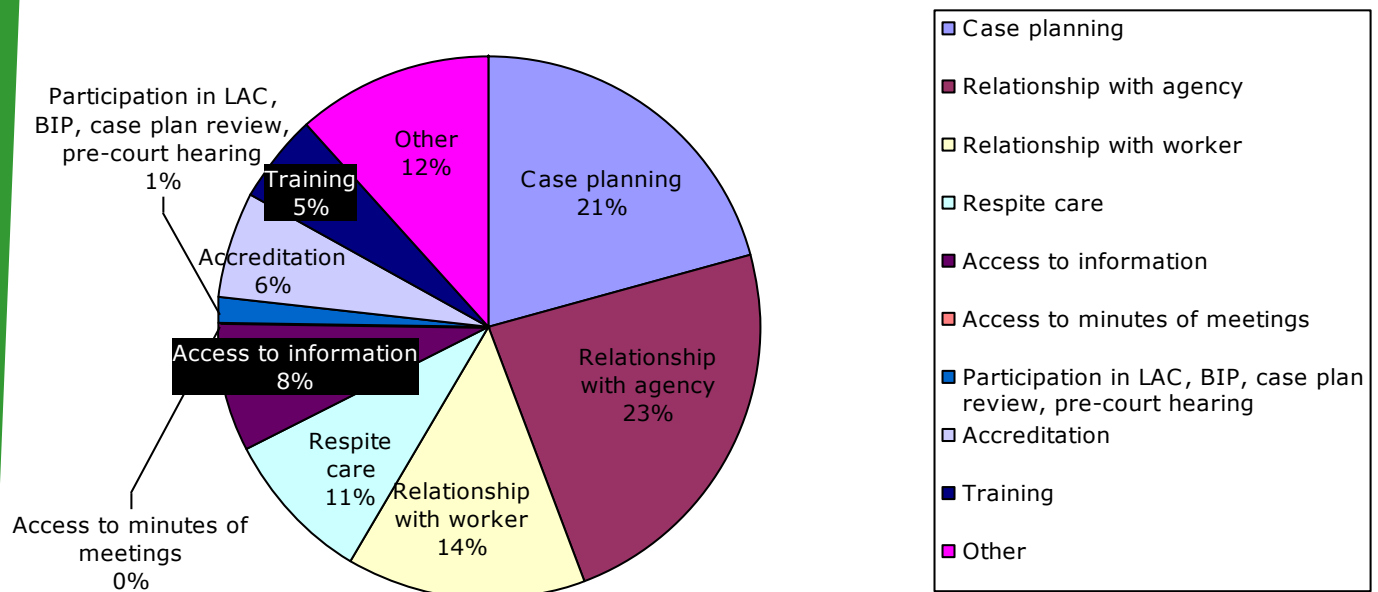
47% of the calls received to the Carer Information and Support Service were from carers (or others) seeking information, while 48% of callers required individual support and 4% of callers required referral to a specialised or targeted service. Interestingly, the 48% of callers requiring individual support accounted for 80% of the total work time generated through the Service.

The combination of the DHS related categories *Financial—DHS* and *DHS—Issues* represented an overall 21% of the issues recorded for the period, with the larger portion of these issues pertaining to financial issues.

The key issue category identified for the review period July-December 2009 was '*D—Agency Issues*'. This category dominated the carer concerns received, representing 26% of the issues captured for the period.

A breakdown of the calls received to this category is reflected in the graph below:

### Agencies - Issues



## Recommendations

With 43% of Agency-related calls to the Carer Information and Support Service for this quarter focusing on *Case Planning, Relationship with Agency* and *Relationship with Worker*, it is clear that a strong and effective working relationship between carers and workers is vital if the placement is to proceed smoothly. In addition, it is important to understand the responsibility for developing and maintaining these relationships lies with all parties involved—it cannot be left to one person to manage.

The FCAV recognises the need for carers and workers to work closely together to ensure the best interests of the children in out of home care are maintained. As part of the FCAV / PPSS Info Sheet series, we have developed a practical worksheet to be used by workers and carers as a tool to aid in establishing ground rules for communication. It is our hope, this tool will assist carers and workers in having clear processes and identification of the following:

- ✓ Carer's expectation of their worker;
- ✓ That foster carers and workers meet face to face—how often?
- ✓ Preferred methods of contact for both carers and workers;
- ✓ Urgent and non-urgent calls to be responded to within agreed timeframes;
- ✓ That feedback about the working relationship be heard and responded to, inclusive of agreed timeframes;
- ✓ If carers are unhappy with any part of the supervisory relationship they will...;
- ✓ Foster care worker's expectations of their carer;
- ✓ The need for workers to discuss issues pertaining to the child with the carer;
- ✓ That the carer will advise the worker of issues relating to the child as soon as possible;
- ✓ That the carer will provide feedback to the worker in a timely and constructive manner and if any areas of concern are not addressed the carer can escalate the matter to a team leader;
- ✓ That the carer/worker contract be reviewed regularly to ensure targeted agreements are still relevant;
- ✓ If workers are unhappy with any part of the supervisory relationship they will...;

All relationships require work and commitment from the parties involved. This is particularly important when the needs and interests of a third party could be adversely affected by the failure of the relationship.

FCAV urges all carers and workers to strive to maintain strong working relationships to ensure a supportive and effective relationship can be achieved. The benefits of committing to this relationship will not only see happier and more effective interactions between the carers and workers, but will in turn create positive impacts for both the placement, the agency and in turn, the children in out of home care.

Carers care for children in a very complex system. Sometimes decisions that are made are those a foster carer would make, or necessarily, understand, in the case of the child they are caring for. It is the role of the agency and agency worker to explain the situation to the carer, actively listen to their views, acknowledge their views, give further information and clarification to the carer where required.


This can seem as if it takes time away from other tasks but FCAV believe it is an important part of the process and will add to the support, and maybe help, the overall situation for the carer.

In 2010, FCAV will seek feedback from agencies to determine what, if anything, can be done to further the training opportunities for carers and agency workers in the areas of relationship building and effective negotiation and case planning.


The *Building & Maintaining Effective Working Relationships* FCAV / PPSS Info Sheet has been released. The draft Info Sheet is previewed on the following pages and copies are available via the website or by calling 9489 9770.

# Draft Release - FCAV/PPSS Info Sheet

## Building & maintaining effective working relationships



**FCAV/PPSS INFO SHEET: Building & maintaining effective working relationships**



### Foster Care Association of Victoria Position:

As a foster carer, you will be required to enter into a number of agreements to ensure the best interests of children in your care. These will set out legal obligations, responsibilities and best practice frameworks. The key to a successful placement however lies in the quality of the relationship between the carer and the agency case worker.

This document has been developed as a tool to clarify expectations and encourage open communication when establishing the foundations for a positive working relationship. It should be considered by the carer in advance to enable reflection on past experiences. This might include what's been useful with previous workers, what hasn't worked so well, what you would like done differently etc. Further, it is essential that this document is reviewed regularly and within agreed timelines.

Guidelines have also been established by your CSO and in the Home-based care handbook prepared by the Department, setting out expectations in relation to communication and information sharing.

**Carer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Worker:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Carer's expectations of their worker:

What are the carer's expectations of their worker?

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

That I see my foster care worker for a face to face visit ...how often? \_\_\_\_\_

That my preferred method of communication for routine matters is:

Mobile Phone       Home Phone       Work Phone       Email

That calls will be returned as soon as possible:

**When urgent:** within \_\_\_\_\_ hours      **When not urgent:** within \_\_\_\_\_ hours


That feedback about our working relationship is heard, and a response provided, including an indication of what action will be taken.

If I'm not happy with a part of our supervisory relationship it is agreed that I will:

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_



**FCAV/PPSS INFO SHEET: Building & maintaining effective working relationships**



**Foster care workers expectations of the carer:**

What are the worker’s expectations of the carer?

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ That when we meet I will need to discuss with you issues relating to the child/young person in your care, your support needs and information required for accountability purposes.
- ✓ That you will raise any relevant issues with me relating to the child/young person, or your role, as soon as possible.
- ✓ That you will provide feedback about my work practices in a timely and constructive manner, and if not satisfactorily dealt with, you may raise concerns with my line manager.
- ✓ That when you ring and leave a message, you let me know the urgency of the matter, and what is required so that I can better respond to your call.
- ✓ That I will review this understanding on a regular basis as part of the carer review process.

If I’m not happy with a part of our supervisory relationship it is agreed that I will:

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

**Next Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signatures**

**Carer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Worker:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



**If you have any feedback regarding this latest FCAV/PPSS Info Sheet, please forward your ideas/thoughts to Beth via email to [b.laister@fcav.org](mailto:b.laister@fcav.org) or give us a call on 9489 9770.**

## A Day with Dave Ziegler The Science of Success in Working with Difficult Children

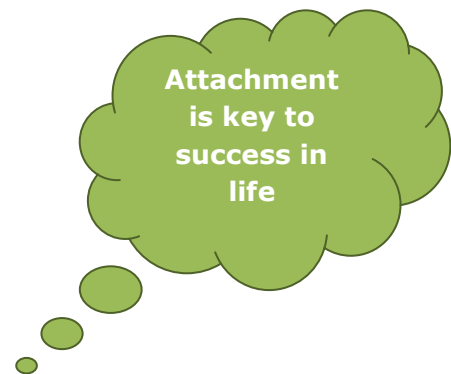
Dr Dave Ziegler, Ph.D., L.M.F.T., L.P.C., is a Licensed Psychologist, Executive Director and Organisation Founder of Jasper Mountain, Oregon, USA, with a 37 year career as a therapist, clinical supervisor, foster parent and program manager. An international authority and presenter on issues related to trauma and psychological treatment, Dave has authored multiple books and publications including:

- **Raising children who refuse to be raised**
- **Traumatic experience and the brain**
- **Achieving success with impossible children**
- **Beyond healing**

Dave was recently in Melbourne running a full day program on 'The science of success in working with difficult children'. As part of our metropolitan conference training initiative for 2009, FCAV sponsored 30 places for carers to attend this great training opportunity. The following notes are the thoughts, ideas, 'wow's' and insights we found valuable while attending the session – we hope this information is as valuable to you as it has been for us...

### **Trauma gets worse throughout life if untreated!**

- Trauma will affect the physiological state as well as the mental state of the child;
- Children who have suffered trauma will lose the ability to play and to bond – they will struggle to maintain friendships;
- Traumatized kids will go out and seek equally damaged friends;
- Traumatized kids will die younger than their counterparts from medical diseases (not from mental illness);



[www.jaspermountain.org](http://www.jaspermountain.org)

Jasper Mountain provides a continuum of programs that meets the needs of emotionally disturbed children and their families. Services include an intensive residential treatment program with a therapeutic school, a short-term residential center, treatment foster care program, community based wraparound program and crisis response services.

(Source: [www.jaspermountain.org](http://www.jaspermountain.org))

Check out the website for articles, resources and further information about Jasper Mountain.

## Influences for Health & Disease

*"The inner working model developed by the level of attachment will form the basis to appraise, interpret and regulate social and emotional information for the person's life span. There is a strong correlation between this bond and adult health or disease".*

Dr Allan Schore

- Genetic coding play a major role;
- Epigenetics – potentiating factors promote or depress the influence of genes;
- The social environment plays a major role in determining the interplay of Mother Nature & Mother Nurture;
- The fundamental influence determining the social world of a child is the quality of attachment;
- Early attachments determine structural and operational functions of the brain;

Dr Dave Ziegler

## Six Processes of Neuro-development

### Promote Survival

**Adaptation:** The infant brain is prepared to develop around the conditions found in the environment, whether nurturing or threatening.

**Imprinting:** The more frequent the traumatic experience or neural activation, the more indelible the imprint or processing template through which all new input is filtered. Very early experiences become the framework through which the brain perceives and understands others and the environment from then on, unless these perceptions are modified through potent further experiences.

**Sensitisation:** Repeated exposure to trauma produces sensitisation, or full arousal to minor stressors.  
The individual's limbic memory produces a reactive response pattern to all levels of future stress.

**Use Dependent Development:** Neurons that connect, communicate and work with other neurons develop, those that do not ....die. ("Neurons that fire together wire together" – Voigt Baier & deLima). Nurturing environments produce neuro-networks of comfort, self regulation and optimism. Threatening environments produce networks for fight/flight, hypervigilance and pessimism.

**Sequential Progression:** Primitive brain regions develop first then more complex regions. Higher reasoning centres of the brain develop only when chronic survival issues are not a constant focus of the brain.

### Brain Structures

- **Orbitofrontal Cortex** – The 'CEO' of the brain that pulls all sensory information into a meaningful whole.
- **Right Frontal Cortex** - Regulates emotions both positive and negative.
- **Right Hemisphere** – Includes the intuitive, creative and social brain.
- **Limbic System** – The emotional/reactive brain including traumatic memory.

**All overlap and interact**

### Limbic System

- **Amygdala** – Signals threats, sources of fear, and triggers autonomic arousal.
- **Anterior Cingulate** – Involved in regulation of emotion, related to identifying others, connecting and separating, moderating arousal.
- **Insula** – Enables internal awareness and a sense of self as different from others.
- **Orbitofrontal Cortex within the Limbic System** – Provides meaning to identification and regulation of emotions.

The Orbitofrontal Cortex begins to develop only after birth and is shaped by attachment experiences which in turn impact:

- Social adjustment
- Mood control
- Drive & responsibility
- Defining the personality

Cavada & Schultz

"To be resilient in the face of stress is a primary indicator of both a secure attachment and of optimal childhood mental health".

Dr Allan Schore

### Some key points from Dr Dave Ziegler's presentation:

- Self regulation is controlled in the frontal cortex. If a child is never soothed as an infant, it has no way of learning to self-soothe or self regulate their own behaviour and emotions.
- Empathy is not an instinctive human trait. Empathy must be taught.
- Traumatized children have no idea why they act the way they do. If you ask a traumatized child "Why did you hit your sister?", their response will be "I don't know", and they are right – they do not know.
- Traumatized children have the mindset that their needs will never be met.
- Neglect is the biggest form of abuse for a child. Neglect programs the 'inner working model' of the child for life.
- Connecting with a child can open the mind to change the inner working model. If you can connect with a child, you can teach them to enable their mind to bond and attach with/to you.
- The brain's job is to protect and survive. It will focus on these objectives above all else.

**Handy hint** – The Limbic System handles memory, sexuality, emotions, attachment. The Limbic System in a traumatized child is always alert and active – permanent state of fight or flight. Instead of asking the question "Why did you hit your sister?", try saying "Tell me how you were feeling when you hit your sister - what was happening with you and what could you have done differently in the situation?"

**Note:** It's not always a great strategy to talk about this with a traumatized child straight after the event as their brain is not available to handle the conversation while they are angry. Instead, have the conversation when they want something. Eg; "We are going to have a quick three minute conversation and then you can go outside". Alternatively, talk to the child while driving in the car – they are more likely to speak freely if you are not looking directly at them.

- Jasper Mountain School – the staff have learned how to adapt the school to suit teaching a traumatized brain. Many traumatized children do not connect at school because school is not teaching what is relevant to them, which is basic survival.
- Lunch time and recess are the hardest times for traumatized children and they perceive everything and everyone around them to be a threat. There are too many variables present for the child's Amygdala, hence it is in a permanent state of danger alert.
- 70% of traumatized children are labelled as having learning disabilities. This is not due to any 'brain' problem, but rather is a direct result of their 'nurture' experience.
- 82% of children who arrive at Jasper Mountain are on medications for hyperactivity. There has been a 400% increase in the prescribing of hyperactivity medications to children in the USA in the last 20 years. 18% of children who come to Jasper Mountain remain on medications, but this is only in cases of highly traumatized children, and only after all other alternatives have been considered.
- We need to teach traumatized children to relax and decompress.
- We need to teach/educate traumatized children differently in schools.
- We need to change the traumatized child from the inside out, rather than from the outside in.
- To achieve success in changing a traumatized child's behaviour, you must have a positive impact on the brain.
- The human brain wants to be happy. The traumatized child's brain just wants to survive.
- Engage the front of the traumatized child's brain with a better way to survive and thrive in life.

**For a full copy of this twenty page conference summary, go to the FCAV Website or call the office on 9489 9770 and a copy can be sent out to you.**

## A Message from the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner



“The new resource provides information about how trauma impacts on young people’s behaviour, development, life choices and relationships”.

### From Isolation to Connection A guide to understanding and working with traumatised children and young people

‘From Isolation to Connection’ is a new resource for professionals and others in the community who work with traumatised children and young people.

This publication is part of a suite of resources produced by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner directed at different people in the community and focuses on the impact of trauma that has occurred through abuse and neglect.

Developed by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, the resource has been developed to help professionals and others working in the community better understand and respond more effectively to children and young people affected by trauma.

The new resource provides information about how trauma impacts on young people’s behaviour, development, life choices and relationships.

It contains a range of useful strategies and approaches for different

professional groups and carers to use in intervening to support young people affected by trauma.

It also provides a number of tips for workers on how to maintain their own health and wellbeing, while ensuring their responses to vulnerable young people are appropriate.

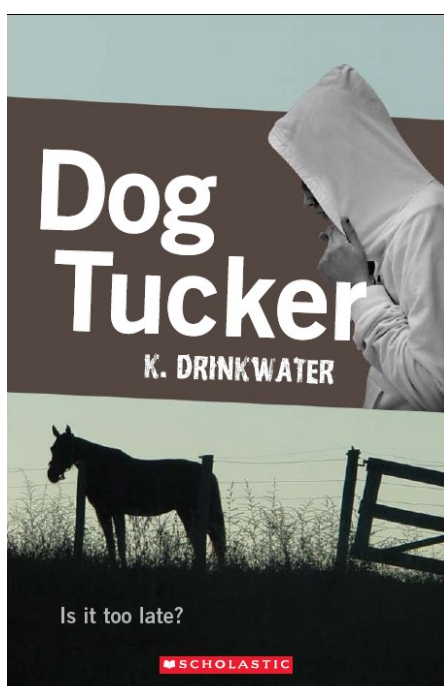
It may also be used with young people themselves to help them understand their experiences and reactions.

Free copies of the resource are available from the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner’s website at [www.ocsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au), or by phoning 8601 5884.

For further information about this great resource, please call Christine Galea on 8601 5894 at the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner.



## Reading opportunity for young people in care



### Dog Tucker by K Drinkwater

Angry and defiant, thirteen-year-old Devlin believes he’s unwanted. His younger siblings, who have been in foster care, are now back home with his mother, who is in an abusive relationship. He’s fed up with changing schools and foster homes, and decides to run away from his foster-uncle’s farm.

But then he meets a horse about to become ‘dog tucker’ and becomes involved in the harness racing scene, where he is instrumental in unravelling a deception.

For mature readers

*Kathryn is a first time author. She submitted this manuscript to the Tom Fitzgibbon Award where it made the shortlist. The committee members felt this story deserved to be published.*

## A Message from the Department of Human Services

### Leaving Care

The *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA) (s16) requires the Secretary, Department of Human Services to provide or arrange for the provision of services to support young people up to the age of 21 years to make the transition to independence from state care. It is important to know that all young people who remain on Custody or Guardianship Orders after they turn 16 years of age are eligible for Leaving Care supports up to 21 years. New funding has been provided in each DHS region for post care support, information & referral services, brokerage and mentoring.

**Mentoring services** are available to young people still in out of home care 16 to 18 years of age. While referrals are only for those young people between 16 to 18 years the aim of mentoring is to ensure safe adult friendships that the young person and the mentor can carry forward post care. These services are operating now in all regions.

**Post Care Support** services are established across Victoria helping young people who have left state care with information, referral assistance, or just a friendly person who they can talk to and help them with problems they might be having. The help provided can be for just a chat or a longer period of time to deal with a range of issues, for example:

- return or maintenance of education;
- help with pre-employment or vocational training;
- accessing employment or help with maintaining current employment;
- maintain existing accommodation or find accommodation;
- Where appropriate to support re-connection with family;
- to access brokerage funding for young people under 21 years who have left care and require funding to support them to maintain their independence; and
- to help young people with information on local services and supports.

**Leaving Care brokerage** is available to assist young people **either** transition to independence, or post care if they need additional help. The brokerage can be used for:

- **Accommodation** costs associated with setting up or maintaining accommodation;
- **Education/training/employment** - enabling a young person to successfully complete training or education;
- **Access to health and community services** that are not accessible via the Commonwealth Medicare scheme.

**Please note that Leaving Care brokerage cannot be used for:**

- items, equipment or treatment that should have been obtained prior to the young person's leaving state care (this is especially relevant for young people between 16 – 18 years of age);
- health care costs that can be met directly or at least partially reimbursed through Medicare and attending medical clinics that bulk bill;
- specialist services including physiotherapy, chiropractic, counselling and psychiatric, and audio/hearing treatments that have not been approved before the proposed treatment;
- other items which do not support the young person to attain or maintain independence.

### Transition Planning for young people in out of home care:

Transition planning should commence at a minimum 12 months, prior to their exit from state care. Young people who are 16 to 18 years and still in out of home care must be involved in the development of their Best Interest Plan (case plan) so they can participate in their own transition planning. They and their carers need to advocate for clear transition plans that identify the young person's individual needs, and how these will be addressed. It is this careful planning that will assist the young person with the next stage of their life as they move to adulthood and independence.

### How to access Leaving Care services

It is important to speak to your agency worker or the young person's case manager to make sure that their transition planning is underway. We will bring you more information in the coming months when a 1300 Leaving Care Information Line, website and other resources will be established for more information on Leaving Care supports.

Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc  
ABN 30 747 010 099

48 High Street  
Northcote, Vic 3070

Ph: (03)9489 9770  
Fax: (03)9489 9119  
Email: admin@fcav.org



## Upcoming Events

### Rainbow Families Conference 13 February 2010



Northcote Town Hall  
189 High St, Northcote  
For the conference program and registration form go to the [Conference Page](#). For more info phone 0419 120 663 or email [info@rainbowfamilies.org.au](mailto:info@rainbowfamilies.org.au).

### FCAV / Prime Focus Regional Roadshow



Look out for these great regional training days coming your way in 2010 courtesy of Prime Focus Consulting and FCAV.

All training will be conducted by Gregory Nicholau, Consulting Psychologist:

### 19 April 2010 Barwon South West Region

Hosted by Community Connections & Brophy in Warrnambool.

### FCAV / Prime Focus Regional Roadshow (cont'd)

#### 21 April 2010 Grampians Region

Hosted by Wimmera Uniting Care, Horsham.

#### 11 May 2010 Hume Region

Hosted by Berry Street Victoria and Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-op, Shepparton.

#### 12 May 2010 Hume Region

Hosted by Upper Murray Family Care. Wangaratta

#### 8 June 2010 Gippsland Region

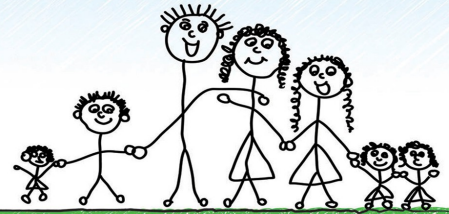
Further details to follow.

### National Foster Carer's Conference

27-29 August 2010  
Wrest Point Casino, Hobart, Tasmania

To register for further information and newsletters contact [conference@fctas.org.au](mailto:conference@fctas.org.au)

FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INC.  
**DARE TO CARE**



## FCAV VISION

For all Children in care to be Cherished, Connected and treated with Compassion.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To Strengthen foster families and enhance the wellbeing of the children in their care.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Association is established for the public charitable purposes of advancing and promoting the care of children and young people who are fostered or are in other forms of home based care including encouraging contact and exchange of ideas and information between those persons involved in foster care.



The FCAV staff, Katie Hooper, Executive Office (left), Gabbi Dalsasso, Office Coordinator & Beth Laister, Help Line Coordinator take this opportunity to wish all our readers a happy, safe and prosperous year ahead for 2010.