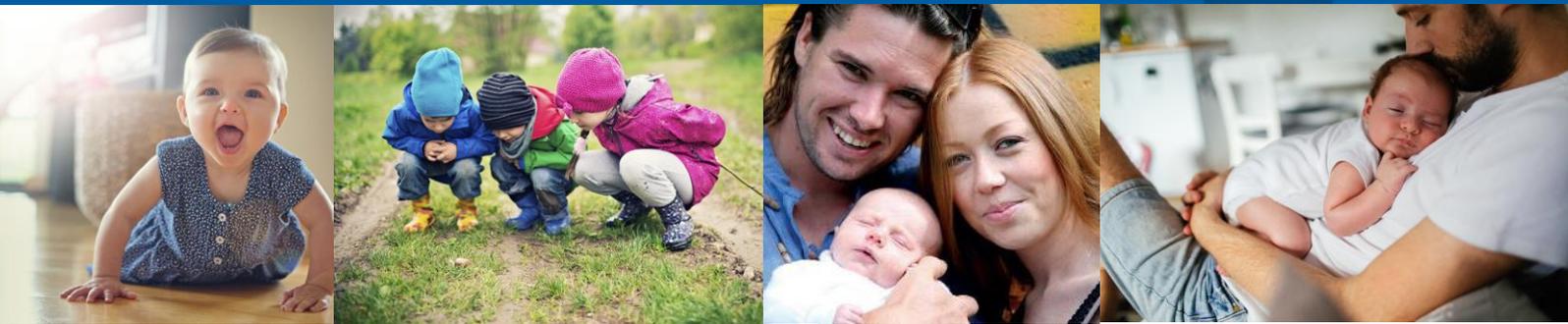


Great Start Bright Future

Ensuring all children in Inner Gippsland will have a Great Start for a Bright Future



Children and Youth Area Partnerships work to address the systemic and local factors that contribute to the vulnerability of children, young people and their families.

Our Vision

All children in Inner Gippsland will have a GREAT Start for a BRIGHT Future

To achieve this the Inner Gippslandⁱ Children and Youth Area Partnerships will act as a catalyst for enabling innovation and linking, aligning and leveraging efforts in the system to enable collective action to improve outcomes for our children, young people and families.

Our Outcomes

Children in Inner Gippsland are

- growing and developing well in safe and supportive homes and communities
- engaged and participating in learning
- supported by strong and confident families, communities and services

Our Target

By 2030 we will increase the number of children in Inner Gippsland who are developmentally on track when they start school.

Our Measure of Success

In 2016 we had 10,564ⁱⁱ children under 4 years of age living in Inner Gippsland. While most of our children are developmentally on track, we estimate that about 1,800ⁱⁱⁱ children will need some extra support to have the great start they need for a bright future.

In 2015, one in five children (20.6 per cent, or 450 children) in Inner Gippsland were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains^{iv} by the time they started school. If we can change the trajectory of approximately 450 children each year, we will be on track to meeting our goal.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH
AREA PARTNERSHIP
INNER GIPPSLAND



What does the research tell us?



Centre for Community Child Health: www.rch.org.au/ccch/first-thousand-days

Investing in early years can transform not just the lives of children, but their families and communities

Many challenges faced by adults, such as mental health issues, obesity, heart disease, criminality, and poor literacy and numeracy, can be traced back to pathways that originated during pregnancy and early childhood.

Factors such as nutrition, stress, and the environment can have significant and lifelong effects on their physical and mental health.

The first 1000 days (from conception to the end of the second year) are the most important to healthy brain development. It is during this sensitive period that brain development is most easily influenced (for better or worse) by external factors.

Children can only develop as well as their families and communities enable them to.

Loving Relationships



Children's relationships shape the way they see the world and affect all areas of their development.

Some ways to foster positive relationships include:

- ✓ **Providing comfort** so that children learn that the world is a safe place to explore
- ✓ **Cuddling** to reassure baby and help create a strong bond
- ✓ **Talking and reading** to build early and future literacy skills
- ✓ **Making eye contact** to help baby learn the connection between words and feelings
- ✓ **Maintaining a regular routine** to help baby feel comfortable and safe
- ✓ **Having safe and loving relationships with others.** It's not just the relationship between carer and baby that shapes their development- It's also carer's relationships with others. Watching how their carer(s) interact with others gives baby a model of how to behave with others and how others will behave in return

Safe Communities



When communities support families raising children, both families and communities benefit.

A child-friendly community is a community that takes responsibility for family and child wellbeing where both are:

- ✓ **Valued** as members of society who need care and support
- ✓ **Allowed** to play a part and are included in community decisions that affect them
- ✓ **Encouraged** to participate in community activities and to express themselves
- ✓ **Protected** as much as possible from all forms of harm, abuse and neglect
- ✓ **Supported** to reach their potential

Secure Housing



Having a safe and stable home has a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of families and children.

This means that the family home is:

- ✓ **Affordable**
- ✓ **Stable**
- ✓ **Not overcrowded**
- ✓ **Safe**

Green Spaces



Access to nature and green space can have a significant impact on children's life-long development.

To support optimal development and health, communities must offer:

- ✓ **Parks and green spaces** where families can come together and children can play
- ✓ **Open spaces** with sports and recreational facilities
- ✓ **Accessible walking / cycling** opportunities

Toxin-free Environments



Even before birth, a baby is much more sensitive to toxins in the environment than adults: even a very small amount of toxins can harm a baby's development.

Ways of ensuring baby is not exposed to toxins include:

- ✓ **Promoting smoke-free public spaces**
- ✓ **Promoting the benefits of smoke-free homes and cars**
- ✓ **Decreasing/avoiding environmental pollution**
- ✓ **Raising awareness** about chemicals used in certain food packaging

Nutritious Foods Nutrition in pregnancy, infancy and early childhood greatly affects long-term health.



It is important to:

- ✓ **Eat the right amount** of healthy food before, during and after pregnancy
- ✓ **Eat more** calcium, protein, iron and folate rich foods
- ✓ **Limit** caffeine, sugary and processed foods, and unhealthy fats
- ✓ **Eliminate** alcohol, raw meats/fish, raw eggs, soft cheese and ready to eat foods

Our key points of influence

The first thousand days offers many significant opportunities to ensure lifelong positive health and wellbeing. Early experiences (e.g. nutrition, the environment and relationships) determine whether the developing brain establishes a strong or weak foundation for future learning, behaviour and health.

When	Why	What
Pre-conception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Even before conception, the mother's and father's environment, nutrition and lifestyle habits can influence a child's lifelong development. This is because our genes and our environments are passed on to our children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improving Nutrition ✓ Avoiding Cigarettes, Drugs and Alcohol ✓ Maintaining a Healthy weight ✓ Having Loving and Supportive relationships
Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ During pregnancy, the mother's experiences affect how the foetus develops. This will have a lifelong influence on the child's health and wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Eating Nutritious foods ✓ Ensuring Rest and Sleep ✓ Exercising and Staying healthy ✓ Staying connected to Friends, Family and Supports ✓ Avoiding Cigarettes, Drugs and Alcohol
Infancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children's early experiences – the things they see, hear, eat and touch – stimulate their brain development. This is when the foundations for life-long learning, health and behaviour are established. ■ Relationships are one of the most influential factors in a child's development- it teaches them whether the world is a safe and secure place, whether they're loved, what happens when they cry, laugh or makes a face – and much more. ■ Nutrition is also very important during this period. Breastmilk supports baby's development and protects against infectious and chronic diseases. It's also a way to support bonding between mother and baby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Breastfeed and Good Nutrition ✓ Talking and Reading to child ✓ Safe and Loving relationships ✓ Cuddling and Comforting child

Remember

Raising healthy, happy children is a whole-of-community responsibility. A child's development is supported by positive relationships with friends and neighbours, and access to things like playgrounds, parks, shops and local services including child care, schools, health centres and libraries. Safe, cohesive, child-centred neighbourhoods, and communities are important for early childhood development.

Our focus

While we are still learning and prioritising the strategies for further work, we are testing and trialling new work that supports our collective vision and outcomes. Below is a brief overview of some of the activities that we are collectively supporting

Grow up in safe and supportive homes and communities

- Testing place-based approaches that supports children to thrive in the first 1000 days
- Reducing the number of young people entering the justice system- testing and learning from the Early Identification Tool and supporting families earlier
- Trailing the implementation of "my views booklet" to ensure the voice of children in OOHC informs all case plans

Engaged and participating in learning

- Co-designing a Morwell Learning Village to improve learning outcomes for children
- Providing free books to children who are experiencing vulnerabilities / are in OOHC
- Ensuring that all children experiencing vulnerability are engaged in early start kinder

Supported by strong & confident families, communities & services

- Ensuring all adults who engage with children, young people and families can identify signs of developmental trauma and respond appropriately
- Building the Gippsland Collaborative Centre for Innovation, Research and Practice, to sustain strong and confident services systems, learning supports and communities
- Strengthening our research and evidence knowledge by funding four PhD Industry based scholarships

Our opportunities to work together

We have many opportunities to enable and support innovation, and provide the container to link, align and leverage our efforts to facilitate collective action and improve outcomes for children. The following are a list of potential opportunities for the Area Partnership to provide support and leverage existing and new work:

Partnerships

- Best Start Partnerships
- Primary Care Partnerships
- Mental Health Alliance
- Gippsland AOD Alliance
- ChildFIRST Alliance
- Integrated Family Violence
- Indigenous Family Violence Network
- Out of Home Care Early Years Taskforce
- Early Childhood Sector
- Regional Partnerships

Plans and Policy Directions and Reforms

- Department of Education and Training Early Childhood Reform Plan
- Municipal Early Years Plans
- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plans
- Early Years Compact: MVA, DHHS, DET
- Support and Safety Hubs

Our approach

Inner Gippsland Children and Youth Area Partnership is committed to working together to address the systemic and local factors that contribute to the experiences of vulnerability of children, young people and their families.

The Area Partnerships embrace the following principles to guide how we put collective impact into practice.

- > Engage diverse partners and perspectives
- > Build and cultivate adaptive leadership skills
- > Co-create and implement with cross-sector and community partners
- > Connect and add value to existing activities
- > Use data and evidence to continuously learn, adapt, improve and questions
- > Embrace failure and setbacks as opportunities to learn
- > Focus on service system and community building strategies
- > Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust and respect
- > Customise for its local context and the unique characteristics
- > Ensure the voice of children, young people and families is heard

ⁱ Inner Gippsland Area includes the Local Government Areas of Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Latrobe City and South Gippsland

ⁱⁱ Census Data (2016) Australian Bureau of Statistics

ⁱⁱⁱ 1800 is based on 450 students who are developmentally vulnerable each year multiplied by four years (0-4years)

^{iv} Australian Early Developmental Census (2015) measures five areas (or 'domains') of early childhood development. The five domains are closely linked to the predictors of good adult health, education and social outcomes. The data shows the proportion of children developmentally vulnerable in one or more of these 5 domains