



BEST START BROADMEADOWS ACTION PLAN

Broadmeadows Best Start Demonstration Project



Mission Statement

“optimising the health, development, learning and well-being of children living or participating in the Broadmeadows Community”

Objectives

- To improve access to universal services for vulnerable groups, especially culturally and linguistically diverse and indigenous (CALD) communities;
- To support universal services to identify and support vulnerable children and their families;
- To strengthen and improve seamless pathways from universal services to appropriate secondary or tertiary services; and
- To provide opportunities for and support the development of neighbourhood cohesion and connectedness in order to achieve more child and family friendly communities.

These objectives are guided by the Victorian Government aims and objectives for the Best Start Project. The aim of Best Start is to improve the health, development, learning and well being of all Victorian children from pregnancy through transition to school (taken as being from 0 to 8 years), with the objectives of;

- To provide better access to child and family support, health services and early education;
- To improve the capacity and confidence of parents to be, parents and families to care for children and enjoy parenting; and
- To assist communities to become more child and family friendly.

This will be achieved by ensuring that the Best Start Project focus on:

- Improving universal early years services through;
 - Access;
 - Inclusiveness;
 - Responsiveness
 - Quality; and
- Mobilising community resources and infrastructure.

About this document

This document is a summary of the strategies that the **Broadmeadows Best Start Partnership** will implement in its second year of operation July 2004 – June 2005.

Best Start is implemented through a formal partnership of 15 agencies in Broadmeadows, with a signed partnership agreement, working together to strengthen and coordinate existing activities and programs for children and families. The lead partners of Best Start in Broadmeadows are Broadmeadows Unitingcare, Dianella Community Health Service and Hume City Council.

The targeted neighbourhoods for **Best Start** Broadmeadows are:

- Broadmeadows, Dallas, Jacana (3047)
- Campbellfield (3061)
- Coolaroo, Meadow Heights (3048)
- Westmeadows (3049)

The Best Start Partnership has consulted with local service providers, community organizations, parents and community members and used local and statewide data to inform priority setting. The Partnership is continually developing a range of strategies to trial coordinated service initiatives and more effectively use existing resources available. The partnership distributes a yearly Action Plan and newsletter.

The Priority Action Plan 2004-5 reflects the priorities and commitment of the agencies currently involved in the Partnership, recognising that a “whole of government” coordinated effort, along with integrated local service planning can improve health and educational outcomes for children.



Parents at First Teachers Literacy Expo



Assisted by the Community Support Fund.

A shared vision for the early years

In Australia and internationally there is a growing body of research evidence that quality early childhood programs and activities have been shown to redress disadvantage for young children. The benefits of this early intervention approach is seen in research that indicates that the recipients of quality early childhood programs are more likely to complete high school, hold a job, pay taxes, be in a stable relationship and less likely to be in trouble with the police. (National Crime Prevention Authority, 1999).

For parents, programs that support them during key developmental transition times for their child and family, such as when first attending an early childhood program or playgroup, and when starting school are indicated. This provides the rationale for the focus on children in the 2-6 year age group in the Priority Action Plan.

For services, coordinated activity in the early years has been identified by the research to be more successful in achieving results than single agency or sector approaches.

The strategies and activities identified in Best Start Partnership's Action Plan fall into five Priority Areas of Action:

1. Early engagement of children (2-6 years) and families (in early childhood, health and literacy programs)
2. Reading, Literacy and Numeracy;(0-6 yrs)
3. Community connections for families with specific needs; and
4. Best Start Aboriginal Partnership
5. Partnership projects to achieve systemic change.

Measurement

Implementation of the strategies in the Priority Action Plan address one or more of the following Best Start Statewide indicators. These are

- Increase in number of children (3-5 years old) participating in kindergarten/ preschool programs
- Increase in the number of children attending the 3.5 year old Maternal and Child Health (MCH) ages and stages visit
- Increase in the numbers of parents reading to young children
- Improvement in the average number of absent days in Prep, Gr.1
- Improvement in assessment of Reading for Prep, Gr.1

Local Indicators have been devised for each priority area.



Services where children's culture and first language is valued

Priority 1: Early Engagement

Aim: to engage children and families in early childhood, child health, literacy and community programs (children 2-5 years old).

Action Plan Strategy

Lead Agencies

Improve access to kindergarten/preschool and address barriers to participation by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engagement of a pool of bilingual workers for kindergartens - whole of community promotion of the benefits of kindergarten - community education for newly arrived families on the benefits of kindergarten - development of kindergarten/school cluster groups 	Hume City Council: Early Childhood Services Broadmeadows Uniting Care Department of Human Services (DHS)
Support the development, maintenance and coordination of playgroups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playgroup Network Coordinator 	Neighbourhood House Network Hume City Council: MCH Service
Support the development of new playgroups	Neighbourhood House Network VICSEG Broadmeadows Uniting Care
Coordinate 3.5 yr. old Maternal and Child Health (MCH) screening in child care centres	Hume City Council MCH KinderHaven Childcare & Kindergarten Derek Robson Children's Centre
Link parents to early childhood and health programs through the MCH/Parent link project (Targeting parents who have not attended MCH for 2 yr. old visit)	Hume City Council MCH Anglicare DHS Neighbourhood Renewal program
Development of community hub/activities for parents at Lahinch St MCH service, with outreach to Olsen Place Shopping Centre and Blue Gum Caravan Park	Hume City Council MCH Anglicare DHS Neighbourhood Renewal program
Support the implementation of the Department of Human Services: 4 year old dental service	Hume City Council MCH, Early Childhood Services DHS Neighbourhood Renewal program
<i>Shared with reading, literacy & Numeracy Working Group</i> Provide language and literacy activities for parents in playgroups, kindergartens/preschool/ library and primary schools supported by speech pathologists	DHS Specialist Children's Services Dianella CHC Speech Pathologists network in Broadmeadows
Development of a pilot Mother Goose Speech and Language Program for parents and children (2-5 years) in Meadow Heights	DHS Specialist Children's Services

Measurement: Statewide Indicators

Increase the number of children (3-5 years old) participating in kindergarten/preschool programs (5 targeted neighbourhoods)
 Improved rates of parents reading to babies and toddlers/young children

Measurement: Local Indicators

Increase the regular attendance of children at kindergarten/preschool (5 targeted neighbourhoods)
 Increased number of playgroups/activity groups for young children (Hume City Council)
 Increase rates of MCH 3.5 yr. old screening of children in child care (5 targeted neighbourhoods)

Best Start Funded positions:	Hume City Council Funded positions
Playgroup Network Coordinator	Community Literacy and Engagement Officer
MCH/ Parent Link worker	Early Childhood Planning Officer

Priority 2: Reading, Literacy and Numeracy

- Aims:**
- To coordinate early literacy activities across MCH, library, child care, playgroup, kindergarten, neighbourhood house and primary school settings
 - To coordinate a process of transition for children and parents between early childhood programs and the first year of primary school

Reading, Literacy and Numeracy Strategies	Lead Agencies
Develop a process for transition to school to improve continuity of care from kindergarten/child care to school	Hume City Council Early Childhood Services Transition to School Reference Group
Development of Kindergarten/primary school cluster groups to implement shared literacy strategies (See Partnerships Group)	Partnership
Coordinate the "Parent as First Teachers" Literacy Expo " - Involving primary school, kindergarten, child care and playgroups at the Broadmeadows Town Centre Shopping Centre and in local neighbourhood shopping centres	Broadmeadows Primary Schools Network Hume City Council Early Childhood Services Hume City Council The Age Library
Increase exposure of parents (from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) and their children to books and early literacy activities in the home and in neighbourhood settings - Literacy kits for playgroups - Supply of books (bilingual and English) for playgroups	Hume City Council Learning Community Hume City Council: Global Learning Centre Best Start Playgroup Network Coordinator Further strategies to be developed
Pilot of the "Let's Read " early literacy strategy for MCH nurses to include in consultations with parents	Hume City Council MCH Hume City Council Learning Community
Development of Reading to Your Child Workshops for Parents	To be confirmed
Development of literacy activity/storytelling in Primary schools for enrolled children in the year before they start school. - development of a protocol for Primary schools to encourage library membership by parents with young children	Broadmeadows Primary Schools Network
Development of Parent Literacy Volunteer Strategy	To be confirmed
<i>Shared with Early Engagement Working Group</i> Provide language and literacy activities for parents in playgroups, kindergartens/preschool/ library and primary schools conducted by a speech pathologist	DHS Specialist Children's Services Dianella CHC Speech Pathologists network in Broadmeadows

Measurement: Statewide Indicators

- Increase the number of children 3-5 years participating in kindergarten/preschool programs (5 targeted neighbourhoods)
- Improvement in assessment of Reading for Prep, Gr.1 at Primary Schools
- Improvement in the average number of absent days in Prep, Gr.1 at Primary Schools
- Improved rates of parents reading to babies and toddlers/young children.

Measurement: Local indicators

- Improved levels of regular attendance at kindergarten
- Increase Picture storybook borrowing (The Age Library and mobile library) and attendance at Library Story time

Best Start Funded positions:

Transition to School: consultant
Literacy Expo Project worker

Hume City Council Funded positions:

Community
Literacy and Engagement Officer

Priority 3: Community Connections

- Aims:**
- To initiate activities to increase the level of engagement and participation in community activities for hard to reach families
 - To improve access for hard to reach families to mainstream services (early childhood and health services)

Community Connections Strategies	Lead Agencies
Engagement of newly arrived CALD communities and link to services - Somali Women's Group bringing parents with young children together for social contact with speakers from local child & family services	VICSEG and North-West MRC
Engagement of families in Caravan Parks and link to services - Nutrition project: Blue Gum Caravan Park	St. Vincent de Paul Dianella CHC
Engagement of the ATSI/ Indigenous community - Aboriginal Best Start Partnership	See Aboriginal Partnership
Community Education programs to promote the benefits of early years learning to families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups	Hume City Council: Global Learning Centre VICSEG
<i>See Partnership Projects</i> Recruit and train Neighbourhood Parent Welcome Volunteers/facilitators to orient newly arrived families to child and family services and schools.	Orana Family Services

Measurement: Statewide Indicator

- Increase the number of children 3-5 years participating in kindergarten/preschool programs (5 targeted neighbourhoods)

Measurement: Local Indicators

- Increase the regular attendance of children at kindergarten/preschool
- Increased number of playgroups/activity groups for young children
- Improved rates of MCH attendance for the 2-5 age group (Broadmeadows, Dallas, Campbellfield)



Developing the role of primary schools as community hubs

Priority 4: Aboriginal Best Start Partnership

Aboriginal Partnership Strategies

Lead Agencies

Develop a Partnership Group specifically for the Aboriginal community in Hume - Develop relationships between mainstream and aboriginal organisations, and members of the local ATSI community	KODE school Northern Division GP Northern Hospital DHS: KIKFO Dianella CHC
Seek further sources of funding to provide programs in Hume for local ATSI children and families	Partnership agencies
Promote access to the KODE kindergarten for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children	Partnership agencies
Development of the Acceptance and Respect Project, to promote Aboriginal cultural awareness for local agencies and schools	Partnership agencies
Support the development of the Wondarra Aunties Group at Broadmeadows Uniting Care	Broadmeadows Uniting Care Dianella CHC VACCA Playgroups
Development of a Baby Diary emphasising cultural identity, to be given to Aboriginal mothers on discharge from hospital, identifying local agencies and services in Hume.	Broadmeadows Uniting Care Dianella CHC VACCA Playgroups

Measurement: Local indicators

- Improved level of cultural pride, identity and access to mainstream services by ATSI families in Hume
- Improved awareness of the needs of the families in Aboriginal community by agencies/schools in Hume
- Improved service coordination to respond to identified needs of the ATSI community

Dianella Community Health Service Funded positions:

Aboriginal Ante-natal /post natal worker

Broadmeadows Unitingcare funded position

Community Worker

Developing acceptance and respect for Aboriginal culture and beliefs

Priority 5: Partnerships Projects To Support Systemic Change

Aims: to develop an effective and coordinated Early Years service system in Broadmeadows with professional learning's that can be replicated across all neighbourhoods in Hume City Council

Building an Early Years Service System

Service Coordination in 2004-5

Engage Hume City Council and Primary Schools in Best Start service coordination	Participation in Partnership, Working Group and Local Action meetings Preparation of Priority Action Plan 2004-5 Hume City Council Budget Initiatives for Best Start 2004-5 Development of the role of primary schools as community hubs/meeting places for parents
Integrate the planning of early years services based on local data collection and identified community need	Continuation of initiatives from 2003 Whole of community poster promotion of the benefits of early learning/ Kindergarten: posters and maps Whole of community poster promotion of the Early Years Service Pathway in Hume Building the bridges between kindergarten and schools - Kindergarten /school cluster groups Joint professional development program offered to all early years services - cross-cultural training - strengths-based approaches to working with families - use of interpreters - early literacy & bilingualism for young children New programs initiated at community hub sites - Meadow Fair North PS, Upfield PS Lahinch St MCH and Olsen Place Practice innovation: integrated model of Kindergarten at Meadow Fair Nth site
Coordinate the Neighbourhood Connections: parent volunteer welcome program	Recruitment of parent leaders/volunteers from Partnership agencies/schools, supported by Orana Family Services
Coordinate the Hume City Council's Global Learning Village with Best Start	"Learning Together": Hume Global Learning Village Strategy 2004 Community Literacy & Engagement Literacy Officer
Coordinate the Neighbourhood Renewal and Best Start projects	Ongoing Development of Neighbourhood Welcome Kits/Maps for Parents
Develop the Best Start Community Advisory Group	Ongoing
Local service coordination strategy – Broadmeadows Neighbourhood Renewal site	Protocol for sharing information Level of shared use of buildings, resources Level of local service coordination between kindergartens, child care, MCH and schools
Local Service Coordination strategy -Campbellfield	To be developed in 2005

For further information about Best Start Broadmeadows please contact:
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With recognition for the significant contribution of services and schools to the Best Start Broadmeadows Demonstration Project.

Broadmeadows Best Start Partnership Group: Management

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Lee- Anne Biggs	Manager, Broadmeadows Family Services - Anglicare
Phil Conrick	Executive Director, Broadmeadows UnitingCare

Community Partners Education

Peter Enright	Department of Education and Training, Senior Education Officer, Northern Regional office
Ann Morton	Principal, Meadow Fair Nth PS, Chair: Broadmeadows Schools Network
Peter Hodson	Principal, Upfield Primary School
Megan Lewis	Principal, Coolaroo South Primary School
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Community Partners Health

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Community Partners Hume City Council

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Helen Broderick	Coordinator, Maternal Child Health
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Community Partners Child and Family Services

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Leonie Symes	Executive Officer, Broad Insight
Jill Webb/Eileen Buckley	Brotherhood of St. Laurence
Angela Collier	Department of Human Services, Child Protection
Moira Rayner	Department of Human Services, KIKFO

Community Partners: other Community agencies

Margaret Rutherford/Fordia	
Andrew	Migrant Resource Centre-North West
John Zika/Firial Ali	Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups (VICSEG)
Joe Narbaleek	Enmaraleek Inc.

Community Partners Parents

Daryl Nayler	Local Parent Representative on the Partnership
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Co-ordinating
and integrating
service provision
for families