A Plan for Victoria’s Children

Community input on challenges in early childhood
MCH conference, 11 November 2005

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A Plan for Victoria’s Children

• Why is it needed?
• What will it cover?
• How will it be built?
• Which questions?
• Where will the answers come from?

• When can I contribute?
WHY is it needed?

• So that the Victorian community can
  ➢ Plan for the future, aware of new evidence
  ➢ Focus effort on the key issues facing children and families now and in the future
  ➢ Develop adaptable, reliable supports useful to all families and children
  ➢ Ensure that small groups of high-need children are not overlooked
WHY is it needed?

• So that families can see:
  ➢ Better access to quality learning and developmental programs, especially in child care
  ➢ A wider range of supports for parents, including for vulnerable families
  ➢ More coordinated, conveniently located children’s and family services
  ➢ Greater opportunities for involvement in local planning.
WHAT will it cover?

- All young children (pregnancy to school)
- Outcomes focus
  - Child safety, health, development, learning, wellbeing
  - Parents, families and their circumstances
  - Community context
  - Supports available to assist parents
- Attention to diversity and disadvantage
WHAT will it cover?

- Priority areas for improvement
  - Both outcomes and gaps in services
- Strategies for improvement
  - Strategies for gain in child outcomes
  - Directions for service system
- Coordinating, integrating mechanisms
  - Local planning, legislative reform, funding, data collection and monitoring
HOW will it be built?

- A range of inputs, especially MEYPs
- Preparation of consultation paper
- Public consultation
  - Partners, peaks, parents, priority
- Involvement of other departments
- Role of Victorian Children’s Council
  - Key adviser, facilitating stakeholder input
HOW will it be built?

• Planning builds on firm foundations
  – PCAC reviewed and affirmed key directions
  – Range of major reforms and service improvement processes
  – Principles to guide services in legislation

• Key policy directions
  – Strong, inclusive universal services
  – Integration, adapt to today’s families
  – Local government, community engagement
WHICH questions?

• So consultation will focus on
  – Consolidating a shared vision across different professions, services
  – Emerging medium-term challenges
  – The most urgent problems for children
  – Putting the principles into practice
WHICH questions?

• We need to ask, for example:
  – What are the barriers to delivering on the principles?
  – Does the mix of early childhood settings match what local parents need?
  – What difference would greater integration make?
  – Are there families who are missing out?
WHERE will answers come from?

- Parents, professionals, service providers
- Child professionals may tell of
  - The gaps in services
  - The best indicators of quality
  - Where we have yet to take up evidence on what helps children
  - Directions in service practice that show the way forward
WHEN can I contribute?

- Consultation opportunities
  - Consultation paper mailed to services
  - Website feedback
  - Regional consultations with professionals and providers
  - Office for Children advisory bodies
  - Priority populations
  - Some conversations on emerging ideas
WHEN can I contribute?

Parent Roundtable with the Minister:
• 26 October 2005

Public regional consultations:
• Nov/Dec

Strategic conversations:
• 2006

PRIORITY POPULATIONS CONSULTATIONS
WHEN can I contribute?

➢ To continue into 2006
  ▪ Ongoing contact via Office for Children advisory mechanisms
  ▪ VCC to advise on need for additional specific events (to help cultural change)

➢ Local government a key area for advice on implementation