

# {Embrace}

*Edition 1 – 2017*



{ VICTORIAN  
INCLUSION  
AGENCY }

One For All

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the Victorian  
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Action – Helping  
Build Bridges  
and Break Barriers  
to Difference*



## Welcome to the first edition of the Victorian Inclusion Agency's (VIA) new publication – EMBRACE

We are pleased to be providing a bi-annual magazine for Victoria's education and care services as part of our guidance and support for the inclusion of all children and their families.

The VIA is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, under the Inclusion Support Programme. Our vision is simple – that all Victorian children can meaningfully and actively participate in an education and care service of their family's choice in their community.

The title of our new publication is reflective of the core values that the VIA embraces, supporting education and care services' capacity and capability in inclusive practice that ensures they are reflective and responsive to all children and families in their community. We are committed to:

- A capacity building approach that acknowledges strengths and capability
- Strengthening communities where everyone has a sense of belonging
- Collaboration with all stakeholders that builds synergy, and
- Diligent attention to excellence in service delivery.

Each edition will provide education and care services with a range of informative articles, resources and case examples that can be referred to or revisited with educator teams, families, children and the wider community.

In this edition you will find information about the role of the VIA, an introduction to one of our partner organisations, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI), how a school holiday program supports children's understanding of diversity, and more.

We hope you enjoy our inaugural edition and look forward to bringing you much more in future editions of EMBRACE.

**Julie Price**  
**VIA Program Manager**  
**Community Child Care Association**

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*VIA would like to show our respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, of elders past and present and the emerging leaders of Victoria.*

## VIA Contributors

*VIA would like to thank the following people who contributed to this edition of VIA's Embrace:*

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# The Role of the Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA)

{ JULIE PRICE  
VIA Programme Manager }

The VIA works collaboratively with Victorian education and care services, supporting, guiding and building your vital work in equitable inclusion for all children. We do this by providing mentoring support to educators and services; offering guidance to groups and networks; assisting with information exchange; and partnering with local family support and human services networks.

Visit our web page [www.viac.com.au](http://www.viac.com.au), call 1800 177 017 or email [via@cccinc.org.au](mailto:via@cccinc.org.au) to get in contact with your local office.







***Our vision is simple. We want all Victorian children to equally, meaningfully and actively participate in an education and care service of their family's choice in their community.***

The VIA can assist you to support all children including:

- Children with a disability or undergoing assessment
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children from refuges or humanitarian backgrounds
- Children with serious medical conditions
- Children presenting with language and speech delays
- Children presenting with disruptive behaviour.

Our team works to advise, mentor and equip Victorian education and care services in inclusive practice that, in turn, supports children and families in your communities. We offer assistance to services across Victoria from fourteen Agency offices and, depending on your need, we can work collaboratively with you to:

- Engage in ongoing reflective practice and continuous improvement to review and/or develop your philosophy, inclusive policies, practices and environments
- Build on your understanding of effective inclusive practice
- Link with other local services to enhance support and learning networks
- Access Specialist Equipment and funding through the Inclusion Development Fund
- Guide you to useful information and resources
- Develop and maintain partnerships with families and their communities, and other family support professionals
- Develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan, which identifies inclusion barriers and strategies.

The VIA is a collaboration of three respected, responsible and ethical agencies – sector peak body, Community Child Care Association (CCC); early childhood education and care provider KU Children's Services; and disability service organisation Yooralla. It is a united consortium that combines knowledge, reach and compassion that helps education and care services achieve the very best outcomes for children and families.

So, if you have children in your education or care setting who face barriers to inclusion, or you are simply looking to build your inclusive practice, talk to us about the ways we can help.

Whether you require advice for a one-off project, development of a whole-of-service Strategic Inclusion Plan, introduction to support networks or advice on funding opportunities, the VIA is a valuable resource, helping to build collective capacity to support the future of all children.


# Building and Sustaining Community Partnerships

{ CAT KIMBER  
Community Child Care Association }

The power of partnerships with other professionals and organisations is sometimes overlooked or underestimated as services navigate their daily work. Much of what we do in our own service is being explored, trialled, implemented or evaluated in other services. Having partnerships with professionals and/or organisations supports a stronger and more widespread approach to improving the lives of children.

However, for partnerships to be an authentic and ongoing collaboration there needs to be the foundation of commitment and a shared vision with clear goals. Building partnerships takes time and understanding. Here are some tips to help services and individuals build or renew partnerships.





## ***Make forging and maintaining partnerships an embedded part of service culture***

If attending meetings, networking with other professionals, or taking part in research projects, reference groups and so on, is not something that is promoted within your service culture, it's time for the team to change this.

While successful change requires good leadership, it is sustained by a whole-team approach. Get started with the following steps:

**1**

Agenda this for the next staff meeting, allowing time for discussion and planning.

**2**

Develop a shared philosophy statement and/or vision; draw on both research and educators' beliefs and understanding of the role and importance of partnerships with professionals; consider developing a 'statement of commitment' to include in position descriptions.

**3**

Develop clear roles and expectations; this will include considering key points such as:

- How will potential partnerships be identified?
- Who will take the lead on new partnerships? How will everyone be able to contribute?
- How will new knowledge and information be shared amongst the team?
- How will each team member be supported; time, resources, etc.?

## ***Use critical reflection as a tool for sustaining partnerships***

Collaborative partnerships won't always have a defined time period. Some collaboration will be short term to address an immediate issue or concern; others may involve more ongoing and in-depth project work to support a sustained change in practice.

As your service actively reflects on current, future or possible practices, take note of who might be a potential partner in supporting any changes or improvements to service and pedagogical practices.

Critically reflecting on practices doesn't always lead to a need for change or improvements but still involves exploring why a practice is purposeful and important. Exploring with other professionals can bring multiple perspectives. It provides more opportunity to promote the broader benefits of a particular service practice for children beyond the service. It also strengthens the consistent approach to quality outcomes for children across various professionals and services that families may encounter.

## ***Record and document***

There are three important points to consider:

**1**

### **Recording and documenting plans and intentions or strategies and goals**

The use of a reflective journal amongst service staff is a great place to start. There does not need to be a defined method or way to contribute, but it can be a central place to contain all the thoughts and ideas that could lead to new partnerships or renewing existing ones. It is also a place for educators to consider individual or service practices that they would like to explore further. Educators might pose a question, suggest an area of practice they would like to know more about or note an idea for a collaborative project.

Information gathered in a reflective journal can be incorporated into a service's Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) as part of identifying the strategies and goals a service will explore to address barriers to inclusion. Alternatively services might like to utilise the SIP in place of a reflective journal for this purpose. Recording and documenting plans and ideas help to keep conversations and provocations buzzing; keeping the passion and curiosity alive for improving or sustaining practices, or celebrating

achievements and outcomes. The reflective journal and or the SIP should be brought to each team meeting and used to help facilitate goal setting and action planning, including ***who could partner with us on this ...?***

**2**

### **Tracking progress**

Tracking progress helps to keep accountable to the goals, strategies and outcomes that have been decided upon. It is also a way for some momentum to be kept alive during any potential staff changes. Occasionally, well set plans can derail, but this shouldn't be an immediate reason to give up. Tracking progress helps to identify challenges, both internal and external. It is also an opportunity to record successes that can be drawn on for use as strategies for future goals and collaborative partnerships.

**3**

### **Recording new knowledge, useful information and outcomes of particular partnerships**

Exploring practices, knowledge and resources amongst a range of professionals, brings a wealth of information that can be drawn on time and time again. But for this to happen, it is important that information is kept and is accessible. Consider where this information could be kept at your service. Who needs to access it ... families, staff, children? How can it be displayed? For longer term collaborations with other professionals, consider how outcomes of the collaborative partnership will be recorded and shared.

## ***Celebrate and acknowledge***

Do all who access your service know just how many partnerships with professionals, both individuals and organisations, are facilitated within the service? A lot of time is invested in supporting a holistic approach to improving the lives of children and families and this should be acknowledged. Celebrate your partnerships – they are important!



# From Correction to Connection

{ TRENT SAVILL  
Complex Care – Director }



Trent Savill is the Director of Complex Care, a practice that specialises in providing intensive therapeutic support to children in the child protection system with complex needs. In this article he shares some of the core principles and strategies he finds most useful in making sense of and responding to children. It is based on a deep understanding of the impact of trauma and attachment on behaviour. He believes when children are acting in ways that are seen as aggressive or non-compliant it is because they do not have the cognitive skills and strong trusting relationships with adults that they need.







In the early stages of my career, I intuitively understood that the behaviours I was experiencing, while working with children, were pain-based and grounded in children's previous experiences of abuse and neglect, yet in the absence of any other behaviour management framework, I, my colleagues and the whole system around me continued to treat their behaviour as a choice. Although most of us could see that the only progress we ever made was through building relationships, we still continued to allow our need for correction to sabotage opportunities for connection.

At the time I believed, and most people still do, that "children do well if they want to", rather than what I now know to be true, that "children do well if they can" (Greene and Ablone, 2006).

We viewed children's behaviour as a simple issue of compliance and we believed that children were somehow motivated to continue doing the wrong thing, even though they received consequences and there was often no obvious pay-off for their 'bad' behaviour.

What I didn't understand back then was that being compliant is not as simple as just choosing to be compliant, but actually requires a whole range of cognitive skills, such as impulse control, cognitive flexibility, empathy, language-processing, social skills and frustration tolerance (Greene and Ablone 2006). On top of all of that, being compliant also requires that a young person trusts adults enough to hand over control to them (Hughes 2004).

The following strategies underpin an approach to behaviour that recognise the complexities involved and reflects an approach that is based on '*connection*' before '*correction*'.

### ***Look for the need behind the 'behaviour'***

If you are responding consistently to a child's behaviour with meaningful rewards and consequences and you are not seeing a fairly immediate shift in that behaviour, then it is likely that the child either:

- A** Lacks the cognitive skills required to meet your expectation
- B** Does not understand why the expectation is important
- C** Does not actually know what alternative behaviour they are required to perform
- D** Does not feel safe handing control over to adults or directly cuing them about their needs, or
- E** Is not actually calm enough in the moment to be able to meet your expectation (has low frustration tolerance or is experiencing increased stress at that time). (Holden, 2009)

.....  
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## ***Stress switches off our thinking brain***

As a child's (or adult's) stress levels begin to rise, our brain automatically begins to rely less on the intelligent 'thinking' part of our brain (cortex) and more on the lower 'survival' parts of our brain (limbic and brainstem region). Under stress, our brain becomes increasingly geared towards responding to danger (not engaging in relationships) and our thinking becomes more simple, automatic, impulsive and defensive. The more threatened we feel, the worse our brain becomes at:

- A** Listening to what people are saying
- B** Engaging in problem-solving
- C** Considering the consequences of our actions.

As our survival brain begins to take over and scan for danger, we stop listening to what people are saying and become far more focused on how they are saying it – what their body language, facial expressions and tone of voice are telling us about their intent.

So if we want children to listen to us and make good decisions, we need to help them feel calm and safe. If we know that their brains are no longer listening to what we are saying, but are instead completely focused on how we are saying it, then we need to first focus on appearing calm and non-threatening. This will allow us to bring their thinking brain back on-line, and only then, can we attempt to teach them, i.e. creating connection before correction.

## ***Emotional regulation is a skill***

Our ability to calm ourselves down is a skill, not a choice. Even as adults, we do not choose whether something makes us feel happy, irritated or out of control, though most of us have learnt ways of thinking and behaving that help us to calm ourselves down. We start to learn this skill through first experiencing co-regulation from our care-giver during infancy (having our care-giver soothe us and direct our attention away from our distress over and over again). If we do not experience enough of this support, we will be delayed in this area. Exposure to trauma or major disruptions to our early attachment relationships can completely destroy our capacity to self-regulate. Even with all the right developmental experiences we may still struggle in this area, just like we can lag in any other areas of functioning (e.g., motor skills, social skills, working memory, etc.).

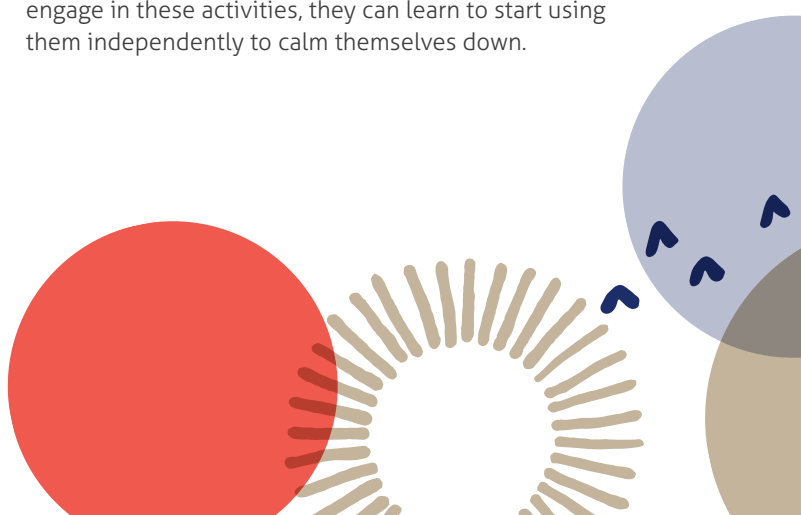
When we begin to view children's 'outbursts' or 'over reactions' as resulting from a lagging skill, it helps us to stop taking it so personally and to stop applying all this negative intent to their behaviour. We can then bring our focus back to teaching them to self-regulate, by helping them to become more aware of their feelings (monitoring their state), giving them strategies to self-soothe (modify their state), and by providing them with more appropriate ways to communicate their feelings (express their state).

Calmly reflecting back children's emotional states and regularly engaging them in mindfulness activities can support children to get better at tuning into themselves and monitoring their emotional states. Incorporating 'today I feel....' activities into a child's routine, where they take a moment to consider and share how they are feeling (practice naming their emotion or pointing to a picture such as an emoticon) can support emotional monitoring and appropriate expression of emotions.

If a child is more aware of their emotions and better at expressing them to others, it makes it a lot easier for them to start using strategies to modify their feelings. It is important to note, that not all children have learnt that they can bring their big emotions to adults and directly cue them for help with calming down. It is important that we remind these children over and over again that if they are feeling upset or experiencing 'big feelings' and need help calming down, they can come to us for connection and support (such as a hug).

Some of the most effective strategies for helping us to self-regulate work by tapping directly into our survival brain (brain-stem). Bruce Perry's research through the Child Trauma Academy has found that engaging in patterned, rhythmic, repetitive activities has a soothing effect on our brain-stem and helps us to feel calmer and bring our 'thinking' brain back on-line (Perry 2008).

Engaging children in activities such as dancing, drumming, singing, marching and bouncing, especially at heart-beat rhythms (around 80 beats per minute), can be used to support children through difficult transitions or situations during their day. This works in a very similar way to rocking or patting an infant on the back to calm them down, as it taps into associations made in our brain during our in-utero development (Holden, 2009). If children are continuously supported by a calm adult to engage in these activities, they can learn to start using them independently to calm themselves down.





## ***The way people look at us impacts on how we feel and behave***

Think for a moment about how a relaxed parent and baby, who are both physically and emotionally healthy, gaze into each other's eyes. Every time a parent looks into their child's eyes with joy and delight, the child begins to learn that they are delightful. Their core sense of who they are is beginning to emerge and they are learning that they are good. In attachment literature this process is often referred to as an inter-subjective experience, the way we feel about ourselves in light of another's gaze, and how that influences the way we behave and gaze back at them (Hughes, 2004).

If a parent provides a child with reliable, predictable, responsive care-giving, the child also learns that they can trust adults, and the world starts to look like a pretty great place. Children who have these experiences learn that they are good, worthy of love and that adults can be trusted, and they will take this security into their relationships with the rest of the world. Now if a child feels good, and trusts adults enough to hand over control to them, it becomes so much easier to behave and comply with adult's expectations, and you will probably find that people just want to keep smiling at them.

I work with children who have had a very different start to life; children with parents who have been overwhelmed, depressed, afraid, or angry. And as a result many of these children have learnt in light of their parents' gaze, that they are depressing, frightening, annoying, or sometimes that they are not even worth looking at. Even outside of the child protection system, there are a whole lot of children whose parents might appear to be well functioning, but who for one reason or another have been emotionally unable to delight in their children. When children feel bad, they are more likely to behave badly, and when they behave badly, we feel stressed (because we take it personally), and we frown at them, raise our voices at them and we ever so subtly reject them. So they feel bad in light of our gaze and the cycle continues.

If we understand this cycle, we can begin to engage children in ways that maintain connection. Dan Hughes' PACE model (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) provides a framework for developing healthy attachment in children (Hughes 2004). If we can consistently engage children with this approach, even when responding to stressful behaviours, we can keep their thinking brains on-line (so they can learn), we can attune to and reflect back their emotional experience (promoting empathy), and we can reduce their experience of shame, allowing them to feel good, and making it easier for them to behave.

These are just some of the important principles and strategies we can use to support the way we care for and respond to children.

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This article, presented in the 2016 Winter Edition of *Roundtable* published by Community Child Care Association, is based on a previous version that was first published by the Health and Community Services Workforce Council (Workforce Council), in Queensland. VIA would like to thank Trent Savill, Workforce Council and CCC.





# Introducing Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated

{ MATILDA DARVALL  
VAEAI }

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), established over 30 years ago (initially as the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group), provides advice and supports the provision of education and training that reinforces our community cultural identity.

VAEAI also works to increase awareness within the wider community about Koorie culture and aspirations in education and training. VAEAI represents the Koorie community in relation to education policy and strategy development at the local, state and national levels by liaising with governments, departmental offices and education and training providers. VAEAI also works with government at the State and Federal levels by providing research and policy advice, developing strategies, providing community advocacy and dissemination of information through the community regarding education opportunities. VAEAI's local advisory arrangements are solidly embedded in local communities through Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs).

VAEAI's Early Years Unit provides advice on, advocates on behalf of, and monitors participation and outcomes for Koorie children aged 0-8 years in relation to their development and learning. We liaise with Children's Services, Koorie organisations, Koorie support staff, and other relevant organisations regarding culturally relevant education service development and delivery. As a partner to the

State Government on education, VAEAI advocates for Koorie children through contributing to policy development in order to improve participation and outcomes. We also monitor trends in education policy and programs that impact on Koorie children.

There are a number of Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS) and Aboriginal Playgroups throughout the state of Victoria. These include:

- Yappera MACS/Preschool, Melbourne
- Gunai Lidj MACS, Morwell
- Bung Yarnda MACS, Lake Tyers
- Lulla Child and Family Centre, Shepparton
- Berrimba MACS, Echuca
- Robinvale MACS, Robinvale
- Wathaurong Playgroup, Geelong
- Winda Mara Playgroup, Heywood
- Ballarat Playgroup, Ballarat
- Goolum Goolum Playgroup, Horsham

However, due to the highly dispersed nature of the Koorie community, most Koorie children will be unable to attend a Koorie-specific service and will

therefore need to engage with a mainstream service. This is one of the reasons why VAEAI is pleased to be working with the Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA), led by Community Child Care Association and delivered in partnership with Yooralla and KU Children's Services.

Many Aboriginal people face difficulties in accessing mainstream services, stemming from many years of oppression and racism, including government policies of segregation and removal. Historically, Aboriginal people have not been granted equitable access to mainstream services and they remain uncertain and uneasy about accessing universal mainstream services, which served as government instruments for justifying the removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities. As a result, Aboriginal children and their families are under-using maternal and child health services, education services and social support services (Aboriginal Best Start Status Report 2014, DHHS).

**VAEAI is glad to offer its support to Education and Care Services through VIA, to build their capacity and capability to include Koorie children.**



Culturally aware, culturally responsive, and culturally inclusive practice as it relates to Koorie children and their families brings together knowledge, behaviours, attitudes and policies that are required to develop, build and maintain relationships with the Koorie community in all settings to effect positive change in early childhood education (Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2010). We are excited about the prospect of as many mainstream Victorian ECEC services as possible becoming places where Koorie children, their families and the community feel acknowledged, welcome and included. In this way, Koorie children will have the opportunity to experience the best possible learning environments and achieve the best possible education outcomes.

“

We are excited about the prospect of as many mainstream Victorian ECEC services as possible becoming places where Koorie children, their families and the community feel acknowledged, welcome and included.

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# Inclusion in Action

## – Helping build bridges and break barriers to difference



Nadia and Ali of Leapkids, operate two school age care programs that offer a mix of before, after and vacation care. Over the past few years they have worked with over 500 families, representing a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds. In one of their services there is over 20 nationalities represented.

Both Nadia and Ali are Muslim, adding to the diversity represented in their services. Nadia wears a hijab and works at the program. In a recent vacation care program, she had an unfavourable experience regarding wearing her hijab. Believing that quality programs for children should not only be fun and exciting, but also an opportunity for learning, Nadia and Ali share with us how they turned the moment into just that – an opportunity for learning about others; helping everyone to build bridges and break barriers to difference.



### ***How does your service view its role in supporting children's understanding of diversity?***

We both see it as a big role, but not in a burdensome way. It is our mission to help create a greater awareness and acceptance of difference within the community and the world. We're very aware just how much media and other influences children are faced with every day about others who look different, or have different ways of living and doing. We really want children to see that physical differences don't define who we are. It might sound a big task, but we want to help children break down the messages media often sends that work against understanding and acceptance.

Our commitment and vision to creating a place of acceptance and understanding of difference in our programs begins with our staff, starting at the recruitment phase. In the interview process we make our vision, mission and values very clear, including our expectations of our staff/educators. It is important to us that staff have this awareness and that we continue to support them. We know from experience that some families can have some resistance to seeing Nadia in her hijab and we want staff to know that it is okay for parents to have questions.

### ***You recently worked in partnership with an Inclusion Professional to invite members of the community into the service, can you tell us about this?***

While our service has been focusing on teaching children about diversity, we spoke with Faye our Inclusion Professional, about the incident regarding Nadia and her hijab. Faye offered a suggestion of finding a person within the community, perhaps one of significance, such as a police officer, to visit the service.

We began researching possible contacts, but were pleased when Faye got back to us with a possible lead. Faye had attended the North East Region Settlement Integration Network (NERSIN) – a community engagement network where all services that support families from CALD backgrounds meet to discuss CALD issues. During this particular meeting, the Victorian Muslim Police Association were guest speakers. They discussed their community education role in breaking down stereotypical and racist attitudes and to promote diversity, inclusiveness and harmony within communities.

Faye approached Albert, one of the police officers, and on learning that they would attend school holiday programs and other children's services to help promote diversity, put us in touch with Albert.

### ***Can you tell us a bit about the police visit?***

One of Albert's colleagues, a female Muslim police officer wearing her hijab, attended our services. It was very interesting that none of the children asked about her appearance; however there was still a presence of underlying stereotypical thinking. The children were both intrigued that a female police officer carried a gun and asked 'do the girls shoot the guns?'

The children embraced the learning opportunity and asked some questions of the police officers. They were fantastic in responding to children's general questions about being a police officer (shooting guns, catching criminals), but also talked with children about the importance of understanding and accepting difference in others and how this builds stronger, connected and collaborative communities for children and adults to live in and enjoy.

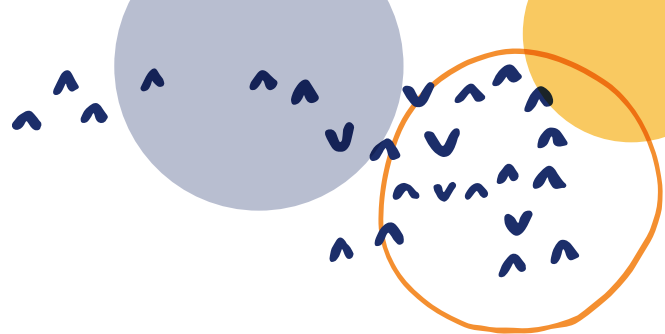
### ***What's next for the service in its work of building community connections and improving children's understanding of diversity?***

There is a lot for us to continue doing. However, we don't view this as hard work as it comes from our hearts. We will keep helping children understand about diversity and continue to provide opportunities for them to make a difference to both their lives and the lives of others. All families can and do experience diversity and we want all families to feel supported and connected.

Diversity looks, sounds and feels different in many contexts and it is important that we continue to find ways of learning about this. We will continue building our knowledge and resources, and this includes our partnership with Faye, our Inclusion Professional. She brings us so much more than just support for accessing funding; she is an excellent sounding board and helps us build our capacity in the work we do every day for our children and their families.

**The VIA thank Nadia and Ali for sharing their story with us. We understand there are many quality practices happening in services that support inclusion and acceptance of all. If your service has a story or example of practice that you would like to share with others, please contact the VIA on (03) 9486 3455 or email [via@cccinc.org.au](mailto:via@cccinc.org.au)**

# Specialist Equipment Library



## ***Did you know there is a library where you can access special equipment to support the inclusion of children in your services?***

Victorian Inclusion Agency's (VIA) Specialist Equipment Library (SEL) loans specialist equipment to education and care services to facilitate and support the inclusion of a child (or children) with additional needs. Yooralla, a consortium partner of the VIA, manage the specialist equipment library. The equipment library operates within the guidelines of the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP), which is funded by the Australian Government.

## ***Who is eligible to access specialist equipment?***

Victorian education and care services (as defined in the Inclusion Support Programme) that support a child with a diagnosed disability, and have identified the need for specialist equipment in a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP), may borrow specialist equipment. For information and support on developing a SIP, contact your regional Inclusion Agency office (a list of VIA regions and contacts can be found at the back of this magazine).

## ***What type of equipment is available?***

Available equipment includes:

- Portable ramps to create access to the environment
- Standing frames and full support swings to allow a child with high physical needs to participate in the daily programme and activities
- Hoists, slings, harnesses, change tables, toilet seats or steps, potty chairs, mobile stools and seating or posture aids for educators to assist them to lift and transfer children safely when carrying out basic care functions such as changing or going to the toilet
- Specialised inclusion toys such as switch toys
- Specialised furniture such as chairs, tables, desk and positioning equipment
- Communication cards or charts and Auslan dictionaries to enable a child and educators to communicate effectively.

The type of equipment that is not available through the SEL includes:

- Therapeutic equipment (for example, hearing aids and therapist tables)

- Equipment that the service would reasonably be expected to supply
- Equipment that the parent or carer would reasonably be expected to supply for their child (for example, wheelchairs, walking frames and body suits)
- Equipment for which there are hygiene issues (for example, padded cots)
- Equipment provided under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

## ***How can I access the Specialist Equipment Library?***

The first step is to make contact with your local regional Inclusion Agency Office of the VIA. Each service will need an IS Portal profile and to develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP). An Inclusion Professional (IP) from your local regional office will work with you in setting up these initial items, if you haven't already done so.

The SIP is an important tool in identifying a service's need for specialist equipment. Working with other professionals, such as an occupational therapist or physiotherapist with knowledge of the child's needs, helps provide guidance on what particular equipment is needed. This same professional will be key in ensuring the equipment is fitted appropriately for the child, and that the service is confident in its use.

When you have identified the equipment needed, your IP can direct you to the correct forms and guide you on information to be collected within them, including where to submit them.

## ***Where do I collect and return equipment?***

Yooralla, as the manager of the Specialist Equipment Library, will organise for the drop off and collection of equipment, free of charge. This will be arranged in consultation with the service.

## ***Where can I find out more information?***

- **Contact your local Inclusion Agency Office**
- **Visit [www.yooralla.com.au](http://www.yooralla.com.au) or call 03 9633 6963**







# Inclusion Support Programme EXPOS – Promoting Inclusive Practice

The Victorian Inclusion Agency is excited to be presenting a number of Inclusion Expos across Victoria.

The expos will provide opportunities for you to:

- Hear from Rhonda Livingstone, ACECQA's National Educational Leader
- Build on your understanding of inclusion strategies and practice
- Q&A panel with experts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse inclusion, and
- Connect with local community and family support providers to understand what local support is available for your service and families.

Expo days will include a two hour Capacity Building Session with a panel of education and care and inclusion experts including the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), discussing what rich inclusive environments look like and some local services showcasing their great practice. There will also be an exhibition of resource providers including local family support and human service providers, and plenty of opportunity for networking.

## EXPO DATES AND LOCATIONS:

Tuesday 13 June – *Bundoora*  
Wednesday 14 June – *Geelong*  
Monday 19 June – *Dandenong*  
Wednesday 21 June – *Mildura*

## COST:

\$10 per person

## TIME:

1.00pm – 3.00pm: *Capacity Building Session*  
3.00pm – 6.00pm: *Exhibition and Networking*  
6.00pm – 8.00pm: *Repeat of Capacity Building Session*

To register visit [www.viac.com.au](http://www.viac.com.au), call 1800 177 017 or email [pcannata@cccinc.org.au](mailto:pcannata@cccinc.org.au)

## Networks – a professional space for support and collaboration

*Across Victoria there are a number of professional networks where educators meet, discuss current or emerging issues, collaborate and share experiences and examples of practices and support each other in the provision of meaningful and active inclusion for all children and their families. Some networks also include the provision of capacity building activities.*

There are a range of networks for various education and care sector types, e.g. Long Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, and Family Day Care and for different roles, e.g. Educational Leaders, Team Leaders, and Educators/Coordinators.

**Contact your local Inclusion Agency Office to find out about Networks in your area.**



# VIA Regions and Contacts

Community Child Care Association, KU Children's Services and Yooralla are working together as the VIA to provide inclusion support to services across Victoria. For further information please go to [www.viac.com.au](http://www.viac.com.au)


## REGION 1 (KU):

Ararat, Pyrenees, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Geelong, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Moyne, Northern Grampians, Queenscliff, Southern Grampians, Surf Coast, Warrnambool, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack

 [Diane.Matthewson@ku.com.au](mailto:Diane.Matthewson@ku.com.au)  
(03) 5221 1814


## REGION 7 (YOORALLA):

Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Murrindindi, Nillumbik, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges

 [Dawn.Meldrum@yooralla.com.au](mailto:Dawn.Meldrum@yooralla.com.au)  
(03) 9916 5736

## REGION 2 (CCC):

Ballarat, Bendigo, Buloke, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Hepburn, Loddon, Macedon, Mildura, Mitchell, Moorabool, Mt Alexander, Swan Hill

 [Region2@cccinc.org.au](mailto:Region2@cccinc.org.au)  
(03) 9486 3455


## REGION 8 (KU):

Bayside, Boroondara, Glen Eira, Kingston, Monash, Port Phillip,

 [Susan.Whittle@ku.com.au](mailto:Susan.Whittle@ku.com.au)  
(03) 9583 7455


## REGION 3 (KU):

Alpine, Benalla, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Mansfield, Moira, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga

 [Rosemary.Barnett@ku.com.au](mailto:Rosemary.Barnett@ku.com.au)  
0459 434 987


## REGION 9 (YOORALLA):

Cardinia, Casey, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Mornington Peninsula

 [Dawn.Meldrum@yooralla.com.au](mailto:Dawn.Meldrum@yooralla.com.au)  
(03) 9916 5736

## REGION 4 (YOORALLA):

Bass Coast, Baw Baw, East Gippsland, La Trobe, South Gippsland, Wellington

 [Dawn.Meldrum@yooralla.com.au](mailto:Dawn.Meldrum@yooralla.com.au)  
(03) 9916 5736


## REGION 5 (KU):

Brimbank, Hobson's Bay, Hume, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley, Wyndham

 [Susan.Whittle@ku.com.au](mailto:Susan.Whittle@ku.com.au)  
(03) 9583 7455

## REGION 6 (CCC):

Banyule, Darebin, Melbourne, Moreland, Whittlesea, Yarra

 [Region6@cccinc.org.au](mailto:Region6@cccinc.org.au)  
(03) 9486 3455

## REGION NO. OFFICE LOCATIONS

1	GEELONG
2	BENDIGO
3	WODONGA
4	MORWELL
5	BRIMBANK
6	PRESTON
7	KEW
8	KINGSTON
9	CRANBOURNE



KU CHILDRENS SERVICES



COMMUNITY CHILD CARE



YOORALLA



*Community Child Care Association, KU Children's Services and Yooralla, working toward the vision that all Victorian children can meaningfully participate in an education and care service of their family's choice in their community.*  
**Further info [www.viac.com.au](http://www.viac.com.au)**

