



Families and Children (FaC) Activity Newsletter

Issue 9 | April 2024

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Contents of this issue

Hello FaC Activity service providers and staff! We hope you had a restful (chocolate-filled) break over Easter and perhaps you are enjoying some Autumn leaf colour wherever you are located. The second issue of the FaC Activity newsletter for 2024 includes information about:

- [Working groups for CaPS, CfC FP and FMHSS](#)
- [Communities for Children Facilitating Partners – Drumbeat](#)
- [Evidence and Evaluation Support \(EES\)](#)
- [Child Family Community Australia \(CFCA\)](#)
- [Review Point](#)
- [Changing the Balance survey](#)
- [National Families Week – 13-19 May 2024](#)
- [FRSA National Conference 2024 – 13-16 May 2024](#)

Please feel free to circulate this newsletter to other staff in your organisation. If staff would like to receive the newsletter directly, they can send a request from their email address to families@dss.gov.au.

We are open to feedback on the frequency, format and content of the newsletter. If you have suggestions, please email us at families@dss.gov.au.



Working groups – CaPS, CfC FP and FMHSS

The department has established working groups for providers from each of these 3 programs: Children and Parenting Support (CaPS), Communities for Children Facilitating Partners (CfC FP), and Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS).

The working groups are running between March and May 2024, and are being co-chaired by the department and Family & Relationship Services Australia (FRSA).

Purpose of working groups

In partnership with Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), the department is undertaking an internal review of the child, youth and parenting focused programs funded under the FaC Activity. The department will develop a discussion paper outlining the findings of the review and seeking a range of views on the future of the FaC Activity.

The 3 working groups will provide advice on issues emerging from the review, to help shape the planned discussion paper (intended for release in the second half of 2024).

The working group meetings are covering a range of topics including: Stronger, independent community sector, program aims and objectives, key changes in Australian families, and implications of the Early Years Strategy, Australia's Disability Strategy, National Autism Strategy and Closing the Gap commitments. Working group discussions may also cover topics specific to the respective program.

Selection of working group members

An Expression of Interest process occurred in late February 2024. Thank you to all the organisations who expressed their interest, we were encouraged by the high volume of responses received!

15 organisations were selected for each working group, with the aim of achieving organisational diversity to ensure the working groups encompass a range of perspectives. The list of 15 members selected for each program was emailed to all organisations in that program.

For all other organisations in these programs, if you have any comments or input you would like to share around the topics outlined in the Terms of Reference, we encourage you to email families@dss.gov.au.



Communities for Children Facilitating Partners

Drumbeat

[Drumbeat](#) can continue to be considered an evidence-based program, however, we have been advised that training is no longer available from Holyoake and therefore this program will not be available for new providers.

Drumbeat will be retained in the Guidebook as a legacy program as there are a number of providers currently trained to deliver it.



Evidence and Evaluation Support (EES)

A reminder that AIFS offers free support to FaC Activity providers.

Online resources are available on the [EES website](#).

EES offers one-on-one support to FaC Activity providers for tasks such as:

- guidance to undertake literature reviews
- developing or updating program logics
- writing evaluation questions
- choosing outcomes to measure and measurement tools
- identifying data needs and data collection methods
- help with writing evaluation plans.

The EES team also provides support for Communities for Children Facilitating Partners to meet the 50% evidence-based program requirement.

Email the team at fac-evidence-evaluation@aifs.gov.au for more information or to book a consultation.

You can also check out some recent EES webinars:

- [Customer journey mapping and what it can tell us about our service systems](#)
Webinar, April 2024
- [How developmental evaluation can be used to develop and adapt social service programs](#)
Webinar, March 2024



Child Family Community Australia (CFCA)

The [CFCA Information Exchange](#) from AIFS publishes a range of resources on their website. Recent CFCA publications you may want to check out:

- [Parenting, peer relationships and mental health in the middle years](#)
Short article, April 2024
- [How a 'village' approach can support infant and toddler mental health](#)
Webinar, April 2024
- [Supporting family and child mental health in the face of severe weather events and disasters](#)
Webinar, February 2024
- [What the research evidence tells us about coercive control victimisation](#)
Policy and practice paper, February 2024
- [How to support clients exposed to technology-facilitated coercive control](#)
Webinar, January 2024

You can also [subscribe to the AIFS newsletter](#) to keep up to date with resources available from AIFS. You can subscribe to the topics:

- Program planning and evaluation (EES content)
- Working with families, children and young people (CFCA content).



Review Point

The department is finalising the mid-term Review Point for service providers who received 5-year extensions from 1 July 2021 under the following programs:

- Communities for Children Facilitating Partner (CfC FP)
- Family and Relationship Services (FaRS)
- Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS)
- Five national Children and Parenting Support (CaPS) activities.

The department is taking some extra time to validate results and will provide more information shortly.

① Please note this information does not apply to the CaPS activities that were extended from 1 July 2023. The [Review Point](#) for those activities will begin in September 2024.



‘Changing the Balance’ Survey

On behalf of the National Coalition, Families Australia have been engaged by the department to undertake the ‘Changing the Balance’ research project which explores the potential impact on non-indigenous Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). More information on the project is available [here](#).

The Changing the Balance [online survey](#) is now open. If your organisation receives Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS) funding for child and family services, Families Australia want to hear from you. Find out more and [take the survey here](#). The survey closes on Friday 3 May 2024.



CELEBRATING
FAMILY
DIVERSITY
& CONNECTIONS



National Families Week

13-19 MAY
www.nfw.org.au

National Families Week – 13-19 May 2024

An annual celebration that brings together individuals and organisations nationwide. The theme of this year is **Celebrating Family Diversity & Connections**. Celebrating family diversity and connections is an essential aspect of fostering inclusivity and understanding within communities.

Registrations have now already opened. Please register via [this link](#) for your event.

*Family and Relationship Services:
Valued now and into the future*



13-16 May 2024 | Pullman Melbourne on the Park
FRSA National Conference 2024



FRSA National Conference 2024

Family & Relationship Services: Valued now and into the future

In just over a month, the Family and Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) Conference will be held at the Pullman Melbourne on the Park from **13-16 May 2024**.

The conference will feature a number of highly acclaimed keynote presenters, as well as Federal Ministers and sector leaders with a focus on delivering the most effective services to children, families and young people.

The Department of Social Services is a proud sponsor partner of this event as one of the largest annual gatherings of practitioners, academics and policy makers working to support children, families and communities.

Registrations are open until **Friday 10 May** for both the workshops and the Conference itself. Getting the full three-and-a-half-day experience is a great opportunity to build your knowledge and networks, as well as share your own learnings about working within the sector. For those who cannot attend the whole conference, there are also day-only registrations available.

Did you know that many professionals employed in the sector can gain CPD points by attending? The [FRSA website](#) has all the information you need.

DSS will also be participating in the conference, and we look forward to connecting and meeting with as many people in the sector as we can.