



# COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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Permanent Care and Adoptive Families



### EVENTS

Click & Connect  
Wed 8/2/23

Share & Connect  
Thurs 2/2/23

**Flexi-Funding**

ADDITIONAL COSTS OF CARE

**Better Futures**

INDEPENDENCE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT

**Helpine**

REFERRALS, ADVOCACY

**CAP**

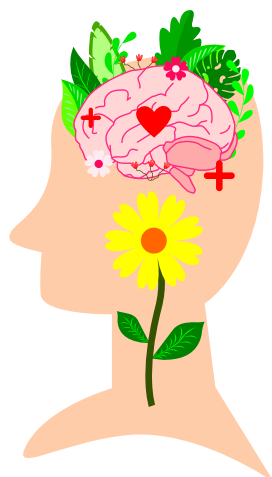
CARER ASSISTANCE



## News - Welcome Back

We would like to welcome everyone back to PCA Families and extend our welcome to any new families. For those that may be unfamiliar with our Communications Update, it is designed to be a quick reference to information, events or learning that may impact or assist families in enhancing the lives of children in your care. At PCA Families we strive to share our learnings and resources and this is our tool to do so. We also welcome any suggestions for content. Email [info@pcafamilies.org.au](mailto:info@pcafamilies.org.au) if you have any suggestions or ideas.

## News - Mental Health



Mental Health and Wellbeing is under reform in Victoria and there is a free service that helps you get support when you need it. Call 1300 375 330 or find a centre near you [here](#) with locations from Bendigo to Frankston. Eight new Family and Carer-led centres will open up across the state this year. Find out more in the latest announcement from the Premier [here](#). For children 12-25 headspace is also available for support [here](#) again with locations all around Victoria.

## News - Got Your Carer Card Yet?

Did you know that carers can benefit from the same discounts as seniors? Don't wait until you are 65 to access free weekend transport or access to discounts at over 4,000 business' across Victoria! Find out more [here](#).

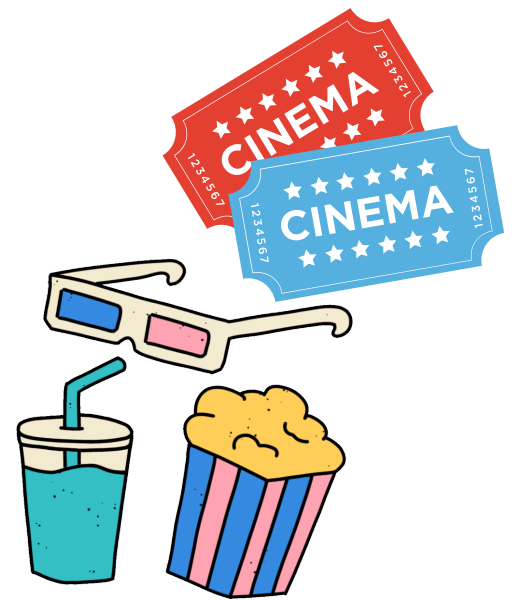
**"Delivering trauma informed services that empower"**

## News - Free Movies?

Did you know that carers can access a companion card for free entry to movies and other participating events like basketball, the circus or even the AFL. If you are caring for a child with a significant and permanent disability, who has a lifelong need for a high level of support to participate in community events and activities, this care is for you.

Examples of eligible indicators are [here](#) and include neurological disorders, epilepsy, severe autism and more.

Find out more [here](#).



## Events - Retool, Replenish and Reconnect



Reimagine Australia have announced dates for their National Early Childhood Conference in Brisbane (20-22 November 2023). The theme is focussed on giving you support and resources to continue to transform the lives of children with developmental delay, disability and difference. More importantly, the focus is on seeing the whole child not just the part that is different. Find out more [here](#) and register your interest to take advantage of early bird rates.

## News - Nasal Spray and Sleep Disorders

A simple saline nasal spray could help avoid surgery and be as effective as steroid treatment for children. The Murdoch Children's Institute found a saline (salt water) nasal spray was just as effective as an anti-inflammatory steroid nasal spray at easing sleep disordered breathing in children after six weeks of treatment. In addition, the spray halved the number of patients that needed to remove their tonsils or adenoids. With children waiting often for a year or more to remove tonsils or adenoids, this is welcome research. Find out more [here](#).



**"Improving the lived experience of young people"**

## Events - Click & Connect



**TOPIC: WELCOME, HOLIDAY DEBRIEF AND BACK TO SCHOOL**

**DATE: Wednesday 8 February 12:00 midday until 1:00pm with hosts Liz & Sonia**

**TOPIC:** In this meeting we will debrief on the holidays and look towards how to best support your child in transitioning back to school. What really makes a difference to you and your family? With the collective wisdom in the room lets support each other and reflect on what we can learn!

**HOMEWORK:** If you like to read, consider this article from the Australian Childhood Foundation on how to prepare children after things go wrong in the holidays - see here.

**REGISTER:** [here](#) via Zoom Link

**FORMAT:** Click and Connect provides a supportive social space that allows natural conversations to flow to ensure you are honoured as experts of your families and lives, while having the expertise of a PCA Adviser on hand for additional professional support. Meetings begin with a brief overview of the topic by a PCA Families adviser before opening up to the group to share experiences, thoughts and ideas. You are welcome to attend as often as you like, whether that's just once or regularly. Pre-registration is required via our Zoom link.

## Services - Carer Assistance Program

The CAP (Carer Assistance Program) offers therapeutic support by an experienced counsellor, aimed at supporting and improving the mental health and wellbeing of parents and carers (including adoption). A range of issues can impact physical and psychological health and can be overwhelming. This service offers a self referral mechanism for support. To access the counselling service, simply fill out the form available [here](#).

## Events - Share & Connect (JC)

**TOPIC: TIPS TO PREPARE FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR**

**DATE: Thursday 2 February at 8.00pm**

**LOCATION: Zoom online**

**TOPIC:** The start to the school year is imminent. For some children that have experienced trauma, the brain may be impacted and the wiring related to learning and control of emotions and behaviour can make learning, making friends and establishing relationships with new teachers challenging. Share & Connect offers members an opportunity to connect with other parents and carers in a safe space and to share the unique and common experiences of parenting children through permanent care, kinship care and adoption.

**BACKGROUND:** Consider reading this article on 7 Tips to Prepare Youth Child for the new school year from Empowering Parents available [here](#)

**REGISTER:** [here](#)

**FORMAT:** Share & Connect is facilitated by skilled volunteers with lived experience in raising children through permanent care, kinship care and adoption. Confidentiality is an important part of these meetings. Typically a brief article is circulated each month prior to the meeting or a guest speaker with expertise in a particular topic joins. Questions are invited from the group and members offer up their unique experiences/advice.





## News - Bedtime Strategies (Autism and ADHD)

Want more sleep? Latest research shows that sleep interventions offer better outcomes. The universal strategies include:

- setting a regular bedtime and waking up time
- creating a safe, comfortable sleeping environment (cool, quiet, dark, screen-free)
- following a regular bedtime routine that is calm and sleep-inducing
- avoiding caffeine, electronic devices and excitement before bed
- encouraging physical activity during the day
- avoiding exercise one hour before bed.

Different behavioural strategies can also help, including the checking method, bedtime fading and relaxation training. Find out more [here](#).

## News - Flexi Funding Files

Keep in mind that the limit for attachments when applying for flexi funding is 15MB. If you need help with reducing the size of your file, call our flexi funding team.

## Better Futures and Home Stretch

The Victorian Government has provided funding to support young people on a permanent care order who turn 15 years and 9 months to get the support they need as they get older. Better Futures also offers Home Stretch, which supports young people to remain living with you after 18 or to move to other housing, like private rental. This support is available until 21 years of age via payment of an allowance. The purpose of Better Futures is to help your young person transition to independence. What that looks like will differ for each young person. We know that some of young peoples past experiences may make them reluctant to engage with the Better Futures providers. We encourage you to talk through with them the benefits of at least engaging to find out what the program is and what it might offer them, so they can make an informed decision. To access these programs, or find out more, either you or your young person can contact PCA Families on 03 9020 1833 (option 3). PCA Families assesses eligibility for the program and connect the young people with a Better Futures provider.

## DFFH Flexible Funding

If your child or young person is on a Permanent Care Order or you receive the DFFH Care Allowance and they have a Family Court Order or Adoption Order, they are entitled to DFFH Flexible Funding to meet the costs of goods and services they need not covered by the care allowance, or another funding source (eg Medicare, NDIS). Flexible funds can be used for therapeutic, educational or medical services, build skills interest or attachments, support birth family contact and cultural identity, respite, medication, vehicle modifications. For more details on what the funds can be used for see [here](#). Claims should be more than \$100 per invoice and generally paid by PCA Families directly to the supplier. To ensure funds are distributed fairly and equitably and are appropriate and safe for your child, we ask for supporting documentation that services are trauma informed and that both goods and services are recommended by a professional who knows your child or young person.

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