

# COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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**EVENTS**  
**Click & Connect**  
**Wed 26/4/23**  
**Share & Connect**  
**Thurs 4/5/23**

**Flexi-Funding**

**Better Futures**

**Helpine**

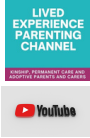
**CAP**

ADDITIONAL COSTS OF CARE

INDEPENDENCE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT

REFERRALS, ADVOCACY

CARER ASSISTANCE



## Youtube - FASD and Nutrition Insights



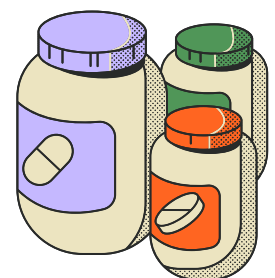
Melanie McGrice is an Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian with a Masters in Dietetics. She specialises in Early Life Nutrition, also known as the 1st 1000 days, from preconception to toddlerhood, when a child's brain, body and immune system grows the fastest to set the foundations for a child's future. She is also a Permanent Carer. When Melanie began fostering and later a Permanent Care Mum she did the research that planted a seed. So many children in foster care /permanent care were born to parents who had alcohol during pregnancy or who had a drug addiction. So Melanie used her training and knowledge in nutrition to do some further research into FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder). What did Melanie find?

- Nutrients that were deficient because of alcohol or FASD.
- Nutrients that could slow the impact of FASD.
- Nutrients that were in smaller volumes in children from FASD.
- Impacts after puberty.

Melanie wants parents and carers to do a blood screen of nutrient markers so that you can treat the deficiencies ASAP.  
 Makes sense!

That combined with a nutrition assessment might do wonders for our community of children.

Listen to the podcast or read the transcript [here](#).



## News - Impact of Fostering and Adoption

Creating a Family joined with Dr Jana Hunsley, Assistant Professor at University of Texas, TBRI practitioner and trauma therapist to discuss the impact of fostering and adoption on children already in the family. They identified that children already in the family (biological or not) may feel they need to do better, but they also generally are more empathetic and often choose roles in life that have meaning or that make a difference.

Some common worries are discussed, such as:

- "Poor Behaviour: Parents and carers worry that "poor" behaviours from a prior home might affect other children. Dr Jana reminds us that there is always a reason behind the behaviour and to play detective with the children that are already in the home as well as the new child. They aren't just mirroring. They are looking to get a need met.
- Vicarious Trauma: It can be hard to experience and witness the affects of trauma and to make sense of trauma when a child comes into your home. Either way there is a reason so get proactive with giving children attention and helping them to talk through these things and process so they don't need to act out.
- Harmful Behaviours: If children act out with harmful behaviours, such as aggression or sexually, go back to the basics: education and communication. You can't have eyes on all the children all the time. Educate all the children in your family about what is safe touch. But also ensure there is open communication in the family so a child can come to you when they are uncertain, scared or don't know how to respond. No matter what is going on or how stressed you might be you want to meet your child's needs with communication. Also look at the safeguards. What can we do to structure our home environment so we don't have to constantly monitor? How do we keep them safe beyond connection and communication?
- Narratives: Dr Jana reminds us that when things happen and we don't understand we create a narrative and make it mean something about ourselves. If I get less attention and don't understand why I might think I'm not good enough or cherished enough. So have multiple conversations and remind your children it has nothing to do with them and their value. Parents and carers can develop shame about this too but it doesn't help. So apologise and acknowledge and move on!



A wonderful reminder that what matters most for wellbeing is a secure base and connection with you. Give up some of the things that were previously important. Perhaps its nutrition. Perhaps its screen time. Connect and attune and communicate!

Find out more [here](#).

# Events - Share & Connect (JC)

**TOPIC:** DR VICKI RUSSELL - FASD ADVOCATE

**DATE:** Thursday 4 May at 8.00pm

**LOCATION:** Zoom online

**TOPIC:** Dr Vicki Russell PhD is a Churchill Fellow (2001). Vicki worked for 30 years in non-government sector management in the delivery of trauma counselling; alcohol and other drug prevention; and neurodevelopmental disability (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder). She trained in narrative practice and has a Certificate of Mastery in the Fetal Alcohol-Neurobehavioural approach (USA).

Vicki has developed and delivered education and training programs on trauma and FASD to professional and non-professional groups across all levels of prevention. Vicki is currently in private practice as a consultant and is a current Board member and volunteer with RFFADA (Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association).

Vicki will introduce Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and explore the diagnosis and the outcomes for the individual across the lifespan, including strategies for management.

Vicki will also look at and open up for discussion the impact for those who care for individuals living with FASD.

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



## carer • KaFÉ

### What is the Carer KaFÉ?

Carer KaFÉ provides learning and development opportunities to kinship carers, foster carers and permanent carers across Victoria.

### What's changing to Carer KaFÉ?

From 1st April 2023, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (the Centre), Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), and Kinship Carers Victoria will be delivering Carer KaFÉ.

Understanding that this is a change, the basics will remain the same: we aim to provide the best training opportunities and support for carers, that are responsive to and reflective of the needs of carers and provide the skills they need to support children and young people in their care.

### When will training be available?

A training schedule will be available shortly, and we look forward to delivering training and connecting with you all soon. We will keep you all updated, every step of the way, so watch this space. Stay in touch through our Facebook: [fb.com/carerkafe](https://fb.com/carerkafe)

### Further information

If you have a question about Carer KaFÉ, please contact **Emily Mellon** at the Centre on (03) 9614 1577 or via email: [Emily.Mellon@cfecfw.asn.au](mailto:Emily.Mellon@cfecfw.asn.au)



## News - Carer Assistance

The Carer Assistance Program continues to explore a range of situations and experiences had by carers. A common experience is mediating between a young person in care and birth families.

Maintaining connection can have wonderful outcomes for the child in supporting them and helping overcome attachment challenges. However, when it doesn't go well, feelings of frustration, rejection and disappointment can arise. As carers its important to get support. Find out more about the CAP program [here](#).



*'I have been to so many psychologists and counsellors' overs the years and no one has made me feel quite as heard as you have. Thank you for acknowledging and validating what I have been going through and helping me see things differently.'* 2023 Carer from CAP

## Events - Click & Connect

**TOPIC: SOCIAL SKILLS FOR YOUR CHILD**

**DATE: Wednesday 26 April 12.00 to 1.00pm with hosts Liz and Sonia**

**TOPIC:** We all know that sharing, patience, empathy and respecting boundaries are important social skills. But which ones are the most important and how do you help your child to learn them? Is there a way to reflect and reinforce the skills that are important to you? Is there a way to teach these skills? This can be even more challenging for children who may have a trauma experience or who are neuro diverse. So how do we start and what experience can we share that might help others?

If you like to read, please consider this article from Raising Teens Today on the 10 Important Social Skills [here](#).

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



## Carer Assistance Program - Therapeutic Support

Self referral available [here](#).

## DFFH Flexible Funding - Funding Additional Needs

Further information available [here](#).

## Helpline - Information, support and referrals

Further information available [here](#).

## Better Futures and Home Stretch - Support to 21

Find out more [here](#).

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