



Welcome to our first 2017 newsletter



Minister Jenny Mikakos comes through for carers!

We have received wonderful news from the Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos, that PCA Families has been granted \$600,000 to run a helpline for permanent carers over the next two years.

In addition, \$4.58 million is available for flexible funding to existing permanent carers for extraordinary expenses which will commence in April. You will find a special message from Minister Mikakos on page 2.

Our organisation is currently developing the next strategic plan which will include a fundraising committee (that we are looking for help with) and will continue to involve our members in the design of our service.

This year you will notice a greater focus on young people as so many issues are being raised through our phone line with families needing support.

I highly recommend the Mindfulness in Motion for Kids program which is aimed at 10–14 year olds (on page 3). Issues for this age group challenge every family and this program builds resilience, emotional regulation and assertiveness.

A big thank you to our members who attended the Commission for Children and Young People's round table on the Permanency Amendments Enquiry. Submissions are now available for you to read, <http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/systemic-inquiries/permanency-amendments/index.htm>

On Thursday June 1, 2017 we are holding an education forum in the CBD (see page 4) and would like to know which topics and/or guest speakers you would like to hear. Please forward any suggestions or recommendations to Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au so we can build these into the program.

We are continually building our specialist database which includes Psychologists, Art Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists etc. Please forward any recommendations to liz@pcfamilies.org.au so we can include them in our database.

PCAF will be visiting the following regional areas in March and look forward to meeting parents and carers who would like to catch up to discuss any concerns or simply to have a chat. We will be visiting the following regional areas:

Geelong March 8	Bendigo March 10	Colac March 16	Warrnambool March 17 & 18
Ballarat March 17	Shepparton March 24	Horsham March 30 & 31	

If you would like an appointment, please contact Pennelopy Tan on 9020 1833 or simply email info@pcfamilies.org.au

Brenda Carmen
CEO

Dates for Your Diary

Friday February 24
10.30am — 12.00pm
**Peer support Mt Eliza @
Sheep Station Bakehouse**

Tuesday February 28,
March 7, March 14, March 21,
March 28
5.20pm — 6.15pm
**Mindfulness in Motion for young
people @ Preston**

Tuesday March 7
8.00pm — 9.30pm
**Journal Club—Collingwood @
Collingwood Library**

Friday March 10
10.30am — 12.00pm
**Peer support Bendigo @
Beechworth Bakery**

Friday March 17
10.30am — 12.00pm
**Peer support Ballarat @
Victoria Gardens**

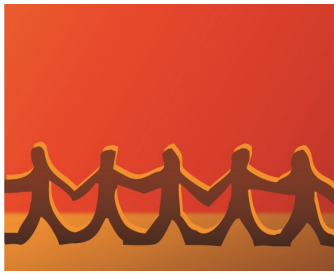
Friday March 24
10.30am — 12.00pm
**Peer support Shepparton @
Baking Dough Bakery**

Friday March 31
10.30am — 12.00pm
**Peer support Horsham @
Conways**

Tuesday April 4
8.00pm — 9.30pm
**Journal Club—Collingwood @
Collingwood Library**

Thursday June 1
10.00am — 2.00pm
Education Forum @ Melb CBD

Information including venues and how to RSVP, visit www.pcfamilies.org.au/event-calendar-all



Health
and Human
Services

New Helpline for Victorian Permanent Carers



Message from Jenny Mikakos MP, Minister for Families and Children

I am very pleased to announce that as a Victorian permanent carer, you will now have access to a helpline for over-the-phone advice and support about the children in your care.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting you in your role as a permanent carer and we are proud to provide \$600,000 over two years to fund the helpline.

As a permanent carer you provide a safe, stable and nurturing home for children who are not able to live with their parents and we understand it's essential that you receive timely services and support.

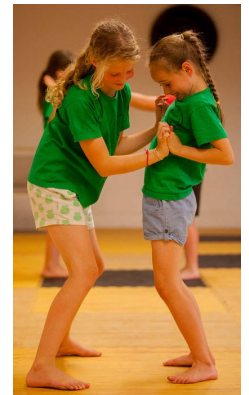
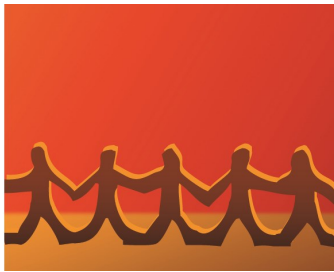
Run by Permanent Care and Adoptive Families, the helpline will be staffed by qualified professionals who can provide tailored advice and information including details about local services and how to access funding to cover extraordinary expenses.

In addition to the helpline, we will be providing \$4.58 million in flexible funding to existing permanent carers to help cover extraordinary expenses, such as child care, transport costs and the therapeutic needs of a child. The flexible funding will be managed by OzChild and accessed through Permanent Care and Adoptive Families.

Your role in giving a child a permanent home is so important and I can't thank you enough for all your hard work, love and effort.

I'd also like to thank Permanent Care and Adoptive Families, which continues to do amazing work providing education and support services to permanent care families. Permanent Care and Adoptive Families has formed an alliance with the Mirabel Foundation, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Kinship Care Victoria, the CREATE Foundation and the Foster Care Association of Victoria, which are all committed to promoting and providing the best possible service to permanent carers.

For assistance and information about permanent care contact Permanent Care and Adoptive Families on (03) 9020 1833 or by email at info@pcafamilies.org.au



The **Mindfulness in Motion Kids Program** is designed specifically to assist young peoples' personal growth. Classes blend skill development, personal observation and experiential learning in an environment that is fun, supportive and engaging for young people. Classes focus on acquiring:

- Resilience
- Focus
- Teamwork
- Emotional regulation
- Assertiveness
- Self-reflection
- Body awareness



This group is targeted at 10-14 year olds in permanent care, adoption, and kinship care and is set to run weekly.

Time: 5:20pm to 6:15pm

Date:

• Tuesday February 28	
• Tuesday March 7	• Tuesday March 14
• Tuesday March 21	• Tuesday March 28

Address: Mindfulness in Motion, 6 Oakover Road Preston

Register: Telephone Deborah Hunt at PCA Families on 9020 1839 or email Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au

Further opportunities will be available to those who are interested.

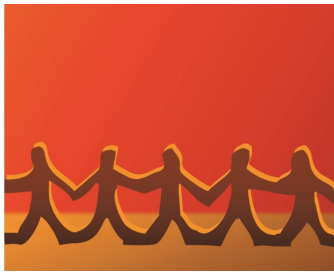
Brenda Carmen, CEO of PCA Families will be there to meet with any interested parents and carers for a coffee while waiting for the kids to finish (or you can quietly watch).

Your Instructors:



Guy Rhynsburger is the senior instructor at Mindfulness in Motions, with over 20 year's martial arts experience. Guy has been working with young people from a variety of backgrounds teaching life skills for well over 15 years.

Alan James is a Kung Fu Black Belt and an experienced Youth Worker with more than 10 years' experience.



Save the date

Date Thursday June 1, 2017
Time 9.30am registration, 10.00 am to 2.00pm
Venue Victoria University Convention Centre, Flinders Street

Education forum for carers aims to:

- Assist carers to better support the learning and education needs of young people they care for
- Inform carers of recent changes and increased support in the Victorian schools environment
- Support carers through networking, shared learning and experiences

The forum will include key speakers and facilitated round table discussions



Caring Connections Information & Support for Kinship

Why do kids behave the way they do? What discipline strategies really work?

They have been through so much...what will help them feel secure & safe?

What about resilience? How can we help our children handle the tough stuff in life?



If you are a relative, grandparent or friend sharing your home with children who can't live with their parents – for whatever reason....this is for you.

Caring Connections is a program for all Kinship Carers. You are invited to:

- ◆ learn about ideas and approaches that make sense for these children & young people
- ◆ build on your strengths and family resilience
- ◆ share your ideas & experiences with others in similar situations

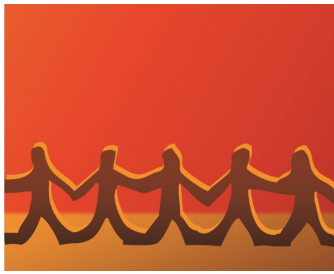
“It is down to earth and relevant... this has been really valuable.”

“It is very informative and you come away feeling empowered”

“(we were able) to speak openly about issues without being judged”

When: 10.00am – 2.00pm - 5 sessions
Tuesdays: 21 & 28 February and 7, 14 & 21 March
Where: Quest Werribee , 69 Synnot Street, Werribee
Cost: There is no cost to attend these sessions
Bookings & Enquiries:
Viki Spedding 03 9301 5200 or
Lily Gleeson (Facilitator) 0429 167 095

For more information and to register your interest in attending
EMAIL: kinship.program@anglicarevic.org.au or FREECALL 1800 809 722



Parenting Plus!

Therapeutic Parenting Program (4 week program)

This specialised Therapeutic Parenting Course has been developed in response to the needs of families parenting children through permanent care and adoption. This course enables parents to explore in a safe and supportive environment, some of the underlying reasons for behaviours and reactions children can have.

This strength's based course is built around the core challenges of parenting children with early experiences of disrupted attachment and trauma and explores:

- Impact of early experiences
- Models of Therapeutic Parenting
- Understanding the impact of early experiences
- Tools and strategies
- Triggers for parents and children

This Program can be delivered across between 4—6 separate modules of approximately 3—4 hours each and enables parents to build on and apply their knowledge within their own family settings.

All Permanent Care and Adoptive Families' training is underpinned by the lived experience and needs of children and families in permanent care and adoption.

We are taking expressions of interest for this highly regarded Parenting Plus! program and need a minimum of 12 people to run the course. Please email Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au with your interest and advise:

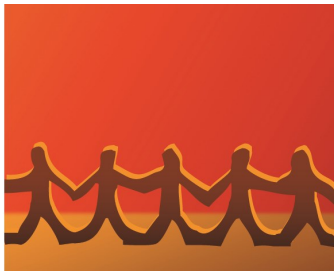
1. How many would like to attend; *and*
2. Where would be your ideal location to undertake the training?



Playgroups offer parents and carers an opportunity to develop networks, and share information while the children have fun. If you are thinking of setting up a playgroup in your area, PCA Families can assist. Please email Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au or call 9020 1839 to discuss. All playgroups are listed on our website <http://www.pcfamilies.org.au/parents-and-carers/support>

"All Ways Playgroup" - Meets first Thursday of the month including school holidays from 10.00am - 12.00noon at Jika Jika Community Centre, Oldis Gardens site, East Street, Northcote. Contact: Tara Gooding, Mob: 0438 827 344, Email: tarascircus@yahoo.com.au

All suburbs—Meet every second Friday of the school term from 10.30 am to (approx.) 1.00pm. Meet at various venues; Melbourne Zoo, Collingwood Children's Farm, CERES, Scienceworks. Contact: Samantha Everton, Mob: 0416 001 224, Email: walford_everton@fastmail.fm



We have many forms of support groups. We have playgroups scattered around Melbourne, see page 8 and peer support groups in Collingwood, Peninsula, Bendigo, Ballarat and setting up in Shepparton and Horsham. They are a gathering for shared learning – participants listen and talk about some of the challenges of raising children and share insights into different ways of supporting our children as well as support and build friendships with other parents.

Our support groups are friendly and welcoming and are open to all adoptive parents and permanent carers with an opportunity to meet and share stories. PCA Families can also assist if you want to set up a support group in your own neighbourhood.

Journal Club – *Collingwood*

Journal Club is a monthly facilitated discussion and support group where participants discuss an article relevant to parenting in home-based care and adoption. It allows confidential conversations around the challenges of parenting and is facilitated by skilled volunteers with lived experience in raising children through home-based care and adoption.

Date: Tuesday March 7 from 8.00—9.30pm
Venue: Collingwood Library, 11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford
Topic: School issues [click here for article](#)

Peer Support – *Mt Eliza*

We are moving the Mornington peer support to a daytime slot and meeting at Mt Eliza.

Date: Friday 24 February 10.30am—12.00pm
Venue: Sheep station Bakehouse, 108—110 Mt Eliza Way, Mt Eliza



Pennelopy Tan, will be meeting with you to discuss advocacy, flexi funding and referral to services, ie psychology, support etc.. Parents, carers and preschoolers all welcome.

Peer Support – *Bendigo*

Our next gathering will be

Date: Friday March 10, 10.30am—12.00pm.
Venue: Beechworth Bakery, 158 High St, Bendigo



Pennelopy Tan, will be meeting with you to discuss advocacy, flexi funding and referral to services, ie psychology, support etc..

Parents, carers and preschoolers all welcome.

Peer Support – *Ballarat*

Our next gathering will take place

Date: Friday March 17 from 10.30—12.00pm
Venue: Victoria Gardens
Parking: Wendouree Parade or Gillies Street



Pennelopy Tan, will be meeting with you to discuss advocacy, flexi funding and referral to services, ie psychology, support etc..

Parents, carers and preschoolers all welcome.

Peer Support – *Shepparton*

Our first catch-up will be:

Date: Friday March 24, 10.30am—12.00pm
Venue: Baking Dough Bakery, 251—253 Maude St, Shepparton



Pennelopy Tan, will be meeting with you to discuss advocacy, flexi funding and referral to services, ie psychology, support etc..

Parents, carers and preschoolers all welcome.

Peer Support – *Horsham*

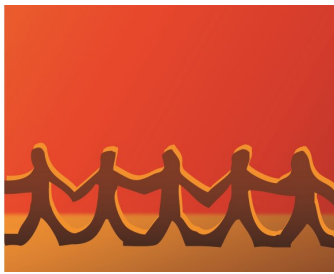
Our first catch-up will be

Date: Friday 31 March, 10.00am—11.30am
Venue: Conways, 51 Pynsent St, Horsham



Pennelopy Tan, will be meeting with you to discuss advocacy, flexi funding and referral to services, ie psychology, support etc..

Parents, carers and preschoolers all welcome.



PARENT ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Maximising every child's potential

6-8 June 2017

The Pullman Hotel, Albert Park
Melbourne, Victoria

The Australian Parent Engagement Conference is jointly hosted by ARACY and The Smith Family, and proudly supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

Theme; 'Maximising Every Child's Potential'

About the conference

Parent Engagement Conference Australia will bring research, policy and practice together to advance discussion about the importance of parent engagement to maximise every child's learning potential. A key focus will be on ways to increase the effectiveness of parent engagement strategies through relationships, and capacity building.

The conference has an outstanding line-up of International keynote speakers to be announced over the coming months.

The primary aim of the conference is to highlight the way parent engagement supports child wellbeing and learning outcomes, with four areas of focus:

1. Growing a shared understanding of parent engagement and why it matters
2. Acknowledging the diversity of contexts in which parent engagement operates
3. Building a consistent approach to the measurement and evaluation of parent engagement
4. Highlighting the importance of capacity building to the future direction of parent engagement in the Australian context.

The intended outcome of the conference is to build and strengthen a parent engagement community of practice in Australia.

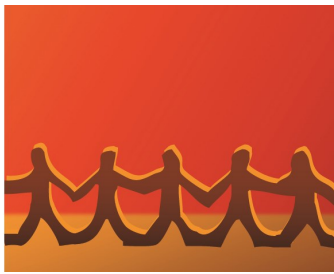
Key dates

17 March 2017 - **Early Bird Registration closes**

27 March 2017 - Draft program released

Visit the PE Conference website for registration prices <https://www.aracy.org.au/events/event/parent-engagement-conference-australia>





15-16 September 2017
Pullman Hotel, Melbourne



[The 2017 National Foster & Kinship Care Conference](#) promises to Shine a Light. We are ambitious in our mission to bring together foster and kinship carers, young people, sector colleagues and other experts such as researchers and childhood professionals from across Australia and the globe.

The National Foster and Kinship Care Conference is an annual event, staged in a different State each year and in most States is typically hosted by the foster and kinship care peak body. The conference will provide an outstanding and rare opportunity for kinship and foster carers and sector professionals to connect on such a large scale and for such a dedicated, intense period of time. It is a major occasion for community building.

Foster and kinship carers provide 24/7 protection to vulnerable children and young people who are unable to live with their own parents, by providing a safe and stable home environment. Further, for these children and young people to be fully supported, carers and Government Agencies as well as Community Service Organisation staff require on-going training, education and support so that they can work together to manage the complex behaviours these children display, due to the trauma, neglect and abuse they have experienced, and to help these children to heal, to grow, to flourish.

This conference is support for foster and kinship carers by providing formal and informal education for carers, whether they are seasoned professionals or new to the system, and to build community.

Aim for the Conference

- To strengthen Home Based Care
- To celebration your contribution
- To support Carers by networking and shared learning

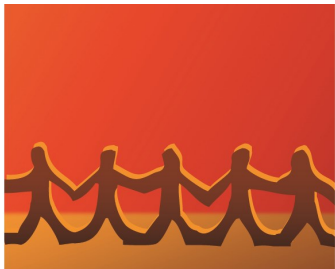
Key Elements

Keynote presentations will give you greater knowledge and support around therapeutic care systems as well as Education and other elements. Question and Answer time built into every parallel session help delegates find answers to all their queries.

Conference presentations and poster presentations will cover hot topics that carers want to hear about such as:

- Research Policy and Practise
- Carer Support Networks and Community Building
- Connecting to Culture
- Working with Families
- Navigating the System
- Caring for Infants, Children and Young People

For more information visit [The 2017 National Foster & Kinship Care Conference](#) .



Inquiry into the Implementation of the Children, Youth and Families Amendment Act 2014

Permanency Amendments Enquiry, public submissions are now available for reading

Thank you for providing a submission to the Permanency Amendments Inquiry being conducted by the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP).

More than 50 submissions were received by the CCYP, from carers, families, service providers and advocates. Not all submissions have been made public but thirty-six public submissions have been made public and are available at <http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/systemic-inquiries/permanency-amendments/index.htm>

We will now be analysing all the submissions and we thank you again for your valuable contribution to the inquiry.

Connecting Carers Melbourne - A free event for grandparent, kinship and non-parent carers

Date: Wednesday 22 March 2017, 10.00am – 2.30pm

Venue: Melbourne Museum, 11 Nicholson Street, Carlton

Trusted parenting website raisingchildren.net.au will host a range of interactive and informative activities to assist full-time carers of children in:

- ✓ connecting with other carers
- ✓ learning about local support services
- ✓ establishing or joining social support networks.

Lunch will be provided. Free child care will be available at the venue and should be booked when registering.

Registrations are essential and can be made by emailing grandparents@raisingchildren.net.au or calling 1800 952 968

Supporting Care Leavers to Study at University



Scholarships: Federation University is offering 4 scholarships for care leavers (no age limit), ranging from \$1,000 to \$7,000. Applications close 24 February 2017. To find out more, go to <http://federation.edu.au/industry-and-community/foundation/supporting-the-foundation/scholarships/care-leavers-scholarships>

Want to study at Uni and think your ATAR is too low? Have a look at **Fed Uni's Open Access Scheme**.

For more information go to <http://federation.edu.au/future-students/study-at-feduni/apply/domestic/how-to-apply/applying-through-vtac/open-access>

Bursaries: From 1 February 2017 **La Trobe University** is offering a one-off \$500 bursary to young people studying or want to study at La Trobe Uni. For more information go to <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/scholarships/care-leaver-bursary>

For more information, services and supports for care leavers about studying at:

Fed Uni contact Pearl Goodwin-Burns, Care Leaver Coordinator on 03 5327 9496 or p.goodwin-burns@federation.edu.au or <http://federation.edu.au/current-students/assistance-support-and-services/student-support-services/care-leaver-support>

La Trobe Uni contact Future Students 1300 135 045 or <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/cheedr/care-leavers>