



# COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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**EVENTS**  
**Click & Connect**  
**Wed 7/3/23**  
**Share & Connect**  
**Thurs 2/3/23**

**Flexi-Funding**

ADDITIONAL COSTS OF CARE

**Better Futures**

INDEPENDENCE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT

**Helpine**

REFERRALS, ADVOCACY

**CAP**

CARER ASSISTANCE



## Youtube - Exercise Physiology that is Fun!



Exercise physiology involves movement, play and the vagus nerve and pushing washing along the floor!

Robyn Papworth is a paediatric exercise physiologist, developmental educator and trainer who is passionate about helping children's body and brain to be ready for kindergarten and school through movement and play strategies.

Robyn reminds us that exercises that help with visual tracking, core strength, crossing the midline, spatial awareness and shoulder stabilisation, all key elements for sitting in a classroom and learning, can be fun. Robyn encourages us to connect feelings and visuals, rather than teaching ABCs, and to meet the child with where **THEY** are at.



**Not every child needs a weighted blanket and some children like to throw things off a table!** And remember the vagus nerve exercises that calm the nervous system are as simple as blowing bubbles, singing and humming or chewing on ice.

Robyn also reminds us that checklists are milestones to work towards, not a race to deliver at a point in time! Find out more by listening to the recording [here!](#)



## News - Parenting Prenatal Exposure

Obtaining a diagnosis for prenatal exposure can be difficult or can be associated with some nervousness or apprehension. Early diagnosis and intervention is the strongest factor in achieving successful outcomes. Early diagnosis is a protective factor - it stops one problem from causing another to develop (see NoFASD Australia to find out more [here](#)).

So what are some of the symptoms or clusters of behavioural and learning symptoms that you look for? They can vary from slow processing speed to poor social skills and inappropriate sexual behaviours. As your child grows secondary symptoms can develop such as frustration, aggression, anxiety and depression.

So what strategies can you apply if this is your child?

"Creating a Family" offer us 10 parenting strategies for prenatally exposed adolescents, including:

1. Slow things down
2. Establish predictable routines
3. Teach money management
4. Streamline their life
5. Prioritise safety
6. Consider medication
7. Increase time and supervision
8. Less socialising is more
9. Calming skills and language
10. Healthy boundaries and respect.



Not a bad list for trauma informed care generally! For further information see [here](#).

## News - University is not a Pipe Dream

The number of participating students at Raising Expectations partner universities has risen from over 300 in 2020 to almost 700 in 2022. That means the university is no longer the pipe dream for young people that have experienced out of home care. Extending eligibility for out of home care and giving VCE students special entry are being attributed to these outcomes. That's great news! Find out more in this article [here](#).



## "Delivering trauma informed services that empower"

### Events - Share & Connect (JC)



**TOPIC:** LOVE THE CHILD YOU HAVE

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

**LOCATION:** Zoom online

**TOPIC:** As parents and carers we all want our children to do well in life. Sometimes our own expectations of what their lives should look like can get in the way. Pride, expectations and more can lead us down a pathway of trying to get our child to try new things or to practice, practice practice until something is learnt. But what if that impacts on your connection with your child or accepting your child for who they are? How do you let go and enjoy the child you have? What is the benefit of letting go?

Lets share our experiences and learn from each other.

**BACKGROUND:** Consider reading this article on "Parent the Child you Have, Not the child you wish you had" 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.

### Events - Click & Connect - New Members

*++new members++*



**TOPIC:** WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

**DATE:** Tuesday 7 March 7.00 to 8.00pm with host Liz and Virginia

**TOPIC:** PCA Families is not-for-profit member-based organisation representing families formed by permanent care, kinship care, and adoption in Victoria. We are not a placement organisation, but rather, we offer support, practical advice, funding and peer support and connection for parents and carers. To help you get started on your journey with PCA Families, join this new members information session where we can introduce you to our services and also connect you with like minded parents and carers. This session is run by PCA Families Advisor Liz Powell and a Parent or Carer, so that you might have the benefit of learning from lived and professional experience. The best of both worlds!

**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 Advocacy and Support 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.

## "Improving the lived experience of young people"

## News - Covid-19 Boosters

Boosters are now being recommended for those over 65 years of age and are suggested for consideration for those over 18 years of age.

Find out more [here](#).



## Helpline

PCA Families Helpline is a free, independent and confidential service, offering short term support, practical information, advocacy and referrals to other services. Our approach is child-centred, family-focussed and trauma-informed. Our caring and supportive advisors have extensive experience working with families. Several advisors also have first hand lived experience of permanent care or adoption. Parenting children who have experienced trauma, grief, loss, attachment issues, abuse and/or neglect can be difficult, and many children and their families require additional support to recover, heal and thrive. We understand that systems can be tricky to navigate, and that sometimes you need to speak to someone who 'gets it' to help you plan a way forward. That support can vary from supporting you to become a new parent or carer to improving family dynamics, communication, mental health, behaviours, attachment, identity and belonging, or navigating government departments or schools. More [here](#).

## Carer Assistance Program

The CAP (Carer Assistance Program) is a partnership between PCA Families and Foster Care Association Victoria which 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. To access the counselling service, simply fill out the self referral form available [here](#).

## Better Futures and Home Stretch

The Victorian Government offer 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. Better Futures is here 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. Either you or your young person can find out more by contacting 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 and more (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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