



COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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Flexi-Funding

ADDITIONAL COSTS OF CARE

Better Futures

INDEPENDENCE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT

Helpine

REFERRALS, ADVOCACY

CAP

CARER ASSISTANCE

Permanent
Care and
Adoptive
Families



EVENTS

Click & Connect
Wed 22/3/23

Share & Connect
Thurs 4/5/23



News - Join PCA Families Advisory Group

Call for Expressions of Interest for PCA Families Lived Experience Advisory Group

PCA Families is calling for expressions of interest from interested members to participate in the PCA Families Lived Experience Advisory Group. The Lived Experience Advisory Group is being established to assist us to embed the voice of lived experience into all that we do. Up to twelve voluntary members will be appointed by the Board via the Chief Executive Officer. Advisory Group members will have lived experience and the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to undertake the functions and responsibilities of the Advisory Group.

Appointments will be for a period of up to three years.

If you would like a copy of the Advisory Group's Terms of Reference and an expression of interest form, please email: ceo@pcafamilies.org.au

Expressions of interest close on Friday 31st March 2023

News - New Home for PCA Families



The team at PCA Families is excited to be moving to our new office in Carnegie on the 14 March 2023. For those of you not familiar with Carnegie it is approximately 12 km south-east of Melbourne's Central Business District and located within the City of Glen Eira local government area. The premises, located at Suite 6/69-71 Rosstown Road, Carnegie 3163 Victoria are a short walk from the Carnegie train station. While our physical address is changing our telephone numbers and email addresses will remain the same. The team is looking forward to exploring the shopping precinct which is a well-regarded 'eat street'!

News - Energy Savings

The Victorian Government has announced that the \$250 power saving bonus will commence again on 24 March 2023, entitling any Victorian residential electricity account holder to \$250. If you haven't applied for this years \$250, you still have until 23 March 2023 to do so! Find out more [here](#).

News - Carer Payments Increase

Carer payments are set to increase when indexation is applied on 20 March 2023. If you are a single carer you can expect an increase of \$37.50 per fortnight and for couples, an increase of \$56.40 per fortnight. Find out more [here](#).



News - National Body for Young People

CREATE Foundation is the national consumer body representing the voices of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience. CREATE aim to connect and empower children and offer young people the opportunity to have their say. There are many ways to join in with their programs. Some of their activities include:

- fun activity days
- youth advocate training
- transitioning from care life skills workshops grants and resources
- voices in action podcast where young people have their say on important issues
- surveys and consultations to change the care system for the better.

Register at Create [here](#) or find out more [here](#).

News - ERC and Holiday Camps and Programs

With school holidays on the horizon its time to think about holiday camps or respite needs. Find out more about the variety of camps and activities in our Respite presentation (October 2021) [here](#). The Edmund Rice Autumn Camps are due for registration by 10 March, so be quick to consider your holiday needs and book in! Find out more about ERC camps [here](#).

News - Wellbeing

My Way to Wellbeing is a support service run by Better Place Australia for those who are suffering low to moderate anxiety, depression, relationship or grief and loss issues. For those who live work or study in Kingston or Cardinia you may want to consider their 6 weeks of online sessions on Wednesdays in March and April. Find out more [here](#).



Events - Share & Connect (JC)

TOPIC: VICKI RUSSELL - FASD ADVOCATE

DATE: Thursday 4 May at 8.00pm

LOCATION: Zoom online

TOPIC: More details to be provided next week!

BACKGROUND:

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 - Paid Advocacy for Diverse Learners

The Youth Advisory Service (YDAS) and the Department of Education are running a paid consultation on Wednesday 8th March 4.30-6.30pm for **students 12 to 21 years** of age who find learning hard or learn in different ways (whether you have a diagnosis (Autism/ADHD/Dyslexia etc) or not). Get paid \$100 to share your favourite and least favourite things about school or how you use your strengths and interests to learn. Find out more [here](#).

Events - Click & Connect

TOPIC: DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF AND AMBIGUOUS LOSS - SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

DATE: Wednesday 22 March 12.00 to 1.00pm with hosts Liz and Sonia

TOPIC: Disenfranchised loss or grief reflects a loss that is not socially acknowledged by society or is not mourned or supported. Ambiguous loss is a loss without closure and without significant likelihood of reaching emotional closure or a clear understanding. This kind of loss leaves a person searching for answers, and complicates and delays the process of grieving, often resulting in unresolved grief. Perhaps the loss is considered too small or distant. Perhaps society just can't see the loss justifies the grieving. It can include things like infertility, loss of one's home or country or loss of sense of safety. So how do you help to process disenfranchised grief and ambiguous loss? What can help you and what can help your child? Let's use the collective wisdom in the room to learn from and share with each other.

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.



News - International Womens Day



On 8 March we celebrate International Women's Day and the attention on issues such as gender equity, violence and abuse towards women and digital equality. There are many ways to get involved and many ways in which you can embrace equity. How will you embrace equity on March 8? 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. Further information available [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. Find out more [here](#).

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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