The New Year

This could be the right time to check out some parenting and carer counseling (See Page 2) after the long school holidays. Children have a lot of energy and they need activities balanced between indoor and outdoor. They also need a balance between time alone and time with others. The problems is, they don’t always see it that way! When I leave my son to his own devices (on the computer or Ipad) he is totally happy (unless there is a computer malfunction), but the longer time he has at it, the more reluctant he is to do anything else. It’s tempting to leave him to it all holidays, but then it’s hard to convince him to change his focus when the holidays are over. So I have learned to set up something each day, even if it’s just taking the Christmas tree out to be mulched at the waste transfer station.

Now we are into 2016, approaching the period of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) transition into full operation. This year some of us will engage with the NDIS through Local Area Coordination services. It will be Local Area Coordinators (LACs) that will assist us through the eligibility process, developing goals and plans and helping participants to implement plans. They will also be assisting all people not eligible for the NDIS, along with their families and carers.

People with permanent and significant disabilities who live in the local government areas of Yarra, Darebin, Banyule, Whittlesea and Nillumbik will be able to seek access to the NDIS from July of this year. This is the beginning of the NDIS transition period. The turn will come for people from Moreland and Hume from March 2018. That is a long time to wait if you are on the Early Childhood Intervention Services waitlist or if your child has other urgent needs for disability support. In such cases the Victorian government is seeking to engage with people with urgent needs to assess them for NDIS support regardless of the timetable for their geographic location. The Department of Health and Human Services factsheet states that “Children on the ECIs waitlist and people on the DSR with the most urgent need for supports will enter the scheme within the first two years of the transition period ahead of their geographic area entering the scheme… Urgent needs will be assisted on a case-by-case basis. Factors that will be considered include the need for additional support to ensure safety and wellbeing and a stable living condition.”

If you feel that your situation is urgent, you might contact DHHS on 1800 783 783 to register your child’s needs and the critical issues at home and in the community. This may begin a process that might get you NDIS support within the next two years. Be brave. Speak up. Don’t give up.

Written and edited by Thea Calzoni, Coordinator of the Northern Parent Support Program. Contact tcalzoni@mcm.org.au
Parentzone Northern – free for parents

Being a parent is an important job. It is also challenging. One day it may be exciting and rewarding and the next day it's overwhelming and frustrating.

Parentzone provides information and support for parents of children of all ages, from babies through to young adults.

Parentzone is a free service for all parents and caregivers including:
- Sole parents
- Step parents
- Grandparents
- Foster parents
- Isolated parents
- Parents of all cultures
- Parents with a disability or chronic illness
- Parents of children with special needs.

Parentzone offers a variety of services, resources and support across a wide range of parenting needs.
- Really useful books and videos
- Information about parenting courses and support groups.
- The chance to meet and chat with other parents.

Telephone: 9465 0322

Raising Children Network

On the Raising Children website, parents will find reliable and scientifically validated information and resources to support them in the day-to-day work of raising children and looking after their own needs. The website is growing all the time and covers a broad range of up-to-date parenting topics. [http://raisingchildren.net.au/children_with_disability/children_with_disability.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/children_with_disability/children_with_disability.html)

Carers Victoria Counselling Program

Many parents and carers experience complicated feelings related to their role. Emotions like anger, depression, anxiety, loneliness, loss and grief are very common. Family and friends can provide important support but it is often helpful to talk with an objective professional.

Carers Victoria carer counselling program can link you up with qualified professionals who understand the problems that caring families often face. You can talk to a counsellor by yourself or include your partner and other family members.

Counsellors can help you:
- Deal with overwhelming and confusing feelings
- Make sense of your experiences as a carer
- Work out your own needs and solve problems
- Manage conflict, stress and other emotional factors that make caring more difficult
- Build resilience and cope with change
- Improve your mental, emotional and physical wellbeing

Carers Victoria can provide free short-term counselling (up to six sessions) that will mainly focus on issues related to your caring role. Counsellors that speak languages other than English are available in some areas.

You can contact Carers Victoria's advisory line to discuss your needs. Staff can assess your eligibility and make a direct referral. You could also ask your GP, case manager or support worker to make a referral with your consent.

Carers Victoria Freecall 1800 242 636

Parentline 13 22 89 is a telephone counselling service for parents and carers of children 0-18 years, open 8am-midnight 7 days a week.
Puberty Education – Co Care

The Co Care Program delivers educational groups for young people with intellectual or learning disabilities. The eight week groups are run in schools and other community settings in the northern and western regions of Melbourne.

The Puberty Education Program provides information to young people, in a fun and interactive group environment which will support a positive transition into puberty. The groups are single sex, with a total of 6 – 8 people per group. Topics include:

- Body Parts and Functions
- Body changes
- Public and Private
- Appropriate Touch
- Protective Behaviours
- Feelings Identification and Management
- Periods and Menstrual Management (girls only)
- Managing 'sexy' feelings, erections and wet dreams (boys only)

The fee for the service is $10 per person. As well as the puberty education program, a program is also available for young people aged up to 25 years.

Call Co Care: 9355 9900

Cyberbullying

The Office of the Children’s e-Safety Commissioner protects Australian children by administering a complaints scheme when they experience cyberbullying. It deals with complaints about prohibited online content. The e-safety Office is an independent statutory office within ACMA. Website: www.esafety.gov.au/about-the-office

Recreation Activities promoted by Access All Abilities

Special Olympics Melbourne West
Special Olympics Melbourne North

PEGS Swim Academy for anybody, boys or girls with a disability in small classes (only 3 per class) at a cost of $18 per week.

PEGS Swim Academy is located at: Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School (Junior Boys Campus), Raleigh St, Essendon http://www.pegsswimacademy.com.au/swimmer-with-a-disability-programs/

Sailability North – Broadmeadows

Sailability North offers an opportunity for those not at school to come and enjoy the excitement and independence of sailing in a fun and social environment, accessible for people of all abilities. The program runs on Thursdays in February between 9:30am and 1:00pm at Jack Roper Reserve, Camp Road, Broadmeadows.

Email: soeterboek@optusnet.com.au
Phone: 9338 7812
Transitioning from Royal Children's Hospital to Adult services

Here are some links to resources which support transitioning from children's to adult medical services:

http://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Adolescent_transition_goal_setting/

http://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Adolescent_transition_basics_for_young_people/

http://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Adolescent_transition_basics_for_parents_and_carers/

http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/transition/Adolescent_Transition_factsheet_2.pdf

NDIS Community Information Session presented by the Association for Children with a Disability.

10.30am - 12.00pm Thursday 18 February

Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre Cnr Bell Street and St. Georges Road, Preston

The session will include:
- An overview of the NDIS
- Learnings from the trial sites where the Scheme is already operating
- Tips on what you can do to prepare, while waiting for the Scheme to be rolled out
- Opportunity to ask questions

RSVP is essential online by Friday 12 February

acdndisinfosession2016.eventbrite.com.au

Having a Say Conference 2016
Ready, Set, CONNECT
10th - 12th February 2016
Deakin University Waterfront Campus, Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Our Choice Expo 2016
The aim of the Expo is to empower people with disabilities, families and workers about the choices and options available through the new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Exhibits will include equipment, personal care, community activities, skill development, therapy, training & support, accommodation, employment, mental health support and much more.

Information Sessions will include speakers & panels on topics including:
- Preparing for transition to the NDIS
- Quality, Standards & the NDIS
- Tips for selecting services to purchase support
- Housing & accommodation options
- Accessing aids, equipment under the NDIS
- Selecting, Training &/or Managing workers

Entry is Free to view the exhibits.

The Registration booklet is available to download from the VALID website.
You can join the conversation about the conference on Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Having-A-Say-Conference/176563439057033 If you have questions or need other information contact us at the VALID office - 9416 4003 or email havingasay@valid.org.au
Would you like to join a MyTime group?

MyTime groups provide local support for parents and carers of a young child under 16 years with a disability or chronic medical condition. Groups provide unique support from other parents who have "been there" or are "there right now". MyTime gives parents the chance to socialise, share ideas with others and find out about available community support. We have a variety of guest speakers who visit our group (eg service providers with information for parents). MyTime is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (Commonwealth Government Funding).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MyTime Group Delivered by</th>
<th>Contact:</th>
<th>Session Day &amp; Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadmeadows Broad Insight-Dianella Community Health</td>
<td>Melinda Bruce 9309 9200</td>
<td>Wednesdays 10.00 am 12.00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Valley SDs</td>
<td>Penny Moffatt 9432 1022 <a href="mailto:moffat.pennie.p@edumail.vic.gov.au">moffat.pennie.p@edumail.vic.gov.au</a></td>
<td>Thursday mornings during school terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenroy Yooralla</td>
<td>Lynne Baker 9359 9208 Call Tuesday mornings only</td>
<td>Tuesday 10:00am - 12:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hume Indigenous Wandarra Aboriginal Corporation</td>
<td>Leanne Brooks 9205 2838</td>
<td>Monday 11:00am - 2:00pm (fortnightly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Melbourne Playgroup Victoria</td>
<td>Leanne Hogan 0418 231 543</td>
<td>Friday 10:00am - 12:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxburgh Park Broad Insight-Dianella Community Health</td>
<td>Melinda Bruce 9309 9200</td>
<td>Thursday 10:00am - 12:00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each group is supported by a facilitator for the parents/carers and two play helpers for the children. The facilitator helps parents find out about useful resources and share ideas to help the children. The play helpers lead the children and their siblings in a variety of play activities that suit the children's ages and interests so that parents are free to connect and learn.

Easy Low GI Banana Cakes

Squish up your left-over brown bananas with some oats and dried fruit and press into patty cake papers or greased patty pan trays. The more bananas you use, the more cakey the cakes!

Recipe supplied by Bree Hansen from B minor Music
## SUPPORT GROUPS UPDATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
<th>DATE &amp; TIME</th>
<th>VENUE</th>
<th>INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADEC Multicultural Disability Support and Carer Social Support Groups with bi-lingual facilitators – Afghan, Vietnamese, Turkish, Japanese, Arabic, Chinese, Chin Hakka, Greek and Somali.</td>
<td>Peehu Gupta 9480 1666</td>
<td>Telephone Pehu and she will arrange for the facilitator of the group to contact you with dates and times of events</td>
<td>ADEC 175 Plenty Rd Preston</td>
<td>ADEC’s groups support carers of children and aged people with disabilities. They have information sessions and social outings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphington Parent Support Group</td>
<td>Sue Lenzi 9499 7227</td>
<td>Tuesday 1-3 pm</td>
<td>Alphington Community Centre,</td>
<td>Formerly a MyTime Group, this group welcomes new members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety and Depression Parent Support Group</td>
<td>Kerry Boag: 9356 8600</td>
<td>Wednesday 2-4 pm</td>
<td>JobCo, 95 Albert Street Brunswick</td>
<td>This group is for parents or carers whose child or young adult may be suffering from mental health issues such as anxiety or depression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerebral Palsy Parent Support Group</td>
<td>Shannon Cheal 9478 1001</td>
<td>Contact the Cerebral Palsy Support Network for up-to-date meeting times and places.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informal get together for Information on issues affecting people with cerebral palsy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftability - parent craft group in Glenroy</td>
<td>Thea Calzoni 9385 3235</td>
<td>Meets fortnightly on Mondays 10am-12pm during school terms.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A friendly card making and scrap booking group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigieburn</td>
<td>Maria Liistro 0407 558 151</td>
<td>Third Monday 10am-12pm</td>
<td>Parent’s Home – please ring for address.</td>
<td>This is a friendly group for parents of children with disability living in Craigieburn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigieburn Autism Support</td>
<td>Kylie Clear c/- facebook group</td>
<td>Virtual meeting space only</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is a closed facebook group. Apply to join. [<a href="https://www.facebook.com/#!/grou">https://www.facebook.com/#!/grou</a> ps/427608787340934/]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dads Can - because children whose fathers are more involved with their development show better outcome.</td>
<td>9435 8311 annettemagro@kalparr in.com.au</td>
<td>Kalparrin, 1 Kalparrin Ave, Greensborough</td>
<td>If you’re a father of a child (0-18) with additional needs come along to our monthly pizza nights.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Valley Autism Support Group (DVASG)</td>
<td>Kerryn 0409 077 777 or Katherine: 0439 652 680</td>
<td>Diamond Valley Learning Centre (DVLC) Greensborough (Cnr Diamond Creen &amp; St Helena Road)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Please make contact via the website for advice regarding the group. [<a href="http://www.dvasg.net.au/">http://www.dvasg.net.au/</a>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragile X Association of Victoria</td>
<td>Bronwyn Kelleher 0407 206 459 <a href="mailto:Bronwyn@kelse.net">Bronwyn@kelse.net</a></td>
<td>To be Advised</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is a volunteer group of parents and friends of people affected with Fragile X syndrome with peer counseling available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP</td>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>DATE &amp; TIME</td>
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<td>INFORMATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grassroots Solutions</td>
<td>Sheena Mathieson 0418 506 942</td>
<td>Thursdays 12-2.00 pm</td>
<td>Banksia Neighbour- hood House, 71-81 Pearcedale Parade.</td>
<td>For parents of children with disabilities to relax with young people with disabilities who are finding new pathways to adult life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearts in Mind</td>
<td>Lisa or George 0430-724-910 or email: <a href="mailto:heartsinmindproject@gmail.com">heartsinmindproject@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Monday mornings for coffee, drop in during school term, at Reservoir Neighbourhood House.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aims to enhance the wellbeing of parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mernda Doreen Parents of Special Needs Children Facebook Parent Support Group</td>
<td>See joining details</td>
<td>Join up anytime on Facebook <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/246613012142763/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/246613012142763/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is a group for parents in the Whittlesea area to share useful information on Facebook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northcote MyTime</td>
<td>Kerry Hands, Down Syndrome Assoc 9486 9600 Ext: 202</td>
<td>Mondays 12.15 to 2.15 at the Oldis Gardens Community Centre in East St Northcote</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is a MyTime group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern (ASSN) Asperger Parent Support Groups: One for parents of primary school aged kids and one for parents of teens</td>
<td>Lisa Petersen on 0430 724 910 Or email: <a href="mailto:northern@aspergersvic.org.au">northern@aspergersvic.org.au</a></td>
<td>Last Tuesday of the month Time: 7 - 9pm Reservoir Neighbourhood House 2B Cuthbert Road, Reservoir (cnr Cuthbert Road &amp; Strathmerton Street)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parent-run groups with information sessions and a non-judgmental space for parents to share support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools’ groups: St Bernard, Merriang, Merri Creek Primary etc</td>
<td>Thea Calzoni 9385 3235</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Groups are run at schools according to schedule set by the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pokits (an autism parent support group)</td>
<td>Susie Bell 0402 245 086. <a href="mailto:pokits@crosswaynorth.org.au">pokits@crosswaynorth.org.au</a></td>
<td>First Monday of every month from 7:30 - 9:00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>7/334 Hume Highway, Craigieburn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenty Valley Parent Support</td>
<td>Natasha Brearley-Ngarua 0438 500 068. <a href="mailto:ngarua73@hotmail.com">ngarua73@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Mondays: 1-2.30 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plenty Valley Community Church 5/9 Danaher Drive, South Morang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunspec Parent Support Group Sunbury</td>
<td>Anthony Henjak 9740 5155</td>
<td>Contact Anthony for dates and venue details</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group for parents in Sunbury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAN - Syndromes without a name Australia</td>
<td>Heather Renton 0404 280 441 <a href="mailto:president@swanaus.com.au">president@swanaus.com.au</a></td>
<td>Meetings and information sessions at the Children’s Hospital. Check <a href="http://www.swanaus.com.au">www.swanaus.com.au</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>A group for those with a (genetic) syndrome without a name.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thanks to the willing workers at Bridges who fold and post Parent News.

**Sharing Our Story**

*Sharing Our Story* is an adult learning tool aimed at tertiary students and service providers who regularly work with children with a disability. It is designed to stimulate discussion and a greater understanding of disability from a family perspective enabling professionals to work in partnership with children with a disability and their families. The *Sharing Our Story* kit includes two DVDs plus a training manual with suggested learning objectives, activities and prompts to generate discussion. The full *Sharing Our Story* kit is available for purchase for $199.00. If you are interested in purchasing the kit, please email mail@acd.org.au Call 9818 2000 or 1800 654 013 should you require any additional information.

*Sharing Our Story* is a part of ACD’s suite of professional development tools. For further information please visit our website at [www.acd.org.au](http://www.acd.org.au)