

# PARENTING IN THE EARLY YEARS



Listening  
Nurturing  
Supporting  
Respecting  
Connecting

A one-day conference for service providers highlighting the critical importance of effective engagement with parents during the early childhood years.

Wednesday 13 May 2009, 8.30am to 4.45pm

Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart

*Brought to you by The Tasmanian Early Years Foundation,  
Good Beginnings Australia and Mission Australia*



Tasmanian Early Years  
FOUNDATION



Mission Australia

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# The Tasmania Early Years Foundation



Across the world there is a strong body of evidence and increasing acknowledgement that the early years are a crucially important stage of human development and that early childhood experiences set the stage for later development, learning and wellbeing. A crucial element in a child's life is a loving and nurturing family environment that provides the security for a child to flourish and reach their full potential in life. To support this goal the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation, in partnership with Mission Australia and Good Beginnings, is proud to support today's Parenting in the Early Years Conference during National Families Week.

The Foundation has been established by the Tasmanian Government under the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation Act 2005 (the Act) as a non-profit organisation to support and promote the well-being, development and learning of Tasmanian children up to the age of six years. The Foundation plays a central role in bringing all the sectors together to help foster a society in which all Tasmanian children are valued and given the best possible start to lead a fulfilling and enriched life. The Foundation is governed by a Board comprising of 10 members who have an appropriate blend of skills and experience to progress and champion the objectives of the Foundation.

The Foundation is actively filling this central role by providing opportunities, in partnership with the Tasmanian community, to support children and their families and raise awareness and a commitment to the early years of childhood. The Foundation encourages a collaborative way of working with the early years sector in Tasmania by supporting workshops and access to national and international speakers through its strong learning and development program, as well as its annual grant program. The conference today is a key strategy for 2009 as we support the development and implementation of the first 8 Child and Family Centres announced by the Premier last year. The Foundation has strongly advocated for the importance of integrated services and a "one-stop-shop" model of service delivery to support children and families who find it difficult for many reasons to access support and guidance in the early days of parenting.

To give children what they need is one of the greatest challenges in society today and a loving family is the key to a good start in life. Children need good mental health and children with a range of difficulties may need help in order to have a full and happy future. There is also increasing evidence that when fathers are closely involved with their children, children develop better friendships, higher self esteem, better life satisfaction and higher educational achievement. This knowledge and understanding that interventions during early childhood influence a wider range of social and economic outcomes than interventions later in life are the themes that underpin the conference today...

Tasmanian Early Years Foundation – phone: 1300 367 863  
[www.earlyyears.org.au](http://www.earlyyears.org.au)



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## Conference Welcome from the Premier



Being a parent is a great privilege and a great responsibility. When I look at my own two children, I see how every day they are learning new things about the world, both through observation and through their interaction with their mum and dad.

All the evidence shows that the early years of a child's life are crucial if we are to help them reach their full potential. As a State Government, we want to find ways to support parents through this time, so that when children are old enough to begin school they already have the seed of a life-long love of learning sewn within them. That is why we have committed to building up to 30 Child and Family Centres across Tasmania – with building on the first eight to be underway this year. These centres will provide parenting programmes, early learning support, child and family health services, early identification of children with special needs, and access to adult education and training.

I hope that today's conference inspires you all in continuing to support parents to be the very best care-givers they can be. There is no greater investment we can make in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Bartlett'.

David Bartlett MP  
Premier

## Good Beginnings Australia



the greatest gift you can give  
a child is a good beginning

Good Beginnings is a national charity that works in partnership with communities to provide early childhood intervention services and engages in advocacy that will build capacity of parents and carers. Our range of socially inclusive early childhood development services helps children and their families to flourish which in turn contributes to effective communities.

Good Beginnings programs operate in every state and territory in Australia. All programs are externally evaluated and are based around the Five Program Pillars:

- **Child focused community development:** Projects that support child focused capacity building within the community
- **Universal supported groups:** A wide range of play-based, support or educational groups that help build self esteem for all family members and enhance relationships between parents and their children
- **Volunteer Family Support:** A service for parents of young children, where the family is partnered with a trained and locally supervised volunteer, who is usually a parent themselves
- **Targeted supported groups:** A suite of structured group programs for families and young children with complex needs, facilitated by at least two professional staff members as well as trained volunteers
- **Intensive Family Support:** Programs that provide professional support and parenting intervention to families with complex needs over an extended period of time.

Good Beginnings' suite of programs also constitute a continuum of services. Depending on the range of services offered at each site, parents can transition from one to another depending on their needs.

Good Beginnings – phone: (03) 6223 5810  
[www.goodbeginnings.net.au](http://www.goodbeginnings.net.au)

## NIFTeY



National Investment For The Early Years – is a national body with a large number of supporters from different disciplines and organisations. It was incorporated in 2000. There are currently three State groups that are affiliated with NIFTeY national.

NIFTeY is a community of individuals from diverse areas including child development practitioners, advocacy and welfare groups, mental health practitioners, community health workers, academics, pediatricians and the juvenile justice system. This NIFTeY family is united by a commitment to improving the welfare of children and their families through a focus on the early years of development, including during pregnancy.



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NIFTeY's objectives are:

- to promote development, implementation and evaluation of strategies in the early years of life that advance the health, development and wellbeing of all children in Australia
- to advance community knowledge and the education and support of parents in relation to the importance of the first three years of a child's life, so as to promote the social, cognitive, emotional and physical well being of all children
- to encourage the provision of resources and services to communities and families where children are known to be disadvantaged
- to promote and disseminate research relevant to the early years of life including monitoring the status of young children.

For information on NIFTeY in Tasmania contact Paul Prichard [paul.prichard@goodbeginnings.net.au](mailto:paul.prichard@goodbeginnings.net.au).  
<http://niftey.cyh.com>

## Mission Australia



Mission Australia

Mission Australia is a not-for-profit organisation providing Community, Employment and Training services across Australia.

Our vision is to see a fairer Australia by enabling people in need to find pathways to a better life.

Walking alongside those in need, we help people discover;

- Pathways to strong families and healthy, happy children
- Pathways away from homelessness
- Pathways through a successful youth
- Pathways to skills and qualifications
- Pathways to sustainable employment

This year Mission Australia celebrates 150 years of servicing the disadvantaged in their local communities. Mission Australia has delivered services in Tasmania since 1998 and has service delivery centres at Burnie, Devonport, Launceston, Oatlands, New Norfolk, Chigwell House, Moonah and Hobart.

In Tasmania Mission Australia delivers a broad range of programmes that are targeted to meet the needs and provide early intervention strategies for children, young people and families. Our work in these areas is developed under a program logic framework and are delivered with both an individual and community outcome focus.

Mission Australia is delighted to be working in partnership with the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation, Good Beginnings Australia and NIFTeY to present this 'Parenting in the Early Years' conference.

Mission Australia, Tasmania state office - phone: (03) 6234 3240  
[www.missionaustralia.com.au](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au)



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# Notes



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# Conference Program

From	To	Session	Speaker
8.00am	8.45am	Registration/tea & coffee	Participants
8.45am	8.48am	Welcome	Rebecca Smith, CEO Tasmanian Early Years Foundation
8.48am	8.53am	Welcome to Country	Leonie Dickson, Tasmanian Aboriginal Community member
8.53am	9.00am	Tasmanian Early Years Foundation	Dr Sue Jenkins, Chair Tasmanian Early Years Foundation
9.00am	9.15am	Opening Address	David Bartlett, Premier
9.15am	10.15am	Keynote Speaker <i>Strategies to promote effective engagement between parents and young children.</i>	Professor Graham Vimpani AM
10.15am	10.45am	Morning Tea	Participants
10.45am	11.45am	<i>Teen Parenting</i>	Professor Julie Quinlivan
11.45am	12.45pm	<i>Engaging Fathers</i>	Dr Richard Fletcher
12.45pm	1.45pm	Lunch & Networking	Participants
1.45pm	3.00pm	<i>The Incredible Years – Australia</i>	Dorothy Abbot, Andrew Lawrence & Dr Gareth Furber
3.00pm	3.45pm	Parents Voice	Good Beginnings
3.45pm	4.00pm	Afternoon Tea	Participants
4.00pm	4.40pm	Q & A Panel	Dr Sue Jenkins, Paul Pritchard, Noel Mundy and Guest Speakers
4.40pm	4.45pm	Thank you/Close	Dr Sue Jenkins, Chair Tasmanian Early Years Foundation



## Keynote Speaker



### Strategies to promote effective engagement between parents and young children

Professor Graham Vimpani AM, Clinical Chair Kaleidoscope – Hunter Children’s Health Network; Discipline Lead, Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Newcastle; Chair, Board of National NIFTeY

Despite our unparalleled freedoms and technological advances child health in early 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia is not all that it might be. This is one feature of the “paradox of modernity”. Why is the scourge of child maltreatment leading to more children being taken into care? Why are so many young people indulging in deliberate or covert self-harming behaviour? Why are so many children not doing as well as they might at school? Why have rates of mental health problems in children and young people doubled in some industrialised countries in the last quarter of a century?

Most parents struggle to balance competing demands on their resources of time and energy. Sometimes a degree of disengagement from young children at a time when the primacy of relationships in moulding their personal development is a price that is paid. But such disinvestment creates risks for the future.

Some parents also carry heavy burdens from their own early life experiences and have not had opportunities to “share the load” before being challenged by the demands of their own parenthood.

There is a growing body of evidence that supports a multi-layered approach to the provision of support to parents of young children. These include family friendly policies that promote better work-life balance, mentoring relationships for parents that promote secure attachment, therapeutic interventions that deal with earlier losses and traumas, creating stronger recognition of the value of play-based learning and embedding a constructivist approach within programs that support parenting.



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## Speaker



### Teenage Pregnancy – Improving Outcomes with a proposed “Triad of Care”

Professor Julie Quinlivan, Dean, University of Notre Dame Australia, Executive Dean, College of Medicine

It has been assumed that teenage mothers are poor parents and that being teenage, *per se*, leads to adverse maternal and infant outcomes.

However, most of the studies reaching these conclusions have compared poor, socially isolated and disadvantaged young mothers with older, financially secure and well supported mothers. It is likely that the financial resources and support available may make more difference than age.

Economic analyses from the United States confirm that it is the social isolation and adverse financial and educational backgrounds that are significant rather than age. This means that education, training and support for young mothers can overcome the barriers that teenage mothers face.

There is good evidence that three separate initiatives can improve outcomes for teenage mothers. These are teenage specific antenatal clinics, prenatal and postnatal home visitation by nurses, and peri-preschool. No trials have evaluated their impact in succession, but each separately has an impact and it is likely their combination would prove to be even more powerful.

This talk highlights the evidence behind the above claims and puts forward the goal for a 'triad of care for teenage mothers'. This combination could help to break the ongoing cycle of disadvantage.

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## Speaker



### Engaging with Fathers – the known and the unknown

Dr Richard Fletcher  
Lecturer, Discipline of Paediatrics, University of Newcastle

Dr Fletcher pioneered the development of Men's Health and Boy's Health areas of study. He is a lecturer in Health Studies in the Discipline of Paediatrics, University of Newcastle and Team Leader of 'The Engaging Fathers Project', Family Action Centre. He has designed and delivered courses and seminars on health research, boy's development and father involvement to teachers, nurses, occupational therapists, and medical students.

We know that fathers are different to mothers and that fathers have an impact on their children's development with the most recent evidence pointing to father's importance from birth. But we know very little about how to successfully deliver services to fathers as part of our support to families. The younger the child the less we understand about effective engagement with fathers. In this presentation the evidence of a father's impact on infant development and evidence from a recent comprehensive review of children's centres will be used to suggest appropriate family-centred early intervention services for fathers and their families.

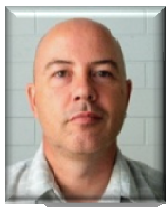
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## Speakers



### The Incredible Years

Ms Dorothy Abbot, Mr Andrew Lawrence  
& Dr Gareth Furber

The Incredible Years (IY) is a series of programs developed by psychologist Carolyn Webster-Stratton, which aim to reduce childhood aggression, behaviour problems and promote social competence. Targeted at parents, teachers and children, the programs have extensive research support and are currently used worldwide in children's mental health centres, preschool and childcare centres, child protective agencies, and primary schools.

In this presentation, we will walk participants through the "who, what, why, when and how" of the IY series focusing on:

- Who the target populations are for the programs.
- What the programs consist of and the key principles upon which the programs are based.
- Why the programs have been so successful, that is, the current evidence base.
- When to implement the programs.
- How the programs have been used worldwide.

This presentation will also cover our experiences of delivering some of these programs in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) service in South Australia, including some preliminary data of treatment group characteristics and outcomes.

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## Tasmanian Early Years Foundation Achievement Awards 2008



The Achievement Awards were presented by Premier David Bartlett MP, on 25 October 2008 in Hobart.

The Awards recognise the important contributions of individuals in the Tasmanian community who assist young children and their families. The Tasmanian Early Years Foundation's Learning and Development program is committed to promoting professional development for key staff across the sectors including early childhood health, education, care and advocacy to ensure every Tasmanian child is given the best possible start in life. The Awards assist the Foundation in meeting these objectives by supporting and acknowledging key staff and community members who work with Tasmanian children and families.



*Pictured left to right:  
Suzanne Purdon,  
Premier David Bartlett MP,  
Clara Baker,  
Val Stephens and  
John Stephens*

The Community Achievement Award winners were Val Stephens and John Stephens. Val and John have shown an outstanding commitment to the well being, development and learning of young children and their families over a long period in Launceston and the surrounding community. They have been registered Family Day Carers for 22 years and also volunteer their time as student supervisors throughout the year.

The Fullers Professional Award winner was Clara Baker. Clara has worked in the early years sector in the George Town community for sixteen years, supporting young children and their families. Clara's early years literacy work has identified her as a leader in this field and she is currently a Literacy Coach and First Steps Speaking and Listening Facilitator for Learning Services North. She has recently initiated an Infants Aquatics Program and the Aboriginal Early Years Project. Clara is a Pre Kinder Advanced Skills Teacher at Port Dalrymple School.

The My State Inspirational Champion Award winner was Suzanne Purdon. Suzanne, an early years educator, has achieved significant outcomes with communities, families and individuals across Tasmania building increased social capital and enhanced life opportunities for children and parents. Suzanne is currently the Network Leader of the South East schools in the Launching into Learning program facilitating and supporting schools to provide high quality early years programs for their local community families.

The next Tasmanian Early Years Foundation Achievement Awards will be held during National Children's Week in 2010.





Celebrate how everyone  
makes a difference

National  
*families week*  
10-16 May 2009

***The Tasmanian Early Years Foundation celebrating  
National Families Week 2009***

The Tasmanian Early Years Foundation encourages all Tasmanians to celebrate National Families Week 2009. The Foundation, along with partners, Good Beginnings and Mission Australia are proud to provide Tasmanian early years practitioners with a conference about supporting parents of children during the early years of their childhood during National Families Week 2009.

Each year, National Families Week celebrates and highlights the critical role of families in Australian society and coincides with the United Nations International Day of Families on 15 May. Hundreds of community groups, businesses and government departments register local events around the country. This year, National Families Week 2009 is being held from 10-16 May 2009.

The central aim of National Families Week 2009 is to encourage all Australians to think about and celebrate the many different people who make families united and strong and the many different types of families across society, each deserving respect and acknowledgement. The theme is: *National Families Week – Celebrate how everyone makes a difference.*

National Families Week is run by Australia's peak independent not-for-profit organisation promoting the needs and interests of families, Families Australia (visit [www.familiesaustralia.org.au](http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au)), on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

