

Parent Support Strategies: Final Report

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES



PARENT SUPPORT STRATEGIES

FINAL REPORT

**FOR FAMILIES FIRST CUMBERLAND
PROSPECT**

SPRC Report 7/04

University of New South Wales Research Consortium
Social Policy Research Centre
Families At Work

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Abbreviations

ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
DoCS	NSW Department of Community Services
GCN	Generalist Community Nurses
LGA	Local government area
NESC	Non English speaking countries

Executive Summary

Background

The Parent Support Project aimed to understand the support and information needs of parents in order to improve the coordination between existing parent support services in the Cumberland Prospect Families First Area (Auburn, Parramatta, Holroyd, Baulkham Hills and Blacktown) and to increase the families' access to these services.

In this report, parent support means services to assist parents with parenting. These include: information to support parents; parenting advice; parent education and skills; and support groups for parents.

The UNSW Consortium, a group of academics and researchers managed by the Social Policy Research Centre and including Families At Work, conducted the research.

The project included:

- a review of local and parent support literature and analysis of the Families First and other data bases;
- interviews with key stakeholders and families;
- a service providers forum to identify short-term and long-term strategies;
- high level support for an area-specific short-term strategy; and
- basic support for development of other short and long-term strategies.

The project reflected an action research approach, accommodating changes in the methodology as new issues emerged at each stage of the investigation.

Current parent support opportunities

In each LGA in Cumberland Prospect, a number of different parent support opportunities are provided. Some of these are general services for any family, while others are specific to particular needs such as cultural background, additional needs children or family member or families at risk. Examples of types of parent support activities found in Cumberland Prospect include: supported playgroups; resource programs for parent support providers; family support; transition to school programs; parent education programs; and child and family health services.

The research revealed that access to parent support activities was affected by the characteristics of the family, understanding about what parent support was for, recruitment strategies and information about activities. Most parent support services were operating at or near capacity.

For some families there were barriers to access such as lack of transport, familiarity or understanding of what parent support services do, and for CALD and ATSI families, accessing culturally and linguistically appropriate information about services and how to access them. Generally, the availability of parent support was inadequate and there was a general lack of resources to support the range of parent needs. The review of existing services and needs was used to develop the principles and plan that follows.

Principles and target groups

Principles for universal inclusive parent support activities and information and considerations for target communities are presented here. The rationale for this two-pronged approach is to reach the majority of families with a range of support types because of the diversity of need, while developing a model for prioritising families least likely to seek support, consistent with the principles of Families First. We applied a strengths-based approach to parent support options that builds on the success of existing models of support in the development of these principles.

1. **Diverse support service delivery.** To meet the diverse needs of the community, the family service system should offer a range of service types that could include: information to support parents; parenting advice; parent education and skills development; and support groups for parents.
2. **Integration and opportunistic means to increase parent support opportunities.** Service providers have successfully used a variety of strategies to increase parent support opportunities. These included:
 - linking to mainstream services such as health, education, children's services and community facilities; and
 - individual and small group activities.
3. **Communication and information to families.** Communication and information for communities and parents is a key to assisting parents to access parent support when they need it. Programs considered successful by parent support stakeholders and Forum participants included:
 - engaging community members in information dissemination;
 - using appropriate cultural contacts, such as local CALD community groups to disseminate information; and
 - cross promotion through other services, agencies and schools.
4. **Communication and coordination between services.** Effective communication and liaison between parent support services is essential if parents are to gain support and link to other services. Programs considered successful by research participants included:
 - allocating responsibility to a case manager to coordinate families moving between services to obtain different parent support as required;
 - distributing newsletters between local parent support services, as a means of keeping local services informed about each other and enhancing referral opportunities for families; and
 - referrals to other agencies (formal, informal and handing information to families for self-referral), when the existing agency did not have adequate or relevant resources.
5. **Staff training and support.** Quality of support is dependent on access to consistent staff with appropriate skills and experience. Strategies considered successful by service providers included:
 - contracting employees to fill service gaps;

- avoiding duplication of programs to ensure staff are available to provide the programs; and
 - partnership models of program delivery using resources and staff across agencies to deliver programs and information.
6. Target groups. To reflect target population needs requires an understanding of the issues facing these families, their particular requirements and flexibility to accommodate these requirements. Expertise, resources and staff with experience were identified as necessary to acknowledge and address the needs of families with characteristics such as CALD; disability (children and parents); ATSI; young mothers and other target groups, such as parents with a mental illness in parents and young people.

Strategies

The plan sets out strategies that aim to achieve enhanced access to parent support opportunities for families currently not accessing these types of services. Strategies include a process to develop parent support activities; enhanced linkages; enhanced family and service relationships; and mobile outreach services. Integrated strategy options for funding in the current 3-year cycle were developed through the action research process.

Process for developing flexible parent support activities

Strategy - Provide parent support through an existing community organisation, to enhance organisations' ability to provide parent support information and resources to effectively meet the needs of some CALD families in the Auburn/Holroyd LGAs; identify and document a range of strategies to maximise opportunistic ways of providing parent support at little or no cost to organisations, while meeting community and family needs; and document a generalised methodology that could be applied to CALD communities that currently do not access parent support, that would enable organisations in other localities to provide parent support activities on a regular or as required basis.

Parent support services network

Strategy – Provide facilitated and outcome-based network activities to improve coordination and information, by LGA or Cumberland Prospect sub-areas eg southeast and northwest. Meetings could be facilitated annually, with participants reviewing and sharing information, and a resource and information list published in print and electronically and distributed to all participants and service providers.

Parent information

Strategy – Develop, distribute and update parent information kits to provide information on parenting and how to find parent support services. A kit is being developed for Nepean FF Area and as part of the Service Network Project. The strategy could build on these precedents. It could be adapted for different providers, family types and literacy.

Mobile Service for Parent Support

Strategy – Provide families and children with access to outreach services that can provide the greatest range of parent support and early learning opportunities through a multidisciplinary team with a variety of specialist allied health and early childhood partners. This would require an interagency approach linking Area Health Services, early intervention, early childhood services and other agencies depending on family and community requirements.

The plan concludes with management considerations from which the Families First planning process can prioritise its forward planning in relation to the further implementation of parent support opportunities relating to funding, communication and sustainability and review.

Families First is supplementary to core service funding. It is not intended to provide, for example, in this case, core recurrent parent support services. It is therefore important that the Families First planning process should act on the identified gaps and service shortages in core parent support services for the purpose of allocation and reallocation of core human service funding. Only by providing evidence to human service agencies for core funding, will the unmet demand for parent support services to priority families and communities be addressed.

Conclusion

This strategic plan set out principles and strategies to aim to improve access to parent support services for priority families and communities and improve the effectiveness of service provision and integration in Cumberland Prospect over the next three years. Strategies include a process to develop parent support activities; enhanced linkages; enhanced family and service relationships; and mobile outreach services. The plan includes management considerations from which the Families First planning process can prioritise its forward planning in relation to the further implementation of parent support services.

1 Introduction

The Parent Support Project aimed to develop an understanding of the support and information needs of parents. In addition, the project aimed to develop, implement and evaluate systems to improve the coordination between existing parent support services within each local government area (LGA) in the Cumberland Prospect Families First Area (Auburn, Parramatta, Holroyd, Baulkham Hills and Blacktown) to increase the access families have to these services.

In this report, parent support means services to assist parents with parenting. The project addresses the needs of families in the Cumberland Prospect Families First Area with children 0-8 years, particularly families with a parent or child with a disability, families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) families.

The UNSW Consortium, a group of academics and researchers managed by the Social Policy Research Centre and including Families At Work, conducted the research.

1.1 Background

The project is part of the Families First implementation plan for the Cumberland Prospect Area. The plan was developed as a result of consultations with community members and service providers. The plan's objectives in relation to this project are that a broad range of coordinated parenting skills development opportunities be available in timely, non stigmatising, empowering and culturally appropriate ways at an accessible level; and that an integrated and coordinated service that ensures families are referred to services they require is provided. The project builds on experiences of parent support groups in the Blacktown and Baulkham Hills areas.

Previous consultation with families in Cumberland Prospect in the development of the implementation plan identified that parents were dissatisfied with the way parent support groups advertise their services, timetabling of parent support groups and scarce resources for existing parent support groups. Concerns were also raised at these consultations about the lack of sustainability of some parent support groups and under representation of some groups of families in existing parent support groups. The consultations recognised that the coordination, linkages and information sharing between existing parent support groups needed to be improved so that families can access the services they need, including families with a parent or child with a disability. These systems need to be sympathetic to CALD and ATSI communities.

Table 1.1 shows the LGA population profiles for Cumberland Prospect. Of note are the high population growth (9.6 per cent), high proportion of people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds (35.7 per cent) and high proportion of ATSI people (2.39 per cent in Blacktown). The only early learning data available, preschool attendance, shows highest use is in Baulkham Hills (23 per cent of children 0-5 years), almost double the lowest, Auburn (12 per cent).

Overall, Cumberland Prospect has a fast growing population. It has significant populations of children between 0-5 years of age (9.1 per cent).

Table 1.1: Cumberland Prospect Demographics by Local Government Area, 2001

	Blacktown	Auburn	Holroyd	Parramatta	Baulkham Hills	Cumberland Prospect (total)	NSW
Total population	256,364	56,379	85,760	144,490	139,404	682,397	6,371,745
Population growth since 1996	10.4	10.6	6.6	3.8	16.6	9.6	5.5
Born overseas Per cent of total population	34.4	56.7	39.0	39.6	28.9	36.7	23.1
Born overseas in NESC* Per cent of total population	27.2	53.2	33.2	33.1	19.8	29.8	-
Speak another language Per cent of total population	30.6	72.3	42.2	41.4	21.3	35.7	18.8
Indigenous persons Per cent of total population	2.39	0.83	0.80	0.80	0.27	1.29	1.88
Number	6,093	464	680	1,147	372	8,756	
Couple families with children less than 15 years Per cent of all families	38.4	40.3	32.9	34.8	37.9	37.0	27.2
Number	36,976	7,611	11,366	18,144	23,544	65,804	
One parent families with children less than 15 years Per cent of all families	11.4	7.4	8.6	7.9	3.9	8.4	7.4
Number	12,741	1,998	3,822	5,825	3,479	14,973	
Children 0-5 years Per cent of total population	10.5	8.9	8.6	8.3	7.8	9.1	8.0
Number	26,838	5,039	7,357	12,006	10,875	62,115	
Children 0-5 years attending preschool Per cent of all children 0-5	16.6	12.0	16.2	16.8	23.0	17.4	19.5
Number	4,466	604	1,191	2,021	2,500	10,782	

Source: ABS Census 2001 Basic Community Profiles & ABS Census 2001 data analysed by WESTIR, *Families First in NSW – Cumberland Area Profile*

Note: * NESC – non-English speaking country

Blacktown had the largest population of ATSI persons in the area (6,093) and has the largest population in any LGA in NSW. Auburn had the highest concentration of its population born overseas in NESC (53.2 per cent) and the highest concentration of its population speaking another language (72.3 per cent).

Blacktown had the highest percentage of children between 0-5 years (10.5 per cent) followed by Auburn (8.9 per cent) and Holroyd (8.6 per cent). Blacktown also the

highest percentage of one-parent families with children less than 15 years of age (11.4 per cent) followed by Holroyd (8.6 per cent) and Parramatta (7.9 per cent). Auburn had the highest percentage of couple families with children less than 15 years of age (40.3 per cent) followed by Blacktown (38.4 per cent) and Baulkham Hills (37.9 per cent).

Baulkham Hills had the highest percentage of children aged 0-5 attending preschool (23.0 per cent), but the lowest percentage of children aged 0-5 in the area (7.8 per cent). Auburn had the lowest percentage of children aged 0-5 attending preschool (12.0 per cent) and the second highest percentage of children aged 0-5 years in the area (8.9 per cent).

1.2 Methodology

The aim of the research activities was to map existing parent support and issues, develop strategies through action research and propose a plan for the following three years. The methodology included:

- a review of local and parent support literature;
- analysis of the Families First and other data bases;
- interviews with key stakeholders and families;
- a service providers forum to identify short-term and long-term strategies (referred to as ‘the Forum’ in this report);
- high level support for an area-specific short-term strategy; and
- basic support for development of other short and long-term strategies.

Details are listed in Appendix A.

The findings of these activities were used to understand the parent support requirements for families in Cumberland Prospect. In addition, the findings were applied to develop, implement and evaluate parent support systems that would work to improve the coordination between existing parent support groups to enhance parent access.

The project reflected an action research approach, accommodating changes in the methodology as new issues emerged at each stage of the investigation.

The project proposal stated that the UNSW Consortium would implement strategies that were locally embedded, developed for the needs of each community, implemented in a priority location and provide opportunities to learn generalisable lessons for strategies in other locations.

This report and the resulting project brief (Appendix C) are the outcomes of the action research. In this report, Section 2 reviews the literature in relation to reasons for providing parent support and summarises principles for effective delivery. It also reviews the opportunities in Cumberland Prospect and describes the action research approach applied in the project. Section 3 describes the universal principles for facilitating the provision of parent support and the needs of target populations. Section 4 presents strategies for enhancing parent support systems in Cumberland Prospect in the next 3 years. The final Section describes management issues for consideration in the implementation of the strategies.

2 Review and Analysis

This section reviews the findings on the availability and adequacy of existing parent support activities in Cumberland Prospect. It begins by defining parent support opportunities and needs, maps the existing services and discusses some of the current utilisation and family recruitment issues. Finally, we describe the action research process applied in developing the parent support strategy in part of Cumberland Prospect.

2.1 Defining Parent Support Activities and Needs

Parent support activities for the purposes of this project have been defined as services that assist parents with parenting. The focus is on the parent rather than the child (although parent support activities work toward the goal of improving outcomes for children and good programs work in conjunction with early learning opportunities and schools). These activities cover a diversity of types from information provision to direct support for families. They include:

- information to support parents;
- parenting advice;
- parent education and skills; and
- support groups for parents.

Parent support can be provided through specific programs that are targeted to provide parent support activities such as pre-natal classes, or as an adjunct or incidental learning opportunity through more general programs such as social events or family days.

Stakeholder interviews reinforced this broad conceptualisation of parent support. Respondents' comments reflected their involvement or particular interest in parent support.

Organisations or agencies (government and non government) who work with families around parenting issues – support, education, counselling and advice, and provide referral, networking and liaison with the potential to look at co-ordination of care.

A wide range of services (government or non-government) which enhance the function of families and enable parents to raise their children in a healthy environment.

Any service that assists parents to care for their children more effectively and to promote their optimal emotional, social and intellectual development.

Assistance with parenting through both role modelling and parenting courses, referrals, support groups, child care, play groups, home visiting, living skills.

Groups aimed at looking at the challenges parents face in raising children (0-5 years). They may be structured and time-limited e.g.

parenting support groups run through Burnside or they may be open and run throughout the year e.g. playgroup.

Strengths-based partnership rather than expert model of process.

The NSW Cabinet Office identifies an optimal approach to the design and delivery of parent support services as including the following features. It would:

- empower parents to be active in decisions which affect their lives;
- view parents as experts who know what is best for their family;
- link families to the service best able to meet their needs;
- have a holistic view of each family;
- seek and take into account feedback from families about the services received;
- provide flexible services in convenient settings;
- work with families as a team; and
- provide ongoing training and development opportunities for staff and volunteers (NSW Cabinet Office, 1999).

The review of Australian and international research about parent support programs found that whilst many studies provided descriptive data there was little evidence of studies that clearly defined measurable outcomes of success (Futures for Kids, 2000; National Council of Welfare, 1999; Bowes, 2000). Mustard comments that ‘the quality of early childhood development appears to have significant effect on the chronic health problems of adult life’, and that these health problems can relate to physical and mental health (2003: 17).

Much of the Australian data describes programs funded through Families First in NSW and the Commonwealth Stronger Families and Communities strategy. These projects are ongoing and limited evaluations of programs have been conducted. An evaluation framework for Families First has been developed (Fisher et al: 2002). It is anticipated that these will form the basis of data gathering and outcomes for parent support programs.

Cumberland Prospect is one of the last areas to implement Families First. Several key reports from other Families First Areas have been useful in identifying strategic approaches in this investigation, which has reduced duplication of effort (Quinn, 2002; D’Urso, 2001; Alcorso, 2003).

Quinn (2002) identified a number of key parenting issues through her consultations with families in Nepean Families First. Families were often not aware of services that were available and service access depended upon the capacity of parents to find the services they need. Families wanted access to information that supported their parenting roles, was specific to the needs of their children and was practical information across a range of issues, as well as support to access more in depth information as required.

A common request from families was to gain a better understanding of how systems worked and how and when to seek support. This was particularly important for CALD and ATSI families (Alcorso, 2003).

Previous research suggests that in order to maximise family participation and beneficial outcomes for children from engagement in parent support opportunities the following considerations should be addressed:

- strengthening networks of families and promoting and supporting informal, social opportunities to exchange ideas and experiences;
- staff development to increase the capacity of staff to work cross culturally;
- increased partnerships between providers of parent education programs and other key service providers to provide links into, and knowledge of, the education and information needs of the community;
- service providers' acknowledgement of the experiences, skills, cultural background and practices of the parents/families through the provision of programs that are relevant to their needs and flexible in approach and delivery;
- development of partnerships between mainstream and bilingual service providers to bridge the gap between working within specific cultural contexts and the experience of living in the Australian community more broadly. Bilingual workers can also assist in the delivery of educational programs;
- establishing the best forums for the delivery of this information;
- determining the most appropriate service providers of the educational input; and
- deriving how information can best be delivered to the target groups (D'Urso et al, 2001).

2.2 Current Parent Support Opportunities

In each LGA in Cumberland Prospect, a number of different parent support opportunities are provided. Some of these are general services for any family, while others are specific to particular needs such as cultural background, additional needs children or family member or families at risk. Stakeholder interviews identified some of the services available. An initial mapping from the DoCS database as at July 2003 is included in Appendix D. It is expected DoCS will update this database with the information from the Service Network Project.

A half day Parent Support Forum was conducted as part of this investigation. Participants included current providers of parent support services, funding bodies, related services such as formal early learning services, child health teams and similar. Forum participants were broken into LGA groups to facilitate local needs based planning in the latter sessions, when future short and long term parent support strategies were identified and discussed. As part of the half day session, Forum participants were asked to identify parent support programs that they were aware of that were working well in Cumberland Prospect (Table 2.1). It should be noted that this list represents only those services that were identified by Forum participants and represents participants' interests, background and knowledge of parent support agencies. It is not a complete list of parent support services, nor does it imply that there are not other services that provide good programs.

Table 2.1: Strengths of Parent Support Opportunities in Cumberland Prospect by Local Government Area, as reported at the Parent Support Forum

Holroyd Forum Group	Blacktown Forum Group	Auburn Forum Group	Baulkham Hills Forum Group	Parramatta Forum Group
Early Childhood Centres - initial home visit to all - ongoing if needed - use interpreter service	Reducing isolation- building community support	Multilingual workers within services – ‘culturally appropriate’	Family work program Group program	Home visits – whole family setting, physical environment
Funding for Parenting Workshops (MR Centre)	Improved access with home visiting		Court support	Groups - Support - Disability – common link young mums
AWCH Hospital Work	Communication between services with child protection interagencies	Granville Multi- cultural Resource Centre	Extra hands – volunteer program trained	- Breaks down social isolation - Parent education - Less threatening
Grandparent Scheme			Universal home visiting program	
Child care	Provision of child care linked to other services	Referral to services	Group programs for new mothers	Positive Parenting program
Parent workshops				
Access to translation services	Building trust with parents through positive, safe experiences which address practical needs		Child care services	Early, long term, flexible
Radio announcements in first language			Networking across services	Less formal settings eg in care
Early Childhood Centres			Playgroups	Early Childhood Intervention Coordination Program
	LGAs working well together across boundaries			

Source: Parent Support Forum, June 2003

Subsequent stakeholder interviews identified other examples of parent support services that operated in Cumberland Prospect. These were also identified as examples of good services, and reflect stakeholder’s background, interest and knowledge. Parent support activities examples include:

- Supported playgroups. Examples are weekly supported playgroups, general or specialist, such as one for Muslim families. SDN Children’s Services (formerly Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association), through its Focus programs, provide two supported playgroups for children with additional needs;
- Resource programs for parent support providers. Parenting Interagency (Blacktown) was established as a forum for services providers to get know which services and support groups are provided by other agencies. The interagency developed a pamphlet that is distributed each school term to over 300 organisations in the LGA. This interagency also provides forums each year to relevant organisations with guest speakers discussing current trends in parenting services;
- Family support. One service assists families who have mental health issues that may impact on their capacity to parent as well as for families whose child has had a less than optimal birth outcome that may impact adversely on that family. Western Sydney Area Health Service provides Positive Parent Programs held every second school term;

- Transition to school programs. An example is Granville Public School, where at a weekly playgroup, families are able to network and share experiences while the children play and learn skills such as socialising and sharing;
- Parent education programs. Burnside provides parent education programs, funded by Families First. Target groups are migrants and refugees. The groups facilitate a family's own cultural values, acknowledging that these may clash with values that could be learned at school or early learning services. The workshops aim to validate the families' values, and find ways to obtain cooperation from children in an acceptable and mutually beneficial way. The workshops also inform families about the Australian law regarding child protection and the existence of services that assist with child rearing in the new country of settlement. Burnside also work closely with other parent support services to link families services and support networks. Another parent education program is Parent Effectiveness Training, a 12 week program with an average group of 10 participants; and
- Child and family health services. For example, Community Health in Blacktown, Doonside and Mt Druitt programs provide home visiting to new parents, baby clinics by Generalist Community Nurses (GCN), and specialist early childhood nurses who see clients referred by GCNs for parent craft and psychosocial issues.

In several LGAs, formal child care was identified as also enabling successful parent support opportunities. Some children's services provide extensive support and networking for families currently using the service. This includes general child rearing information or referrals to specific agencies as required. In most instances this type of parent support works well for those families who are able to access formal early learning opportunities. However, the majority of families do not access these services.

2.3 Current Utilisation and Recruitment

The research revealed that access to parent support activities was affected by the characteristics of the family, understanding about what parent support was for, recruitment strategies and information about activities. These are discussed below.

Most notably, stakeholders expressed concern that the availability of parent support was inadequate and that there was a general lack of resources to support the range of parent needs. It was reported by Forum participants and commented on by Alcorso (2003) that this was exacerbated for some specific language groups, particularly new and emerging refugee groups.

Family characteristics and service barriers

Service provider and family interviews identified the characteristics of families who access parents support programs. Stakeholders consistently reported that these programs were mainly accessed by first time parents. Other characteristics varied according to service location and target groups, such as families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, families at risk, families involved with a number of agencies who need longer term support and interventions, young mothers or single mothers and families with particular issues that affect their ability to parent, including mental illness, drug or alcohol dependency.

While some families access parent support services, there are many who do not. Forum participants and service provider stakeholder interviews identified barriers such as lack of access including transport and parking, the lack of appropriate venues, unavailability

of child care while parents attend support services and, in some cases, the cost of programs.

Understanding about parent support

Families' knowledge of where to seek parent support, who is who and which services are provided by which organisation also concerned service stakeholders. One Parent Support Forum participant summarised the parent dilemma well – 'Where do I go?'

CALD and ATSI families faced particular barriers accessing culturally and linguistically appropriate information about services and how to access them (Alcorso, 2003). This was exacerbated by a lack of available culturally appropriate parenting services and programs generally (Alcorso, 2003; Kayrooz and Blunt, 2000). Kayrooz and Blunt (2000) identify key issues facing CALD parents as being intergenerational conflict emerging from different rates of accessing and becoming familiar with Australian cultural norms, knowledge of the school system, child discipline and child protection legislation and how to access parent support systems. The lack of knowledge of how Australian parent support works, and how and when to access services creates additional barriers for CALD families. One service provider commented that:

Families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are unlikely to know about the existence of parent support services in their area and it is likely that this is a settlement issue that will be put on "the back burner" while the migrants/refugees deal with other more pressing settlement issues such as finding accommodation, employment, learning English, etc.

The importance of providing parent support activities and information through opportunistic means becomes even more important when one needs to engage parents who do not always see that their child's needs may differ to theirs. Holloway et al (1995) argue that the best way to engage parents is to ensure that whatever information and resources are provided furthers the goals that parents have for their children. Gaining an understanding of parents' concerns and goals is an important part of engaging the family in the process. Where parents are ordered to attend a service they often lack motivation, as they may not be aware that they can benefit from parenting support.

Some Forum participants and service stakeholders commented that often accessing a parent support agency was seen as the last port of call, after all other avenues of support had been tried by the parent. Kingwell states that parents 'will usually seek information from someone they trust, or who are in the same situation ... they clearly indicate that as an option, they would NOT seek supports in the first instance from Government sources' (2003: 5). One stakeholder stated that though some families had 'difficulty coping with parenting and managing emotions' they also had 'difficulty acknowledging parenting issues exist'. This reluctance to seek and accept support reinforced parents' lack of knowledge and understanding of the potential benefits.

Stakeholders acknowledged the perceived or actual risk of participation in parent support services by some families. They commented that intervention by professionals with training and expertise could undermine parental confidence, or that parents may fear and avoid such intervention. Stakeholders also argued that such fears are based in reality in that involvement in parent support may result in, for example, the involvement

of child protection agencies. Service providers, not families, reported these kinds of parent fears. However, it is important to acknowledge that there may be some distance between the strengths-based approach of parent support services and the perception of these services from parents who do not use them and could benefit from them.

Recruitment and information about parent support

Current parent support programs are promoted through a variety of channels, such as word of mouth from existing clients or sharing of service information at interagency meetings, direct contact with families (depending on the service), advertising in local newspapers and ethnic press, general promotional materials such as brochures distributed throughout the community, and workers participating in other community activities. Families are also referred to services from local schools, DoCS, Area Health Services, self-referrals and early childhood services.

Providers had different attitudes to prioritising recruitment. Some providers currently running parent support programs actively seek families and others do not. Two stakeholder interviews highlight this distinction:

We don't seek new parents due to existing high demand.

We are constantly on the look-out for families in need of this service.

Several stakeholders identified using other agencies to support access. For example, one stakeholder is doing a joint project with Immigrant Women Speakout, linking new and emerging communities to existing services. They are currently establishing a Sudanese group, and have recently employed an Aboriginal worker, resulting in an increase of Aboriginal families accessing this particular service. Another agency employs a group worker who works with the community and other services to promote the services available through the agency.

The appropriate timing of information that is provided to families was identified as critical. Forum participants suggested that effective parent support opportunities are limited if they are not accessed before the child enters formal early learning or school entry,. Some service providers were of the opinion that the most appropriate time for parenting information could be during the pre-natal period up to birth, as service providers see most parents at this point. Whether parents are ready to receive the information at this point is another question. It is not possible to provide basic parenting information to all families at this stage. For example, for refugee families arriving in Australia, targeting information on their access to CALD parent support services takes on a high priority. There is also the possibility that families from new and emerging refugee groups may also miss out if they are not eligible for Commonwealth Government benefits on arrival.

2.4 Development of Action Research – Auburn/Holroyd Project Brief

Following the Parent Support Forum, the findings on parent support activities and the current service availability were applied to short-term strategy development. An action research approach was taken in the Auburn Holroyd LGAs. This section explains the research activities.

Action research can be used as a tool for social change, empowering people to take action and as a means to reflect and build on good practice (Johnson, 2003). Johnson

(2003) further comments that action research should reflect the concerns of the stakeholders, be collaborative and involve research as well as action.

The process to select a specific plan to work on more intensively was through the Parent Support Forum process, where LGA groups worked through a process to identify gaps in local parent support delivery and develop strategies that may assist parents who do currently not access services.

In consultation with the Project Reference Group, we selected the Auburn/Holroyd strategy of disseminating information to CALD parents about available services and parenting issues. We considered the plan was the one most likely to be developed within the project timeframe. The aim of this approach was to encourage local social change through increasing interaction within and between local agencies, empower parent support staff to become more active in developing and implementing local programs that reflected parent needs, and building and enhancing existing good practices within services. We also considered the strategy potentially had broader application across other LGA and Families First Areas.

The Auburn/Holroyd action research described below was an evolving process that incorporated the broadening of understanding and greater acknowledgement of the stakeholders in identifying and considering the most effective way to support CALD parents.

Participants in the Auburn/Holroyd action research varied during the three months due to availability of personnel. Auburn Migrant Resource Centre provided consistent input and participation during the course of the action research. The groups that participated in some or all of the consultations are listed below.

- Auburn Council
- Auburn Asian Migrant Welfare Centre
- Auburn Community Development Network
- Auburn Migrant Resource Centre
- Australian Turkish Kurdish Community Services.

The initial meeting was to develop a four-week action plan to examine the feasibility of disseminating information to CALD parents regarding parent support services and parenting issues. Discussions included identifying:

- steps in determining feasibility;
- how to identify new and emerging cultural needs given that the project was to consider how to target CALD families currently not accessing services;
- essential parenting elements that families would most benefit from knowing about;
- the most effective way to convey the information, available opportunities or means of disseminating the information; and
- benefits to the families and services from adopting this type of approach, along with any obstacles that needed to be considered.

The Auburn/Holroyd Action Research Group found it difficult to consider the best way to move forward without additional information from Families First in relation to

possible scope of the project and funds available. This information was provided from the Project Reference Group. A standard project brief was provided to assist in developing a framework for the next stage of the research.

Further discussions with the Action Research Group refined the brief, recognising that communication to CALD groups was not the only consideration. One of the greatest barriers was that parent support agencies believed that the only way they could provide programs for new and emerging CALD groups was to receive additional funds. This was rather than examining whether it was possible to develop alternate methods to reach and assist these families within current resources or with limited additional resources. One group participant described how they had trialled parent support workshops as part of a family social event and that this had worked very effectively.

The project brief was developed in consultation with the Auburn/Holroyd Action Research Group to consider how opportunistic events such as family social gatherings could be used to provide incidental parent support as a way to start working with new and emerging CALD communities. The goals of the project brief were to trial a cost effective way of providing parent support information, without requiring significant additional resources. This could involve a community or parent support agency reviewing how it currently provides information for parents and what opportunities exist to provide information differently within current resources. The outcome from the project brief was to develop a 'how to' manual that detailed how services could utilise opportunistic events to provide parent support information in cost effective ways.

Auburn/Holroyd Action Research Group participants were enthusiastic that this type of project would provide a valuable recourse that would encourage community and parent support services to use existing resources in efficient and effective ways. The 'how to' manual would provide documentary support to services who are often struggling and finding it 'all too hard' (Auburn/Holroyd Action Research Group participant).

2.5 Development of Action Research – Other Areas

Each LGA group of participants at the Parent Support Forum developed long or short term strategies. We reported back the details of their strategies and the names of other LGA group participants to all Forum attendees. At the Forum a person from each LGA group was nominated to be the contact point for the group to develop the strategies further. A UNSW Consortium researcher also contacted the nominees for phone or email support. No groups wanted assistance at the initial and subsequent contacts.

2.6 Summary

A wide range of parent support activities is provided in Cumberland Prospect. Types of activities include those related to child and family health, resource programs, family support, transition to school, parent education programs and supported playgroups. Parent support services promoted their activities in a number of ways, and most services were operating at or near capacity. For some families there were barriers to access such as lack of transport, familiarity or understanding of what parent support services do, and for CALD and ATSI families, accessing culturally and linguistically appropriate information about services and how to access them. Generally, the availability of parent support was inadequate and there was a general lack of resources to support the range of parent needs. This review of existing services and needs was used to develop the strategic plans that follow in the next sections.

3 Principles and Target Groups

As described above, an action research approach was used to develop the strategic plans. Each LGA developed and were encouraged to implement a short-term plan. We then developed a long-term plan for Cumberland Prospect, with specific local components as identified by the stakeholders.

The principles that emerged for universal inclusive parent support activities and information are presented here. Considerations for target communities are also outlined. Section 4 details the specific strategy options that emerged from the research process.

The rationale for this two-pronged approach is to reach the majority of families with a range of support types because of the diversity of need, while developing a model for prioritising families least likely to seek support, consistent with the principles of Families First.

3.1 Universal Principles

We applied a strengths-based approach to parent support options that builds on the success of existing models of support in the development of these principles.

Diverse support service delivery

The central focus is on the parents' needs, with the secondary focus on the needs of the child. To meet the diverse needs of the community, the family service system should offer a range of service types that could include:

- information to support parents;
- parenting advice;
- parent education and skills development; and
- support groups for parents.

There are examples of these kinds of services already in place in Cumberland Prospect (Section 2.2 and Appendix D).

Integration and opportunistic means to increase parent support opportunities

Service providers have successfully used a variety of strategies to increase parent support opportunities. These include:

- linking to mainstream services such as health, education, children's services and community facilities; and
- individual and small group activities.

Linking mainstream services with specialist services has worked effectively for some services. One service provider commented,

One of the things we've found works well is having the more specialised services linked up with the mainstream, the universal ones. So the library has attracted a different group of people than any of our other services because it's just a generic service, so it's not targeting anyone in particular ... and from that we are able to provide support

or advice ... they are not coming 'cause they've got a problem, they're coming to borrow toys for their child or what have you ... we've found that it has really helped us get access to families we wouldn't have otherwise.

Providing opportunities for individual or small group interactions was also considered important for both service providers and potential participants. Forum participants commented that group interventions were often poorly attended, as participants did not always feel comfortable discussing their concerns in front of others. Often transport and parking were difficult, discouraging people from attending.

Communication and information to families

Communication and information for communities and parents is a key to assisting parents to access parent support when they need it. Programs considered successful by parent support stakeholders and Forum participants included:

- engaging community members in information dissemination;
- using appropriate cultural contacts, such as local CALD community groups to disseminate information; and
- cross promotion through other services, agencies and schools.

Many services were reliant on the community they serve to assist in disseminating information. The example that follows speaks to the provision of services by an organisation that receives no funding at all, an example of a service relying on community to disseminate information. The provider commented that 'we have a large crew of women that hold up the front line of this [service], off their pensions and social security benefits.' Other suggestions for effective communication to families were discussed in Section 2.2.

Communication and coordination between services

Effective communication and liaison between parent support services is essential if parents are to gain support and link to other services. Programs considered successful by parent support stakeholders and Forum participants included:

- allocating responsibility to a case manager to coordinate families moving between services to obtain different parent support as required;
- distributing newsletters between local parent support services, as a means of keeping local services informed about each other and enhancing referral opportunities for families; and
- referrals to other agencies (formal, informal and handing information to families for self-referral), when the existing agency did not have adequate or relevant resources.

Discussions with parent support stakeholders and Forum participants suggest that communication between services is not always optimum, for a variety of reasons. This has resulted in families not being referred, not being followed up or having to visit multiple services before they receive support according to the service providers. Information was not always provided to families in a consistent manner. The underdeveloped linkages between services exacerbated this problem for families.

One of the key limitations identified by researchers was service providers' poor knowledge of other services and resources available for parent support. Many services had no formal support structures in place, some services and resources were duplicated, and referrals were often based on a service providers' individual knowledge rather than a more systemised approach. Services that lack the resources to enable employees to participate in external networks and forums are especially affected by this lack of systematic referral information, and families may consequently not receive the most appropriate or timely referrals. This is particularly marked for families who may require long term support and interventions, or present with multiple problems.

Forum participants identified communication and liaison between services as one of the key issues in effective parent support. The ability to do this effectively was hampered through lack of funds; difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff; difficulties in training and supporting appropriate staff, particularly bi-lingual workers to support CALD families; and lack of coordination between services.

Communication between services about availability, waiting lists, eligibility criteria and general information exchange did not always occur. One Forum participant commented that while the service coordinator regularly attended local interagency meetings that promoted information sharing, this information was not always shared after the meeting with the workers who have direct contact with families, due to the day to day operational constraints of the service. This experience was not unique to this service.

Service providers were seeking solutions to these problems. Some services used a number of different strategies to coordinate between agencies. One agency employed a case manager who was responsible for co-ordination of care across agencies, others relied on phone, email, or fax. One agency distributed a newsletter to other agencies.

Stakeholders and Forum participants, where appropriate, referred families to other agencies. Where this was done it was with families' consent, usually by phone or in writing. There did not seem to be formal methods to ensure that a referred family was successful or otherwise. In some instances families continued to use the referring agency as well as the new agency and in these circumstances it was possible to follow the family's progress. One stakeholder commented that they gave parents 'the phone number and a brief idea of the organisation, [but they had] no idea if they got the assistance they needed unless by via personal contact.'

Staff training and support

Quality of support is dependent on access to consistent staff with appropriate skills and experience. Strategies considered successful by parent support stakeholders and Forum participants included:

- contracting employees to fill service gaps;
- avoiding duplication of programs to ensure staff are available to provide the programs; and
- partnership models of program delivery using resources and staff across agencies to deliver programs and information.

Many stakeholders commented that it was difficult finding appropriate skilled and trained staff. This is compounded when trying to find bi-lingual workers who can work with new and emerging CALD communities. Some services used contract employees to

fill skills gaps, but often it was not possible to get contract facilitators' time and parent support activities to match. The result was limited access to the facilitated program.

Consistency in service provision was considered vital to providing high quality services to families. Staff need to build trust relationships with families to provide the greatest benefit to parents and children. Staff turnover is high in some services. Parent support stakeholders commented on the impact staff turn over had on consistency of service provision and familiarity with families accessing services. One service provider highlighted the dilemma parents could face:

Things work best when you've got consistent staff in services ... we've got huge turnovers in staff in child care centres at the moment and that creates problems for families, and the same in other services as well ... if there's a fast turnover ... connections aren't made. People don't want to make a connection with a service, they want to make a connection with a person.

Service personnel did not always have the skills to support all the parent needs in the most effective way. For example, many services had difficulties engaging fathers as part of the parent support process. Several reasons were provided by stakeholders for this. Service staff are most often female, so it is difficult to engage fathers who do not have a male to talk to. Where parents are ordered to attend some type of service, mothers are usually referred to parenting support while fathers are referred to anger management courses, discouraging fathers from attending parent support options.

3.2 Target Groups

To reflect target population needs requires an understanding of the issues facing these families, their particular requirements and flexibility to accommodate these requirements. Holloway comments that it is important for services to be aware of and manage the overarching unwritten cultural assumptions regarding 'authority and social relations' (1995: 470), which are implicit in service practices and provision. These implicit practices may not always reflect target population expectations and requirements. Parent support providers need to be aware of particular needs of target populations as well as managing principles of universal access.

Culturally and linguistically diverse

Concurrent with this project, specific investigation into the needs of CALD families and communities were conducted (Alcorso, 2003). The findings of the CALD research have impacts for any current and future parent support opportunities.

Alcorso (2003) identified several program design aspects that need to be managed to encourage CALD families to utilise parent support services. These are:

- language – bilingual educators are essential to attract CALD families to services;
- culturally specific content – acknowledgement and accommodation of different cultural expectations of parenting, for example Alcorso (2003) comments on the lack of fit between Australian maternity norms and CALD Cumberland/Prospect residents' countries;
- formality – class room style or as an adjunct to a social gathering;

- venue – community-based or close to family homes; and
- women only classes or activities. Alcorso (2003) noted that this was considered particularly important for antenatal classes, with reference to Arabic speaking women, although this issue is not exclusive to Arabic speakers.

Disability (children and parents)

Families with parents or children with disabilities are often invisible in the community. Their needs are usually catered for by specialist services and agencies. There is a stigma attached to disability that can result in families not acknowledging the disability, particularly of a child, resulting in no or limited parent support or early learning opportunities.

Several stakeholder interviews identified opportunities that existed for children with disabilities. Of particular note was a sports program for children with disabilities that offered parents respite care while their child participated in the program. The respite provided an opportunity for opportunistic parent support, while the sports programs enhanced these children's early learning opportunities.

One stakeholder provides a service that supports parents with disabilities. This program targets mothers with disabilities and provides them with broad ranging support, advice and information such as family budgeting, cooking, adult and child self esteem, and positive parenting practices.

ATSI

Some services specifically targeted ATSI families. One service provided a program working with new ATSI parents with babies aged 6 weeks to 4 months by employing an ATSI worker. This service provider commented that the needs of this group were still not met due to limited funds, resources and lack of appropriate staff. Where they were not able to provide a particular service they looked for opportunities to refer families to another agencies.

One stakeholder commented that ATSI families did not find it easy to access services that did not have a specific ATSI focus. It is important that appropriate ATSI personnel are available to support families as required.

Young mothers

Strategies for single parents and young mothers were not specifically identified in the research as a group that currently required specific support, although one Forum LGA group (Baulkham Hills) and one parent support stakeholder identified adolescent parents as a current gap in service provision.

Western Sydney Area Health Service, Women's Health completed a research project, Blacktown Teenage Pregnancy Initiative, in 2003.

Other target groups

An emerging issue identified by some Forum participants and stakeholder interviews was the incidence of apparent or diagnosed mental illness in parents and young people. While young people fall outside the purview of Families First, parents with mental illness and young children do not. The need to consider these groups was reflected in the Baulkham Hills Forum group.

4 Strategies

Parent Support Forum participants developed a range of local action plans to be implemented over the course of this research. These plans are documented for each LGA in Appendix B. The researchers and Families First Reference Group further developed the LGA plans as integrated options for funding in the current 3-year cycle. The options are described below.

4.1 Process for Developing Flexible Parent Support Activities

Strategy - Provide parent support through an existing community organisation, to enhance organisations' ability to provide parent support information and resources to effectively meet the needs of some CALD families in the Auburn/Holroyd LGAs; identify and document a range of strategies to maximise opportunistic ways of providing parent support at little or no cost to organisations, while meeting community and family needs; and document a generalised methodology that could be applied to CALD communities that currently do not access parent support, that would enable organisations in other localities to provide parent support activities on a regular or as required basis.

Goal – to ensure that parent support opportunities are not only provided in formal settings, but are available informally, through opportunistic events. Community and parent support organisations can support families and children in ways that use parents' goals and activities as a way to facilitate parent support participation.

Target – families who are not accessing parent support services, including CALD families from new and emerging communities, who might participate in informal, family-based community activities.

Rationale – many families do not have access to parent support opportunities for a variety of reasons including lack of places, cost, transport and lack of information about the potential benefits of enhancing parenting skills. Providing ways to support opportunistic parent support activities is one way to target families currently not in formal services, such as CALD and ATSI families. It is also a way to provide parent support and resources in a culturally sensitive way, within the appropriate community and in a safe place for families who may be vulnerable or at risk. Activities could be provided at mosques, Tots and Mums morning sessions or churches. The Project Brief (Appendix C) outlines an approach to adding value to existing family activities within a CALD or ATSI community as a way to provide parent support information and resources.

Resources – funding through Parent Support CALD brief – approximately \$60,000. Promotion and publicity relating to the final methodology and its applicability to parent support opportunistic events. Limited funding to providers to develop and provide parent support opportunistic models.

Time – year one of 3-year strategy. Parent support in this instance may not necessarily be provided by a traditional parent support agency. It may be more effective and beneficial for families to access parent support through other community organisations such as cultural groups, children's services or libraries, that may have links, formal or informal, back to a parent support service or provider. This enables accommodation of

opportunistic events for providing parent support and fosters communication between and within community, parent support and early learning agencies.

4.2 Parent Support Services Network

Strategy – to provide facilitated and outcome-based network activities to improve coordination and information, by LGA or Cumberland Prospect sub-areas eg southeast and northwest. Meetings could be facilitated annually, with participants reviewing and sharing information, and a resource and information list published in print and electronically and distributed to all participants and service providers.

Goal – to improve information and services networks so that service providers will have a greater understanding of available services and enhance the rate of family referrals.

Target – all parent support providers or related agencies. It may be advantageous to include early learning services also to enhance exchange and information sharing across services types.

Rationale – to provide structured and facilitated networking and information sharing. Many parent support services do not have the resources – money, time and personnel to enable them to attend regular interagency meetings. A more formal, facilitated process, with capacity to provide release funds, and the provision of an information resource, may encourage services providers to attend.

Resources – funds to enable parent support staff to be released from duty to attend, database of parent support services providers (preferably drawn from an existing database), personnel to coordinate and facilitate meeting, transcribe service data and reports, preparation of booklet, electronic and print publishing and dissemination of booklet. It may be possible to provide the booklet on-line (assuming all services providers have internet access), as this would facilitate ease of data updating. Funds should be prioritised to existing agencies with infrastructure and a current role in services coordination and development, for example local council community services departments or relevant Area Health Service departments.

Time – second six months of 3-year strategy to identify and fund provider. Annual event to be held within 3-6 months of receiving funds, thus two annual events and resulting publications would be held.

Related early learning recommendation: Enhance linkages between services and families.¹

¹ Enhance linkages between services and families strategy - linkage programs between early learning services, education services, early childhood clinics and parent support opportunities. A specific family liaison people would be employed to ensure referrals are made to appropriate organisations, both early learning and parent support as required, and families are followed up after the referrals to assist in transition or access to services. Where possible these people would be from a community language group. There is no particular requirement for location, although it is more practicable to be located in an early childhood setting, working between multiple local services. Examples of activities would be to establish and facilitate interagency communication such as case management, information exchange and referral mechanisms (Warrilow et al, 2003).

4.3 Parent Information

Strategy – Develop, distribute and update parent information kits to provide information on parenting and how to find parent support services. A kit is being developed for Nepean Families First Area and as part of the Service Network Project. The strategy could build on these precedents. It could be adapted for different providers, family types and literacy.

Goal – to enhance family and parent support service knowledge of parent support activities, facilitate family referrals, provide alternate service options when there may be limited capacity for the current agency to provide parent support and as a resource to link families with appropriate parent support activities.

Target – parent support service providers and families who are not accessing support or who want parenting information.

Rationale – to provide parent information regarding support services and resources available. The strategy was suggested by the Blacktown Forum group. Parents can have difficulty in determining the most appropriate or relevant services that could assist them. Having access to information can assist in more effective services selection. For services, it could facilitate referrals and sharing of resources, and possibly reduce duplication.

Resources – current database and service directories of parent support service providers, development of annual service survey to gather data, transcribe service data, preparation of information kit, printing and dissemination of booklet. It may be possible to provide the information kit in hard copy and on-line (assuming some service providers have internet access), as this would facilitate ease of data updates. Funds should be prioritised to existing agencies with infrastructure and a current role in services coordination and development, for example local council community services departments or relevant Area Health Service departments.

Time – year two of 3-year strategy.

4.4 Mobile Service for Parent Support

Strategy – to provide families and children with access to outreach services that can provide the greatest range of parent support and early learning opportunities through a multidisciplinary team with a variety of specialist allied health and early childhood partners. This would require an interagency approach linking Area Health Services, early intervention, early childhood services and other agencies depending on family and community requirements.

Goal – to attract families and children who are not easily able to attend external services, who are not familiar with parent support opportunities or who may need some assistance with transition to more formal early learning or school.

Target – specifically CALD, ATSI and families with disabilities, or families who are not able to easily access external services.

Rationale – to provide parent support opportunities for families in small group or individual settings depending on family and child needs and requirements, in local areas close to or at family homes. The use of opportunistic events, in locations close to the

families' homes would assist in building good working partnerships with families and encourage mobiles respond to local community need.

Resources – vary depending on services currently provided and additional multidisciplinary team members required, and other resources, for example toy library, child leisure activities and play resources. Funds should be prioritised to existing mobiles who have the relevant service and transport infrastructure, and would need to include new funds to existing mobile services to assist with changes/modifications to fit out, operating costs and service upkeep. Additional costs could include time for agency partners to develop infrastructure to support collaborative planning, and subsequently for multidisciplinary team members to plan, release time from existing work, and network as required.

Time – first six months identification of need and additional resources required by existing mobile services to extend their services; roll out of multidisciplinary mobiles next 6-12 months of 3-year strategy.

Related early learning recommendation: Mobile outreach services with multidisciplinary teams. A similar suggestion was made in the Disability Forum in 2003.

4.5 Summary

This plan sets out strategies that aim to achieve enhanced access to parent support opportunities for families currently not accessing these types of services. Strategies include a process to develop parent support activities; enhanced linkages; enhanced family and service relationships; and mobile outreach services.

The integrated strategy options discussed above were developed from needs and strengths identified within the parent support community in Cumberland Prospect.

The next section discusses management considerations from which the Families First planning process can prioritise its forward planning in relation to the further implementation of parent support opportunities.

5 Management

Strategy options in this report will assist the Families First Implementation Group plan for parent support strategies over the next three years and allocate its funding for 2003/04 in relation to parent support. This section lists some of the considerations for management of the strategy. They relate to funding, communication and sustainability and review.

Funding

The Families First planning process should take account of the identified priority community needs and gaps as presented in Sections 2 and 3. Families First resources are not available to implement the suggested strategies universally across the entire Cumberland Prospect Area. Nor is it the intention of the Families First initiative to substitute funding of core service provision. In the discussion of each option in Section 3, estimated minimum resource requirements are included. Some economies may be reached through integration of the projects with existing services and with the implementation other Families First strategies.

Planning for resource allocation should allocate resources to existing providers for the provision of expertise and training on how to do integrate and expand their services effectively so as to increase and prioritise family access to appropriate support. This not only builds on the strengths and infrastructure of the existing family services system, but also provides opportunities for efficiency in resource allocation.

Families First funding is supplementary to core service funding. It is not intended to provide, for example, in this case, core recurrent parent support services. Some Forum service providers were not aware of the funding structure for Families First. Clarifying funding processes to services providers would enhance the implementation of Families First.

It is also important that as part of its role in the family services system that supports families and children, that the Families First human service agencies actively seek secure and sustainable funding for core parent support services as part of its vision for children's health and well-being. The Families First planning process should act on the identified gaps and service shortages in core parent support services for the purpose of allocation and reallocation of core human service funding. Only by providing evidence to human service agencies for core funding, will the unmet demand for parent support services to priority families and communities be addressed.

Communication and publicity

Forum participants commented on the value of the Forum day and being invited to take an active role in the future of Families First in Cumberland Prospect. Effective communication of Families First strategies and participation in strategy development enhance the provision of parent support services. This type of opportunity enhances service providers' knowledge of available service types, communication and networks.

It may be useful to consider how ongoing service participation, information sharing, and feedback from current and future Families First strategies can form part of a regular Families First process for the Area. Similar events to the Parent Support Forum focused on family service system development could include information on feedback and

review of existing services, issues and gaps in service provision, information on Families First funded services and identification of possible strategies to move forward. Opportunities for information and networking across services types and between parent support and early learning is also an essential part network development.

Understanding about Families First would be improved if all family service agencies, including parent support, receive brief information regarding the Families First plan and contacts for access to further information.

Sustainability and review

One of the critical issues facing programs is funding sustainability. The strategy should be funded and implemented through building on the strengths of existing services, skills and resources, and only where necessary add new services and resources. For ongoing and successful programs, funding should be applied to services with current viable programs that could be adapted or extended, have the internal capacity to look at opportunities for self funding (full or partial) and have a commitment to effective community partnerships.

Evaluation needs to be incorporated into the strategy to monitor the success of the programs funded from the perspectives of Families First, service providers, communities, families and children. It is important that outcomes for services and families are documented to track the success of programs funded and the Families First program generally. Regular review and monitoring can contribute to more effective use of Families First funds, enabling parent support agencies to access documentation on related funded projects, identify issues that may need to be managed, or opportunities to enhance what is currently provided to more effectively meet family needs.

All funding should include accountability for measures of positive outcomes for families, including, where possible, measure of changes in parenting, family satisfaction with the services provided, and next steps.

Outcome measures for families accessing parent support services should be included in funding contracts, drawing upon the Families First Outcome Framework. The Families First outcome evaluation framework (Fisher et al, 2002) includes the intention to develop service-level measures relevant to these parent support funded projects.

There is very limited formal documentation relating to outcomes of programs. Outcome measurements from Families First projects need to be flexible enough to accommodate the macro Families First goals, while ensuring that local needs are not lost, with opportunities to track data as a means to evaluate and establish evidence of good child outcomes.

Some services already measure the impact of their program and whether participants were satisfied with what they received. Centacare runs the 'Hey Dad' program. They are about to commence on a comprehensive evaluation of this program over the past three years. They will interview past and current participants, related services and facilitators.

Conclusion

This strategic plan set out principles and strategies to aim to improve access to parent support services for priority families and communities and improve the effectiveness of service provision and integration in Cumberland Prospect over the next three years. Strategies include a process to develop parent support activities; enhanced linkages; enhanced family and service relationships; and mobile outreach services. The plan includes management considerations from which the Families First planning process can prioritise its forward planning in relation to the further implementation of parent support services.

Appendix A: Methodology

Literature review

A review of documents relevant to the project was conducted to identify approaches to parent support in the LGAs, the Cumberland/Prospect Area, as well as within NSW, and internationally. The document review also informed the service and utilisation mapping exercises.

The review also included parent support models from other national and international jurisdictions to develop options for future directions in the service plan for the Area. The focus was on strategies that remove barriers to access for target groups, address the needs of families and build on the strengths of existing services and networks. The findings from the literature review were situated in the local context. This included:

- local and NSW *Families First* research on parent support activities, existing service directories and past research;
- contact with services and interagency mechanisms;
- materials referred to in the brief (attachments, consultation report, plan, New South Wales Child Health Survey (Centre for Epidemiology and Research (2002)), Quinn (2002));
- Families First data base; and
- a brief review of related Australian and international research.

Interviews with key stakeholders and families

Sixteen key stakeholders were interviewed. Interviews included:

- an anonymous service provider;
- Australian Lebanese Welfare Group;
- Barnardos;
- Baulkham Hills/Holroyd/Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre;
- Blacktown/Mt Druitt Area Mental Health Service;
- Centacare;
- Doonside Community Health;
- Granville Multicultural Centre;
- Mt Druitt Primary Health Care Team;
- Parent Effectiveness Training;
- Parramatta Community Health Centre;
- Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre;
- Relationships Australia;
- Rouse Hill Community Planning Team;
- Swinson Cottage; and
- Telopea Family Support Service.

Snowball sampling was employed to recruit stakeholders, having first established initial stakeholder representatives. Stakeholder representatives were identified by Families First Reference Group members for this project.

Information to be collected through the stakeholder interviews included type, description and size of service; number of clients and type of target groups; facilitators or obstacles to access; suggestions for parent support access improvement; models of best practice; and family consultation.

Interviews with families to gain a consumer perspective was conducted, particularly targeting family types with priority status for the Families First strategy and Cumberland Prospect plan. Five family interviews were conducted. The interviews explored families' experiences of accessing parent support, as well as their perspectives on child and family parent support needs, facilitators and barriers to access and suggestions for improvements.

Families were paid \$30 for participation in the research. Interpreters were engaged as appropriate to assist in meeting the cultural needs of families.

Questions to families focused on: their experience of service provision for themselves or other family members, their participation in parent support, their unmet needs, suggestions to make services and information more relevant and accessible.

Parent support forum

A half day Forum of parent support providers was organised to inform the second part of the review and analysis (existing parent support groups characteristics and capacity, systems for improving the parent support group coordination, information and access). Approximately 35 service provider representatives attended.

The Forum combined large and small group activities to identify what is working well now, issues facing services and families, needs and opportunities in LGAs, ideas about where to from here for parent support and the development of short and long term action plans by LGA.

Appendix B: Local Government Area Short-term Plans

Action plans from each LGA are detailed below. These action plans were developed at the Parent Support Forum attended by parent support providers and agencies.

Blacktown LGA

1. What outcomes do we want to achieve?
 - parent information kit
2. What will parents gain from this?
 - the kit will be a resource to link families with all parents support agencies, services, resources available in the LGA
3. What will our services gain from this?
 - services will benefit as they will enhance their local knowledge, facilitate referrals, provide alternate service options when there may be limited capacity for the current agency to provide parent support
4. What does the service need to do to achieve the outcome?
 - effective data collection and central data point, determine what information is most useful to collect, employment of a person to gather and amalgamate service information
5. How could this be done? Action steps.
 - use of existing databases, service directories (council, interagency and similar), development of annual service survey to gather data
6. Who is going to do it?
 - Blacktown Community Health, as Health has existing database resources
7. What is the time frame?
 - as soon as is practicable, allowing for communication at local interagencies
8. What could stand in the way?
 - services were concerned about managing current workloads, and availability of ongoing resources to maintain currency of information
9. How will we overcome this?
 - look for funding opportunities within Health, needs to be managed by one agency who can take a longer term view to maintain the database and information distribution
10. How are we going to report back?
 - effective communication with other services via interagencies, and other service gatherings
11. Who will be the central point of contact?
 - Blacktown Community Health, Tim Hoffman, Tanya Clark

Parramatta LGA – short term action plan

1. What outcomes do we want to achieve?
 - improving networks with parenting support services within LGA with annual meeting to review and share information, production of a subsequent booklet

2. What will parents gain from this?

- services and workers will be better informed about the range of services available in the local area, and provide more comprehensive to parents who may need referrals to other agencies

3. What will our services gain from this?

- services will be able to make better referral decisions, giving parents the correct information about the most appropriate services, saving time for families

4. What does the service need to do to achieve the outcome?

- part of a services' regular way of operating, so that constantly striving to improve networks and share information becomes part of how business is done in the service

5. How could this be done? Action steps.

- needs to form part of every staff members job description and time allocation, needs to be recognised as part of agencies funding, commitment of time for staff members to do this

6. Who is going to do it?

- local councils could facilitate the meetings through their family and children's services areas, it becomes an annual event

7. What is the time frame?

- annually, but initially, within the next twelve months

8. What could stand in the way?

- the biggest stumbling block is dealing with entrenched bureaucracy, potentially limiting staff ability to attend as part of their regular job descriptions

9. How will we overcome this?

- persistence and demonstrating the importance of information sharing as an integral part of effective parent support

10. How are we going to report back?

- communication will be maintained via fax and email to provide timely reporting

11. Who will be the central point of contact?

- Simone Gerber, Early Education

Parramatta LGA – long term action plan

1. What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- mobile family support van across several LGAs providing a multidisciplinary approach

2. What will parents gain from this?

- easier access to parent support opportunities, particularly for families who are not able to get out of their homes to attend services, increased knowledge and linkages for parents, hours could be more flexible to accommodate local family needs, more effective linkages for families with multiple needs

3. What will our services gain from this?

- informal ongoing professional development for team members, more effective case management, safety for staff working as a group in a home or local outreach area
4. What does the service need to do to achieve the outcome?
 - current mobile service, with ability to modify, expand current mobile service provision, family friendly set up, information dissemination to families and local communities, access to resources and support for team members, operating policies and procedures
 5. How could this be done? Action steps.
 - need coordination and team members, perhaps model on existing programs, ongoing funding and support, need someone to facilitate negotiation with current mobile providers to determine interest in this model and facilitate implementation
 6. Who is going to do it?
 - local councils, current mobile providers, existing multidisciplinary mobile team providing on the job training
 7. What is the time frame?
 - based on funding availability
 8. What could stand in the way?
 9. How will we overcome this?
 10. How are we going to report back?
 11. Who will be the central point of contact?
 - Wendy Eaves, Marist Education Centre

Baulkham Hills LGA - short term action plan

1. What outcomes do we want to achieve?
 - parents being able to access information about parent support services via child care services
2. What will parents gain from this?
 - access to timely and accurate information from a known and trusted services provider, linkages between early learning and parent support
3. What will our services gain from this?
 - formal early learning services can provide information and more effectively promote child and family well being
4. What does the service need to do to achieve the outcome?
 - make sure formal early learning services are part of parent support information dissemination, networks and interagencies, ensure that Children's Services Advisors (DoCS) put new children's services on contact lists, and provide appropriate information regarding parent support agencies
5. How could this be done? Action steps.
 - local council and family services to provide information to update, DoCS CSAs to distribute with input from local council and children's services networks
6. Who is going to do it?

- DoCS and Baulkham Hills Council
7. What is the time frame?
 - end 2003 if funds become available
 8. What could stand in the way?
 - available funding to support information gathering, documentation and dissemination
 9. How will we overcome this?
 - apply for Families First funding, does anything similar exist throughout NSW that could be used as a model to save time and money, and use this resource
 10. How are we going to report back?
 - no reporting back as responsibility rests with local council and DoCS
 11. Who will be the central point of contact?
 - Margaret Farmer, Education Centre

Baulkham Hills LGA – long term action plan

1. What outcomes do we want to achieve?
 - early childhood health centres to have networked computers
2. What will parents gain from this?
 - timely access to relevant information and family records
3. What will our services gain from this?
 - more efficient use of time, access to a broader range of information, ability to network, minimising duplication of effort
4. What does the service need to do to achieve the outcome?
 - two computers, phone lines or cable for internet connection, network capacity for computers, staff training to support computer use
5. How could this be done? Action steps.
 - application for Department of Health funding through Better Services Delivery funds
6. Who is going to do it?
 - DoCS to advice early childhood clinic that funding is still available, and contact Community Project Officer (CPO) to organise
7. What is the time frame?
 - ASAP – next week
8. What could stand in the way?
 - nothing - need submission writing time and approval process
9. How will we overcome this?
 - use resources of CPO to assist
10. How are we going to report back?

- early childhood clinic will report back to Forum group via email once they have received and connected their computer

11. Who will be the central point of contact?

- not needed – Margaret Farmer and Lyn Tunchon

Auburn/Holroyd LGA – short term action plan

1. What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- disseminating information to CALD parents about available services and parenting issues

2. What will parents gain from this?

- gain knowledge of what parenting support is available in a culturally sensitive manner, support for better parenting skills and understanding of Australian context of parenting

3. What will our services gain from this?

- increased interagency and understanding of what other services provide, more effective referrals for families, identification of existing gaps in service provision and ideas to overcome these

4. What does the service need to do to achieve the outcome?

- funding to identify opportunities, consult with relevant communities, stakeholders and parents

5. How could this be done? Action steps.

- organise a series of area wide meetings to develop a methodology for project, effectiveness of project and good ways to proceed

6. Who is going to do it?

- migrant resource centres, community and area health services in LGA, Western Sydney Community Forum, information and cultural exchange, any other interested agencies in LGA

7. What is the time frame?

- 12 months based on funding availability

8. What could stand in the way?

- time, resources, funding, suitable agency to develop and promote program

9. How will we overcome this?

- break project into smaller steps, have a lead organization, develop project brief as part of Families First funding (2003/04)

10. How are we going to report back?

- area network meetings, email, standing item on interagency meetings

11. Who will be the central point of contact?

- Kestine Flannigan, Auburn Council to organise initial meeting

Appendix C Project Brief for the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parent Support Strategy



Draft Project Brief

**Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
Communities
Parent Support Strategies
(Auburn and Holroyd)**

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Parent Support Strategies (Auburn and Holroyd)

Part 1 Background

1.1 Project name and location

The project is the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD) Parent Support Strategies Project (Auburn and Holroyd). The project incorporates the local government areas of Auburn and Holroyd.

In this project brief, the use of the term “*parent support activities*” covers a cross section of services or programs that assist families with parenting, such as:

- Information
- Advice
- Parent education and skills
- Support groups for parents.

1.2 Project summary and objectives

The objectives of this project are:

- To provide parent support
- To enhance organisations’ ability to provide parent support information and resources to effectively meet the needs of some CALD families in the Auburn/Holroyd LGAs.
- To identify and document a range of strategies to maximise opportunistic ways of providing parent support at little or no cost to organisations, while meeting community and family needs.
- To document a generalised methodology that could be applied to CALD communities that currently do not access parent support, that would enable organisations in other localities to provide parent support activities on a regular or as required basis.

Target group: Families from CALD backgrounds with children aged 0-8 years within the Auburn and Holroyd LGAs.

This project has three stages.

Stage 1

Design and implement a strategy for determining target groups. Identify a particular CALD community (or communities) that currently have limited or no access to parent support.

Identify the parent support needs of parents in the selected target groups and most appropriate communication strategies to develop a way of addressing those needs. Work with families and stakeholders from this CALD group to identify the key issues in accessing parent support, potential gaps in parenting information and the most effective ways to encourage families to access this

support. For example, a community group may have regular family gatherings – how could the organisation add value to this event through providing opportunities for parent support information and education?

Stage 2

Develop and implement a series of parent support activities in the local area. Where possible these should form part of an existing CALD community activity or service so that the organisation does not need to generate a “special event” at high cost.

Document the opportunistic parent support activities provided.

Stage 3

Document the strategic approach used in Stages 1 and 2 to assist other organisations to identify:

- which families to work with;
- what the target families needs were, strategies to find out what families need and want, what the target families’ needs are, beneficial ways to engage families from that particular community, existing infrastructure and opportunities;
- any internal organisational requirements that need to be managed to assist in the effective implementation and processes required to address this;
- the benefits and obstacles to the organisation and families of providing this type of parent support activity or information; and
- the organisation’s and community opportunities for this type of parent support to be self sustaining using little or no additional funds.

This documentation needs to be written in such a way so that the methodology can be applied to other LGAs.

1.3 Overview of Families First

Families First is a New South Wales Government initiative to support parents and carers raising children by providing a coordinated network of services focusing on prevention and early intervention support.

The Families First Framework (see attachment A) is premised on the establishment of networks of services and strategies that have demonstrated positive impacts on children and families. Families First targets families who are expecting a baby and those who have children up to 8 years of age.

The objective of this project is to develop a methodology that provides CALD families with relevant parent support information that is accessible, in their own language, in a culturally sensitive manner, and uses a means of communication which is most appropriate to them. Further the objective is to develop a methodology that can be applied to other parts of Cumberland Prospect, other target groups and other Families First Areas.

1.4 Rationale for the Project

The recent Cumberland Prospect Families First Parent Support Project identified the need for parent support information for CALD families that uses more appropriate means than is currently available. One aim of that project was to review strategies for increasing access to parent support services through the use of opportunistic events on an ad hoc or regular basis within a CALD community. Parent support services in the Auburn and Holroyd LGAs identified communicating in a culturally and linguistically manner, for the specific families targeted, as vital to increasing access to parent support.

This project will also in part address another objective of the Parent Support Project, by bringing services together to achieve a common goal, thereby increasing the coordination and linkages between organisations providing parent support in the Auburn and Holroyd LGAs.

It is envisaged that the final documentation from this project will include an outline of a methodology for providing targeted parent support that are replicable, cost effective and self sustainable for use in other Families First Areas. It may also be sufficiently generic to adapt to addressing the needs of families in other target groups, or early learning opportunities. This documentation would support organisations to utilise opportunistic events to provide parents support activities and information with little or no cost to the service, while maximising exposure to parent support information. Consultations with interested groups identified suggested discussion points to address in that process (attached).

Part 2 Services Required

2.1 Outputs of the Project

Stage 1. Document CALD groups identified to work with, stakeholders and parent inputs.

Stage 2. Document opportunistic parent support information, activities and services provided.

Stage 3. Document the overall methodology outlining the strategic approach used in Stages 1 and 2 to assist other organisations to replicate the process in other Families First Areas.

2.2 Methodology

Stage 1

1. Review previous Families First research projects for the area, particularly Parent Support Strategies (2003) as background to this project.
2. Identify a CALD community or communities to work with.
3. Identify CALD community stakeholders and any existing community networks that could provide parent support.
4. Identify other organisations providing parent support to link to for resources and assistance.
5. Identify the best way to reach families to determine their needs and interests.

Stage 2

1. Contact CALD stakeholders and families to discuss the proposed project, opportunistic ways to promote and provide parent support and what types of support may be most useful.
2. Develop a program for implementing opportunistic parent support activities.
3. Run these activities in coordination with CALD stakeholders, families and community.
4. Obtain feedback from CALD stakeholders, families and community as to the effectiveness of these activities.
5. Document the process and outcomes from these activities.
6. Present this report to the FF Reference Group.

Stage 3

1. Based on feedback from the FF Reference Group, CALD stakeholders, families and community, document a methodology that could be applied in other organisations and Families First Areas interested in providing parent support.
2. Methodology to include a strategic approach to assist services to identify:
 - o which families to work with, considering new immigrant and refugee groups;
 - o what the targeted families' needs were. That is strategies to find out what families need and want in terms of parent support information and activities. In addition, determining beneficial ways to engage families from that community. This should consider existing infrastructure and opportunities with a view to providing a model that does not always require additional funding to provide the support;
 - o any internal organisation requirements that need to be managed to assist in the effective implementation of this type of parent support. Examples might be temporary reorganisation of work responsibilities between staff, identifying and working with new targeted communities. The approach should suggest processes required to address this;
 - o what are the benefits and obstacles to the organisation and families of providing this type of parent support activity or information; and
 - o what are the organisation's and community opportunities for this type of parent support to be self sustaining using little or no additional funds.
3. Present draft methodology to FF Reference Group for comment.
4. Incorporate feedback as required.

Subsequent publication and promotion of the methodology will be the responsibility of Families First.

2.3 Reporting to the Reference Group

The ?????????????? Project Reference group is to receive a plan of how each stage will be achieved at the start of each stage and a report at the end of each stage. Reports provided at the end of each stage will comply with the methodology and the Outputs that are documented in the "Outputs for the project" and "methodology" sections of the brief. . The Project manager can provide names of people on the Reference group.

2.4 Key Personnel Involved in the Project

It will be important to include ??????????????????????.

stakeholders, families and members of CALD communities who are involved in this project.,

(Maybe include the following:-

Additionally, the Reference group can assist with the identification of and introduction to a range of these services and projects. It is expected that the Project will seek advice from these service providers in identifying strategies for consulting with the target groups)

2.5 Timeframe and Deliverables

suggest up to 12 months

Milestone	Date
Expressions of Interest invited on project brief	
Expressions of Interest submitted	

Project to commence

(First meeting with Project Manager by this date)

Stage one report

Stage two report

Stage three draft report

Final report to Reference Group

Part 3 Management of Project

3.1 Project Manager

The Director of Partnerships and Planning with the Department of Community Services for the ??????? Network within the ?????? Area. will be the Project Manager.

3.2 Responsibilities of Project Manager.

Responsibilities of the Project Manager include:-

- Point of contact for the consultant
- Meeting with the consultant at key stages
- Convening Reference Group
- Approval of key milestones and deliverables (in line with agreed outputs)
- Payment of consultants fees

3.3 Reference Group.

The consultant/organisation undertaking the project will be advised by *Name of Committee*. The *name of committee* has been established by the *who* to *implement the ??????????*

The role of the *committee* is to:

- Proactively provide support and direction for the project
- Members will have the capacity to represent the Government Agency, Local Government, Non Government sector or communities that they have been nominated to represent and collaborate and consult with their constituency as required
- Provide advice
- Members will seek to support the resolution of issues in an open and collaborative manner
- Support a "whole of government" and interagency approach

The *consultant/organisation* is required to attend meetings of the *name of committee* at key stages in the project as noted in the timeframes and deliverables section.

The **consultant/organisation** will be responsible for recording all decisions made and actions to be taken arising from meetings with the Project Manager and the **name of committee**.

3.4 Submitting a Project Proposal

Project proposals must include information on:

- Stages and milestones
- Methodology
- Timeframe
- Project budget, including incidental costs such as interpreters, promotional material
- Documentation demonstrating ability to meet the key selection criteria
- Consultant personnel to be involved and expertise that they will bring to the project
- Three referees for three separate projects that have similar elements to this project

3.5 Selection Criteria

A successful tenderer will be chosen on the basis of evaluation against the following criteria:

- Commitment to social justice principles
- Competency in the Families First philosophy and program
- Demonstrated experience in engagement with CALD families
- Demonstrated experience in providing services and activities to CALD communities
- Demonstrated understanding of parent support
- Demonstrated ability to link with other organisations providing parent support information
- Demonstrated ability to meet project timeframes and budget.
- Demonstrated ability to document complex information clearly and concisely.
- Value for money.
- Quality of proposal.
- Referee Reports.

3.6 Timeframe

The **consultant/organisation** will begin consultation with the Project Manager by **insert date** and have completed the final report no later than **insert date**.

3.7 Project Approval

Within 10 days of engagement the consultant/organisation will need to meet with the Project Manager to undertake the following:

- Project Manager to provide the consultant with an overview of the operations of the CALD Parent Support Strategy
- Finalise project **and schedule meetings with committee (if relevant)**

- Ensure that all parties have a common understanding of the requirements of the project.

3.8 Terms of Project

3.8.1 Terms of Agreement

The consultant will need to abide by Terms of Agreement (Attachment E), unless otherwise negotiated in writing.

3.8.2 Payment of Fees

Fees will be paid to the **consultant/organisation** within 14 working days of presentation of invoice according to the payment schedule identified by the **consultant/organisation** and agreed to by the Project Manager. **Consultants/organisations** are advised that any request for progress payments must take into account that 20% of the consultancy price is to be retained until the completion of the project.

The **consultant/organisation** shall indicate whether progress payments are to be made.

3.9 Funding Available

suggest \$60,000 excluding GST

3.10 Ownership of Materials

All materials developed by the consultant specifically for the purposes of meeting the terms of the consultancy, including copyright of all written documentation, will remain the property of the Department of Community Services.

3.11 Lodgement of Tenders

Tenders should include all the information in section 3.4 of this document. Tenders shall be lodged by close of business **????????** with:

Director, Partnerships and Planning
Department of Community Services, **????????** Network Office
???????? Area
PO Box **??????**
???????????????? NSW **????**

Or hand delivered to :

Director, Partnerships and Planning
Department of Community Services, **????????** Network Office
?????????????? St
????????????????

3.12 Inquiries

Further information is available from:

???????? **????????**
Community Project Officer (Families First)
Partnerships and Planning
Department of Community Services
???????? Area Office

Phone **????** **????**

Attachment: Discussion points for the project as raised in community consultations

Design strategies for determining target group(s)

- * How will the target group(s) be identified - will the aim be to target the largest communities, or will it be to target smaller emerging communities who may not have as yet have as many support services established, or will it be based on the community with the greatest needs?
- * Who needs to be consulted/involved?
- * Who will be involved in the decision-making of selecting the target group?
- * Will there be input from the local services? - If so:
- * How will they be identified/selected?
- * How will they be contacted (phone, mail, in person, survey, etc)?
- * Who will be contacting them?
- * What method of consultation and involvement will take place?
- * Will there be input from the local community/parents? - If so:
- * How will they be identified?
- * How will they be contacted (phone, mail, in person, survey, etc)?
- * Who will be contacting them?
- * What languages/resources will be needed?
- * What method of consultation will take place?

Develop and implement strategies for engaging service providers and relevant organisations (eg. media) in the Auburn/Holroyd area

- * How can an informal, non-threatening environment be created that encourages services and community participation?
- * Who should be involved?
- * Which service providers, community groups, etc
- * How will they be selected?
- * How does this project fit in with their services' goals?
- * What level of involvement will be needed?
- * When/at what stage will their involvement be sought?
- * What level of involvement will be sought?
- * How can the project be promoted in a positive way, to encourage participation?
- * How will trust be established?
- * How can the project link with outside services? - eg. Immigration, Centrelink, etc.

Identify parent needs in the selected target groups and most appropriate communication strategies

- * What are the main parent support needs of the target group(s)?
- * How will these needs be identified?
- * How will these be prioritised?
- * What resources are needed?
- * What is the best method of communication to identify needs?
- * How can the majority of people in that target group be
- * How will literacy difficulties be overcome
- * How can information be sought and provided in a culturally sensitive manner?
- * How can parent support be promoted in a positive way (rather than being seen as for parents who 'have have problems parenting')

Develop and implement CALD parent support strategies

- * What are the existing strategies?
- * What resources/information already exist?
- * Who are the existing services?
- * How can existing expertise be used?
- * How can existing information be used? - eg. can written information be reproduced, recorded onto tape recordings, etc.
- * What translation services are available
- * What is the best strategy for obtaining value for money?
- * What is the capacity of local parent support groups to meet local parent needs.

- * How will parent support needs be met?
- * Will it be through general public education/awareness of specific topics (via media, pamphlets, etc), or through conducting workshops on specific topics, or combination of various methods?
- * How will services be selected to contribute to information dissemination or holding workshops? Consider their location, existing information, experience, resources, links to the community and other groups/services, etc
- * Where is the largest audience for the target group(s) located (areas, venues, etc.)
- * What format will the workshops adopt? - eg. will it be a formal setting, arranged as a social outing, etc.
- * What venues are available to hold workshops? - Is there a fee? How many people can the venues accommodate? - Is it in a central location/easily accessible?
- * What are the most effective methods for disseminating information and details of workshops to parents in the target group? Eg. via existing local services, community groups, written material, local/ethnic specific newspapers/radio/TV
- * Who can assist in disseminating this information? - eg. local services, medical practitioners, schools, religious leaders, newspapers, radio, TV.
- * What connections do existing organisations have that can facilitate the dissemination of information? - eg. obtain free advertising, cheaper printing, promote and encourage attendance at workshops, etc.

Develop and implement evaluation system measuring the effectiveness of the CALD parent support strategies implemented.

- * How will progress be monitored to ensure project is on track?
- * What are the short-term objectives and timelines?
- * How will success be evaluated
- * Who will monitor progress?
- * Who will conduct the evaluation process?
- * Who will be involved in the evaluation process?

Appendix D Selected Map of Parent Support Services

Selected services as listed in databases held by DoCS July 2003.

Service provider details	Description	Capacity	Location	Area served
Blacktown				
Centacare Blacktown family support service	Information and Referral; Family Worker Services (in home); Family Worker Services (Centre based); Parenting Groups (for parents: men and women)	2 staff working (1 full time, 1 part time) Working in homes with about 20-25 client families	Blacktown	Blacktown LGA
Blacktown City community services network Inc			Plumpton	
Blacktown Mental Health Service			Blacktown	
Mt Druitt/ Blacktown Family Support	Information and Referral; Family Worker Services (in home and Centre based); Groups (parenting)	9 staff working the equivalent of 5.3 full-time positions; usually working in home with about 45 client families at any one time	Mt Druitt	Blacktown LGA
Blacktown Parenting forum - Run Through Blacktown community health			Blacktown	
Blacktown Primary Health Care Team			Blacktown	
Blacktown-Mt Druitt Community Health Service			Mt Druitt	
Dean Park Community Development Committee Inc			Blacktown	
Emerge Centre	Provides counselling services for parenting skills		Blacktown	Blacktown LGA
Mt Druitt/Blacktown Learning Difficulties Support Group Inc	Information and Referral; Groups; Community development Mobile services	2 staff working the equivalent of 1.3 full-time positions	Blacktown	Blacktown LGA
Postnatal Unit – Blacktown hospital			Blacktown	
Prospect Area Christian Services Inc			Blacktown	

Service provider details	Description	Capacity	Location	Area served
Swinson Cottage Family Centre Inc	Child protection agency which helps families develop skills and encourages them to nurture and care for their children in a safe environment. Services include parenting groups, a playgroup and home visits.		Blacktown	Blacktown LGA
Blacktown-Mt Druitt Community Health Service			Blacktown	
Marist Community Services (Metro West)			Seven Hills	
Murawina Mt Druitt Co-operative Ltd			Plumpton	
Seven Hills North P & C Association Inc			Seven Hills	
Ministry to Solo Parents & Their Families			Quakers Hill	
Parents Without Partners NSW Inc	Provides social activities and emotional support for lone parents and their children through a network of branches in NSW.		Quakers Hill	NSW
Quakers Hill Community Development Project			Quakers Hill	
Quakers Hill Family Centre	Information and Referral; Family Worker Services (in home and centre based); Groups (Parenting, playgroups, therapeutic parenting); Community development; Financial counselling; Mobile services	Usually working in home with about 50 - 60 client families at any one time	Quakers Hill	Quakers Hill, Blacktown, Riverstone, Parklea, Nth Marayong, Kings Pk, Kings Langley, Rouse Hill and Schofields LGAs
Anglicare - Children Respite Service			Rooty Hill	
Essie Women's Refuge Inc			Rooty Hill	
Rooty Hill Outside of School Hours Care Centre Inc			Rooty Hill	
Child and Family Team			Mt Druitt	
Community Solutions			Mt Druitt	
Holy Family Education Centre			Mt Druitt	
Mt Druitt Family Holiday Committee Inc			Mt Druitt	
Mt Druitt Primary Health Team			Mt Druitt	
Shalvey Out Of School Association Inc			Mt Druitt	
Sustained Home Visiting Team			Mt Druitt	

Service provider details	Description	Capacity	Location	Area served
Mt Druitt Community Health Centre			Mt Druitt	
Parents As Teachers Program	Provides early-learning program, which focuses on child development. Aim is to help parents recognise the everyday learning opportunities in their children's lives. Also provides informal group meetings and individual home visits. Priority is given to first time parents with babies under 6 months of age.		Whalan	Blacktown LGA
Auburn				
Antenatal/Postnatal Unit			Auburn	
Auburn Community Development Network			Auburn	
Auburn Community Health Centre			Auburn	
Auburn Migrant Centre			Auburn	
Australian Turkish & Kurdish Community Services Co-operative Ltd	Information and Referral; Family Worker Services (in home and Centre based); Groups (Parenting) Financial assistance	1 full time staff member, usually working with 5 client families at any one time, groups for about 20 people each week.	Auburn	Auburn LGA
Barnardos Australia - Auburn	Information and Referral Family Worker Services (in home) Groups Supervised access for parents and their children	5 staff part time, usually working at homes with 27 client families at any one time	Auburn	Auburn LGA
The Association of Bhanin El-Miniech			Auburn	
Holroyd				
Cassia Community Centre / Holroyd Community Development Association Inc			Wentworthville	
Nicholii Cottage Neighborhood Centre Inc			Wentworthville	
Parent Effectiveness Training	Network of instructors throughout Australia running effective communication courses for parenting, teaching, personal and professional development. Courses involve 24-30 hours of training		Wentworthville	National

Service provider details	Description	Capacity	Location	Area served
Western Sydney Area Health Service			Wentworthville	
Merrylands Community Health Centre			Merrylands	
Karabi Community & Development Services Inc			Pendle Hill	
Parramatta Holroyd Family Support Inc	Information and Referral; Family Worker Services (in home); Family Worker Services (Centre based); Groups; Community Development	9 staff working the equivalent of 4.8 full-time positions; usually working in home with about 50 client families at any one time	Pendle Hill	Parramatta and Holroyd LGA
Westmead Hospital Childbirth and Parenting Education	Co-ordinates 'Preparation for Childbirth and Parenthood Program'. The aim of this program is to educate expectant women and their support people about labour, childbirth and parenting. Also co-ordinates Young Mothers Program for pregnant adolescents.		Westmead	Western Sydney AHS
Parramatta				
Burnside Family Learning Centre			Ermington	
Ermington West OOSH Care Inc			Ermington	
Granville Family Support	Information and Referral; Family Worker Services (in home & Centre based); Domestic violence court assistance scheme Groups (Parenting and playgroups)	1 full time coordinator and 2 part-time staff; usually working in home with about 28 client families at any one time.	Granville	Parramatta and Holroyd LGA
Granville Multicultural Community Centre Inc			Granville	
Marist Education Centre			Granville	
St Vincent de Paul Society - Granville			Granville	
Western Sydney Community Forum Inc			Granville	
Adele Dundas Inc			Toongabbie	
Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Services Inc			Toongabbie	
Australo-Lebanese Christian Council Inc			Parramatta	
Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre			Parramatta	

Service provider details	Description	Capacity	Location	Area served
Burnside			Parramatta	
Centacare - Parramatta (Metro West)			Parramatta	
Community Midwifery Program			Parramatta	
Early Interventions/Carramar Cottages	Provides support, education and accommodation to pregnant and parenting adolescents.		Parramatta	Parramatta LGA
Lone Parent Family Support Service	Offers activities and parenting skills groups for lone parents with dependent children, including lone fathers support group. Can provide details of local groups		Parramatta	Parramatta LGA
Old Toongabbie Early Childhood Health Centre			Parramatta	
Parramatta Community Health Centre			Parramatta	
Parramatta Mission			Parramatta	
SDN Children's Services Inc Focus Support Service			Parramatta	
Sydney Anglican Home Mission Society Council (trading as) Anglicare			Parramatta	
Telopea Family Support Services	Information and Referral Family Worker Services (in home & Centre based) Supported craft group Playgroup Nutrition program Groups Community Development Emergency relief	9 staff working the equivalent of 4.7 full-time positions; usually working in home with about 30 client families at any one time	Telopea	Eastern part of the Parramatta LGA
Western Region Young Peoples' Hostel Organisation			Parramatta	
Western Sydney Area Health Service			Parramatta	
Parramatta Community Health Centre			Parramatta	
Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)	Provides programs for parents of children aged 3-10 years with behavioural difficulties.		Parramatta	Across all Cumberland Prospect
Ministry to Solo Parents and Families	Support service for solo parents		North Parramatta	Western Sydney
Uniting Care Northmead	Provides counselling for adolescents and families where there is conflict. Also run groups for parents of teenagers.		Northmead	Baulkham Hills and Parramatta LGAs

Service provider details	Description	Capacity	Location	Area served
Parramatta Early Childhood Centre	Provides a range of services to assist with growth and development of children aged 0-5 by providing advice and referring to appropriate services. Also run groups for new parents including new parents from a Chinese background.		Parramatta	Parramatta LGA
Dads Australia	Support group for parents with family breakdown problems, including child support, family court, custody/access & child welfare.		Parramatta	
Baulkham Hills				
Australian Breastfeeding Association (NSW Branch)	Voluntary, non-profit organisation providing breastfeeding information, support to parents.		Baulkham Hills	NSW
St Michaels Family Centre Ltd			Baulkham Hills	
The Hills Community Aid & Information Service Inc			Baulkham Hills	
Parents Without Partners Hills Branch	Activity and support group for single parent families		Baulkham Hills	Baulkham Hills LGA
Australian Breastfeeding Association - Hills Group	Voluntary, non-profit organisation providing breastfeeding information, support to parents.		Castle Hill	
Baulkham Hills Early Childhood Centre	Provides a range of services for families with children aged 0-5. Includes new parents group. First visit is by appointment only.		Castle Hill	Baulkham hills LGA
Castle Hill Early Childhood Health Centre	Provides range of services to assist with the growth and development of children aged 0-5 by providing advice and referring to appropriate services. Services include regular breastfeeding education sessions and parent groups.		Castle Hill	Baulkham Hills LGA
Dalmar Child and Family Care			Castle Hill	

Service provider details	Description	Capacity	Location	Area served
Hills Parenting Centre	A specialist Day Stay Centre that provides excellence in Early Childhood Health Care. Parents who may be experiencing difficulties with their infants or young children are provided with support, advice and education.		Castle Hill	Sydney Metro
Mothercraft and Parenting Service	Mobile Tresillian Domiciliary Service. Mothercraft and parenting advice in the home		Castle Hill	Sydney Metro
The Hills Community Health Centre			Castle Hill	
The Hills Family Centre	Information and Referral; Family Worker Services (in home); Family Worker Services (Centre based); Groups (Parenting and parenting groups for men); Training for volunteers in home visiting.	17 staff working the equivalent of 6.1 full-time positions; usually working in home with about 85 client families at any one time	Castle Hill	Baulkham Hills
Glenhaven & District Community Services Inc			Glenhaven	

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