

PPSS January 2013 Newsletter

Welcome to the first PPSS newsletter for 2013. In this, my first year as President of the PPSS Board, I am looking forward to some exciting growth in programs developed and delivered for PPSS members and our community.



As the father of two children adopted from China and Korea, I know the absolute joys and challenges of family life. Having been a PPSS member for a few years now and joining the Board in 2010, I have seen first hand how important it is to have really useful programs and services available for families formed through adoption, kinship care and permanent care.

2012 saw PPSS delivering events that engaged parents and children, with the popularity of the *Let's Talk About Schools* workshops shining out, and the Journal Club continuing to generate supportive and engaging discussions.

In 2013, drawing on professional input from around the country, we are embarking on an ambitious program to develop and deliver new sessions that will be engaging and provide useful tools and strategies for families with younger children as well as those with teens.

We are continuing to grow our therapist referral service with health professionals focussed on areas of highest relevance to parents, carers and children connected in kinship care, permanent care and adoption.

As PPSS grows, we all have more opportunities to become stronger in our families and communities through learning and sharing of experiences. I encourage you to come along to a session, call in with a query and join in PPSS in 2013.

Chris Lockwood, President

Training

Let's Talk About School: Adoption and Permanent Care

**Western
Suburbs**

When: Wednesday 20 March 10.30am-12.30pm
Venue: Anglicare, 41 Sommerville Rd, Yarraville
RSVP: <http://trybooking.com/CGIH> by 13 March

Contact Deborah Hunt on 9020 1833 for more information.

If you are unable to attend this session, but would like to purchase a copy of the **Let's Talk** publication, email Deborah deborah@ppss.org.au

Let's Talk About School: Kinship care will be delivered at Anglicare, Yarraville, on **Wednesday 20 March**. If you are interested in attending or want to find out more, please contact Deborah on deborah@ppss.org.au Bookings essential.

School starts



The new school year is beginning. How are the members of your family feeling? As with all changes there will be excitement, joy, nervousness and, for some, hiccups along the way.

There are often unique challenges for non-traditional families such as ours. The reality is that our families have additional layers of complexities because of the way we came together.

Listening to many of your school experiences during 2012 has made us reflect again on the significance that schools have in our children's lives and the importance of positive and strengths-based experiences.

So in the new year we hope your 'school' wishes come true. These might include:

- Seeing the growing confidence in your child's eyes as they move into a wider circle of people
- The thrill when your child has a teacher 'who just gets it'
- Feeling pride in the strategies that your child uses to respond to (or choose to ignore) inappropriate questions about family formation
- Uncovering and working through the pre-placement experiences that may have impacted on your child's learning, behaviour and self-view.

It is important to remember that teachers want every child to succeed; academically, socially, physically and emotionally. As parents and carers it is our responsibility to make connections with the school, to share our knowledge and ensure that we work together to do the very best for our children. We are true believers in creating scaffolding to guide children's journeys – so our advice is to have a plan for the coming school year!

Here are some highly recommended books from the PPSS bookstore that may help with the journey.

Easing Transitions

[The Kissing Hand](#)

[The Invisible String](#)

Celebrating Difference

[Families Are Different
Am I Really Different?](#)

[The Great Big Book of Families
We're Different, We're the Same](#)

To read more about these books, visit our shop at shop.ppss.org.au

Support Groups and Community Events

■ Journal Club

Thursday February 7, 8.00pm - 9.30pm

Venue: Collingwood Library, 11 Stanton St,
Abbotsford

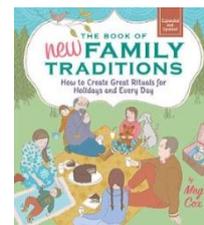
Topic: Helping Children to Self-Regulate their Emotions.

■ Playgroups/Support groups

Please check our website www.ppss.org.au for playgroups in Northern, Western, Greater Western and Peninsula regions.

Book Review

Family Traditions by Meg Fox



The book *Of New Family Traditions* is packed full of fun and touching ideas to help your family come together and create memories.

It will also help you realise how many family traditions and rituals you already have together, but might not have even noticed - songs, words, special connection tools you share and use every day. Meg Cox has gathered together a wealth of material from different families, and her book is a great starting point for reflecting on what might be useful in your family, or creating your own ideas using the book as inspiration.

This is a really dense and lovely book, one that I could see becoming a much-loved reference bible for many families. It covers bedtime, coming of age, weekly family nights, problem solving, celebrations, as well as adoption rituals and many more. The book has some North American references (Thanksgiving etc.) and includes ideas drawn from various religions, but is very easy to adapt to all families.

Our thanks to the many members who joined us at the Post Placement Resource Centre on 23 January for our 'Creating Rituals and Ceremonies' workshop.



Parents and carers participated in a discussion around the creation and role of ceremonies and rituals in the lives of our families. Rituals were identified as often the most simple things, made special through our attention to them. The most successful rituals identified by the group included those that weren't created formally but which emerged in response to the needs and wishes of our children.

The children got stuck into the glue and the sparkly bits as they populated toolboxes from which to build their own, future rituals and ceremonies. They created wonderful moons which suspended stars representing all of the special people in their lives, past and present. Beautiful, multi-coloured bracelets were braided, with their different colours representing the children's many loved ones.

Our workshop ended with a special reading of one of our favourite books from our bookstore, *Love You Forever*, a story of the everlasting love between a mother and her child.



CREATE Foundation is the Australian organisation representing the voices of all children and young people in out of home care.

In Victoria we play an advocacy role for system changes and aim to make a positive impact not for one young person but for all children and young people in out of home care.

We have a range of free fun events, life skills programs, leaving care and leadership workshops, annual grants for young people, youth advisory groups and opportunities for young people to use their voice through consultations and focus groups on policy change and things that matter to children and young people in care. We also have young people involved in training child protection workers, case managers and foster carers. We support young people to share their stories in a safe and supportive way.

CREATE is free for children and young people with a care experience aged 0-25 years old.

To get involved, contact 1800 655 105 or our website www.create.org.au and click on the "Join clubCREATE" box either for under 12's or over 12's and sign up to a club just for children and young people with an out of home care experience.

Members receive a bi-monthly magazine filled with stories from children and young people from around Australia and invitations and updates to everything happening in Victoria. Members are also eligible to access all of our events, programs and competitions.

Workers and carers can also receive updates on what's happening around Australia when they become a CREATEmate. To become a CREATEmate, go to our website <http://www.create.org.au/create-mates>, or give us a call.

PPSS is currently involved in two Department of Human Services (DHS) projects affecting the interests of our members.

The first is the Stability and Permanent Care project, a 12-month project established by the Victorian government in response to the *Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children* inquiry. It will review the case plan of every child under 10 who is currently in the statutory system and, where appropriate, work to resolve any barriers to permanent placement. This project will be of particular interest to members who are currently negotiating permanent care orders with DHS. We hope it will assist permanent care parents to achieve better outcomes for themselves and the child in their care.

The second project is Future Directions for Permanent Care and Adoption. This project is working to identify a new service model for permanent care and local and intercountry adoption. A short summary of this project, provided by DHS, is included on this page.

We will keep you up to date on the progress of both these projects and would welcome hearing from you at any time (jennifer@ppss.org.au) with any questions or comments you would like to share.

Future directions for permanent care and adoption

Achieving an integrated service system with streamlined processes enabling timely decision-making, stability and permanence for children

Following reviews of the Permanent Care and Adoption system in Victoria, a number of common trends and issues have emerged that demonstrate a need for reform. These are:

- Fragmentation of the current service system means that we are not meeting the increasing demand for ongoing, stable, permanent placements.
- We need a service system that better meets the needs of children and permanent care families, through effective practice, better access to services and supports, and more timely decision making.

A proposed conceptual design of permanent care and adoption has been scoped with general parameters that need to be further explored and tested with the intention of:

1. integrating the service system;
2. streamlining processes enabling timely decision-making, stability and permanency for children;
3. streamlining the applicant recruitment, screening, training and assessment processes;
4. delivering more effective intervention and planning for children involved in child protection;
5. integrating permanent care services with the broader out-of-home care service system.

Further, the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry (PVVCI) has recommended a strengthened approach to achieving permanency for children unable to remain safely in the care of their birth families.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has committed to undertake a Permanent Care and Adoption Review that is designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of permanent care, adoption and intercountry adoption in Victoria. DHS will undertake a consultation process that aims to maximise stakeholder engagement and foster commitment to a new concept mode.

Important Links

Be Net Wise

Berry Street is launching www.benetwise.org.au. This site contains information and resources regarding use of the internet, mobile phones and other digital technology.

Created for the Out of Home Care and Alternative Education sectors, it includes resources for carers, agencies, educators, young people and children.

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