



Aboriginal Family Support Services Newsletter

November - December 2015



Bumper
20-page issue!

AFSS office hours over the holiday period

All AFSS offices will close at 3pm on Thursday December 24 and will re-open on Monday January 4, 2016. Staff will be on call as normal and Crisis Care can also be contacted on 13 16 11.

Crisis Care is the after hours service provided by qualified Families SA social workers. It operates from 4pm to 9am and 24 hours on weekends and public holidays.

A special
message for AFSS
foster carers.
See page 5

Tell Someone Who Cares

International Foster Care Conference – 2015 (Sydney)



Above: Toni-Lee Miller, Deb, Warren Guppy, Chris, Carrie, Jody Lynch and Sharron, were Adelaide delegates to the International Foster Care Conference in Sydney.

The International Foster Care Conference convened by the International Foster Carer Organisation (IFCO) was held at The Star in Sydney from 8 - 11 November. Three AFSS staff, along with four of AFSS' fantastic foster carers attended the conference. Below we are pleased to provide a summary of their experiences.

Carrie – AFSS Foster Carer, Metropolitan

The Conference in Sydney was full of lots of great speakers and provided great advice and tips, but the stand out moment for me was hearing from some of the children in care. Their voices on what they would like was very strong and powerful, so it is up to us to listen and learn from them also.

Deb – AFSS Foster Carer, Port Pirie

I was honoured to have been asked to attend the IFCO conference 2015. From the moment I knew I was attending to actually attending was a time of anticipation and eagerness. I did some research in readiness. The carers' conference was well worth attending, in fact it was absolutely amazing! I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of the three days; the information, presentations and guest speakers were highly informative and interesting. I especially enjoyed "The same but different" – Estella Abraham UK, learning about the differences in foster care not just in Australia, but worldwide.

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A message from the CEO

As 2015 draws to a close it provides me with the opportunity to reflect on all AFSS' activities of the past 12 months.

We have had an incredibly busy, but productive year, with many positive outcomes, including the establishment of the new Community Safety & Wellbeing program, the purchase of new premises for AFSS Coober Pedy, and our participation in the National SNAICC conference, as well as numerous community events and activities in Adelaide and in regional South Australia.

We were pleased to share with the Riverland community the highlights of our activities at the AFSS Annual General Meeting, held in Berri on November 13.

Tracey Everingham, Senior Manager Therapeutic Services, presented an overview of the Stronger Families program and the statewide implementation of Solution Based Casework, and of our role as Gazetted Organisation, providing an overview of the process concerning court responses and family care meetings.

Tony Lawrence (Coordinator), Bronte Warneke and Normie Giles delivered a presentation on the Aboriginal Gambling Help Service program, which was very well received by those in attendance.

The current AFSS board members were elected unopposed and I look forward to our continued positive working relationship. The Board comprises Bev Ewen (Chairperson), Paul Elliott (Treasurer), Greg Sinclair (Secretary), Wayne Rigney (Executive Member), Margaret Nelson (Executive Member) and Maryanne Clements (Executive Member). I thank them all for their support and wise counsel over the last 12 months.

In closing, I thank you for your support of AFSS and your interest in our work for Aboriginal children and families in South Australia. I wish you a happy and safe holiday period and look forward to the challenges that the New Year will bring.

Sharron Williams
CEO



The AFSS Board, CEO and staff wish you the compliments of the festive season and best wishes for the new year.

Tell Someone Who Cares

Continued from page 1

In Tasmania children exit the system at 16, in the USA it is 21. In India most children are placed in what we know as residential accommodation. These are just a few points we were informed about. “The teenage Brain-closed for renovations” – Nathan Willis NZ, was a fantastic presentation exploring the functioning of an adolescent’s brain and how we as foster carers can understand the changes and giving us tools on how we can best approach and interact with young people.

I have to say meeting the other AFSS workers and foster carers was a privilege. Meeting other foster carers and stakeholders from around the world was the icing on the cake, to be with like-minded people, with the same goals and aspirations for three days was a true privilege. Thank you!!

Chris, AFSS Foster Carer, Port Lincoln

The carers’ conference was amazing!! I did not realise how important and knowledgeable the conference was; people from 24 different countries across four continents attended, so multicultural. Did not even know about IFCO or what it stood for and knowing that it is an international network. Knowing each person who spoke, what they do for their countries/communities and people is incredible, and having children under foster care attending and the presentation they created together was very inspiring and emotional.

The guest speakers were amazing, two of them were

Kevin Y Brown and Nathan Wallis, and they were both funny and educated in the foster care system. Robi Mack was an amazing MC and the opening ceremony was astonishing, Deborah Cheetham has a very strong and unique voice which gave me goose bumps.

I met a few new people who can relate to what I have been doing and know what I’m talking about when it comes to these beautiful kids who need us. Thank you for the opportunity to attend the International Foster Care Organisation (IFCO) Conference I had an amazing experience.

Sharron, AFSS Foster Carer, Adelaide

I was recently lucky enough to attend the IFCO world conference in Sydney. I travelled with some amazing people from AFSS. The conference was amazing, full of relevant information that I could take away and use on a daily basis with my foster children and in fact my two teenage sons. All speakers over the four days were inspiring and all had great stories to share, but the standout speaker for me was Nathan Wallis from NZ giving us an insight into the adolescent brain.

Jody Lynch, AFSS Support Worker

Robi Mack was the MC for the Conference and it was great how she shared some personal stories and involved the crowd. Robi works in Sydney’s Children’s Hospital as a clown doctor providing the children with lots of laughter and fun. Robi introduced the audience

to the world of Kazoo bikes. The Conference involved foster carers from over 24 countries. The conference was opened by an amazing woman, Deborah Cheetham, her voice was strong and powerful.

Steven Bloom talked about Connecting with Laughter and involved all the audience in a session. It was very simple and everyone did have a good laugh; as they say laughter is the best medicine.

Kevin Y Brown talked about his life growing up in foster care and how individuals provided him opportunities to help him grow into a healthy and positive person. He also explained how all it takes is for one person to show they care and put the work in for a child, to make a difference.

Nathan Wallis was amazing, talking about brain development and how it impacts adolescence. His presentation was very informative and explained in simple language.

Dr Arne Rubinstein talked about how to interact with children and the things we do as parents and care givers that may impact on the children, although we feel it is the right thing to do.

Malay Dewanji from India talked about how foster care began in his country. He moved to America to study and research foster care and the impact on young children. Foster care in India was only established in 2000 and is still currently being evolved and building networks.



Coping with the heat with babies and young children

As a person who cares for children it is vital you are aware of the dangers posed by heat for children in summer. "Heat illness" is a term for a range of conditions, from sunburn and heat rash, to heat cramps and life-threatening heatstroke.

Children are more susceptible than adults to these conditions because their bodies are less able to adjust to changes in temperature. Children have less capacity to perspire, which reduces the body's ability to cool itself.

Hot weather can therefore be a time of high risk for younger children, especially babies. Signs of heat stress in babies and children are: looking unwell, rising body temperature, fewer wet nappies, increased thirst (but later, as the baby gets weaker, they may drink less), dry mouth and eyes, headache, muscle cramps, being sleepy or 'floppy' confusion, shortness of breath and vomiting, coma (not rousing when touched or called).

What you can do

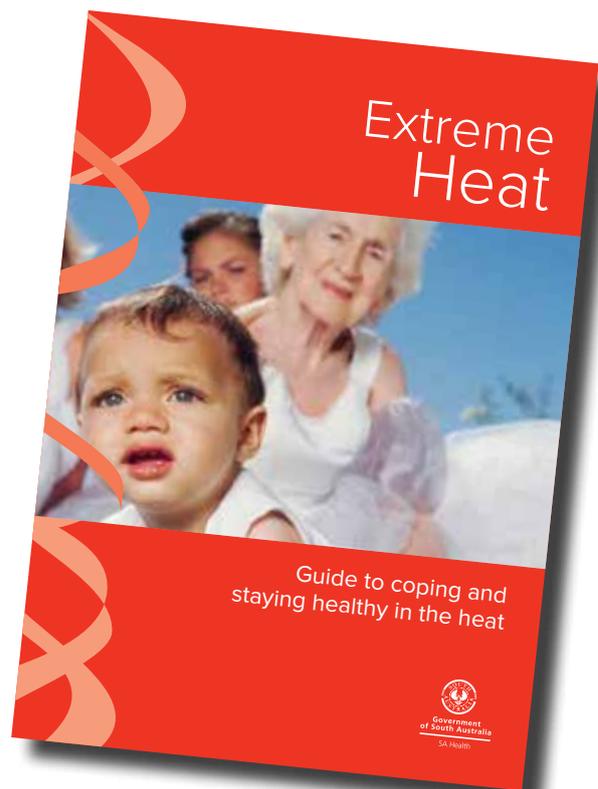
Avoid travelling with children in hot weather if possible, or do it early in the day. Children can overheat very quickly in cars. Never leave children in a parked car (not even for a moment). Do your best to keep children inside, particularly during the hottest hours of the day between 11am and 4pm.

If a child is out in the sun, apply sunscreen (at least SPF 30+), have them wear a hat and suitable lightweight, light coloured, long sleeved, loose fitting clothing to protect the skin. Provide small, frequent meals.

Try not to use the stove. Plan simple meals that require little or no cooking. Choose one room in the house that you can stay in during the hottest part of the day.

Close the curtains and use a fan for air circulation. It is much easier to keep one room cool, than to try to cool the whole house. Use a room that doesn't get a lot of sun. If you have air conditioning, be sure to use it – if not, use electric fans. (Check that the air conditioner is set to 'cool').

If you are concerned about the cost of air conditioning there is information about managing energy bills at www.sa.gov.au/energysmart Visit air conditioned public buildings. You can get a lot



of relief from visiting the local shopping centre, library, movie cinema etc. Plan to do activities with children in the cool of the evening. Use lukewarm baths or showers, or wet towels to cool children down.

If you are a carer of a child or young person and the weather is, or will be very hot when a family contact visit is to take place please contact your AFSS support worker to discuss alternative For further information visit the following internet sites

www.sabhealth.sa.gov.au – search for: "extreme heat". This will display a list of useful articles on staying healthy in hot weather including: Pregnancy tips during the heat extreme heat; Guide to coping and staying healthy in the heat; Caring for babies and young children in extreme heat; Older children and teenagers: Extreme heat – health advice.

www.cyh.com – search for: Babies in hot weather. This contains excellent information for carers of babies.

www.ses.sa.gov.au – search for: Extreme Heat Plan; Important heat related advice.

Information supplied by Department of Education and Child Development.

Training - a vital part of AFSS activities

Solution Based Casework

AFSS recently hosted 13 staff from AFSS, Centacare and Baptist Care for Solution Based Casework Training for 2.5 days.

It was a really good opportunity for interagency collaboration, and the staff from other organisations showed great interest in learning about what we do and how we can connect our services with theirs in future.

The days together in training were very productive and enjoyable, and we look forward to further ongoing opportunities working across the agencies in 2016.

Seasons for Healing (Community Safety and Wellbeing)

Tania Elliott, AFSS Training Facilitator, spent two days in Nowra NSW, co-facilitating the delivery of Companion Training for Seasons for Healing. Mel Philips who originally wrote the program in 2012 in collaboration with AFSS, the Healing Foundation and Good Grief, invited Tania to join her to deliver this program for 15 staff from a variety of agencies in and around Nowra.

The participants were inspiring in their enthusiasm and commitment to provide grief and loss support to Aboriginal people across NSW through delivering this program.

Next year our Community Safety and Wellbeing staff will be trained as Companions to deliver Seasons for Healing to the community in South Australia.



Images of the Seasons



The River Story

Attention all carers - "SA Shorts" holiday draw

A special thank you to AFSS' dedicated foster carers

To recognise the wonderful work that AFSS foster carers around South Australia undertake in looking after Aboriginal children and young people, AFSS is holding a prize draw for a **\$500 SA Shorts holiday voucher**.

According to Bev Ewen, chairperson of the AFSS Board of Management, "AFSS is proud of our committed foster carers and we are pleased to be able to recognise their hard work by holding this prize draw, which we hope will become an annual event."

The draw will take place at AFSS Head Office on Monday, 25 January 2016, so make sure you read the January-February AFSS Newsletter to see who is the lucky winner.



AFSS Community Safety and Wellbeing Program helps Playford come alive



Pictured, AFSS CSW team members pulled out all the stops to ensure that AFSS was an active participant at Playford Alive. Below, Facilitators Jasila Jehangir and Eliza White smile for the camera.



Playford Alive Family Fun Day attracted a huge crowd on Saturday 21 November. There were concerts, jumping castles, rides for kids, plenty of food stalls (of course!) and community organisations set up ready for the public to indulge in. We decorated our little spot as colourfully as possible with flags and balloons and proudly displayed our array of exciting freebies (light up balls, stress balls, flags, bandanas, hats, pens, temporary tattoos, highlighters and torches) and handed them out to kids, families and fellow stakeholders who were there.

Samantha Jade's appearance engulfed the crowd on a journey of musical adventure. Needless to say, it was well received by the community and most importantly it sent positivity throughout the community.



AFSS Aboriginal Gambling Help Service

AFSS Gambling Help Service recognises the need in the community to support Aboriginal people and their significant others, where gambling has become, or is potentially developing into a problem.

AFSS also recognises that education and awareness are fundamental in supporting Aboriginal people who have gambling problems by:

1. Building resilience
2. Promoting connectedness
3. Awareness and education.

To find out more, why not visit the AFSS website, www.afss.com.au or ring Program Coordinator Tony Lawrence on 8205 1500.



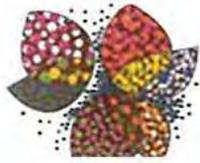
Funded through the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund



ahalsa
Australian Horse Association (SA)



Government of South Australia
Department for Communities and Social Inclusion



For Our Children *Ngaliak Koorlangka*

In this issue we are pleased to share with you more highlights from the presentations given at the SNAICC conference, held in Perth in September

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) - In another exciting initiative, VACCA staff presented on a pilot project where the relevant Victorian child protection agency handed over guardianship of 13 Aboriginal children to the peak Aboriginal child care agency in Victoria (VACCA). Permission was sought from the children's parents as part of the process but essentially, all consents and decisions were transferred to VACCA - as was the decision about whether the child could be reunified with family. While needing to adhere to the legislation, VACCA were able to be more innovative and creative in their approach to achieve some successful outcomes for the children under their guardianship.

Cultural Support Planning for Kids in Care - this session was divided into two presentations. "Cultural Support Planning for our Kids in Care (NSW)" was presented by Michelle Lester (AbSec, NSW) where she explained that the Cultural Care Plan goes through the NSW court system, whereas the Cultural Support Plan is a living document for each child or young person in care and is reviewed every 6-12 months. This is a culturally driven process which is child-centred with a family focussed approach which should also include a clear monitoring and review process.

All Children have the Right to know who they are and where they come from - was presented by Raylene Popovich (Barnardos Australia, NSW) who

highlighted that identifying the "Cultural Caretakers" of each child and young person was the most important part in keeping children and young people culturally connected. She also used the term "Open Adoption" where (if appropriate) the child or young person has an open relationship and ongoing contact with the birth family.

Connecting with Culture through Creativity - this session was also divided into two presentations. Crayons, Calico and Cups of Tea: An Unlikely Friendship, was presented by Verity Roennfeldt and Natasha Orr (Department of Child Protection and Family Support, WA) where they showed the audience several creations that were thought out whilst having cups of tea. Calico and crayons were used to design a cultural connection item where the child's name is in the centre of the object and all family names and

other cultural aspects were listed/painted around the child's name. This could then be made into an age appropriate item such as a cushion, snuggler, turtle or quilt for the child to keep.

The Future of Dance Lies with our Children who will carry it on - was presented by Jo Clancy (Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre, NSW) who founded Wagana Aboriginal Dancers where she works intensively with children and young people. Jo presented a video Keep the Dragonflies Dancing and at the end of the session taught participants the moves of this dance.

Inequalities in the Child Protection System - was also split into two. Is Australia Creating a Second Stolen Generation? was presented by Nick Naughton (Centre of Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, VIC).

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Above: AFSS regional Managers Ray Willis (Port Augusta), Katharine Micka (Ceduna) and Susie Crisa (Coober Pedy) get ready for another interesting lecture.



For Our Children *Ngaliak Koorlangka*

Continued From page 7

Nick outlined some shocking statistics from Victoria: in 2014 a total of 1,300 Aboriginal children and young people were in out of home care. This equates to 1:10 Aboriginal children and young people in out of home care in Victoria. A total of 150 children and young people were in care during the stolen generation. The statistics also showed a decrease of referrals in areas with Aboriginal controlled organisations.

He called for Aboriginal Commissioners and advocates in all States and Territories to act, as well as increasing transparency and accountability of relevant child protection departments across Australia.

Inequality Disguised as Equality - The New Stolen Generation and the Failure to

Protect Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Children (and how Legislation Entraps and Destroys Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Families) was an inspirational presentation by Joe Harman (Federal Circuit Court of Australia, NSW).

Joe questioned why we tolerate the treatment of Aboriginal families in this way and asked who profits from inequality and the silence of the media.

The essence of his presentation reflected the wise words of Albert Einstein – “We can’t solve the problem with the same kind of thinking we used when we created it”.

DRUMBEAT – presented by Grace Trusso, from Holyoake DRUMBEAT program WA, this was delivered in the beautiful summer garden, showcasing two

new interventions. DRUMBEAT uses hand drumming to explore relationship issues that support community connection and healthy lifestyles.

It is used in Aboriginal communities across Australia and First Nations communities in Canada and the USA.

Out of Home Care and Connection to Culture - a number of presentations were delivered including on the factors influencing connection to culture by Aboriginal children in out of home care.

Joseph McDowall from the CREATE foundation discussed the need to ensure children have a cultural support plan. Recent statistics reveal that 65% of children in care were unsure if they have a cultural support

New home for AFSS Coober Pedy

AFSS Coober Pedy has been busy transitioning in the last few years and finally has a permanent home in Aylett Street. The new office is progressing nicely as are all the new staff. The transition is a work in progress and at this stage

we are fully functioning from the new premises. The clients and other agencies have commented that it is a great building and we are certainly looking forward to conducting business here for many years to come. During my

time as AFSS Regional Manager of the Coober Pedy office, I have gained and shared many positive experiences and have thoroughly enjoyed the challenges and learning opportunities in serving our local community to the best of my ability.

AFSS has forged strong working relationships with our clients, partners and community and it is therefore with a great deal of sadness that I will be ending my ties with Coober Pedy and moving on. My role with AFSS will continue in another capacity and I am pleased to join Metro team in the role of Manager of Residential Services.

Susie Crisa, Manager, Coober Pedy



Above: AFSS' new premises at Coober Pedy.

AFSS joins in Anti-Poverty week activities in Ceduna

Centacare held an Anti-Poverty Week event in Ceduna to help highlight and overcome issues of poverty and hardship in the community.

Anti-Poverty Week runs from October 11-17 and the event was held in the Ceduna Sailing Club on Thursday, October 8.

AFSS was pleased to take part in the event, and was one of eight local organisations that distributed information to the community, and arranged a variety of activities throughout the day.

The day was focused on families building relationships and enjoying a relaxing day by the beach.

This event was a funded by several locals businesses, ILUKA and Centacare.

Our aim was to build relationships with other agencies and promote foster care and stronger families programs in the communities.

All who attended enjoyed the day, which included sumo wrestling for the children, a jumping castle, face painting and a free sausage sizzle.



Above: Asha and Levi Ross enjoyed playing on the Jumping Castle and having their face painted by staff from Centacare.

Christmas cooking with the kids

Mini Christmas puddings

Here's an easy recipe without much cooking that even the littlies will be able to help you make. And of course, everyone will love eating the mini Christmas puddings.

Ingredients:

- 100 grams white cooking chocolate or white chocolate buds.
- 12 round chocolate marshmallow biscuits
- 12 glace cherries or raspberry lollies
- Spearmint leaves, cut in half

Method:

Put the white chocolate in a microwave bowl and microwave on "medium" until fully melted. Stir each minute to make sure it doesn't burn.

Put the melted chocolate into a sealable plastic bag. Cut one corner to make a piping bag.

Pipe enough white chocolate onto the top of the chocolate marshmallow biscuits so that it drips down the sides a little.

Put a glace cherry or raspberry lolly on top of the chocolate.

Place a cut-down spearmint leaf either side of the lolly. This finishes off the holly on top of the mini puddings.

Eat the puddings. Enjoy!





tips and info for foster carers

bits 'n pieces is designed with our foster carers in mind!

Here you'll find some useful information and news that will help you in your vital role as a carer. We hope you find it interesting and informative.

Dealing with children's behaviours

Behaviours we see in children are really coping mechanisms that children have developed to manage their emotions and the distress that they feel inside. In this and upcoming issues of the AFSS Newsletter we'll look at some of these behaviours, explain why they are occurring and provide you with tips and information to cope with them. The material is taken from the "Iceberg Model" fact sheets, Families SA.

Playfulness

Play takes many forms but the heart of all play is pleasure. If it isn't fun, it isn't play. We play from birth onwards using our bodies (eg building with blocks) and our minds (eg fantasy play). We use words to play (eg jokes, wit, humour) and we use props (eg blocks, toys, games). Play and playfulness are the most important developmental activities children and young people can experience. Unfortunately, children in care often have significant difficulty experiencing and undertaking spontaneous play with others. For these children play and playfulness is often restricted, sabotaged or fulfilled in unsafe or antisocial ways.

Underneath the surface

Play and playfulness are the building blocks of relationship development and all subsequent childhood developmental tasks. A young infant will smile and a parent will reciprocate the smile, thus telling the infant "you are special ... you matter!". A toddler will play hide and seek with a parent and in doing so, learns

about their body in relation to the physical environment. A young child who engages in rough and tumble play with a parent learns how to develop control over their body and the impact of their physical actions on others. Older children play with their peers and experiment with social roles which contribute to future identity development.

Many children who have experienced trauma struggle with both individual and peer-based play because they have not had these early play experiences or a responsive adult to guide their play activities and share playful moments with them. For these children, play and playfulness often occurred inconsistently, was severely restricted or was inter-mixed with abusive or frightening experiences. In short, the parts of the brain responsible for fun and spontaneous interactions remain under-developed and playful exchanges can be foreign, confusing and anxiety provoking.

As many children who have experienced trauma have high levels of underlying shame, the experience of playful interactions

can be extremely frightening and confusing as it conveys a positive message (eg value and worth) which does not fit with how they see themselves (eg bad and worthless). In response, children with histories of trauma may (1) restrict the type or intensity of play and fun they receive, (2) sabotage fun or playful experiences, (3) engage in forms of play they can control, or (4) restrict themselves to antisocial play which confirms the way they see themselves (eg naughty).

However, children who have experienced trauma require ongoing opportunities to experience playful activities and interactions with adults. Play has a central role in the following:

- Social development; learning how to share and interact with peers, negotiation and taking turn.
- Attachment relationships are developed through responsive and playful interactions; play fosters both belonging and achievement and allows children to be close to an adult without involving close

affection, which increases anxiety.

– Emotional development; play allows children to experience a diversity of emotions and have adults support them to make sense of these. Happiness and fun remain underdeveloped for these children and controlled play allows children to experience these positive effect states while feeling safe and relaxed. In addition, play artificially increases a child's arousal levels, and when this occurs with the support of a safe adult, it provides an opportunity for the child to learn and develop emotional regulation.

– Play is central to the developmental tasks of exploration and curiosity; it relates to children exploring both their outer (physical) and inner (sense of self, identity) worlds.

– Reducing shame and feelings of worthlessness; by increasing positive time spent with caregivers.

– Imagination and creativity; imagination is central for children to explore and create a better future.

– Sense of self; play shared between a child and an adult provides the most powerful non-verbal message to a child that shows that they are valued, and that your relationship with them is unconditional, even when their behaviour has been challenging.

Strategies

- Continued acknowledgement that play and playfulness are fundamental developmental tasks of childhood, adolescence and

even adulthood. All interactions and activities undertaken with children should be grounded in this.

- Utilise playful exchanges and interaction when repairing a relationship with a child, especially after you have had a disagreement or a consequence has been delivered. This is a powerful non-verbal message that your relationship with the child is unconditional.

- Utilise play interactions with children, especially when discussing the really hard topics. This will take the emotional intensity out of the interaction and the child's shame will decrease. This may include gentle teasing (depending on the child), exaggerating your emotions and body language, smiling, telling a joke, sharing a laugh or engaging in unexpected activities. Be extremely careful if using sarcasm (children who have experienced trauma have a tendency to take sarcasm personally).

- Coach children while they are engaged in play. During the playful activity "be the brain" for the child and support them to learn about the emotions they may be experiencing, how to regulate these emotions, and teach them the "rules of the game".

- Restrict the competitiveness of social play. There should always be a focus on the "process" of play (eg enjoyment and fun), as opposed to the "outcome" of play (eg winners and losers). Any form of competitive play should be closely supervised and supported by adults.

- Intervene to ensure safe play. Social conflicts often occur when children try to negotiate. Adults



should help children when they cannot solve these conflicts by themselves.

- Create opportunities for children to engage in playful activities, use their imagination and creativity, and have fun!! Restrict the time spent on passive forms of play like video games, computers and television. Ideas for play include:

- Sport, recreation, rock climbing and camping
- Blowing bubbles with children (depending on their age)
- Playing hid and seek, building a cubby house
- Drawing, arts and crafts.

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We want to hear from you!

Share your news!

If you have any ideas or information that you'd like to share with other carers on these pages, such as things that you've found helpful, special events or activities that have worked well, we'd love to hear from you and publish your story (your identity will be kept confidential).

Simply write to Grace Nelligan, AFSS, 341 Waymouth Street, Adelaide SA 5000 or email grace.nelligan@afss.com.au.

We look forward to hearing from you!



Dealing with children's behaviours

Continued from page 11

- Participate in the fun and playful activities with children. Show children that adults are human and make mistakes, that you enjoy spending time with them and teach them about responsive and positive adult-child relationships.
- Utilise a follow-lead-follow approach when supporting the play. That is, during the play follow the child's lead on the direction of the play activity, then gently guide the play activity and then once again, follow the child's lead.
- Playful interactions and activities should be targeted both at the child's developmental and chronological age. Play should always be matched to the development of the individual –

for instance some children may only be ready to play catch, while other children may be able to cope with rock-climbing.

- Encourage children to engage in pretend and imaginative play. This allows children to practice new roles and assists in their identity development.
- Actively monitor children while they engage in play. Heightened arousal levels, indicated by aggressive, oppositional or controlling behaviour, will require an adult presence, debriefing and temporary removal from the play until a point is reached where the arousal levels are lowered. Always terminate the play activity at the point when it becomes a negative experience for the child(ren).
- Play and playfulness should always be conducted in a

manner that makes the child feel emotionally and physically safe.

- Know the child and their threshold for play. Some children can only cope with short bursts of playfulness that should be gradually built up over time. Some children will sabotage their playful experience either during or after the event. This is a sign that the child is not ready for that level of play intensity.
- Explore the deeper meaning when a child is unable to engage in pro-social play. For instance, does the play overwhelm the child's arousal levels? Does the social play always lead to competition and conflict, which in turn triggers shame for the children?



Strong children strong community

Stand with us – become a carer

Aboriginal Family Support Services is looking for family based carers who are committed to providing safe and culturally appropriate homes for children in need.

You can be single or a couple, with or without children. And whether you're willing to provide emergency, short term, respite or long term care, we'd love to hear from you!

Contact:

Adelaide Judy Spooner judy.spooner@afss.com.au (08) 8205 1500

Ceduna Michelle Naylor michelle.naylor@afss.com.au (08) 8625 3466

Coober Pedy Donna Dixon donna.dixon@afss.com.au (08) 8672 3066

Port Augusta Marie Skipworth marie.skipworth@afss.com.au (08) 8641 0907

Port Lincoln Toni-Lee Miller toni-lee.miller@afss.com.au (08) 8683 1909



Aboriginal Family Support Services Inc
Together with the community

AFSS Community Safety & Wellbeing Team

Circle of Security – Parenting Training

Our Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSW) staff attended Circle of Security Training in Sydney 9 - 12 November. Below they provide their reflections on the training.

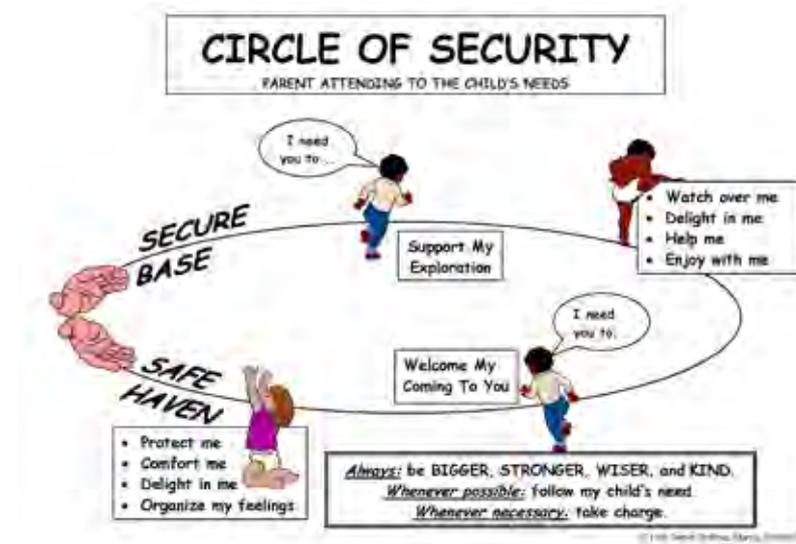
Daniel Martin, Facilitator, Port Lincoln

We have just arrived back from our Circle of Security training in Sydney. This in itself was a big experience for me as I live in the country and have never flown out of SA before.

We were lucky to participate in this training in Sydney for a week and I believe our local communities will benefit from what we have learned from participating in the Circle of Security-Parenting course. The training gave me a different way of looking at things in relation to attachment children have with their parents or care givers. It provided some helpful knowledge we can pass on to them. In doing our training I was able to relate to the information, not so much with my own child with myself and partner, as I don't see attachment issues a problem. However I could certainly see how it works with other children I have cared for or looked after in my times as a worker or through the joys of having a big extended family.

Arnold Bonilla, Facilitator, Adelaide

Having access to the results of years of social science research based on the attachment theory and applied to parenting practices, has been an invaluable experience, especially receiving that information directly from one of the founders who developed the program. The Circle of Security-Parenting training not only provided the



skills and knowledge needed to facilitate the program with families having ruptures in the parenting relationships, it also generated an inspiring environment where facilitators could feel motivated and willing to do as much as possible to improve the quality of life of children and their families. It provides a better understanding and a great variety of tools to drive dialogues and transform realities from the parent's perspectives, who will be able to recognise and be aware of the kind of relations they have been building with their child. Sensitivity, awareness and kinship are the core of this program, and it will be rewarding to be able to see changes in families with whom we will work through the AFSS Community Safety and Wellbeing program.

Jasila Jehangir, Facilitator, Adelaide

Circle of Security-Parenting provided a great insight into how a child's level of security affects their relationship with

their parents. It is really easy to overlook our children's actions and judge them based on their behaviour. COS-P is a good course to help caregivers identify behaviours, not judge, and attend to children's needs whenever required. This course helps caregivers not only to organise their children's feelings but also their own feelings, so as to provide the best support for their kids. The videos were excellent, demonstrating the attachment and security circle and to know what to look for so that we don't miss the needs that are normally overlooked.

I love how the whole workshop is more reflection and discussion and not presentation-based. It allows caregivers to share thoughts, feelings and experiences with others in the group. There were Aboriginal-focused resources available for COS-P facilitators to use with Aboriginal groups and communities.

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AFSS welcomes new staff members to the team



My name is Judy Spooner and I am the new staff member for the Foster Care program working as a foster carer support worker. I worked previously for Centacare for the past nine years and due to the funding being withdrawn from Northern Parent Resource Program in Salisbury I am now blessed to be working with AFSS. I have trained in trauma and how this affects the developing brains of children. I have worked with and supported many parents and children to help them overcome and recover from issues that impact on their behaviour. Recovery takes time but can be achieved with the right support in place. I have facilitated countless groups and really enjoy group work as you can help and support many families at the same time. I am married and have five children; three have left home and two are still a drain on resources! I am also blessed with eight grandchildren from my older three. Family is very important to me. I love watching my two younger children play sport on the weekends. My interests are home decorating, gardening, reading, walking and swimming (in summer).



Hi everyone! My name is Grace Advbal and I am the new case worker for stronger families here in AFSS Coober Pedy. I was born and raised in the Philippines and moved here to Australia in 2007. I have worked with the local Coober Pedy council for the last four years as a program facilitator for the Community Child Links program. I am currently in my final year of studying Bachelor of Behavioural Studies with Swinburne University and I hope to be a clinical psychologist in five years' time. I am very interested and passionate about the mental wellbeing of women and children. I would like to be a part of the movement that would help change the negative stigma that is attached to mental health. I am very grateful to AFSS for giving me this opportunity to help families stay together. Coming from a very close-knit family myself, I understand the importance of having that sense of belonging and having people around you who love and accept you no matter what. I am looking forward to bringing to the SF team the things that I have learned through my studies and also I am excited to learn

more from my experience working with AFSS. Most especially I am looking forward to being a part of an organisation that is involved in making a significant positive difference in Aboriginal people's lives.



My name is Andrea Khan, I am a proud Kuyani, Adnyamathanha of the western and northern Flinders Ranges and third generation Australian born Afghan woman.

I have recently taken on the role of Coordinator, AFSS Cultural Consultancy program.

I am the oldest of three girls, aunty to seven girls and two boys and nanna to 10 grannies with one taking his time to come into the world.

I love my grannies with my every being and enjoy being around them and chatting to them (they are better conversationalists than most adults!).

I love it when my grannies say that they love me 100 and 50 hundred and 25 (random numbers lol) so cute.

I am an avid Adelaide Crows supporter and Glenelg Tigers supporter but am definitely not a Port Adelaide fan!



Hi there, my name is Donna Dixon and I was born in Sydney and moved to Adelaide in 1997. My work there was as a Share Clerk and also spent some time working with the Australian Federal Police. In 2005 I felt I needed a change in my life and started working at Prominent Hill Mine just out of Coober Pedy. While working there I met my partner and moved to Coober Pedy.

I have been in Coober Pedy for the past eight years, three years working with my partner and five years working at the local Post Office. I was involved with AFSS Children's Holiday Program for a short but sweet two weeks.

Although the program was a short one, I really enjoyed the interaction with the local Aboriginal children.

I'm very excited about my position with AFSS as a Foster Carer Support Worker and hope to be a lasting benefit to the Aboriginal Community here in Coober Pedy and Oodnadatta, although I'm sure I will face some challenges.



My name is Gandeeep Gill and I am a Bachelor of Social Work student currently doing my final placement with AFSS Coober Pedy. I am in the last year of university and will finish my degree once I complete the placement. I am currently

assisting with the Family Based Foster Care program working under Susie Crisa, Manager, Coober Pedy.

I am a 25 year old girl who moved to Australia from India in 2009 when I was 18 years old to pursue my higher education. Prior to getting into University, I completed a Diploma in Community Welfare from Adelaide Institute of Management and Technology. I lived in Adelaide for four years and then moved to Coober Pedy in October 2013. I started my career in human services as a Care and Protection Worker with Families SA Far North Services. I have been working in Child protection for two years doing the investigation, assessment, family preservation and guardianship work in Coober Pedy, Oodnadatta and the APY Lands.

Working at AFSS is a great learning curve in my career and has allowed me to come out of my comfort zone with good support. I would like to say a huge thank you to Susie Crisa and Warren Guppy for allowing me to join this amazing organisation for 12 weeks.

Port Lincoln Family Based Care Open Day

On 19 November the Port Lincoln Family Based Care Program had an Open Day. Many carers attended to share their experiences around fostering.

Overall the event was successful, with two potential carers seeking further information. AFSS provided a free raffle for all people attending on the day, with the lucky winner being Jackie Townsend, a current AFSS foster carer, who took home the prize.

Jackie, pictured right with AFSS Port Lincoln Manager Angela Fee, was thrilled to win the raffle, saying it felt like Christmas.



News from Corporate Services

After another successful Audit outcome, our Corporate Services team have a few more things to celebrate.

Firstly, congratulations to Amy Van Buskirk, our Senior Coordinator, Finance & Administration on being granted Australian citizenship. Amy arrived in Australia from South Africa via the UK, where she met and married her Australian husband. Amy has worked with us at AFSS since March 2010 and we are delighted that she is now “one of us”.

To celebrate, AFSS presented Amy with an arrangement of Australian native flowers.



Above: Amy is pictured receiving her Certificate of Citizenship from the Mayor of the City of Mitcham, Mr Glenn Spear.



Above: Corporate Services team members, from left, Lynette Lemm, Amy Van Buskirk, Kim Appelby, Helen Laxton, Terri Ceckic and Lizzie Wright, proudly display their certificates.

About two years ago, we arranged for the staff in Corporate Services to undergo some personal and professional development by undertaking some formal study. It has been many years since most of the team had done any formal study, so it was not without some trepidation, that the team agreed to give it a go and were signed up for a mix of:

- Certificate IV in Business
- Certificate IV in Bookkeeping.

We are thrilled that they all stuck with it and got to the end, with each now having a certificate to hang proudly on their wall. We arranged a celebratory graduation dinner where each was presented with their hard-earned certificate.

Trust Fund grants will assist young people who have been under Guardianship of the Minister

The Dame Roma Mitchell Trust Fund grants open on 9 January 2016 and close 29 Feb 2016.

The grants are available to eligible young people under the age of 30 years who are or have been under guardianship of the Minister in SA, to:

- help them achieve personal goals
- contribute to their health and wellbeing
- provide them with development opportunities.

Eligibility criteria include:

- Applicants who are, or have been, under Guardianship of the Minister for at least one year, or
- Applicants from a remote Aboriginal



community who are/were placed in long-term care of relatives under a family care agreement, financially supported on a regular basis by DECD or a former equivalent, for at least one year.

You may be a carer for a child who could benefit from this opportunity.

If you would like to find out more please visit www.decd.sa.gov.au/drmtrust

AFSS Community Safety & Wellbeing Team

Circle of Security – Parenting Training

Continued from page 13

Those resources provide a culturally oriented approach with connection to country, land and spiritual needs. The AFSS CSW team is very excited to provide COS-P training to the communities!

Donna Carr, Facilitator, Port Lincoln

I was very fortunate to be able to attend the four-day workshop on Circle of Security training in Sydney during November. I have been looking forward to this training for a while now as I have seen first hand how parents/carers and their children can benefit from this.

Previous employment had allowed me to be a participant in a Circle of Security parent group, which I enjoyed. This recent workshop provided a further opportunity to discover the theory behind the program and this allowed me to gain insight into the ways this program can assist parents/carers to support their children to feel more secure and to allow them to reflect on their own experiences. I found the video footage of the clinical work within the circle of security program to be both frightening and inspiring. It was amazing to see and hear of how this program was able to support these parents/caregivers to better acknowledge and identify what their children's needs were and how their children were communicating this to them. Seeing these care givers respond to their children after participating in this program was inspirational. I am looking

forward to presenting this workshop to the Port Lincoln community as I believe that this program will be of great benefit to local parents and caregivers.

Alicia Keilty, Facilitator, Port Augusta

Circle of Security was an interesting way to look at a concept that I have seen many times in my friends' and families' children, but never really considered the logistics and motivations as to why it was occurring.

Circle of Security showed a simple way to look at a child's behaviour on a circle model where the parents are the stronghold, to both protect and nurture their little ones. The sheer volume of attachment shortcomings in many children was astounding to me and there was much supporting evidence provided, which shows the effectiveness of implementing the Circle of Security program with parents who may be struggling with child attachment issues. The program is simple, but informative enough to provide parents with an understanding of their children's behaviours, be they good or bad. I also love the way in which Circle of Security does not place blame on parents; everyone makes mistakes and Circle of Security acknowledges this, as well as that some mistakes are always a reality when parenting. Circle of Security does not say we all have to be perfect, it helps us understand that we just need to be there, know when we have made a mistake and support our

little ones so that they have the courage to explore and take on the world.

Every single child deserves a safe space with supportive parents and the Circle of Security program is a great way to allow parents to understand how to improve their relationships with their children, without bogging them down in psychological theory. Thanks Cooper, Hoffman and Powell for a great intervention program.

Eliza White, Facilitator, Adelaide

The four-day training was facilitated by Bert Powell, one of the founding creators of the CoSP model that has been widely accredited and praised throughout the USA, Australia and other countries. The course is aimed to assist parents with the trials of parenting and to identify and meet their child's emotional needs. The model is broken up into eight "chapters" and the course itself is designed to be held over an eight-week period. Personally, I felt I learnt a great deal from the program as it helped me understand my own child's emotional needs, and how to fill her "emotional cup". This will benefit our own clients in many ways to do with bonding and attachment, and to help them understand and realise the importance of their own child's needs and wants. After talking to and meeting with agencies, the general response is a positive one, and I feel that we will get a great deal of attendance from facilitating this program.





Here is a Christmassy picture for you to colour in!



★ MERRY CHRISTMAS





Which Father Christmas will find his sack?



Answer



Seasons Greetings

w	g	o	n	q	k	f	g	n	i	p	p	o	h	s
h	i	o	v	s	q	a	t	n	a	s	b	s	c	w
a	n	h	k	r	e	b	m	e	c	e	d	n	n	m
p	g	y	a	z	t	r	i	h	c	n	l	o	n	r
l	e	y	j	a	m	a	g	k	n	r	h	i	y	s
n	r	a	o	p	c	i	l	p	a	j	s	t	v	
d	b	y	u	e	e	y	o	v	t	g	t	a	q	c
i	r	r	e	l	u	q	n	u	i	d	n	r	o	l
e	e	v	s	v	d	i	v	s	v	y	e	o	v	a
y	a	t	u	r	k	e	y	d	i	o	s	c	i	u
h	d	y	s	g	t	w	e	h	t	r	e	e	x	s
l	y	z	c	c	t	t	q	o	y	w	r	d	e	e
s	r	r	u	d	o	l	p	h	a	v	p	a	n	w
n	j	i	n	g	l	e		b	e	l	l	s	z	u
r	o	h	o	h	o	h	n	b	q	g	i	j	c	m



See if you can find all the words in the Christmas Word Find. Words can go in any direction.

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	u	o	u	o	u	o	-	-
-	-	s	l	l	e	q	e	l	g	u	!	!	-	-
-	u	d	-	-	h	d	l	o	p	n	r	-	-	-
-	e	p	r	-	y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
s	x	e	e	-	t	-	-	-	-	-	-	p	-	-
n	u	i	c	s	-	!	-	y	e	k	r	u	a	t
a	v	a	o	e	-	v	-	-	-	-	s	e	-	-
l	r	u	r	-	!	-	-	-	-	l	-	r	-	-
c	-	a	-	t	-	-	-	e	-	-	-	h	-	-
-	-	t	s	t	-	a	-	!	-	-	-	r	-	-
s	-	!	-	-	u	g	-	-	-	-	-	e	-	-
r	o	-	-	-	h	e	-	-	-	-	-	g	-	-
m	-	u	d	e	c	e	b	m	e	r	-	-	u	-
-	-	s	-	s	a	s	a	t	a	t	-	-	!	-
s	h	o	p	d	p	u	g	-	-	-	-	g	-	-

december	gingerbread	decorations
turkey	sleigh	nativity
shopping	rudolph	santa
jingle bells	mrs claus	vixen
presents	hohoho	

Seasons Greetings Answer Key:





Where to find us

Adelaide

134 Waymouth Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone (08) 8205 1500

Berri

23 Denny Street
Berri SA 5343
Phone (08) 8582 3192

Smithfield

39a Anderson Walk,
Smithfield SA 5114
Phone (08) 8254 1077

Ceduna

28 Poynton Street
Ceduna SA 5690
Phone: (08) 8625 3466

Coober Pedy

Lot 1991 Aylett Street
Coober Pedy SA 5723
Phone (08) 8672 3066

Murray Bridge

C/- ALRM Inc
27 Beatty Terrace
Murray Bridge SA 5254
Phone 0418 499 649

Port Augusta

1st Floor
47 Commercial Road
Port Augusta SA 5700
Phone (08) 8641 0907

Port Lincoln

3 Gloucester Terrace
Port Lincoln SA 5606
Phone (08) 8683 1909



Visit the AFSS
website
www.afss.com.au

Winangay in SA – AFSS leads the way!

AFSS recently hosted the Winangay Team at a three-day workshop convened at AFSS Head Office in Adelaide. Based in NSW the Winangay Team (Aunty Sue Blacklock and Paula Hayden) delivered their Aboriginal Foster Care Assessment Training in Adelaide. It is the first time the training has been delivered in South Australia. Participants included AFSS and Families SA staff as well as representatives from Anglicare, a.c.care, Centacare and Lutheran Community Care.

While South Australia's Out of Home Care sector is required to use the Step by Step Foster Carer Training Assessment tool, AFSS was



Above: Debra Axleby, FSA; Aunty Sue Blacklock, Winangay Resources; and Kathy Rigney, FSA.

keen to participate in this Aboriginal specific assessment tool. The tool reflects a more appropriate way of working with Aboriginal people who want to become foster carers, while also maintaining a very rigorous and transparent process throughout the assessment.

The Winangay Aboriginal Foster Carer Assessment Tool is culturally strong and robust generating evidence from a range of sources, and; is competency based; child centred; trauma informed; collaborative in design and in the process; empowering and enabling. focuses on



Above: Merike Mannik, Supervisor Carer Registration, FSA; and Aunty Sue Blacklock, Winangay Resources, NSW.

existing skills and strengths and is orientated to the learning and development needs of perspective carers; identifies areas of concern or challenges and provides opportunities for the carers and workers to identify strategies to meet those concerns and challenges; is user friendly for prospective carers and assessors; reflects best practice in the development of assessment tools.

Similar to Step by Step, there are four key assessment competencies:

1. Environment and Meeting Needs
2. Staying Strong as a Carer
3. Growing Kids Strong
4. Safety and working well with others.

The key difference of the Winangay model is that it actively engages potential carers in a two-way process throughout all stages of the assessment.

AFSS is keen to trial the Winangay Assessment Tool with six to eight prospective carer households in a partnership with Families SA's Carer Assessment and Registration Unit (CARU). AFSS will continue to liaise with Families SA about a trial use of the Winangay Aboriginal Foster Carer Assessment tool in South Australia.