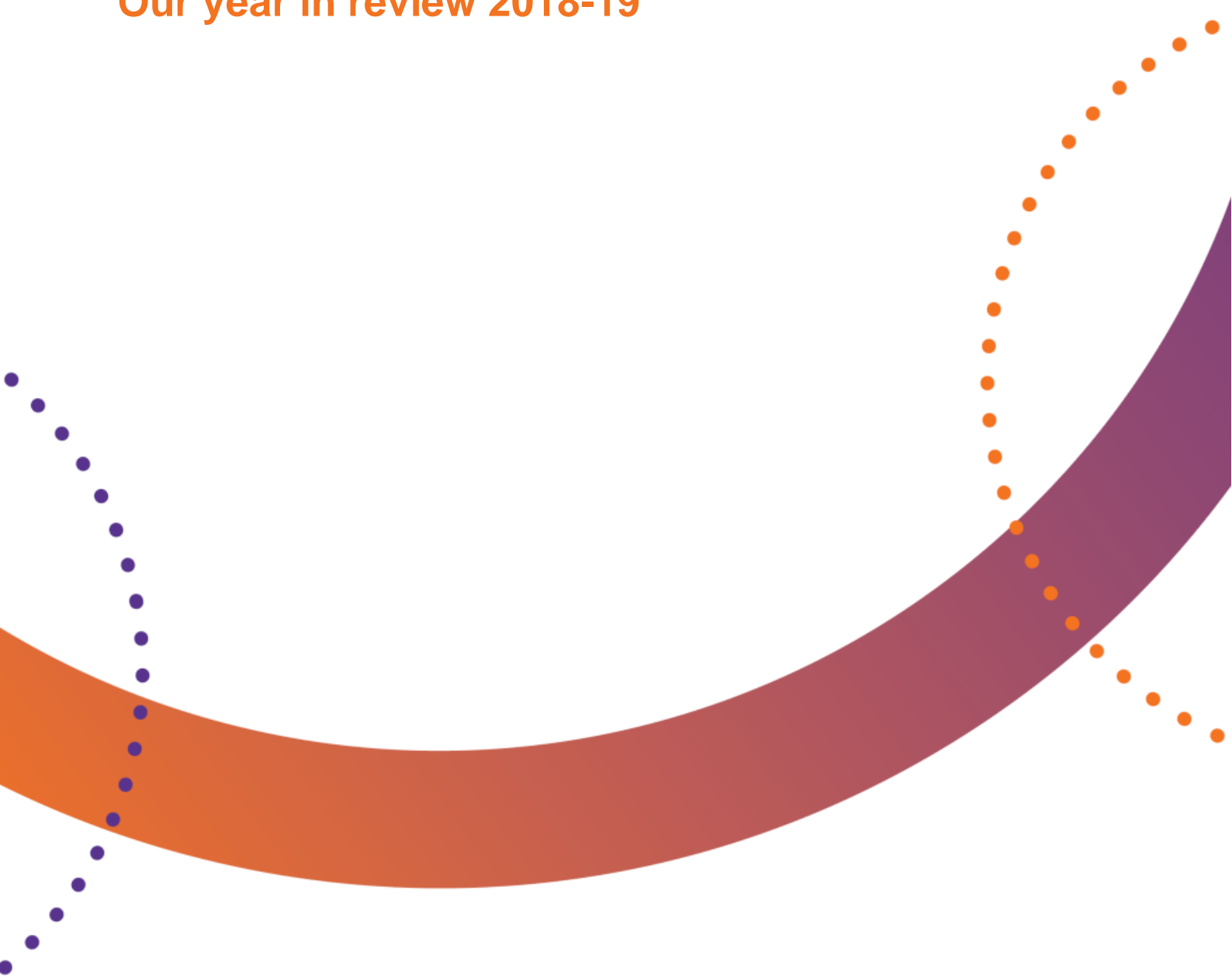


Parenting in frame

Our year in review 2018-19



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Introduction

The Parenting Research Centre recognises that supporting parents is one of the most effective ways to help children thrive. We are driven by research evidence, filling knowledge gaps and designing new ways of working to help families.

By taking a collaborative, partner-focused approach to change, we help others to use the latest scientific evidence on parenting in their work with parents, carers and families.

In 2018–19, we supported governments and community agencies from around Australia and beyond to design and deliver programs that put the best research evidence on parenting support into action.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF 2018–19

Advocating for effective parenting support	We made significant steps forward in helping to re-shape the way the child and family services sector communicates about parenting through the national Reframing Parenting project. We shared insights and practical tools with key communications and opinion leaders at two summits, and worked with our partners to disseminate and begin implementing the new approach across the sector.
Driving innovation in parenting support	<p>Drawing on a decade of collaborative work, we launched PracticeWorks, which gives child and family services a practical way forward to achieve evidence-based practice. More than 200 stakeholders attended our Practice Reimagined events to learn about the approach, which involves working closely with agencies to co-design customised practice frameworks that form the ‘scaffolding’ practitioners need to support their clients in making change.</p> <p>We continued our work to make the internationally-recognised SafeCare program available to families experiencing vulnerability. We now support eight agencies and a growing number of providers to deliver the program that has been shown to significantly reduce recurrence of child abuse and neglect.</p> <p>As part of our ongoing partnership with Emerging Minds – a national initiative to improve the mental health of children – we supported a new project to identify initiatives that are likely to have the biggest impact on improving child mental health.</p>
Advancing evidence-based policy, services and systems	<p>We contributed to policy discussion by giving evidence to the Federal Government’s Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness about the need for greater awareness and support for parents grappling with sleep issues.</p> <p>We advised the Victorian Government on the design of the State’s first baby bundle – a package of practical products and important information on child health and development, to be distributed to parents welcoming their first baby.</p>
Increasing reach and impact of evidence-based parenting support	We played a key role in assisting the Australian Government Department of Social Services to raise awareness about the importance of the first 1000 days of life, from conception to two years, by developing a new ‘First 1000 Days’ section on the raisingchildren.net.au website.

How we support change

We firmly believe that the way in which we work is as important as the type of work that we do. That is why we take a collaborative, partner-focused approach to change in all our work, helping others to gain knowledge, look at things differently and improve outcomes for children.

Our co-design approach enables our partner organisations to build their own capacity, as well as the capacity of others, to deliver effective parenting support.

By combining our unique skills and expertise with the insights and capabilities of our partners, we can be agile in responding to their needs and providing timely advice backed by rigorous research.

This combination of skills is outlined in the diagram below.

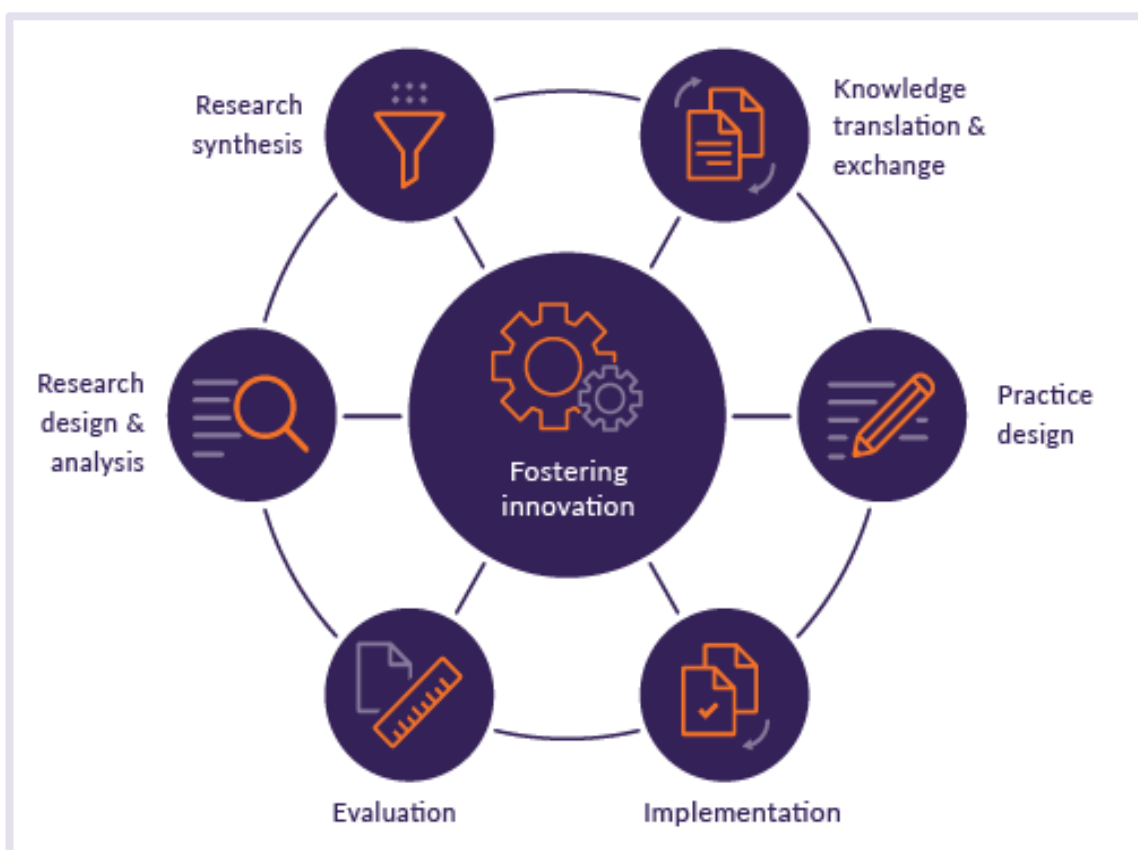


Figure 1. The Parenting Research Centre's areas of practice

Planning for the future

We are continuing to focus on implementing our 2018–23 Strategic Plan, which guides our direction over the five-year period.

Our Strategic Plan will ensure that we remain a strong, viable organisation with the necessary skillset to achieve our mission of helping children and families thrive by driving improved ways of supporting parenting.

The 2018–23 Strategic Plan outlines five key goals:

- 1 Advocate for effective parenting support
- 2 Be a leader in advancing evidence-based policy, services and systems related to parenting support
- 3 Drive innovation in parenting support
- 4 Increase reach and impact of evidence-based parenting support
- 5 Build a thriving organisation.

Our Theory of Change (see figure below) shows the way in which we help to drive evidence-informed policy and practice.

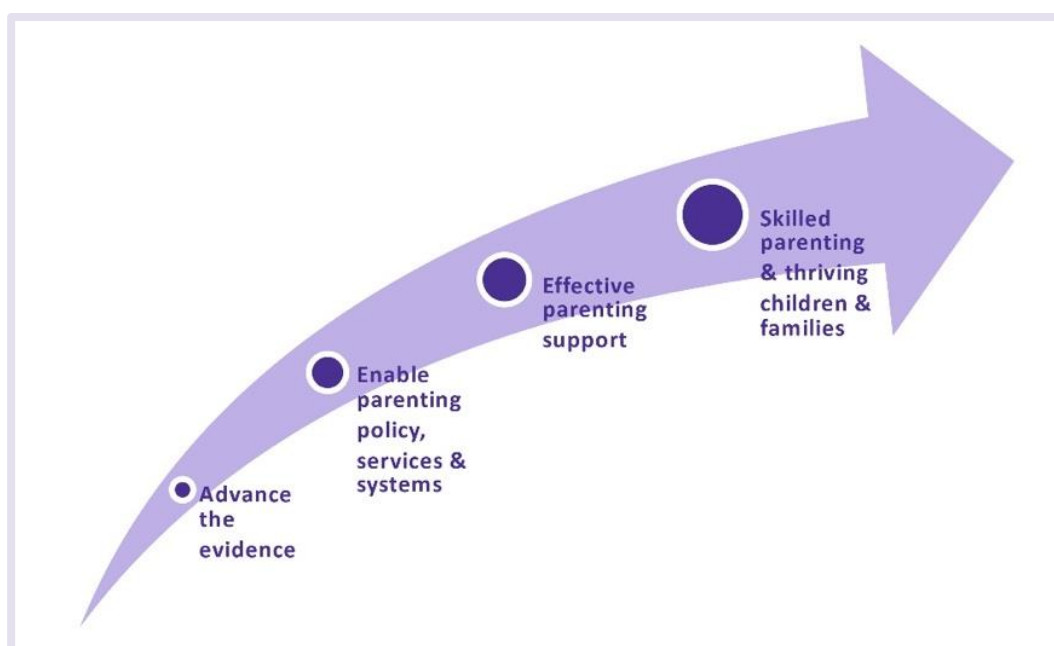


Figure 2. The Parenting Research Centre Theory of Change

2018–19 OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

In line with the Strategic Plan, a major operational development this financial year has been the maturing and improving of our project and business management systems.

This includes the introduction of a new portfolio management approach that is designed to clarify roles and accountability, and to assist the Executive in adopting strategic overview of a diverse range of projects.

Our client satisfaction has been extremely strong in this period, with 100% of clients rating the quality of our work as good or very good and reporting that they were satisfied or very satisfied with our work.

Increased reach and impact of evidence-based parenting support

Providing practical support to help families is a key element of our work. In 2018–19 we used both traditional methods and a range of digital technologies to connect with parents and carers and provide them with practical information and resources about parenting. We achieved increased reach and impact of evidence-based parenting support across all our major projects.

RAISING CHILDREN NETWORK

The Raising Children Network is a leading Australian portal that provides trusted, evidence-based information and resources to parents and families.

We produce and develop the raisingchildren.net.au website in collaboration with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, and it is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

The website provides free, accessible information about parenting issues ranging from pregnancy through to adolescence.

During 2018-2019, raisingchildren.net.au offered parents and professionals a vastly improved user experience. A major project involving the engagement of a new technical and hosting partner for the website enabled us to make significant improvements in how quickly web pages load and server response time, which has given parents seeking information on the website a more reliable browsing experience.

A fresh new responsive design took a 'mobile-first' approach, so that information is delivered seamlessly to parents wherever and whenever they need it most. This has provided a solid foundation for future growth of the platform.

We continued to reach tens of thousands of parents each day through the raisingchildren.net.au website. There were significant increases in the number of users accessing the website and its associated [Twitter](#) feed and [Facebook](#) page in 2018–19, with the platforms proving a valuable resource for the community.

In 2018-19:

- **56,335** people accessed the website each day – compared with 42,085 in the previous financial year, with 83% of visitors coming to the website via a mobile device
- **31.5 million page views** – almost a 30% increase on 2017–18
- **6475** Twitter followers – a 6% growth
- More than **221,000** people followed the raisingchildren.net.au Facebook page by June 2019 – a 10.4% increase on the previous financial year
- Almost **35,000** users subscribed to the range of raisingchildren.net.au email newsletters

Developing and enriching content

First 1000 Days

The period of development from conception to two years has become known as the 'First 1000 days' and is recognised as key to lifelong health and wellbeing. The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children is a major Australian Government Department of Social Services initiative that focuses on this critical window.

- We played a key role in assisting the Government to reach parents and the broader community with information about the importance of this period via a new [First 1000 Days webpage](#) on raisingchildren.net.au
- We curated our content on early development to help parents and carers understand how experiences in the earliest stages of life shape children's development and wellbeing. The portal brings together resources on child development, self-care for parents during and after pregnancy, and useful information on how to connect to support around Australia.

Focus on mental health

The importance of children's and parents' mental health is increasingly recognised, and becoming a significant topic of public conversation. In response to this changing landscape, raisingchildren.net.au launched an easy-access A–Z toolkit on child, teenage and parent mental health and wellbeing, aimed at professionals who work with families.

- The toolkit was designed in collaboration with subject matter experts and brings together around 200 mental health related articles, videos and guides to make it easier for practitioners to connect parents with trusted mental health resources.
- Professionals can access free information on a diverse range of topics, including depression, risky behaviour, abuse, anger management, bullying and sleep through [raisingchildren.net.au/mentalhealth](#)

Community engagement

- **Activity guides:** We launched a new section called 'Activity guides: 0-6 years' comprising 31 fun, low-cost activities that parents and carers can do with their children to promote development, learning and connection.
- **Better Start and autism:** We completed an audit of our disability-related content to assist parents' understanding of NDIA processes and ensure compliance with the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- **Digital life and screen time resources:** A comprehensive new set of resources was developed for parents looking for tips and tools on positive use of digital technology and managing their children's screen time.

Languages Other Than English resources

The raisingchildren.net.au collection of 450 parenting resources in more than 20 languages other than English was redesigned this year, to enable simplified access via one source.

- Practitioners working with families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can use the new portal as an easy-access referral tool.
- With 21% of Australians speaking a language other than English, the redesigned page also gives parents easier access to multilingual resources including articles, videos and picture guides.

Sharing content

We have continued to innovate the way we reach out to families, through an ongoing partnership with Storypark, a cloud-based secure platform where childcare educators and families can share photos, videos, observations and learning.

- Content from raisingchildren.net.au can be accessed via the Storypark app, which is embedded in 4000 early childhood centres in Australia and reaches the parents of 280,000 children.
- Raising Children Network has continued its partnership with Singapore's Ministry of Social and Family Development to put evidence-based parenting resources into the hands of Singaporean families.
- Through a licensing partnership with Tonic Health Media, around 180 Raising Children Network videos are broadcast on Tonic Health TV. This service is available in more than 5300 GP, pharmacy and hospital waiting areas around Australia, reaching a potential audience of 16 million people per month.

MYTIME

MyTime is a national peer support program for parents of children with developmental delay, disability and chronic medical conditions. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, our role is to coordinate this national program so it can be delivered by community partners.

There are more than 200 MyTime groups across Australia, delivered by 12 state-based disability and family support partner agencies. Ongoing evaluation of the program indicates extremely high member satisfaction. A snapshot of MyTime's growth in 2018-19 showed that:

- The program's [Facebook](#) page attracted **410 new likes**
- There were more than **1100 enquiries** received through the MyTime website
- More than **3500 members** attended 5324 MyTime sessions across every state and territory
- Average attendance at each session was six members, and four children
- 49% of members lived in major cities, 23% in inner regional areas, 12% in outer regional areas and 5% in remote and very remote Australia
- Nine out of 10 MyTime members were women.

MyTime pilot programs

In April 2019, MyTime invited partner agencies to apply for innovation funding for a number of pilot programs that aim to overcome barriers to parents accessing the program, and which have the potential to take the program into the future. Pilot projects now underway include:

- **MyTime online:** Trials of three online pilots – involving WA, NSW and Tasmania – are underway, to deliver MyTime through a range of online technologies. The projects aim to open access to the program to more families, regardless of where they live or their circumstances.
- **Reaching diverse communities:** A Melbourne-based project is exploring the use of a bicultural worker to broaden access to MyTime to parents and carers who do not speak English, or for whom English is a second language
- **A culturally-safe yarning garden:** The Yarning Garden, a unique community garden space, is being developed to deliver MyTime to Aboriginal families in two South Australian communities in a culturally safe and sensitive way.

PARENTINGNOW

Our ParentingNow project, supported by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, delivers webinars about important parenting issues that are broadcast live through a web-based platform. Parents can access and interact with the webinars online, via computer or mobile devices.

In 2018–19:

- We continued to deliver two main types of webinars: stand-alone webinars that provide a one-off session on a topic; and multi-session webinars or courses covering a single topic, such as a series of four one-hour webinars on 'anxiety in your family'.
- ParentingNow delivered **14** webinars to **1625** attendees, with the recordings of these events being viewed **3955** times.

ParentingNow aims to straddle the gap between traditional, face-to-face parenting support programs, which are hard for some parents to access, and traditional online supports, which are non-interactive.

Each session is presented by an expert presenter who has specialist knowledge and experience in the webinar's topic of interest, supported by a facilitator to manage the interactive chatroom that runs in parallel to the live session.

The webinars received consistently positive feedback from participants, and the ParentingNow team continued to refine and test the platform's technological features.

Driving innovation in parenting support

The launch of our PracticeWorks model, offering a new perspective on how to embed evidence-informed practice in child and family services, was a highlight of 2018–19.

Drawing on a decade of collaborative work, PracticeWorks is proving a game changer in child and family services. It involves supporting commissioning departments, agencies and services to develop new models of working, based on what we know from evidence.

PRACTICEWORKS: MAKING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE A REALITY

Practice Reimagined breakfast events in Melbourne and Sydney in June 2019 attracted nearly 200 stakeholders from policy and practice in the health, education and child and family services sectors.

At the events, CEO Warren Cann outlined the key challenges faced by services in achieving evidence-based practice. Director of Policy and Practice Annette Michaux explained how the PracticeWorks model enables a tailored approach, using data-informed decision making to develop and implement programs that best support parenting.

The attendees heard how the approach was helping partner agencies to work more sustainably by using goal-oriented, coaching approaches to building parents' capacity. Leading thinkers from policy, practice and academia also joined our executives on stage at each event to further the discussion.

A number of projects and organisations drew on our PracticeWorks model in 2018-19, including:

- **Key Assets:** We applied the PracticeWorks model to help agency staff reform the way they deliver foster care, family preservation and restoration services. We provided implementation support to Key Assets through advice, guidance on data reporting and interpretation. We also undertook training and coaching of staff, including family preservation staff in Hobart, restoration service staff in Sydney and fostering service staff across WA, NSW and New Zealand. Our implementation support to these services was completed this year.
- **Wesley Mission, NSW:** We worked with Wesley Mission to redesign practice in its Brighter Futures program, which focuses on building the resilience of families with children at risk of entering the child protection system. The co-designed practice framework helps staff improve case management and parenting support and was implemented across three Brighter Future sites in Western Sydney in 2017–18, and a program of training and coaching work with staff was finalised in late 2018.
- **SDN Children's Services:** We worked with SDN throughout the year to co-design a practice framework for the Brighter Futures program, which delivers targeted early intervention services to families of children at risk of entering the child protection system. Work included holding an outcomes-mapping workshop and developing an 'outcomes chain'. We collaborated with SDN managers and practitioners on a series of design team meetings to consider key elements for the practice framework, and tested elements of the framework with practitioners. This implementation support was completed in October 2019.
- **The Smith Family:** After completing a co-designed practice framework last year to guide how support is provided to families in the Learning for Life program, we trained program staff from 14 trial sites across Australia and completed individual and group coaching to team leaders. We also supported The Smith Family to develop and implement a family feedback measure, which provides feedback to the practitioner on families' perceptions of their work together. We have continued to provide strong implementation support through regular implementation team meetings, and advice on data collection and reporting. This implementation support was completed in October 2019.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

We help governments and organisations to install evidence-based programs, services or ways of working in a way that makes them 'stick'.

SafeCare

We continued our work to make the internationally-recognised SafeCare program available to families in Australia. The evidence-based parenting program was developed by the National SafeCare Training and Research Centre, Georgia State University, US, and has been shown to significantly reduce recurrence of child abuse and neglect.

We worked with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to trial the program at 14 sites across NSW that are part of the NSW Government's Brighter Futures Initiative.

We are providing coaching support for the trial, and in 2018-19 we conducted one round of SafeCare training for providers as well as one round of coach training.

By the end of June 2019:

- 79 families had completed the program since October 2017
- 50 families were participating in the program
- There were 35 certified practitioners delivering SafeCare across NSW and 32 practitioners working towards becoming certified SafeCare providers
- The agencies we support to deliver the program were expanded to a total of eight, representing the largest systematic implementation of SafeCare outside the United States.

smalltalk supported playgroups

We continued to scale-up the *smalltalk* program, which supports parents who are experiencing disadvantage to enhance the home learning environment for their young children.

In 2018–19, there were 81 provider agencies funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services to deliver *smalltalk* in 79 local government areas across the state.

We delivered the following training events across Victoria:

- three facilitator training workshops with more than 80 participants
- a manager's information session with more than 40 participants
- 30 Community of Practice events, which were open to all trained facilitators, including at the DHHS-funded statewide playgroup conference in March 2019.

We also continued to train and provide support to range of supported playgroup providers in SA, NSW and Queensland.

Internationally, we are working with the Singapore Government's Early Childhood Development Agency to embed and deliver *smalltalk* enhanced supported playgroups to vulnerable and disadvantaged families across the country.

In 2018–19, *smalltalk* projects included:

- ***smalltalk* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families:** We partnered with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) to reproduce *smalltalk* materials (e.g. conversation cards and video demonstrations clips) depicting Aboriginal families and with a strong Aboriginal design motif.
- **Boosting child language and speech development:** The *smalltalk* language enhancement project is a core component of the Victorian Government's Latrobe Valley Early Parenting Initiative (LVEPI). The initiative is designed to address data showing that children in the region experience greater vulnerability and disadvantage than in other parts of the state and are at higher risk of developmental problems. Our work on the project involved reviewing *smalltalk* resources and updating the evidence-base for attention to children's language development. We created new content and adaptations, including a new interactive online module for facilitator training. We conducted a one-day facilitator training event in the Latrobe Valley and incorporated a language enhancement session in a Community of Practice meeting in the Latrobe Valley. This was followed up with a survey on language enhancement implementation by facilitators. We also provided six recommendations to government about implementation of *smalltalk* enhancements. The project will place a stronger emphasis on children's language and communication in the delivery of *smalltalk* in supported playgroups and home visits and to enable families to access more targeted resources on child language and speech development.
- **Adapting the program to the family support service model:** As part of the Victorian Government's Latrobe Valley Early Parenting Initiative (LVEPI), we also collaborated with a local family services agency (Uniting) to adapt *smalltalk* for Integrated Family Service (IFS) practitioners to use when conducting home visits for families who need more intensive intervention. We trained 22 IFS staff from eight agencies in two, one-day workshop and also offered six post-training support (coaching) sessions for all trainees.

SUPPORTING EDUCATOR-PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

In 2018, we began to trial a new practice support system called Partnering with Parents in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services across Australia.

- The support system is designed to guide ECEC educators through practical strategies for working collaboratively with parents.
- We consulted with early childhood professionals and centres to develop the multi-year initiative, which is supported by the Victorian Government.
- It embeds evidence-based approaches to working in partnership with parents in ECEC services and aims to create an environment that is welcoming and responsive to parents.

A field test of the resources was conducted, which involved educators and parents from Gowrie Victoria (Broadmeadows Valley and Carlton North), Acacia Children's Services (St Albans and Richmond) and Acacia Fitzroy Creche. The system was widely accepted by educators, who, along with parents, gave critical feedback that enabled us to further refine the online education system.

We are now conducting a Cluster Randomised Control Trial of Partnering with Parents involving 19 early childhood services across Victoria, with 118 educators and 302 parents consenting to take part.

SUPPORTING CHILD MENTAL HEALTH

Emerging Minds

We continued to contribute to a wide range of projects as part of our involvement as a key consortium member for Emerging Minds: National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health. Emerging Minds assists professionals and organisations working with children and families to have the skills to identify, assess and support children at risk of mental health conditions.

This year we made particular progress in the areas of evaluation, resource development and implementation support. Our evaluation collaboration with Emerging Minds and the Australian Institute of Family Studies continues to provide valuable feedback and data on the success of Emerging Minds' resources and strategies, as well as insight into what can be improved.

We also continue to provide implementation support to Emerging Minds' Child Mental Health consultants and contribute to implementation considerations for existing resources, as well as the development of future resources.

During the year, our work on Emerging Minds included:

- completion of scoping, research and development on an e-learning course for practitioners in the alcohol and other drugs sector
- development of two new practice tools
- completion of 10 evidence reviews and briefs on child and adolescent mental health (see page 20)
- a needs analyses on how maternal and child health services and allied health professionals identify and respond to child mental health difficulties
- developed a practice guide titled *Supporting parents of pre-teen children with mild-moderate anxiety*

The Emerging Minds project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, and other partners include Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian National University and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

Beyond Blue

This year we were also commissioned by Beyond Blue to conduct a review of evidence on how schools can best respond to critical incidents, and to update our review of evidence-based approaches in out-of-home care.

Working with Our Place

The Our Place Project is a new and expanding initiative that builds on successful work at Doveton College in Victoria, and aims to create schools that have the skills, resources and partnerships they need to make a difference in the lives of children and their families. The approach focuses on opening up local schools to the community, building a 'single entry' into early learning, school, adult learning and community spaces.

In 2018–19, we were engaged to assist Our Place in translating key elements of the approach – creating an accessible 'elements guide' that would be useful to Our Place facilitators and stakeholders.

We also collaborated closely with the Our Place team to refine a 'theory of change', capturing and linking key outcomes of the approach. This work will help inform how Our Place team members and stakeholders understand and deliver the approach in the future.

Advancing evidence-based policy, services and systems

We aim to drive the use of research evidence to ensure that both parenting policy and practice is based on what really works. Acting as an intermediary, we work closely with policy makers, organisational leaders and practitioners to help them apply the evidence in a way that meets their needs, addresses their challenges and is best suited to their local context.

BUILDING CAPACITY

A key part of our work is to support agencies to build internal capacity to use evidence, and to develop systems that will ensure continuous quality improvement and sustainability. During 2018–19, we helped the following agencies build their capacity to deliver evidence-based programs and services in family and childhood services.

Windemere Child and Family Services

We continued our partnership with Victorian-based agency Windemere Child and Family Services, working with them on several projects.

- We delivered a series of professional development/education workshops for the Communities for Children (CfC) Cranbourne community partners and Windemere staff. This included five workshops: Program Logics; Program Evaluation; Writing for Publication; Capturing Children's Voices; and Coaching and Coachable Moments.
- We also supported the Cranbourne Library to collect and document the evidence needed to successfully achieve promising practice status for their Library has Legs program.

NDIS Learning and Development Project

An innovative project involving the development of a new professional e-learning package in Victoria to help build capacity of child and families system workers around the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was rolled out statewide in Victoria this year.

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services commissioned us to develop the package, which aims to help workers identify and support families with a disability to access and navigate the services and supports they need as part of the NDIS.

Four interactive e-learning modules and resources were developed in collaboration with the Department and workforce, and were rolled out statewide by early 2019. These included:

- An understanding of disability
- An understanding of the NDIS
- Working with eligible families
- Collaborating with families and the NDIS.

We also hosted eight workshops across Victoria to introduce child and family system leaders to the learning package.

Quality Assurance Framework for children in out-of-home care

We continued our work with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to trial a Quality Assurance framework to give caseworkers access to reliable data in real-time about the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children in out-of-home care.

- We concluded our implementation support for the project at the end of 2018 and were subsequently asked by the Department to support leadership at three agencies as they continue to implement the framework.
- From June 2019, we began supporting the expansion of the Quality Assurance Framework at three sites with agencies that are currently involved, and supported leadership at one agency to develop a plan to sustain the use of the Quality Assurance Framework.

POLICY AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Intensive Family Support (IFS) Services Queensland

We joined with the University of Queensland to evaluate the Queensland Government's Intensive Family Support (IFS) Service. The service was launched in 2015 to improve safety for children and families by providing intensive and extended support and building parents' skills and capacity.

The extensive, mixed-methods evaluation looked at outcomes as well as how the service was implemented across 22 Queensland locations.

- The findings were strongly positive, showing that the service was addressing an important gap in the Queensland service system and that areas of improvement covered life skills, resilience and child safety in the vast majority of families involved.
- We presented the IFS evaluation findings at a symposium with government representatives and service providers at the Child Aware Conference in Brisbane in May 2019.
- The Government also asked us to investigate an additional aspect of the reforms in that state – we conducted an assessment of the Local Level Alliances across Queensland and presented findings and implications from our evaluation at a forum of professionals in May 2019.

LINKS Trauma Healing Service evaluation

We are leading the evaluation of a service designed to reduce the effects of trauma related to child abuse or neglect for children who are now living in out-of-home care.

- In partnership with the Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre of Australia and Deakin Health Economics at Deakin University, we are conducting a mixed-method process, outcomes and economic evaluation of the LINKS Trauma Healing Service in NSW, which is part of the NSW Government's Their Futures Matter reform to services for vulnerable children and young people in that state.
- This year, we submitted the first of three reports from the evaluation, which showed promising findings about implementation of the four evidence-based programs within the LINKS service. The report was used by the Government and the service provider to make data-informed adjustments to the delivery of the LINKS services.

ADVOCATING FOR EFFECTIVE PARENTING SUPPORT

Reframing Parenting

Our work in helping to re-shape the way the sector communicates about parenting support made significant steps forward during the year. The Reframing Parenting project is an important national effort to help people talk and think in more productive ways about parenting.

This year, we continued to partner with organisations that work with children and families across Australia to support them implement the new way of communicating about parenting.

- In August 2018, we held Reframing Parenting summits in Sydney and Melbourne for key communications and opinion leaders in the sector. At the events, the FrameWorks Institute shared insights from the research and we also shared practical hands-on tools to support participants in driving change.
- Following the summits, we received funding from the Australian Government's Department of Social Services to continue our work with other organisations to implement the research findings throughout 2019–2020.

Reframing Parenting is based on research involving more than 7600 Australians and was conducted by the FrameWorks Institute, a US non-profit organisation specialising in communications research on important social issues. This research informed our development of communication materials aimed at guiding a new 'master narrative' that involves talking about parenting in terms of child development, rather than in terms of parents being effective.

The research project was funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services, the Department of Education and Training Victoria, the NSW Government's Department of Family and Community Services and The Benevolent Society.

Stakeholder events

We connected with our stakeholders in many ways throughout the year, including events that shared new insights and helped to drive new thinking about parenting.

Major events included:

- **August 2018:** Reframing Parenting Summits in Sydney and Melbourne, led by Associate Professor Julie Green with key speaker, Frameworks CEO Nat Kendall-Taylor.
- **June 2019:** Our two Practice Reimagined events in Sydney and Melbourne, led by Associate Professor Julie Green, Warren Cann and Annette Michaux, attracted a high level of interest, with more than 200 stakeholders taking part.

Submissions

We shared our expertise on parenting with policy makers through submissions to two government inquiries this year.

- We lodged a submission to the Australian Government Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness, illustrating that child sleep problems are extremely common in Australia. Following the submission, Derek McCormack and Associate Professor Julie Green were invited to attend an Inquiry hearing in February 2019 to give evidence on the links between sleep awareness, good sleep health and hygiene, and overall wellbeing and positive family functioning. They highlighted the huge demand for online information about parent's sleep.
- We also lodged a submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, highlighting findings from the Parenting Today in Victoria Survey that are relevant to parental mental health.

Contributing to policy

Our expertise and research also contributed to informing a wide range of policies and initiatives around parenting including:

- The Victorian Minister for Early Education used Parenting Today in Victoria findings to help justify investment in further efforts to engage fathers in first time parent groups and to provide new supports to assist parents in managing children's sleep.
- The NSW Committee on Community Services picked up on our recommendations around the importance of online parenting support for new parents in their report to the NSW Parliament. We advocated for the importance of parenting in the development of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020.
- We advised the Victorian Government on the design of the State's first baby bundle. The bundles are distributed to parents welcoming their first baby and contain practical products and important information for parents, including a booklet developed in collaboration with raisingchildren.net.au, that provides vital information on child health, safety and learning and emergency contacts.
- We advised the Victorian Government on the development of the National Digital Child Health Record.

Thought-leadership

We also helped to promote national conversations about important parenting issues, through the publication of opinion articles written by Parenting Research Centre experts in influential media outlets, which are read by policy makers and thought-leaders. These included:

- August 2018: *The Conversation*. "[Children's well-being goes hand in hand with their dad's mental health](#)", authored by Dr Catherine Wade and Associate Professor Julie Green, looking at the importance of a father's mental health to their child's development.
- April 2019: *The Mandarin*. "[When it comes to mental health, what's good for parents is good for children](#)" authored by Dr Catherine Wade, calling for a national conversation around the link between parents' mental health and the mental health of their children.
- May 2019: *The Mandarin*. "[Protecting vulnerable children: what policy lessons can public health teach us?](#)" authored by Annette Michaux, on taking a primary prevention approach to child protection.

Media coverage

Our media work throughout 2018–19 helped to strengthen the Parenting Research Centre brand and foster positive, informative dialogue about parenting.

- During the year, our media engagement culminated in 480 media items published across print, radio, TV and online. The majority of coverage was related to Raising Children Network, as we took an increasingly proactive approach to coverage to promote key content from the raisingchildren.net.au site. This included information on parenting teens, the importance of reading to children and issues around screen time.
- We also contributed expertise to a podcast called 'Feed Play Love' broadcast by Babyology, with Dr Naomi Hackworth, Warren Cann and Derek McCormack interviewed on parenting issues in three different podcast episodes.

Knowledge sharing

We have shared our expertise internationally through a number of projects this year.

- **Singapore:** We started working with Singapore's KKH Hospital on a practice framework, representing our first international project in this space.
- **Scandinavia:** International interest in our parent education program, Parenting Young Children, continued to grow, with 500 Swedish and 30 Norwegian professionals now ready to deliver the program to parents.
- **Japan:** Principal Research Specialist Catherine Wade was an invited guest speaker at a one-day forum in Tokyo, Japan held by the Department of Humanity Science, Faculty of Education and Social Welfare at Tokyo Kasei University and attended by government officials, researchers, service providers, students and parents. The forum was about parenting with intellectual disabilities and was aimed at identifying opportunities for improving Japan's response to supporting these parents. Following the forum, Dr Wade ran professional training for around 30 people as an introduction to the 'Parenting Young Children' program.
- **Northern Ireland:** Senior Knowledge Exchange Specialist Derek McCormack visited Northern Ireland as part of our partnership with the Centre for Effective Services. The centrepiece of the visit was a masterclass on self-care and resilience for family practitioners. The workshop provided a range of evidence-based strategies practitioners can use to reduce the risk of burnout. His visit also involved a range of meetings with policy makers and service providers on family and parenting support.

Membership of advisory committees

Many of our executive and senior staff members contributed to a range of advisory committees, expert reference groups and panels. Our 2018–19 contribution includes:

Warren Cann, Chief Executive Officer

- Expert Panel Consultation on School Readiness Funding menu of evidence development, Victorian Department of Education and Training
- Ministerial Advisory Panel for Baby Bundles, Co-Chair, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Maternal and Child Health and Parenting Expert Reference Group, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Roadmap Implementation Ministerial Advisory Group (RIMAG), Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Learning System and Practice Implementation Group, Co-Chair, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Kindergarten Reform Expert Panel, Victorian Department of Education and Training
- Beyond Blue National Education Initiative Advisory Council
- Child Mental Health Working Group, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Parent Engagement Expert Reference Group, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)
- Early Childhood Development Advisory Group, Victorian Department of Education and Training, Victoria
- Ministerial Expert Panel for Early Childhood Development, Victorian Department of Education and Training

Associate Professor Julie Green, Executive Director, raisingchildren.net.au

- Ministerial Advisory Panel for Baby Bundle, Victorian Department of Health & Human Services
- Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand, Consumer Advisory Panel
- Participant Recruitment Working Group, NSW Health (Office of Preventive Health) Evaluation of two healthy eating and active living support programs for parents of 2-6 year-old children - Time2bHealthy (online) and Healthy Habits (telephone-based). NSW Health in partnership with the University of Wollongong, University of Newcastle, NSW Office of Preventive Health and 4 Local Health Districts
- Melbourne Children's Campus Education Advisory Committee
- Children as Contributors Advisory Committee, The Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program, University of Melbourne
- Digital Policy Advisory Group, Early Childhood Australia
- National Community Child Health Council
- The National Health & Medical Research Council Mental Health and Parenting Working Committee

Annette Michaux, Director

- Beyond Blue National Education Initiative: Technical Advisory Network
- Child Aware 2019 Conference Peer Reference Group
- Consumer Advocacy Advisory Group: Child Safe Organisations – National Principles. Australian Human Rights Commission
- Emerging Minds National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health Steering Group
- Every Child Campaign Steering Committee
- Families Australia Board
- National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group
- National Forum for Protecting Australia's Children Overseeing the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children - Fourth Action Plan
- NSW Kids and Families Scientific Advisory Committee (NSW Dept of Health)
- Youth Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group, NSW Ministry of Health

Derek McCormack, Senior Knowledge Exchange Specialist

- ASDetect Clinical Reference Group, LaTrobe University
- Children's Contribution Research Project Advisory Group, Melbourne University

Associate Professor Jan Matthews, Associate Research Fellow

- Independent Research Advisory Group for the HIPPY (Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters) Australia National Longitudinal Study (HANLS 2016-18).
- Queen Elizabeth Centre Research Advisory Group
- Victorian Early Years Awards Judging Panel 2019, Victorian Department of Education & Training

Dr Catherine Wade, Principal Research Specialist

- Research Committee, The Association for Successful Parenting (USA)
- Clinical Working Group of the Funds in Court Human Rights Advisory Committee of the Supreme Court of Victoria

Naomi Hackworth, Senior Research Specialist

- Victorian Early Years Awards Judging Panel 2019, Victorian Department of Education and Training

KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS SUPPORTING POLICY DECISION MAKING

We were commissioned by government and a number of other agencies to produce 10 reports and reviews on a broad range of parenting issues during 2018–19, further building the evidence-based on effective parenting.

Commissioned reports (restricted access)

Parenting Research Centre (October 2018). *Best practice framework for active waitlist support models*. Report for the Victorian Department of Education and Training.

Parenting Research Centre and University of Queensland (2018). *Assertive outreach case study report*. Melbourne, Australia: Parenting Research Centre.

Parenting Research Centre and University of Queensland (2018). *Audit summaries of Local Level Alliances in Queensland*. Melbourne, Australia: Parenting Research Centre.

Parenting Research Centre and University of Queensland (2018). *Review of Local Level Alliance Functioning and Best Practices*. Melbourne: Parenting Research Centre.

Parenting Research Centre and University of Queensland (2018a). *Queensland Intensive Family Support Services Evaluation: Implementation Evaluation Report*. Melbourne, Australia: Parenting Research Centre.

Parenting Research Centre and University of Queensland (2018b). *Queensland Intensive Family Support Services Evaluation: Review of Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Supports*. Melbourne, Australia: Parenting Research Centre.

Parenting Research Centre and University of Queensland (2018c). *Queensland Intensive Family Support Services Evaluation: Outcomes Evaluation Report*. Melbourne, Australia: Parenting Research Centre.

Parenting Research Centre and University of Queensland (2018d). *Queensland Intensive Family Support Services Evaluation: Longitudinal Outcomes Case Study Review*. Melbourne, Australia: Parenting Research Centre

Parenting Research Centre. (December 2018). *Intensive Family Support Services: Implementation Outcomes Evaluation Final Report*. Melbourne, Australia: Parenting Research Centre.

Wade, C., Tan, L., & Almendingen, A. (March 2019). *Parenting Today in Latrobe Valley: Report on Time 1 Findings* (report produced for the Department of Education and Training, Victoria). Melbourne: Parenting Research Centre.

Reviews

Our work on the Emerging Minds project (see page 12) included contributing to the evidence around mental health issues impacting parents and children by conducting a series of 10 reviews. These reviews of the latest research evidence answered the following questions, to help guide the development of future practices, models and resources:

- What is the prevalence of mental health problems in 0–12-year-old children in Australia’s states and territories?
- What health and welfare services do Australian families with 0–12-year-old children use?
- What are the risk and protective factors for key mental illnesses during adolescence?
- What is the evidence for parent-delivered brief interventions for reducing anxiety in children?
- What are the risk and protective factors for mental health problems in children and young people with intellectual disability?
- What parenting interventions exist for improving the parent, parenting or child outcomes of parents with anxiety or depression?
- What is the impact of preteen biopsychosocial factors on the mental health of young people aged 10–18 years?
- What are the mental health outcomes associated with peer victimisation during preadolescence?
- What practices are associated with improved attachment between parents and children aged 0–2 years?
- What are the protective factors associated with good mental health outcomes in parents of children with developmental disabilities?

We also completed the following four commissioned reviews during 2018–19:

Parenting Research Centre (2018). Literature and evidence review: Aboriginal programs and services delivering improved outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people, families, and communities. Report prepared for NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

Parenting Research Centre (2019). Early childhood mental health services rapid review. Report prepared for NSW Ministry of Health.

Parenting Research Centre (2019). Responding Together Evidence Check. An Evidence Check rapid review brokered by the Sax Institute for Beyond Blue.

Parenting Research Centre (2019). Technology-based coaching for improving practitioner competencies: A rapid evidence assessment. Report prepared for the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

PUBLISHED PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

During the year, we contributed 13 published papers in numerous peer-reviewed journals, and presented at conferences in Australia and internationally, as detailed below:

Journal publications

Avdagic, E., Wade, C., McDonald, M., McCormack, D., Dakin, P., Macvean, M., Hayes, L., Phan, T. Resilience in young children: A Delphi study to reach consensus on definitions, measurement and interventions to build resilience. *Early Child Development and Care*. 2018; 12 Dec; Online. doi: 10.1080/03004430.2018.1556211

Avdagic, E., Grose, C., Hunter, J., & Wade, C. (2018). Sure Steps: Trialling a family coaching model with families in public housing. Family Relationships Services of Australia. *FRSA National Conference e-journal*. 2018; Ed 3, 13–22.

<https://frsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FRSA-conference-ejournal-2018.pdf>

Bavin, E. L., Sarant, J., Hackworth, N. J., Bennetts, S. K., Buzhardt, J., Fan, J., Button, E., Busby, P., Leigh, G. & Peterson. Modelling the early expressive communicative development of infants/toddlers with early cochlear implants, *Ear and Hearing*. 2018.

Buzhardt, J., Greenwood, C. R., Hackworth, N. J., Jia, F., Bennetts, S. K., Walker, D., Matthews, J. M. Cross-cultural exploration of growth in expressive communication of English-speaking infants and toddlers. 2019;29 May: Online. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2019.04.002>

Cortis, N., Smyth, C., Wade, C., & Katz, I. (2019). Changing practice cultures in statutory child protection: Practitioners' perspectives. *Child and Family Social Work*. 2019; 24:50–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12580>

Crawford, S., Hokke, S., Nicholson, J. M., Zion, L., Lucke, J., Keyzer, P. & Hackworth, N. J. "It's not black and white": Researchers' and ethics committee's views on conducting research via social media, *Internet Research*, 2019; 4 Feb, Online. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-07-2017-0278>

Darryl Maybery, Melinda Goodyear, Andrea Reupert, Jade Sheen, Warren Cann, Brendan O'Hanlon and Rose Cuff. A mixed method evaluation of an intervention for parents with mental illness, *Clin Child Psychol Psychiatry*, 2019; Jan, Online. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1359104518822676>

Goodyear, M., McDonald, M., von Doussa, H., Cuff, R., & Dunlop, B. Meeting the intergenerational needs of families where a parent has a mental illness. *Journal of Parent and Family Mental Health*. 2018; 3(2): 1–3 [1]. <https://doi.org/10.7191/parentandfamily.1011>

Hayes, L., Brophy, L., Harvey, C., Tellez, J.J., Herrman, H. & Killackey, E. Enabling choice, recovery and participation: Evidence-based early intervention support for psychosocial disability in the National Disability Insurance Scheme, *Australasian Psychiatry*. 2018;26(6);578–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1039856218759407>

Hokke S, Hackworth NJ, Bennetts SK, Nicholson JM, Keyzer P, Lucke J, Zion L, Crawford SB. Ethical considerations in using social media to engage research participants: Perspectives of Australian researchers and ethics committee members, *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Ethics*, 2019;Jun 14; 1556264619854629. Doi: [10.1177/1556264619854629](https://doi.org/10.1177/1556264619854629)

Hokke, S., Hackworth, N. J., Quin, N., Bennetts, S. K., Win, H. Y., Nicholson, J. M., Zion, L., Lucke, J., Keyzer, P. & Crawford, S. Ethical issues in using the internet to engage participants in family research: A scoping review, *PLOS One*. 2018;13(9);e0204572. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0204572>

Wade, C., Cann, W., & Matthews, J. Introduction to special issue: parenting interventions and the mental health of children and parents. *Advances in Mental Health*, 2019;17(1):1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18387357.2019.1585647>

Yoong, S.L., Grady, A., Stacey, F., Polimeni, M., Clayton, O., Jones, J., Nathan, N., Wyse, R., Wolfenden, L. A pilot randomised controlled trial examining the impact of a sleep intervention targeting home routines on young children's (3-6 years) physical activity, *Pediatric Obesity*, 2018; Online. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijpo.12481>

Book chapters

Smyth, B. M., Hunter, C., Macvean, M., Walter, M., Higgins, D. J. (2019). Education for family life in Australia, *Global perspectives on family life education*, 93-113

Conference presentations

We shared our knowledge and expertise on parenting, with our staff presenting at the following 13 conferences held around Australia and internationally:

Baulch, C., Jenkins, B., Wade, C., Firman, K. (2019). The secondary system reforms in Queensland: Prevention and early intervention through joint service planning and investment. Child Aware Conference, Brisbane, May 16–17.

Green, J. (2019). *Engaging parents in conversations on children's screen practices: a window into teacher-ready resources*, National Future Schools Expo and Conference, Melbourne, 20–21 March.

Green, J., Edwards, S. & Straker, L. (2018). *Screen use by young children – an important issue for early childhood professionals supporting parents?*, Early Childhood Australia national conference, Sydney, 18-22 September.

Green, J., McCormack, D. & Hackworth, N. (2018). *Parenting trends in a digital age: A window into what matters to parents*, Australian Institute of Family Studies national conference, Melbourne, 25-27 July.

Hackworth, N., Nicholson, J., & Westrupp, E. (2019). *Symposium: Evaluating the long term impact of smalltalk, an early childhood parenting intervention*, International Society of Early Intervention, Sydney, 25–28 June.

Macvean, M. (2018). *Parenting education in Australia: A rapid evidence assessment update*, Australian Institute of Family Studies National Conference, Melbourne, 25–27 July.

Matthews, J., Green, J., Michaux, A., McCormack, D., Little, K., & Wade, C. (2018) *What matters most to parents: The evidence, opportunities, and policy implications* (Symposium). Australian Institute of Family Studies National Conference, Melbourne, Australia, 25–27 July.

Matthews, J., Green, J., Michaux, A., McCormack, D., Little, K. & Wade, C. (2018). *What matters most to parents: The evidence, opportunities, and policy implications*, Australian Institute of Family Studies National Conference 2018, Melbourne, 25–27 July.

Michaux, A., Hodgson, J. (2018). *Implementing Evidence Informed Practice Frameworks*. ISPCAN XXII International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, Prague, Czech Republic, 2–5 September.

Michaux, A., Kendall-Taylor, N. (2019). *Reframing Parenting, raising thriving children by support parents*. Their Futures Matter Conference. Their Futures Matter Conference, Sydney, 12–13 February.

Michaux, A. (2019). *Keeping Children safe and settled, seven strategies for policy and practice*. Child Aware Conference, Brisbane, 16–17 May.

Murphy, C. & Probert, M. (2019). *Key Assets Fostering Service Practice Framework*, Child Aware Conference, Brisbane Australia, 16–17 May.

Murphy, C., & Clayton, O. (2018). *Partnering with parents in early childhood*, HIPPY Australia National Gathering, Gold Coast, 5 September.

Wade, C. (2018). *Parents with intellectual disability: An international perspective* (invited guest speaker), Japanese Symposium on parenting support for parents with intellectual disability, Tokyo Kasei University, Department of Humanity Science, Faculty of Education and Social Welfare, Tokyo, September.

Whittaker, E., Brunton, I., Wade, C., Edwards, B., Davenport, J., & Kreutzfeldt, K. (2019). *Evidence Based Interventions Workshop Case Study*. Their Futures Matter Conference, Sydney, February 12–13.

Whittaker, E., Edwards, B., Wade, C., & Michaux, A. (2019). *Effective partnerships holds the key: Providing trauma-focused support to maintain placements for children in care*. Child Aware Conference, Brisbane, 16–17 May.

Leadership and governance

PARENTING RESEARCH CENTRE BOARD

Juliette Alush, Former Chair (resigned from Board November 2018, after completing six-year term)

Tracey Gibson, Deputy Chair

Linda Hornsey

Andrew Hume, Chair

Marina Jury

Greg Molyneux

Tania Phillips

Dr Alison Roberts (resigned from Board November 2018, after completing six-year term)

Cameron Smith (appointed August 2018)

Jason Whakaari (Appointed May 2019)

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Warren Cann, CEO

Associate Professor Julie Green, Executive Director raisingchildren.net.au

Annette Michaux, Director

Christian Thompson, Director

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Alan Hudson, Chair

Susan Gribben

Ian Jungwirth

Douglas Marshall

Jan Matthews

Zvezdana Petrovic (member until March 2019)

Helen Reilly

Emily Ryder

Gina Maree Sartore

Maggie Troup

Diana Wilson

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Parenting Research Centre Financial Report 2018–19 is available from our website.