



Healthy Development Adelaide
A Research and Innovation Cluster in South Australia

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

**GET YOUR RESEARCH,
NEWS, PAPERS, MEDIA
RELEASES,
RECRUITMENT TRIALS,
EVENTS OUT THERE!!**

*Submissions by end
November for our next
issue out in December*

**Social Media
submissions
(TWITTER, FB AND
LINKEDIN):**

*Submissions open
anytime*

**Submissions must align
with HDA:**

We aim to promote, facilitate and enable multidisciplinary research to advance understanding of healthy development, ensuring the physical, psychological and social health of infants, children and adolescents.

OUR PARTNERS

PLATINUM



GOLD



**University of
South Australia**



**Flinders
University**

SILVER



Government of South Australia
Department for Education



**Government of
South Australia**

Women's and Children's Health Network



Women and Kids



Wellbeing SA



Government of South Australia
Department for Child Protection

BRONZE



UPCOMING HDA EVENT

Please join us for the 19th annual **Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA) Oration** to be presented by **Professor Sally Brinkman** on **Navigating the health and education nexus for the sake of child development**. The Oration will be held on Wednesday 25 October, 6.00-8.00pm: Napier G04 lecture theatre, Napier building, Ground floor, University of Adelaide, North Terrace.



Early childhood development (ECD) is important to many disciplines, however two dominate: education and health. Each discipline adopts distinct approaches, and while both have their merits, combining them can present challenges, especially when it comes to measurement. The recent policy advances towards universal 3 year old preschool offers unique opportunities to foster collaboration. This presentation will aim to promote an openness to a more cohesive system of support for children and families, ensuring optimal ECD outcomes.

Professor Sally Brinkman, Professor at Education Futures, University of South Australia and Director of the Fraser Mustard Centre.

Sally Brinkman is a Professor at Education Futures, University of South Australia (UniSA) and Director of the Fraser Mustard Centre a research translation partnership between the UniSA and the Department for Education. Her research focuses on improving the healthy development and early learning of young children in disadvantaged communities across Australia, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Emirates. Sally collaborates closely with international governments and donor organizations such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO to drive meaningful change. She specializes in population monitoring and pragmatic randomized control trials to understand inequality in child outcomes and assess intervention impact and cost-effectiveness. Sally's research has significant global and local impact, across disciplines providing valuable insights for early education, community development, and development economics. She is recognized as a leading authority in child development metrics, advising governments and contributing to influential Expert Advisory Groups. With over 200 publications, including renowned journals like The Lancet, and Nature Medicine Sally's research effectively bridges academia and policy.

OUR CHAIR - Professor Carol Maher (HDA Co-Convenor), Professor of Population and Digital Health, Medical Research Future Fund Investigator / Deputy Director of the Alliance for Research in Exercise, Nutrition and Activity (ARENA), University of South Austr

Register on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/727744141317?aff=oddtcreator>

WELCOME NEW HDA AMBASSADOR! A/PROFESSOR ALWIN CHONG



Associate Professor Alwin Chong is a Director of Arney Chong Consulting.
<https://arneychongconsulting.com>

Alwin is a Wakamin man from Far North Queensland. He has over 35 years of research experience in various roles as Associate Professor at the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP), Director for Positive Futures Research Collaboration, Acting Director of Yaitya Purruna Indigenous Health Unit (YPIHU), and Senior Research and Ethics Officer for the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia. He is also a member of the NHMRC Australian Health Ethics Committee.

Alwin's areas of expertise closely align with his commitment to Indigenous health and child protection. These areas include alternative strategies for Aboriginal child protection, conducting research that tackles large societal issues such as smoking and gambling in Indigenous communities, and perception around Fatherhood for young Indigenous men.

Treasure Boxes

Treasure Boxes provides a vital service for some of the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and at-risk children and families in South Australia. With the provision of practical, tangible support such as a years' supply of clothing and shoes, clean sheets and bedding, essential newborn nursery equipment and nappies, Treasure Boxes leads the charge in the circular economy space for redistributing over 3,125T in FY23 of quality donated childhood items direct to families in need, to over 170 government and NGO support organisations across South Australia.

Over the last 12 months, Treasure Boxes has experienced a 38% rise in the number of children they have supported from 2,205 to 3,039, and a 28% rise in items distributed (15,096). There was a 3% rise in support for Aboriginal children (*now sitting at 45% of all children supported*) with the major reason for support being financial hardship which has risen 32% since FY22, and now represents 71% of the total families who require support from Treasure Boxes. This comes as no surprise with the current economic climate and rental crisis creating extraordinary pressure on already struggling families.

If you work with families who need tangible support – either as a preintervention measure or in a crisis situation – please reach out for further information. If you are interested in helping us to commence a research project on the direct health and wellbeing benefits for vulnerable families, with the provision of vital, essential childhood items such as warm clothing, cots and clean bedding – particularly in the preintervention space - we would love to hear from you.

For further information, please visit **www.treasureboxes.org.au** or contact Rikki Cooke, CEO/Founder a **rikki.cooke@treasureboxes.org.au**

HDA MEMBER PROFILE - ZARA BOULTON TELETHON KIDS INSTITUTE



Zara Boulton is a researcher and Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisor at the Telethon Kids Institute, before which they completed an Honours degree in Psychology. Zara's research broadly focuses on understanding the underlying factors that influence inequalities during childhood and adolescence, generating interventions and resources to improve the health and development of children, adolescents, and young people, and ensuring high-quality evidence drives policy and practice changes across Australia.

Zara's research expertise includes early childhood health, development and education, trans young people's health, screen time during the early years, child, adolescent, and youth mental health, young people's social and emotional wellbeing, academic outcomes among school students, and public health advocacy.

Employing data from the Wellbeing and Engagement Collection, one of the largest population monitoring systems of child and adolescent wellbeing in the world, Zara's leading research identifies and addresses critical health and wellbeing inequities among trans children, adolescents, and young people, by exploring population-level outcomes among more than 65,000 cisgender and trans children and young people. Zara also collaborates across several additional paper within the Wellbeing and Engagement Collection study, to understand the academic, social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, school engagement and health behaviours of children, adolescents, and young people at a census-level (e.g., breakfast skipping, mental health profiles, NAPLAN outcomes).

Beyond their leading research, Zara also provides support across multiple research projects, with the aim of producing relevant research papers, research translation material, and government reports. Invested in understanding screen time in the early home environment, Zara has supported several research projects which (1) examine the impact of screen use during the early years, how this differs across socioeconomic groups and what impact it has on children's development, and (2) working alongside parents and early childhood professionals to co-design an online parenting intervention to support parents with very young children to develop healthy screen time behaviours.

Broadly, Zara's research interests focus primarily on identifying, understanding, and addressing unique and complex inequalities among varying populations. They are passionate about working alongside like-minded researchers to conduct innovative research, and are always interested in forming new collaborations with passionate researchers, policymakers or practitioners working across the early years system.

BECOME A HDA MEMBER TODAY ...

Join us in fostering South Australian multidisciplinary research, policy and practice at basic, clinical, social and population levels to enhance the healthy development and wellbeing of Australia's future generations.

HDA membership is open to researchers, PhD students and professionals working in areas relevant to HDA's research.

Membership benefits

- Access to travel grants (PhD students and early career researchers)
- Access to PhD scholarships
- Eligibility to apply for HDA awards
- Free HDA event attendance certificates towards your continuing professional development points
- Build relationships with people working in areas relevant to the health and development of young children and adolescents
- Contribute your knowledge and expertise to make a difference
- Support HDA into the future

1 year for \$20 or 3 years for \$50 (excluding GST).

<https://health.adelaide.edu.au/healthy-development-adelaide/get-involved>

HDA PARTNER NEWS WELLBEING SA

Can you participate in a South Australian Child Development Check Survey?

South Australia's Early Years System spans multiple sectors including health, education, and community services. It is inclusive of all services and supports that are available to children from birth to five years, and their families. A key element of the Early Years system are Child Development Checks, which are recommended for babies and young children at regular intervals in these first five years to assess a child's development, behaviour, growth and health.

Wellbeing SA have commissioned the following survey to further understand the current practice of delivering Child Development Checks in South Australia. **If you or anyone within your organisation is currently delivering child development checks, we encourage you to complete this survey, or forward onto the relevant staff member to complete.** The information gathered will help us develop a comprehensive understanding of South Australia's Early Years System to enable better connection and coordination between key services and supports for families.



We expect this survey will not take any longer than 20 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and responses will remain anonymous. We welcome you to forward this survey on to other individuals or organisations you think relevant to participate.

If you would like further information on the survey please contact Sarah Hunter at Sarah.Hunter@sa.gov.au

To complete the Child Development Check Survey go here <https://researchsurvey.flinders.edu.au/surveys/?s=DARC9ECN79434PEE>

HDA PARTNER NEWS WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH NETWORK



Welcome to **Rebecca Graham** as the new Interim Chief Executive Officer for the Women's and Children's Health Network.

Rebecca has worked in healthcare for close to 40 years and, during that time, has worked extensively across the South Australian public health service, including most recently as the inaugural Chief Executive Officer of the Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network.

"It is my privilege to lead South Australia's largest paediatric and maternity healthcare Network through this period of transition and I have been overwhelmed by the warmth and support I've felt since stepping into the role".

In welcoming Rebecca, we say thank you and farewell to outgoing CEO Lindsey Gough, who led the Network for more than 5 years, including successfully navigating a global pandemic and commencing planning for the new Women's and Children's Hospital.

HDA PARTNER NEWS

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Congratulations to the winners of the 2023 South Australian Child Protection Awards!

Active Efforts Award

Tara Forbes-Godfrey, KWAY Aboriginal Corporation

Outstanding Service Award: Non-government organisations

Newpin Team, Uniting Communities

Taikurtirna Tirra-Apinthi, KWAY Aboriginal Corporation

Outstanding Service Award: Across Government

Detective Senior Sergeant Alexandra Rusul, Investigations Manager, Child and Family Investigation Section, Northern District Criminal Investigation Branch

Outstanding Service Award: Department for Child Protection

Mikala Ballard

Outstanding Service Award: Regional

Emily Ware, Centacare Catholic Country SA

South Australian Foster Carer of the Year

Lisa O'Malley, supported by Lutheran Care
Maxine and Stephen Bowden, supported by Uniting Country SA

Sonia and Brenton Smith, supported by Uniting Country SA

South Australian Kinship Carer of the Year

Dwayne Harvey, supported by InComPro
Kylie Stewart, supported by DCP

Volunteer of the Year

Myra Langdon, DCP

The voice of children and young people in care

Ros Calley, DCP

Positive Impact Award

Stella Braund

Jeannie Alderson and Julia Popkins

Outstanding achievement of a child or young person

Shantae Barnes-Cowan

Life Achievement Award

Fiona Ward PSM, Adjunct Professor University of South Australia

Nancy Penna, Anglicare SA

HDA PARTNER NEWS

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH NETWORK

Congratulations to the Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN) 2023 Excellence Award winners!

The Enhancing Hospital Care Award

Burns Digital Referral Service

The Excellence in Non-Clinical Services Award

Staff Wellbeing in the NICU

The Improving Safety and Quality Award

FAAIRI Service

The Research and Innovation Award

Dr Amit Kochar

The Out of Hospital Strategies and Care Award

HENNS in the community

The Excellence in Community Services Award

CaFHS Oaklands Park Leading Change Team

The Excellence and Innovation in Aboriginal Health Award

Forensic CAMHS Cultural Programs

The Excellence in Consumer Partnerships Award

Partnership between WCHN and AWFOSA

The Young Professional of the Year Award

Jack Noonan

The CREATE Award

Di Smith-McCue

The CEO Award for Excellence in Healthcare

WCH Foundation Lakinyeri Beach House



HDA PARTNER NEWS SAHMRI WOMEN AND KIDS

Funding a better future for preterm babies

A collaborative project aiming to improve breastfeeding and the use of human milk in premature babies has been awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Centres of Research Excellence Scheme.

Chief Investigator, Professor Alice Rumbold, says researchers from SAHMRI and the University of Adelaide will work with other leading experts to investigate why breastfeeding rates are lower in premature infants and develop ways to improve lactation support for mothers.

"We know maternal milk greatly improves outcomes of prematurity, including cognitive development. Despite this, breastfeeding rates among these tiny, vulnerable babies are significantly lower than full-term infants and haven't improved in the past twenty years," Prof Rumbold said.

Breastfeeding premature babies presents a variety of challenges, including difficulties suckling at birth, high nutrient requirements and reduced maternal milk supply.

"By working with families and health care providers, we hope to improve breastfeeding support after birth by designing and evaluating lactation support strategies in neonatal units and developing new nutritional interventions that harness the unique components of human milk," Professor Rumbold said.

The project will also explore ways to optimise the use of donor human milk, including how much donor or maternal milk is needed to deliver the best benefits for very preterm babies.

Babies are considered premature when they are born before 37 weeks gestation. Some may require lengthy hospital stays and can be at risk of cognitive and motor impairments, behavioural disorders and chronic health conditions.

"Preterm birth is a major public health issue with around 25,000 infants in Australia born prematurely each year," Professor Rumbold said.

"This funding will enable us to build the capabilities of a cohort of early career researchers to undertake and translate research to give preterm infants the best start in life."

Professor Rumbold's team also secured an NHMRC Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies grant of \$2.2 million in May for a donor milk study known as the GIFT trial.

HDA Member News

Eureka prize winners

Cutting-edge medical research carried out at the University of Adelaide has been awarded prizes for excellence in the prestigious 2023 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes. Two projects won awards for innovative medical imaging techniques to help treat children with cystic fibrosis and for the improved diagnosis of endometriosis using artificial intelligence.

The winning University of Adelaide projects were awarded within the Research and Innovation Category.

The Cystic Fibrosis Lung Health Imaging project from the University of Adelaide; Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide; 4D Medical Pty Ltd; and Monash University was awarded the Aspire Scholarship Eureka Prize for Excellence in Interdisciplinary Scientific Research. The project is led by the University of Adelaide's Associate Professor David Parsons from Adelaide Medical School and Robinson Research Institute.

The IMAGENDO team from the University of Adelaide and OMNI Ultrasound and Gynaecological Care, led by Professor Louise Hull from the Robinson Research Institute, was awarded the ANSTO Eureka Prize for Innovative Use of Technology.

HDA PARTNER NEWS FLINDERS UNIVERSITY / CRF

Sharing real-life stories of actors, authors, musicians, scientists and others will help challenge attitudes of children towards learning differences, thanks to a new program being developed by Flinders University researchers. Funding from Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation will enable the development of the Cool Brain Hall of Fame, using examples from popular culture to de-stigmatise learning differences in primary schools.

Dr Amy Wyatt from Flinders University is featuring such celebrated contemporary figures as Greta Thunberg (climate change activist, autistic), Billie Eilish (pop singer, Tourette syndrome), Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter actor, dyspraxia), Pharrell Williams (pop singer, synesthesia) and Dav Pilkey (author of the popular children's book series *Captain Underpants*, ADHD/dyslexia) in the Cool Brain Hall of Fame, as they are all people who have learning differences.

"While the stories of these people are available online, we want to present them in way best suited to engaging children, that clearly showcases the value of neurodiversity," says Dr Wyatt.

About 15-20% of South Australian children have a learning difference such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, autism or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), yet these kids are one of the largest marginalised cohorts in schools – at risk of discrimination and harassment, which impacts their mental health, school attendance and learning outcomes.

"Although policies exist to ensure the physical inclusion of students with a disability in mainstream schools, there is an urgent need for novel strategies to improve their social inclusion," says Dr Wyatt. "Research shows that embedding relevant knowledge about disability in school communities reduces peer-discrimination, but programs to combat stigma against learning differences are not commonplace in primary schools. We are working to develop and evaluate an innovative peer-based de-stigmatisation program that has the potential to promote inclusivity and enhance self-esteem in primary school children. This will translate into better psychological and educational outcomes for children with learning differences and has the potential to improve their quality-of-life across their lifespan."

To help achieve this, the project team will work with the award-winning Flinders University Digital Media team to bring "The Cool Brain Hall of Fame" to life as an animated series, developed with the help of children with a learning difference.

"We want children aged 7-11 years to help us develop an animation series that talks about having unique learning strengths and challenges. An engaging animation series that normalises this will promote more inclusive school environments and increase self-esteem in children," says Dr Wyatt.

Participation will involve children attending a fun one-hour focus group session conducted by researchers at Flinders University. Each participant will receive a \$10 gift card, and will be given the option of being acknowledged as a co-developer in the animation credits. Once completed, the animation series will be presented by teachers in SA schools, with Flinders researchers recording students' attitudes towards learning differences before and after watching the animation series.

"Due to the simplicity of our program, which does not rely on teachers having specialised skills or knowledge to implement, it's plausible that our program could be made widely available to Australian primary school children," says Dr Wyatt.

This research represents the first analysis of South Australian children's attitudes towards learning differences. "We believe that providing young school children with access to an engaging, age-appropriate educational resource that draws on relevant examples from popular culture and popular occupations will reduce the tendency of children to devalue and exclude children with a perceived learning difference – and increase self-esteem in children with a formally identified learning difference."

This projects compliments work Dr Wyatt is doing with the Flinders Neurodivergent Study Support and Advocacy group (FNSSA) that is currently presenting an art exhibition at Flinders Medical Centre as a part of the Arts in Health gallery Program on the Promenade Gallery (running August- 22nd September 2023). The collective, established at Flinders University in 2021, has swiftly gathered over 300 members – and while not all of them are studying creative disciplines or intend to move into creative professions, they all have deep personal connections to making art.

"I see creative pursuits as fundamentally important to wellbeing and self-expression, and so I want to provide neurodivergent youth with opportunities to showcase their creativity and strengthen connections between the neurodivergent community and the community at large," says Dr Wyatt, who believes that more initiatives such as this will challenge the stigma associated with conditions such as autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia – and shine light on the value of neurodiversity.

RECENT HDA EVENTS

Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA) forum on Evidence-based support systems for vulnerable families. This forum was held in conjunction with our partner organisation the Department of Human Services. Chaired by **Professor Claire Roberts** (HDA Co-Convenor), Flinders University.

Socio-economic disadvantage is a significant and growing problem for vulnerable families and their children in South Australia. If society is to address this wicked problem, it is essential that systems and services approach this problem from an evidence-informed position. It is important that we understand and utilise evidence in the form of data/research, cultural wisdom, lived experience, and practitioner expertise. Our speakers will provide insights into the work underway to understand evidence-based practice for early intervention and child protection services from these different important perspectives so we can better support families seeking early support.

Our speakers included **Dr Henry Pharo**, Director, Early Intervention Research Directorate (EIRD), Department of Human Services - *Creating an Evidence Base for Early Intervention Services*; **Rebecca**, System Advisor, Early Intervention Research Directorate Lived Experience Network, Department of Human Services - *What helps families reach out for support early: From a lived experience perspective*; **Dr Rhiannon Pilkington**, Senior Research Fellow, BetterStart Health and Development, School of Public Health, University of Adelaide - *Using the BEBOLD linked data platform to support the development and evaluation of child and family services in South Australia*; **Craig Rigney**, Chief Executive Officer, KKY Aboriginal Corporation - *Engaging with Aboriginal families, my view, your view, our view*; and **Sue Macdonald**, Executive Director, Service Delivery and Practice, Department for Child Protection - *Sharing power with families: Family Group Conferences*.

Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA) and Flinders Caring Futures Institute forum on Inclusivity in the Early Years. Chaired by **Professor Claire Roberts** (HDA Co-Convenor), Flinders University.

A healthy start to life is something we all take for granted. Healthy pregnancies, healthy mums and babies, connected families, strong development, engaged learners are all valued. But it is not always the case. Despite our best efforts some children do not get the best start to life. They face challenges due to disability, social determinants of health, gaps in the network of adults around them, or lack of support for the tough job of parenting. The Flinders Caring Futures Institute brings together over 200 researchers to tackle the complex care challenges that limit health and wellbeing in our communities. The multi-layer barriers that are embedded in our health, education and social care systems are the focus of our interdisciplinary teams that utilize innovative research methods, theoretically-informed knowledge translation, health and social care economics and digital technologies to ensure all South Australians have the supports in place to thrive.



Our speakers included **Professor Joanne Arciuli**, Lead: Communication, Cognition, and Wellbeing Research Group, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Flinders University on *Self-reported School Satisfaction and Disability*; **Dr Nina Sivertsen**, Senior Lecturer, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Flinders University on *Cultural continuity in health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in mainstream health*; **Dr Brittany Johnson**, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Caring Futures Institute, Flinders University on *TOPCHILD: Using tailored evidence in policy and practice*; and **Dr Sarah Hunter**, Research Fellow, Caring Futures Institute, Flinders University on *Caring for Caregivers: Navigating the Early Years System*.

RECENT HDA EVENTS

Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA) forum on **Starting early for children in need – where we start matters**. This forum was held in conjunction with our partner organisation the Department for Child Protection. Chaired by **Professor Leah Bromfield**, Director, Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia

The message this year for National Child Protection Week (3-9 September) was that 'Every child in every community needs a fair go' and will be complemented with the theme '*Where we start matters*'. Our expert panel of speakers presented around their work in this area on a wide range of topics from babies, children, mothers and support programs.

Our speakers included **Dr Prue McEvoy**, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist: Lead Psychiatric Director, Department for Child Protection on *Child Maltreatment: the obstacle to children getting a fair go*; **Brad Morgan**, Director, Emerging Minds on *Early Support, early in life: Mental health as a foundation for lifelong development*; **Dr Alisa Willis**, Head of Impact, Growth and Innovation, Junction Australia on *Growing Together*; **Gemma Crisp**, Lead Clinician – Speech Pathologist, Therapeutic Carer Support Team. Department for Child Protection on *Identifying children in care who are at risk of disability or developmental delay - living in rural and remote South Australia*; **Dr Carmela Bastian**, Senior Lecturer, College of Education, Psychology and Social Work, Flinders University on *Safety and wellbeing of children in the context of women's shelters*; **Professor Yvonne Clark**, Senior Research Fellow, University of South Australia and SAHMRI on *Understanding the needs and providing support for pregnant women with Aboriginal babies in antenatal settings*; **Hanne Brunes**, Liaison Officer and **Esma**, foster carer, Life Without Barriers on *The Mockingbird Family*.



The Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care has released its Final Report

The report contains 43 recommendations and details an ambitious vision for the future of early childhood education and care in South Australia.

The Commission heard from researchers, experts, providers and families about the importance of high-quality early childhood education and care.

In essence, this Royal Commission report is all about creating that best start for every child.

Read the report here

https://www.royalcommissioneccec.sa.gov.au/publications/final-report/_nocache

RECENT HDA EVENTS



Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA) and Wellbeing SA forum on Partnering for System Change in the Early Years – how can we better support children and families in South Australia?. Chaired by **Dr Natasha Schranz**, Manager, Early Years Children and Young People, Wellbeing SA.

It is well known that the early years of life lay the foundations for future health and wellbeing. Positive health and wellbeing behaviours established across early childhood can have a lasting effect across the lifetime and can play a critical role in primary prevention. Partnerships are a strategic enabler for Wellbeing SA. To optimise the health, development and social outcomes of children, partnerships are essential in recognising the diversity of touchpoints and transition points that children and families encounter in the early years.

Our speakers included **Laurianne Reinsborough**, Director, Health Promotion Branch, Wellbeing SA on *Wellbeing SA – who we are and the importance of partnerships*; **Professor Rebecca Golley**, Matthew Flinders Professor, Deputy Director of the Flinders Caring Futures Institute, Flinders University on *Caring Futures Institute: Cross sector collaboration to support a Healthy Start to Life*; **Lynne Kurtzer**, Co-Director, Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS), Primary and Population Health, Women's and Children's Health Network on *CaFHS partnerships across the early years*; and **Natalie Atkinson**, Head, Office for the Early Years, Department for Education on *South Australia's Office for the Early Years – System stewards and strategic direction for the State*.

The disability royal commission recommendations could fix some of the worst living conditions – but that's just the start

After more than four years and many traumatic stories, the disability royal commission's final report was released on 29 September. Included in its 6,845 pages are 222 recommendations.

The scope of the A\$600 million disability royal commission included school, work, housing, hospitals and the criminal justice system.

Read more at www.theconversation.com

ARE YOU A HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONER? PARTICIPATE IN OUR WORKSHOP!

**WE NEED
YOUR IDEAS!**

**WE WANT TO EXPLORE
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILD
HEALTH BEHAVIOUR SCREENING IN
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, AND WE
NEED YOUR INPUT!**



Join our online
workshops to be held
September + October
2023

SCAN HERE TO
REGISTER YOUR
INTEREST



This project is approved by Flinders University's Human
Research Ethics Committee (Project ID 6514)



Wellbeing SA

epoch - Translate
Translating Early Prevention of Obesity in Childhood

Invitation to take part in a workshop 'Screening for health behaviours in the early years: what are the opportunities for implementation in primary health care?'

The Centre for Research Excellence in Translating Early Prevention of Obesity in Childhood (EPOCH-Translate CRE), alongside the Flinders Caring Futures Institute and Wellbeing SA are exploring opportunities within the primary health care system to support the development of lifelong healthy behaviours (diet, activity, screen use and sleep) in early childhood (0-5 years).

Are you a primary health care practitioner that works with SA children and their families, we would like to invite you to be part of a workshop to discuss opportunities to implement child health behaviour screening in primary health care.

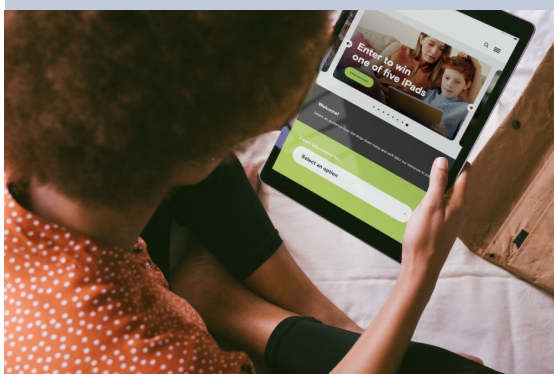
The 2-hour interactive workshops will take place during **September-October 2023** and will be held **online via Microsoft Teams**. Workshops dates and times will be set according to participant availability.

Your input would be a highly valuable contribution to this project.

If you are interested in being involved, please visit https://qualtrics.flinders.edu.au/jfe/form/SV_3mIZ6QfuRFAg7tk.

Contact Dimity (dimity.dutch@flinders.edu.au) if you would like further information about this project.

Emerging Minds National Workforce Survey 2023



Do you work in the health, social or community services sectors?

Complete our 2023 National Workforce Survey for Child, Parent, and Family Mental Health and be in the running to win one of five iPads! You don't need to work directly with children or have a focus on mental health to take part in our survey.

Your contribution will help us better understand the current awareness, knowledge, confidence and practice challenges facing professionals in supporting children's mental health during everyday practice. Survey closes 15 November.

Take the survey today: <https://emergingminds.com.au/nws-content>

INVITING YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 13-24 HELP US BUILD THE FIRST NATIONAL PLAN!



Roadmap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adolescent Health

One in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are aged 10-24 years (adolescents and young people).

This is a time where we grow physically, start to think about things in different ways and take on new roles in our families and communities.

It is also a time when our health needs change and new challenges can present.

Despite this being a very important time in life, there is currently no national strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescent health and wellbeing, and as a result, many young people can't access the services and support they need or want.

To help address this critical gap we are developing the very first *National Roadmap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adolescent Health*. The Roadmap will describe the most important health challenges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescents and the best ways to address them.

Working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, services and organisations, the Roadmap will ensure young people are supported in accessing the services they need to stay healthy and strong – now and into the future!

Read more on the roadmap here: <https://roadmap.org.au/>

Take the survey now: <https://redcap.sahmri.com/surveys/?s=AYJM49WN4MALFCHW>

Can you participate in this Social Media Psychoeducation Study



Looking for participants to participate in an online experimental study focusing on social media psychoeducation with the opportunity to win a \$40 voucher.

You can participate in an online study to assess the outcomes of social media psychoeducational videos. Participation will involve completing online surveys and watching a brief video, as well as using Instagram for a period of time, using your personal account. You will also be sent a brief follow-up survey three days later. To thank you for your participation in both surveys you can enter a draw to win a \$40 Coles/Myer.

If you are aged 16 years and over, fluent in English, have access to an Instagram account and are interested in participating in our study, please access via the link:

https://adelaideunisop.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bJzFeaf4THRyqxM

ARE YOU THE PARENT/CAREGIVER OF A CHILD IN PRIMARY SCHOOL?

Researchers at Flinders University want to hear from parents/caregivers - What would you want to see if we had school provided meals in Australian primary schools?

Follow the link or scan the QR code if you are interested in participating in a workshop!

https://qualtrics.flinders.edu.au/jfe/form/SV_4Tx7vIQzpipQcDA

Understanding an acceptable Australian school provided meal system

the parent perspective

Are you the parent/caregiver of a child in primary school?
We want to hear your thoughts!

What would you want to see if we had school provided meals in Australia?

1.5 hour online research workshop

no research experience required

Scan to express your interest!

Children and Families Research Team
Flinders University

Young People and Gambling Survey

The Commissioner is asking Young South Australians aged 13-22 about their knowledge and experiences of gambling. Participants do not need to have gambling knowledge or experience, and aren't required to provide any identifying information.

It is a chance for you to share your thoughts about gambling.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/gamblingsurvey>

WORDS GROW MINDS



The Early Years Taskforce, set up in 2021, is charged with improving early childhood developmental outcomes for South Australian children. Members include government and non-government services working with young children and their families.

The pilot campaign was launched in October 2022 by the Early Years Taskforce, which brings together early years services from across South Australia and was trialled successfully with families and early years services in Mount Gambier and Whyalla. Evaluation results showed a significant increase in parent and carer awareness about the importance of early childhood development and positive interactions in their child's first three years.

Taskforce members are working to improve developmental outcomes by:

- Increasing collaboration across services
- Forming clear and consistent messaging for parents and caregivers on the importance of brain development in the early years
- Showing families simple things they can do to literally grow babies' and young children's brains.

The South Australian statewide rollout will be launching in early 2024! Watch this space!

The Early Years Taskforce and Words Grow Minds campaign are funded by the Government of South Australia. Read more here <https://wordsgrowminds.com.au>

Nutrition Society of Australia, Adelaide branch seminar

Nutritional Psychiatry for the prevention and treatment of mental disorders



Tuesday 17 October, 5:30 - 7:30 PM ACDT
BH 2-09 Lecture Theatre, Barbara Hanrahan Building, Level 2
University of South Australia (City West) Adelaide

Felice Jacka is a Professor of Nutritional Psychiatry, Director of the Food & Mood Centre at Deakin University, and founder and president of the International Society for Nutritional Psychiatry Research.

Prof Jacka created the field of 'Nutritional Psychiatry', establishing diet as a risk factor and treatment target for common mental disorders. She has influenced clinical guidelines in psychiatry worldwide and is cited in over 100 policy documents (e.g., WHO, UNICEF). In 2021, she was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her services to Nutritional Psychiatry.

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/nutritional-psychiatry-for-the-prevention-and-treatment-of-mental-disorders-tickets-708377103987?aff=oddttdcreator>

Addressing Australia's reading crisis: initiatives to improve literacy and educational equity for children

Flinders Caring Futures Institute news - 27 September



Around 20% of Australian children fail to meet the minimum reading standard by the time they reach school leaving age, with the most recent NAPLAN results revealing that roughly 10% of students across all year levels require additional support in reading. Furthermore, First Nations children and children residing in remote areas or attending disadvantaged schools exhibit even lower reading performance.

Dr Lisa Furlong from Flinders Caring Futures Institute explains that there is a deficiency in the training of Australian teachers during their university education when it comes to effectively teaching reading. Additionally, children struggling with learning disorders such as dyslexia can encounter obstacles in accessing extra support due to financial constraints, geographical limitations, and extensive service waiting lists.

Research indicates that children with reading challenges face a heightened risk of persisting academic, social and financial difficulties as they mature.

"Learning to read is a fundamental life skill and a basic human right. It is essential not only for personal growth and development but also for the overall health and wellbeing of the general population," Dr Furlong said, emphasising the significance of achieving reading proficiency. "Furthermore, students who struggle with reading are more likely to experience academic underachievement, disruptive school behaviour, poor mental health outcomes, limited employment prospects, reduced earning potential in adulthood, and overrepresentation in the youth justice system."

Dr Furlong leads and co-leads several collaborative projects with institutions such as the Australian Catholic University, La Trobe University, Macquarie University, and the University of Canterbury with

leading researchers in this field including Professor Pamela Snow, Associate Professor Tanya Serry, Professor Gail Gillon, Professor Brigid McNeill, and Associate Professor Saskia Kohnen.

These projects focus on improving the quality of reading instruction provided by teachers to all children; improving speech pathologists' capacity to work in the literacy domain; and, improving access to reading interventions for children who require additional support using technology-based models of delivery, like telepractice and mobile health apps.

One noteworthy project that is in preparation, is the development of a mobile app that can be used by young children to support the development of their early literacy skills.

"By creating a mobile app that supports young children in learning to read, our objective is to ensure that every child, regardless of their geographical location, can access early literacy support, serving to fill a gap as children wait for services or to provide a higher dosage of practice activities outside of clinical settings," Dr Furlong explained.

To inform the development of this mobile app, a world-first evidence-based evaluation of mobile apps for early literacy skills is underway, adopting a systematic review process to identify and evaluate apps available on Google Play and the App Store claiming to support early literacy skill development.

Other projects are focussed on building the capabilities of teachers and speech pathologists to deliver effective instruction and intervention for oral language and literacy. This includes exploring collaborative teaching practices between teachers and speech pathologists for early literacy and oral language instruction within classrooms, transforming reading instruction in schools to align with the Science of Reading, and enhancing the preparation of teachers and speech pathologists in universities to deliver high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction and intervention.

"Students who do not achieve proficiency in reading by grade three face substantial challenges throughout their schooling and potentially face lifelong consequences," Dr Furlong said, underlining the significance of early reading achievement.

Dr Furlong concluded, "I'm sure we can all appreciate the importance of being a literate member of society. As a researcher, I can help children by exploring ways in which we can improve access to support and enhance the quality of the instruction and intervention they receive."

South Australia's child development initiative: Early screening for lifelong impact

Flinders Caring Futures Institute news - 27 September



Since 2009, the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) has identified a troubling trend in the decline of childhood development in South Australia, particularly among 'middle-class' families.

Many children are not receiving the recommended number of developmental screenings before they begin primary school. Furthermore, parents and carers are not utilising developmental screening and child health check services, which is placing children at a higher risk for developmental issues.

The "Enhancing Health and Development Outcomes for Children Aged 0-5: A Nurse Practitioner-led Routine Healthy Development Assessment" project led by Flinders Caring Futures Institute's Associate Professor Yvonne Parry and Dr Matthew Ankers was piloted to address the issue.

The South Australian Department for Education was a key collaborator on this project, providing funding and support to develop the program. Goodstart Early Learning Centres were industry partners and facilitated the health checks and developmental screenings.

As of August 2023, 1,000 children between 0 and 5 years of age were screened by Nurse Practitioners and Registered Nurses in Goodstart Early Learning Centres across South Australia.

"Using the Brigance developmental screening tool, we've identified over 300 instances of developmental delays, prompting crucial referrals for specialised support services like speech pathology, occupational therapy, and pediatricians," remarks Dr Matthew Ankers, underscoring the project's significant impact on early childhood development.

This research builds upon Associate Professor Parry's earlier work, where she developed a Nurse

Practitioner-led model of care service specifically designed for children and their families living in homelessness. This earlier initiative addressed unmet healthcare and access needs within a specialist homeless service.

The critical protocols for health assessments and data collection methods used in the current project were established during Associate Professor Parry's previous research.

Additionally, her work pioneered the process of embedding Nurse Practitioner services within multiple community settings, laying the foundation for the current project's success.

"Early intervention in childhood development is paramount, as it profoundly shapes adult health and life outcomes. The project's health assessments and developmental screenings play a pivotal role in ensuring a brighter future for our children by identifying and addressing challenges early on," explains Dr Matthew Ankers, co-leader of the project.

Parents and childcare centre directors have responded positively to the project, with its associated outcomes of improved access to care and reduced waiting times for services.

Stakeholders include the South Australian Department for Education, Goodstart Early Learning Centres, and participating families. The project aligns with the Caring Futures Institute's goals of improving lives, addressing social determinants of health, and promoting social care in the community.

The pilot marks the first-time extensive data has been collected from presumed healthy children without prior health or developmental concerns.

"We're not just identifying issues; we're supporting families in accessing essential services like NDIS and referrals to other healthcare professionals," stresses Dr Ankers.

The long-term impact of this research is practice change and improving children's quality of life by addressing their health and developmental needs at the community level.

It has the potential to inform policy, train professionals, and change behaviours to prioritise early intervention and support.

The Caring Futures Institute would like to thank the families and children who participated in the project, who were instrumental in its success.

Advancing international inclusive literacy practices for children with developmental disabilities

Flinders Caring Futures Institute news - 27 September



Learning to read is a human right yet children with developmental disabilities often receive inadequate literacy instruction. This issue is compounded by the fact that some parents and educators may hold lower expectations for these children, which can limit their access to valuable learning opportunities and essential resources.

Professor Joanne Arciuli from Flinders Caring Futures Institute emphasises the vital role schools play in literacy:

“Inclusive literacy practices in schools ensure that all children are given opportunities to learn which affects a variety of life outcomes including academic, vocational, social and health outcomes.”

Professor Joanne Arciuli is a member of the Healthy Start to Life area of the Caring Futures Institute and leads a program of research focussed on child development and disability with particular expertise in communication, cognition, and wellbeing. Notably, she has recently secured nationally competitive grant funding for ongoing projects in this field as lead investigator from the Australian Research Council and Channel 7 Children’s Research Foundation.

Earlier this year Professor Arciuli was invited to be a visiting scholar at Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom, for a month. She shared that Not-

tingham was a major centre of lace production at one point in history and she enjoyed walking among the striking curved buildings in Old Lace Market District.

The purpose of her visit was to spend time with long-time colleague Professor Clare Wood and her team at the prestigious Centre for Research in Language, Education and Developmental Inequities (CLEDI).

Professor Wood and Professor Arciuli have known each other for several years through their involvement with the international Society for Scientific Studies of Reading.

“We both have expertise in children’s literacy development but have not yet undertaken research together,” Professor Arciuli explained, “by joining forces, we can increase internationalisation activities at our respective universities with a view to making global impact on inclusive literacy practice in partnership with policy makers, clinicians, educators, parents, and of course children.”

Together with Professor Wood and their co-authors, Professor Arciuli is writing a paper that offers policy guidance for inclusive literacy instruction. Their aim is to provide a framework that supports educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in creating environments where every child can thrive academically.

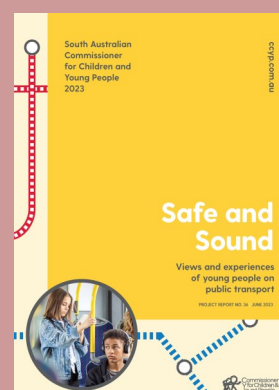
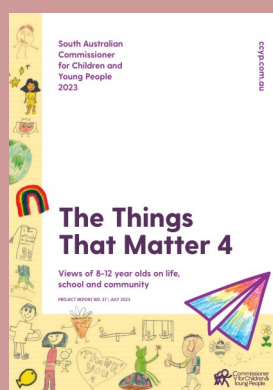
During her visit, Professor Arciuli presented her research at a CLEDI stakeholder meeting attended by local school educators. She also shared the findings from her research on co-design practices; a project funded by the Caring Futures Institute, which she led with co-authors from the Institute during her time as methodological innovations lead and Dean of Research at College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

The team at CLEDI invited Professor Arciuli to preview a new tool for co-design and interdisciplinary collaboration called CoNavigator.

“This new tool is unlike any other I’ve used previously. It is not just about distilling ideas into a single consensus view. It allows for far more complex and inclusive idea generation and planning than other tools.”

CCYP Reports - Keeping Our Promises ::: The Things That Matter 4 ::: Safe and Sound

<https://www.ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports>



Breastfeeding helps mother's cardio health for three years or more

Media Release - 3 August, University of Adelaide



A new South Australian study has found breastfeeding for six months or more appears to reduce the risk of cardiovascular problems developing in mothers for at least three years after delivery.

The surprising cardio-metabolic benefit for maternal health is particularly important for women who experienced a complicated pregnancy, which can increase their chance of developing cardiovascular disease (CVD) later in life.

The new results – published this month in the *International Breastfeeding Journal* by experts from the University of Adelaide and Flinders University – stem from a long-running study of 160 breastfeeding mothers who took part in follow-up health checks after delivery of their babies.

The study found women who breastfed for at least six months experienced lower blood pressure and body-weight recovery (or BMI) for up to three years after the birth of their baby.

Senior author, Professor Claire Roberts, who leads the Pregnancy Health and Beyond ('PHaB Lab') research group at Flinders University, says the study was positive for women with pregnancy complications, as they recorded lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol measures at three years postpartum.

"That means that breastfeeding improves women's

cardio metabolic risk factors, which is good news for new mothers who might be at risk of developing future cardiovascular and metabolic diseases," says Matthew Flinders Professor Roberts, from Flinders College of Medicine and Public Health.

"Pregnancy complications are associated with later cardiovascular disease risk and their children are also at risk of impaired metabolic health earlier in life. Along with neurological and other health benefits for babies, the World Health Organization recommends breastfeeding exclusively for up to six months, and breastfeeding over 12 months to promote a significant reduction in both chronic hypertension and diabetes in women."

The new South Australian study was led by University of Adelaide PhD Dr Maleesa Pathirana and colleagues from the Robinson Research Institute, Lyell McEwin Hospital cardiology department and Flinders University, who conducted the follow-up of 280 women and their children from the Screening Tests to Predict Outcomes of Pregnancy (STOP) study between 2018 and 2021.

"We found that women who breastfed for at least six months had significantly lower body mass index (BMI), lower blood pressure, mean arterial pressure and lower central blood pressure than those who did not," says Dr Pathirana. We found that if women with at least one major pregnancy complication – like preeclampsia, gestational hypertension and gestational diabetes – breastfed for at least six months, they had significantly lower blood pressure, improved cholesterol profile and lower insulin compared to those who did not breastfeed for at least six months. These findings indicate an overall improvement in cardiovascular health."

The SA researchers recommended further investigations in a larger sample size of women who breastfeed compared to those who choose not to breastfeed. They also recommended more interventions that support breastfeeding in disadvantaged or low socioeconomic areas, particularly for women with pregnancy complications to reduce their lifetime risk of cardiovascular disease.

One in 18 babies born in Australia are conceived via IVF, latest data shows

The 102,157 cycles of IVF performed in 2021 was a 17% increase on 2020, with an average of two cycles for each woman

The annual report from medical researchers at the University of New South Wales found a record 18,594 babies were born in Australia as a result of IVF treatment in 2021, with more than one in three women (37.1%) who completed their first cycle of IVF giving birth. The report is based on the data which all 95 accredited IVF clinics operating across Australia and New Zealand are required to submit to the Australian and New Zealand Assisted Reproduction Database (Anzard).

Professor Robert Norman, an expert in reproductive and periconceptual medicine at the University of Adelaide, said the data showed Australia was one of the countries in the world most dependent on assisted reproductive technologies. "Encouraging fertility in the population involves several measures and adequate support for ART is an important arm of this," Norman said.

Healthy connections help kids cope with cyberbullying

Media release - 18 September, UniSA



TikTok, Instagram or YouTube, whatever the platform, if your teen is active on social media, they may encounter cyberbullying. In fact, 44% of Aussie teens say they've had a negative online experience in the past six months.

Now, University of South Australia researchers are helping parents protect children and teens from the effects of cyberbullying by encouraging social connection, healthy friendships and belonging.

Cyberbullying is the online version of traditional bullying – a misuse of power to cause intentional and repeated harm. It can take many forms, including sending threatening texts, exclusion and intimidation, or harassing by sharing images, texts, and videos without consent and with the intent to humiliate. It can be open and obvious or covert and hidden.

Cyberbullying research expert and change analyst, UniSA's Dr Carmel Taddeo, says while parents may not be able to stop cyberbullying, growing a young person's social connections can promote positive healthy coping and can be a protective factor for them.

In the new book, *Cyberbullying and Online Harms*, Dr Carmel Taddeo and Professor Barbara Spears outline several strategies to help parents support positive coping.

- 1 – Develop your child's self-esteem and confidence.
- 2 – Role model positive communication – listening, negotiating, being assertive and respectful.
- 3 – Provide opportunities for your child to connect with others face-to-face and online.
- 4 – Ask how your child feels about their connections and friendships.

5 – Remember that connecting online is not an indicator of social connectedness.

"As much as they may want to, parents can't always shield their children from online bullying. But they can role model and teach their children how to better cope if they face negative interactions," Dr Taddeo says.

"The heart of this lies with positive relationships and constructive communication. Building a young person's self-esteem and confidence is key. Feeling good about yourself can protect against negativity and is a solid foundation for developing positive friendships.

"Helping children to foster and practice positive communication skills is also important. Learning how to converse and listen, as well as how to negotiate and manage conflict, are all life skills that will help children sustain positive connections in both face-to-face and online contexts.

"When looking at online engagement, parents also need to remember that being online doesn't necessarily mean your child is socially connected. In many instances, it could be a sign of disconnect.

"Providing opportunities for your child to connect with others is extremely important, especially for children who may struggle with friendships. So, whether it's school co-curricular or club activities like sports, music, drama, or science, finding ways for your child to connect in small-scale social and peer groups is a great way to help them build self-esteem and social capital."

When young people do not feel connected to their school or other communities, they don't have the social 'buffers' they need to cope with negative behaviours, both in online and offline environments.

"By nature, people are social creatures, so when we have positive respectful and healthy relationships, we gain a sense of belonging, being cared for, valued, and supported. When we don't have these, we are more at risk of negative experiences, and if we encounter them, we're less likely to ask for help," Dr Taddeo says.

"Talking with your child or teen about their connections and friendships, how they feel about them, and what they may want to change, is always a good move. Given the ways sociotechnical ecosystems are evolving, it's vital that we meaningfully involve young people to help us better understand their world and how they engage in offline, online and hybrid spaces, so we can better support them build healthy self-esteem and positive social connections."