

Friday, 5 April 2019

New early childhood development program for vulnerable kids launches in Adelaide

A new yourtown Early Childhood Development program aimed at increasing child development and wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable pre-school aged children will be launched in Elizabeth today, 5 April.

yourtown developed the free specialised early intervention program to provide much needed support for parents up to age 25 in Playford, Northern Adelaide to help 3-5 year old children not meeting development milestones.

“**yourtown** has been working with young people and parents in the Playford area for the last 13 years and found that many families with small children could do with extra help and support with kids struggling in the early part of their lives,” **yourtown** Head of Client Services Brendan Bourke said.

“We aim to give preschool-aged children the best start in life by using prevention and early intervention approaches critical to creating healthy families, and creating strong, child-friendly communities.

“This includes working with parents to understand their child’s barriers to reaching social development milestones, how to help them thrive at school, collaborative case management and support, and in-home help where needed.”

Mr Bourke said the Elizabeth based program will be trialled over the next 18 months and will work closely with other child development and related organisations in the region. The program aims to help around 50 families throughout the trial.

“Parents and their kids will work with our own specialised child development team and can access play groups, long day care and early childhood services like those by Northern Area Community and Youth Services (NACYS) through the program,” he said.

Special guest speakers at the Elizabeth launch will include Minister for Child Protection The Honourable Rachel Sanderson MP and Northern Area Community and Youth Services’ (NACYS) Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist Dr Matt Doherty who will speak to child development in the region.

Dr Doherty said NACYS’ is excited to be part of a program he says will breach a huge service gap in the region by preparing children for future education.

“We’ve found a high number of young children in North Adelaide are facing issues prior to commencing their schooling journey and do not receive enough support to ensure that their transition into education is successful and engaging,” he said.

“This program will help set children up for the possibility of a life-long love of education creating for them greater success and opportunities. The long-term benefits are infinite!”

The program is voluntary and free to parents and their kids. It is mostly funded by **yourtown**’s Art Union Prize Home supporters with the SA Government also contributing to program costs. Parents can find out more about how to get involved by contacting **yourtown** on 08 8487 0087 or northernadelaideadmin@yourtown.com.au

WHERE AND WHEN?

Launch will take place 10.30am, Friday, 5 April; 7 Philip Highway, Elizabeth

INTERVIEW/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

Tracy Adams, **yourtown** CEO; Peter Ffrench **yourtown** Board Chair; Brendan Bourke, **yourtown** Head of Client Services; Paula Gillespie-Fotheringham, **yourtown** Child Development Specialist and Dr Matt Doherty, NACYS. Tour of new program facilities including child engagement space.

MEDIA CONTACT

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MORE ABOUT THE YOURTOWN EARLY CHILDREN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The program is available to Playford families with children aged 3-5 whose primary caregiver is aged up to 25. At least one of the following factors must also be present:

- Family vulnerabilities have the potential to delay or impair a child's development
- A child requires additional support to achieve developmental milestones
- A child's transition to primary school is at risk
- The family is not engaged with existing early childhood services

It aims to help 3-5 year olds:

- Reach important development milestones
- Become a more engaged and confident learner
- Be better prepared to start school
- Feel a greater sense of confidence and wellbeing

It aims to help parents:

- Learn how to support their child's emotional, social and intellectual development
- Get specialist support for their child
- Learn how to help their child thrive at school
- Learn new strategies and skills for positive parenting
- Build stronger family relationships and support networks

yourtown is a registered charity and public company limited by guarantee providing services young people can access to find jobs, learn skills, become great parents and live safe, happy lives. For over 58 years we've been tackling the issues impacting young people in Australia - like youth unemployment and mental health and taking on issues like family and domestic violence. The community, with **yourtown's** Art Unions, funds most of what we do.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW:

Paula Gillespie-Fotheringham, yourtown Child Development Specialist

Paula Gillespie-Fotheringham has over 15 years' experience working in the field of mental health and social care, gaining experience in children's residential services, CAHMS and adult in-patient units. As an art psychotherapist Paula has worked extensively with both children and adults; specializing in issues of self-harm, attachment and developmental trauma.

Paula founded Manchester Art Psychotherapy Services in 2011 an organization providing art psychotherapy services to schools and government agencies across the North of England. In June 2014 Paula relocated to Australia to take up the role of Head of Creative Therapies at the Ikon Institute. In 2016 Paula moved into the role of Program Coordinator for the Graduate Program in Counselling and Psychotherapy at the University of Adelaide and currently lectures in Expressive Therapies. Until recently Paula maintained a private practice providing Autistic Spectrum Disorder specific services via the NDIS. Paula is passionate about training both psychotherapists and art psychotherapists of the future and is committed to creating research to ensure expressive therapies has a robust evidence base.

Paula took up the role of Child Development Specialist at **yourtown** in February and is excited to be part of a service providing support to parents and children simultaneously.

Dr Matthew Doherty, Clinical Manager, Northern Area Community & Youth Services Inc (NACYS)

Matt is an experienced child and adolescent psychotherapist who, over the last 20 years has had the privilege of working with young people in a variety of psychotherapeutic settings. These settings have included community mental health, homelessness, child sexual abuse, sexual health and acute inpatient hospital care. Matthew has strong interest in Jungian approaches to psychotherapy.

For the last seven years Matthew has been lecturing part-time for the University of Adelaide, in both the School of Medicine and School of Public Health. In these roles he has been helping to train medical students and post graduate psychotherapists in the care of young people and their mental health. His work for NACYS includes providing psychotherapy to complex child and adolescent mental health presentations.