

REACH PROJECT – Conversation Starters

“Conversation Starters” is a project of Parenting Australia and has been funded by FaCS for three years 2004 – 2007. It is funded under their Responding Early Assisting Children initiative (REACH) and builds on the Early Intervention Parenting Project previously delivered by Parenting Australia funded from 2001- 2004.

REACH aims to improve the well-being of children and families by providing national leadership in early intervention and the prevention of child abuse.

“Conversation Starters” is a research project that will focus on families who do not readily access support services. The project is interested in:

- understanding why this is so.
- Investigating if the project can influence services to understand and support these families.

The project will focus on four transitional stages in the family life cycle:

1. becoming a new parent
2. when families access early childhood services
3. when children begin primary school.
4. when children begin secondary school

“Creating Conversations” is targeting families

- in the City of Whittlesea and Shire of Central Goldfields for the first two transitional periods
- in the City of Brimbank and La Trobe Valley, with a particular interest in Morwell, for the second two transitional periods.

“Conversation Starters” is being externally evaluated by the Centre for Adolescent Health and the University of Melbourne.

To find out more about “Conversation Starters” contact:

Pat Jewell <mailto:pat.jewell@jss.org.au>, or
Constance Jenkin <mailto:constance.jenkin@jss.org.au>

See below for a brief profile of Pat and Constance.

Pat Jewell

Pat has Bachelor of Education, Graduate Diploma of Special Education and Educational Studies and is currently working on her Masters in Education. Pat has worked, for the last 20 years, in the parent education field with parents whose children are at risk of child abuse and neglect. Pat is the author of a speech kit for young children, *Getting Good Speech Going*, a parenting manual for parents with an intellectual disability, *Out of the Mainstream* and a parenting manual for professionals facilitating parent groups for diverse family groups.

Pat has worked on the Early Intervention Parenting Project at Parenting Australia, is the President of NAPCAN (National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect) Victoria and teaches in Child and Family Studies Care field at Swinburne University of Technology in both undergraduate and post graduate courses.



Pat Jewell

Constance Jenkin

Constance is a parent educator, author and family therapist. Constance has worked for over 30 years in early childhood education and established some of the first community-based parenting programs in Victoria.

Over the past 15 years her work has focused on training teachers and a broad range of professionals to facilitate parent groups in order to meet the diverse needs of families and adolescents. Constance was the National Coordinator of Supporting Families, a National Parenting Initiative of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. Her parenting kits *Planning Happy Families* and *Parenting Adolescents: A Creative Experience (PACE)*, co authored with Dr Di Bretheron, are widely used throughout Australia.



Constance Jenkin