



AGENDA APPENDIX
Council Meeting
Wednesday 22 June 2016

AGENDA ITEM FOR SEPARATE DISTRIBUTION TO COUNCILLORS AND
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM DUE TO DOCUMENT SIZE.

THE ITEM IS ACCESSIBLE VIA THE COUNCIL WEBSITE OR BY
CONTACTING COUNCIL ON 03 5662 9200.

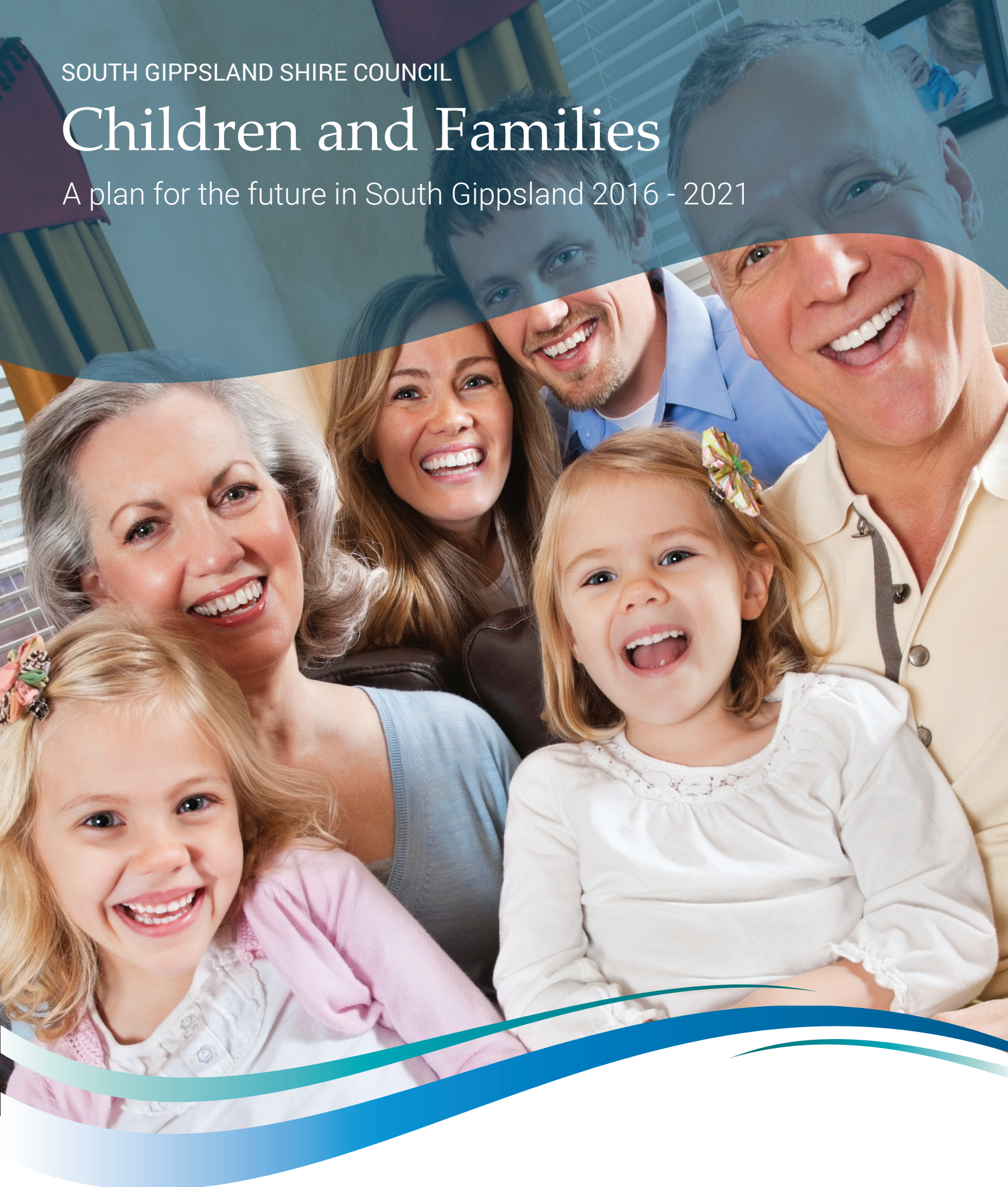
E.12 MUNICIPAL EARLY YEARS PLAN 2016-2021

Appendix 1 – Municipal Early Years Plan - Children and Families - A
plan for the future in South Gippsland 2016-2021

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

Children and Families

A plan for the future in South Gippsland 2016 - 2021



A Child Friendly South Gippsland

We believe in a South Gippsland where what we do and the spaces we provide consider the needs of children. In a child friendly South Gippsland, children's voices and opinions are taken into consideration and influence decision making processes. Children's rights are reflected in policies, laws, programs and budgets.



South Gippsland
Shire Council



Introduction

South Gippsland Shire Council and its partners are committed to improving the outcomes for children and families by working in partnership with the community, service providers and local businesses.

Children and Families – A plan for the future in South Gippsland 2016 – 2021 (the Plan) builds on the work of the previous Municipal Early Years Plan 2011 – 2015 and will be supported by:

- An annual implementation plan providing details of projects and actions towards achieving outcomes of this plan.
- Annual reporting against the projects and actions.
- Monitoring on outcomes every five years.

Purpose of this plan

The plan focuses on partnerships between local agencies, levels of government, children and families, and the wider community to improve outcomes for children aged 0 - 8 years in South Gippsland.

It is supported by a shared vision between agencies working with children and families in South Gippsland. The strategic direction of this plan will be incorporated into detailed implementation plans and service plans resulting in a collective impact approach.

What the research tells us

Overwhelming evidence indicates the first years of a child's life are critical to healthy development.

Early childhood is a time when a child's brain is developing rapidly. The evidence shows that positive, healthy development is critical for setting foundations for lifelong learning and wellbeing. Engagement with high quality early years services for children and families supports this development with positive outcomes over the long term.

Healthy development depends on the quality and reliability of a young child's relationships with the important people in their life, both within and outside the family. Support to families and caregivers helps build a strong foundation for the child. Stressful events can impact child development, health, social competence and ability to succeed in school and life. Research indicates that providing extra support for vulnerable families and appropriate early intervention are ways to break the cycle of disadvantage.

(Newman, L.K., Mares, S (eds) 2012)

Children's rights are influenced and impacted by their everyday experiences - where they play, how they learn, who they live with, the information they access, and where they get help when they get sick.

<http://www.unicef.org.au/our-work/children-in-australia>



South Gippsland
Shire Council

Our Children and Families



5 year olds fully immunised

SOUTH GIPPSLAND
94%

AUSTRALIA
92%

Immunisation Register

Low birth weight babies

SOUTH GIPPSLAND
4%

VICTORIA
7%

Birth Register

Children fully breast fed at 3 months

SOUTH GIPPSLAND
56%

VICTORIA
51%

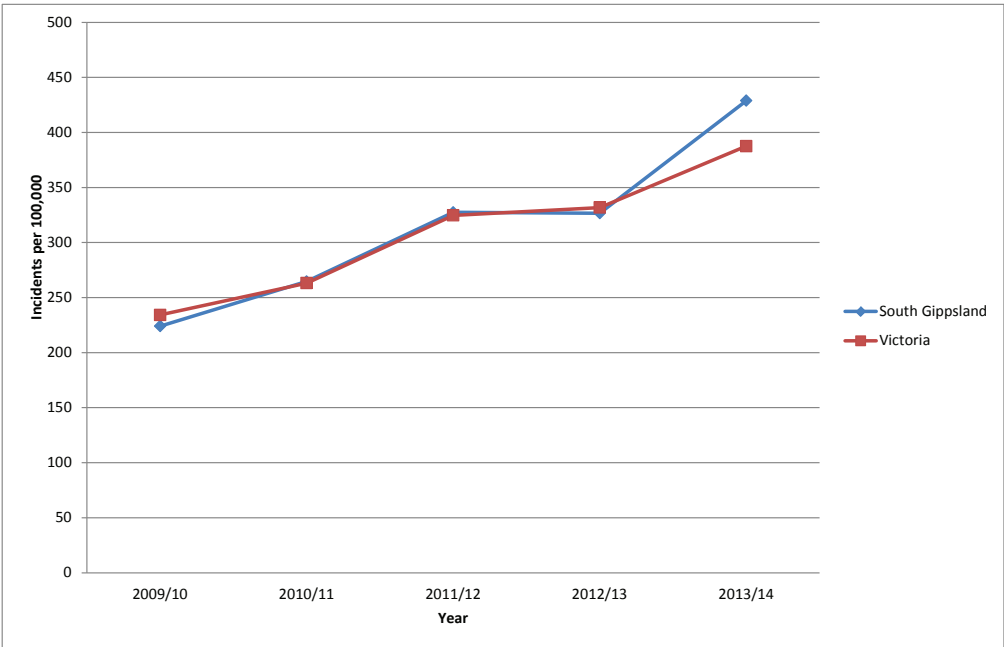
Children developmentally vulnerable in more than one domain

VICTORIA
20%

SOUTH GIPPSLAND
17%

Australian Early Childhood Development Index

Family Violence where children are present South Gippsland



Three towns
with before
and after
school care

(out of 26)

6037

Unpaid Child
Carers

Victoria Police Family Incidence Report 2009 - 2014

"We have an obligation as a community to protect and nurture our children by doing what we can to give them stable and safe family environments."

Auditor General John Doyle

Victorian Auditor-General's Report Early
Intervention Services for Vulnerable
Children and Families May 2015





Services for Children and Families

Health, education and care, early intervention and community services are available within South Gippsland. Services, including parent support programs, public dental health and paediatrics, require families to travel outside the Shire.

South Gippsland Shire Council provides services to children and families including Maternal and Child Health, Immunisation, Supported Playgroups, Library and Preschool Inclusion.

How we developed the Plan

The plan was developed in consultation with children, families and services providers in South Gippsland. Using surveys, drawings, interviews and discussions our community informed us about what would make South Gippsland more child friendly.

'Children learn in the context of their families and community. Throughout the early years children acquire knowledge and skills that form the foundations of their later achievement. They learn how to learn and they develop dispositions for learning and a sense of agency. They make decisions and choices, to influence events and to have an impact on their world'

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for Children 0-8 years p25

What our children think

Through drawings and conversations our youngest community members presented their views of what they liked about South Gippsland and what would make it better.

Playing on community infrastructure

Rail Trails
Playground
Monkey bars
Playground
BMX Track

Playing and learning with others

Kindergarten
School

What children like doing in South Gippsland

Playing in the natural environment

Climbing big trees
Exploring with the dog
Going to the beach
Walking the dog

Spending time with family

Cooking
Shopping
Library



Things to play with outside in the natural environment

- More rocks
- Sand at the park
- The beach

Things to support imaginative play

- Fairies
- Flying clouds
- A penguin
- Dump truck

What children wish for in South Gippsland

Equipment to play on in parks and playgrounds

- A park
- A tunnel
- A bigger slide
- Bike trail in Korumburra

What families and service providers told us

A Child Friendly Shire

A survey for families and service providers was based on the UNESCO Child Friendly Cities and focuses on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Great Things

Parks, sporting facilities and playgrounds

The natural environment

Activities for children outside of family

Supportive communities

Maternal and child health services

Playgroups

Children are healthy and supported by health services

Concerns

Busy roads and limited footpaths make it unsafe for children in our community places

Not all children feel safe in the home or in care

Some families feel isolated

Mental health support to parents and children is limited

Food security and access to food for some families

Families cannot access the education and care services they need

Children with disabilities have difficulty accessing suitable services and places

Children are not free from drugs or alcohol in our community



'Many of our rural and regional communities are thriving and provide positive and supportive environments in which Victorian families lead happy and productive lives. We want to build on these strengths and the many positive features of rural and regional life, such as the high levels of social connection and strong participation in community, cultural and recreational activities.'



Our Vision:

We want a South Gippsland where children and their families have a sense of belonging in a safe community where they can be happy, healthy and develop to their full potential.

Key principles

Five key principles were developed in consultation with the community and experts in early childhood, and by researching strategic plans and legislation along with supporting data at a local, state and national level.

We support a South Gippsland with:

1. Child friendly spaces and places
2. Children and families connected with the community for whole of life
3. Children and families that are healthy, well and safe
4. Equal access and inclusion to services for children and families
5. Collaborative partnerships that support children and families

1. Child friendly spaces and places

Outcomes

- A child friendly built environment
- A natural environment accessible to children and families
- Multi-use buildings catering for children and families

2. Belonging and connecting

Outcomes

- The voice of the child is reflected in the community
- Children and families are active participants in their community
- Children are connected to services from birth
- Children and families connected to learning
- The diversity of children and families is supported

3. Happy and well, safe and secure

Outcomes

- Children and families are healthy and well
- Children and families can be safe and feel safe
- Children and families have mental health support

4. Access to services

Outcomes

- Integrated services and practices
- Creative, flexible services outside main towns
- A workforce with capacity and energy
- Better access, equity and inclusion for all

5. Partnerships support children and families

Outcomes

- Strong links with local partners in the region
- Connect and work with children and families



1. Child friendly spaces and places

OUTCOME: A child friendly built environment

Strategies

- 1.1
Collaborate with all partners to plan and deliver a child and family friendly built environment

Indicators

Percentage of Council buildings and parks audited as 'accessible to all' maintained or improved

Early years facilities maintained to be accessible to all children and their families

Improved walkability of streets around early years services and schools

All early years services compliant with National Quality Standards (NQS)

Number of playgrounds with all ability installations

OUTCOME: A natural environment accessible to children and families

Strategies

- 1.2
Maintain the natural environment for the future of children and families
- 1.3
Connect the built and natural environment to provide access to children and families

Indicators

Planning development decisions support provision of open space and access to the natural environment

Increase in improved built access to natural attractions

OUTCOME: Multi-use buildings catering for children and families

Strategies

- 1.4
Deliver affordable infrastructure available for use by children and families

Indicators

Increase in percentage of buildings accessible to a mix of users

New Council community buildings cater for use by children and families or their service providers

Regulatory management records for smoking in outdoor dining areas and playgrounds

2. Belonging and connecting

OUTCOME: The voice of the child is reflected in our work

Strategies

Indicators

2.1

Plan with children and families

Consultation and submission records show the opinion of children has been sought

NQS compliance shows consultation with children and families

OUTCOME: Children and families are active participants in their community

Strategies

Indicators

2.2

Children and families are connected with their local community

Playgroup participation – enrolments/attendances maintained or increased

3 year old and 4 year old kindergarten participation – enrolment/attendances maintained or increased

Volunteer participation in young families maintained or increased

Library programs catering for children and families and level of participation maintained or increased

OUTCOME: Children are connected to services from birth

Strategies

Indicators

2.3

Monitor continuous service provision from birth to school

Percentage of children attending each early years service maintained or increased

Percentage of children immunised at key ages maintained or increased

Education and care attendance rates maintained and match enrolments

Percentage of children at Maternal and Child Health key ages and stages maintained or increased



2. Belonging and connecting continued...

OUTCOME: Children and families connected to learning

Strategies	Indicators
2.4 Provide opportunities for engagement in learning for children and families	Kindergarten participation rates over 12 months maintained or increased
	Education and care participation rates maintained or increased
	Waiting lists decreased
	Percentage of children participating in education and care most suited to their needs increased
	Playgroup memberships and participation maintained or increased
	Increase in proportion of children on track Australian Early Development Census

OUTCOME: Diversity in children and families is supported

Strategies	Indicators
2.5 Plan and develop programs and events that are inclusive of the diversity of children and families in the community	NQS compliant
	Schools delivering Kids Matter components (www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/)

3. Happy and well, safe and secure

OUTCOME: Children and families are healthy and well

Strategies	Indicators
3.1 Health services are available to children and families	Maternal and Child Health key ages and stages percentage maintained or increased
3.2 Children's health needs are met	Proportion of children breastfed at 3 months maintained or increased
	Proportion of children immunised maintained or increased
	Low birth weight babies maintained or decreased
	Victorian Health Survey – child health levels maintained or improved
	Children exposed to tobacco in the home decreased
	Dental health service access by children 0 – 8 years increased or maintained
	Number of education and care settings that are engaged in the Healthy Together Achievement Program increased or maintained (www.achievementprogram.healthytogether.vic.gov.au)

OUTCOME: Children and families can be safe and feel safe

Strategies	Indicators
3.3 Children and families are safe and feel safe in the home and community	Families referred into community programs via Child First
	Family violence incidences where child is present noted and informs action of partners
3.4 Working towards a safe built environment for children and families	Improved or maintained perceptions of safety (bullying, cultural safety and harassment)
	Improved walkability of streets around early years services and schools

OUTCOME: Children and families have mental health support

Strategies	Indicators
3.5 Implement preventative actions for good mental health and wellbeing	Number and range of mental health promotion programs available in schools
	Mental health services available and attended by children and families in South Gippsland
3.6 Children and families are connected to mental health services and support networks	Referrals of children and families to mental health support services



4. Access to services

OUTCOME: Integrated services and practices

Strategies

Indicators

- 4.1
Collaborate to provide practices and services that are child and family centred

- Documented multi access points to services
- Joint policies and protocols developed
- Evidence of multi-disciplinary teams
- Universal service protocols in place

OUTCOME: Creative, flexible services outside main towns

Strategies

Indicators

- 4.2
Work with the community to investigate alternative models for service delivery

- Varied services, service types and locations evident
- Outreach delivered in range of locations

OUTCOME: Professional practice is supported in our workforce

Strategies

Indicators

- 4.3
Strengthen and build the capacity of those working with children and families

- Support networks are available and attended
- Staff and community skills updated in line with current trends and practises
- Training records for all early years services indicate regular participation

OUTCOME: Better access, equity and inclusion for all

Strategies

Indicators

- 4.4
Develop innovative strategies and partnerships to connect to vulnerable families in the community
- 4.5
Support the provision of equal access to services without discrimination or favour

- Vulnerable families enrolled/attending range of services, community events
- Documented additional family support services
- Preventative support services for all families available
- Reduced waitlists for families accessing services
- Increased outreach or pop-up services

3. Partnerships support children and families

OUTCOME: Strong links with local partners in the region

Strategies

5.1
Establish and maintain partnerships with people and organisations working to support children and families in South Gippsland and the Gippsland Region

Indicators

Local and regional networks support early years professionals and community members

Evidence of shared program delivery, practices and protocols

OUTCOME: Connect and work with children and families

Strategies

5.2
Support community led actions in support of children and families

Indicators

Support programs for playgroups

Expertise shared between Council, service providers and community members





Monitoring and reporting on our progress

Council, in conjunction with its project partners, will review the progress and impact of the plan annually and at the end of the five years in 2021.

The implementation action plan will be reviewed annually and will consider:

- **progress on strategies and actions in the implementation plan**
- **relevance to current and emerging needs**
- **influential State and Federal Government policy and planning**
- **emerging research and practices**

An annual report will be provided to Council, plan partners and relevant government departments. The final review will consider the extent to which the outcomes have been achieved through the actions of the plan and other influencing factors.

The final review will inform the development of the next Early Years Plan for children and families in South Gippsland.

Local Partners and Plans

Partners contributed to the development of the plan through their knowledge and experience with children and families in South Gippsland. Individual organisations and networks in the area provide a range of services. Local networks and alliances include:

- Child FIRST Alliance and Integrated Family Services
- Children Services Providers Network
- Inner Gippsland Child and Youth Area Partnership
- Karma Learning Alliance
- Preventing Men's Violence Against Women Gippsland and South Coast Networks
- Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation
- South Coast Best Start Partnership
- West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation

Strategies and policies guiding our practice

The Children and Families Plan 2016-2021 draws from our partners' expertise in early childhood and guidance from strategic plans and legislation.

Council

South Gippsland Shire Council plays a variety of roles in support of children and families as planners, providers and funders of a diverse range of services programs and places across the Shire. Some key plans that guide Council's work with children and families includes:

- Council Plan 2013 – 2017
- Early Years Infrastructure Review – Satellite Infrastructure Services of Corner Inlet
- Building Assets Policy Framework March 2013
- Central Enrolment Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Policy 2016
- South Gippsland Blueprint for Social Community Infrastructure 2014 – 2029
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013 – 2017
- West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation Early Years Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017





Government

Federal

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (2012)

National Quality Framework 0-5 years

[Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015](#)

State

[Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment \(Child Safe Standards\) Act 2015](#)

[Family Violence Protection Act 2008](#)

[Children, Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#)

[Health Records Act 2001](#)

[Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#)

[Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008](#)

[Local Government Act 1989](#)

[Information Privacy Act 2000](#)

[Public Records Act 1973](#)

Legislation and Regulation

Legislation and regulations guide the delivery of services and programs to children and families.

The legislation and regulations guiding Council and our partners are listed below:

Regulatory guides

Victorian Government (2016) No Jab, No Play 2016

Department of Health and Human Services (2016) Child Safe Standards

Plans and Guides

Government strategic plans and guides link legislation to delivery of service and practice:

Department of Education and Training (2016) *Stakeholder and community engagement key findings report: The Education State, Early Childhood*

Department of Health and Human Services (2015) *Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children Project*

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2014) *Early Years Strategic Plan - Improving outcomes for all Victorian children 2014 – 2020*

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2014) *Aspiring Learners, Thriving Communities - A long-term approach to improving rural and regional learning outcomes*

Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Municipal Association of Victoria, Early Learning Association of Australia (2014) *Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care – Partnering agreement*

Victorian Government (2013) *Victoria's Vulnerable Children Our shared responsibility Strategy 2013 – 2022*

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2011) *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework 0-8 years*

Department of Education and Training Best Start Partnership Action Plan

www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/

www.achievementprogram.healthytogether.vic.gov.au

Influential researchers and peak bodies

[UNICEF Child Friendly Cities](#)

[Early Childhood Australia](#)

[Early Learning Association Australia](#)

[Community Childcare Association Inc](#)

Dr Tim Moore - Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, The Royal Children's Hospital

Dr Louise Newman – Monash University Centre for Development Psychiatry and Psychology

Professor Frank Oberklaid – Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, The Royal Children's Hospital, University of Melbourne.



Thank You

We acknowledge and thank our partners for their ongoing support and work in developing Children and Families – A plan for the future in South Gippsland

Our partners in planning include:

- Children
- Families
- Education and care providers
- Family committees of management
- Service providers for children and families
- State and Federal Government Department representatives
- Carers and volunteers and
- Council staff.

For further information contact

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www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au