



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

**OUR
VISION:
EVERY
YOUNG
CHILD IS
THRIVING
AND
LEARNING**

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 29 August 2018

New early response program for family trauma in early childhood

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is proud to deliver a new program for educators—**Early signals. First Responses**—funded by the NSW Domestic & Family Violence Innovation Fund. It will resource and support early childhood educators and carers to better recognise and respond to young children who have been exposed to or experienced family violence.

ECA welcomes the NSW government's support for young children and early childhood educators and carers through its DVF Innovation Fund. The focus of the Innovation Fund on long-term prevention and early intervention strategies ensure educators receive resources and information to respond to the needs of young children who have been exposed to violence in the home.

Early Signals. First Responses is a unique program developed by Early Childhood Australia that combines face-to-face and online learning techniques including: webinars; expert coaching and networking opportunities and is developed by experts in the fields of domestic violence and trauma in children.

'Sadly one-in-four children in NSW experience family violence so there could be up to twenty five thousand children under five years old attending early childhood services who need support and understanding,' said ECA CEO Samantha Page.

Very young children who have been exposed to violence in the home do not have words to express their anguish and trauma. There is increasing awareness that children exhibiting difficult, challenging or withdrawn behaviours may be affected by trauma, and educators are calling out for support and resources on how to recognise trauma affected behaviour and respond in a way that helps children.

ECA is honoured to have the support of expert collaborators: Professor Richard Fletcher (University of Newcastle), Dr Anne Kennedy (early childhood researcher and consultant), Alys Gagnon (The Parenthood), Janet Williams-Smith (child protection specialist and now Director Service Development & Strategy, ECMS) and well-established early childhood service providers who bring decades of experience in early childhood, family services and transdisciplinary teams: Goodstart NSW, Gowrie NSW, SDN Children's Services and Betty Spears Child Care Centre.

Our partners will participate in an innovative component which uses video feedback and intensive coaching, mentoring and workshops.

'Our aim with **Early Signals. First Responses** is to develop the skills and confidence of early childhood educators to safely and professionally respond to young children affected by family violence and trauma and work with their families,' said Ms Page.

/continues...

‘This innovative program will support educators to respond to children’s immediate unmet needs and change the long-term trajectory that early exposure to conflict, abuse and hidden violence creates over young children’s future lives.’

‘Based on evidence-informed practice, ECA’s **Early Signals. First Responses** will enable educators to support children to process their feelings, reduce anxiety, support secure attachment with caregivers and develop protective behaviours that potentially interrupt generational patterns of violence,’ concluded Ms Page.

View the NSW DV Innovation Fund page [here](#)

ENDS

For interviews with CEO Samantha Page, contact: Carolin Wenzel 0475 554 999

Early Childhood Australia is the peak advocacy body for children from birth to eight years, their families and early childhood professionals.