



LOCAL GOVERNMENT & EARLY YEARS NETWORKS

Working in Partnership Resource

This resource is available online and in print. The online version is available on the Connecting Early Years Networks Portal at eyn.dropin.org.au and on the following websites:

Local Government Professionals - Community Development Network:

http://www.lgprofessionalswa.org.au/Lgmawa/Branches_Networks/WA_Networks/Community_Development_Network/Lgmawa/Branches_Networks/Networks/Community_Development_Network.aspx?hkey=eecafdc2-c773-476d-a4c5-f6ca7e13d883

Department of Local Government and Communities - Local Government and Early Years Networks Working in Partnership:

<https://www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/AdviceSupport/Pages/Early-Years-and-Parenting.aspx>

Western Australian Local Government Association - Early Years:

<http://walga.asn.au/Policy-Advice-and-Advocacy/Community-Development.aspx>

The printed version is available from WACOSS by contacting eyn@wacoss.org.au

FOREWORD

Research into child development overwhelmingly supports the view that focusing on early childhood health and wellbeing leads to positive outcomes as children grow older, as well as reduced economic costs to governments and families.

Local Government is the closest sphere of government to the community and therefore has enormous potential to influence a community that values and supports children in the early years and their families.

Local Governments play an essential role across a range of areas that can improve the health and wellbeing of young children including Early Childhood Education and Care services; being the largest provider of venues for parent-led playgroups; supported playgroups; children's health and safety; children's recreation and public spaces; library services and planning.

Early Years Networks (EYNs) are voluntary community groups which may be comprised of allied health professionals, such as speech, occupational and physiotherapists, early education and care staff, parents, teachers, librarians, nurses, community members, local government employees, and a range of other community stakeholders, committed to supporting children and their families in the early years. The strengths of Early Years Networks lie in the member's commitment to the philosophy of collaboration and their wealth of collective early years and community knowledge.

Local Governments working together with Early Years Networks can be powerful allies in creating environments in which children in their early years can thrive through coordinated approaches to planning, delivery and review of services and supports within local communities.

The development of this resource was made possible by the WACOSS Connecting Early Years Network Support Project¹, working in partnership with the Department of Local Government and Communities (DLGC); The West Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and Local Government Professionals.

We also acknowledge the generous support of staff from the Cities of Rockingham, Wanneroo and Gosnells, the Department of Education, the State Library of Western Australia and Early Years Network members across the State of Western Australia.

The Community Development Roundtable members urge you to draw on this resource. It provides valuable information for Local Governments and Early Years Networks about how to improve outcomes for young children in your community.



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The Purpose of This Resource

This resource has been developed to provide practical information, tools and resources to support partnerships between Local Governments and Early Years Networks to achieve positive outcomes for children and families in local communities.

This resource promotes collaboration by:

- Early Years Networks becoming familiar with Local Government decision making processes and how Local Governments support services and communities.
- Local Governments:
 - Understanding the importance of investment in children in the early years;
 - Becoming familiar with the role of an Early Years Network;
 - Partnering with and providing support to Early Years Networks in their area.

The Importance of Investment in the Early Years

Research demonstrates that what happens from conception to age three influences a person's development throughout their life. This includes brain development, social skills and the ability to learn. By the age of three years, a child's brain has reached 90% of its adult size with research indicating that brain sensitivity to language, numeracy, social skills and emotional control peaking before the age of four. The early years lay down the child's foundation for later life. Improving children's development for this critical period can have a transformative social and economic effect. The quality of a child's earliest environments and the availability of appropriate experiences at specific stages of development are crucial in shaping developmental outcomes. Longitudinal data from international studies demonstrate that children who are developmentally vulnerable at the start of their

schooling are likely to continue a life trajectory of poor life outcomes. Early intervention is the most cost effective and effective way to deal with disadvantage. Every dollar invested in quality early childhood development for disadvantaged children produces a 7%-10% return, per child, per year².

Child development is influenced by many factors, from the family environment and community, to wider influences such as government policies, environmental conditions and broader social norms, beliefs and attitudes. Local Governments and Early Years Networks are well placed to ensure local communities are nurturing, safe and supported, where children can grow to reach their full potential.

For further information on the importance of investment in the early years and its long term benefits [click here](#).



WA Early Years Population Profile 0-9 years

A WA Early Years Population Profile for children aged zero to nine years has been developed by the Department of Local Government and Communities as a resource to provide Early Years Networks and Local Governments with evidence-based information about children living in their communities.

These interactive maps provide accurate and up to date demographic information about children. The maps with a quick start guide can be found by [clicking here](#).

Interactive Maps

To access information about the number of children in the early years in your local area scroll down to the section 'Interactive Maps

for the WA Early Years Population Profile 0-9 years'. There are two interactive maps available, a Single Map View and a Double Map View. These can be used as a mapping and data analysis / visualisation tool.

Single Map View

Single Map View is considered more suitable for analysing data for one location or for exploring data for multiple locations at a specific point in time.

Double Map View

Double Map View for comparing data and trends for one or more locations.

²The Ounce of Prevention Fund 2017

What are Early Years Networks?

Early Years Networks support children aged 0 to 8 years and have existed in Western Australia since 2003. In January 2017, there were approximately 50 active Early Years Networks across Western Australia. Early Years Networks play an important role in developing and implementing initiatives, services and activities aimed at improving outcomes for young children and families. They do this by connecting across local communities and working collaboratively. Early Years Networks provide a strong platform to engage with key stakeholders across organisations; increase opportunities to coordinate policies and programs; and respond to evidenced based information about children living in their community through the use of tools such as the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC).

Each Network is unique, with its own culture and set of practices based on its members and the needs of the community.

Early Years Networks provide opportunities to:

1. Share knowledge and experiences collectively to improve communities for children and their families.
2. Engage members to discuss emerging early years issues across their community and advocate solutions to decision makers.
3. Gain insights and perspectives from community representatives to understand what may be influencing early childhood development.
4. Explore the AEDC results together with other information to understand community strengths and areas for improvement in supporting children's development.
5. Foster a variety of short and long term community initiatives to improve local conditions for children and families.

6. Strengthen community understanding about the importance of the early years.
7. Promote early years' initiatives to the community, for example Children's Week and parenting workshops.
8. Form smaller working groups of members to run the early years network's activities/ events as detailed in an action plan.
9. Invite guest speakers and presenters to meetings to introduce or develop ideas, programs or topics relevant to the Early Years Network.

If you want to contact the Early Years Network in your community visit the [CEYNSP portal](#) or email the CEYNSP team at WACOSS via eyn@wacoss.org.au.



Broome – Shire of Broome

What are Local Governments and their Role within Communities?

There are 139 Local Governments or Councils in Western Australia of which 30 are metropolitan and 109 are regional.

The type and nature of services delivered by Local Governments varies. Western Australia's growing population has increased the demand for a wide range of services in all areas of the State.

Under the Local Government Act 1995, Local Governments in Western Australia have a

general function to provide for the good government of people in their district. These wide powers mean Local Governments have the authority to provide community development and community services, including facilities, as long as they do not inappropriately duplicate services provided by others.

Local Governments have a vital role in our communities including the provision of public spaces and community facilities, planning well-designed communities, providing services targeting social issues and building stronger community ties through events and community engagement.

The services provided by Local Governments generally fall into three categories:

Services to people and the community

Community services and family and neighbourhood support; Early Years Networks; recreation, arts and culture; maintaining sporting grounds, reserves, parks and gardens; provision of public libraries; seniors' services and childcare services.

Services to property

Roads and footpaths; land drainage and development; sewage disposal (in some country areas); refuse disposal and recycling services; litter control; street lighting and underground power; street cleaning; and Emergency Management Services.

Regulatory services

Exercise control to enforce legislation covering health, buildings, signs, goods, litter, planning, parking, fire and traffic hazards.

Why is it Important for Local Governments and Early Years Networks to Partner?

By working effectively with Early Years Networks, Local Governments obtain access to input from key stakeholders and to alternative service delivery models for consideration, including services that could be co-delivered (for example, by pooling resources). Such collaboration facilitates more informed decision making, improved policy and program development and increased engagement with community sector organisations. This enables the development of policy and programs that build community resilience with a focus on achieving community outcomes, which in turn achieves improved outcomes for young children and their families.

The benefits of effective partnerships between Local Governments and Early Years Networks flow on to communities by improving access to streamlined support and services by encouraging community ownership and participation.

Early Years Networks and Local Governments can make use of a range of options to work together including understanding each other's priorities, the challenges faced by their communities, the social, economic and environmental conditions in a community and what services currently exist.

How Can Local Governments and Early Years Networks Partner?

There are a number of ways in which Early Years Networks and Local Governments can work together to improve the wellbeing of children in the early years including:

1. **Building partnerships and working collaboratively;**
2. **Ensuring decision making is informed;**
3. **Examining the Australian Early Years Development Census results;**
4. **Capitalising on local libraries.**



1. Building Partnerships and Working Collaboratively

1.1 What Can Early Years Networks Do to Build Partnerships?

Establishing positive working relationships with Local Government is critical to effective, ongoing engagement and the development of partnerships which help sustain Early Years Networks and improve their effectiveness.

Strong communication is vital between Early Years Networks and Local Governments if the issues, concerns and suggestions of Network members are to be heard by those who have the capacity to influence change and to make a difference for children in the early years. Members of Early Years Networks know what the important issues, challenges and opportunities are in their communities and are well placed to clearly and consistently communicate those issues to Local Government.

Many Local Governments employ Community Development Managers who may have diverse responsibilities such as children and youth services, seniors, sport and recreation, libraries and community events. Sometimes a single staff member has responsibility for community service provision or community development. A targeted approach by Early Years Network members to Local Government by identifying the key contact person opens opportunities for Early Years Networks to build connections, partnerships and relationships. Some practical examples to assist in building connections include:

1. Sending a personal invitation to the CEO, Shire President and Councillors to your events and/or Early Years Network meetings.
2. Ensuring they receive your newsletters.
3. Inviting the editor and photographer of the local paper to all of your events and ensuring you include your Local Government in the publicity.
4. Presenting to council once a year on the key

successes or challenges of the Early Years Network during the year.

5. Establishing a standing meeting with the CEO and Community Development Manager every quarter.
6. Actively engage with Local Government decision-making processes, the deadline for information and the time required for decisions to be made.

When planning how you will establish a working partnership with your Local Government, factors to consider are:

1. Clearly articulating what it is that your Early Years Network wants and setting out your objectives in the short-and-longer-term.
2. Goals need to be important and relevant; describe why you want/need and clearly demonstrate why achieving a goal will add value in the community.
3. Is the goal consistent with your Early Years Network Action Plan?
4. Is the goal consistent with your Local Government's Community Strategic Plan? and what the strategic plan aims to achieve for children in the early years in your community.
5. Understanding the budget cycle.
6. Be proactive and consistent in your communication.
7. Prepare quality material with easily digestible facts demonstrating research on the importance of investment in children during their early years.
8. Share success stories illustrating the power of the Early Years Network within your community.

To access the contact details for Local Governments across Western Australia [click here](#)



1.2 What Can Local Governments Do to Build Partnerships?

Early Years Networks provide an important link to the early years 'community' in which the Local Government operates. Through their direct connection to community professionals and local families, Early Years Networks are well placed to provide advice to Local Governments and can act as a conduit for two-way communication to inform policy, strategies and services. Early Years Networks can contribute to the development of community programs by participating in planning processes or by responding to requests for feedback.

Local Governments can build partnerships with Early Years Networks by:

1. Becoming familiar with and drawing information from Early Years Networks Strategic Plans and/or Early Years Networks Action Plans. Examples of Early Years Networks plans can be found in the [Resource Kit for Starting and Sustaining an Early Years Network](#).
2. Promoting funding rounds or access to community grants that support positive community development outcomes such as a community playground.
3. Providing administrative support to Early Years Networks, for example support with emailing information, shaping agendas and keeping action registers.
4. Supporting Early Years Networks with access to venues and meetings places e.g. for a venue to hold the network meeting or a support staff member to facilitate the meeting.
5. Inviting Early Years Networks to Council meetings once a year to present on the key successes or challenges of the Network during the year.
6. Ensuring Council's website and Facebook pages promote the work of the Early Years Network and encourage community involvement in the Network.
7. Offering network building opportunities and events to develop further connections with community members, other community sector organisations and government agencies.
8. Providing leadership opportunities and other professional development training to your local Early Years Network.
9. Ensuring Local Government is represented on local Early Years Networks.
10. Identifying opportunities to pool resources to deliver efficient and effective community outcomes.

2. Ensuring Decision Making is Informed

Everyone benefits when there is a shared understanding of how decision-making processes work within Local Government. Partnerships built on a good understanding and knowledge of Local Government roles and responsibilities will be in a strong position to engage with Local Government elected members and staff as well as the community.

Every four years, Local Governments are required to develop Strategic Community Plans (CSP) in line with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework overseen by the Department of Local Government and Communities. The plans purpose is to:

1. Establish the community's vision for the Local Government's future, including aspirations and service delivery expectations;

1. Drive the development of Local Government area/place/regional plans, resourcing and other informing strategies;

2. Drive and inform all other Local Government planning.

Each plan covers a 10-year timeframe and is developed in consultation with the community through various methods of engagement and participation. Early Years Networks can be involved in this process and work with the community and their Local Government to inform and help set future community priorities.

By doing this, Early Years Networks will develop:

- A greater understanding of the communities involved, including how they see themselves in the future and what they see as priorities for families with young children.
- Develop a better understanding of what the community identifies as their strengths and weaknesses and strategies for addressing community needs.

- Shape the focus of Early Years Networks efforts into the future.

Local Governments have to review their strategic community plans and engage with the community at regular intervals. The reviews are an important Local Government decision making process.

Reviews of Strategic Community Plans by each Local Government are required to be completed by June 30 2017. Consequently, now is the time for Early Years Networks to have input into the review of these plans.

In addition to the IPR process, Local Governments have other corporate and community plans that provide information on council priorities and activities. Early Years Networks can contact their Local Government or access the Local Government's website for more information. The plans may include age friendly, children, family and youth, healthy lifestyles, disability access and inclusion and community infrastructure plans. Local Governments may seek consultation and feedback on the plans and this also presents opportunities for Early Years Networks and Local Governments to partner together.

Some Local Governments also have Early Years Strategies. Examples of these can be found by clicking on the links below.

The City of Armadale
[Children and Families Strategy](#)

The City of Kwinana
[Children Family and Youth Policy](#)

The City of Wanneroo
[Early Childhood Strategy](#)

The City of Mandurah
[Early Years Strategy](#)

3. The Value of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) provides key data that can assist Local Government in demonstrating evidence to support their long term priorities. When used alongside other community data, knowledge and research the AEDC can also inform their planning and strategic direction.

The AEDC is a population measure of young children's health and development in communities across Australia.

Teachers complete the Early Development Instrument for children enrolled in their first year of full-time school (average age is five years). As a population measure, the results are reported at the group level based on an AEDC community (equivalent to a local government area) and local community (equivalent to a suburb or town) where the child lives.

The primary output of the results is through on-line community maps and profiles of early childhood development measured against five key areas:

- physical health and wellbeing,
- social competence,
- emotional maturity,
- language and cognitive skills,
- communication skills and general knowledge.

These areas are closely linked to the predictors of good adult health, education and social outcomes.

The AEDC results allow communities to see how local children are doing compared to other children in their community, and across Australia. The information can be used to understand what is working well in the community. It can also highlight what needs to

be improved or developed to provide children with safe and nurturing learning environments where they can thrive.

Under the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and Guidelines*, it is recommended Local Government outline their long-term priorities supported by community input, performance data, demographic information and an outline of the social issues.

For further information please [click here](#) to access the Local Government User Guide on how to respond to the AEDC data or contact Gail Clark, WA AEDC Coordinator via gail.clark@education.wa.edu.au



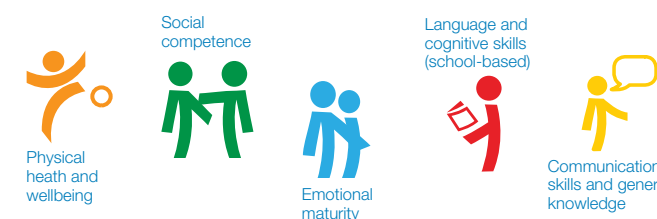
Using the AEDC



Our Children
Our Communities
Our Future

Local Government

The AEDC is a reliable measure of child development across five domains.



Use the AEDC confidently as a holistic measure of child development in your community.

The AEDC is a starting point for identifying the needs of children in your community.



Use the AEDC results to consider how you can contribute to better outcomes for children in your area.

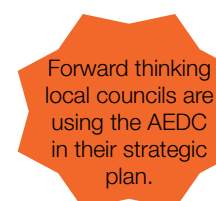
Families are not always able to access quality services to support their children's development.

BARRIERS TO ACCESS:



Examine solutions to barriers to access for families residing in your local government area.

AEDC is an early indicator of the future prosperity of your community.



COMMUNITY ASSETS SUPPORTING CHILDREN:



Examine how your local government area assets are being used to support child development.

Local governments play a key role in promoting early child development.



Monitor improvements in the AEDC results over time in your local government area.

Explore your community's AEDC results at www.aedc.gov.au

4. Collaborating with Public Libraries

Public libraries are community assets in each Local Government area throughout the State. Libraries are making a significant contribution to supporting the development of literate communities, and can serve as important partners in raising awareness of the important role played by parents and caregivers in a child's early literacy development and learning.

Early Years Networks can collaborate with and involve their local library in their network and activities through initiatives such as the [Better Beginnings Family Literacy Program](#) that promotes a whole of community approach to family literacy.

The State Library of Western Australia provides resources and ideas for parents and early years practitioners wanting to engage in quality early literacy activities in the home as well as in early years and community settings. All WA practitioners involved with the early years are welcome to create a login for the [Better Beginnings website's Practitioner's Portal](#) to gain access to the full range of resources available.

Partnership between local libraries, incorporating the Better Beginnings resources, Early Years Networks and Local Governments can be a powerful tool for improving outcomes for children in local communities. Contact your local library about how they can contribute to the goals of your Early Years Network for children and their families in your community.

"When we dream alone, it's just a dream. But when we dream together, it's the beginning of reality."

Brazilian proverb



Engaging with Multiple Local Governments

Depending on the project and the geographical area represented, Early Years Networks and Local Governments often partner across jurisdictions. An initiative that can be rolled out across multiple locations may require liaison or buy-in from several Local Governments and multiple Early Years Networks. Local Governments in regional areas often work collaboratively through a regional group. For example, the Pilbara Regional Council represents the five Local Governments in the Pilbara to deliver better outcomes for the community and visitors to the region.

Early Years Networks should identify whether a regional organisation or similar already exists, as this may provide a forum for collaborating with multiple Local Governments on projects that may deliver regional benefits.

If your project could be applied across Early Years Networks, it may also be beneficial to contact the Western Australia Council of Social Service (WACOSS), Connecting Early Years Network Support Project to begin your initial enquiries.

Contact Us

Western Australian Council of Social Service Connecting Early Years Networks Support Project

Telephone: (08) 9420 7222
 Freecall: 1300 658 816
 Fax: (08) 9486 7966
 Email: eyn@wacoss.org.au
[CEYNP Portal](#)
[EYN Resource Kit](#)

State Library of Western Australia. Better Beginnings Family Literacy Program

Telephone: (08) 9427 3130
 Freecall: 1800 198 107 (Country only)
 Email: better.beginnings@slwa.wa.gov.au
 Website: www.better-beginnings.com.au

Department of Local Government and Communities Centre for Parenting Excellence

Telephone: (08) 6552 1453
 Email: info@dlgc.wa.gov.au
 Website: www.dlgc.wa.gov.au

Western Australian Local Government Association

Tel: (08) 9213 2000
 Fax: (08) 9213 2077
 Email: info@walga.asn.au



Stories from the field: Early Years Networks and Local Governments Working Together

Zig Zag Early Years Partnership (ZZEYP) and Shire of Kalamunda

In 2015 an AEDC presentation was made by Local Government staff to all councillors which generated considerable impact. In 2016 ZZEYP felt that greater support was required for the group and the CEO attended a meeting, the main purpose of which was to discuss the possibility of employing an Early Years Coordinator. The ZZEYP presented a case for greater Local Government staff involvement. The CEO stressed the need for the group to prepare rigorous strategic planning which could then be applied to the local government's systematic budget process. With the cooperation of well-experienced ZZEYP members and Shire staff, this process was undertaken. In late 2016 the Youth Officer was given the additional role of Early Years Coordinator for seven hours per week. The group then finalised its Strategic Plan and the ZZEYP continues to benefit from the support of the Youth Officer in coordinating the early years services within the community whilst working alongside residents.

Activities and events for 2017 are in the process of being planned and the group now has the benefit of secretariat support, free rent of a facility to conduct meetings, training and assistance with planning events that promote positive parent/child interactions. 2017 sees ZZEYP well placed to be active within the local community resulting in young children and their families being supported to reach their potential.

Warren Blackwood Early Years Network and Shire of Manjimup

In May 2009, a presentation of the AEDC data for the Bridgetown and Manjimup areas was provided to service providers and community members, outlining developmental vulnerability across all domains of the AEDC for the children in the Manjimup area.

At the initial meeting there was consensus to:

1. Set up a formalised Network across the four Shires of Bridgetown/ Greenbushes, Boyup Brook, Manjimup and Nannup;
2. Develop Terms of Reference using Rockingham and Bunbury Early Years Network's information as a guide;
3. Invite Department of Child Protection staff from Katanning or Albany;

The Shire of Manjimup has been a key stakeholder and driver of the WBEYN since its inception. The early years sits within the Community Development Department and is an assigned portfolio. There are several factors that have made the early years a priority for the Shire including:

1. Industry Changes within the Shire of Manjimup

The Shire of Manjimup has needed to develop new industries and assist in the transition from the area having a strong timber industry to growing and strengthening the horticultural, agricultural and tourism industry sectors. This has seen the Shire need to not only retain the population in the current four towns of

Manjimup, Pemberton, Northcliffe and Walpole but also encourage new families to move to the area.

2. Low AEDC scores

The AEDC helps measure how a community is performing and how well its young citizens are progressing to their full potential. The Network was aware that evidence shows that it is far better to intervene early to prevent problems from occurring, or escalating, than to try to address them once they have become entrenched.

3. Low SEIFA scores

The SEIFA scores for the area have continued to decline since the 2001 census and the range of the SEIFA score has also increased showing increasing inequity within the community. The Shire is continually working with the community to improve education outcomes and seeking opportunities to enhance employment opportunities. The needs of the disadvantaged and at risk are now an identified unmet need within the Warren District. There has also been an identified increase in the number of children who have behavioural issues at schools.

4. Passion of the Community Development Team

Key staff who have worked within the Shire for over 20 years saw the need for more support in the early years. As well as being part of the Early Years Network, staff chair with the Education Visions Committee in Manjimup which comprises Principles of Manjimup Schools, Health Department staff lead agencies and community representatives.

The benefits of the Local Government working in partnership with the Warren-Blackwood Early Years Network have been;

1. Secretariat support to the Network

2. Provision of meeting place
3. Provision of promotion for activities
4. Assistance from the Shire to host activities
5. Free printing of brochures/posters/ flyers
6. Members with designated time to devote to the Network and the development of its activities
7. Free transport to trainings/expos/workshops
8. Development of an Early Childhood Strategy for the Shire of Manjimup
9. Assistance from the Shire to develop an Early Years Strategy for the Network
10. Donations for events hosted by WBEYN

Wanneroo and Surrounds Early Years Network (WASEY) and City of Wanneroo

The City of Wanneroo is recognised as the fastest growing Local Government in Western Australia. The City has a population of 198,689 with nearly 17% being children between the ages of 0-11 yrs.

The City has committed to providing support to families and communities to ensure young children are given the best chance to learn, develop and achieve good mental and physical health. In order to achieve this, the City of Wanneroo developed their Early Childhood Strategy 2014 - 2016 to provide a framework to guide City actions.

In recognition that it takes 'a village to raise a child,' the City's Early Childhood Strategy recognises the need for collaboration and for actions to be community driven. As such City officers engaged with the Wanneroo and Surrounds Early Years Network (WASEY).

WASEY is made up of service providers, parents, teachers, Child and Parent Centre representatives, Child and Adolescent Health nurses, Telethon Kids Institute, Joondalup Health Campus and early education and care staff.

The WASEY provided feedback and approved the City of Wanneroo's Early Childhood Strategy 2014 -2016 as well as the City's Early Childhood Policy. WASEY assisted with the launch of the strategy and additional members of the WASEY Network have created partnerships to achieve outcomes contained within it, such as the City's 'It's all About Play' program.

The City of Wanneroo is now evaluating their 2014 – 2016 Early Childhood Strategy and working on developing a new strategy to continue to guide the City into the future. WASEY's feedback and support of the draft strategy is valued and will be sought when the new strategy is available for public comment.

Rockingham Early Years Network and City of Rockingham

The City of Rockingham is a coastal, metropolitan Local Government with a population of 134,719. Of the 134,719, 16% of the population is made up of children aged 0-11 years of age.

The City's Community Development team works closely with the community to identify and address the needs of the Rockingham community as part of the City's aspiration for a 'Strong Community'. One valued community group is the Rockingham Early Years Group (REYG). REYG is a networking group of early years' service providers and professionals.

The partnership between the City and REYG works well as each party contributes through either resources or professional 'specialists' guidance. The City and REYG partnership has created many outcomes for the community including:

- Teddy Bear's Picnic (TBP). TBP is an event created to connect early years' parents and carers to service providers as well as creating a platform to engage early years' parents, carers and service providers.
- Various parenting workshops some facilitated by high profile presenters such as Maggie Dent and Clark Wight.

The City is currently drafting a Children and Young People's Strategy where children 0-11 yrs will be consulted and included. As part of the consultation phase of this strategy, REYG has been a vital conduit between the City and community (early years' parents and carers). All REYG members liaised with the City's appointed consultant to assist with the mapping of early years' services and a further four members were identified for a full in depth interview.

Information gathered through the consultation of early year's parents, carers and service providers has been consolidated and has been used to inform the draft strategy.

Armadale Early Years Network and City of Armadale

The City of Armadale has a population of 87,437 with children 0-11 years making up nearly 19% of the total population. The Armadale community is comprised of large numbers of families with dependent children.

In 2005, the area received 'Communities for Children' funding to establish an early years network in order to support Armadale families and children. As a result, the Armadale Early Years Network (AEYN) was established. The AEYN is a professional networking group of representatives of early years' service providers.

In April 2010, the City of Armadale's Council endorsed their Children and Families Strategy 2010-2013. The strategy provided a broad framework to guide the City's efforts in engaging and supporting their children and families. The City took a place focussed and partnership approach to identify and create opportunities that optimise the development of children and support their families. As such, City officers engaged with members of the AEYN to assist in informing and endorsing the strategy. Partnerships were then forged through the network to ensure outcomes for the community.

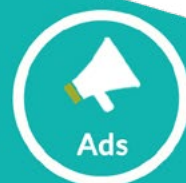
In October 2015, The City commenced its largest community consultation initiative, 'Growing Armadale'. The information gathered

during 'Growing Armadale' was used to inform the City's Strategic Community Plan 2016-2031. In recognition of the strong partnership between the City and AEYN, the AEYN was engaged during the consultation phase of the development of the Plan and asked to provide feedback on the draft prior to it being adopted by Council.

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**The Council's Connecting Early Years Network Support Project has
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