Acknowledgement

KidsMatter Australian Primary Schools Mental Health Initiative has been developed in collaboration with beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society, the Principals Australia Institute and, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and beyondblue.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also advised that this publication may contain images or audio of deceased persons.

Last updated in January 2013
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What is KidsMatter Primary?

KidsMatter Primary is a national initiative that aims to contribute to:

- improving student mental health and wellbeing,
- reducing mental health difficulties amongst students, and
- increasing support for students experiencing mental health difficulties.

KidsMatter Primary is a flexible, whole-school approach to children’s mental health and wellbeing for primary schools. It works both on its own and as an umbrella under which a school’s existing programs can comfortably fit. KidsMatter Primary provides the proven methods, tools and support to help schools, parents and carers, health services and the wider community nurture happy, balanced kids.

KidsMatter Primary was developed in collaboration with beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society, and the Principals Australia Institute, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and beyondblue.

KidsMatter Primary fosters partnerships between the education and health sectors.

KidsMatter Primary takes schools through a two-to-three year cyclical process in which they plan and take action using a comprehensive whole-school approach to mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention. It allows for flexibility and can be tailored to schools’ local needs. In this way, KidsMatter Primary builds on the work schools are already doing to address the mental health and wellbeing of their students through national, state, territory and sector-based mental health initiatives and policies. KidsMatter Primary provides a range of resources and support throughout the implementation journey.

Four components

Schools take action across four areas, known as ‘components’. Research has identified that these are the areas where schools can make a real difference in supporting their students’ mental health and wellbeing. These make up the core content of KidsMatter Primary.

Dividing KidsMatter Primary into the four components is a way of making the task of improving students’ mental health and wellbeing in schools more manageable. It also allows schools to focus their efforts more effectively, and include all the significant people and contexts in children’s lives that may impact on their mental health.

The four components of KidsMatter Primary are interrelated. Each is important for supporting student mental health and wellbeing.

To read more about KidsMatter Primary, see the Participant Workbook and website: www.kidsmatter.edu.au.
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

A child’s family is central to their healthy development and long-term wellbeing. Evidence strongly suggests that children who are born into a nurturing environment and provided with emotional, social and physical support are more likely to experience wellbeing and reach their full potential. The home environment, and the functioning of the family within, is therefore considered to be the biggest influence on children’s development.

A school is another highly influential setting. Research shows that when staff and families partner together – to share their best interests and responsibilities for the child – a caring school community develops around students. This makes a significant positive difference to the wellbeing and learning capacity of students regardless of outside factors such as socioeconomic status.

Teachers are professionals with high community visibility, respect and trust. They are likely to be consulted by parents and carers who have questions about child-rearing. Increasing the support available to parents and carers is considered essential for improving the mental health and wellbeing of children. Studies show that the majority of parents and carers report a need for extra support or information on raising children, and one in four feels a lack of support outside the home.

Schools are well-placed to provide families with information, resources and learning programs related to parenting, child development and children’s mental health. Schools can also become a community hub for networking and support between families. Improving parenting practices enhances children’s social skills, reduces conduct problems and negative emotional states. Increasing parental involvement in children’s education is a protective factor for children’s mental health.

Working with parents and carers also brings benefits to schools. Research clearly indicates that parental involvement is critical to the success of school-based programs. Schools that implement social and emotional learning or behaviour management programs without involving parents and carers are less likely to achieve their goals for students. A collaborative approach, where parents, carers and schools work together, is much more likely to yield substantial and sustained improvements for children’s learning and mental health and wellbeing. Home and school are the two most important contexts for child development.

KidsMatter Primary encourages schools to connect with parents and carers by systematically building relationships, providing support for parenting, and opportunities for families to develop support networks. Cultivating relationships with parents and carers is an investment of time and effort and involves regular, genuine and positive communication about the whole child. School-wide procedures for making contact with families are also important for optimal success.

Three specific target areas have been identified for Component 3, with goals for each target area that assist schools in developing policies and practices for working with and supporting parents and carers.
Collaborative working relationships with parents and carers

School planning, policies and practices support collaborative working relationships with parents and carers.

School staff implement strategies to proactively develop collaborative working relationships with parents and carers to promote children’s mental health, wellbeing and learning.

Support for parenting

School staff have knowledge and skills to communicate effectively with parents and carers about their children in areas related to child development, learning and mental health and wellbeing.

School staff communicate effectively with parents and carers about child development and learning, mental health and wellbeing.

The school has policies and practices to support staff to identify issues and, where appropriate, facilitate access for parents to resources and services that support parenting.

Parent and carer support networks

The school provides opportunities for parents and carers to connect with each other and develop support networks, and actively seeks to minimise barriers to participation.

The school identifies and promotes community groups which may act as a source of support for parents and carers.

Important note:
KidsMatter Primary acknowledges that there is a range of people with parenting responsibilities who may not strictly fit within traditional understandings of ‘families’, ‘parents’ and ‘carers’. The use of such terms in this professional learning is intended to be fully inclusive of all social and cultural interpretations.

To read more, see the Component 3 literature summary in the ‘Additional reading’ section of the CD presentation.
Component 3 professional learning helps participants recognize the importance of working with parents and carers in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their students. Specifically, participants should be able to:

1. Further understand the way collaborative relationships with families can improve student mental health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes.

2. Deepen their understanding of the importance of systematically building relationships with families.

3. Increase their familiarity with different types of parenting information and support, including community and KidsMatter Primary resources.

4. Develop skills for responding to parent and carer requests for information.

5. Explore the way schools can provide opportunities for families to develop support networks.

6. Identify how schools can create opportunities to ensure families can play an active role in the school community.
What it covers

Component 3 professional learning is conducted over three sessions and can be delivered as a one three-hour session, or as three one-hour sessions.

This session enables participants to...

- learn about KidsMatter Primary and Component 3
- reflect on attitudes and beliefs about families and home-school relationships
- understand how family diversity and parenting challenges impact on home-school relationships
- understand the benefits of home-school collaborative relationships
- identify the role schools can play in building home-school relationships

- recognise that school staff play a key role in supporting families to enhance children’s mental health and wellbeing
- increase their familiarity with common concerns families present to staff
- develop skills and strategies for responding to parent and carer concerns and requests for information

- understand the importance of building and investing in staff-family relationships to enhance opportunities for families to be involved at the school
- reflect on the key elements of collaborative working relationships with families
- identify and understand common barriers to working with families
- explore ways for families to support each other
- understand the benefits of the school forming relationships with local agencies.
Implementing KidsMatter Primary successfully requires the active participation of the whole-school community. Each of the four KidsMatter Primary components has a professional learning package designed to be delivered to all school staff by you, the facilitator.

Whole-school professional learning can help staff to:

- develop a shared understanding of children’s mental health and wellbeing and recognise the important role that staff play
- understand different school community perspectives, including those of parents, carers and students
- further understand what contributes to children’s mental health and wellbeing
- view examples of good practice and have the opportunity to practise specific skills
- identify avenues or opportunities to enhance their school’s practices relevant to each component
- contribute to the planning for implementation of KidsMatter Primary at their school.

Each component package contains three-to-four hours of content relating to the KidsMatter Primary target areas, and includes:

- a Facilitator Guide
- a CD presentation (including videos and slides)
- a Participant Workbook
- additional reading.

During a typical professional learning session, it’s the job of the facilitator to:

- understand the mental health, wellbeing, and educational concepts
- explain the concepts to the participants
- ask participants to make sense of the concepts, based on their own experiences, by facilitating discussions
- highlight key points for each concept, as noted in the Facilitator Guide
- answer any questions that may be raised by participants (or take questions on notice and respond at a later time)
- invite staff to complete the online feedback form at the completion of the training session.

The presentation process requires facilitators to:

- play video footage of health and education experts explaining key mental health concepts and illustrative school case studies
- lead participants in activities and discussions that relate to concepts presented in the videos and slides.
The professional learning component package supports facilitators to:

- provide consistent ‘gold standard’ presentation of complex mental health and wellbeing concepts
- provide consistent timing of delivery throughout sessions
- engage participants through activities and discussion
- accommodate multiple learning styles through the use of case studies, interviews, animated graphics as well as text-based resources
- offer actual (‘real world’) case studies of KidsMatter Primary to inspire and model implementation in schools.

The professional learning packages have been developed according to a number of adult learning principles. There are a range of models and theories that describe how adults learn best.

These sessions have also been based on the following learning and training principles:

- Content must be evidence-based (Mitchell, 1999).
- A combination of didactic and interactive training is most effective for learning (Forsetlund et al., 2009).
- A range of primary and secondary learning strategies and media should be used to cater for different learning styles and to provide opportunities to reinforce learning (Davis, Thomson, Oxman, & Haynes, 1995).
- Practical activities are most effective in leading to change in practice (Hodges, Inch, & Silver, 2001).
- New learning should be explicitly linked to prior knowledge and opportunities should be provided for broader application (Dewey, 1938; Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 2003).
- Learning should be evaluated (Deane, Crowe, King, Kavanagh, & Oades, 2006).
Getting ready for delivery

You have been identified as a facilitator (or co-facilitator). You may be a member of the Action Team or an external support person or critical friend with relevant expertise. You will also have attended training to deliver the Component 3 professional learning to all school staff.

Role of the Action Team

The Action Team is made up of representatives of the school community and is responsible for planning and driving the implementation of KidsMatter Primary.

The Action Team plays a central role during the professional learning event. **Members will need forewarning that there is an opportunity for them to report on Component 3 during Session 1.** This report will include work commenced to date, such as the ‘How might KidsMatter Primary build on what we are already doing?’ activity from the Getting Started event, and initial results of the KidsMatter Primary surveys. They may also provide an update of ongoing Component 1 and 2 work.
Additional points for the delivery of Component 3:

- Describe the families in your school community with regard to:
  - diversity (e.g., range of backgrounds – cultural, socioeconomic status, education)
  - strengths and challenges they might face.
- What are relationships like at present between parents, carers and staff?
  - Any significant positives?
  - Any concerns?
  - What work has been done to build relationships? Outcomes?
- Do staff focus on developing positive relationships with all parents and carers or are they more focused on dealing with parents and carers they see as more challenging or difficult?
- How do we ensure the parenting voice is heard?
  - How do we determine what is of most benefit to parents and carers?
  - How do we determine the events we hold are useful to parents and carers?
- Parenting resources:
  - What resources are available for parents and carers at the school?
  - What challenges are there (e.g., language)?
  - What resources are available in the local community – what actions have been taken to identify and partner with these organisations?
- Developing support networks:
  - What is currently available for parents and carers to support each other?
  - Do staff see this as part of the school’s role?
  - Are there ways that parents and carers currently support each other outside of the school?
- What are the main challenges or concerns?
  - When teaching the S-I-B model to all staff, what processes do we have set up within the school to support them?
  - If staff are provided with confronting information or require support in managing parent and carer relationships, does the school have adequate support available (e.g., an employee assistance program)? If not, does the school plan to make support available?
  - Do we expect all staff to refer parents and carers to information or do we suggest that some staff (e.g., office staff) refer parents and carers to a particular staff member with a wellbeing role?

The responses to the KidsMatter Primary surveys are particularly useful for establishing relevant contextual factors for this component.
Your checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>CHECK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FACILITATOR MATERIALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CD presentation*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator Guide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Workbook</td>
<td>1 per participant</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GENERAL MATERIALS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sticky notes</td>
<td>For each table</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher’s paper or a whiteboard</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markers</td>
<td>1 set</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pens</td>
<td>1 per participant</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component 3 information sheets for school staff, parents and carers</td>
<td>1 set</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Details of the Employee Assistance Program (see page 13)</td>
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*The CD presentation can be played on a computer. Ensure that the video can be heard easily by all participants.*
Self care and personal disclosures

Talking about childhood and school experiences can sometimes trigger unpleasant memories for people – even facilitators. This often occurs when people discuss feelings of exclusion. In Component 3, school staff may find themselves reflecting on their own experiences as parents or carers.

It’s important to remind participants at the beginning of each session that the KidsMatter Primary materials focus on the children they work with and their families. Although sharing thoughts and ideas is important, the disclosure of personal stories is not advised.

Participants should also avoid using the names of students or families during group discussions.

It’s a good idea to have a list of contacts available for participants (either school or community-based agencies) in the event that personal feelings arise that they would like to address further. Include the contact details of any employee assistance programs (EAPs) available to school staff. Again, the school Action Team and external support or critical friend can help to identify the relevant personnel within the school.

Some useful contacts for adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TELEPHONE</th>
<th>WEBSITE</th>
<th>SERVICE PROVIDED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifeline</td>
<td>13 11 14</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beyondblue</td>
<td>1300 224 636</td>
<td><a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANE Australia</td>
<td>1800 187 263</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sane.org">www.sane.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Psychological Society (APS)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.psychology.org.au/FindaPsychologist">www.psychology.org.au/FindaPsychologist</a></td>
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Symbols used in this guide

- Group discussion
- Reflection
- Activity
- Video
Home-school collaborative relationships

Session 1
Session 1:

Home-school collaborative relationships

What it covers

This session enables participants to:

- learn about KidsMatter Primary and Component 3
- reflect on attitudes and beliefs about families and home-school relationships
- understand how family diversity and parenting challenges impact on home-school relationships
- understand the benefits of home-school collaborative relationships
- identify the role schools can play in building home-school relationships.

Session outline

<table>
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Start

- KidsMatter Primary recap (and report from the Action Team)
  Today’s professional learning

10

- A positive learning community
  Introductory activity: Exploring our attitudes and beliefs

15

- Video 1: Introduction to Component 3
- Video 2: Family perspectives
- Discussion: Reflecting on family perspectives

10

- Discussion: Family diversity

5

- What is mental health?
  Risk and protective factors

5

- Home-school collaborative relationships
  Video 3: Home-school collaborative relationships

5

- Discussion: What are we already doing?

5

Summary
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

WHAT'S NEXT?

KidsMatter Primary recap

Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay my respects to Elders past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.
### SLIDE 1  
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

**Notes**
- Welcome participants to the KidsMatter Primary professional learning session for their school.
- Emphasise that terms such as ‘families’, ‘parents and carers’ and ‘parenting’ are used throughout the training, and are intended to be inclusive of all social and cultural interpretations of their meaning.

### SLIDE 2  
KidsMatter Primary collaborating organisations

**Notes**
- KidsMatter Primary is a national initiative, and has been developed by the Department of Health and Ageing, *beyondblue*, the Principals Australia Institute and the Australian Psychological Society.

### SLIDE 3  
Acknowledgement of Country

**Notes**
- Acknowledge the traditional owners of the land you’re gathered on. Personalise this as you wish.
- Acknowledgement of Country is a way for the wider community to demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
COMPONENT 3: SESSION 1

SLIDE ORDER

WHAT'S NEXT?

Today's professional learning

- Session 1: Home-school collaborative relationships
- Session 2: Support for parenting
- Session 3: Collaborative working relationships

KidsMatter Primary recap
KidsMatter Primary recap

Key messages

- KidsMatter Primary is a whole-school framework for supporting students’ mental health and wellbeing. It is informed by current evidence about children’s mental health and wellbeing.
- KidsMatter Primary enables schools to systematically plan actions for mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention.
- The framework allows schools to tailor their actions to their local needs - rather than a single, prescriptive program - and is supported by an implementation process and a range of evidence-based resources.
- Schools take action across four areas - known as ‘components’ - that research shows can make a real difference to students’ mental health and wellbeing. Schools audit what they are doing well and what they could do better across each component. Strategies are developed for implementation within and beyond the classroom that become part of the school’s broader strategic plan.
- The Action Team drives KidsMatter Primary in schools, and is responsible for representing and incorporating the views of all school community members into the planning for each component.
- KidsMatter Primary was successfully piloted in 100 schools nationally during 2007 and 2008, and was shown to be effective in achieving mental health and wellbeing outcomes for students, as well as significant academic and educational benefits.

Notes

- Refer to the Participant Workbook for more information about the theory underpinning KidsMatter Primary:
  - whole-school approach to promotion, prevention and early intervention
  - socio-ecological model
  - risk and protective factors framework.
- Mention that the KidsMatter website is also a helpful resource for further information, tools and resources.
- Now ask the Action Team to introduce themselves to participants.
- This is an important opportunity for the Action Team to provide a brief summary of the school’s starting point in Component 3 using the:
  - ‘How might KidsMatter Primary build on what we are already doing?’ activity completed in the Getting Started event (and later provided to all staff), outlining the strategies already in place to work with parents and carers
  - results of the Kids Matter Primary surveys (and any other available data) which highlights the strengths and challenges in the school community. Report on only the main themes arising as the topics will be explored together during the session.
- The Action Team may also provide an update of ongoing Component 1 and 2 work.
COMPONENT 3: SESSION 1

SLIDE ORDER

SLIDE 5

Today’s professional learning

- Session 1: Home-school collaborative relationships
- Session 2: Support for parenting
- Session 3: Collaborative working relationships

WHAT’S NEXT?

Component 3: Working with parents and carers
Key messages

• KidsMatter Primary professional learning:
  • is a forum for your opinions and ideas
  • marks the beginning of an ongoing conversation about mental health and wellbeing in the school
  • enables the Action Team to incorporate all staff views and suggested approaches into their strategic planning for each component.

• Why are we here?
  • Component 3 continues the journey of reflection and growth about the way our school builds collaborative working relationships with parents and carers.
  • To raise awareness of strengths and challenges in working with parents and carers.

• What are we going to do?
  • Build a shared understanding of:
    – why working with parents and carers is important to schools and student mental health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes
    – how to best respond to concerns or questions parents and carers bring to staff
    – ways to support staff in their work with families
    – collaborative home-school relationships
    – ways our school can connect families together and promote community information.
  • Build a strong foundation for our school to further address the big issues relating to mental health and wellbeing.
WHAT'S NEXT?

Activity

Introductory activity
Session 1: Home-school collaborative relationships

A positive learning community

Notes

• It can be useful to name mental health and wellbeing as the area of focus for the professional learning.
• This professional learning encourages all participants to contribute their views and ideas, so it’s important that they feel safe doing so.
• It is recommended you ask participants how they wish to work so as to ensure the session promotes the voice of all staff in a respectful space.
• If you’re presenting to a group you know well, reminding them of your existing working agreement may be sufficient - it’s strongly suggested that you discuss this, however, so that expectations are clear.
• It can be helpful to record and display suggested rules and refer to them as needed throughout the session.
• It’s important to remind participants that they will have various experiences themselves (or with families) that may be triggered during discussions. This prompt can ensure that participants are aware and mindful of each other’s needs during the session.
• Some parents and carers from the school community may be in the session, so respectful and confidential conversations are essential.

Background information

Common working agreements/ground rules for a successful session:

• Listen to each other
• Respect different perspectives
• Share only what you are comfortable sharing
• Respect confidentiality
• Engage in one conversation at a time

The Participant Workbook includes a list of support services in the event that any issues arise for participants on a personal level. The school’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may also be a useful source of support to mention. The Action Team may like to display the EAP phone number in the staff room.
COMPONENT 3: SESSION 1
SLIDE ORDER

WHAT'S NEXT?
Introductory activity: Exploring our attitudes and beliefs

15 min

Purpose
To help participants identify and reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about families and home-school partnerships, and to set the scene for discussions to come.

Instructions
1. Ask participants to position themselves in a line facing forward. Explain that one end of the line is ‘agree’ and the other, ‘disagree’.
2. Inform participants that you will read out some statements, and that they should position themselves along the line in accordance with whether they agree or disagree with them. Emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers, and people will have differences of opinion. Also emphasise that the discussion to follow should not identify parents, carers or students at the school.
3. Read out the following statements:
   - Most parents and carers want to be involved in their child’s education.
   - Parents and carers are usually open to letting teachers help with any concerns about their child.
   - Parents are the primary educators of their children.
   - School staff need to be informed about what is happening at home.
   - Schools find some families hard to engage. Those families don’t care about their child’s education.
4. In relation to the last statement, ask participants: What did you notice about the language ‘schools find some families hard to engage’ rather than ‘families who are hard to engage’?
   Inform participants that the language used emphasises the way schools engage. Other language can be parent-blaming or label families.
5. If time permits, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts and reasons for standing where they are – for efficiency, you may like to choose the statements which generated the most interest or difference.
6. Debrief by explaining that we all have different attitudes and beliefs about the children and families that we work with - but the way we think about these relationships can impact on interactions.
7. Ask participants: What might school staff say about participating in professional learning about working with parents and carers? What concerns might they have? What are the benefits of working effectively with families?
   This allows participants to name concerns they may have (in the third person) or to highlight some of the challenges and benefits from the start.
8. Ask participants: What do you expect from today’s session?
   This is an opportunity to gain insight into any expectations and assumptions participants hold about the session, which you can address in your introduction and throughout delivery.

Conclusion
Draw on themes in participants’ responses that allow you to introduce the content of this professional learning – working with parents and carers. Clarify that your role as facilitator is not to provide all the answers, but to help participants develop their own ideas for what will work in their school setting.
SLIDE 9

Video 1: Introduction to Component 3

Purpose

To introduce the content of Component 3 to participants.

Instructions

1. Play Video 1 (1:34).
2. Clarify understandings of Component 3 by inviting any comments, questions or concerns, and then summarise in line with the video’s key messages.

Key messages

- KidsMatter Primary recognises the challenges and opportunities for schools in working closely with parents and carers.
- Component 3 professional learning enables schools to reflect on, and plan strategically for, building collaborative working relationships with parents and carers.
- When we refer to parents, we are inclusive of carers as well – for example, foster carers, grandparents or extended family members who are caring for children.
- Emphasise the concept of ‘enrolling the whole family,’ not just the child.
COMPONENT 3: SESSION 1

SLIDE ORDER

SLIDE 10

WHAT'S NEXT?

Discussion

Reflecting on family perspectives
### SLIDE 10

#### Video 2: Family perspectives

**Purpose**
To enable participants to understand the range of emotions involved in parenting, to highlight diversity in family units, and to assist staff to identify some of the challenges facing families.

**Instructions**
2. Summarise in line with the video’s key messages.

**Key messages**
- Families are not all the same. They arrive at the school with many different experiences and expectations. This can affect their interest in, and capacity for, their involvement with the school.
- There are many pressures that families face today.
- A school can play a critical role in supporting families (e.g., through ‘keeping children on track’ and being ‘a place of healing’).
- Parents and carers will experience a range of emotions in their parenting role (e.g., joy, excitement, guilt).
- Families have different expectations about what they want for their children and what they expect from teachers.
- Grandparents can play an active role in school communities.

**Background information**
- The parents and carers in the video have good relationships with their child’s school and were willing to be filmed. This meant that the perspective of parents and carers who do not experience collaborative working relationships with schools could not be included in the videos.
- A number of parents in the video are also teachers, and were able to reflect on their understandings from both perspectives.
- It is useful to remember that school may not be a place that many parents and carers find familiar or feel comfortable with.
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

Slide 11

Reflecting on family perspectives

What's next?

Family diversity
## Discussion: Reflecting on family perspectives

**Purpose**
To enable participants to further explore the challenges facing families and the range of emotions involved in parenting.

**Materials**
- List of modern-day parenting challenges in the Participant Workbook (page 16)

**Instructions**
1. Drawing on Video 2, ask participants some of these discussion questions:
   - What are some of the emotions of the parents and carers that you can identify from the video?
   - What were the main things that parents and carers in the video wanted from teachers and for their children?
   - What were some of the themes that flowed through this video?
   - What do you think are some of the challenges of parenting today? Refer to the list in the workbook.
   - (Optional question) If this video showed teacher perspectives on working with families, what would you want parents and carers to know?

**Conclusion**
Reiterate the message that adults often face many challenges in parenting. As families are diverse, they have different needs. Schools can provide a supportive environment for them and their children.
Component 3: SESSION 1

SLIDE 12

Family diversity

SLIDE 13

What is mental health?

“The capacity to enjoy and benefit from satisfying family life, relationships, and educational opportunities, and to contribute to society in a number of age-appropriate ways. It also includes freedom from problems with emotions, behaviours or social relationships that are sufficiently marked or prolonged to lead to suffering or risk to optimal development in the child, or to distress or disturbance in the family.”

Reynolds, 2001

WHAT’S NEXT?

Risk and protective factors

- Risk factors – factors that increase the chances of children developing mental health difficulties.
- Protective factors – factors associated with good outcomes for children and which serve to protect children in circumstances where they are exposed to risk.
Discussion: Family diversity

**Purpose**
To encourage participants to identify the diversity amongst families in their school community.

**Materials**
- List of family diversity statistics in the Participant Workbook (page 16)
- Whiteboard/butcher’s paper and markers

**Instructions**
1. Break participants into small groups and ask them to refer to the Participant Workbook for the statistics on family diversity in Australia.
2. Ask participants the following questions:
   - Thinking about your school community (and without referring to individuals), what do you know about the diversity of your families?
   - What might you not know about your families?
3. Link back to Component 1 discussions about inclusiveness and who is visible and invisible/not noticed in the school.
4. Ask groups for their feedback to the questions and write responses on the whiteboard or butcher’s paper for the Action Team.

**Key messages**
- Families are diverse and parents and carers are not a homogenous group of people.
- Research suggests that contemporary family life is more complex than in the past, with family composition becoming more diverse. Recent trends indicate increased rates of single parent households, smaller family sizes, and greater choice in co-habitation options, with cross-racial, age-disparate and same-sex relationships becoming more common.
- Schools can be a place of welcoming and community when we become aware of the different needs of families.
- Understanding the diversity of families in their school community enables schools to identify which families might feel included, excluded, or overlooked.

**Conclusion**
Sum up by emphasising that a family’s needs are unique and depend upon their experiences and expectations.

**Reference**
Hayes, Weston & Qu (2011).

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What is mental health?

**Notes**
- This slide is to remind participants that the overall aims of KidsMatter Primary relate to children’s mental health. Families play a key role.
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

SLIDE 14
Risk and protective factors

- Risk factors – factors that increase the chances of children developing mental health difficulties.
- Protective factors – factors associated with good outcomes for children and which serve to protect children in circumstances where they are exposed to risk.

SLIDE 15
Risk and protective factors

Adapted from Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 2003; Supreme, 1991

WHAT'S NEXT?
Positive home-school collaborative relationships

"Parental involvement has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping student attainment have been controlled for."

Developed November 2003
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLIDE 14</th>
<th>Risk and protective factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>• This slide provides a definition of risk and protective factors and helps lead into the following slide showing risk and protective factors in different contexts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLIDE 15</th>
<th>Risk and protective factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key messages</td>
<td>• The risk and protective factors diagram can be found in the <em>Participant Workbook</em> (page 15). The factors listed are not a definitive list and are examples only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Risk and protective factors for children’s mental health can be viewed in different contexts. The role of the family is evident in this framework – it can provide risk factors as well as protective factors.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are numerous family risk factors linked to poor mental health outcomes in children, including low levels of social support, and the limited ability (or confidence) of parents and carers to influence their child’s behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family-related protective factors can provide positive long-term outcomes for children’s mental health and learning. These include a secure attachment between parent and child, and positive parenting practices such as warmth, affection, limit-setting, and positive reinforcement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Families often turn to schools for protective factors to reduce the impact of the risk factors they are facing. The presence of just one protective factor (such as the support of a significant adult at school) for a child with many identified risk factors can sometimes be enough to prevent a mental health difficulty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Even if a child is exposed to one or more mental health risk factors, it does not mean he or she will experience mental health difficulties. However, when multiple risk factors are present, this likelihood is significantly increased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It is important to consider societal pressures in the context of family-related risk and protective factors. KidsMatter Primary is based on the principle that all families want the best for their children. Those who make poor child-rearing decisions are more likely to be in need of greater support, or experiencing competing external pressures, rather than not care about their children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| References | Bergin & Bergin (2009); Centre for Community Child Health (2004); Cowan & Cowan (2009); Green, Furrer & McAllister (2007); Sanders et al. (1999). |
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

WHAT'S NEXT?

Discussion

What are we already doing?
Positive home-school collaborative relationships

**Key messages**
- There is considerable research literature to suggest that children experience improved educational and academic outcomes when schools develop positive collaborative working relationships with families.
- Schools can be a protective factor for children's mental health and wellbeing by supporting children and their families.
- Research shows that schools which have adopted a mindset of partnership with families have experienced a positive and critical shift in their relationships (for a summary and school case studies, see National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, 2010).
- Epstein's framework demonstrates six types of parental involvement schools can promote when developing partnerships with families (see the Component 3 literature summary for details).
- Although parental involvement has obvious benefits, it is important for schools to work at the level parents and carers are comfortable with. For example, some parents and carers lack confidence in their parenting role; have had difficult personal experiences themselves at primary school; or are leading extremely busy work and home lives.

**References**
Desforges & Abouchaar (2003); Elias (2003); Epstein (1995); Sanders et al. (1999); Fuller (2001); Stormshak, et al. (2005).

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**Video 3: Home-school collaborative relationships**

**Purpose**
To outline the rationale for schools developing collaborative relationships with parents and carers, and to reiterate that schools are well-placed to foster home-school relationships.

**Instructions**
1. Play Video 3 (3:58).
2. Ask participants: *What stood out for you?*
3. Summarise in line with the video's key messages.

**Key messages**
- Schools can help build protective factors for children's mental health by working with families and supporting parenting.
- Schools can develop collaborative relationships with families to develop trust and a willingness to share the intimacies of home life, as well as to accept support.
- The triangle of families working with the school for the benefit of the child can help families feel valued, and increase staff understanding of where a child is coming from.
COMPONENT 3: SESSION 1

SLIDE ORDER

SLIDE 18
Discussion

What are we already doing?

SLIDE 19
Session 1 summary

- Attitudes and beliefs about families and home-school relationships can impact on interactions with families and students.
- Families are diverse.
- There are a range of experiences and emotions involved in parenting.
- Parental involvement has a significant positive effect on children’s achievement and adjustment.

END OF SESSION
Discussion: What are we already doing?

**Purpose**
To enable participants to reflect on what they currently do to work effectively with parents and carers.

**Materials**
- ‘What are we already doing?’ worksheet in the Participant Workbook (page 17)

**Instructions**
1. Ask the following questions and invite participants to write the answers in the worksheet (they should also consider the questions at the bottom of the page when doing so):
   
   **What are you and the school already doing to:**
   - Establish cooperative and collaborative working relationships with families?
   - Promote parenting information and support?
   - Provide opportunities for families to develop support networks with each other?

2. Inform participants that they will add to this page throughout the session as more ideas are generated.

**Conclusion**
There are many ways school staff are already working with parents and carers. Component 3 aims to bring this work to light as well as to add to it through discussions.

**Notes**
- The worksheet could be photocopied on A3 paper and posted on the wall for additions during the session and displayed afterwards for all staff to see.

---

**Session 1 summary**

**Notes**
- Summary messages for this session are on the slide.
- Completion of this session will depend on whether this professional learning is being run as a single session or multiple sessions. At this stage, it may be helpful to give a brief overview of the session to come.
- Encourage participants to take a moment to reflect on the session, and make a note of any new learnings or ideas on the summary page of their Participant Workbook (page 18).
Session 2:
Support for parenting

What it covers
This session enables participants to:
• recognise that school staff play a key role in supporting families to enhance children’s mental health and wellbeing
• increase their familiarity with common concerns families present to staff
• develop skills and strategies for responding to parent and carer concerns and requests for information.

Session outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME (minutes)</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION 2</td>
<td>Support for parenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recap previous session, if necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start</td>
<td>Discussion: Common parent and carer concerns Two approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Video 4: Supporting families Parenting resources KidsMatter Primary supporting resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Video 5: Responding to parent and carer questions – the S-I-B model Discussion: Reflecting on the S-I-B model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Activity and discussion: The S-I-B model in action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

WHAT’S NEXT?

Two approaches

1. **Promoting** – increasing access to parenting resources.
2. **Responding** – dealing with questions and concerns and providing relevant information sessions.

**SESSION OVERVIEW**

**SLIDE ORDER**

**SLIDE 20**

**SLIDE 21**

**Discussion**

Common parent and carer concerns
**SlIDE 20**

**Session 2: Support for parenting**

**Notes**
- If necessary, repeat the summary slide from the first session.
- This may be important if you are running three one-hour sessions.

**SlIDE 21**

**Discussion: Common parent and carer concerns**

**5 min**

**Purpose**
To set the scene for introducing the S-I-B model, and to remind participants that they are already fielding concerns from parents and carers.

**Materials**
- ‘Common parent and carer concerns’ worksheet in the Participant Workbook (page 20)
- Whiteboard/butcher’s paper and markers

**Instructions**
1. Break participants into groups. Ask them to discuss the following question, using the worksheet to record their responses:
   *In the last two years, what kinds of things have parents or carers asked you?*
2. Divide the whiteboard/butcher’s paper in half for ‘school-related’ and ‘non-school-related’ feedback, and record comments from each group.
3. Ask participants:
   *What is this list telling you? Do some parents and carers see the school as a place to seek assistance?*
4. It is likely that the ‘non-school-related’ list will be the longest. Emphasise its length and the fact that staff are already dealing with many questions and concerns that parents and carers bring to them.
5. Ask the Action Team to note down the responses on the whiteboard/butcher’s paper.

**Conclusion**
School staff are asked by parents or carers for support with a range of parenting issues on a regular basis. It can be difficult for staff to know how best to respond. This session will explore that with a focus on consistency across the school.

**Notes**
- The focus of Session 2 is to develop a school-wide approach for responding to these concerns – in ways that make the jobs of school staff easier.
Component 3: Session 2

Slide 22

Two approaches

After GPs, teachers are the professionals most frequently consulted by parents and carers regarding children’s emotional or behavioural problems.

1. **Promoting** – increasing access to parenting resources.
2. **Responding** – dealing with questions and concerns and providing relevant information sessions.

Slide 23

Video 4

Supporting Families

What’s Next?

Parenting resources spectrum

- Help groups
- Information sessions
- Parenting programs
- Parenting materials
- Parenting resources
- Parenting workshops
- Parenting videos
- Parenting websites
- Parenting discussion forums
- Parenting podcasts
- Parenting blogs
- Parenting organizations
Two approaches

Key messages

- After GPs, teachers are the professionals most frequently consulted by parents and carers regarding children's emotional or behavioural problems.
- KidsMatter Primary presents two approaches for school staff when consulted by families regarding children's wellbeing:
  - **Promoting** – increasing access to parenting resources.
  - **Responding** – dealing with questions and concerns using the S-I-B model, recognising the common needs of parents and carers, and providing relevant information sessions.
- These approaches:
  - reflect that parents and carers see schools as places to obtain information and support with parenting
  - reflect that parents and carers have different needs and comfort levels in accessing support and information – some may verbalise their intent, while others may prefer to access information without discussion
  - improve access to parenting information and education – this fits with the mental health promotion work of KidsMatter Primary
  - can reduce demands on school staff because the information is being delivered at a time and in a manner suitable to them.
- The 2004 Parenting Information Project reported families had a limited awareness of how and where to access information and support, but wanted information regarding:
  - children’s development and health – emotional, social, intellectual and physical
  - parenting – balancing work and family, coping with financial pressures, parental health and wellbeing, changes to parental relationships, and dealing with feelings of isolation.

References

Centre for Community Child Health (2007); Sanders, et al. (1999).

Video 4: Supporting families

Purpose

To outline ways schools can support families, including by promoting parenting information and responding to their concerns and requests for information.

Instructions

2. Summarise in line with the video’s key messages.

Key messages

- A school is an influential setting, and can be a rich source of parenting information – through newsletters, bulletins, suggestions/helpful hints, electronic media, and workshops.
- Providing families with information on relevant topics (eg literacy, nutrition, sleep) can help build a positive relationship between the school and family.
- Schools can assist families to manage difficult times and circumstances.
- Knowing about the services in their community will help school staff to assist parents and carers with appropriate support as required.
COMPONENT 3: SESSION 2
SLIDE ORDER

SLIDE 24
Parenting resources spectrum

SLIDE 25
KidsMatter Primary supporting resources

WHAT'S NEXT?

Component 3: Working with parents and carers
There is a spectrum of parenting information that schools can make available to all parents and carers:

- **Help yourself:** information in the form of fact sheets, tip sheets, websites and more, which parents and carers can access without direct instruction.
- **Information sessions:** face-to-face information, such as discussion forums, guest speakers, agency expos and more.
- **Parenting programs:** structured programs suitable for all parents and carers delivered by accredited staff or individuals – for example, Triple P parenting programs. The KidsMatter Primary Programs Guide is a searchable online tool for schools to view parenting programs available.

There are many ways schools can proactively support parents and carers.

- It is helpful for parents and carers to have choices about their level of involvement and the best ways to meet their needs.
- Remind participants of the KidsMatter Primary information sheets which can be used to start discussions and build collaborative relationships with parents and carers.

If time allows:

- ask participants to jot down on sticky notes some of the ways their school currently supports families through resources, and any ideas they may have for new methods
- invite the Action Team to collect the sticky notes for their planning.

The KidsMatter Primary Component 3 information sheets cover a range of parenting topics. They can be used to help staff build collaborative working relationships with parents and carers, as well as support them with parenting.

In addition to the KidsMatter Primary schools website, there is now a section for families where all information sheets can be downloaded: [www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families).

Make the Component 3 information sheets available for staff to see.
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

*Activity and discussion*

The S-I-B model in action
### Purpose

To reflect on an example of the S-I-B model in practice.

### Materials

- The S-I-B model in the *Participant Workbook* (page 21)

### Instructions

1. Explain to staff that the upcoming video illustrates the ‘S-I-B model’, a model which helps school staff respond to questions and concerns from parents and carers. Refer them to the detailed model in the workbook.

2. **Play Video 5** (5:50), explaining that the use of the S-I-B model in the video is not meant to be a perfect example, but provides stimulus for discussion.

3. Clarify that the S-I-B model is used by school staff to respond to parent and carer questions or concerns, and complements existing methods of responding to school-based issues. The focus is not on using the model to raise concerns with parents and carers. Initiating these types of conversation will be covered in Component 4.

4. Commence the discussion by asking participants:
   - *What did the teacher do well?*
   - *What could he have done better?*
   - *How did the teacher set the scene for this interaction?*
   - *How did the teacher identify the parent’s concerns?*
   - *How would you have responded to this parent? Similarly? Differently?*
   - *How do you think the parent might have felt?*
   - *Can you think of times when you may need to be more aware of your communication when using the S-I-B model (eg eye contact and/or physical space considerations when working with parents and carers from different cultural backgrounds)?*

### Conclusion

Reiterate that the S-I-B model provides a structure for communicating with families – it helps keep the relationship a priority, identifies the families’ interests and needs, and explores options for addressing their concerns or questions – that can help prevent pressure on staff.

### Key messages

- The S-I-B model supports staff to respond to families:
  - within the scope of their own role – for example, wellbeing staff can proactively respond with information and possible referral sources, whereas an education support worker may be better placed to listen and empathise and refer concerns on.
  - without feeling pressured to ‘have all the answers’ – referring to appropriate resources or trained staff, schools can provide accurate information to parents and carers without drawing on personal experiences.
  - The KidsMatter Primary information sheets available on the website can be used with the S-I-B model to provide information to parents and carers in response to concerns.
WHAT'S NEXT?

**Session 2 summary**

- Schools can be a source of parenting information that will enhance children’s mental health and wellbeing.
- GPs, teachers are the professionals consulted most by parents and carers on children’s mental health issues.
- The S-I-B model provides an approach for communicating with parents and carers seeking parenting support.

**SLIDE 28**

Activity and discussion

The S-I-B model in action
### Purpose

To increase participants’ knowledge of the S-I-B model and their confidence in applying the steps.

### Materials

The following items from the *Participant Workbook*:
- Demonstration script (pages 22-23)
- Concern scenarios (page 24)
- Planning sheet (page 25)
- Observation sheet (page 26)

### Instructions

1. Inform participants that they will now have the opportunity to practice the S-I-B model. Break them into groups of three people.

2. Emphasise that this activity is **not** a reflection of their past practices or experiences, and that they should view the concern scenarios as hypothetical. Remind them that family/student privacy should be observed.

3. Ask participants in their groups to read through the S-I-B demonstration script.

4. Invite them to choose a parent and carer S-I-B concern scenario. Once they have done so, ask groups to plan their responses to parents and carers using the planning sheet.

5. If time permits, participants can also perform a role-play of their planned response in groups, with the roles of a staff member, parent and observer. The role play should involve participants using their chosen scenario. The group observer should fill out the observation sheet in the workbook during the role-play.

6. Return to a whole group formation for the discussion. Invite participants to share their experiences of the S-I-B activity, by asking:

   **How useful would the S-I-B model be for you?**

### Conclusion

Conclude by emphasising that the S-I-B model is a planned approach to working through a concern – similar to the process used for KidsMatter Primary component planning. It is designed to create consistent responses for families, and to facilitate access to parenting information and support without requiring school staff to ‘have all the answers’.

### Notes

- Participants may like to refer to the following pages of the *Participant Workbook* to help them complete the activity:
  - ‘Tips for brainstorming’ (page 27)
  - ‘Online information for common parent and carer concerns’ (pages 28-29).
Components can be a source of parenting information that will enhance children's mental health and wellbeing.

After GPs, teachers are the professionals consulted most by parents and carers on children's mental health issues.

The S-I-H model provides an approach for communicating with parents and carers seeking parenting support.
## Session 2 summary

### Notes

- Summary messages for this session are on the slide.
- Completion of this session will depend on whether this professional learning is being run as a single session or multiple sessions. At this stage, it may be helpful to give a brief overview of the session to come.
- Encourage participants to take a moment to reflect on the session, and make a note of any new learnings or ideas on the summary page of their *Participant Workbook* (page 30).
Collaborative working relationships
Session 3:
Collaborative working relationships

What it covers
This session enables participants to:

• understand the importance of building and investing in staff-family relationships to enhance opportunities for families to be involved at the school
• reflect on the key elements of collaborative working relationships with families
• identify and understand common barriers to working with families
• explore ways for families to support each other
• understand the benefits of the school forming relationships with local agencies.

Session outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME (minutes)</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SESSION 3</strong></td>
<td>Collaborative working relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recap previous session, if necessary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong>: What builds a collaborative two-way positive working relationship?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **10**         | **Video 6**: Building relationships  
**Collaborative working relationships**  
**Relationship bank** |
| **15**         | **Activity**: Investing in the relationship bank  
**A systematic approach** |
| **10**         | **Video 7**: Connecting parents and carers together  
**School as a community hub**  
**Family and community support networks**  
**Community resources** |
| **5**          | **Discussion**: What else could we do? |
| **10**         | **Activity**: Taking action |
| **Summary**    | **Video 8**: A final word from families  
**Feedback forms** |
WHAT'S NEXT?

Video 6

Building Relationships
### SLIDE 30
**Session 3: Collaborative working relationships**

**Notes**
- If necessary, repeat the summary slide from the first session.
- This may be important if you are running three one-hour sessions.

### SLIDE 31
**Discussion: What builds a collaborative two-way positive working relationship?**

**5 min**

**Purpose**
To help staff to identify the factors that build a collaborative working relationship.

**Materials**
- Whiteboard/butcher’s paper and markers

**Instructions**
1. Ask participants: *What builds a collaborative two-way positive working relationship?*
2. If necessary, provide the following prompt: *Think of a relationship which has been beneficial. What kind of things helped that relationship to develop and be positive?*
3. If the discussion is slow to start, suggest the following factors:
   - Trust
   - Good listening
   - Open communication
   - Mutual respect
   - Having a clear goal to work on together.
4. List participants’ answers on the whiteboard or butcher’s paper. This could be turned into a poster for the school’s future reference.

**Conclusion**
Finish off by highlighting that there a range of factors that assist positive working relationships to develop.

**Notes**
- Different factors may take prominence in exchanges between staff members and parents or carers, especially in relation to the starting point of the relationship – for example, a parent or carer who has experienced personal difficulties during their own primary school experiences may need to focus on developing trust as a priority, before any other factors.
COMPONENT 3: SESSION 3

SLIDE ORDER

SLIDE 32

Video 6

SLIDE 33

Factors that create a collaborative working relationship

- Trust
- Two-way communication
- Mutual respect
- Common goals
- Good listening
- A clear goal to work on together

WHAT'S NEXT?

Collaborative working relationships require effort

- Prioritise time for conversations to get to know one another.
- Understand the other person’s perspective so that we:
  - know what to expect of each other (school and family)
  - can develop shared views about a student’s mental health, wellbeing and learning.
SLIDE 32

Video 6: Building relationships

**Purpose**

To show various examples of strategies schools and staff have used to build relationships with families.

**Instructions**

1. **Play Video 6** (6:00).
2. Ask participants:
   - *What stood out for you?*
   - *What was new to you?*
   - *If you interviewed your families, what would they say was important? Have you asked them?*
3. Summarise in line with the video’s key messages.

**Key messages**

- One of the challenges for schools in building relationships with families is the time this takes.
- Strategies such as keeping a list of parent contacts, positive phone calls home, and sending postcards can help staff build positive relationships with parents and carers.
- Trust is a key element of positive relationships which can take time to build.

SLIDE 33

Factors that create a collaborative working relationship

**Key messages**

- Teachers can greatly enhance their relationships with parents and carers when they:
  - can offer attributes including warmth, openness, sensitivity, flexibility and accessibility
  - have a positive attitude toward families – view families as partners and see the relationship as important.
- Research suggests parents and carers can be encouraged to participate in their child’s school when:
  - they are personally involved in their child’s education
  - they believe they can acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to help their child succeed in school
  - their child and/or the school ask for their involvement.

**Notes**

- Ask participants to refer back to the discussion prior to Video 6 and consider whether:
  - the discussion identified all the items listed on the slide
  - there are any gaps in the list
  - any items are more important than others.
- If time permits, ask participants to rank the factors listed on the slide in order of their importance. They could also create a school poster listing the key factors for future display.

**References**

SLIDE 34

Collaborative working relationships require effort

- Prioritise time for conversations to get to know one another.
- Understand the other person’s perspective so that we:
  - know what to expect of each other (school and family)
  - can develop shared views about a student’s mental health, wellbeing and learning.

SLIDE 35

Benefits of collaborative working relationships

- A sense of community can be developed.
- Teachers may better understand the whole child.
- Parents/carers experience more confidence in supporting children at home.
- Students have greater engagement at school.
- Students have greater academic success.
- Teachers are more likely to receive parental support.

(Handley, Anderson, Breslin & Abbott, 2006; Bekkens & Mencheye, 2005)

WHAT’S NEXT?

Relationship bank

- Relationships are built by small, regular deposits.
- Deposits are an investment in the relationship (they can also help manage future difficulties).
- Regular contact is best built and maintained systematically.
Collaborative working relationships require effort

Key messages

- There are two critical situations that influence how a teacher interacts with a family:
  - The first meeting – sets the tone for the relationship; awareness of cultural issues and preferences for verbal and non-verbal communication is key.
  - Teacher invitations for parental involvement in activities – foundational for maintaining an ongoing relationship.
- There are many factors that can get in the way of building a collaborative working relationship. Some are attitudinal concerns (eg lack of trust) and others are practical (eg time limitations).
- It is valuable for staff to reflect on questions such as: How do you meet families? How do you get to know their names? How do you greet them? How do you find out their preferred way of being contacted?
- It is important to identify what you can change if something is getting in the way of building a positive working relationship with a parent or carer.

Notes

- Provide participants with examples of ways to prioritise conversations to get to know each other (eg welcome barbeques, family-student-teacher meetings, parent-teacher interviews).
- Refer back to Component 1 work which may have identified the various diversity of perspectives amongst community members, especially parents and carers.

Reference

Keyes (2002).

Benefits of collaborative working relationships

Key messages

- The benefits of forming collaborative working relationships between home and school are numerous and include the factors listed on the slide.
- Student learning outcomes relate to the positive relationships between the important adults in their lives (eg parents, carers, teachers and others).
- It can be useful to view home-school relationships as dynamic and interactional, noting that parents and carers will respond to cues given by school just as school staff react to parents’ and carers’ behaviour.
SLIDE 36

Relationship bank

- Relationships are built by small, regular deposits.
- Deposits are an investment in the relationship (they can also help manage future difficulties).
- Regular contact is best built and maintained systematically.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Investing in the relationship bank
Key messages

- Positive and regular connections with parents and carers are a ‘deposit’ in the ‘relationship bank’.
- These deposits are an investment in the relationship that can help in the future during any difficult times, providing a solid foundation to protect the relationship during strain.
- Regular, small-effort contact is more effective than rarer events such as parent-teacher meetings and end-of year concerts.
- The best approach is to incorporate these small, regular investments systematically into school procedure. Without a system, relationship-building tends to occur infrequently, and becomes forgotten about over time.
- Parents and carers may have a history of contact with the school only when something is wrong, and may therefore be likely to react anxiously or defensively when contacted. Establishing a pattern of positive interactions can help overcome this.
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

WHAT’S NEXT?

One school’s approach

- Observe – Over a month, class teachers recorded each time they had contact with their students’ parents or carers.
- Review – Data showed they had regular contact with some families, but little or none with others (especially in the older grades).
- Act – Staff decided to make contact with each student’s parents or carers twice per term, and to keep a record of progress.

Investing in the relationship bank
### Purpose
To assist participants to think about the ways in which they make positive and regular connections with families.

### Materials
- ‘Investing in the relationship bank’ worksheet in the *Participant Workbook* (page 32)
- Whiteboard/butcher's paper and markers
- Sticky notes

### Instructions
1. Write two headings on the whiteboard or butcher’s paper: ‘positive connections’ and ‘regular connections’.
2. Explain that investing in the relationship bank is a two-pronged approach, requiring both positive and regular connections with families.
3. Divide participants into three or four small groups and ask the following questions about **positive connections** with families:
   - *What sort of things do parents and carers like hearing from school staff?*
   - *How do you know? Have you asked them?*
   - *How can these be communicated?*
4. Ask participants to write their answers on sticky notes and stick under the corresponding title on the whiteboard/butcher’s paper. There is also space in the worksheet for recording answers.
5. As a group, read out the many ideas school staff have for positive connections with parents and carers.
6. In the same small groups, ask participants the following questions about **regular connections** with families:
   - *How can school staff connect regularly with parents and carers?*
   - *Have you asked families how they prefer to be contacted?*
   - *Is this something that is asked of all new families when they join your school?*
7. Ask participants to write their answers on sticky notes and stick under the corresponding title on the whiteboard/butcher’s paper. There is also space in the worksheet for recording answers.
8. As a group, read out the many ideas school staff have for regular connections with parents and carers.

### Conclusion
Conclude the activity with the underlying message that there are many simple ways school staff can build relationships with families through their day-to-day interactions.

### Key messages
- Parents and carers like to hear personal things about their child, not solely about their academic abilities - for example, their interests, nicknames, and funny things they have said at school are important aspects.
- Staff can communicate these things genuinely to families, in a way that shows the staff member cares for the child as a whole person and not just a student.
- Remember also that parents and carers arrive at the school with different expectations, interest and capacity to build relationships with school staff.
- It may take time to build relationships with parents and carers.
Facilitator Guide

Component 3: Working with parents and carers

COMPONENT 3: SESSION 3

SLIDE ORDER

SLIDE 38

One school's approach

- **Observe** – Over a month, class teachers recorded each time they had contact with their students' parents or carers.
- **Review** – Data showed they had regular contact with some families, and little or none with others (especially in the older grades).
- **Act** – Staff decided to make contact with each student’s parent or carer twice per term, and to keep a record of progress.

SLIDE 39

A systematic approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child's name</th>
<th>Welcome time</th>
<th>Positive contact</th>
<th>Mobile call</th>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Reminder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aidan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aman</td>
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<td>L</td>
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<tr>
<td>George</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/T/F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Interpreter needed) (1) Home difficulties of adults (5) Responds best to email contact

WHAT'S NEXT?

Video 7
One school’s approach

Key messages

- Schools can use a three-step process – Observe-Review-Act – to systematically review parent and carer contact, and implement an ongoing strategy.
- One KidsMatter Primary school used the process in the following way:
  - **Observe** – Over a month, class teachers recorded each time they had contact with their students’ parents or carers.
  - **Review** – Data showed they had regular contact with some families, and little or none with others (especially in the older grades).
  - **Act** – Staff decided to make contact with each student’s parents or carers twice per term, and to keep a record of progress using a systematic approach.

A systematic approach

Key messages

- Over time, the school staff gathered information on the most effective ways of communicating with their parents and carers. Time was set aside at staff meetings once a term to review the progress of this approach and to resolve any concerns. Some staff had started to develop a coding system to help them.
- This included things such as:
  - (I) Interpreter needed
  - (L) Literacy difficulties of adults
  - (E) Responds best to email contact
  - (F2F) Responds best to face-to-face contact.

Notes

- Refer participants to the table in the Participant Workbook (page 33).
COMPONENT 3: SESSION 3

SLIDE ORDER

WHAT'S NEXT?

School as a community hub

Research tells us:
- one in four parents and carers report low levels of social support
- feeling connected to a community helps parents and carers to cope better
- connecting parents and carers together can increase their social support – a protective factor for children’s mental health.
Purpose

To reiterate the idea that schools can be a community hub where people gather together and can increase social support for parenting.

Instructions

1. Play Video 7 (3:09).
2. Ask participants: What stood out for you?
3. Summarise in line with the video’s key messages.

Key messages

- Some parents and carers may have a need to belong to the school community. When schools engage them early on, this helps promote a positive relationship that can be drawn on in difficult situations.
- Parents with school-aged children may not have the support they had when their children were babies (e.g., mothers’ groups).
- The benefits for schools of having an engaged parenting community are numerous, and relate directly to creating a positive school culture and which promotes student success.
- Equally, there are significant benefits to parents and carers in having a place in the community where they can connect and support each other.
- Increased support for parenting can lead to increases in flexibility and patience, and more available time for parents and carers to attend to and concentrate on children.
- Schools can be seen as a community hub and, by connecting families together, can increase their social support which is a protective factor for children’s mental health.
- It’s helpful for schools to audit the events they offer. This could include considering who comes and why, and any other opportunities to capture the interests and needs of a diverse range of parents and carers.
Facilitator Guide
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

**Community resources**

Schools can develop partnerships with community agencies to:
- increase access to services for families
- especially support families with complex needs
- address barriers to family engagement outside of the school's control (e.g., parental mental illness).
SLIDE 41  School as a community hub

Key messages

- The points on this slide link back to children’s mental health directly. Video 7 has outlined the importance of protecting children’s mental health by increasing the support available to parents and carers – among themselves and in the community.
- One in four parents or carers report low levels of social support – particularly those who are single, young, or born outside of Australia.
- Feeling connected to a community helps parents feel supported and cope better.

Reference

Zubrick et al. (2008).

SLIDE 42  Family and community support networks

Key messages

- Schools can provide opportunities for parents and carers to develop relationships and support each other. Reducing social isolation is a protective factor for children’s mental health.
- Parents and carers can be linked with relevant services and organisations in the community.
- For some families, a school is the only social institution where they can turn for help in raising their child.
Component 3: Session 3

**Slide 43**

Community resources

Schools can develop partnerships with community agencies to:
- increase access to services for families
- especially support families with complex needs
- address barriers to family engagement outside of the school's control (e.g., parental mental illness).

**Slide 44**

Revisiting attitudes and beliefs

- Most parents and carers want to be involved in their child's education.
- Parents and carers are usually open to letting teachers help with any concerns about their child.
- Parents and carers are the primary educators of their child.
- School staff need to be informed about what is happening at home.
- Schools find some families hard to engage. Those families don’t care about their child’s education.

**What's next?**

- Discussion

What else could we do?
### Community resources

**Key messages**
- Developing partnerships with the community helps schools increase families’ access to services and support them with any complex needs.
- Working in partnership with community agencies to support families can also support schools to place boundaries around their role in supporting families.

**Notes**
- Provide examples of any local community resources available to the school.

### Revisiting attitudes and beliefs

**Notes**
- Ask participants to review and check that they still agree with their responses to the introductory activity in Session 1. Ask for volunteers to share their reasons why/why not. If changes occurred, ask what helped to make this change. If no changes occurred, ask why that may have been.
- Remind participants it is important to reflect on their beliefs, and to identify those which impact on how they work with families.
- KidsMatter Primary professional learning is designed to support staff to reflect on current thinking and practices and, together, develop shared understandings and strategies.
WHAT ELSE COULD WE DO?
SLIDE 45  Discussion: What else could we do?  5 min

### Purpose
To enable participants to reflect on the extra things they and the school could do to better work with parents and carers.

### Materials
- ‘What are we already doing?’ worksheet in the Participant Workbook (page 17)

### Instructions
1. Ask the following questions and invite participants to write the answers in the worksheet (they will have already completed the ‘What am I doing?’ section):

   **What else could you and the school do to:**
   - Establish cooperative and collaborative working relationships with families?
   - Actively promote parenting information and support?
   - Provide opportunities for families to develop support networks with each other?

### Conclusion
It is important to continue to identify ways to work effectively with families as their needs and expectations change. Furthermore, the school community will evolve as families leave and new ones arrive.
Component 3: Working with parents and carers

WHAT'S NEXT?

Session 3 summary

- Relationships are best built by small, regular investments and maintained in a systematic way throughout the school.
- Schools can be a community hub where people come together – to reduce social isolation and optimise children’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Schools can build home-school relationships through connecting families together and promoting community information.
### Activity: Taking action

**Purpose**
To ensure the key messages and learnings from the session are incorporated into a personal action plan for future development.

**Materials**
- ‘My personal action plan’ worksheet in the *Participant Workbook* (page 34)
- ‘Planning school-wide action’ worksheet in the *Participant Workbook* (page 35)

**Instructions**
1. Invite participants to complete the personal action plan.
2. Ask participants to complete the plan for school-wide action. This is a tear-off worksheet for ideas which they may wish to share with the Action Team.

**Conclusion**
Remind participants that the opinions and ideas developed in this professional learning will be incorporated into the Action Team’s whole-school planning for Component 3. This is an essential part of KidsMatter Primary, and the way in which the professional learning feeds into whole-school improvement.

**Key messages**
- Individuals can take action immediately to start enhancing their work with parents and carers.
- The personal action plan can help goals become achievable, and assists participants to:
  - outline a specific, measureable and attainable goal
  - consider the obstacles to progress, and plan in advance how they’ll be overcome
  - make a public commitment (to the group, or a partner) to keep them motivated
  - set a review date to monitor progress.
- It can take time to develop, so participants may need to continue planning outside of the session.
- Some participants may benefit from hearing the ideas of others to stimulate their own thinking.
What's next?

Slide 47

Session 3 summary

- Relationships are best built by small, regular investments and maintained in a systematic way throughout the school.
- Schools can be a community hub where people come together – to reduce social isolation and optimise children’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Schools can build home-school relationships through connecting families together and promoting community information.

Slide 48

Session 3 summary

- Through reflection, staff can become aware of the attitudes and beliefs that impact on their relationships with families.
- It’s important schools continue to find ways to work with families, as needs evolve and new families come and go.

Slide 49

Video B

A final word from families

Tell us what you think:

- Did you find this training session useful?
- Do you have any thoughts on the KidsMatter Primary resources provided?
- Please take a minute to provide your anonymous feedback at: www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/component/feedback
SLIDE 47  
Session 3 summary

Notes
- These slides review the content of all three sessions of the professional learning.
- The next step for the Action Team is to continue planning for Component 3 informed by the ideas generated in these sessions.
- It is likely that the sessions will have encouraged participants to reflect and, in so doing, begin an awareness-raising process for themselves as individuals and as a whole-staff group.
- This session is the beginning of the work of the Action Team who will regularly include staff in planning and update them of their progress.
- Encourage participants to use their Participant Workbook as an ongoing record of ideas and reflections, and to refer to the KidsMatter website for further resources and updates.

SLIDE 48  
Session 3 summary

Notes

SLIDE 49  
Video 8: A final word from families

Key messages
- Families feel valued and included when they are welcomed into the school.
- Parents and carers appreciate it when staff show an interest in what goes on in their families, and their care of and interest in their children.
- When families see staff providing care, love, information and wisdom to children, this can help parents and carers to grow and challenge themselves.

Notes
- To finish the session on a positive note, remind staff of the positive impact on families when they have a collaborative working relationship with their child’s school.
- Play Video 8 (2:18).
Tell us what you think!

- Did you find this training session useful?
- Do you have any thoughts on the KidsMatter Primary resources provided?
- Please take a minute to provide your anonymous feedback at: www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/component/feedback

END OF SESSION
Tell us what you think!

Key messages

- KidsMatter Primary would like to hear what you think of their resources and whether you have found this session useful.
- Every participant, including the facilitator, is invited to give feedback.
- Individual responses are confidential and go direct to the KidsMatter Primary national team for quality assurance purposes – they will not be seen by the school Action Team.
- Feedback is also an important step in helping us move towards formal recognition as a KidsMatter Primary school.
- The link to the online feedback form is in the Participant Workbook: www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/componentfeedback
- You may also be sent a reminder email after the session.

Notes

- Invite participants to complete the online feedback form (they will be commenting on the content of the session, not your presentation).
- Thank the group for their participation and conclude the session.
- After the session, send out a follow-up thank you email to participants (suggested wording):

  Dear staff,

  Thank you for your participation in the recent KidsMatter Primary Component 3 professional learning session/s.

  Your feedback is very important to KidsMatter Primary and will help ensure that these sessions are effective and meet your learning needs. We would appreciate your assistance in completing this short survey.

  1. Your responses are anonymous.
  2. It is important that you give your honest views.
  3. Responses are viewed only by the KidsMatter Primary National team for quality assurance purposes.

  Click here to give your feedback: www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/componentfeedback
References


This disc can be played using both Windows and Macintosh computers.

Insert the disc into your computer’s CD drive – if you are on a Windows machine the disc will play automatically unless you have adjusted your settings to specify otherwise. Windows 7 users may be prompted to ‘Run KMP_C3_WIN.exe’ and will experience this dialogue box every time the disc is inserted until the ‘Always do this for software and games’ option is checked.

To open the application manually, follow these instructions:

**WINDOWS:** Go to My Computer, right-click on CD Drive and select open. Double-click KMP_C3_WIN.exe file to open.

**MAC:** Double-click KMP_C3 icon on the desktop to bring up a new Finder window. Double-click KMP_C3_MAC.app to open.