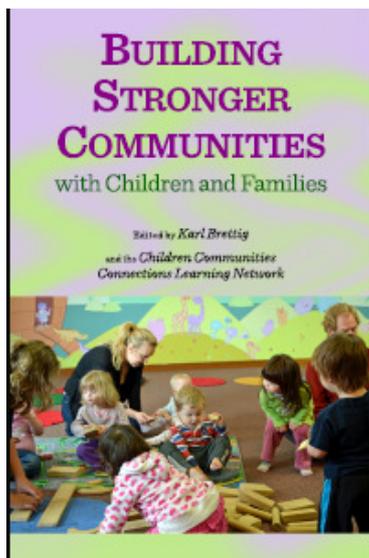


# Building Stronger Communities with Children and Families

*A Practice View*



Do we want to see communities change or will we allow children continue to be neglected and abused? At what cost?

Can we reverse current trends by listening to the voices of children and families and becoming more responsible as adults?

How can government departments and non-government agencies work together with families and communities?

Available from Amazon

Published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing

<http://www.cambridgescholars.com/building-stronger-communities-with-children-and-families>

This book captures something of the essence of how communities that better support healthy child development can be built. It includes a look at key elements of the Australian Communities for Children initiative, using a collaborative approach that takes into account community, government and family. How can the voices of children be heard in decision-making processes that impact their futures? How can the avalanche of electronic games, the information superhighway and social media be negotiated to support, educate and protect children living in an online world? What does it mean to use a whole of community approach to supporting families? How can government departments and non-government agencies work together with communities to provide the kind of support that effectively engages families, so that the quality of parenting improves and results in healthy child development? What strategies can be developed in early childhood and school settings to improve family functioning? How can the integration of fragmented services be improved? While these are undoubtedly diverse questions, this kind of holistic viewpoint is necessary if we are to redesign inadequate, siloed approaches and build family friendly urban villages that deliver improved outcomes for children.

Complex early childhood trauma often leads to recurring problems for generations with significant economic cost if there is no effective intervention. The current 'merry go round' of services risks the re-traumatisation and escalation of symptoms of those seeking help. If significant change is to be witnessed, relevant stakeholders need to make a concerted attempt to, first of all, listen to what children and families are saying, and then to implement the kinds of practices and policies that will adequately address their needs and aspirations. To do this, a well-trained workforce that understands the issues of holistic, trans-disciplinary and integrated work with children and families is required. Governments and services can't do this alone. Most families are more influenced by peers and associates, and change needs to be galvanised across whole communities. A whole of community approach involves linking together a place-based combination of government, non-government and community initiatives to support families. Services need to consider how they can work with individuals and community groups to develop the kind of social environment that enables families to flourish. This is not an easy task, and, drawing on research and practical experience, this book looks at some of the key ingredients needed by those who attempt it.

# Reviews



*Building Stronger Communities with Children and Families* clearly highlights the need for a collective response in the development of lasting social change given the complexities of modern life. This publication provides us with an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the efficacy of whole of community, coordinated and collective approaches to build family friendly communities. I commend the authors of this book in the documenting of the practice journeys of a number of organisations and services in the early intervention/prevention arena as a valuable tool which shares learnings, practice wisdom and evidence to support the critical importance of “working together” to improve outcomes for communities and the families and children who reside in them.

Jenny Chaves  
Program Manager, Mission Australia Communities for Children Inala to Ipswich and Circles of Care

Over many years as a licensed family therapist, I have become increasingly concerned about the breakdown of family and community and am convinced that this is the source of many personal and social problems. I have read this publication with interest and excitement. I see in this book a real working blueprint to build healthier families and communities. I especially like the emphasis of diverse groups within the community working together as a team. This can make things happen by using the ‘power of we’. Our children need this!

Dr. David J. Ludwig  
Professor, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, NC. USA

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