

Supporting a healthy first 2,000 days for all Victorian children

VicHealth Local Government Partnership



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VicHealth health promotion modules for local government

As part of the [Local Government Partnership](#) VicHealth has partnered with sector experts to develop health promotion modules to support local government to improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families. The modules include how-to guides and recommended resources for health promotion action.

In 2022, a suite of implementation actions with a specific focus on the healthy development of children in their first 2,000 days have been incorporated across the active communities, food systems, mental wellbeing, arts, alcohol harm prevention and tobacco control modules.

The implementation actions provide guidance for councils to take a range of early childhood-focused actions across their services, places, programs and initiatives to support local government to improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families.

This document introduces and provides the broader context for the actions to support a healthy first 2,000 days. It first explains the importance of the first 2,000 days for the healthy development of children, and why councils have a role in supporting all children to experience healthy conditions as they start their lives. It then outlines opportunities for councils to do this through the settings, services and strategies within their remits, and in the context of the Victorian policy environment.

The document outlines language, terms and concepts used in reference to the first 2,000 days actions and recommends a range of resources for councils.

Finally, it introduces the best practice implementation actions for councils to support a healthy first 2,000 days, and signposts where to find and how to use the toolkits for the actions in VicHealth's local government health promotion modules.

All children in our communities should be supported to have the healthiest start to life

The ‘first 2,000 days’ refers to the period in a child’s life from conception to five years of age. This is a critical phase in development, during which a child’s experiences can have lifelong impacts on their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Healthy conditions in this phase play a crucial role in shaping a child’s future health outcomes. However, many children experience inequities in the social, economic and environmental conditions in which they are born and grow, which can lead to them experiencing poorer long-term health and wellbeing.

The first 2000 days is a window of opportunity to influence the health and wellbeing of children.

Councils can play an important role in supporting all children in their local communities to have a healthy first 2,000 days. By taking action to support the healthy development of children, and creating communities that support families with young children, councils can help all children have the best start to life and reach their potential.

Councils can provide accessible and inclusive services, activities and facilities, provide social support and connection for all young children and families, and help address underlying determinants of health and wellbeing. They can also help create neighbourhoods and communities that support young children and their families to be healthy as they play, learn, move around the community, and go about their daily lives.

As the leaders of their municipalities, councils have unique vantage points across their communities and a responsibility to understand the inequities and barriers that some families face more than others.

They have opportunities to create or advocate for healthy conditions in a multitude of everyday touchpoints with young children and families. By working within council and with stakeholders in a connected way, councils can convene action on a range of priority areas, and achieve greater collective impact to improve the first 2000 days for Victorian children.

Why are the first 2,000 days so important?

There is growing evidence that a child's experiences in their first 2,000 days of life can have lifelong consequences for their health and wellbeing.

These early experiences can affect all aspects of a child's development and functioning, including their cognitive development, social functioning, and long-term health and wellbeing.

[A comprehensive evidence review by the Centre for Community Child Health](#) highlights that a child's first 1,000 days are particularly critical. At this early stage of life, humans have maximum 'developmental plasticity' – the capacity to adapt to different social and physical environments. Most of a child's brain development happens during this period and is heavily influenced by their social and physical experiences.¹

[A knowledge synthesis by the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre](#) reviewed evidence from 60 peer-reviewed articles on prevention in the first 2,000 days, with guidance from prevention policy makers in eight Australian jurisdictions. The knowledge synthesis found that the first 2,000 days of a child's life is a unique and critical window to reduce their lifetime risk of chronic disease.

Prevention interventions in the first 2,000 days are more effective than at any other time in life. They help set the foundations for lifelong health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequities throughout children's lives.²



1. Moore TG, Arefadib N, Deery A, & West S (2017) The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper. Parkville, Victoria; Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

2. Chung, A, Hall A, Brown V, Kuswara K, Howse E, Stickney B, Signy H, Rychetnik L (2000) The first 2000 days: Synthesis of knowledge from the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre and CERl, The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre.

What are key influences on the health and development of children in the first 2,000 days?

Young children thrive when they have positive experiences in their early years. They need to feel safe and included, while receiving secure and responsive caregiving, good nutrition and high-quality early learning at home and in early childhood settings.

Built environments that encourage children to play and be physically active can have long-term benefits for their health and development. Positive social networks and social support for parents also have important positive influences on children and their families.³

Adverse experiences in a child's early years – such as physical, sexual or emotional abuse, physical or emotional neglect, or exposure to family violence, substance abuse or mental health issues – also have long-lasting impacts on their health and development.⁴

Children should be free of exposure to harmful products and commercial influences. Consuming or being exposed to harmful products at this early age, including highly processed foods, sugary drinks, alcohol, and tobacco smoke or vape aerosol, can have long-lasting impacts on children's health and risk of chronic disease.

Exposure to marketing of harmful brands and products, including alcohol, e-cigarette and unhealthy food and drink marketing, can also influence a child's long-term health behaviours, product consumption, and health outcomes.

The social and economic conditions in which families raise young children – known as social determinants of health – are particularly important in the first 2,000 days. These include family socioeconomic status, parents' or carers' educational attainment and employment status, poverty, geographic location, race-based discrimination, disability, gender, and social connectivity.⁵

Inequities in these conditions occur in every community, and determine children's exposure to positive and adverse experiences. This can lead to disparities in children's early development and functioning, and long-term inequities in their health, wellbeing, employment and education outcomes.

These conditions are mainly determined by external factors, such as structural influences and inequalities, rather than families' individual choices, responsibilities or behaviours. All levels of government, and a range of sectors and organisations have a role in influencing social determinants of health, including income, housing, social support, opportunities for education, and access to health care.

3. Moore TG (2019) Early childhood, family support and health care services: An evidence review. Prepared for the City of Port Phillip. Melbourne, Victoria: Centre for Community Child Health and the City of Port Phillip. DOI: 10.25374/MCRI.8312768.

4. Moore TG, Arefadib N, Deery A, & West S (2017) The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper. Parkville, Victoria; Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

5. Newman L, Javanparast S, Baum F, Hutchinson C (2015) Evidence review: Settings for addressing the social determinants of health inequities, VicHealth.

How can councils support a healthy first 2,000 days for all children?



Councils are ideally placed to support a healthy first 2,000 days for every child. They can lead the way by working to understand and remove the barriers families in their communities face.

Councils are the leaders in providing services and support to young children and families and shaping local environments and communities that foster children's healthy development in their earliest years.

Councils lead community services and workforces that influence children's earliest experiences – Maternal and Child Health Services are often among parents' first visits after their baby is born and provide vital care, support and information to new parents and families. First time parent groups can also provide valuable additional support.

Council-facilitated parent groups and community supported playgroups offer opportunities for local children and families to connect, play and build positive social support networks. Councils help ensure children receive high-quality early learning, making sure they are ready to start school and providing the foundation for better outcomes throughout their lives.

Councils are responsible for destinations and hubs in the community for children and families to meet, socialise, be active and play, including playgroups, libraries, toy libraries, sports and recreation centres, playgrounds and parks.

They also play a key role in shaping the physical world through which children and families move as they go about their daily lives, helping to ensure streets and spaces are safe and accessible, families have access to healthy food, and our youngest community members have opportunities to play, move and be active.

Councils already provide high-quality early childhood and family services, and have a well-functioning early years system in place. This system provides significant opportunity for councils to reach children and families, and maximise benefits for children in their first 2,000 days. To support children to have the best possible start to life, councils also need to work outside the early years system – to raise the profile of supporting a healthy first 2,000 days more broadly across council and the community, and to strengthen coordinated action across council departments and policies, and the different sectors, systems and settings with which councils engage.

To holistically address the many underlying determinants of the health and development of children in their first 2,000 days, broad social and structural change is needed through cooperation across multiple sectors and levels of government. However, evidence-based actions by councils in the first 2,000 days can make an important difference in improving their early experiences and supporting their healthy development.

By getting it right from the start, investing in prevention that is equity focused and centres the communities' lived experience, and shaping healthy environments for children to live, grow and learn, councils can help set the foundations for all children to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

[A review of the evidence by the Centre for Community Child Health on behalf of the City of Port Phillip](#) found that councils can improve experiences and conditions for children in their first 2,000 days, including through actions and approaches in the following key areas:⁶

Providing inclusive and accessible services

- Providing high quality early childhood and family services that are inclusive and accessible.
- Offering services universally to all children and families but reaching out and providing tailored, appropriate and co-designed support to families who need it.
- Meeting the diverse needs of all young children and families, including by engaging them in co-design.

Shaping healthy influences

- Shaping healthy built environments for young children and families that encourage physical activity and play.
- Promoting nutrition and healthy eating in pregnancy and early childhood, and shaping healthy food environments.
- Adopting an early childhood perspective across all council policies.

Improving social conditions and support

- Improving social conditions for young children and families, particularly by helping families to build positive social support networks.
- Creating child-friendly community hubs and activities to foster social connection and support, which can be used as platforms for delivering information and services.
- Addressing social determinants of mental wellbeing for families to provide safe and secure conditions.

The [Australian Prevention Partnership Centre's knowledge synthesis on the first 2,000 days](#) highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to support healthy behaviours, and create healthy and supportive settings and environments for children and families in the first 2,000 days. This should combine individual and population-based interventions, and universal as well as targeted approaches. It should also involve ongoing surveillance of health risk factors and outcomes for children across the community. The knowledge synthesis identified key prevention interventions that are effective to give children the best start to life.

These include actions within the remit of councils, such as:

- supporting parents to be physically active and eat healthily in the first 12 months after their children are born
- obesity prevention interventions in early childhood education and care services, such as [Romp and Chomp](#)
- improving retail food environments in sports and recreation centres, including by removing sugary drinks.⁷

6. Moore TG (2019) Early childhood, family support and health care services: An evidence review. Prepared for the City of Port Phillip. Melbourne, Victoria: Centre for Community Child Health and the City of Port Phillip. DOI: 10.25374/MCRI.8312768.

7. Chung, A, Hall A, Brown V, Kuswara K, Howse E, Stickney B, Signy H, Rychetnik L (2000) The first 2000 days: Synthesis of knowledge from the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre and CERl, The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre.

Recommended Resources

The following resources can help you explore evidence and recommended actions relating to the first 2,000 days of a child's life:

- [Centre for Community Child Health, The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper](#)⁸
- [Centre for Community Child Health, Early Childhood, Family Support and Healthcare Services: An Evidence Review, Prepared for the City of Port Phillip](#)⁹
- [New South Wales Government, The First 2000 Days Framework](#)
- [VicHealth Evidence Review: Settings for Addressing the Social Determinants of Health Inequities](#)¹⁰
- [VicHealth Promoting equity in early childhood development for health equity through the life course](#)¹¹
- [Prevention in the First 2000 Days: Synthesis of knowledge from the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre and the Collaboration for Enhanced Research Impact](#)¹²



8. Moore TG, Arefadib N, Deery A, & West S (2017) The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper. Parkville, Victoria; Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

9. Moore TG (2019) Early childhood, family support and health care services: An evidence review. Prepared for the City of Port Phillip. Melbourne, Victoria: Centre for Community Child Health and the City of Port Phillip. DOI: 10.25374/MCRI.8312768.

10. Newman L, Javanparast S, Baum F, Hutchinson C (2015) Evidence review: Settings for addressing the social determinants of health inequities, VicHealth.

11. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. (2015) Promoting equity in early childhood development for health equity through the life course, VicHealth.

12. Chung, A, Hall A, Brown V, Kuswara K, Howse E, Stickney B, Signy H, Rychetnik L (2000) The first 2000 days: Synthesis of knowledge from the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre and CERl, The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre.

First 2,000 days policy framework

Victorian councils work with multiple stakeholders to plan for their municipalities, including for children's early years. These stakeholders include state and federal government departments and agencies, non-government agencies, community support services, early childhood services and businesses and most importantly, local families.

Councils develop Municipal Early Years Plans (MEYPs) in partnership with the community to improve the health and wellbeing of young children and families. Councils' early years planning occurs within the framework of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans, the Victorian planning system and legislation, and early years policy frameworks, legislation and funding initiatives at the state and national level. MEYPs provide a key opportunity for councils to ensure their services, facilities and spaces meet the needs of all children and families in their community.

The early years policy framework includes:

Municipal Early Years Plans

[Municipal Early Years Plans](#) (MEYPs) provide strategic direction for councils in coordinating efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of children in their early years, such as early years programs, activities and other local community development processes that affect children and their families.

The MEYPs take a place-based, whole-of-system approach to build community strength, address health inequities experienced by children and families, and improve long-term health, social and educational outcomes.

Recommended Resources

[MAV Resource Guide to Municipal Early Years Planning](#)
(updated in June 2022)

Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures

[Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures](#) is the Victorian Government's five-year action plan to support children and young people's health and wellbeing. It focuses on creating supportive environments for healthy eating and physical activity, and providing complementary mental health initiatives, consistent with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023.

The plan includes commitments and priority actions over five years to achieve the following key objectives:

- healthier food and drink in child and family-focused places
- communities focus on children and young people's health and wellbeing
- children and young people are supported to be healthy, and families are supported to raise healthy children
- more opportunities to be active throughout the day

The early years policy framework cont.

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

The [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework \(VEYLDF\)](#) guides early years professionals working with children aged 0–8 years by providing a range of principles, guidelines and resources.

It includes practice principles to support early years professionals in working with children and families to achieve these outcomes.

The VEYLDF identifies five learning and development outcomes for children from 0–8 years:

- identity
- community
- wellbeing
- learning
- communication

School Readiness Funding Menu

The [School Readiness Funding Menu](#) (Menu) provides additional funding support for Victorian early childhood services that deliver funded kindergarten programs. It funds a range of capacity-building programs to support children’s learning and development.

Each Menu item contains a description, information about the cost, its application in a kindergarten setting and its alignment to the [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework \(VEYLDF\)](#).

The Menu addresses three priority areas for school readiness:

- communication (language development)
- wellbeing (social and emotional)
- access and inclusion.

National Quality Standard

The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority’s [National Quality Standard](#) sets seven quality areas for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services that represent important outcomes for children. Services are assessed and rated against these quality areas by relevant regulatory authorities.

- [Quality Area 1](#) – child-centred educational program and practice that maximises opportunities to enhance and extend each child’s learning and development.
- [Quality Area 2](#) – environments that safeguard and promote children’s health and wellbeing.
- [Quality Area 3](#) – safe, suitable physical environments that provide rich experiences, and promote children’s learning and development.
- [Quality Area 4](#) – qualified and experienced educators who develop warm relationships with children and engage them in learning.
- [Quality Area 5](#) – responsive, respectful relationships with children that foster their sense of security and belonging.
- [Quality Area 6](#) – collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
- [Quality Area 7](#) – effective leadership and governance of services.

First 2,000 days – language, concepts and terms



An equity approach

The first 2,000 days updated module sections are anchored in an equity approach, consistent with [Fair Foundations: The VicHealth Framework for Health Equity](#).

They are based on the fundamental position that every child should experience good health and wellbeing outcomes, and no child should be held back from reaching their potential.

An equity approach aims to achieve equity in outcomes rather than in treatment; it recognises that young children and families experiencing disadvantage may need more support or resources to achieve equal health outcomes. At the same time,

it recognises that universal approaches – that apply to the whole population but incorporate tailored support informed by community experts to meet the needs of children and families experiencing disadvantage – are more effective than targeted approaches on their own.

Councils are encouraged to take on an equity approach to implementing actions to support a healthy first 2,000 days for children. Councils should consider approaches to promote equitable outcomes for young children across the everyday settings in their communities, and the range of councils' policies, services, facilities, infrastructure and programs.

Family inclusive language

Words and expression can create a culture in which everyone feels valued. The first 2,000 days actions strive to use family inclusive language to highlight that all parents and carers of young children should be considered and supported when designing local services and action.

As part of implementing actions to support a healthy first 2,000 days for children, councils are encouraged to champion and help normalise the use of family inclusive language in relevant resources and communications. This can set a standard of avoiding stereotypes and assumptions about family structures and who does the care of children in families.

Ensure any communication is family inclusive by:

- Ensuring language used doesn't reinforce gendered stereotypes or makes assumptions about roles and family structures
- Only refers to personal characteristics such as sex, religion, racial group, disability or age at all in reference to a family structure when necessary
- Ensuring references to young people and families reflect the diversity of the intended audience
- Avoids unnecessary jargon and acronyms and focuses on people

By using family inclusive language, council can contribute to positive experiences of young children, families and carers, and enable everyone to feel they are reflected in the information and resources councils provide.

Key terms

Carer	A person responsible for a child's welfare regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.
Early childhood education and care services	Collectively refers to kindergarten, long day care and occasional care.
Early childhood services	Refers to all services providing a dedicated service for young children. This may include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services that provide care and education to young children aged 0-5 years, including childcare centres, early years learning centres, family daycare, occasional care, kindergarten, before and after kindergarten care, and playgroups. • Council-owned services and facilities attended by young children and families, such as libraries, sport and recreation centres, Maternal Child Health Centres and neighbourhood houses.
Every child or all children	Phrases used to suggest an inclusive approach. Using these phrases emphasises that all children should have the same opportunities, regardless of their age, gender, background, circumstances or abilities.
Family	A group of two or more people that are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, kinship or cultural connection and who may live together in the same household.
Family day care	The provision of flexible care and developmental activities for other people's children in the home of an educator.
First 2,000 days	Refers to life from conception through to five years of age. This is a crucially important phase in human development and where healthy conditions play a significant role in shaping future health outcomes.
Inclusion / inclusive	Inclusion is about making sure all children and families can participate as valued, respected and contributing members of society. Inclusion is vital to ensure all children's and families' experiences are recognised and valued and to ensure equitable access to resources and participation.
Young children	Refers to children aged 0-5 years.

Kindergarten programs

Kindergarten is a program for young children delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher.

Local government often manages kindergartens, along with a range of organisations including parent committees, private operators, independent schools and some government schools.

Children attend kindergarten in the year before they start school, usually when they are four years old. However, some services and centres also offer kindergarten programs for three-year-old children.

Long day care

Primarily aimed at young children, long day care is usually based in a centre and the education and care programs are created around the developmental needs, interests and experience of each child. Long day care services may also offer kindergarten programs

Maternal and Child Health Services

Maternal Child Health Services are free universal primary health services available for all Victorian families with children from birth to school age. Maternal Child Health Services refers to the services providing to children and families, as well as the physical buildings where they are housed.

Maternal and Child Health Services give parents support, advice and information about child and family health issues and are responsible for monitoring the growth, health, development and behaviour in infants and young children. Delivery also includes first time parent groups and other group-based programs.

Promotion of physical, emotional and social health and wellbeing of families is central to the role of Maternal and Child Health Services.

Occasional care

Occasional care is a similar environment to long day care, but provides shorter sessions, and is likely to have less formal booking processes.

Parent

A person in a parental relationship with the child including a legal guardian regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Playgroups

Community playgroups are regular gatherings of parents and caregivers with their young children.

Playgroups create an opportunity for children to engage in play activities and provide occasions for parents to meet other parents to form friendships and for mutual support and advice.

Recommended Resources

- [VicHealth Promoting Equity in Early Childhood Development for Health Equity Through the Life Course: An Evidence Summary](#)¹³
- [VicHealth Evidence Review: Settings for Addressing the Social Determinants of Health Inequities](#)¹⁴
- [Fair Foundations: The VicHealth Framework for Health Equity](#)

[UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities Handbook](#)¹⁵

UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative aims to bring together local governments and stakeholders to create safe, inclusive and child-friendly cities and communities, where children's rights are fulfilled. This includes children being able to have a good start in life and grow up safe, healthy and cared for. UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities and Communities Handbook recommends a range of strategies for local government to create child-friendly cities and communities, including:

- ensuring legal frameworks and policies under local government control promote child rights
- city- or community-wide strategic planning for child-friendly cities and communities
- establishing a framework for understanding the impacts of budget expenditures on children
- ensuring cross-departmental partnerships and collaboration
- introducing inclusive mechanisms and processes to engage children's participation
- building capacity of local government staff and stakeholders collecting data to measure and monitor progress and impacts on children
- collecting data to measure and monitor progress and impacts on children.

13. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. (2015) Promoting equity in early childhood development for health equity through the life course, VicHealth.

14. Newman L, Javanparast S, Baum F, Hutchinson C (2015) Evidence review: Settings for addressing the social determinants of health inequities, VicHealth.

15. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2018) Child Friendly Cities and Communities Handbook, UNICEF.

First 2,000 days implementation actions

New sections of the [VicHealth Local Government Health Promotion Modules](#) provide guidance on best practice actions that councils can take to promote a healthy first 2,000 days for all children in their communities. The new sections provide toolkits for implementing the actions, with practical guidance, how-to-guides, and links to additional resources, templates, and case studies.

The actions range from 'Quick Wins', 'Step Ups' to 'Ambitious Actions', and are included in the following Core and Stretch modules:

Core modules:

- Building Active Communities
- Connected and Supportive Communities
- Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities

Stretch modules:

- Promoting Everyday Creativity at a Local Level
- Strengthening Tobacco Control at a Local Level
- Increasing Alcohol Harm Prevention at a Local Level.

Councils are already doing significant work to support a healthy first 2,000 days for children and will be at different stages in their progress. Councils vary widely in the size and needs of their municipalities, and the extent to which they have staff and resources to implement the actions. The first 2,000 days actions are designed to support councils by providing a range of options.

Councils can choose which actions to pursue depending on their starting points, the needs of their communities, and their resources. The actions are aimed particularly at supporting smaller councils with fewer health planning staff and resources by providing practical solutions and step-by-step guidance on implementation.



Action to support a healthy first 2,000 days

Councils can create healthy communities for children in their first years of life with a suite of 'first 2,000 days' focused implementation actions and guidance.

This section highlights new and updated actions in the VicHealth health promotion modules to provide ideas, recommended resources and information to amplify the needs and priorities of young children and their families through council policy, facilities and services.

As part of this update, we have included 'families' as a third group in some of the impact stream and minimum deliverables. This is in recognition of the need to include parents and other caregivers as part of these actions.

The new and updated actions across the core and stretch modules will be available in December 2022.



Connected and Supportive Communities – core module

Impact stream

Co-designing with children, young people and families for community wellbeing



Step up: Showcase local opportunities that promote mental wellbeing for families and young children

Identify, promote and increase opportunities which offer social connection and mental wellbeing support and education parents, families, and caregivers.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream 'Co-designing with children, young people and families for community wellbeing', councils will have:

1. enhanced understanding of social connection opportunities and gaps for children, young people and their families in their local communities
2. documented increased opportunities for social connection for children, young people and their families
3. demonstrated leadership and commitment to co-designing with children, young people and their families to improve community wellbeing
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of their current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Connected and Supportive Communities – core module

cont.

Impact stream

Building proud and inclusive communities

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Quick win: Incorporate an early children’s focus in council’s Gender Equality Action Plan

Identify strategies to increase the focus on early childhood needs in council’s Gender Equality Action Plan.



Step up: Strengthen participation in local playgroups

Work with families to ensure local playgroups are inclusive, accessible, welcoming and suit community needs.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Building proud and inclusive’, councils will have:

1. identified key priority cohorts of children, young people and their families who face greater barriers to inclusion in community activities
2. implemented a new activity that promotes the inclusion of priority cohorts of children, young people and their families based on council demographics and needs
3. demonstrated support from council and local leadership to building proud and inclusive community practices by allocating resources and/or endorsing strategies or policies
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of their current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Impact stream

Addressing social determinants of mental wellbeing



Ambitious: Strengthen gender equity and family-inclusive practice across council services

Together with families, assess inclusivity of early childhood and family services and facilities across council and make changes to ensure all types of families feel safe and included.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Addressing social determinants of mental wellbeing’, councils will have:

1. increased their understanding of the key social determinants that influence children and young people’s mental wellbeing, and the interventions that can be used to prevent mental ill-health among children and young people
2. implemented changes to strengthen their internal and/or external partnerships in order to reduce inequities in social determinants for children and young people
3. demonstrated activities to involve children and young people in working toward the goal of the impact stream
4. demonstrated support from council and local leadership to work toward the goals of the impact stream by allocating resources and/or endorsing strategies and policies
5. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of their current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Building Active Communities – core module

Impact stream

Increasing active travel for children and young people

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Quick win: **Run a ‘Walk to Kinder’ day campaign**

Develop a campaign that promotes the benefits of active travel and encourages local families to try it for a day.



Step up: **Create a plan to make walking fun for young children**

Work with early childhood services to develop a plan that makes walking for travel fun, safe and easy in the area around the service.



Ambitious: **Support young children to develop bike skills**

Create or source a program for young children to develop physical and safety skills to prepare them for active travel.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Increasing active travel for children and young people’, councils will have:

1. documented the goals of the identified implementation action, including priority focus on
 - locations,
 - key population cohorts
2. demonstrated increase in active travel opportunities to and from key locations for children and young people
3. demonstrated how they have worked directly with children and young people to increase active travel opportunities
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.



Building Active Communities – core module cont.

Impact stream

Including walking and bike riding in council strategies

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Quick win: **Create local pram walking groups**

Create pram walking groups to support families to connect and enjoy walking together in the local area.



Step up: **Audit and promote walking and bike riding infrastructure for young children and families**

Identify key places in the community for young children, assess and then promote suitable active travel routes that are safe for prams and young children who are walking, riding or scooting.



Ambitious: **Create early childhood-friendly active travel infrastructure**

Strategically review walking and riding infrastructure projects and appropriate opportunities to embed design or strategies to promote safe active travel for young children and families.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Including walking and bike riding in council strategies, councils will have:

1. identified walking and bike riding priority locations or routes, projects, activations or infrastructure changes and targets to address these priorities
2. demonstrated support from council and local leadership to work toward the goals of the impact stream by allocating resources and/or endorsing of strategies or policies
3. implemented changes that documented increased opportunities for walking and bike riding around the community
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Building Active Communities – core module

cont.

Impact stream

Creating opportunities for all Victorians to be active

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Quick win: Develop a ‘things to do before you’re 5’ campaign

Develop a campaign to promote young children’s physical literacy and time spent outdoors by encouraging age-appropriate experiences in your community.



Step up: Promote the ‘Play Today’ campaign

Promote Play Australia’s ‘Play Today’ campaign and celebrate the benefits that different types of play have for young children’s healthy development.



Ambitious: Create a nature play program

Develop a program to increase nature play or ‘Bush Kinder’ for young children in your local area.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Creating opportunities for all Victorians to be active’, councils will have:

1. identified priority cohorts of children and young people who face barriers to being active
2. demonstrated an increase in physical activity opportunities for identified priority cohorts of children and young people
3. demonstrated activities to involve children and young people in working toward the goal to increase active opportunities
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans

Building Active Communities – core module

cont.

Impact stream

Including gender equity in council sport and recreation policy

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Step up: Create a toolkit for welcoming participants with young children to sport and recreation clubs and facilities

Work with women and gender diverse parents and carers to understand barriers mums face in joining or re-joining community sport, and develop a toolkit to help clubs remove these barriers.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Including gender equity in council sport and recreation policy’, councils will have:

1. established a network, reference group or governance structure, including women and girl members, to support gender equity in sport and recreation
2. undertaken community engagement to include the ideas of women and girls in the development of all stages of the implementation actions
3. demonstrated an increase in club capacity to provide participation opportunities for women and girls on and off the field
4. demonstrated support from council and local leadership to include gender equity in sport and recreation by allocating resources and/or endorsing strategies or policies
5. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.



Building Active Communities – core module

cont.

Impact stream

Empowering and enabling women to get active through local promotion of This Girl Can – Victoria

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Action update: Guidance about how to target parents of young children in the existing action will be included in the implementation action how-to guide ‘Quick win: **Promote This Girl Can – Victoria in your community**’



Step up: **Create a This Girl Can – Victoria incentive program for parents and babies**

Identify and offer incentives that will increase involvement in This Girl Can – Victoria by local sport and recreation providers with a focus on opportunities that suit parents and carers with young children.



Ambitious: **Create a This Girl Can – Victoria social sport program for parents and babies**

Work with local sports clubs and organisations to introduce a This Girl Can – Victoria parents and babies program, where parents can participate and be active together with young children.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Empowering and enabling women to get active through local promotion of This Girl Can – Victoria’, councils will have:

1. demonstrated engagement of local sports and recreation providers to use This Girl Can – Victoria materials
2. documented promotion of and engagement with This Girl Can – Victoria through council communication channels
3. demonstrated awareness by staff and community members of the campaign and key messages
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities – core module

Impact stream

Creating thriving local food systems

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Step up: Create food system education opportunities for young children

Foster connections between early childhood services and members of the local food system to increase food learning experiences for young children



Action update: Guidance on raising the profile of breastfeeding and first foods for young children through a local food coalition will be added to the implementation action ‘Step up: **Create a local food coalition**’

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Creating thriving local food systems’, councils will have:

1. documented council’s goals for the identified implementation action, including a priority focus on:
 - food security
 - food at all stages of life, including breastfeeding and first foods
 - healthy, sustainable and locally sourced foods
2. established partnerships with key stakeholders in the local food system
3. demonstrated activities to involve members of the community, including children and young people and their families, in working toward the goals of the activity
4. demonstrated support from council and local leadership to work toward the goals of the impact stream, for example, endorsement or alignment of policies
5. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities – core module

cont.

Impact stream

Embedding healthy food and drink in council owned and operated spaces and services

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Quick win: **Register council-owned spaces as ‘Breastfeeding Welcome Here’ facilities**

Increase registrations to and promote the Australian Breastfeeding Associations ‘Breastfeeding Welcome Here’ program



Step up: **Create breastfeeding-friendly spaces across council-owned settings**

Work with families to identify changes that would make breastfeeding and feeding young children easier and more comfortable in important council spaces.



Action update: Guidance on creating healthy food options for young children the implementation action ‘Step up: **Create healthy food retail environments in council-owned settings**’



Step up: **Provide first foods professional development for local early years workforce**

Identify opportunities to increase first foods and nutrition related professional development and capacity building of the local early years workforce

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Embedding healthy food and drink options in council owned and operated places’, councils will have:

1. identified the council owned and managed spaces frequented by children and young people that will be the focus of change
2. met the healthy food and/or drink environment changes relevant to the selected implementation action
3. adopted a new policy/ies that ensure improvements to council food environments achieved through this impact stream are sustained
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities – core module

cont.

Impact stream

Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Quick win: Create and run a local healthy food for children campaign for community events and activities

Work with people involved in local events to highlight and celebrate the importance of creating healthy food environments for babies and young children.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Using healthy awards and sponsorships in community activities’, councils will have:

1. identified local high-impact settings, spaces or policy opportunities to focus on for the chosen intervention
2. increased healthy rewards and/or sponsorships or decreased unhealthy rewards and/or sponsorships in those settings, spaces or policies
3. demonstrated change in settings, spaces or policy that centre around children and young people
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Impact stream

Enabling healthy partnerships

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Step up: Create a standard for healthy partnerships to protect a healthy first 2,000 days

Develop a standard to highlight the type of relationships council and community organisations should accept to ensure young children are protected from marketing and products by unhealthy food providers.



Step up: Develop a fresh food incentive program

Create an incentive program to encourage local grocers to offer fresh fruit and vegetables to young children

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Enabling healthy partnerships’, councils will have:

1. identified and outlined the scope, key settings/space, partners and audience to address with the relevant implementation action
2. engaged with, and received endorsement from, the relevant council and community leaders who oversee the identified settings/space or partners to complete the implementation action (e.g. the leader participates in the communication effort or the council endorses the relevant policy/ies)
3. prioritised change in settings, spaces or policy that centre around children and young people
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Strengthening Tobacco Control at a Local Level – stretch module

Impact stream

Adopting tobacco control actions to protect children and young people

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Action update: Guidance about considering people who are pregnant, planning pregnancy and families with young children will be included to the implementation action how-to guide: ‘Quick win: **Amplify anti-smoking campaigns**’



Quick win: **Promote smoke-free events and activities for children and families**

Create smoke-free and vape-free environments at community events by reviewing event planning, working with site and event managers and working with children to create key messages.

Note: This new action has a focus on children of all ages and their families.



Quick win: **Promote smoking cessation programs**

Ensure people starting families or with young children are supported to quit smoking by promoting smoking cessation programs through council channels.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Adopting tobacco control actions to protect children and young people’, councils will have:

1. mapped partners within council who are already working on tobacco control or can assist to achieve tobacco control actions as part of this module
2. demonstrated support from council and local leadership for tobacco control actions to protect children and young people
3. demonstrated adoption of actions which lead to tobacco control initiatives to protect children and young people
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Increasing Alcohol Harm Prevention at a Local Level – stretch module

Impact stream

Adopting alcohol harm prevention actions to protect children and young people

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Quick win: **Promote alcohol-free events and activities for children and families**

Create alcohol-free environments at community events by reviewing event planning, working with site and event managers and working with children to create key messages.

Note: This new action has a focus on children of all ages and their families.



Step up: **Create a local alcohol awareness campaign to protect young children**

Partner with local agencies and families to create an alcohol awareness campaign relevant to the needs in your community with a focus on protecting children from alcohol harm in the first 2,000 days of life.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Adopting alcohol harm prevention actions to protect children and young people’, councils will have:

1. enhanced understanding of their community alcohol profile and prioritisation of actions for alcohol harm prevention
2. demonstrated adoption of actions which lead to alcohol harm prevention to protect children and young people
3. demonstrated support from council and local leadership for adopting alcohol harm prevention actions to protect children and young people
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.



Promoting Everyday Creativity at a Local Level – stretch module

Impact stream

Increasing equity in creative strategies

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Quick win: **Develop a ‘Baby Choir’ program**

Implement Kids Thrive ‘Baby Choir’ program to support parents and carers to bond with their babies through voice, touch, movement, music and mindfulness.



Step up: **Increase creative programs offered through local early childhood services**

Support early childhood services to connect with local creative and cultural practitioners to increase the diversity of programs young children can experience.



Step up: **Deliver welcoming creative experiences for all families**

Work with families to identify equity strategies and remove structural barriers to foster inclusive creative and cultural programs in your community.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Increasing equity in creative strategies’ your council will have:

1. identified priority cohorts of children, young people and families who face barriers to participation in arts, culture and creative programs or careers
2. demonstrated activities to involve people representing the identified cohorts to inform improved access to creative programs
3. demonstrated inclusion and promotion of access or cultural equity in creative programs through council communication channels
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans

Promoting Everyday Creativity at a Local Level – stretch module

cont.

Impact stream

Embracing opportunities for children to inform creative programs

Implementation action with a ‘first 2,000 days’ focus



Quick win: Audit and promote creative opportunities for young children

Amplify the range of creative and cultural opportunities on offer for babies and young children across your community



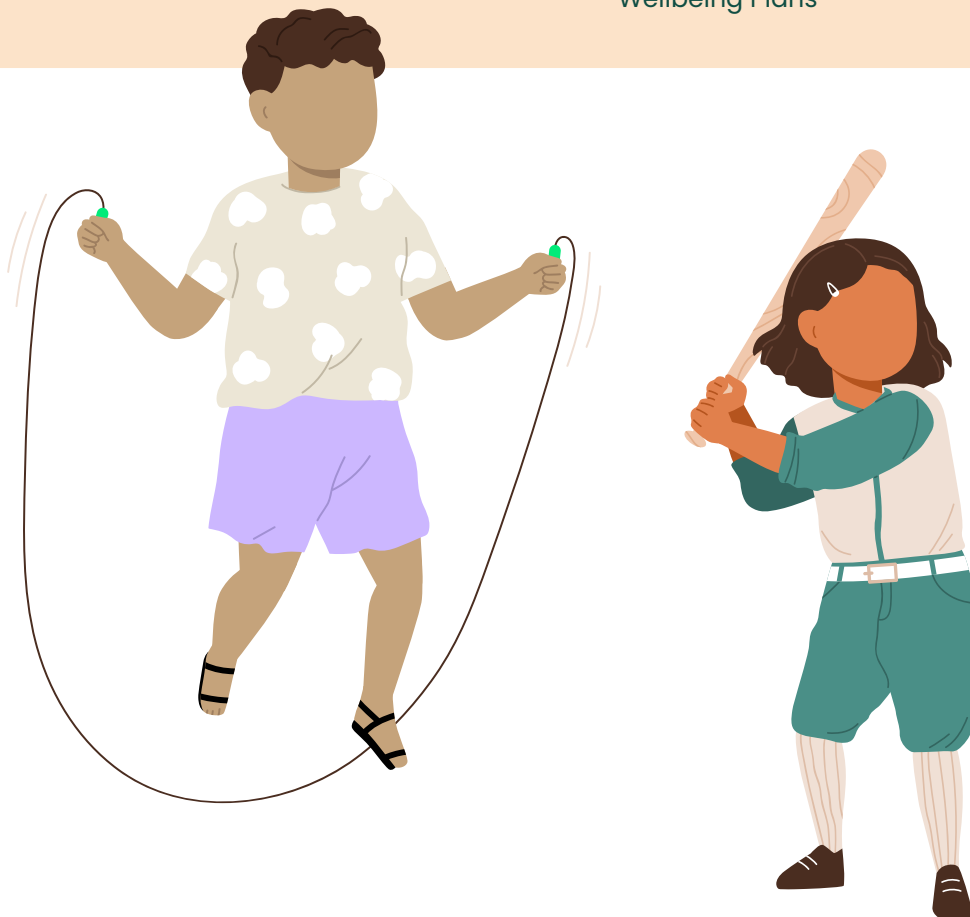
Ambitious: Co-design creative play programs with young children and their families

Involve young children and families in shaping the types of creative play programs available locally to support early childhood development.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream ‘Embracing opportunities for children to inform creative programs’, councils will have:

1. identified existing council and council-supported programs that support children as audiences or creators
2. adopted policies that allow for children to be involved in the development of creative programs.
3. supported the delivery of creative programs that involved children’s voices during selection or development
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans



Promoting Everyday Creativity at a Local Level – stretch module

cont.

Impact stream

Improving opportunities for young people to lead creative programs

Implementation action with a 'first 2,000 days' focus



Step up: Build the capacity of young creatives about early childhood creative programs

Support young creatives in your community to connect with professional development or capacity building about the benefits of and skills required to provide creative programs that support early childhood development.

Minimum deliverables for the impact stream

To complete the impact stream 'Improving opportunities for young people to lead creative programs, councils will have:

1. identified existing council and council-supported programs that support young people as audiences or creators
2. adopted policy/ies that allow for young people to be consulted on the development of creative programs
3. supported the delivery of creative programs that involve young people's voices during design or development
4. demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans





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VicHealth acknowledges the Traditional
Custodians of the land. We pay our respects
to all Elders past, present and future.



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