



Safe from the Start Project

Safe from the Start is an Australian evidence-based project, developed to address the impact of family and domestic violence on children. Developed in partnership with UTAS and Swinburne Universities (Vic), researchers Prof Erica Bell and Dr Angela Spinney worked with women's refuges and children's specialist services and identified that children directly witnessing family violence, hearing the violence or seeing evidence of violence in the home can impact on a child's brain development and general health. Moreover, this can also increase the risk of adopting violent behaviour, addiction to alcohol and drugs and mental health issues later in life.

Safe from the Start provides a positive approach and toolkit to intervene early using a trauma-informed lens in supporting children at risk.

The initiative includes an educative training package and resource toolkit that presents an overview of the issues including the prevalence and incidence of domestic violence, the impact on women and children and the importance of listening to the voices of children. The one day training course provides an introduction to Family Violence and includes:

- Definitions of domestic and family violence
- The impact of family violence on children
- The importance of the early years in brain development
- Engaging with children through activity based play
- Using the *Safe from the Start Resource Tool Kit* when children have experienced a traumatic event, for example family violence, bullying, family breakdown or natural disasters within the local community.

The quote 'A child who lives with violence is 'forever' changed, but not forever 'damaged' – and there is a lot we can do to improve their future prospects' (Cunningham, Baker, 2007) inspired the message that we can influence all caregivers and indeed the broader community to engage with children in a positive way to bring healing and prevent further damage.

Safe from the Start has won a number of national Awards: Top National Crime & Violence Prevention Award 2011, NAPCAN Award 2013, HESTA Award 2014 and Play Your Part Award 2015.

One meaningful encounter with a child affected by violence can change their lives forever ...

Safe from the Start Resource Tool Kit

34 resources including children's books, puppets, Training DVD, *Not in My House* DVD, posters, brochures, kit manual with ideas how to use the kit's resources.

Cost: \$550 + GST, Postage Australia \$40.

One-day Safe from the Start Training

Trainers: Dr Wilma Gallet, Nell Kuilenburg

All participants receive a training manual, USB pen with training presentation, 2 DVD's, Duluth Adult and Children's Wheels, posters/brochures to assist in facilitating further training in local communities or workplaces.

Research and resources

States of Mind: A Best Practice Framework for Women's Immediate Emergency Accommodation SAAP Services in Tasmania Working with Children 0-5 Exposed to Domestic Violence, 2006, UTAS, A Prof Erica Bell

Safe from the Start: Education and Therapy to Assist Children Aged 0-5 Who Have Witnessed Domestic Violence, 2008-9, Dr Angela Spinney

A Safe Start for All: The Tasmanian Aboriginal Safe from the Start Project Final Report, 2013, Dr Angela Spinney

Everyone Deserves to Feel Safe: Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Safe from the Start Project, 2014, Dr A Spinney

Men's Research Project – The Salvation Army & UTAS
Increasing Men's Awareness of the Effects on Children Exposed to Family & Domestic Violence, 2016, Dr Peter Lucas

Children's books
When Daddy Hits the Table When Mummy Shouts
Little Jack the Wallaby (Tasmanian Aboriginal Book)

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All reports and resources are available from the website:

salvationarmy.org.au/safefromthestart

