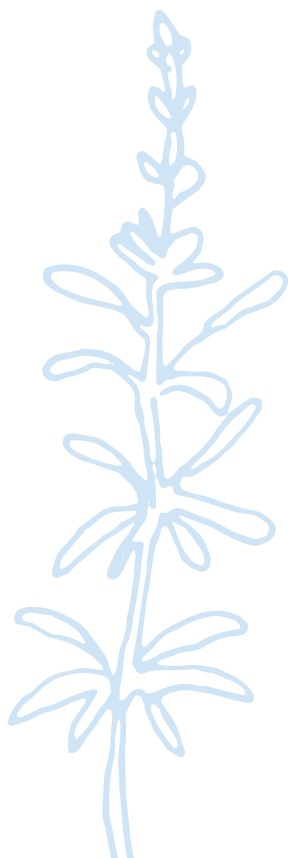


Nurturing **UNIQUE ABILITIES**

Working in Partnership with Families





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*"Within my role I am constantly
in contact with families working
towards better learning outcomes."*

– TEACHER



Message from the Minister



I am delighted to share information through this booklet to celebrate the work that has been undertaken to build strong relationships with families through the Family Partnership Model in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to building positive relationships between schools and families. We are doing everything we possibly can to support the access, participation and engagement of all students in education.

In 2014, we commissioned a Ministerial Taskforce into Students with Disability. One of the key recommendations that came out of the Ministerial Taskforce Report – *is to ensure all Tasmanian schools and communities work together in partnership*. In response to this recommendation, the Department of Education has delivered Family Partnership Model since 2016.

Within the DoE context, Family Partnership Model has been used to facilitate and strengthen partnerships between school staff and families to achieve positive outcomes in relation to children with disability.

We know that genuine partnerships with families lead to the sharing of knowledge and expertise and improved educational outcomes for students, and effective collaborations are required at all levels to determine how best to engage all students in the *Australian Curriculum* and the *Early Years Learning Framework*.

While we know there is still work to do to improve the educational experiences for students with disability, we are committed to continuing to implement the Ministerial Taskforce recommendations.

The purpose of this document is to showcase the positive impact that Family Partnership Model has had on building partnerships with parents and families, and achieving improved outcomes for students with disability in Tasmanian Government schools.

Jeremy Rockliff MP

Minister for Education and Training

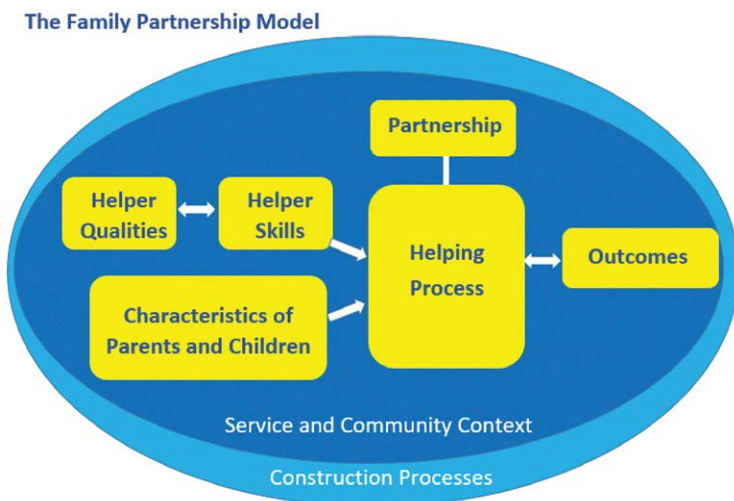
Family Partnership Model

The Family Partnership Model (FPM) is an innovative, evidence-based model of the helping process and an internationally recognised approach to partnership practice. The model demonstrates how specific helper qualities and skills, when used in partnership, enable parents, families and others to overcome their challenges, build strengths, resilience and enable their goals to be achieved effectively. Ultimately, it aims to achieve better outcomes for our children and their families.

The FPM assumes that the process of helping is essentially an attempt to combine the expertise of parents with that of helpers, and to avoid the pitfalls associated with the imposition of expert knowledge. The development of a genuine and respectful partnership provides the basis for a clearer understanding of strengths and problems of individual families, a better basis for effective problem management, and for building parental self-efficacy.

The Model was co-authored by Dr Crispin Day from the Centre for Parenting and Child Support at Guy's Hospital in London. Dr Day has published and lectured widely as well as provided advice to central and local governments across the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

The FPM process is visually represented in the following diagram:



FPM in Tasmania

Within the Tasmanian context, the FPM has been implemented specifically across Child and Family Centres (CFCs), Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS), Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS) and other non-government agencies since 2004.

The current program, coordinated by the Department of Education (DoE) through its Professional Learning Institute, supports staff across both primary and secondary schools to explore and understand the skills, qualities and processes needed to develop partnership relationships with families. It has been implemented in response to the Ministerial Taskforce into Education for Students with Disability (2015) with a recommendation that:

'Developing a partnership that recognises and values the expertise of families will ensure the best outcome is achieved for each child with a disability'

The Tasmanian FPM Program was designed collaboratively with the Department of Education for schools through the Professional Learning Institute (PLI), Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI – Melbourne), and the Centre for Parenting and Child Support – UK (CPCS). Ongoing consultation with MCRI and CPCS ensures the ongoing integrity and delivery of the program.

The aims of FPM in Tasmania are:

- To build a system-wide benchmark of practice for relationship building between parents/families and DoE schools/CFCs.
- To support key staff in schools/CFCs develop highly effective communication skills that are achieved through a deep understanding of partnership and an evidence-based model of helping.
- To improve student learning outcomes by building respectful and trusting relationships with students and their families.
- To improve relationships between education sites and their associated communities.

"Building strong relationships with parents is very important to me and I always strive to make parents feel heard, valued and a part of a child's learning."

- TEACHER



FPM Programs

There are four key programs in the Tasmanian implementation of the FPM.

1 FPM Foundation Course

The five day FPM Foundation Course is implemented across a 10 week period exploring the process of developing partnership relationships with parents and colleagues. The Model supports the development of a genuine and respectful partnership, and provides the basis for a clearer understanding of strengths and problems of individual families, a better basis for effective problem management and building parental self-efficacy.

Feedback from educators who have participated in FPM shows a common understanding about the importance of a workplace practice that reflects listening, building partnership and being present for others:

When staff have the ‘same’ language, particularly around listening, constructs, partnership and the ecological model, there are positive changes in building partnerships with colleagues and families.

? If I think I am listening, but the person I am working with doesn’t experience it – Am I showing it?



"FPP connects with other professional learning we have in schools. It underpins 'how to do relationships' and isn't an 'add on' to our workload but supports/guides a way of practice across all interactions with parents and staff"

— TEACHER



② FPM Leadership Course

The three day course has been developed in 2018 as a result of the need to support leaders to embed this approach in their school or workplace. It is modelled on the FPM Foundation Course but is designed to help those in educational leadership positions to identify and explore both the necessary attributes of engaging leadership and processes for enabling those whom they support to implement change. The content links to leadership requirements and professional practices within the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*.

There have been three courses across 2018 with 37 leaders participating – 30 from schools and CFCs, and seven from the Early Education and Care sector.

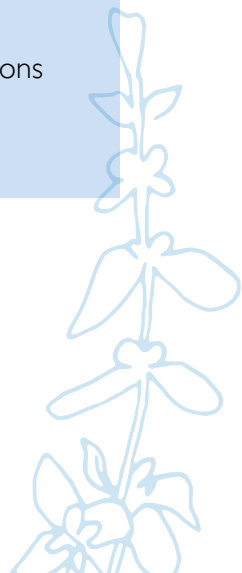
Feedback from participants reflects an understanding of their critical role in both supporting staff but also 'modelling the model' as a leader:

"The role of reflective practice/supervision is a shared learning process with staff where we can learn from each other. Recognising opportunities for this in both incidental conversations, group meetings and more formal supervision is something I want to focus on in my leadership role."

– TEACHER

"Being mindful of not 'jumping' to assumptions with both colleagues and parents."

– TEACHER



3 FPM in my Practice

A component of the Tasmanian FPM Program is 'FPM in my Practice'. It was recognised that participants often complete a professional learning experience with little or no follow up support in their workplace. In this program, participants are supported individually in their workplace by a FPM Facilitator to develop and implement a specific practice focus across a six month period. This initially involves a workplace meeting with their line manager to reflect on their learning and to develop a FPM focus in their practice. It is important to note that this model of the FPM with the 'In my Practice' component and follow up support, is unique in Australia and is attracting attention from other jurisdictions. It has the potential to set a 'best practice' template for the implementation of the FPM.

The following comments by participants support how critical this meeting and process is for reflection and implementation of the FPM in a school or workplace.

? Question to participants at conclusion of workplace meetings:

What has been helpful about this?
What could be different?

"I value the opportunity to go deeper into my FPM goals and unpack what I am doing in my work role."

– PARTICIPANT

"Having this meeting time 'quarantined' meant that I have an understanding of the learning of one of my staff and what it might mean across the school. We often don't make time to meet with staff individually after professional learning."

– PRINCIPAL OF PARTICIPANT

4 FPM Workplace Reflective Practice

Consultation with schools/workplaces indicated there was a need for workplace reflective practice workshops for two reasons:

- Workplaces such as CFCs and ECIS completed the FPM Foundation Course over 10 years ago and were requesting a program that would enable staff to refresh and reflect on practice.
- Schools where one or two key staff had completed the FPM Foundation Course want a program that gives their staff a general overview of the components of FPM and ensures some 'common language' among staff.

Across 2017 – 2018, there have been 18 workshops across 14 schools, ECIS sites and CFCs with approximately 250 participants. Each workshop focus is negotiated with the workplace leadership team to ensure that it is relevant to workplace needs and supports planned improvement.



"Exceptional leadership from principal.
Clear goals set to encourage children
to be the best versions of themselves."

— PARENT



FPM Partnerships

Across the three years, 92 (DoE) schools and work places have participated in the program(s) with a total of 312 participants.

Through FPM, strong partnerships have been developed with Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS) and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

To date, 32 CHaPS and 29 ECEC staff have participated in Family Partnership Model.

The strength of creating a more connected approach across agencies such as Schools, CFCs, ECIS, CHaPS and ECEC, is a powerful way of building and developing partnership relationships with each other and families in support of children.

By offering FPM to staff in other agencies and programs alongside DoE staff, we build common understandings and consistent ways of working in true partnership.

“Wow! The two days of FPM have been fun, exhausting and also exciting. I can see lots of opportunities for using the model, not only with families, but also with work colleagues. We were provided with lots of opportunities to reflect, to consider and to challenge ourselves as we continue on the path of ongoing improvements. A very well-spent two days and I am really looking forward to the opportunity to get back together with others to share, and to learn more about the FPM.”

— MANAGER ECEC

"My relationships are built on
respect for the family and
genuine care for the child."

– TEACHER



FPM Making a Difference

Child and Family Centres (CFCs)

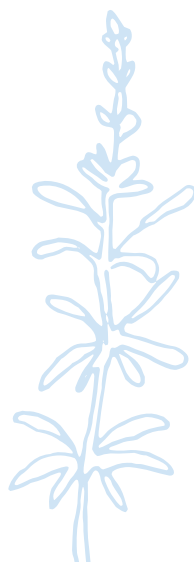
CFCs across Tasmania have all implemented the FPM as their 'way of being' with centre staff, families and community partners. This is an ongoing process since each was established and new staff continue to complete the FPM Foundation Course. CFCs have embraced the opportunity to 'refresh/reflect' their FPM practice with involvement in the workplace sessions implemented as part of the current FPM Program.

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS)

From 2005, ECIS incorporated the FPM as best practice for building relationships with families. All staff were trained in the FPM and as new staff are appointed to ECIS they are supported to complete the Foundation Course. ECIS have also embraced the opportunity to have workplace reflective sessions that support and embed the FPM, with the understanding that building a partnership relationship is critical to the implementation of early intervention for families of young children (birth to four years) with additional learning needs and disability. The FPM is the process ECIS staff use to build partnerships with community agencies and schools to support children and families to access community based programs for young children.

"Better communication between student and teacher and communication between teacher and parents. Teacher open to ideas that things can sometimes work better if tried differently."

– PARENT



"I'm supportive,
open minded, non-
judgemental, happy to
take on their ideas
and opinions"

- TEACHER





Chloe

"Prioritising communication with parents as a whole school commitment and reassessing our practice regularly at staff meetings."

– TEACHER



Impact of FPM – School Case Studies:

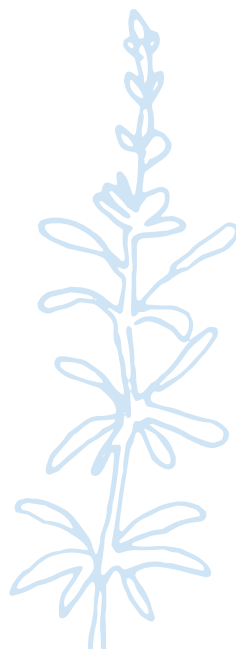
Port Sorell Primary School engaged with FPM after two senior staff completed the Foundation Course. The school negotiated a one day staff workshop that focused on the key components of FPM – Helper Skills and Qualities, Personal Construing, Partnership, Characteristics of Parent and Children.

Eight staff have completed the Foundation Course and the Principal has completed FPM applied to Education Leadership.

Staff and parents had decided to implement Parent Teacher meetings in Term 1 2018 with a focus on starting a partnership relationship, where the teacher and parents or carers can work together to explore what parents know about and want for their children.

Whole staff development was facilitated by a FPM Program Leader focusing on the Family Partnership Model skills, techniques and processes so that teachers have a deeper understanding of how to begin a partnership implementing these meetings.

The opportunity to 'listen' to parents seemed to build a positive relationship, so that the first contact in the year wasn't a negative one. Parents felt that they were listened to and seemed willing to share.



"When faced with challenging behaviours/difficult family members, you can find yourself defensive and attacking, but awareness of the FMO helps you to work in a respectful manner."

– TEACHER



Campbell Town District School engaged with the FPM following involvement of a Launching into Learning teacher in the FPM Foundation Course in 2016. The school negotiated a one day whole staff workshop that focused on the key components of FPM – Helper Skills and Qualities, Personal Construing, Partnership, Characteristics of Parent and Children. Six key staff have now completed the Foundation Course.

One of the key strategies for staff was being present and visible at strategic times (prior to/after school and during key school events such as assemblies and sports days) and available for incidental conversations.

Partnership relationships with families of students across birth to Year 12 were begun in an authentic way, and staff were mindful of the specific skills, qualities, processes and constructs in their interactions with parents and families.

The school also became aware of the importance of a 'staff shared language, specifically with reference to partnership and construct', allowing staff to respectfully challenge unhelpful staff behaviour.



*"The school has communicated with me
on a regular basis, via my children's
teachers and support teacher."*

– PARENT



Molesworth Primary School engaged with FPM Foundation Course after a Kindergarten Teacher Assistant completed the training. Across the three year period all staff (including administration and teacher assistants) have completed the Foundation Course.

Staff worked together on a shared goal 'exploring how to begin a partnership relationship, particularly what are the 'tasks' of a meeting':

- What words/phrases/processes you would use at beginning, middle and end of a meeting
- How to welcome and invite parents to be a partner; using specific skills such as summarising, listening with empathy to understand the 'ecology' of a family
- The importance of having positive interactions with parents to strengthen the partnership leads to improved student learning outcomes and relevant achievable goals.

Staff were also mindful of different ways of having 'meetings' with parents – phone, email and face to face.

"Using the FPM approach we've been able to engage a family from a low-socio economic background with a child in the care of his grandmother. The family have shifted from feeling judged and low in confidence to feeling accepted with a sense of belonging to a safe, secure and supportive service – more regular attendance."

– TEACHER



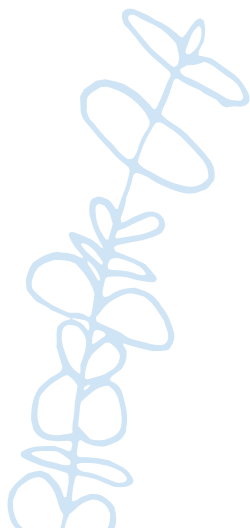
South George Town Primary School's approach was to initially engage all Early Childhood staff to complete the five day Foundation Course. The Principal and Assistant Principal completed the FPM applied to Educational Leadership Course and now most of the primary teachers have completed the Foundation Course.

A shared staff focus was around particularly engaging hard to reach families and those parents of children with high and additional needs. Staff were mindful of 'constructs' and the influence this has on how parents 'make sense' of schools.

Across all schools was a renewed understanding and enthusiasm of the effect of incidental and authentic conversations with parents – being visible and available across key times of the day and programs.

"Evidence collected shows that parents have become much more willing to share their concerns about their own levels of literacy. Parents are reporting that reading has become a much more enjoyable family activity and books are chosen over screens."

– TEACHER



"My child is becoming more proud of his work
and feels more valued in the classroom"

– PARENT





Family Partnership Model, is based on the internationally recognised Model, co-authored by Dr Crispin Day, from the Centre for Parenting and Child Support at Guy's Hospital in London, UK.

For further information please contact:
Inclusion and Diversity Services
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