



## **“The Role of Schools in the Delivery of Integrated Early Childhood Services”**

An integrated early learning model at Doveton College

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FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

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### **How can we support the health, development and learning for all children?**

- Invest in creating high quality environments for all children
  - At home
  - In early childhood settings
  - In schools
- Address known biological and environmental risks - prevention and early intervention
- Obtain better outcomes from existing service system

## **Invest in creating high quality environments for all children**

- High quality, flexible early childhood development and learning options
- Integrated service delivery models - parent/child centres in schools and other community settings
- Highly qualified staff, appropriate child/staff ratios and group sizes
- Sound pedagogy guiding teaching practice
- Partnerships with a range of other health and community services
- Flexible in home support programs

## **The Role of Schools**

- Schools are integral to the process of linking the future because they are the central bastion of 'place', neighbourhood, a sense of grounded identity.

## **The Role of Schools**

- ....become more of a community learning centre than a place separating children from the world of adults and the wider community (Edgar 2001)

## **Barriers to Learning**

- Poor quality teaching
- Health and well being issues
- Parental capacity – low parenting skills
- Lack of safe secure home environment
- Child protection issues
- Drug, alcohol, family violence, mental issues within the family
- Intergenerational poverty
- Lack of resources/role models
- Lack of stable housing
- Unemployment
- Disability or developmental delay

## **Addressing the barriers to learning**

### **Barrier Busters**

Comprehensive ongoing process by which school and community resources are restructured and woven together to address barriers to learning and development.

### **Barrier Busters**

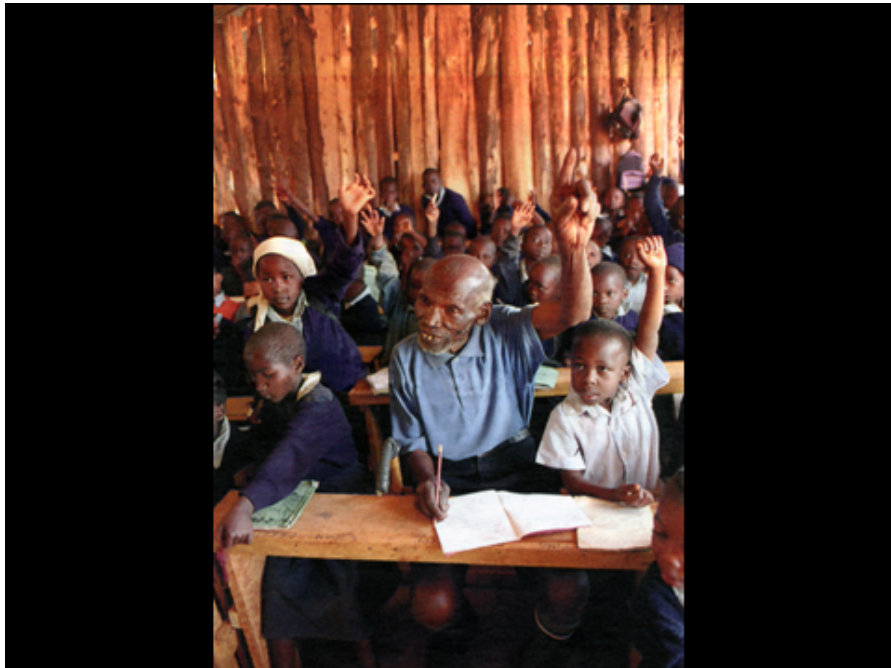
Two levels

- Enhance “school readiness” (schools readiness for children)
- Improving opportunities for adult family and community members

## Barrier Busters

Availability of a range of child and family services

- Parent support services – information and brokerage
- Playgroups
- High quality Early Learning Centres based in schools
- Community drop in facilities
- Health services
- Resources and support - referral
- Home Visiting
- Adult education



## **Barrier Busters**

### **Increased Adult Presence**

Students observing adults who have a commitment to education and to career preparation can encourage far greater appreciation by students for lifelong learning

## **The Role of Schools**

The natural grouping formed by families, children's activity centres and schools is the perfect basis for planning other government services aimed at supporting and assisting families, particularly in areas of high disadvantage.

## **The Role of Schools**

- Build on neighbourhood and regional centrality in new ways, to make schools an indispensable feature of community life.
- ...need to build links that add value to what schools are already doing.

## **Doveton College**

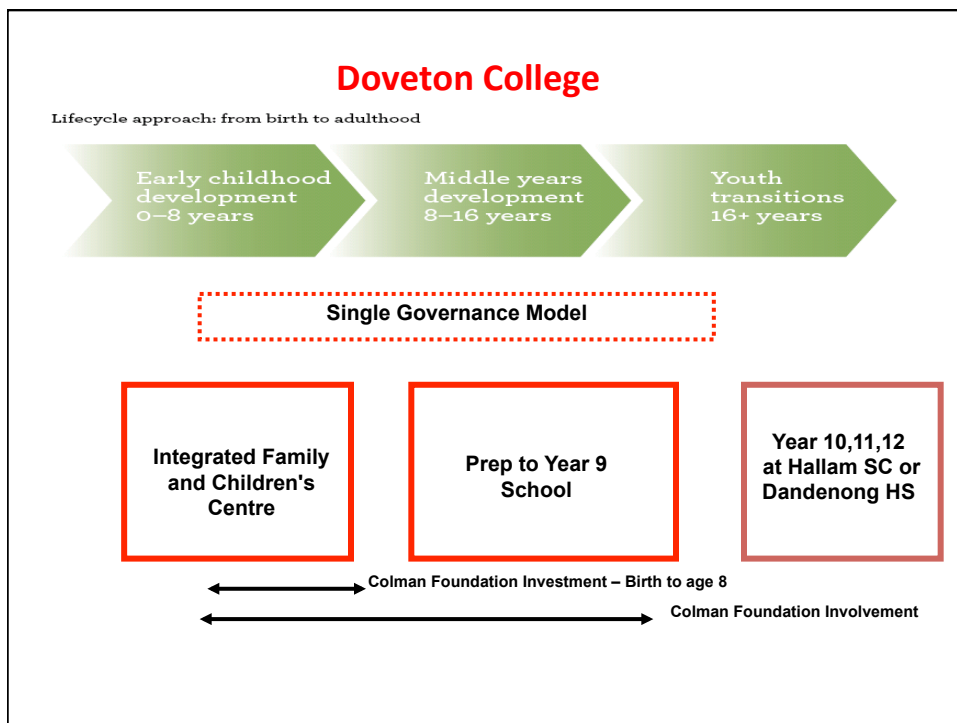
At Doveton College every child will succeed.

We believe:

- In the potential of all children
- In empowering our children and young people
- In personalising learning
- In a strong learning culture
- In the support and commitment of the community
- That learning occurs in partnership with parents

## Background

- Commonwealth government
- State government
- Regional government
- Colman Foundation
  
- First social-government partnership of its type in Victoria





## Why Doveton?

### Demographics

- Significant disadvantage – in lowest quintile in Victoria
- Approx 12% unemployed & 14% in full employment
- Approx 90% health care card holders
- 48 different languages

### AEDI results

- 30% developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (3% nationally)

### NAPLAN results

- 58% of year 3 and 70% of year 5's are below the expected level in reading compared to the state average 4% of year 3 and 5% of year fives

## What is the community data telling us?

### .....Barriers to Learning

- Poor health and well being
- Parental capacity – low parenting skills
- Lack of safe secure home environment
- Child protection issues
- Drug, alcohol, family violence, mental issues within the family
- Intergenerational poverty
- Lack of resources/role models
- Lack of stable housing
- Unemployment
- Disability or developmental delay
- Education program not addressing need

### **The existing early childhood service system...**

- High numbers of families with complex needs – often beyond the capability of any single service
- Capacity of services to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families
- Poor attendance at MCH and kindergarten
- Demand for support greater than services available
- Lack of information and clear referral pathways
- Lack of availability of ongoing intensive support for families
- Lack of service coordination resulting in families having difficulty accessing services they need
- Poor linkages between early years services and schools

### **The existing school system...**

- Based on traditional teaching methods
- Low literacy and numeracy levels
- Poor attendance – low retention rates
- Lack of parental involvement in the school curriculum
- Parents don't feel welcome in the classroom
- Poor physical environments
- Poor linkages between schools and other services

## **Our Aims.....**

### **1. Serve and engage an entire neighbourhood**

Engaging an entire neighbourhood helps to achieve three goals:

- a) it reaches children in numbers significant enough to affect the culture of a community
- b) it transforms the physical and social environments that impact on children's development
- c) it creates programs at a scale large enough to meet the local need

## **Our Aims.....**

### **2. Create a network of support**

A network of support developed through a school of Excellence partnering with local services can provide:

- uninterrupted support for children's healthy growth, starting with prenatal programs for parents and finishing when young people go on to further education, training or employment.
- additional programs that support families in not only raising their children but also in their own educational and employment opportunities

## Our Aims.....

3. **Work to build community among residents, institutions and stakeholders** who help to create the environment necessary for children's healthy growth and development and families participation in education and work.
4. **Evaluate program outcomes** so that what we are doing is open and transparent and every success or failure teaches us how to do it better.
5. **Develop and support a culture of success** based on passion, accountability, leadership and teamwork.

(based on TFD)

## Service Model

### Governance structure

- **Doveton College Council** - responsibility for setting the strategic intent of the new facility, determining key partners, developing a shared and unifying vision and underpinning values and undertaking joint planning. Council members include four parents, the Colman Foundation, Executive Principal, Director Family and Children's Services and Director Community Services, City of Casey.
- **Local Agencies Advisory Group** – providing advice and opportunities for services to come together and meet, share information and undertake professional development.
- **Parent Advisory Group** - ongoing involvement of and partnership with families through their participation in the **PAG**, as well as formal representation on committees, service user feedback, satisfaction surveys and consultation in ongoing planning and development of activities.

## Service Model

### Three levels:

- services that are funded and operated by the College
- service partners who operate from the College on an ongoing or occasional basis with their own funding
- service partners who do not conduct their operations on site.

All services within the model are expected to contribute to and subscribe to a shared vision, one family file, establish partnerships with one another and create effective referral pathways within and between each participating agency. All participating agencies are required to sign an MOU with Doveton College for the programs they provide.

## Service Model

### Key components

- high quality education program for all children with wrap around support available as needed
- high quality long day early learning programs, supported playgroups, Lets Read, Sing and Play and a range of other specific programs with an early years focus
- health and well being services including MCH, First time mothers groups, Healthy Eating programs, Immunisation, Paediatric consultations, therapy and other early childhood intervention programs
- Programs for adults including computer skills, sewing groups, coffee and chat

## Service Model

### Key Components

- opportunities for students and families to make appointments with the school nurse, community engagement coordinator, social worker, family support worker or other allied health professionals
- opportunities for volunteering in various areas across the College
- availability of Centrelink staff to discuss education, employment opportunities as well as family payments and entitlements
- settlement services including refugee health and well being

## Agency Partners

- **Good Beginnings Australia** – Play and Learn, drop in playgroups, parenting outreach
- **Southern Health, Community Health**- Healthy Eating, Play Gym, therapy, oral health, and family counseling
- **City of Casey** – MCH, EMCH, First time Mothers groups
- **Multicultural Resource Centre** –African Youth worker, Settlement workers, adult training programs, conversational English classes
- **Monash Children's hospital** – Paediatric fellow
- **Parenting Research Centre** – Early Home learning Study, Psychology support

## Agency Partners

- **Noahs Ark** – ECIS programs
- **DEECD** – Specialist Children’s Services
- **The Smith Family** – Learning for Life
- **Family Life** – Mental Health Family Support
- **Centre link** – advice and support for families
- **Centre for Community Child Health** – support and evaluation
- **Monash University** – student placement, evaluation

## Doveton College Learning Charter

The purpose of education is to equip children and young people with the capacities to manage themselves and relationships with others, understand the world and act effectively in that world. The aim is to prepare them for success in education, work and life.

(based on) Victorian Essential Learning Standards Overview document

*The big challenge is for systems like education to work out how to learn for themselves. If the goal is equity as well as excellence, they must learn how to meet the needs of people they have **never** successfully served, as well as operate at the leading edge of pedagogical and organisation innovation...*

*David Hargreaves*

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