

Bethany Community Support NEWPIN Early Years Program

Final Evaluation Report

**Prepared for:
Bethany Community Support**

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Evaluation Background

The Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program was established at Bethany Community Support in Geelong in 2004 as a component of the Family Support Innovation Project. The model is a therapeutic and support program for parents of children 0-5 years of age. It offers parents and children an opportunity to achieve positive change in their lives and relationships.

The evaluation was conducted by the Centre for Community Child Health. The aims of the evaluation were to consider whether the program components were delivered as intended (process evaluation) and to assess the extent to which the program aims were met over the evaluation period (impact evaluation).

The methodology includes the development of a program logic and collection of qualitative and quantitative data through: program observation; staff interviews; validated measures; staff reflections; member interviews; and Bethany NEWPIN internal evaluation processes.

The **general aims** of this program are:

For families to exhibit positive family behaviours; for families to have reduced child protection notifications and reduced re-notifications; children are kept safe and within the family environment; parents and children demonstrate reciprocal enjoyment and delight in the parent child relationship; parents and children to enjoy spending quality time together; increased social networks and community connectedness; children to have improved on some aspects of developmental domains; and families to have individual structured routines and rituals.

The **specific objectives** of the Bethany NEWPIN program are:

To improve positive parent child relationships; to improve social connectedness for families; to increase opportunities for children to reach their individual developmental milestones; and to improve parenting styles and practices

The **four** strategies of the Bethany NEWPIN program are to:

Promote positive parent child attachment; provide opportunities to develop social connectedness; provide opportunities for children to reach their developmental milestones; and provide intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment

A range of **indicators** have been developed to measure the achievement of the objectives through delivery of the strategies.

CCCH has developed an evaluation framework to evaluate the program. The aims of the evaluation are to identify:

- What if any are the demonstrable benefits of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program to new and existing members in the four program target areas and whether members are satisfied with the program?
- What if any are the demonstrable ongoing benefits to members from having been a Bethany NEWPIN member once they have left the program?
- Whether it is necessary for Bethany staff to adapt the NEWPIN Early Years program to the needs of members. If so what form does this take and is it likely to affect the replication of the program in another site?

The evaluation also **aims** to:

- Through consultation with Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program staff, to facilitate the production of a program matrix which details the connection between the program's aims, activities and intended outcomes.
- Consider whether the program activities identified in the program matrix have been delivered as intended.

1.2 Key Findings

1.2.1 Achieving the evaluation aims

- The development of the program logic by staff in phase one of the evaluation, has provided a systemic approach in linking outcomes, objectives, strategies and activities.
- The program logic has proven to play a valuable part in connecting the different parts of the program, and has lead to delivery of a high quality program for vulnerable families.
- The program logic has been applied into a working document (program manual) that would be transferable in the Australian context to other areas of disadvantage.
- Staff reported the amount of time and effort taken to develop the program logic was immense however it has provided reflection on how they deliver the program, why they deliver it this way and whether it would meet the objectives.
- The four specific program objectives have been met: families are now socially connected, children have improved in their child development milestones, parent/child attachment has improved and parents have improved parenting styles and practices.
- Best Interests of the Child – the program focus through research, stakeholder input and incorporation of legislative reform (Children, Youth and Families Act 2005) has the best interest of the child and focuses on healthy parent/child attachment and assists parents to understand behaviours and processes that impact on their parenting and their child's development.

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- Members have described changes in how members relate to their children, how they enjoy them more, the friends and social connections made at NEWPIN and the local community, and that they now have a better understanding of child development and how to promote this in their child.
 - There have been no further interventions by Child Protection with any of the sample group members
 - In closure summaries and post discharge interviews, 86% of children are engaged in early childhood services, (day care, kindergarten, playgroups and school). Prior to attending NEWPIN 23% of children had been engaged in early childhood services
 - In closure summaries and post discharge interviews, 86% of previous NEWPIN members have either found work 24%, completed a certificate at TAFE 24%, involved in volunteering 19%, are linked with employment agencies 9% or have returned to secondary school 24%.
 - Child Behaviour Checklist validated tool analysis shows an improvement in children's behaviour especially in the reduction of the percentage of children who are in the clinical and borderline categories and this has been maintained since discharge from the program.
 - Implementation of the validated tools, especially the Parent Behaviour Checklist and the Interpersonal Support List, to measure parent and child outcomes has been hindered by factors inherent to the target population. This is also partly attributed to the difficulty in relating to cultural and language references of the U.S tool and also that it is primarily used for middle class families. However this was the best available validated tool.
 - Mothers discussed feeling less aggressive and being more in control of their feelings and having an awareness that they need to talk over their problems and not bottle them up.
 - The four core values – empathy, respect, trust and support were an integral part of the program.
 - Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program has the ability to enhance different components of the diverse program depending on the individual needs of the members thus facilitating replication in other sites.
 - Financial analysis of the unit cost has shown that delivery of Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program is comparable with other family service programs.

1.3 Emerging Considerations

Systems Approach

Bethany NEWPIN's approach to delivery and development of the program has been based on a systems approach. The approach of developing linkages and collaborative practice models has complemented existing family services and provides a critical link between primary, secondary and

tertiary services, ie from early intervention services for all children through to specialist and statutory interventions.

Best Interests of the Child

Within this context Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program has as its focus the best interests of the child. Bethany NEWPIN's theoretical framework focuses on healthy parent-infant attachment and supports psychotherapeutic approaches to assist parents to understand behaviours and processes that impact on their parenting and their children's development.

Name of the Program

Bethany Community Support has reflected on the current Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program name and whether this is appropriate given the change in direction and focus of the program. Consideration needs to be given to the naming or marketing of this early intervention program at Bethany and also to have consistency of name if replication is to occur in other areas of disadvantage in Australia.

Staffing of the Program

Staffing of the program requires high level, multi skilled, flexible staff provided with resources for adequate supervision and ongoing professional development.

1.4 Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

Through a systematic approach to service delivery, incorporating the child's best interest principle, flexibility and diversity of activities to meet the needs of all families and resources provided for employment of highly skilled staff, staff supervision and ongoing professional development of staff, Bethany has been able to deliver an early years program that has successfully demonstrated marked improvement of the quality of life for high needs young families

This intensive program for high risk, vulnerable families seems to have value in the Australian context and the work delivered by Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program staff in developing the program logic and program manual could be readily transferable. This program model fills a gap for vulnerable families and meets the intensity of family need. The next step is to assess if the long term outcomes of this program remain sustainable within the family's external circumstances and lead to a continued reduction in child protection referrals.

Recommendations

The following recommendations arising from the evaluation findings are offered to inform the future work of Bethany in delivering the NEWPIN Early Years program.

- It is recommended that Bethany continues to develop the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program model to guide practice and meet the ongoing needs of members.
- It is recommended that the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program actively promotes the outcomes of this program and that this report contributes to discussion in the Early Years sector.
- It is recommended that the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program evaluation report is used to support future funding options for replication of this service delivery model in other areas of disadvantage.
- It is recommended that future long term evaluation is conducted to monitor the sustainability of changes made by past Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program members.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background to NEWPIN

What is NEWPIN?

NEWPIN (NEW Parent and Infant Network) is a centre based therapeutic befriending program for parents with children aged 0-5 years. The model originated in the UK in response to the needs of new mothers who were also experiencing issues such as isolation, mental ill health, family violence, social disadvantage, low self-esteem, and those who were at risk of neglecting or physically and emotionally abusing their children.

It seeks to break the cycle of destructive family behaviour by:

- Placing emphasis on emotional abuse as a precursor to physical and/or sexual abuse
- Developing the self esteem and emotional maturity of parents
- Bringing about lasting change in the quality of life for both parents and children
- Empowering parents and children to take care of their lives.

Who is NEWPIN for?

NEWPIN works with mothers and other primary carers of children who are in need of support in their role as parents. Individuals may refer themselves or be referred and may:

- Be suffering from post-natal or other forms of depression
- Feel unable to cope with raising children
- Feel unable to give their children the nurturing and care they need
- Be hurting their children or taking their anger out on them
- Feel isolated from family and society
- Feel valueless as individuals and parents

2.2 NEWPIN in Australia

The NEWPIN model was introduced to Australia in 1998 in the western suburbs of Sydney. The first NEWPIN program in Victoria was established by Bethany Community Support in Geelong in 2004 as a component of the Family Support Innovation Project.¹ The program is funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services as part of the Geelong Innovations Project and is named the Bethany

¹ Uniting Care Children and Young People (2008), NEWPIN – Courage to Change Together, Helping Families Achieve Generational Change, Ch 14.

NEWPIN Early Years program. Initially the program at Bethany Community Support was named Bethany NEWPIN however 12 to 18 months ago the name was changed to Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program to recognise the focus of families with young children. Previously families and local services may not have been aware of the early year's focus of the program.

Bethany Community Support², a non-government agency in the City of Greater Geelong, was one of the initial eight sites in Victoria chosen to establish the Family Services Innovations Project. Geelong is one of the largest municipalities in Victoria, with a population of some 200,000.

In 2002 Victorian Government budget funds were set aside to establish eight Innovations Projects across the State. The strategic themes underpinning the projects included: prevention and diversion; flexibility and responsiveness to the complex and changing needs of families; community-based solutions to local issues; more effective support for Indigenous children and families; and capacity building to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services.

Initial planning phase of the Geelong Innovation project included an audit conducted by Barwon South West Regional office of DHS identifying children in the area with involvement in child protection and their presenting characteristics. This report found a lack of collaboration between services and a need for assertive outreach and therapeutic interventions.

The Bethany Innovations program based their model, including the NEWPIN program on the above report, evidence based research and stakeholder input. The program planned to adopt a strong risk assessment process, assertive outreach, be goal-focused, and offer practical assistance, ongoing flexible support, regular case reviews, and accessible pathways in and out of the service.

Within the planning phase, the literature review identified the NEWPIN program as a best practice model to integrate into the broader Family Services Innovations Program. During the development and implementation of the NEWPIN Early Years program at Bethany, there was significant legislative reform and redevelopment being undertaken across the sector that impacted on the nature of service delivery and the targeting of services. This philosophy, and new legislative principles embodied in the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, clearly influenced the development of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program to fit within the Victorian context and to ensure that the best interests of children were the central focus. Bethany is committed to providing children with the best possible start in life. The program is child-focused and works in collaboration with other early childhood programs and family services to best meet the needs of children and families, and acknowledges that the early years of a child's life are the critical foundation for a successful adult life.

²<http://www.bethany.org.au/www/newpin/newpin.html>

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program works from a number of theoretical approaches including Attachment Theory, Systems Theory, Strength Based Theory, Child Development, Solution Focused Therapy, Play Stages and Family Centred Practice. The model is a therapeutic and support program for parents of children 0-5 years of age. It offers parents and children a unique opportunity to achieve positive changes in their lives and relationships.

The development of the program logic in the first phase by Bethany staff, supported by CCCH staff was an important part of the evaluation. Staff were challenged to think clearly and reflect as they developed the outcomes, objectives, strategies and activities and how these sections all relate to one another. The program logic set out and guided the staff in what it is they set out to change. The program aimed to support members to break the cycle of destructive behaviour. The following section details the outcomes, objectives, strategies and activities as described in the program logic.

The **general aims** of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program are:

- For families to exhibit positive family behaviours.
- For families to have reduced child protection notifications and reduced re-notifications
- Children are kept safe and within the family environment
- Parents and children demonstrate reciprocal enjoyment and delight in the parent child relationship
- Parents and children enjoy spending quality time together
- Increased social networks and community connectedness
- Children will have improved on some aspects of developmental domains
- Families have individual structured routines and rituals.

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program Objectives

The objectives of the Bethany NEWPIN program are:

1. To improve positive parent child relationships
2. To improve social connectedness for families
3. To increase opportunities for children to reach their individual developmental milestones
4. To improve parenting styles and practices

The **four** strategies of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program are to:

1. Promote positive parent child attachment
2. To provide opportunities to develop social connectedness
3. Provide opportunities for children to reach their developmental milestones
4. Provide intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment

A range of indicators have been developed to measure the achievement of the objectives through delivery of the strategies.

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program Philosophy

The program philosophy is based on four core values as defined by the members (parents of NEWPIN); of Support, Equality, Empathy and Respect and these pervade every aspect of the NEWPIN Early Years program. They are practised by staff, members, children and volunteers and ensure a safe environment for all. The four core values are discussed in informal conversations, at member meetings, in both therapy and personal developmental groups, at volunteer and staff meetings. Members, volunteers, students and staff are encouraged to respectfully challenge one another if they believe that the four core values are not being practised as they are intended. Members have had involvement in the development of the core values giving ownership, understanding and driving the philosophy of behaviour at Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program.

The Four Core values

<p>Support</p> <p>Listening Believing in one another Trust Helping out Help with things you may struggle with Not judging</p>	<p>Equality:</p> <p>Everyone is equal, we are all the same We've all got good and bad qualities Take people how you find them Never judge Be supportive</p>
<p>Empathy:</p> <p>Having an understanding and being understood Caring of people's emotions Taking care with everyone's feelings</p>	<p>Respect:</p> <p>Treat people (especially your children) how you would like to be treated Caring Speak respectfully to one another Be responsible Patience is a virtue Good manners Open and honest Listen and show interest</p>

2.3 How does the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program work?

Program Description

Bethany provides a home environment adjacent to the Bethany main office in Geelong for the NEWPIN Early Years program. This freestanding facility provides a safe space for parents and children eligible to become Bethany NEWPIN Early Years members to meet and to address parenting challenges.

Bethany Community Support provides a range of support services, positioning the NEWPIN program within this large organisation which has improved collaboration between other Bethany program staff. Further collaboration with other universal, secondary, tertiary and other local family services has occurred. This partnership approach has created opportunities to enhance networking skills, improve the knowledge of Bethany NEWPIN staff and connect NEWPIN families to the local community. Staff have commented on the time and effort taken to maintain these links with other agencies and that this time must be factored in when developing new programs.

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program works with families who experience multiple complex issues which impact their parental capacity. As the program has evolved it has integrated different aspects of casework such as assertive outreach

Members can either be referred by the Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), non government organisations, doctors, schools / pre-schools, maternal and child health, family services or self refer as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. In order to be eligible members need to be:

- Able to attend the centre at least twice a week, either independently or by accessing a Bethany provided bus service if they live in the northern suburbs of Geelong
- Be the principal carer of a child under the age of five
- Have recognisable parent / child difficulties

The Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program promotes the development of parenting skills in its members through role modelling and communication by its staff. The program also provides a setting in which activities that promote the strengthening of mother and child relationships are conducted. Such activities include:

- A weekly therapeutic support group. This group provides members with the opportunity to share their experiences with other parents in a safe, supportive environment while their children are cared for in the playroom.
- A Bethany NEWPIN Early Years personal development program which includes:
 - Psycho-educational group work programs

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- Creative play activities and parenting strategies
 - One to one counselling on a short term basis at member's request
 - Fortnightly members meetings

In addition members have access to a 24 hour peer telephone support network. Members can choose to be a part of the telephone support network and a list of participating members and their phone numbers is shared at the commencement of each term. The program also has an assertive outreach component.

The Bethany NEWPIN program was not developed overnight and required reflective practice of the staff and empowerment of the members to be more active in the daily program. Many conversations were had with members to discuss their needs and what they wanted to change. Key messages from members were that the activities and strategies be structured, be consistent and have a routine. This guided the Bethany NEWPIN staff in developing the program.

Members Personal Development program

The Personal Development program consists of a series of group sessions delivered at the centre in the therapeutic room to members providing information, support and opportunities to reflect and discuss the topic presented. The sessions are very interactive with constant members participation. Members speak highly of these sessions and the difference it has made to their lives and their relationship with their children. The decision on what session will be delivered depends on the needs of the members at that time.

The Members Professional Development program includes the following:

- Bodies are Great: Keeping Children Safe from Sexual Abuse. This group was co-facilitated by a counsellor from Barwon CASA and explores strategies to prevent sexual abuse of children.
- Keeping Children safe. This group aims to inform parents about child abuse, the effects of child abuse and neglect on children and how to protect children.
- Safe Start. This group is co-facilitated by staff from the Greater City of Geelong's Safe Start Program and educates families about safety in the home including supporting parents to conduct safety checks on their homes.
- Music Therapy. This group program is facilitated by a qualified music therapist who is supported by Bethany NEWPIN Early Years staff and supports mothers, and their children to learn to enjoy music and sing, move and dance together, with an emphasis on eye contact, trust and touch.

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- Importance of Play. ³ This therapeutic and support group work program for parents and children based on child development theory, attachment theory and play theory has been developed, implemented and evaluated by Bethany NEWPIN Early Years staff. Members come away with an increased knowledge of child development at different ages, the impact on play activities and how to actively play with their children.
 - Certificate in First Aid. This course was facilitated by a qualified First Aid instructor that educates and informs participants about First Aid and members become qualified with a Level 1 Certificate in First Aid specialising in paediatrics.
 - Communicating Positively with Your Child. This group work program supports parents in their relationship with their children and educating them in positive communication strategies with their children.
 - Mums and Bubs Group. This group work program aims to raise parent's awareness of their infants best interests and development needs. The focus of the group was on enhancing the mother child relationship whilst educating parents about how to best meet their baby's needs. The final session was co-facilitated by a parent educator who took members through a session on infant massage.
 - Our Skills as Parents. This parenting group encourages parents to reflect on their childhoods, how they were parented, and how this affects the parenting choices and decisions they make. It encourages members to explore their feelings about the role of being a parent and develop confidence in understanding their children's needs.
 - SEERS. The SEERS group is based on the four core values of support, equality, empathy and respect and was important in helping members to articulate these values.

Further information can be found in the NEWPIN Quality Assurance report 2007 and the NEWPIN Program Manual.

Bethany NEWPIN Activities and Strategies

The Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program consists of the following activities and strategies. These structured, targeted activities and strategies provide guidance, education and support to further develop the skills and knowledge of members. Different themes are planned and incorporated into

³ Napoli, K. & Howe, K. (2008). A new and innovative service response for vulnerable families: Establishing Newpin within the Victorian family services context. In L. Mondy & S. Mondy (Eds.) *Newpin: Courage to Change Together*, (pp175 – 188), Sydney: Uniting Care Burnside

the different activities each term depending on age of children, needs of families and the time of the year. The themes chosen may depend on the needs of the members or the time of the year ie the four different seasons, a special day or week such as mother's day or family week or an occasion such as Christmas.

The Centre Activities include:

- Therapeutic Support Group. This session facilitates the promotion of parent child attachment by educating and reinforcing attachment principles.
- Daily Parent Interaction Sessions. This session assists in the development of positive parent child attachment and improves parenting style and practice.
- Non Structured Time. This provides an opportunity for members to supervise, spend time with and respond to their children without the structure, routine and expectation of other sessions.
- Meal times. This provides opportunities for the development of appropriate peer relationships through social interaction at meal times.
- Daily Routine and Rituals. This supports the development of appropriate peer relationships, promotes parent child attachment, positive parenting practice and style and supports children. Normal family routines and rituals are role modelled and developed with members and children.
- The Circle of Security. This provides a simple visual representation of attachment theory to members in how they relate to their children.
- Excursions. Excursions provide the opportunity to facilitate family's connectedness to their communities and focus on the parent child relationship.
- Story and Song Time. This session encourages and models the importance of reading and singing with small children and encourages parent child attachment especially through eye contact and creates opportunities for children to reach their developmental milestones.
- Member meetings. These are held on a regular basis to discuss issues, projects and daily structure. Members take it in turns to chair and record minutes.
- School Holiday program. During the school holidays a modified program is provided to members and their children, both preschool and school age.

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- Speech Therapy sessions. These sessions are provided by a speech therapist from early intervention children services and provides information to parents of normal language development and how to promote communication in their children.
 - Open Days. An annual open day is held at the centre each year inviting member's family and friends, referral agencies and stakeholders. Members play a key role on this day, presenting information and showing people around the centre.
 - Special Persons day. The centre is open twice per year for a special person of the family to attend. It provides an opportunity for that special person to visit the centre and participate in some of the daily activities. Members look forward to this day.
 - Guest Speakers and Visiting Professionals. Bethany regularly invites guest speakers and other professionals to attend the centre about topics the members may have expressed an interest in. Examples include:

Visiting professionals to members: speech pathologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, psychologist, MCH nurses, dietician.

Guest speakers to members: Preschool educators from road traffic authority, dental health nurses, specialist children's staff, belly dancing workshops, hairdressers and Body Shop staff to talk about self care, representatives from TAFE and other education providers.

Other strategies include:

- Appointment support. Staff will support members to arrange appointments, organise transport and actively support families to attend and maintain links with other services and the greater community.
- Transition and closure processes. Members are supported as they work towards achieving their goals and moving on from NEWPIN.
- Therapeutic Loaded Conversations. These conversations are often about difficult issues or concerns but also may acknowledge change and achievements. The conversations are child centred and goal focused.
- Attendance at centre two times per week. There is an expectation that members will attend the centre at least two days per week. This assists in the development and establishment of replicable routines and structures by facilitating involvement in the daily routine of the centre. It also builds a strong trusting relationship between members and also between staff, members and children. This frames the positive therapeutic relationship

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- Systemic Work with families includes assertive outreach, home visits, service collaborations, referral and liaison with services, family meetings and case conferences
 - Assessment and Goal Review Process. This structures the program interventions to best support the parent child relationship and are an opportunity to review, discuss progress, celebrate achievements and set future goals.
 - Playroom daily structure and plan of themes. These sessions are planned for each term depending on age of children, needs of members and children, and current theme.
 - Therapeutic Letters. The breaking of trans-generational negative family behaviour and the development and strengthening of positive parent child relationships is supported through the use of therapeutic letters.
 - St Luke's Bear Cards. This promotes positive parent child attachment through assisting parents and children to better articulate and organise their feelings.
 - Four core values. These values are defined by members and provide a clear and sound base with which to conduct interactions.
 - Healthy Food policy and Hygiene rituals. There is an expectation that parents will provide healthy choices for themselves and their children that provide a sound basis for replication of a healthy diet at home. Staff provide support to members in the establishment of sound hygiene practices at the centre which are also replicable at home.

Further information outlining more detail of these activities can be found in the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Quality Assurance report 2007 and the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program Manual.

Staffing

Staffing of the program consists of a Manager, Children's and Family Support Worker, Children's Support Worker, a part time Transport and Support Worker and Volunteers.

The development of the team has occurred over time and is an integral part of the delivery of a quality program. Initially staff, though they were experienced family and early childhood support workers, found the program required a new way of thinking and practising especially around empowering the young families to be more active in the program. The team is required to have a strong focus and exhibit the four core values of the program. Qualities and characteristics required by the team members as reflected by staff include: ability to challenge and be challenged, creativity, innovation, self awareness and assuredness, degree of professional confidence and ability to say a strategy was not successful.

Bethany Community Support developed a partnership with Uniting Care Burnside (Sydney NEWPIN), to deliver initial training and support regarding development of the NEWPIN program to Bethany

NEWPIN Early Years staff in the early phase of the program. The initial NEWPIN program in the UK and Sydney included a befriending component however due to Bethany NEWPIN being a new program there were no previous members (parents). Bethany Community Support did have a large contingency of volunteers who were trained to assist in the NEWPIN program. The volunteers have been a valuable component in the day to day delivery of the program for families and staff.

Staff Professional Development

Bethany is committed to improving and developing the knowledge, skills and growth of its staff. Attendance at professional development sessions for Bethany NEWPIN Early Years staff has provided valuable knowledge and skills in developing the program. Resourcing of programs requires adequate funding for staff professional development for programs to continue to develop and be successful. Professional Development has included the following:

- Completion of Diploma of Social Sciences in Family Therapy by two staff.
- Legislation and Best Interest principles
- Attachment Theory and Trauma
- Compassion, Fatigue, Stress and Burnout
- Court skills training
- Neglect and Trauma
- Family Partnership Training
- Level 1 First Aid training
- Housing Forum
- Refugee forum
- Language Delay
- Visual tools to support language development
- Autism
- Parenting Plus
- Play and Literacy Training
- Vulnerable Infants – Identifying Populations and Presentation Patterns
- Women, Motherhood and Drugs forum

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- Bruce Perry presentation
 - Master Class with Naimi Eisenstadt – Sure Start
 - Deakin University Writers Workshop
 - Karl Tomm Workshop – Intervention, Interviewing and Reflexive Questioning
 - Volunteer Screening
 - Level 2 First Aid
 - Graduate School of Social Science – Pre and Post Family Support.
 - Proteus Leadership and Management six week course
 - Other professional development has been provided by visiting professionals presentations from speech pathologists, drug and alcohol staff, staff from chemical dependency antenatal unit and infant mental health clinicians.

Staff have also been actively involved presenting at various conference, seminars and at other organisations, providing information regarding the journey of developing the Bethany NEWPIN program and outlining the challenges, learning's and achievements along the way. Presentations have included:

- ISPCAN September 2004 – The Voice of Women in Family Support
- National NEWPIN conference 2006 – two presentations –‘NEWPIN in Victoria’ and ‘The Importance of Play’
- Down to earth and by the Sea – Williams Road family Therapy Conference March 2007 – NEWPIN – Support program for Mothers and Preschool Children with Significant Parenting Difficulties
- Royal Children’s Hospital Mental Health Service August 2006 -- Infant Mental Health and the Impact of Family Violence
- Queen Elizabeth Centre conference November 2006 – The Importance of Play Group Work Program
- ACCAN conference November 2007 – Poster Presentation: NEWPIN Early Years Program – New Pathways to Restoring Relationships
- Down to Earth and by the Sea – Williams Road family Therapy Conference March 2008 – Reflecting teams in Practice

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- Australian Institute of Family Studies – Families Through Life July 2008 – Poster Presentation- A NEW Way to Support Play in an early Years Program

Staff supervision

Staff supervision consists of weekly case discussion, monthly clinical supervision provided by the infant mental health practitioner at Children's Mental Health Services (CMHS), individual supervision conducted as arranged between manager and team member, and weekly peer supervision. Staff have found the time given to reflection has assisted in ongoing improvements to the program and created opportunities to develop strategies in managing the challenges of complex case management. At the end of each days session at the centre, staff reflect on the challenges and achievements as a team and plan appropriate strategies to be implemented.

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program volunteers

One of the early innovations at Bethany NEWPIN Early Years was the use of volunteers within the centre. Bethany Community Support had a long history of working with volunteers and this ready pool of volunteers would be able to support the work of the staff. The volunteers have a current *Police Check* and *Working with Children Check*. The volunteers have attended extensive training by Bethany and are assigned to a staff member for the day and receive supervision at the beginning and end of the day. A monthly meeting for volunteers is held.

The role of the volunteers within the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program include:

- Supporting and assisting staff in the day to day running of the playroom.
- Creating welcoming and supportive opportunities for parents and children to develop relationships, self esteem and creativity through play.
- Contributing to each child's autonomy and self development.
- Upholding and promoting the four core values.

The program also employs volunteers as relievers on a casual basis when staff require leave due to illness, training or annual leave. The use of volunteers as relievers provides consistency of approach for families and a familiar person.

2.4 Background to the CCCH evaluation of Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program

2.4.1 Previous NEWPIN Evaluations

There have been three studies of the NEWPIN program carried out in the UK, the most recent of which was conducted in 1993-94⁴. In Australia the program has been the subject of two research

⁴ Please refer to the NSW community builders website for more information:
<http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/sync/PPR3%20Supporting%20Families%20and%20communities.pdf>.

studies and two small scale evaluations as well as the 2005 Nucleus Report on the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program⁵. The research studies on the whole reported moderate to high level improvements on such measures as parental stress, risk of physical child abuse, reported parental self esteem and confidence and levels of depression. While some questionnaires and scales were used as part of the mentioned studies, many of the reported benefits of the program came from anecdotal observation. The current study uses qualitative, quantitative and observation research methodologies in the pursuit of producing the most accurate picture possible of the effects of the program and whether it is likely to be replicable in another setting.

2.4.2 Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Evaluation Aims

CCCH developed an outcome based evaluation framework to evaluate the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program. The aims of the evaluation are to identify:

- What if any are the demonstrable benefits of the program to new and existing members in the four program target areas and whether members are satisfied with the program?
- What if any are the demonstrable ongoing benefits to members from having been a member once they have left the program?
- Whether it is necessary for program staff to adapt the program to the needs of members. If so what form does this take and is it likely to affect the replication of the program in another site?

It also *aims* to:

- Through consultation with Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program staff to facilitate the production of a program matrix which details the connection between the program's aims, activities and intended outcomes.
- Evaluate whether the program activities identified in the program matrix have been delivered as intended.

It was *hypothesised* by CCCH that the program:

- Has value in an Australian context.
- Will deliver improvements for members across all four objectives:
 - To improve positive parent child relationships
 - To improve social connectedness for families

⁵ The Nucleus Group, 2005, *NEWPIN Program – Study of Success Factors, Final Report*, The Nucleus Group, Melbourne.

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- To increase opportunities for children to reach their individual developmental milestones
 - To improve parenting styles and practices

2.4.3 Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program Internal Evaluation Processes

The program has two internal evaluation processes:

1. A 'progress form' or 'goal review form' which members fill out with assistance from NEWPIN staff every six months. This allows the comparison of forms over time, the identification of any changes made and the opportunity for the marking of achievements. The program proposes that seeing their progress from one report to another motivates members to continue.
2. An annual quality assurance procedure. This involves receiving direct feedback from members, collating statistics, a written report detailing the Centre's activities over the year, refining program needs and setting targets for the following year. This process is undertaken by the Manager, Executive Manager and a Manager Quality Assurance. The Quality Assurance Report 2007 can be seen in **Appendix 1**

The Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program is registered as a Community Services Organisation (CSO) and is undertaking Quality Improvement and Community Services Accreditation (QICSA), (Latrobe University) and Quality Improvement Council standards.

A review of these processes and accompanying documentation took place in phase one evaluation and contributed to the development of the program logic.

3 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program was undertaken by the Centre for Community Child Health. The aims of the evaluation were to consider whether the program components were delivered as intended (process evaluation) and to assess the extent to which the program aims was met over the evaluation period (impact evaluation). A two phase evaluation process was developed.

Phase One

The first phase of the evaluation commenced September 2006 and completed December 2006; the second phase commenced January 2007 until project completion in September 2008.

The first phase was primarily concerned with the development of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program logic in the form of a table known as a 'program matrix'. This program logic has been developed by the program staff with support from CCCH evaluation staff and can be seen in ***Appendix 2***.

It was decided that specific program indicators relating to each of the four program objectives would be the focus of the process and outcome evaluation. The agreed program objectives are:

- To improve positive parent child relationships
- To improve social connectedness for families
- To increase opportunities for children to reach their individual developmental milestones
- To improve parenting styles and practices

Ethics approval was gained from the Royal Children's Hospital Ethics Committee for this project.

Phase Two

The second phase of the evaluation involved:

- A longitudinal outcome evaluation of past members, members who completed the program during the evaluation and current Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program members using validated measurement tools, worker reflections and member interviews.
- A process evaluation, employing both program observation and interviews with staff as the means of data collection.

The development of the program logic in phase one provides critical information for the phase two evaluation activities, as an effective evaluation is developed on the clarity of the underlying model. A

clear idea of the program logic provides the basis for asking whether the program has been implemented as intended (process) and is having the desired effect (outcome).

3.1 Process evaluation

The process evaluation consisted of program observation at four time points and worker interviews at two time points.

3.1.1 Program observation

The method of program observation was adopted as part of the 'process' evaluation'. A CCCH researcher observed the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program at four time points (refer to Section 4, Evaluation schedule). Specific program activities were observed for each of the four program goals and an assessment made by the researcher as to whether the program was being delivered as intended, based on the program logic developed during the first phase of the evaluation. The observation was guided by a single indicator for program goals 1 – 3 and three indicators for program goal 4. The specific structure of the program observation can be found in Table 1.

The four activities chosen and their description and links to the relevant program strategies are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 Program Observation

Program Observation - Process measure - participant observation				
Strategy	Indicator	Activity	How the activity promotes the objective / indicator	Evaluation questions
Promote positive parent child attachment	Mother responsible at all times	Daily Parent interaction session	Parenting in real time promotes the mother being responsible at all times as it provides an opportunity for staff to support and challenge parenting practices during routine daily activities, behaviour redirection and comforting and soothing their children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the activity delivered as described (process)? 2. Were parenting practices both supported and challenged during the activity? 3. Was behaviour redirection witnessed as part of the activity? 4. Were parents encouraged to and did they comfort and soothe their children?
To provide opportunities to develop social connectedness	Improved social skills and confidence	Meal times	Meal times in the centre improve social skills and confidence through encouraging staff, members and children to sit together at lunch time; this enhances the development of positive peer relationships through social interaction. Members instigate, join and enjoy lunchtime conversation with one another.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the activity delivered as described (process)? 2. Did meal times provide the opportunity for peer interaction and was this taken? 3. Did members instigate conversation with each other?
Promote child development	Children improve on some aspects of child development domains (for example they demonstrate improvements on language and communication, gross motor and fine motor skills and play)	Story and song time	Story and song time enhances children's development through providing a regular time for parents and children to enjoy sitting, listening to a story and participating in singing songs together. Children are participating in developmentally age and stage appropriate activities with their parents. Story and song promotes and enables the development of language, social, cognitive skills and confidence.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the activity delivered as described (process)? 2. Did children actively listen to stories and participate in singing songs? 3. Did members engage and encourage their children's participation?

Program Observation - Process measure - participant observation				
Strategy	Indicator	Activity	How the activity promotes the objective / indicator	Evaluation questions
Provide intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment	Parents have increased confidence in own parenting – decisive, follow through	Non-structured time	Non-structured time increases parents' confidence in their own parenting and their ability to follow through by providing them with an opportunity to put into practice what they have learnt. Parents are able during non-structured time to supervise, spend time with and respond to their children's needs without the structure and expectation of the more structured interventions. Parents are supported during this time, but encouraged to follow through independently. Parents, positive parenting practice is acknowledged and praised.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the activity delivered as described (process)? 2. Did parents supervise, spend time with and respond to their children's needs? 3. Were positive parenting practices acknowledged and praised?
Provide intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment	Families show an understanding of and replicate learning environments in settings external to the NEWPIN program	Non-structured time	Non-structured time assists parents to replicate learning environments in external settings by providing an opportunity for parents to supervise, spend time with and respond to their children without the routine, structure and expectation of the more structured interventions. Parents are supported during unstructured time by the therapeutic team; however non-structured time gives them an opportunity to practice new found skills without direct intervention by staff.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the activity delivered as described (process)? 2. Did workers provide support without direct intervention?
Provide intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment	Development of positive individual family and parenting rituals and routines that are replicable at home (e.g. birthday cakes, greetings, birthdays, mealtimes)	Non-structured time	Non-structured time supports families to establish routines and rituals in the family home as it is during this time in the centre that we may celebrate a birthday or an achievement. These special events are always acknowledged with a cake and time taken as a group to celebrate. Other rituals acknowledged in the centre include Christmas, Easter, Children's Week, Child Protection Week, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Family Week, etc. These special occasions are marked both by activities, but also by general conversation about how families usually celebrate special events and how would families like to celebrate these events, what may they be able to do differently and how would this be for them and their children.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the activity delivered as described (process)? 2. Where special events acknowledged? 3. Was the way in which occasions are marked discussed?

3.1.2 Staff interviews

As a further measure of whether the program processes are being achieved brief interviews were held with program workers at two time points, June 2007 and June 2008. The staff consisted of four team members. Staff were asked if the specific strategies that make up the program were delivered as intended and that parents responded in the ways you would expect them to in respond to the program. Staff also provided information regarding staff issues, professional development, the influence of the program logic in delivery of the program and challenges within the program

3.2 Impact evaluation

Three different measures were used in the impact evaluation.

1. Validated measures: Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), Parent Behaviour Checklist (PBC) and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL)
2. Member interviews, and
3. Staff reflection summaries.

3.2.1 Validated Measurement Tools

Three validated measures were selected for the impact evaluation in consultation with the NEWPIN team. These tools were completed in one or two sittings between worker and member at three time points through the project⁶. The original versions of the tools were adopted despite their often American use of language (e.g. 'diaper' instead of nappy). Program staff explained the meaning of such words as and when required, with the purpose of aiding clarification only. Descriptions of the tools chosen, with relevant information including the measure they are seeking to assess are contained in the tables below.

Tool Name	Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL)
Purpose	To use a validated tool to analyse NEWPIN members' ratings of their children's behaviour against population norms over time.
Measure	Children's behaviour over time
Tool	The CBCL is a 99 item, validated, reliable and widely used parent – report measure which includes child externalising behaviour problems. The CBCL is a device by which parents or other individuals who know the child well rate a child's problem behaviours and competencies. The CBCL has previously been used to measure a child's change in behaviour over time which is why it was selected for the purposes of the current evaluation.

⁶ Initially four collection time points were selected however due to the time taken to enrol participants into the program the number of collection times was reduced to three.

Method	To be completed by NEWPIN members aided by workers.
Timing	Three time points

Tool Name	Parent Behaviour checklist (PBCL)
Purpose	To use a validated tool to analyse NEWPIN members' ratings of their parenting against population norms over time.
Measure	Parent / child attachment and parenting styles and practices over time.
Tool	The PBCL is an objective measure of how parents are raising their young children, ages 1 to 5 years. It can be used to assess parenting strengths and weaknesses so that educational and intervention efforts can be tailored to each parent's unique style. It can be administered to both individuals and groups. The scale consists of 30 items and includes three empirically derived subscales: Expectations, Discipline, and Nurturing.
Method	To be completed by NEWPIN members aided by workers.
Timing	Three time points

Tool Name	Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL)
Purpose	To assess the development of social support and connectedness for Bethany NEWPIN member families over time.
Measure	The social connectedness of families
Tool	The ISEL comprises four subscales: tangible assistance (material aid), appraisal (availability of someone to talk to about one's problems), self esteem (positive appraisal of self from others and positive comparison when comparing one's self with others) and belonging (people with whom one can do things).
Method	To be completed by NEWPIN members aided by workers.
Timing	Three time points

3.2.2 Interviews with Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program members

Program members were interviewed by staff and/or CCCH staff and two time points, June 2007 and June 2008. Interview questions were developed to assess:

- How beneficial the program had been for members and their children
- Are members doing anything different as a result of attending the program
- Are members parenting differently as a result of the program

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- Is the time spent with their child different
 - What were the best things about attending Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program
 - What were the worst things about attending Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program

3.2.3 Staff reflections

Staff met at three time points following the member interviews and completion of validated tools. These time points were July 2007, December 2007, and July 2008. The reflections were collected to record staff's general impressions of how the member had approached the completion of the evaluation tools and if they had responded with answers that reflect their true situation. Staff also recorded other information of relevance and listed interventions completed with each member over their time. A written report was provided detailing reflections of each member.

4 Evaluation schedule

Evaluation Schedule						
Task	Number of subjects	Responsibility	Time Point			
			One Jan - June 2007	Two July - Aug 2007	Three December 2007	Four June 2008
Program observation	n/a	CCCH	X	X	X	X
Staff Interview	4	CCCH	X	Possible exit interview with staff		X
Staff reflection / summary	1 per member	NEWPIN	X		X	X
New member interviews	8	CCCH	X	If subjects leave - secure consent to stay in touch		X
New member tools	8	NEWPIN	X		X	X
Existing member interviews	14	CCCH	X	If subjects leave - secure consent to stay in touch		X
Existing member tools	14	NEWPIN	X		X	X
Past member interviews	4	CCCH	X			X
Past member tools	4	NEWPIN	X		X	X

5 Evaluation Findings

The following section details the evaluation findings. The findings are divided into two main sections, process evaluation and impact evaluation.

5.1 Process Evaluation

Process evaluation focuses on the extent to which activities are being delivered as intended. It answers the questions:

- Did the activity reach the target audience?
- Was the activity carried out as planned?
- What was the quality of the activity?

5.1.1 Program observation

A CCCH researcher observed the program over four time points: March 2007, July 2007, December 2007 and July 2008. Specific program activities were observed for each of the program strategies.

1. Promote positive parent child attachment
2. To provide opportunities to develop social connectedness
3. Provide opportunities for children to reach their developmental milestones
4. Provide intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment

Observation was conducted as to whether the activity was delivered as intended based on the program logic developed in Phase One of the evaluation.

Strategy One: Promote positive parent/child attachment

Activity observed: Daily Parent Interaction session

How the activity is described in the program logic:

The Daily Parent Interaction session promotes the mother being responsible at all times. It provides an opportunity for staff to support and challenge parenting practices during routine daily activities, behaviour redirection and in comforting and soothing their children.

Observation:

Parents and children were observed engaging in the activity together. Activities observed at each four sessions varied. They included making Christmas decorations and the celebrations around Christmas, fruit and vegetable stamping, gross motor activity using mats and outside climbing equipment and a craft activity around the family theme.

Staff constantly role modelled normal behaviour for families when completing this type of activity throughout the session. If parents became distracted from their child they were encouraged to engage with their child again. If the child became distracted parents were redirected by staff to notice child's cues and redirect behaviour. Management of child behaviour at times was challenging for parents however staff supported parents on a one on one basis. Guidance was provided with clear, simple instructions given about the activity or how to manage the behaviour or how to soothe the child. It was observed that guidance was replicated by parents in the sessions.

An example of staff guidance is provided:

A member was observed not noticing that her son wanted to catch her attention. Staff asked the member "do you want to move your chair closer to child?" This prompt was observed to create the opportunity for more child/parent interaction -once the parent moved the chair closer, the child was observed to immediately smile up at the mother and the mother was then observed to engage more enthusiastically in the activity with the child.

Staff role modelled conversations with children to encourage parent child interaction. Members were challenged if not focusing on the child needs. Staff noted and gave positive praise to both children and members.

The aim of promoting positive parent child attachment was attained using normal parent child activities that could be easily replicated at home and in other situations. If a child was seeking attention from an adult other than their mother, staff were observed to ask the child "where is your mum?" thus making the mother responsible at all times. If a child needed comfort the staff would always return the child to their mother for soothing and nurture.

Parenting practices were both supported and challenged during the activity. Behaviour redirection was witnessed as part of the activity. Parents were encouraged to and did comfort and soothe their children.

It was concluded that this activity was delivered as intended and that mothers displayed that they were responsible during the daily interaction sessions.

Strategy Two : To provide opportunities to develop social connectedness

Activity observed: Meal times

How the activity promotes the indicator as described in the program logic:

Meal times in the centre improve social skills and confidence through encouraging staff, members and children to sit together at lunch time. This enhances the development of positive peer relationships through social interaction. Members instigate, join and enjoy lunchtime conversation with one another.

Observation:

Meal times created an excellent opportunity to observe social connectedness. This was observed with parents and children sitting together with other families. Parents and children readily engaged in conversation with other parents and children. Parents and children were observed to enjoy the social part of meal times. Meal times also provided opportunities for staff to direct social skills for children, role model social interaction and challenge parents' behaviour and interaction with child.

Staff sat with members and children to have lunch, engaging in conversations and providing positive praise for such things as sitting at the table for the whole meal, trying new foods, using eating utensils, saying thankyou. All members sat next to their children and were encouraged to converse with their child and other members and children.

Members and children were observed to enjoy this time together with lots of conversation being conducted. Children were observed to display social confidence in having conversations with one another, asking questions of members or staff and using table manners. Healthy food choices were praised by staff.

At times members needed redirecting in responding to child's needs, and support and guidance if a child's behaviour was hard to manage at the table. Staff guided members to manage children in a comforting consistent manner.

It was concluded that the activity was delivered as described and meal times provided opportunities for peer interaction. It was observed that members interacted more enthusiastically over the four observation time points indicating improved social skills and confidence.

Strategy Three: Provide opportunities for children to reach their developmental milestones

Activity Observed: Story and song time

How the activity promotes child development as described in the program logic:

Story and song time enhances children's development through providing a regular time for parents and children to enjoy sitting, listening to a story and participating in singing songs together. Children are participating in developmentally appropriate age and stage activities with their parents. Story and singing promotes and enables the development of language, social, cognitive skills and confidence.

Observation:

Children were observed to readily participate at age appropriate levels in the story and song time activities. They were observed to enjoy the routine of story time and learning the words and actions when singing. As described in the program logic, story and singing promotes and enables the development of language, social, cognitive skills and confidence.

Story and song time appeared to be a time that mothers and children looked forward to and enjoyed. Mothers sat in chairs in a circle with children in bean bags at their feet. One staff facilitated the activity while other staff joined the circle. Staff role modelled how the mother and child could be involved and intervened when it appeared the mother or child was not focused on the activity or needed encouragement on what to do.

Examples of story time

A staff member started talking about Christmas and engaging the children in conversation. One of the children asked the staff member what she would like for Christmas. The staff member thanked the child warmly and said “that is a lovely question” and then gave a response. She then asked this child the same question and then went around the room asking the other children

The children sang a song about the parts of the body. Depending on the age and development level of the child, many actions, rhythm and words were used. Mothers were involved as well. One mother with a small child in arms sang the song to the child and pointed to body parts. The child smiled readily at mother.

Staff were observed to involve the children in story time. Staff encouraged children to ask questions about the story and then started the story. Some children became very enthusiastic about the story while others were quietly absorbed in the moment. The staff members told the story very enthusiastically and engagingly, providing a role model for this at home. Where necessary staff supported the mother to manage children’s behaviour and refocus on to the activity. At the end of the story a “goodbye song” which everyone contributes to, was sung, including an individual good bye to each child.

It was concluded that the activity was delivered as described in the program logic. A story and song time was delivered at the end of each day. Children were observed to actively participate in singing and listening to the story. Members were seen to engage and encourage their children’s participation. Where this was not occurring, staff intervened and supported and guided mothers to redirect the behaviour of their child. Positive praise was given to mother and child when this was achieved. Children were observed over the four time points to have gained confidence, participate in the actions, singing and story telling.

Strategy Four: Provide intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment

Activity Observed: Non Structured Time – Focus - parental confidence

How the activity is described in the Program Logic.

Non-structured time increases parent’s confidence in their own parenting and their ability to follow through by providing them with an opportunity to put into

practice what they have learnt. Parents are able during non-structured time to supervise, spend time with and respond to their children's needs without the structure and expectation of the more structured interventions. Parents are supported during this time, but encouraged to follow through independently. Parents' positive parenting practice is acknowledged and praised.

Observation:

Staff confirmed that each day of attendance members were provided with non-structured time. Members had the time to put into practice what they had learnt. Over the four time points members were observed to display behaviours that indicated they had an increase in parenting knowledge and skills in managing their children. Members were observed to participate in play activities with children, respond to child's cues and behaviour, and supervise children especially around safety. Examples observed were members setting up play activities such as a member playing with a visually impaired child and focusing on a tactile and auditory experience with the play activity, a member playing with dolls in the cubby with her child. Members were observed to be aware of strategies such as applying sunscreen and hats to children when playing outside and a member intervening when her child stood up on furniture.

Members implemented strategies to manage children's behaviour as in the following example.

A child was observed to be throwing a tantrum, the parent calmly moved the child away from the activity, used eye contact with the child, asked why he was upset, comforted him until he was calm then returned her child to play with the other children. Staff followed up with positive praise for member and child.

It was concluded that the activity was delivered as described in the program logic and that parents supervised, spent time with and responded to their children's needs during these sessions, It was observed that staff acknowledged and praised positive parenting practices

Activity: Non-structured time. Focus – replicate learning's to other environments

How the activity is described in the Program Logic:

Non-structured time assists parents to replicate learning environments in external settings by providing an opportunity for parents to supervise, spend time with and respond to their children without the routine, structure and

expectation of the more structured interventions. Parents are supported during unstructured time by the therapeutic team however non-structured time gives them an opportunity to practise new found skills without direct intervention by staff.

Observation:

The activity was delivered as described in the program logic. Parents frequently displayed strategies and routines learnt in the structured sessions. These included behaviour management, routines, positive language expression, safe practices and hygiene principles. Members reported using these practices at home to staff and staff were often seen to praise member and child for using appropriate language, behaving in a certain way, replicating routines, having meals together, reading to child, replicating activities such as making play dough. Members mentioned that now they talk to their child, get down to their level and ask them what they want. Members were heard informing staff of what activities they set up at home with their children and that now they sit down to eat together.

Staff on the majority of cases were seen to provide support without direct intervention. However there were times that the member was unable to handle the situation, and the staff would intervene. Intervention would consist of guiding and supporting the member to apply the appropriate strategy followed with information of why it is suggested to act in this manner. Members were praised or in some cases challenged for how they managed the situation with the focus on the child and not judging the member.

It was concluded that the activity was delivered as intended and that staff provided support without direct intervention.

Activity: Non-structured time. Focus – establish routines and rituals in the family home

How the activity is described in the Program Logic.

Non structured time supports families to establish routines and rituals in the family home. These are often special events such as Christmas, Easter, Birthdays, Family week, Children's week, Mothers Day, Fathers Day.

Observation:

In non structured time every day routines and rituals are celebrated at NEWPIN. If it is a birthday or special member's event that member or child are given special consideration by staff. Members mention how the routine of staff greeting everyone

upon arrival at the centre is valued. Often in their home environment this has not happened. Members and children are now seen to greet one another warmly upon arrival.

Routines around meal times appeared to be well established with occasional prompts from staff. Routines included washing of face and hands before meal, children sitting at table and waiting for mother to prepare lunch, younger children having bibs put on and strapped safely in highchair, no children in kitchen during meal preparation, washing after meal and cleaning teeth, cleaning up after the meal. It is hoped that these routines will be replicated at home.

An example of involving members in an event was observed around Christmas activities. Members were involved in discussion of how the occasion would be marked. Initially staff would ask the children lots of enthusiastic questions such as “does anyone have a (Christmas) tree at home, what does it look like, where will we put our centre tree, shall we make a place mat for Christmas lunch, who’s coming to your place for lunch, who would like to make some decorations for their house”. Families were also invited to have a photo taken with the tree.

Events were always recorded with lots of photos by staff and these were given to members and children. On discharge from the NEWPIN Early Years program families are provided with a collage of photos of their time in the program.

Activities at the centre were observed to include special events. Themes observed were Christmas, birthdays, and Family week.

The events are marked by activities and general conversations about how families celebrate these events, how the NEWPIN families would like to celebrate the event, what they could do differently and how this would be for them and their children.

It is concluded that this activity has been delivered as described in the Program Logic and special events acknowledged. Discussion about how occasions were marked was observed regularly at the program.

5.1.2 Staff Interviews

Initial staff interviews were completed in June 2007 with a second interview completed June 2008. The program staff team consists of four members; NEWPIN manager, children’s support worker, children and family support worker and part time transport and support worker. Volunteers were also involved in the program.

Staff reported that the NEWPIN program was being delivered as intended and constantly grows and changes in response to NEWPIN members' requirements especially incorporating the principle of the best interests of the child in program planning and delivery.

Achievements of the program objectives by staff

Staff were asked whether the specific objectives that make up the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program were achieved:

- Promote positive parent/child attachment
- Provide opportunities to develop social connectedness
- Provide opportunities for children to reach their developmental milestones
- Provide intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment

Promote positive parent/child attachment

Staff have viewed the promotion of positive parent/child attachment as their core purpose especially in the area of planning and purposeful conversations. The participant and non participant observer roles lead to clear conversations with members about concerns in this area. This uses the power of observation with one staff member observing and one staff member providing direct intervention. It provides a reflective practice approach.

Education in the form of videos and discussions using the whiteboard and therapeutic conversations with members are always from the child's perspective, about support, education and not laying blame. Staff have found it can be a logistical challenge in planning and delivery of activities while still responding to the broad mix of ages attending each day and responding to higher need members. During the development of goals, parents are requested to set a goal for each child and a parenting goal. This then focuses on parent/child interaction and is reviewed regularly including formally at six month intervals.

The Circle of Security⁷ is used as a simple visual representation of attachment theory. This educates and promotes attachment theory to parents and is used as a tool to educate, support and promote parent child attachment.

⁷ Early Childhood Australia Inc. Research in Practice Series, Volume 14, No.4. 2007

The daily routine and rituals set up at the centre support and challenge parents in daily activities, behaviour redirection, and comforting and soothing their children. The excursions provided allow for positive parent child attachment through facilitating a regular, age and stage appropriate parent child activity. The breaking of trans-generational negative family behaviour and development and strengthening of positive parent child attachment is promoted during family meetings, home visits, one on one parent/ child/ staff working together and parent and child interaction sessions. Meal time routines encourage parent child interaction. Non structured time enables members to supervise, spend time with and respond to their children without the more structured interventions.

These various activities provided at Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program encourage a nurturing and attentive relationship between parent and child that includes positive affect, safe holding, eye contact, touch, smile and the fulfilment of infant/child's needs. The expectation of the program is that parents will provide supervision for their children at all times thus increasing parent child interactions. Staff are there to guide, support, educate and when necessary, challenge parenting behaviour and redirect to improve parent child relationships.

Other tools used by the staff include:

- Therapeutic letters sent to members, these provide a written acknowledgement of struggles, goals and achievement. It provides witness to the changes made in the parent child relationship.
- Therapeutic Loaded Conversations are conversations that aim to improve parenting practice styles by education, reinforcing and challenging parents about their relationship with their child. They increase parents' knowledge and understanding of their child's development.

All members attend therapeutic and educative group work which promotes positive parent child attachment by educating and reinforcing attachment principles. Members readily attend the groups and positive feedback has been received.

Provide opportunities to develop social connectedness

The staff response was that improved social connectedness has occurred through members attendance at Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program and exposure to open days; Special Person's day at the centre; facilitating forums; running expos; linking with other services in the area; taking members' on excursions to the local neighbourhood centres, shops, and parks; encouraging friendships between members at the centre,

celebrating birthdays at centre and members given opportunities to speak at community events. Staff take the time to find out what is going on locally and promote this to the members or staff may bring a representative of a different organisation to the centre. Members also have twenty-four hour phone support service to one another.

The program expectation is that members will attend a minimum of two days per week with transport to and from the centre provided to families residing in the North Geelong area. Many members have commented that the criteria of having to attend the centre for a minimum of two days and being picked up by the Bethany bus gives them a reason to go out. Once at the centre there is the opportunity for members and their children to socialise.

Program staff focus on celebrations such as birthdays, special persons day, mothers day, graduations from the program, Easter and Christmas. All these events give an opportunity for families to socialise. Members also talk about the social events they have attended after being exposed to different settings during a Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program excursion or visitor to centre. Visitors may include early childhood professionals, TAFE educators and other services such as the library.

The program has set mealtime routines focusing on healthy foods, hygiene, sitting at a table, table manners and social interaction. Parents and children over time initiate conversations at meal times. Staff also sit and have lunch with members and children and role model conversations, provide positive praise, encourage the use of manners and where necessary redirect behaviour. Families report that following involvement in the program they have acquired a dinner table and eat together as a family.

The team offer a warm welcome and farewell when members and children arrive and leave the centre. This provides an opportunity for the development of appropriate socialisation skills. Staff report that they see these skills replicated by members and children at the centre and at home visits.

Provide opportunities for children to reach their developmental milestones

Opportunities provided in the program included the assessment of the current child's development and planned activities that were developmentally appropriate for each individual child. Child development activities were included in the assessment and goal review tasks that occur formally every six months and informally at daily sessions for each member. Development of the 'Importance of Play' manual and group educational sessions for parents has helped immensely with members now displaying improved knowledge of child development and talking about child development in conversations with one another and staff.

The Importance of Play group work program was developed to fill a service gap and evolved from practice to meet the specific needs of parents and children who have experienced significant difficulty in their relationships. The Importance of Play group work program was implemented incorporating educative, therapeutic and reflective components of attachment theory, child development and play theory.

The Importance of Play aims includes:

- To enable and encourage positive play interactions between parent and child
- To enhance the parent child relationship
- To develop parent's understanding and knowledge of their children's development and play
- To enhance and stimulate children's development

Child development was also promoted through activities like inviting other allied health professionals to the centre to provide Speech Therapy sessions and Music Therapist sessions with members and children. Feedback from parents highlighted the benefit and enjoyment of these sessions. Members describe how they now communicate with their child and how they sing and dance at home with their children. Employment of appropriate staff with relevant child development knowledge has improved the quality of sessions with families. Other activities provided by the program that promote child development include: assistance in transport to child specialist paediatric appointment, excursions, home visits, one on one parent /child/ staff working together, daily parent/child interaction session, story and song time, and structured and non structured playtime.

Provide intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment.

The staff responded that they delivered intensive support within a structured, therapeutic and educative environment. Improvement in parenting style and practices is achieved by staff taking a history from the member of parenting and how they were parented, their supports and strengths. Realistic goals are planned, strategies developed and implemented and reviewed at six monthly interviews. Real time parenting in the form of individual staff guiding, challenging, supporting and role modelling with parent and child at mealtimes, non structured time, daily activities, excursions and home visits provides help in establishing positive parenting styles. These can be transferable to any situation and become routine for the parent and child.

The opportunity for role modelling from other parents occurs and parents become more confident in setting clear boundaries for children.

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program has developed a *common language* for staff, members and volunteers communication at the centre and families' homes. They are underpinned by the four core values of the program and give word for concepts, themes and are framed positively. They may be used to challenge members, staff, volunteers and children and can provide words for members when they are frustrated, angry, tired or simply silenced. Members are encouraged to take a copy home of the list of *common language* to their partner and extended family so it may be replicated in the home.

Comments from staff interviews raised the following issues

- **Staffing**

There have been three changes of staff, creating the opportunity to look at the skill base and alter staff positions to better meet the needs of families. It was identified that there was a gap in a child centred focus and the need to up skill in family centred practice. It was also identified that there was a gap in a therapeutic role. Relevant staff were recruited and staff report the current team is a good fit.

Staff backgrounds include social work, nursing, family therapy, and early childhood and these characteristics of the different backgrounds appear to bring strength to the program. Concern was expressed about the effect of future staff turnover as it has taken time and effort to attain the current team dynamics.

- Staff have identified over time the **qualities and characteristics** required for NEWPIN to be successful. They include the following:

• Degree of professional confidence - self assuredness	• Work/life balance
• Humour	• Practical Skills
• Organisation	• Capable of breadth of tasks – ie from sandpit to Therapeutic Loaded Conversations
• Interested	• Innovative
• Creative	• Able to challenge and be challenged
• Able to have rigorous conversations with team members- may not always agree	• Willing to say it didn't work
• Know self – self awareness	

- ***Program Logic/ Program Manual***

The program logic was developed as a guide and as part of Phase 1 of the evaluation process. The staff were required to develop the program logic in Phase one of the evaluation. This took considerable time however it became a working document that in the future could be transferred to other services interested in implementing a similar model. It articulated why and how the program is delivered. The program logic supported the program staff to clearly articulate and document all facets of their program, their purpose and outcome.

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years staff stated the program model had changed in the Victorian context to be in line with the legislative changes and to have the focus on the best interests of the child. The befriending component of the original UK and Sydney programs was changed and the use of volunteers implemented. These factors were included in development of the program logic.

Once the program logic was completed, staff were motivated into developing a program manual, Appendix 3, which they felt was a more practical tool. Each staff member was given responsibility to develop separate components of the manual, developing ownership of the document. The aim of the manual was to develop a living document that set out the how and why of the program and what to expect. Bethany NEWPIN Early Years staff have written two book chapters to be published in NEWPIN: "The Courage To Change Together" a history of NEWPIN in Australia. This is to be published by Uniting Care (Sydney) in October 2008 a comprehensive account of the 10 years of Newpin operating in Australia, published by Uniting Care Burnside and edited by Linda Monday and Dr. Steven Monday.

- ***Challenges of NEWPIN***

Initial referral

Initial referral requires a lot of intense work in contact, developing a relationship and managing the client on the waiting list. Sometimes an immense amount of work is completed during this time with the client opting to not enrol in the program. During this phase staff may assist clients to engage in crisis management and refer to other services that are more appropriate. Staff feel frustrated that this work is not recorded in time and activities completed.

Attendance of members at Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program

Staff have found providing an assertive outreach component of the program to new members when members first commence at the program helped maintain attendance at the centre for the two days. An assertive outreach strategy was also used as an

intervention when member's attendance dropped off. Decreased attendance was usually the result of a family crisis and the increased support by staff and the development of strategies to resolve the crisis assisted the member to get back on track. It was found that during a crisis a member would either reduce or increase their attendance at the centre.

Teamwork

Teamwork constantly requires work – all staff members must work from a team perspective, even when working individually with a member. Trust is essential in showing a united front to members and having a similar approach and perspective to their work. The team discussed the need to critically reflect on practice and challenge each other about their work. This then provides a positive role model for members on how to resolve conflict in a mature respectful manner. The team struggled initially to work in a different way however over time this has developed.

Staff's ability and confidence is on show and staff must be able to discuss situations in front of members and other staff. Managing the complexity of problems and member to member conflict is constant. Members also will try to split staff which requires tactful management. For example a member may have completed a one to one session with a staff member, agreed on a plan of action and then approach another staff member to change this plan.

Staff commented on the uniqueness of the program and the importance of empowering parents and active parent involvement in the program for successful outcomes of families. The work required constant reflection and discussion and improvement in documenting and recording such as the use of therapeutic letters and goal review for families. Staff had to constantly work on team dynamics and be open and honest with one another.

Staffing of the centre requires experienced staff with background knowledge of the principles that guide delivery of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program. Members also take time to trust new staff. Staff feel obligated to go to work when unwell as often there is no appropriate back fill. A reliever list is currently being developed however developing the skill base in new staff can take time.

Further comments from staff

- Exit planning – staff have incorporated exit planning for members from the program, especially around goal setting, goal review and goal

assessment. Staff initiate discussion on exit planning at entry into the program. Staff continue to focus on exit planning from the program in regular conversations with members.

- New work reforms program – this has implications for the members. Under federal legislation, once their child turns six years of age the members are required to be seeking employment. Linking parents to not just supportive services but also education services leads to members being better prepared. Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program has incorporated opportunities for further education and linked members with employment agencies so they are better prepared. Some members have completed a food handling course, Level 1 First Aid course specialising in paediatrics and others have enrolled in a TAFE course on exit from the program. Members report volunteering and finding employment.
- Children, Youth and Families Act Legislation – this legislative reform has a stronger focus on the best interests of children and cumulative harm. The program has moved toward this, especially in terms of recording. Previously they would look at things in isolation but are now looking at cumulative effects of harm on the child.
- Non structured play time – staff mentioned that this session could be difficult. It requires the staff challenging the members to remain child focussed, and that this is a time to interact with your child, not a time to gossip with other members.
- Group work activities to remain engaging for all members – staff mentioned the challenge of this in making sure the activities continue to be interesting and motivating for the existing members as well as the newer members.

5.2 Impact Evaluation

5.2.1 Validated Measurement Tools

The three validated measurement tools selected were the Child Behaviour Checklist, Parent Behaviour Checklist and the Interpersonal Support Evaluation. Data was collected at three collection time points, the first Jan-July 2007, the second at December 2007 and final collection point June 2008.

Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL)

The purpose of the CBCL is to provide a standardized benchmark to compare members' ratings of their children's behaviour against population norms over time. This checklist is validated for children aged eighteen months to 5 years and the forms are designed for self administration by the respondents who have at least 5th grade reading skills. For respondents who have difficulty completing the form, it can be read out aloud by the interviewer who writes the respondents answers on the form. This was the case for some of the NEWPIN members. The form consists of 118 questions relating to child behaviour.

The CBCL can be measured in syndrome scales and can be scored in terms of three broad groups, internalising which reflects self, externalising which reflects attention problems and aggressive behaviour and the third which is a total score or sum of the internal, external, sleep problems and any other problems that are not on the other syndromes.

Internalizing problems consists of four subscales and comprises problems that are mainly about self. They are described as emotionally reactive, anxious/depressed, somatic complaints and withdrawn.

The externalizing area consists of two syndromes; attention problems and aggressive behaviour.

The third problem area is **sleep problems**.

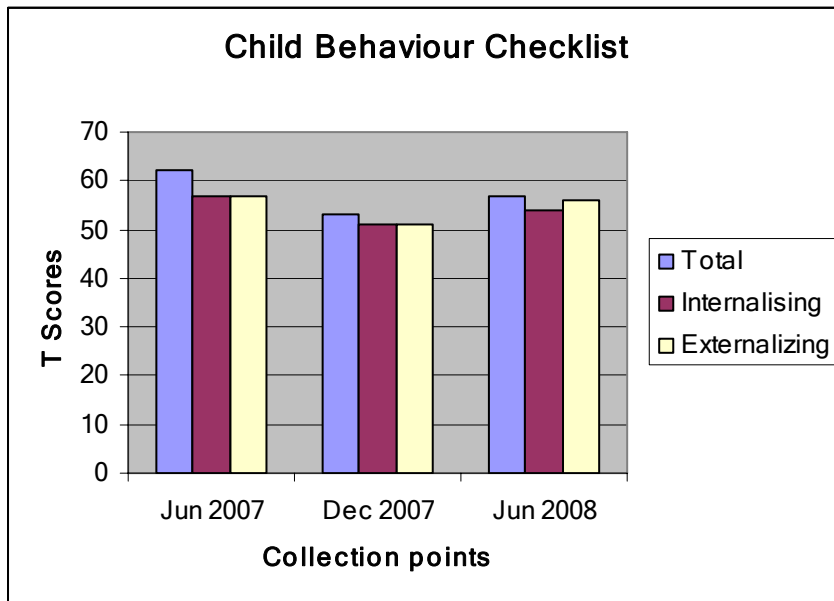
The score is measured as a T score; below 65 is considered within normal range, 65 to 70 is borderline but high enough to be of concern and above 70 is considered in the clinical range and of concern. The T score is measuring children's behaviour as compared against population norms

Table 1 and Graph 1 reflect data in the total, internalising and externalising data.

Table 1

	Total	Internalising	Externalising
June 07	62	57	57
Dec 07	53	51	51
June 08	57	54	56

Graph 1



Average T scores of children attending Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program were below the borderline and clinical levels for intervention and in the normative range. There were however individual children who were in the *borderline* and *clinical* category.

The *clinical* category indicates that significant problems are evident and a child needs professional help.

The *borderline* category indicates that this child scores between the normative range and the clinical range. In such cases categorical distinctions are less reliable. A borderline range informs us that concerns have been reported and more information is required through further assessment and observation to assist practitioners to make more differential decisions.

Table 2 gives us more information regarding the children who are on the borderline or clinical category for the CBCL in regard to behaviour and shows improvements since attending the NEWPIN program for the majority of children.

Table 2

	Total		Internalising		Externalising	
	Clinical %	Borderline %	Clinical %	Borderline %	Clinical %	Borderline %
June 07	39	22	22	33	39	16
June 08	33	5.5	27	11	22	22

Analysis of CBCL results.

Internalising:

Children in the clinical category show an increase of 5% over 12 months. Children in the borderline category show a reduction of 22% over 12 months – meaning there have been a large number of children who have moved from the borderline to the normative range over the 12 months demonstrating a reduction of behaviour problems about self, such as being less emotionally reactive, less anxious/depressed, having less somatic complaints and withdrawn problems. However a small number of children have moved into the clinical range.

Externalising:

Children in the clinical category show a reduction of 17% over 12 months. Children in the borderline category show an increase of 6% - meaning a large number of children from the clinical range have moved into the normative or borderline range indicated improvement in the behaviour of children in the areas of attention problems and aggressive behaviour.

Total:

Children in the clinical category show a reduction of 6% over 12 months. Children in the borderline category show a reduction of 16.5 % over 12 months – indicating overall there has been a reduction in behaviour problems over 12 months.

Parent Behaviour Checklist (PBCL)

The purpose of the PBCL is an objective measure of how parents are raising their children. It is to analyse the NEWPIN members' rating of their parenting against population norms over time and assess their strengths and weaknesses. In this evaluation we are measuring the parent/child attachment and parenting styles and practices. The checklist is validated for children 1 year to 4 years and 11 months and parents with a reading skill of 3rd grade.

The scale consists of 30 items and includes three empirically derived subscales: Expectation, Discipline and Nurturing.

Expectation: measure a parent's developmental expectations – ie “*My child should be old enough to share toys.*”

Discipline: assess parental responses to problem child behaviours - ie “I yell at my child for whining.”

Nurturing: measure specific parent behaviours that promote a child’s psychological growth – ie “I read to my child at bedtime.”

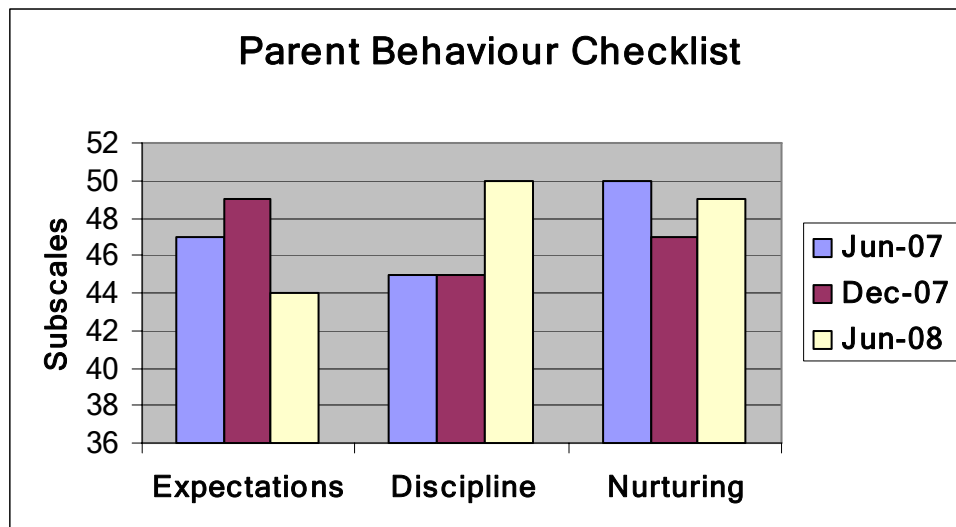
Normative average T Score is 35-65.

Table 3 reflects the PBCL average T scores in the three subscales over the three collection time points.

Table 3

Collection Point	Expectations	Discipline	Nurturing
June 2007	47	45	50
December 2007	49	45	47
June 2008	44	50	49

Graph 2



The three subscales – expectations, discipline and nurturing show minimal changes over the different collection time points however all results are within the average norms of the population.

Other factors that may affect the PBC results are: ethnic background, number of children in the family, educational level of the parents, economic status of the family, age of the parent, developmental level of child, behavioural difficulties of the child, who provides care for the child and mental and emotional status of parent. The Bethany NEWPIN members may have many factors contributing to the PBC results.

PBCL scores for this group would suggest an average range of parenting and would need to be considered within the context of other assessment findings and other factors such as socio economic that may influence the findings.

Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL)

The purpose of the ISEL is to assess the development of social support and connectedness for families over time. In this evaluation we are measuring the social connectedness of families.

The ISEL comprises a measure of four 10 item subscales as well as an overall support measure. The four subscales are:

- Tangible assistance - perceived availability of material aid
- Appraisal – the perceived availability of someone to talk about one’s problems
- Self esteem – the perceived availability of a positive comparison when comparing oneself to others
- Belonging – the perceived availability of people one can do things with

Score interpretation of ISEL

0 = least amount of support

30 = most amount of support for that social support function/subscale

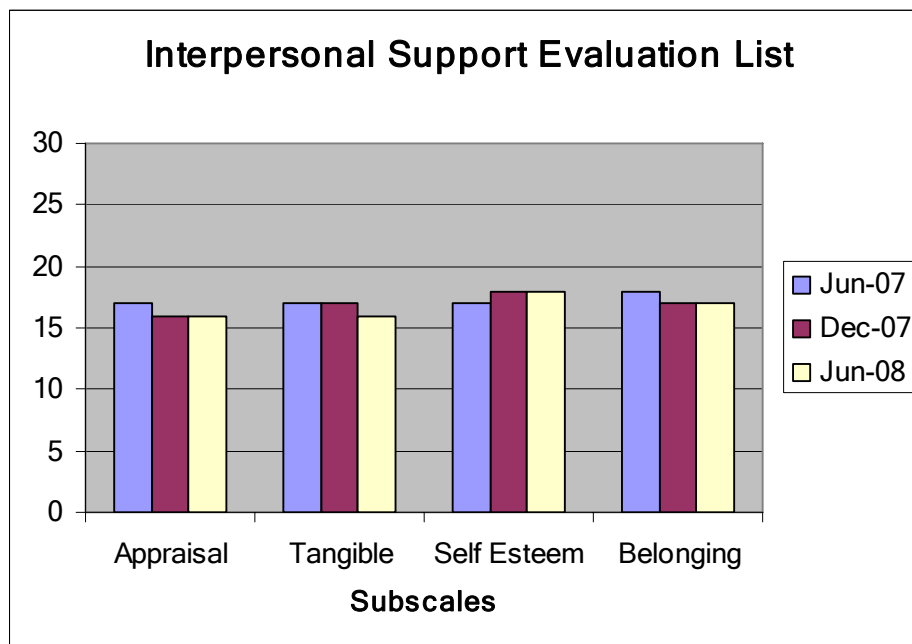
120 = most amount of support for the total ISEL

Table 4 and Graph 3 show results of the ISEL scores over three collection time points.

Table 4

Collection Point	Appraisal	Tangible	Self Esteem	Belonging
Jun-07	17	17	17	18
Dec-07	16	17	18	17
Jun-08	16	16	18	17

Graph 3



Analysis of subscales scores would indicate members have average interpersonal support and show minimal variation over the three time points as compared to population norms.

Other measures of social connectedness used in this evaluation report show more positive results and need to be considered in the evaluation. These other measures give a stronger positive result and reflect that through the program members have gained new friends, have someone to talk over their problems and to do things with and that the program has assisted them with material aid. The ISEL results can however provide a starting point for discussing social connectedness with families and an opportunity to reflect with members what they really think.

Validated Measures Outcomes Summary Reflections

In the CBCL tool, good improvements have been shown in the behaviours of children. Overall the results from the three validated tools demonstrate family's results measure in the average normative ranges and that the three validated measure tools results suggest some discrepancies in results in some instances to other evidence provided through goal reviews, worker reflections and member interviews.

Staff worker reflections had indicated in some cases that member completions of these tools were not reflective of the child's development or behaviour. Members reported finding the length of the tool and some wording of the tool difficult to complete. When interpreting these results consideration needs to be taken in that this group consists of high risk families whom may have been referred through child protection to the

program and families may in some instances reflect a distorted view to please the professional.

The strengths of these tools is in what it tells you in terms of objective effectiveness of the program based on independent assessments. The tools can identify starting points for discussion with parents about what they think is happening. Discussions with other professionals can also be held to discuss and plan appropriate interventions. The tools have also been used to evaluate changes over time such as if there has been any movement over time and whether scores have moved from the clinical range to the borderline or normative range which was clearly shown in the CBCL results.

The limitations of the tools have been the length and wording of some of the tools for parents, the demographic factors of the group and the newness of the tool for staff to implement. The validated measures cast some doubts in validation results and completion of these tools. More weight should be given to the other measures used in this evaluation which demonstrate effectiveness of the program.

The value of these tools can be enhanced when interpreting the results with multi evidence data such as program observation, goal review and parent and staff interviews such has occurred in this program. The divergence of information can create opportunities for discussion in planning effective strategies and intervention.

5.2.2 Interview with NEWPIN members

The collection points of interviews with NEWPIN members occurred at three time points; initially between March and June 2007, December 2007 and final collection point at June 2008. The following summary gives a snapshot of emerging themes from the member's interview questionnaire as completed by members.

- Age of children ranged from three months to 6 years,
- Length of program involvement ranged from two weeks to three and a half years
- Twenty-five members were enrolled in the program
- Gender of the child was not always recorded

In response to the question "Do you feel that your participation in the program is good for you?" the majority of participants responded positively, one said no as she didn't like the other mothers and another stated she attended due to a court order.

Participants gave the following reasons why they thought NEWPIN was good for them:

- They looked forward to the socialisation with other mothers, assistance given with the children, the education and information provided, and that coming to Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program was a reason to get out of bed/house, they described an improved relationship with their children, improved emotional state, and liked the support and some one to talk over concerns.

Participants spoke positively about the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program and the strong influence it has had in changes they have made in their lives and that it had been very beneficial for them.

In response to the question “Do you feel that your participation in the program is good for you/your child?” all participants responded positively.

Participants gave the following reasons why they thought the program was good their child:

- Provided an opportunity to socialise with other children and adults, improved child development and behaviour, helped with transition to day care, playgroup, kindergarten and school, the program provided child focused activities, members reported learning how to soothe and comfort child.

Participants spoke about the assistance the program has given them in relation to their child/children. They regularly commented on the how the routines provided some organisation and plan for the day and that the children seemed to like this. Being better socially connected has had positive outcomes for the children, who now are taken out to the park, library and other places with their parents and they too have more friends and are happier and more sociable. They exhibited more knowledge about child development, safety, and play and appeared more affectionate with their children.

In response to the question “Do you feel that you do anything differently as a result of your involvement in the program?” The majority of participants responded positively. Comments included:

- “I do lots more things with her, go out on more outings, visiting, cooking and gardening with her.”

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- “Yes, I interact with kids in a better way- I was a young mum and not ready to be a parent and be aware of what kids need.”
 - “I don’t get angry or hit, try and work out why she is like this, left a violent marriage as I learnt what harm it could do to my child.”
 - “I mix with nicer people, talk about my problems, set boundaries and don’t growl or smack children.”
 - “View children as little people and that they have feelings and allow them to express themselves. Bethany got me into a routine and now I am starting to mix in the community.”
 - One member said she would “*have to experiment.*” Two participants responded they do nothing differently.

The families appear to exhibit improved nurturing skills and relate better to their children. They talk about yelling and smacking less and talking to their children. They also talk about the different boundaries they now put on some relationships with partners and previous friends so they and their children are safer.

In response to the question: “Do you feel that you do anything differently as a result of your involvement in the program and is the time you spend with your child/children different?” all participants responded positively except for one. Comments included:

- “I don’t yell as much as I get my child to listen”
- “I read to her now and spend more time with her like play outside”
- “Sometimes I can solve my own problems using NEWPIN strategies”
- “I am more focused on my child and get down to her level and play with her
- I appreciate the time with her more”
- “I am more aware of my child’s needs, am able to set boundaries and show I am interested, play music and dance with child now”

One responded “they do nothing here different to what they do at home; another said she did nothing different.

In response to the question: "What are the best things about coming to the centre for the program?" All parent comments were positive and the following comments were made.

- "Excursions, friends, go out of the house more and am more motivated. I can do a lot more things by myself rather than having my mother by my side"
- "Interacting with the kids and support from other parents"
- "Lovely staff that help me and give support. Made friendships, mix socially and share problems"
- "Greeting from staff when I arrived. They always asked me how my day has been – sometimes that is the only time someone asks me how I am"
- "Dealing with past experiences in therapeutic groups, share experiences with other parents, share strategies, space to air things and not be judged"
- "Social support, I talk a lot more"
- "Showed me how to nurture my child"
- "Better than other programs, handle good and bad times, teach you things other programs don't"

In response to the question: "What are the worst things about coming to the centre for the program?" participants had the following comments.

- "Putting up with some of the other mothers"
- "Bitching amongst other mother's and interference"
- "Nervous at first, different, couldn't express myself as I had no confidence and took time to establish trust"
- "Sometimes staff were arrogant and rude, felt I was back in high school"
- "Staff get grumpy when I am not child focused. That is OK as they only have my child's safety in mind."
- "Staff get on my back but I know it is to get me back on track"

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- “Some parents not helped as much as others. The people who were in crisis more than others got more care and you felt like you couldn’t ask for support some times.”

General comments about NEWPIN included:

- “If no NEWPIN I would have stayed at home and bottled things up, been an angry mum and not trusted any one.”
- “If no NEWPIN I would have probably have left my child in the porta cot and gone in each four hours to feed her. I didn’t know I had to talk and interact with her. She only showed excitement to other visitors.”
- “If I didn’t go to NEWPIN I would have had a nervous breakdown”
- “Since going to NEWPIN I am linked into the community ie kinder, school and Geelong hospital. NEWPIN helped me to keep going and assist me to get out of a violent relationship. Staff supported and challenged me. I now talk a lot more. Would recommend NEWPIN to anyone.”

Less positive comments included:

- “Maybe 20% of ‘NEWPIN’ helped. Not sure if I didn’t go to ‘NEWPIN’ if it made a difference. I was too young and didn’t grow up until I left ‘NEWPIN’. Maturity may have helped me take on more of what ‘NEWPIN’ offers. I still meet with friends made at ‘NEWPIN’.”
- “Some parents not helped as much.”
- “Bit of a shock when you first come as everyone had their own groups”

Overall Member interviews gave very positive responses to the program and described enthusiastically the changes they have made to themselves and their children’s lives for the positive. Many emphasized how emotionally they now feel in control and feel more confident as parents. Being more socially connected to the community and having friends with children has been very valuable and is demonstrated in the number of connections they now have with early childhood services and adult education and employment.

5.2.3 Staff reflections

The staff met at three time points following the interviews with members. These time points were July 2007, December 2007 and July 2008. The reflections were collected

to record staffs general impressions of how the member had approached the completion of the evaluation tools and if they had responded with answers that reflect their true situation. Staff also recorded any other information of relevance and listed the interventions completed with the member over their time with Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program. Themes highlighted show:

- Staff reflected on how the members responded to the tools. Of the 25 recorded members, eighteen members were reported by staff as giving an accurate reflection. Of the remaining 25 members recorded, one member disengaged and another at the 3rd data collection did not have care of her child. Some members were reported to have an idealistic reflection of their children around emotions and behaviour.
- Two mothers had an intellectual disability, one child was hearing impaired, one child was visually impaired and two children were developmentally delayed. Case notes review of member's shows many have had association with child protection due to environmental neglect, poor attachment and attunement to child/children, limited interest and confidence in parenting, family violence, and drug use. Other issues highlighted include maternal depression, teenage parent, child with marked global delay, child health problems such as anaemia and mother with intellectual disability.
- Staff reflections have identified many improvements of members since engagement with the program. These include: showing more interest in child; improved parenting confidence and capacity; mothers enrolled in TAFE course or completed course such as food handling course; mother drug free and setting boundaries with partners and friends; evidence of craft and play activities at home with child; being warm and attentive to children; improved skills in self care and child care; member enjoying and delighting in child more and socialising outside of Bethany NEWPIN Early years program with other members. This information is supported by evidence from the goal review forms and closure summaries.
- Prior to attending NEWPIN Early Years, 4 children were in day care and 1 child attended Kindergarten. This represented 23% of children being engaged in early children services prior to attending NEWPIN. In closure summaries 86 % of children from families who have been discharged, (18 out of 21 families) from the program were recorded as

being engaged in early childhood services such as playgroups, day care, kindergarten and schools. Many were assisted in this transition by program staff. This is a marked improvement of 63%.

- Of the discharged mothers, 86% (18 out of 21 mothers) have either found work – 24%, completed a certificate in TAFE – 24%, been volunteering – 19%, are linked with employment agencies – 9% or have returned to school – 24%.

The improvements identified have been enabled through the following activities and interventions initiated by the program staff to supplement direct support to the individual families.

- Setting goals and goal review with members
- Family conferences and family meetings
- Support with housing services
- Support with transition of children into school, playgroup, day care and kindergarten
- Outreach support and home visiting
- Support parent with transition into TAFE and brokerage for parents to attend TAFE, transition to return to school
- Referrals to maternal and child health services, general practitioners, paediatricians, specialist children services, disability services, child protection and case workers, family services, employment services, Vision Australia, playgroups and young mums group.
- Brokerage for food vouchers, assistance to attend courses, carpet cleaning and child's swimming lessons
- Liaison and collaboration with child protection and a wide range of universal, secondary and tertiary services and professionals
- Transport and support to attend appointments and the centre
- Skills and role modelling in child care/behaviour, child play activities, hygiene, housekeeping, self care and parenting confidence and capacity as part of the program logic

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- Educational groups such as
 - Importance of Play, Therapy Group, Mums and Bubs group, Our Skills as Parents, School and Kinder Readiness sessions, Self Esteem sessions, Safe Start – safety in the home, Parent/child interaction sessions and many more.
 - Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program also provided support when members were required to attend court.

6 Evaluation Discussion

CCCH developed an evaluation framework to evaluate the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program. The aims of the evaluation were to identify:

- What if any are the demonstrable benefits of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program to new, existing and past members in the four program target areas and whether members are satisfied with the program?
- What if any are the demonstrable ongoing benefits to members from having been a Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program member once they have left the program?
- Whether it is necessary for Bethany staff to adapt the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program to the needs of the members? If so what form does this take and is it likely to affect the replication of the program at another program site.

The evaluation also *aims* to:

- Through consultation with Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program facilitate the production of a program matrix which deals with the connection between the program aims, activities and intended outcomes.
- Evaluate whether the program activities identified in the program matrix have been delivered as intended.

6.1 Achieving the evaluation aims

In considering whether the aims of the evaluation were met the following questions are addressed.

What if any are the demonstrable benefits of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program to new, existing and past members in the four program target areas and whether members are satisfied with the program?

Worker reflections, member interviews and validated measures (CBCL), have shown the benefits to new, existing and past members of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program. The aims were:

- To improve positive parent/child attachment
- To improve social connectedness for families

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- To increase opportunities for children to reach their individual development milestones
 - To improve parenting styles and practices

Demonstrable benefits have been seen in the four program target areas and members have described the benefits from attending the program. They have described changes in how they relate to their children, how they enjoy their children more, the friends and social connections made at the centre and the local community. Members describe how they have a better understanding of child development and how to promote this in their child and described parenting strategies learnt through the program and replicated at home and other places.

Member interviews reflect their satisfaction in the program. They have responded positively when questioned if the program had been good for them and their children and described many things they were doing differently as a result of the program. They described more positive strategies and styles in parenting and that the time spent with their children was now more enjoyable.

Members describe how they are better connected to their children and understand and relate to them more, that they are more sociable and connected to the community, that they have a better understanding of child development and what are appropriate activities for their children, and that they are more confident as a parent in parenting and managing their children.

CBCL analysis shows an improvement in children's behaviour especially in the reduction of the percentage of children who are in the clinical and borderline categories.

What if any are the demonstrable benefits to members from having been a Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program member once they have left the program?

Of the twenty-five members evaluated and interviewed over the three collection time points, at the final collection time point in June 2008, nineteen are past members and six are existing members. Members describe many benefits from having been a past Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program member and the information and strategies that they still replicate.

Many report still maintaining friendships with other members from Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program, going out with children and parents together on social outings and ringing one another for support.

Closure summaries provide detail on services families are linked in with and that most children are still engaged in other early childhood services such as day care, playgroups, kindergarten and school. Mothers also report being part of the kindergarten committees. Members have demonstrated personal growth with mothers volunteering, having completed a course or enrolled in an educational course including two young mothers who have returned to secondary school, and with some mothers employed and others seeking employment.

Members report maintaining routines learnt at the program such as meal time routines and sitting at the table to eat, having a routine in the morning to be on time for kindergarten and school, healthy food choices and hygiene routines. Activities demonstrated at the centre and home visits are now often set up for children at home although some mothers reported finding enough time hard. Mothers report singing and reading to children on a regular basis at home.

Mothers discussed feeling less aggressive and being more in control of their feelings and having an awareness that they need to talk over their problems and not bottle them up. They remember parenting strategies learnt in the program and most of the time implement these strategies.

CBCL results reflect ongoing improvements in children's behaviour. On completion of the final collection point past members showed lasting improvement in children's behaviour over the past 12 months and since discharge from the program.

Was it necessary for Bethany staff to adapt the NEWPIN Early Years program to the needs of members? If so what form does this take and is it likely to affect replication of the program at another site?

The Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program is guided by the program logic to provide a consistent approach however different parts of the program may be enhanced, and individual goals set and reviewed depending on the needs of the individual child. Term plans are implemented after reviewing goal outcomes to guide activity focus, developmental level of children and parenting skill of parents. Some parents may need more individual care than others and parents are enrolled in the different personal development/educational groups on offer depending on their individual needs.

The changing needs of members and program focus would not effect the replication of the program at another site. The development of the program logic and now the emerging program manual has developed clear information and guidelines to implement the program. Bethany also has an internal annual quality assurance program to monitor outcomes. When interviewing members, they have asked why there are not other 'NEWPIN' sites in Victoria.

The program logic defines the objectives, how this would be measured (Indicator), and the activities required to meet this objective. The program manual describes the philosophy and values of the program, aims, theoretical approaches, legislation and practice principles. The program processes from referral to discharge and the different activities and strategies provided in the program are outlined in the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program manual and Program Logic.

Replication of this program at other sites in Australia would be quite achievable. Processes set up by Bethany provide clear guidelines for set up and ongoing delivery of the program. The program also incorporates a quality assurance component to facilitate a changing environment.

Financial analysis of the unit cost has shown that delivery of Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program is comparable with other family service programs. The program has been aided by a donation from a philanthropic source to fund the Speech Therapy component at the centre and provision of staff clinical supervision from an external facilitator.

Through consultation with Bethany NEWPIN Early Years staff facilitate the production of a program matrix which details the connection between the program's aims, activities and intended outcomes.

The Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program staff in consultation with CCCH developed a program matrix/logic over the time period of September 2006 to December 2006. Staff reported the amount of time and effort taken to develop this document was immense however it has provided reflection on how they deliver the program, why they deliver it this way and if it would meet the aims of the program. It has informed their practice. The program logic details the connection between the program's aims, activities and intended outcomes. Staff report learning and reflecting in the development of this program logic and that this was then the impetus in development of the program manual which they see as an ongoing working document.

Evaluate whether the program activities identified in the program matrix have been delivered as intended.

The program activities in the program matrix/logic have been delivered as intended. The process evaluation through program observation and staff interviews has evaluated how the activities have been delivered, and demonstrated they were delivered as described in the program logic and indicators met. All four program target areas were delivered as intended. Further information can be found in section 4.1.

The evaluation of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program has shown that it has value in an Australian context and has improved all program-target areas.

6.2 Outcomes

The following section outlines the desired outcomes of the program as originally developed in the evaluation framework and the achievements derived from the evaluation. Impact and process evaluation findings from NEWPIN member interviews, program observations, staff interviews, staff reflections and validated measurement tools have described activities that give evidence to achieving these outcomes.

Short term outcomes for this program were outlined as:

- Families to exhibit positive family behaviour
- Reduced notifications to child protection
- Reduced re-notifications to child protection
- Children kept safe and contained within the family environment
- Parents and children to demonstrate reciprocal enjoyment and delight in the parent child relationship
- Parents and children enjoy spending quality time together
- Increased social networks and community connectedness
- Children to have improved on some aspects of developmental domains
- Families to have developed their own individual structured routines and rituals.

Families to exhibit positive family behaviours

During the program observations members were seen to spend more time interacting with their children in a positive manner. Members mentioned in interviews how the centre program was a positive environment to learn positive behaviours, and that the time spent at the centre was child focused. They now talk how they are more patient and allow the children to express their feelings. Many talked about how they now mix with nicer people, don't argue with partner as much and one parent discussed her awareness of how violence can impact on the child and has since moved out of this relationship. Members mentioned how they feel less aggressive and are more emotionally settled. One member stated that "she was more aware of her child's needs,

boundaries to set, and that she tries to show that I am interested in my child and have conversations with my child.”

Parents and children to demonstrate enjoyment and delight in the parent child relationship.

Program observation demonstrated parents playing together with children in lots of different activities with both parents and children smiling, talking, clapping and laughing with one another. During member interviews past parents reported enjoying their children now and knowing how to play with their children. “I enjoy being with my child, I praise my child, I now know about comfort and nurture so I hug, and touch my children more” Staff reported observing parents enjoying and showing delight with their children at home visits and when completing final collection data with past and present members.

Parents and children to enjoy spending quality time together.

During member interviews mothers described the increase time they now spend with their children and the enjoyment they and their children receive from it. They described different activities they now take their children to such as playing in the park, going to the library and swimming lessons. Comments were “I take the kids out and do things with them, enjoyed the excursions at ‘NEWPIN’ with children, I am more focused on my child, ‘NEWPIN’ has made us connect together, previously felt being a parent was like a job, now appreciate time with children.”

Increased social networks and social connectedness

Closure summaries recorded by staff identified children attending day care, playgroup, kindergarten and school. Mothers were members of kindergarten committees, volunteering in the op shop and at school, working part time, had completed or enrolled in study and many were seeking employment. Members described different outings and connections and all except one member described friendships made at the program that they still maintained. Many had commented that previous to the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program they just stayed at home and watched the television. Member comments included” starting to mix in the community, school, and local footy club, I now go out socially with friends made at the program; my children have friends, more sociable.”

Children to have improved on some aspect of developmental domain.

A previous research project completed by Deakin University in 2007⁸ investigated developmental and play abilities of children attending Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program. Literature highlights the risk of children being exposed to neglect and poor

⁸ Unpublished, Neal,S.(2007). Children from NEWPIN: Developmental and Play Abilities

parent child attachment and the effect on child development delay and play developmental delay.; (Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002).⁹ It was identified at Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program that children were more delayed in play than developmental skill. A project recommendation was for the program to implement a literacy program to encourage play as well as social and language development. The centre has implemented an “Importance of Play program’, speech therapy sessions and music therapy with parents and children and a regular Song and Story Time each day. This provided improved opportunities for children to reach their developmental milestones.

Members report learning more about child development through attending such things as the Importance of Play sessions with staff and applying these learning’s in activities with their children. Attendance at the speech therapy sessions has also improved their knowledge about age appropriate communication and provided mothers with hints on how to promote language.

Members also report enjoying the Song and Story time sessions with children. Children were observed over the four time points to have gained confidence in language skills, participated in the actions during the song and know the words of the song to sing.

Families to have developed their own individual routines and rituals

NEWPIN puts a strong focus on developing normal family routines and rituals for families at the NEWPIN program. This is very apparent and observed in the program observations and was the most reported improvement from members. All members mentioned the development of routines at interview. They discussed how much more structured their lives were and how more settled the children were. Past members discussed how they still continue these routines and rituals at home and have developed individual routines such as organising clothing and school lunches the night before, setting times for getting up so their child is not late for kindergarten. The most common routine mentioned was around meal times and included sitting together to eat. Mothers mention how they and there children love the routines. Some mothers described the routines as ‘learning mother skills and being in control.’

Children are kept safe and contained within family environment

Members describe being able to provide a safer environment for their children. They now have an awareness of how violence affects the child and have moved out of violent relationships. Closure summaries describe mothers being drug free. Members also describe how they now choose “nicer people” to socialise with. Members are

⁹ Hildyard, KL., & Wolfe, D>A. (2002). Child Neglect: developmental issues and outcomes. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 26, 679-695

provided with education at the centre in the form of personal development programs such as :

- **Bodies are great: Keeping Kids Safe from Sexual Abuse.** The group opened discussion about member's own experience of sexual assault. Members became familiar with Barwan CASA service, the referral process and services offered. The group raised awareness of sexual assault on children and assisted parents to discuss and explore strategies to keep children safe.
- **Keeping Children Safe.** A child protection officer co-facilitated these sessions with NEWPIN staff informing the members about notifications, investigations and what child protection looks for and how they work with families. Members were informed and educated about what constitutes child abuse and neglect and its effects on children and their development. The sessions also provided a safe place for parents to reflect on how they were parented and how they are parenting their own children. The sessions raised the status of children in the centre and provided resources to support parents.
- **Safe Start:** This group was co-facilitated by staff from the City of Greater Geelong Safe Start Program. Members found this group helpful and informative. Home safety checks have since been conducted, poisons have been moved in the house to safe locations, fire alarms checked and fire evacuation plans completed for their homes. Members disclosed and discussed issues of concern around safety in their homes.
- **Certificate in First Aid:** Ten members successfully completed this certificate specialising in the 0-8 year old child. This increased member's knowledge and skill in first aid and members were reported as very enthusiastic.

During the program one child was moved out of the family home due to a family court order and another child moved in with extended family while the mother recovered from a serious car accident.

Reducing child protection notifications and re-notifications.

Staff report many members being referred to the program with multiple child protection notifications however since leaving the program these members have recorded no

further ongoing interventions by Child Protection. The Victorian State Government provides statistics about child protection notifications and re-notifications on the general population which is recorded in regions, however no individual statistics are provided to individual services about child notifications. Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program questioned if their service could be identified as the reason why there had been no repeat of notification since discharge or was it a result of interventions from other services the family may be engaged in.

6.3 Considerations of Key Findings

The evaluation of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program has identified a number of findings.

Program Logic

Development of the program logic for Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program has been based on an outcomes framework and has been one of the critical factors in achieving the desired outcomes. The program logic provides a plan to develop outcomes, objectives, strategies and activities that are linked to meeting individual complex family needs. Impact and process evaluation indicators were also developed to measure program objectives.

The program logic has supported staff to articulate the practice of the program, the purpose of interventions and their outcomes. Organisations can learn from this program how effective the development of the program logic has been in delivering positive outcomes for families and staff.

The staff at Bethany, through the program logic, questioned why they do things and challenged one another to do better using the program logic as a base. It has provided a tool for reflection on what they do and how they deliver the program and prompted improvements in the program. The desired outcomes were achieved with the program logic as a guide and parents reported improved positive family behaviours, feeling good about themselves and feeling happier, and their children being happier. Families genuinely expressed through interviews enjoyment of the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program activities.

NEWPIN Internal Evaluation Processes

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program has internal evaluation processes with members 'goal review form' and an annual quality assurance procedure which provide information of value for service provision and outcomes for families.

The 'goal review form' is filled out each six months with assistance from staff. This allows comparison of change over time, the identification of any changes made and the opportunity to mark achievements with members. The program proposes that seeing their progress from one report to another motivates members to continue.

The annual quality assurance procedure involves direct feedback from members, collation of statistics, a written report detailing the Centre's activities over the year, refinement of program needs and setting targets for the following year. This process is undertaken by the manager, executive manager and the manager of quality assurance.

These processes are an integral part of the program and have contributed to the success of the program.

Staffing

Through staff reflections and interviews, it has become apparent that the program requires highly skilled early childhood workers and family support staff with specific qualities and characteristics.

In developing the program, staff have been required to have high level communication skills with other team members, NEWPIN members and other services. Members will at times try to split staff in decisions made. Staff are required to be comfortable with having their work being on display, and that they themselves may be challenged by another staff member or NEWPIN member and that in some cases they may be told that the wrong course of action was taken. The staff have built up very respectful relationships with one another, managing conflict maturely and thus role modelling this to members that family conflict can also be managed in a mature way.

Having the program logic and manual as a guide for delivery of the program and the program philosophy of the four core values (Equity, Respect, Support, Empathy), provides continuity of care and a common vision for staff and thus members.

Supervision of staff has been carefully planned into the program. It consists of weekly case discussion, monthly clinical supervision with an external facilitator, individual supervision conducted as arranged between manager and team member and weekly peer supervision. Staff meet at the end of each day's centre session to review the day and discuss any problems or achievements that have been noted. The supervision time was seen as an integral part of the program giving staff time to reflect on practice with high need complex families. Bethany Community Support has allocated appropriate resourcing to provide adequate staff supervision and ongoing professional development for staff. This is a key consideration in delivery of a program such as this

in developing skills and knowledge of staff to meet the needs of complex, vulnerable families.

Child Focus

The centre activities, weekly group therapy, home visits, counselling, one to one parent/child/staff interactions, role modelling, therapeutic loaded conversations and personal development groups were all planned around the goals of the program and all have a child focus. This central focus of everything provided at the program is about the child, creating a common vision amongst staff and members. All members were attending the centre because they cared about their children and wanted support in parenting.

The program challenges members to change parenting styles, behaviours and practices and make the child the central person, not the adult. When staff challenge a parent about how they may be 'supervising their child, hygiene practices, the language used in front of the children or the violent relationship that they have involved their child in', change is always focused in questions to the parent of what are the affects on the child – 'how do you think he feels, what do you think he wants'. Members appear to take on the support, guidance, redirection and information if it will help their child. This method also takes away the judgement factor for the parent by staff having a strong child focus and using positive language, giving reason to the change and constantly praising when even small achievements are made.

Social Connectedness

Many of the members, past and present discussed that before this program they were isolated and lacked supports in their community for themselves and in caring for their children. The criteria of attending the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program at least twice per week and transport (Bethany bus) being available to most of them, was the stimulus to attend even though at times they found it hard to get organised and be there on time. Once at the centre members report making lasting friendships and that they now have a group of mothers and children to socialise with. Parents now take their children to child focused activities such as the library, swimming and play in the park. Most children are engaged in early childhood services such as playgroup, day care, kindergarten and school. Most mothers now have other interests outside the home such as volunteering, employment or study.

Many highlighted the social connections they made at the centre as one of the best benefits of the program not just for themselves but also the children. Members were also exposed to other local services through representatives visiting the centre, open days or program staff collaborating with other services. Rituals and routines such as

meal times and the friendly greeting on arrival exposed members to appropriate socialisation skills. The program has provided an opportunity for families to connect with one another and the local community.

Promote Opportunities for Children to Reach their Developmental Milestones.

Promotion of child development was one of the four program objectives. In all activities at the centre and home visiting staff focused on child developmental learning's for parents and demonstrated and provided information on what would be appropriate for the age and stage of their children. Previous evaluations had shown children at NEWPIN were delayed in play activities affecting their developmental skills. Staff responded by developing the 'Importance Of Play program and personal development sessions for parents, inclusion of music therapy, speech therapy and song and story time sessions in the program. The daily parent/child interaction sessions also assisted children to develop in the different developmental domains. Each parent at the six monthly review in their goal review forms were to identify a child development goal for their child.

Parents were observed to have a better understanding of child development, how to promote child development in their child and understand how important play was to their children. Staff observed at home visits different activities set up for children that focused on play and child development.

Methodology

Implementation of the validated tools to measure parent and child outcomes from the four program areas has been hindered by factors inherent to the target population. Staff members reported members having difficulty in completing and understanding the wording of tools, that the number of questions in each tool was lengthy and staff describe members as having idealised expectations of their child's behaviour and development.

NEWPIN member families are more likely to be affected by socio economic factors such as; educational level of the parents, economic status of family, age of the parent, developmental level of child, behavioural difficulties of the child, who cares for the child besides the parent, and the mental and emotional status of parent which could affect interpretation of results. Because of the discrepancies in results of these tools especially with the PBCL and the ISEL one could place doubt on their validation. The other multi evidence data produced by other measures in this evaluation has shown the program has been very effective in providing positive outcomes for this population.

The CBCL results however was able to show improved children's behaviour over time and would reflect that parents have applied the information provided through the program in parenting strategies learnt, education and support by staff.

On reflection the validating tools may not have been the most suitable for this cohort of families although the results do provide opportunities to discuss the results with families and plan strategies and interventions. Consideration should be given to investigating or developing a different set of validated tools to provide a more accurate measure when evaluating families complex, high risk factors.

6.4 Emerging Considerations for the model

Systems Approach

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program's approach to delivery and development of the program has been based on a systems approach. This has been incorporated in the program logic linking outcomes, objectives, strategies and activities and has been integral to the achievements of the program. Therapeutic and educational sessions and tools have then been planned around the program logic in developing and delivery of the activities, indicators and meeting the individual needs of the members. The internal quality assurance processes in place have provided evidence of the programs progress and contributed to the development of the program logic in phase one. Organisations would find this a successful strategy in development of new programs and ongoing review.

Child's Best Interest

Bethany Community Support's NEWPIN Early Years Program has made changes to its program focus by incorporating the significant legislative reform and redevelopment undertaken in Victoria and embodied in the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

Within this context the program has as its focus the best interests of the child. Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program's theoretical framework focuses on healthy parent-infant attachment and supports psychotherapeutic approaches to assist parents to understand behaviours and processes that impact on their parenting and their children's development. Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program practice is child centred and family focused, with all practice centred on the best interests of the child. This method of delivery was more acceptable to parents in making changes as the focus was on the benefits to the child and not a judgement of their parenting.

Flexibility

Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program has consistently demonstrated flexibility to meet the changing needs of families and legislation. As the program has developed changes have been implemented. These have included:

- recruiting staff to have a stronger focus on child development and family centred practice
- adapting program activities to have a stronger child focus and incorporate legislative changes
- responding to research outcomes and developing activities that support importance of play for children's development
- inviting allied health professionals to provide educational and practical support for parents especially around language development
- Developed networks with other local services and working in collaboration with these services for the best interests of the child.

Delivery of Outcomes

Through a systematic approach to service delivery and the child's best interest principle, members attending Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program have been enabled to make changes in their parenting, feel good about them selves, socialise and connect to their community and have a better understanding of child behaviour and development. Evaluation has shown improvements in the four program goals and attainment of evaluation aims.

Four Core Values

The four core values were an integral part of the original NEWPIN program, (Support, Equity, Empathy and Respect). Bethany NEWPIN Early Years members have defined the values as they interpret them. These values have been incorporated into the program with members and staff using these as a guide and vision to how the program is delivered and how members, staff and children will behave and relate to one another. Members are challenged if behaviour is outside these four core values. The values create a philosophy for the centre and have been seen to be replicated outside the centre.

Name of the Program

Bethany Community Support has reflected on the current NEWPIN name and whether this is appropriate given the contemporary development, direction and focus of the program. The roots of the program is based on the original U.K model, however the evidence based practice research and development has demonstrated considerable

evolution and necessary evolution to ensure the service has the best fit with current and future needs of the members. Therefore in further consideration of the program and its replication in other locations, the emphasis needs to be focussed on the current program model whilst acknowledging its origins. Continuing discussion on the most appropriate name for the program would be valuable.

Consideration needs to be given to the naming or marketing of this early intervention program at Bethany and also to have consistency of name if replication is to occur in other areas of disadvantage in Australia.

6.5 Conclusion

Families attending Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program were often referred through child protection, with many children suffering from neglect, poor attachment and parents lacking in parenting confidence and socially isolated. This evaluation has shown the program logic developed has addressed these areas and has been very successful in improving outcomes for families. Development of the program logic has proven to be a valuable part in evaluation and development of this high quality early years program that would be transferable to other settings in Australia.

The work is intensive and requires highly skilled staff to deliver the program. Staff have shown a strong commitment to families and have been very enthusiastic and positive in working with families. The role modelling of staff in working with families in all program activities has been a key asset in assisted parents to make positive change in a non-threatening, non judgemental manner.

The diversity of activities and strategies delivered in the program model is wide and many however it provides flexibility in meeting the individual needs of these complex families. If the diversity was reduced it would not create challenges, adequate education and interest for members nor meet the needs of children.

Funding and resourcing of these types of programs needs to incorporate adequate supervision for staff when working with complex families and adequate allowance for ongoing professional development. These have been shown in this program to contribute to the development of quality staff and delivery of a quality early intervention program at Bethany for at risk families.

Currently Commonwealth and State governments are significantly concerned about the rising child protection notifications and the need to intervene with early intervention programs to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program has been shown to provide interventions that have positive outcomes for children and young families. The evaluation has demonstrated that the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program objectives have:

- Improved positive parent child relationships
- Improved social connectedness for families
- Increased opportunities for children to reach their individual developmental milestones and
- Improved parenting styles and practices.

This intensive program for high risk, vulnerable families seems to have value in the Australian context and the work delivered by Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program staff in developing the program logic and program manual could be readily transferable. This program model fills a gap for vulnerable families and meets the intensity of family need. The next step is to assess if the long term outcomes of this program remain sustainable within the family's external circumstances and lead to a continued reduction in child protection referrals.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations arising from the evaluation findings are offered to inform the future work of Bethany in delivering the NEWPIN Early Years program.

- It is recommended that Bethany continues to develop the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program model to guide practice and meet the ongoing needs of members.
- It is recommended that the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program actively promotes the outcomes of this program and that this report contributes to discussion in the Early Years sector.
- It is recommended that the Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program evaluation report is used to support future funding options for replication of this service delivery model in other areas of disadvantage.
- It is recommended that future long term evaluation is conducted to assess the sustainability of changes made by past Bethany NEWPIN Early Years program members.

8. References

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9. Appendices

- 1. Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Quality Assurance Report 2007**
- 2. Bethany NEWPIN early Years Program Logic**
- 3. Bethany NEWPIN Early Years Program Manual**