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Respect & listening

How a robot called Pink helped school children bring an Aboriginal language back to life

Maitland Lutheran School, a co-educational primary and middle school in the farming district of Maitland, Yorke Peninsula, in South Australia is located on the traditional lands of the Narungga people. By learning to program a small humanoid robot named Pink students developed 21st-Century skills while also engaging with an Indigenous culture and language. The project also strengthened the connection between school, home and Country. More >

Transgender kids need family support but many parents don't know what to say

Sharnya Thomson-Yates is planning to make a short film to educate parents and the wider community about the importance of acceptance and support for trans and gender-diverse children. A 2017 survey of trans people aged 14 to 25 found that 48 per cent had attempted suicide, and were also 10 times more likely to suffer from serious depression and anxiety than other young Australians, and 80 per cent had self-harmed. More >

How should an adopted child maintain a relationship with their birth family?

Research shows that long-term foster carers find it a challenge to manage contact arrangements. When agencies take control of contact it can create a welcome buffer between themselves and birth relatives. A trauma-informed approach to contact that takes account of a child's needs for emotional and relational safety and the impact of parental complex trauma on their behaviour at contact is urgently needed. More >

Complaint handling guide: upholding the rights of children and young people

This guide provides practical advice to organisations about how to develop, implement and maintain a complaint-handling system that prioritises child safety and promotes the rights of children and young people to have a voice in decisions that affect them. More >

Love (still) makes a family: A report into discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+-parented families when accessing Australian Government services

This report looks at the experiences of LGBTIQ+-parented families when accessing services provided through the Australian Government. It finds that families still face exclusion and discrimination in the most basic day-to-day interactions with government, from forms that don't reflect the makeup of families, to schools who can exclude children because of who their parents are. More >

Providing Services and Supports for Youth who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex or Two-Spirit

This Practice Brief from the USA is for policymakers, administrators, and providers seeking to learn more about youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, or two-spirit (LGBTQI2-S) and how to develop culturally and linguistically competent programs and services to meet their needs and preferences. More >

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Health & wellbeing

'It is not a pipe dream': five things Australia could do now to end poverty
Our poverty rate has remained stubbornly high for 30 years, despite Australia being one of the wealthiest countries in the world and enjoying decades of economic growth. Yet the 10% of Australians living in income poverty remain, with up to a million of us living in persistent and entrenched poverty, unable to participate fully in life. More >

'Have you been feeling your spirit was sad?' Culture is key when assessing Indigenous Australians' mental health
Indigenous teenagers aged 15 to 19 are five times more likely than non-Indigenous teenagers to die by suicide. The importance of being able to more accurately identify those at risk can't be understated. A new culturally specific screening tool called the aPHQ-9 is an adapted version of an existing tool; nine questions routinely used by doctors in Australia and overseas to screen for depression. More >

The impact of inequalities in the early years on outcomes over the life course
This report draws together research presented at the, 'The impact of inequalities in the early years on outcomes over the life course: Using international evidence to identify creative policy solutions' symposium. It comprises findings from the US, Israel, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia, and Scottish and UK data sets, exploring key stages in a young person's life, from early adversity in early childhood through adolescence and the impact of this on adult lives. More >

Why 10 is the new 15 for today's young girls
Girls' experience of growing up in the 21st Century is a far cry from previous generations and is happening faster than many experts argue they are capable of handling, as they struggle to cope with the boom of information technology and changing social media landscape. More >

Opinion: After a six-year-old attempted suicide, I thought it wouldn't happen again. I was wrong.
This article argues for assertive outreach, intense psychosocial supports, through-care and aftercare, because through the 'people supporting people in-person' approach the suicide toll can be reduced. Instead, governments, to be seen to be doing something, fund research, which delivers more of the same 'recommendations'. More >

Out of the shadows: Building resilience in our community
This is a study of how one Anglicare community hub in Liverpool is endeavouring to address the multi-causal and multi-faceted issue of deep and entrenched disadvantage. In recognising the complexity of issues facing families who present to their services, they have responded by integrating some complementary services underpinned with an intensive case management approach. With the advantage of the continuity of one worker who is deeply respectful and understanding of their circumstances, immediate crises can be averted and, through a process of collaborative problem solving and decision-making, families can work their way towards longer term sustainability in terms of both resilience and thriving family relationships. More >

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Social media, but not video games, linked to depression in teens, according to Montreal study

Screen time, and social media in particular, is linked to an increase in depressive symptoms in teenagers, according to this study which investigated the relationship between depression and exposure to different forms of screen time in over 3,800 adolescents from 2012 until 2018. More >

A system mapping approach to understanding child and adolescent wellbeing

Key factors influencing children and young people to enable a high level of wellbeing that should be prioritised by practitioners, school leaders and policy makers include: the nature of the overall educational and school environment; the development of appropriate intrapersonal and interpersonal skills; a stable and safe family environment. More >

A health check of Australia's 11 and 12-year-olds

Australian 'tweens' have had a comprehensive health check as part of a long-running survey of children. The Child Health CheckPoint looked at a wide range of health data in 11 and 12-year-olds and found that they are broadly healthy, but there are some concerning results in the mix too. More >

What works for me: the self-care approaches of children and young people

This online consultation aimed to find out about the self-care approaches used by children and young people to address anxiety and depression. It captured the views of young people, aged 11-25, and parents and carers about their experiences of 85 self-care approaches. It sought participants' perspectives on why they choose certain self-care strategies, why these approaches are effective for them, and priorities for future research in this area. More >

Supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through a collaborative community approach

This webinar explores the practical implementation of collaboration with Aboriginal communities and how this sits alongside traditional therapeutic approaches in non-Aboriginal services to deliver positive outcomes, particularly for infant and child mental health. More >

Safe & nurtured

Aboriginal children and young people in care and juvenile detention 2017-18

Aboriginal children and young people are vastly over-represented in out-of-home care and the youth justice system. This report demonstrates that South Australia is no exception. More >

National framework for protecting Australia's children indicators

This release updates the online data visualisations for indicators under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children* and the *National Standards for Out-of-Home Care*. It includes updated child protection indicators, along with a variety of other measures that focus on whether Australia's children are safe and well. More >

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Nearly 30% of kids experience sibling bullying – as either bully or victim
Much time and effort has been invested into putting in place bullying prevention programs, especially across schools. But what happens when your bully lives with you, so you have no escape? Sibling bullying tends to fly under the radar, in large part because many bullies and victims see it as a normal part of sibling relationships. More >

'Crossover kids': Vulnerable children in the youth justice system
This report on the child protection backgrounds of children who received a sentence or diversion in the Victorian Children's Court looks at levels of involvement and care history, sentence types, and age differences. More >

The Adoption Barometer
This UK report reveals that adopted children are twice as likely to not be in employment, education or training as their peers, 16% of them have had contact with the criminal justice system and 39% have needed help from mental health services. The report also shows that while advances have been made in the recruitment and preparation of adopters, too many families are fighting a losing battle to get support to help children overcome their tough start in life. More >

NZ remand homes emphasise culture and connection
In 2017-18, half of the young people detained in the Adelaide Youth Training Centre were on remand, awaiting trial or sentencing. Though not convicted of an offence, they are removed, often far, from family, community and culture adding to their stress and social dislocation and placing them into contact with young people already experienced in serious offending. Youth justice authorities in New Zealand have trialled a different approach. More >

Australian legal definitions: When is a child in need of protection?
This updated resource sheet provides an accessible single reference guide for practitioners and researchers on legal definitions of when a child is in need of protection for each Australian jurisdiction. More >

Working Together to Care for Kids: A survey of foster and relative/kinship carers
A large number of children aged 0–17 years in Australia live in out-of-home care, but not enough is known about the circumstances, needs and experiences for those who care for them. This article discusses some of the key findings of a recent study of foster and relative/kinship carers. More >

Safety by Design
As part of the consultation process for the Safety by Design initiative, young people were asked to prepare their vision of how the online industry could help users to navigate the online world, freely and safely. Research has consistently highlighted that children's and young people's rights and needs online are not being met. More >

How do we know if children's social care services make a difference? Development of an outcomes framework
A UK study has found that children's social care services need better evidence to make well-informed decisions about service planning and delivery, particularly given the increased pressures due to a rise in demand at a time of declining resources. More >

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Putting the early back into prevention and early intervention

The case for early intervention is clear. Ten years later there has been little movement of funding from crisis-oriented investment to prevention and early intervention (P&EI). P&EI also needs to be clearly defined, with inaccurate or vague definitions of the terms producing service systems which fail to implement effective P&EI approaches. More >

Fourth action plan: National plan to reduce violence against women and their children 2010-2022

The National plan aims to connect the work being done by Australian governments, community organisations and individuals to ensure less women experience violence and more women and their children live safely. It recognises that violence against women and their children is a complex problem that requires a long-term plan for action. More >

Therapeutic residential care services in Australia: a description of current service characteristics

This snapshot of current practice of therapeutic residential care services in Australia reports on the results of an online survey of services, describing their configuration, characteristics and activities. It also summarises the views of services and discusses issues for the further development of this form of care for young people. More >

Enjoying & achieving

Children and young people in state care in South Australian Government Schools 2008-18

This report looks at how well the state education system has done for children in care including trends on rates of absence and attendance, suspension and exclusion, learning and intellectual disability, and NAPLAN results. More >

What family-friendly policies mean for children

A Unicef study argues children get a better start in life and parents are more able to find the right balance between work and private life in countries that have family-friendly policies. However, even some of the world's richest countries fail to offer comprehensive solutions for all families. More >

Making the most of technology in education

This report draws together lessons from nine international examples of inspiring practice where technology is impacting on large numbers of teachers and students and makes recommendations for how governments, philanthropic foundations, technology companies and schools can support effective use of technology. More >

Please Just Say You're Proud of Me

This consultation explored the views of young people in high school about their parents' engagement with their education and learning. Discussions highlighted the particular issues faced by high school students, who are maturing as autonomous individuals and taking on more responsibility for their own decisions and performance at school. The comments of students indicate the tensions between asserting their independence, while still deeply wanting and needing the support and guidance of their parents in their education and decisions about the future. More >

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Risk is an essential ingredient in children's play

In play children continually extend their boundaries and strengthen their abilities. This means taking risks, which they do, by assessing their own abilities and matching them to the conditions of their environment. Play without risk still has some value, but it quickly becomes rather boring. More >

Changing the trajectories of Australia's most vulnerable children

This report presents findings of an evaluation of the Early Years Education Program, a three-year intervention which aims to help improve the development of young children who have encountered extreme adversity or abuse. It found that after the first two years of enrolment in the program there was a positive impact on children's IQ, protective factors related to resilience, and social-emotional development. More >

Achieving our educational goals: a declaration for system transformation

If we continue on our current education trajectory, there is a risk that young people in Australia will not be adequately equipped with the right knowledge, skills and capabilities for the future and too many learners will miss out on the educational opportunities that they need. More >

Australia must fix school inequity to create a top education system

In most Nordic countries, the best school is the local public school. This privilege is the result of deliberate public policies that view education as a human right rather than a commodity. More >

Participation

Young people with disability help sector turnaround access and inclusion

The Together project offers online training for organisations coming into regular contact with young people with disability. It was co-created by young people with disability and covers practical tips and actions workplaces can take to offer more inclusive and accessible services. More >

Teenagency: How young people can create a better world

This research sought to understand more about the motivation and perceived ability of young people to make a difference in their communities and how creative they see themselves as being. The opinions of young people were also compared with those of older people. Key findings include; young people's participation in social action significantly outweighs adult perception. More >

FUSE 2019: National multicultural youth leadership summit report

With the themes of 'Connect, 'Ignite' and Trailblaze', FUSE 2019 provided a unique and transformative opportunity for young Australians from refugee and migrant backgrounds to participate in skills building workshops, hear from experienced advocates working in diverse sectors, explore key issues and solutions facing young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and engage with decision-makers and MPs from around Australia. More >

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The Imagination Declaration: young Indigenous Australians want to be heard – but will we listen?
A group of school students from across Australia have just shown what real leadership on Indigenous issues looks like. They called it the Imagination Declaration. It's a challenge to the Prime Minister and education ministers to involve young people and Indigenous Australians in particular in making policy about their future. More >

Prepared for adult life

Care to talk about money? The importance of financial education for children in care
This report seeks to understand the measures that are being undertaken to support children in care and care leavers in their financial education, and what more can be done to support them in understanding how to form positive financial habits that are essential to independent adult life. More >

School-to-work pathways
It is well established that a successful transition to the labour market has long-term social and economic implications for both individuals and society. However, the journey from school to the world of work is not straightforward and needs to be better understood. More >

The student journey: skilling for life
This discussion paper looks at how vocational education and training (VET) supports lifelong learners. It explore VET's role in assisting lifelong learning and seeks to understand how VET will need to transform in the future to enable it to confront the challenges of an increasingly complex and changing world. More >

Beyond 18: The Longitudinal Study on Leaving Care, Wave 3 Research Report, Outcomes for young people leaving care in Victoria
This study aims to increase understanding of young people's experiences of leaving out-of-home care. A three-wave online survey explored the young people's in-care experiences, sources of income, education, health and wellbeing, social and family relationships and access to services. More >

Starting a future that means something to you: outcomes from a longitudinal study of Education First Youth Foyers.
In Australia, the standard service offer to young people experiencing homelessness provides an immediate response to housing crisis, but struggles to deliver a pathway to sustainable independent living. Youth foyers address this gap by providing an integrated approach to tackling youth homelessness, combining affordable accommodation with education, training and employment opportunities and other support services. More >

Risks and rewards: when is vocational education a good alternative to higher education?
This report argues that a good tertiary education system steers prospective students towards courses that increase their employment opportunities and minimise their risks, and that Australia's post-school system does not always achieve this goal. More >