



**NAPCAN**  
PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

**EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT 1 SEPTEMBER 2013**

**NAPCAN National Play Your Part Awards**

**To: Anglicare NT  
For: PALS (Play and Learn Support)**

**Name of project:**

Play and Learn Support (PALS) Training and Mentoring Project

**Organisation:**

Anglicare

**State:** NT

**Location:** Ludmilla, NT

The PALS Mentoring and Training Project commenced in 2008. The PALS Resource was officially launched in June 2012.

The PALS Resource was developed as part of the Anglicare NT EA C4C (East Arnhem Communities for Children) Initiatives funded by FaHCSIA. This was in response to the need for a resource to support caregivers to provide positive and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children aged 0-3, with a specific focus on addressing developmental delays and supporting families and caregivers of children at risk of abuse and neglect. The kit facilitates rich discussions about critical periods of development and expected developmental milestones.

The unique feature of this kit is the way it engages parents and caregivers through hunting images recognised and understood by participants from their own experiences. The resource is versatile and can be used to evoke understanding and motivation for change in aspects of child rearing as diverse as:

- healthy growth and development milestones,
- appropriate play-based activities to promote development,
- an understanding of neural pathways in the brain,
- the importance of critical periods of development for healthy growth, and
- brain development and the impact of trauma on development and learning capacity.

PALS discussions are based on personal experiences of parenting and being parented, and are structured to invite parents and caregivers to explore their own experiences, and build appropriate caregiving approaches and skills from their identified strengths.

The PALS resource utilises aspects of narrative and strengths-based approaches. Embedded in the design is the recognition that the caregivers of children who are at risk are often living in circumstances where they are also vulnerable to the impacts of



health challenges, violence, family instability, social dysfunction and social displacement.

Although developed for use with families in North East Arnhemland, the value of the kit has been recognised by service providers supporting early childhood development and child protection in other parts of the NT, and other jurisdictions throughout Australia. In some of these locations the kit has been adapted, with local hunting images used to contextualise the resource.

Since the kits official launch, training and mentoring has been provided to 24 remote Aboriginal playgroups and creche workers, 6 Family Skills Facilitators, 90 mainstream service providers, 30 caregivers and families of children at risk across remote East Arnhem communities. Twenty five service providers from other parts of the NT and 50 national conference delegates have received orientation training to the kit. Ongoing support of local community members and mainstream service providers in the communities is provided by the PALS team.

**NAPCAN is awarding a 2013 National Play Your Part Award to PALS for: creating a resource that facilitates open discussions between parents and caregivers, ultimately creating a better understanding of child development and therefore better outcomes for children and young people.**

**For further details:** contact Madelene McGrath, NAPCAN on 02 9269 9200