



CHANGE Together

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Communities
& Justice

NSW PRACTICE
FRAMEWORK

Justice Doing Dignity Giving Family Seeing

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We listen and learn from the knowledge, strength and resilience of Stolen Generations Survivors, Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal Communities.

About artwork

The artwork for this program has been inspired by the organic lines and shapes found in the NSW natural landscape and by the themes of Change, Connection, Care and Collaboration. These themes are the underlying principles of the *Change Together* program.



About the artist

Charmaine Mumbulla is a Kurna and Narungga woman from the Yorke Peninsula, with family ties to the Gumbaynggirr people of the NSW Mid-North Coast. Together with her partner she runs an Aboriginal creative agency called Mumbulla Creative. Charmaine is passionate about working on projects that support social justice. She works closely with organisations to tell their stories through her art.

Introduction

About this document

This document introduces the *Change Together* practitioner learning and development program. It includes information about the program's target audience, syllabus and learning platform.

What is the *Change Together* learning program?

"The issue of shared language is important. DCJ and NGOs, all child protection services. We have distinct roles, but we need to understand and communicate with each other." – Project Stakeholder

Change Together is a learning program for non-government practitioners working with children and families who are receiving Targeted Earlier Intervention, Family Connect and Support or Family Preservation services funded by the Department of Communities and Justice. These program areas are diverse, with their own objectives, referral pathways and guidelines. Practitioners working across

these program areas are responsible for supporting children, families and communities to keep children safely home through their unique service roles.

The *Change Together* program aims to develop the knowledge, confidence and skills of practitioners working to support children to remain safe at home with their families by providing free training which complements the professional learning of individual non-government organisations. Training is available via elearning, virtually instructor led workshops, and will soon include training via a limited number of face-to-face workshops. The program offers a catalogue of modules which participants can enrol in. Some practitioners may choose to complete all modules, while others may select modules depending on the areas in which they hope to grow their practice.

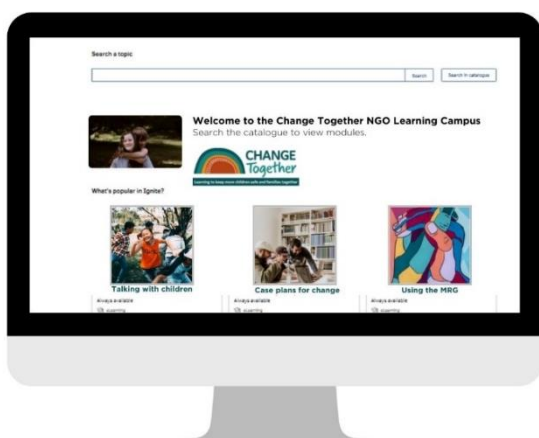
How do I access the Change Together training?

Registration for *Change Together* occurs via the Department of Communities and Justice website. Potential participants must register their interest via a form and provide key details about the program area participants work in, organisation name, line manager and role. This information helps us ensure learning profiles are created for eligible participants.

Once registered, participants will receive confirmation that their learning account has been created. Participants will have access to the *Change Together* virtual campus where they can enrol in online modules and view upcoming workshops.



Campus image 1: Depiction only. Department of Communities and Justice landing page.



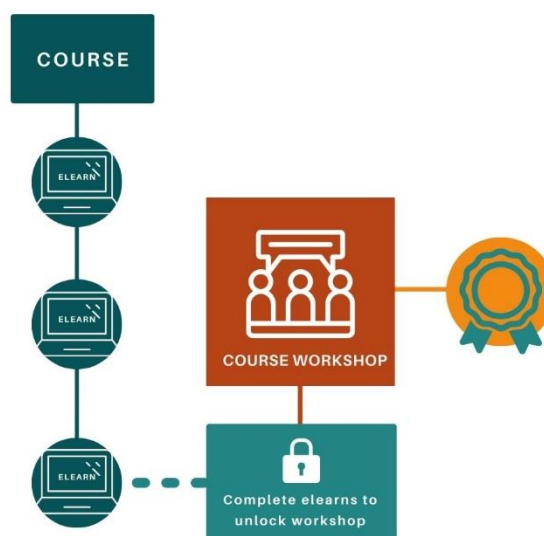
Campus image 2: Depiction only. Learning management system home page.

Do participants have to complete training in a certain order?

The *Change Together* program is made up of elearning and workshops. Modules can be accessed in any order. Once enrolled in a module, participants can complete the elearning units. Most modules have an associated workshop. Participants will need to complete the relevant module to register to participate.

What's the difference between online modules and workshops?

While participants can select from a catalogue of online modules, registration for workshops requires the completion of pre-requisites. Workshops are virtually facilitated by instructors with comprehensive practice knowledge and experience and focus on knowledge, tools and strategies to improve practice with children and families. Participants in workshops get opportunities to practise skills and share knowledge with others across the sector. Importantly, workshops build upon the knowledge developed through elearning.



Campus image 3: Learning pathway

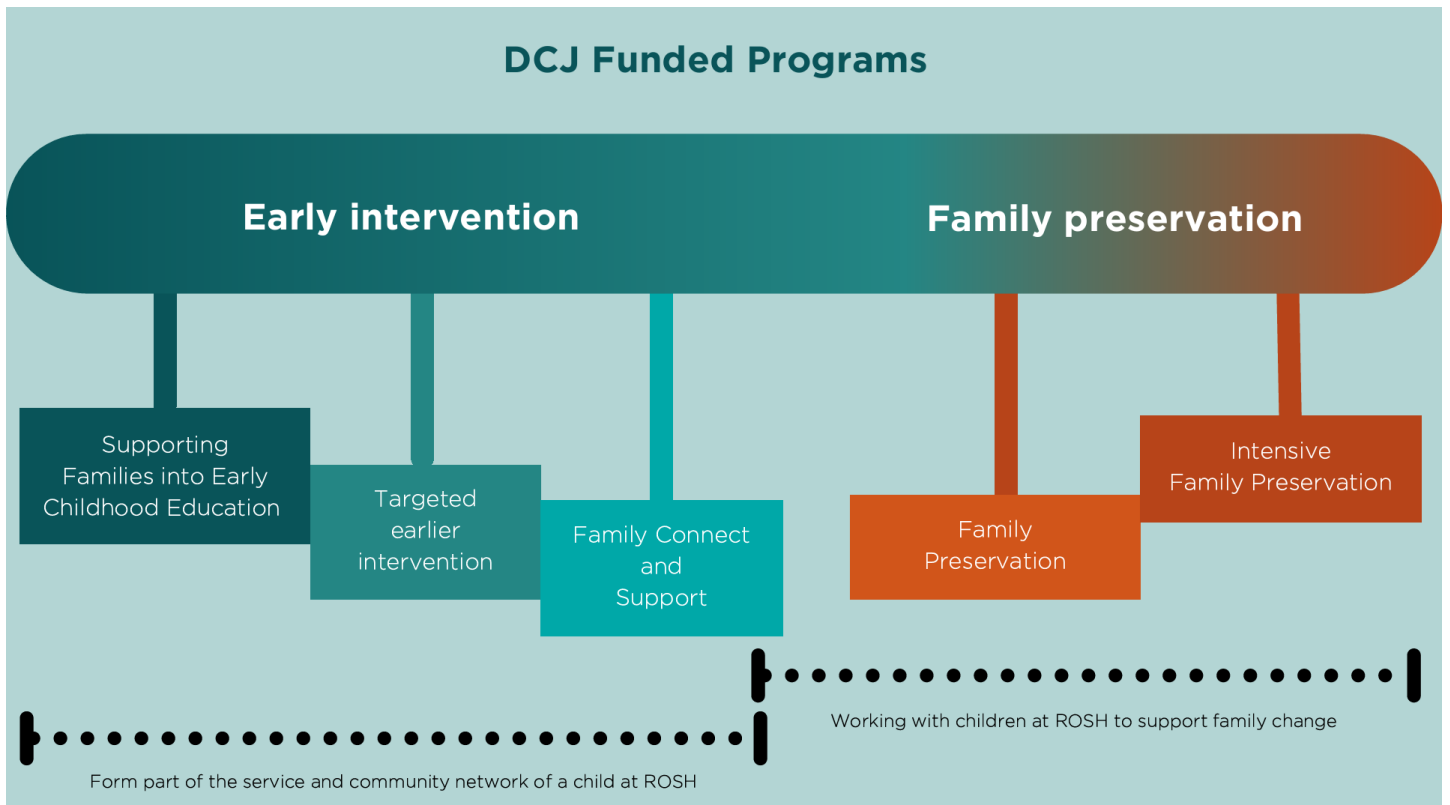
Who is eligible to participate and what kind of casework do they do?

The program is open to all practitioners working within Department funded programs in Targeted Earlier Intervention, Family Connect and Support and Family Preservation.

Why are these groups eligible?

Current program content focuses on building the foundational knowledge and skills of practitioners working closely with children and families to making sustainable changes to keep children safely home. Most of these practitioners will be working with children and families following a Structured Decision Making (SDM) Risk Assessment which found the child was at high or very high risk of being re-reported to the Department if no intervention occurred. Families would then be working with these non-government workers after a referral by the Department of Communities and Justice.¹ These non-government practitioners may take a lead in family preservation through case management or be part of a child's service and community network.

¹ Structured Decision Making is the current assessment approach used by DCJ to conduct its child protection assessments.



Other participants in the Early Intervention stream may *also* work closely with children and families where no risk of significant harm concerns have been identified. The program learning will still be useful for many of these practitioners, helping them to see when a child may be experiencing harm and understanding how to respond in child centred and family focused ways that to keep children safe.

Graphic description: Graphic representing the continuum of programs involved in keeping more children safely home. Dotted lines represent the breadth of programs working either directly with children assessed at risk of significant harm (ROSH) and those services which may form part of a child and family's network.

What learning is available?

Change Together launches includes several modules and associated workshops.

PREREQUISITE MODULE

Foundations of child protection

This module provides an introduction to the child protection system in NSW. It includes information about the Department of Communities and Justice, its interagency partners and the legislation and policies guiding child protection and family preservation work. The module also gives an overview of abuse and neglect, looking at different types of harm and their impact on children in both the short

and long term. The module draws on current research and is focused on identifying types of harm, understanding the child's experience of harm and providing support to children and their families. This module can be done in conjunction with a workshop. The online units provide a level of knowledge that will be further built on through the module's workshop. This module is a mandatory part of any participant's orientation. It must be completed to unlock all other elective modules.

Available Now

Associated workshop: Yes

ELECTIVE MODULES

Culturally responsive practice

This module supports participants to develop the knowledge and skills required to understand the needs, perspective and experience of children and families whose culture is different from the worker. Participants will explore their own cultural identity and consider how implicit bias can negatively influence work with families and outcomes for children.

The module explores colonisation in the context of the child protection system. It highlights the importance of seeing the strengths and resistance of Aboriginal children, families and communities as well as the impacts of racism, bias and institutional discrimination.

Participants will also learn about cultural diversity in NSW and how child rearing practices and family dynamics may look different across cultures. Participants will reflect on the challenges faced by families who have migrated to Australia or settled as refugees or asylum seekers and strategies to support them in building a culturally responsive approach to their work.

This module can be done in conjunction with a workshop. The online units prepare participants for the culturally responsive practice workshop.

Available Now

Associate workshop: Yes

Trauma-responsive practice

This module is a foundational exploration of trauma, its impacts and the use of trauma-responsive practice in child protection. It explores different types of trauma; however, its focus is on childhood trauma and the impacts of complex trauma on child development into adulthood. The module draws on a combination of child development and trauma research, as well as practice expertise. This

module can be done in conjunction with a workshop. The online units provide grounding for the trauma-informed practice workshop.

Available Now

Associated workshop: Yes

Understanding and responding to commonly co-existing issues in child protection

This module provides information and strategies for working with children and families experiencing mental health issues and problematic substance issues. These two issues often co-occur. For many people, substance use is one way to manage and respond to mental health injury or ill health.

This module takes a child-centred and social justice driven approach to working with children and their families. It supports participants to challenge common misconceptions and biases about mental health and substance use, to see children and parents as partners in assessment and case management and shares tools to support practice. This module can be done in conjunction with a workshop. The online units provide a level of knowledge that will be further built on through the module's workshop.

Available Now

Associated workshop: Yes

Mandatory reporting

This module supports practitioners working as part of a child's family preservation case plan to understand their role and responsibilities as mandatory reporters and responders when are concerned that a child is experiencing abuse or neglect. It is specifically designed to help practitioners who are working with children and families where the Department of Communities and Justice have previously assessed child protection worries. Participants will learn about identifying, consulting and responding to concerns, including the use of the Mandatory Reporter Guide and, if required, how to report to the Child Protection Helpline. The module will cover:

- The roles and responsibilities of mandatory reporters in early intervention and family preservation.
- Using the Mandatory Reporter Guide to accurately identify the level of intervention that is required to support the child and family.
- How to respond, alongside reporting where necessary, to buffer risk of harm and support children to remain safe.

- The role of the Child Protection Helpline and the information gathering skills that support making a report that allows for accurate assessment.

Available Now

Associated workshop: Yes

Working with children and young people

This module takes a rights-based approach to work with children and young people. It explores how to uphold a child or young person's voice and perspective in casework. Participants will learn about partnering with children and young people to hear how they are experiencing care, and how they can be active participants in identifying what they and their family need, as well as their strengths. The module also covers the principles of safety centred practice, an approach to assessing a child or young person's needs and experiences of care and harm.

Available Now

Associated workshop: Yes

Talking with families

This module focuses on building purposeful partnerships with a child's family with the goal to keep children safely at home. Participants will learn about Dignity Driven Practice, an approach developed by the Department of Communities and Justice to identify, understand and better respond to children and parents through respectful relationships that uphold resistance. Participants will learn about planning conversations with parents about child protection concerns and how to approach conversations based on the dynamics and context of a child and family's experiences.

Available Now

Associated workshop: Yes

Working with families for change

This module focuses on the critical work of addressing identified risk of significant harm and care and protection issues and planning to make purposeful and sustainable changes to keep children safely home. Participants will learn about the change process, develop foundational knowledge in motivational interviewing and practise working with worry statements, family strengths and needs, and protective factors to build SMART goals. Participants will understand the family action planning for change process, and their role in leading or supporting preservation casework.

Available Now

Associated workshop: Yes

What brings this learning together?

The learning for this program has been identified through consultation with providers and internal Department stakeholders, the objectives of funded programs, and organisational priorities, including Premier's Priorities and the NSW Practice Framework. This consultation and frameworks also inform the program's learning goals.

The program goals

- To support practitioners to develop the foundational knowledge and skills needed to partner with families to create meaningful and sustainable **change** in the lives of their children.
- To **connect** practitioners from across agencies via a variety of relevant and accessible training sessions.
- To develop **collaboration** through a shared language and understanding of practice underpinned by the Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection Act) 1998, [NSW Interagency Guidelines](#), NSW Practice Framework, [Aboriginal Case Management Policy](#) and [Permanency Case Management Policy](#).
- To support more children to remain safely home with their families, experiencing **love and care**, through practical and rights-based practice partnerships between children, family and practitioners.

Where can I learn more?

Contact the Department Practice Learning Unit via ChangeTogether@facs.nsw.gov.au

