

1 September 2016

Every child deserves a childhood

Child wellbeing and protection is a high priority for South Western Sydney Local Health District and forms a crucial part of what our staff do every day.

SWSLHD Director of Child Protection Lisa McCue said Child Protection Week (4-10 September) is a timely reminder to keep children and young people safe while contributing to their overall wellbeing.

“All children have a right to protection against abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence,” Ms McCue said.

“Parenting is one of the most important roles you will play in a child’s life. What parents do and say can make a difference to their overall wellbeing,” she said.

Children can experience all kinds of difficulties as they grow and develop. Sometimes, families may need extra help and support to deal with the kinds of things that they are experiencing. Ms McCue said hospital social workers, child and family health nurses and speech pathologists in community centres are always willing to assist parents and carers obtain support, advice or help.

“If you’re a friend, neighbour or family member who is visiting a patient in one of our hospitals or services then you can do your part by asking our staff for advice about a parent or carer who may be struggling to care for their child. With the right support from friends, family and services, most families can go on to properly care for their child themselves,” she said.

Ms McCue said that protecting children is everyone’s business and takes a community approach to ensuring young people grow up in safe communities.

“Child abuse and neglect which is not addressed can have long lasting impacts on a child’s physical, emotional and social development. You can help play your part during Child Protection Week and beyond by seeking help to benefit children and families to work towards a common goal of giving every child a childhood,” she said.

Top tips for caring about children and young people:

- Encourage discussions where everybody’s views, including children are invited and respected, however different they may be.
- Make play a priority with young children in your family and take time to play a game in the back yard but don’t compete with them. Spending quality time with your child on a regular basis can make all the difference.
- Feeding, talking to, watching, singing to, cuddling, and bathing your new baby are the start of play and should be explored as new parents. The LOVE Talk SING Read PLAY phone application alongside the Deadly Tots app have been developed to help your child

learn and develop while keeping a digital photo album of their progress.

- Sexual abuse is a crime. If you suspect someone is abusing your child or others, you must tell the appropriate authorities to put a stop to abuse. Listen to what your child says and believe them. It is important that you reassure your child it is not their fault and contact the Family and Community Services Child protection Helpline on 132 111 or the Police on 000.
- Verbal, emotional, sexual abuse and the control of money as well as isolation from family and friends are all counted as forms of domestic violence. This can have long lasting impacts on families as well as affect to a child's development.

For more information visit <http://napcan.org.au/resource-hub/napcan-brochures/>

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

WHAT: Members of the Fisher's Ghost Youth Orchestra will perform in the foyer of Campbelltown Hospital's main entrance in support of National Child Protection Week. (pictures can be sent upon request).

WHEN: Saturday 10, August at 11am.