

|  |
| --- |
| Good Practice Bulletin |
| Spotlight on parents with disability  Office of Professional Practice, Issue 15, November 2018 |

# Chief Practitioner’s welcome

# Tracy Beaton

**Tracy Beaton**

There are almost always multiple factors to take into account when assessing parents skills in caring for their child. A physical or intellectual disability adds to complexity however as practitioners’ we must guard against assumptions about parenting capacity based on physical or intellectual disability.

As you would with any parent, get to know the strengths this person brings to the parenting role and identify any areas where they may not be able to meet one or more of their children’s needs and in fact may be placing them at risk of harm. Understand the impact physical and/or intellectual disability may have on parenting capacity. If barriers are identified, consider how they can be overcome. Be creative and think about what has and has not worked in the past.

Your risk assessment can be both strengths based and forensically astute. Research shows that with the right support, parents with intellectual disability may be able to successfully parent their children. Identify and advocate for the supports needed to give children and their parents the best chance of remaining safely together.

Disability is just one of a range of intersecting variables which contribute to a person’s lived experience and which may impact on parenting capacity. In this bulletin we apply an intersectional lens as we consider parents with disability.

# Case study

The case study this month is presented as a [video](https://vimeo.com/287573508) <https://vimeo.com/287573508>.

Baptcare practitioners speak about supporting Mary, a mother who has an intellectual disability, as she cares for her daughter Yasmin.

## Discussion prompts

* What are some of the intersecting variables, apart from Mary’s learning disability that practitioners considered in their work with Mary and Yasmin?
* How did the practitioners build on Mary’s strengths?
* Are you working with any parents with disability? Have you considered the impact unconscious bias may have on your expectations and decision making? What is the impact of disability on parenting capacity? In the case of infants or young children a [PASDS](file://C:\Users\bepa0609\AppData\Local\Temp\notesCB626E\Parenting%20assessment%20and%20skill%20development%20services%20(PASDS)%20are%20specialist%20and%20intensive%20support%20services%20provided%20in%20every%20division%20across%20the%20state%20by%20local%20community%20service%20organisations%20or%20Victorian%20early%20parenting%20centres,%20to%20parents%20and%20families%20who%20are%20caring%20for%20infant%20clients%20of%20child%20protection.) assessment will provide valuable insight. What intersecting variables can you identify? Have you used any creative approaches to overcome barriers?
* How up to date are you on the NDIS and the support it may provide to parents? Consider reviewing the online modules (see practice tools on page 2)

# Disability and culturally and linguistically diverse families

People with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may find themselves exposed to overlapping forms of discrimination.

Barriers to services can be amplified and there may be heightened risk of social isolation and economic disadvantage. People from culturally diverse backgrounds might not be fully informed about the services available to them. Parents may avoid openly discussing their disability and support needs due to shame or fear.

The resource [Understanding disability](http://healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcht.nsf/PresentDetail?Open&s=Understanding_disability_-_multimedia_files) <http://healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcht.nsf/PresentDetail?Open&s=Understanding\_disability\_-\_multimedia\_files> has been translated into a number of community languages and provides information about how disability is viewed in Australia and where to get help. The following excerpt sets the scene for how people with disabilities should be expected to be treated:

*In Australia, people with disabilities have the same rights and are allowed to do the same things other people in the community can do. For example, they have the right to be treated fairly, to learn and work, to choose where they live, and how they live their lives.*

Women with individual needs

The Women with individual needs clinic is an antenatal care clinic at the Royal Women’s Hospital for women who are pregnant and have a disability.

The clinic works with pregnant women who have acquired brain injuries, intellectual or learning disabilities, physical disabilities or sensory impairments.

The Women with Individual Needs Clinic has a dedicated Midwife and Social Worker. The Midwife provides continuity of antenatal and postnatal care, pregnancy related information and postnatal outreach for up to six weeks after the baby’s birth.

The Social Worker assesses a woman’s psychosocial needs, provides information about service options, advocacy, practical assistance, emotional and social support, referral to community services and works with her and the midwife to develop a postnatal care plan. For more information, see [Women with Individual needs](https://www.thewomens.org.au/health-professionals/maternity/women-with-individual-needs) <https://www.thewomens.org.au/health-professionals/maternity/women-with-individual-needs> on the Royal Women’s Hospital website.

# Relevant resources and practice tools

This [assessment tool](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/tools-and-checklists/assessment-tools/parental-intellectual-disability) <http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/tools-and-checklists/assessment-tools/parental-intellectual-disability> is available on the child protection manual with working with parents with intellectual disability.

Introduction to NDIS – build your knowledge of NDIS by accessing these [online modules](https://imclearningcloud.com/pages/wbt-scorm-player.jsf?wbtId=1227780&parentCourseId=0&mediaId=1227780&scoId=1227783&courseId=1011036&plainSco=false&isLibraryItem=false&openMode=same-page&isOpenedFromSyllabus=true) <https://imclearningcloud.com/pages/wbt-scorm-player.jsf?wbtId=1227780&parentCourseId=0&mediaId=1227780&scoId=1227783&courseId=1011036&plainSco=false&isLibraryItem=false&openMode=same-page&isOpenedFromSyllabus=true > (you will need to log onto the eLearning portal)

Child Protection Manual: a new NDIS and children with a disability and/or complex medical needs Procedure and update to the Disability and complex medical needs advice coming up in December 2018

[Raising Children Network](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/) <http://www.raisingchildren.net.au> has a range of [Parenting in pictures](https://raisingchildren.net.au/search?query=parenting%20in%20pictures) <https://raisingchildren.net.au/search?query=parenting%20in%20pictures> resources – have a look to see if any would be useful for parents you are working with.

[Parenting assessment and skill development services](file://C:\Users\bepa0609\AppData\Local\Temp\notesCB626E\Parenting%20assessment%20and%20skill%20development%20services%20(PASDS)%20are%20specialist%20and%20intensive%20support%20services%20provided%20in%20every%20division%20across%20the%20state%20by%20local%20community%20service%20organisations%20or%20Victorian%20early%20parenting%20centres,%20to%20parents%20and%20families%20who%20are%20caring%20for%20infant%20clients%20of%20child%20protection.) (PASDS) are specialist and intensive support services provided in every division across the state by local community service organisations or Victorian early parenting centres, to parents and families who are caring for infant clients of child protection.

On behalf of the Office of Professional Practice, we hope you have found this issue of the Good Practice Bulletin useful. If you have any feedback or ideas about what you would find useful to include, please email [Office of Professional Practice](mailto:officeofprofessionalpractice@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <officeofprofessionalpractice@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 03 9096 9999, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email Office of Professional Practice](mailto:officeofprofessionalpractice@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <officeofprofessionalpractice@dhhs.vic.gov.au>

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne. © State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services November 2018.

Available at the [Good Practice Bulletin page](http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/good-practice-bulletin) of the DHHS Providers website <http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/good-practice-bulletin>