

# Tasmanian Library Advisory Board

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The Secretary  
Legislative Council Select Committee – Tasmanian Child and Family Centres  
Legislative Council  
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Dear Committee Members

I submit this advice on behalf of the Tasmanian Libraries Advisory Board (TLAB), to provide information for the consideration of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Tasmanian Child and Family Centres (CFCs). I provide this information from the perspective of TLAB, which advises the Minister for Education and Training on matters relating to LINC Tasmania.

LINC Tasmania has a particular interest in CFCs, as two CFCs are integrated into the community service hubs managed by LINC Tasmania (George Town and the West Coast). The CFC in Bridgewater is also physically co-located with a LINC facility, but is managed separately. LINC Tasmania also works closely with most CFCs across the state to expand the reach of its early and family literacy programs, and to improve access to the broader range of LINC services, including adult literacy.

Relationships between LINC and CFCs vary considerably from location to location, according to community context and client needs in each area. Where LINC and CFCs are not co-located, relationships have been stronger when CFC Leaders have been particularly open to the possibilities of collaboration. LINC Tasmania has observed that, as with many community engagement initiatives, the success of each individual CFC has been significantly influenced by the capacity, capabilities and enthusiasm of centre leaders and staff.

The following addresses Terms of Reference (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5).

**1. The challenges to, and benefits of, the provision of an integrated, collaborative health and wellbeing and early education and care service delivery model.**

LINC Tasmania has identified that the integrated service delivery model has made CFCs an important focal point for parents and children from birth to five years. CFCs generally also have strong relationships with other early years stakeholders, including schools (Launching into Learning – LiL, and Learning in Families Together - LIFT), specialised support services (such as St Giles and the Early Childhood Intervention Service) and child care providers.



### ***Combining complementary expertise***

The hub model allows LINC and CFC staff to work closely together, and with other stakeholders, to share expertise and develop and implement programs and initiatives that contribute to improved early years' literacy, family literacy and adult literacy outcomes.

The following examples from the George Town Community Hub demonstrate this:

- LINC Tasmania is able to offer expertise in age-appropriate reading material to build on the strong oral language focus of the CFC to improve the quality of experience for parents and their children accessing programs such as Baby Music (birth to two years), Play and Learn (two to five years), and Chatterbox PaAC (Parents as Active Companions). These programs are designed and delivered by experienced CFC early years educators and LINC Tasmania staff.
- A project specifically targeting family literacy (Chat Pack), is being jointly developed by LINC Tasmania and CFC staff. This will focus on "conversation starters" to promote ways parents and children from birth to five years can share stories. This concept will be transferable to the LIFT context.
- The LINC Literacy Coordinator and CFC staff work collaboratively to design and deliver community learning and literacy programs to meet local community needs.

### ***Reaching more families in need***

The community hub model brings families who need support into the space for many different reasons. LINC Tasmania and CFC staff can work together to identify and support community members who may benefit from the programs offered by the hub. Some further examples from George Town follow:

- LINC Tasmania staff build relationships and promote services across the whole hub; for example, a "library in the CFC" initiative will soon see a pop-up library in the CFC at different times during the week. This will reach clients who may not initially be comfortable in the LINC space. Relationships will be built so that CFC clients are more confident in transitioning to the library space.
- The strong outreach focus of CFC staff (and LiL staff from local schools) raises awareness of, and increases community engagement in, a range of services, including literacy-related programs and support.
- The CHAPS nurse introduces new parents to key hub staff and the range of activities and support services available. She also supports the broader early literacy focus by participating in the Baby Group, and inviting new mums to the Baby Music program.

2. **The role of Child and Family Centres in providing early learning to children and**
3. **The role of Child and Family Centres in providing education and support to families and carers in their parenting role and participation in early learning programs.**

Supporting and developing family and adult literacy and encouraging and supporting people to read and access information through our collections are core LINC Tasmania business. LINC Tasmania's engagement with CFCs has a particular focus on supporting early, family and adult literacy. This is the case in both the hub model and where LINC and CFCs are not co-located.

TLAB believes that the increased collaboration between LINC Tasmania and CFCs is delivering benefits for families, particularly in respect to early, family and adult literacy and learning. We consider that the capacity of CFCs to provide early literacy opportunities to children and guidance to their parents in supporting early language development is significantly enhanced by collaboration with LINC Tasmania.

LINC Tasmania's objective in engaging with CFCs outside hubs has been to provide CFC families with the opportunity to discover LINC Tasmania services, in particularly children's programs such as *Rock and Rhyme* and *Storytime*, adult literacy and learning services and free borrowing of books and other resources. Efforts have focused on families that are harder to reach, as they may be disengaged from, and wary of, formal institutions, including schools. These families often have the greatest need for the literacy, learning and the other wide range of services LINC Tasmania offers, including digital literacy support.

Engagement has ranged from the delivery of *Bookstart for Babies* (a free age-appropriate book accompanied by advice on reading to children and outreach by adult literacy staff – delivered through all 12 CFCs), to regular outreach with *Rock and Rhyme* and *Storytime* delivered by LINC Tasmania staff and volunteers in CFCs, and organised visits to LINC for CFC clients.

LINC Tasmania has particularly focused on engaging parents in need with the LINC adult literacy service. This recognises the significant impact parental literacy levels can have on children's educational outcomes, and the key role of parents as their children's first and most important educators in the early years.

We are aware of small but important numbers of CFC clients who have become LINC Tasmania members, regular borrowers and/or LINC adult literacy clients as a result of this interaction, thereby increasing their skills, confidence and literacy practice.

The benefits of collaboration are most evident where the LINC and the CFC are co-located and managed within the integrated services environment of a hub. In the hub model in particular, some programs offered through the CFC have provided a valuable "soft entry" to literacy support, engaging adults in learning and literacy where more traditional approaches have been ineffective. This has led to referral to one-on-one adult literacy support through LINC Tasmania.

**4. The outcomes and broader impacts of Child and Family Centres to the communities in which they are located.**

It is not possible to generalise about the broader impact of CFCs on communities or locations, as experiences have been different in different communities. TLAB is aware, however, of active involvement by CFCs in broader community learning initiatives such as the 26TEN community in St Helens, aimed at raising adult literacy and numeracy levels in line with *26TEN Tasmania: Tasmania's strategy for adult literacy and numeracy*.

In St Helens, CFC support of the 26TEN Community has helped meaningful connections to be made with young mothers and all families in a friendly and familiar environment. These families otherwise would not have connected with the 26TEN Community and adult literacy support.

The CFC shares its facilities generously with the 26TEN Community team and with the LINC Literacy Coordinator to support any group training, meetings, and room for one-on-one literacy support. This has meant vocational training has been delivered at times that suit adult learners, particularly young mothers who can't train in the evening.

There is strong collaboration between the LINC Literacy Coordinator and the CFC, with warm referrals happening in both directions: adults needing literacy support are introduced by CFC staff to LINC, and families who come to LINC first, and would benefit from CFC activities, are introduced in a similar way. LINC and the CFC work together on activities such as Children's Book Week, Baby Bookstart and Harmony Day.

The CFC in St Helens is a member of the THRIVE Training Group. Members work together to map current training, avoid duplication and plan for future training. These initiatives in St Helens have led to a greater sense of community and a stronger appreciation of the value of learning, with many community members finding opportunities to improve their skills and qualifications and some gaining employment as a result.

**5. The level of government funding provided to Child and Family Centres and whether there is a need for more Child and Family Centres in particular communities or locations.**

TLAB supports the LINC Tasmania vision of the establishment of further hubs in select communities, and the inclusion of CFCs in these. TLAB would welcome the provision of funding to establish a hub incorporating a CFC in Sorell. This would have the advantage of offering a welcoming and safe environment in which parents could be referred across the services of the two organisations, according to their individual needs. In this environment, they could be offered appropriate literacy and learning support for the benefit of not only them, but also their families.

**6. Any other matters incidental thereto.**

N/A

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the above input into the review by the Legislative Council Select Committee on Tasmanian CFCs. Should you require any further information, please contact the Director LINC Tasmania, Ms Elizabeth Jack by phone on 6165 5556 or by email at [liz.jack@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:liz.jack@education.tas.gov.au)

Yours sincerely

**Mary Bent**

Chair