

MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate action needed; the Australian Childhood Foundation suggests further recommendations into child abuse

The Australian Childhood Foundation (the Foundation) applauds the Australian Human Rights Commission's Children's Rights report released yesterday and supports the recommendations. The report calls for greater research into the impacts on children of family violence and early education but the Foundation states that there is lack of practical recommendations for how to better protect children.

The Foundation's CEO, Dr Joe Tucci has been working with children affected by trauma and abuse for over 25 years and says urgent action is needed now for the thousands of children affected by family violence.

"Children do not escape family violence unaffected, they are traumatised by the experience and it destabilises the foundations of their development. In the face of family violence, children need to experience safety," said Dr Tucci.

"This generation of children cannot wait for early intervention programs to help them deal with the violence that is occurring in their homes every night. Immediate action has to be taken for the thousands of children being hurt today."

The Foundation suggests the following recommendations:

1. All State and Territory Governments should introduce harsher sentences for perpetrators of family violence when children are involved in it.
2. A nationally consistent framework for all front line professionals (police, social workers, teachers) should be implemented that enables more effective assessments of short and long term threats of danger to children in family violence scenarios.
3. There should be greater training offered to all professionals about the impact of family violence on children and strategies for ensuring their protection in their own right, when it is required.
4. The Commonwealth Government should fund a national network of child trauma recovery centres that will support children over the long term to be free of the psychological and emotional impacts of family violence. It should not be dependent on where children live as to whether they receive the right kind of therapeutic support.
5. As a community, we need to recognise that children also face other types of abuse in their homes in addition to family violence. Children are still being sexually abused at home, they are still experiencing neglect, emotional abuse and physical abuse at the hands of their parents and other carers.

Dr Tucci is available for further comment. For more information on the Foundation visit www.childhood.org.au.

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