


# Keeping Contact: Collaborative Research in the Real World

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# Building collaborative research/practice relationships

- Multiple partners increase the reach of the research
- Shine a spotlight on a particular area of practice
- Allow for the larger numbers required for quantitative research
- Use a participatory action research methodology

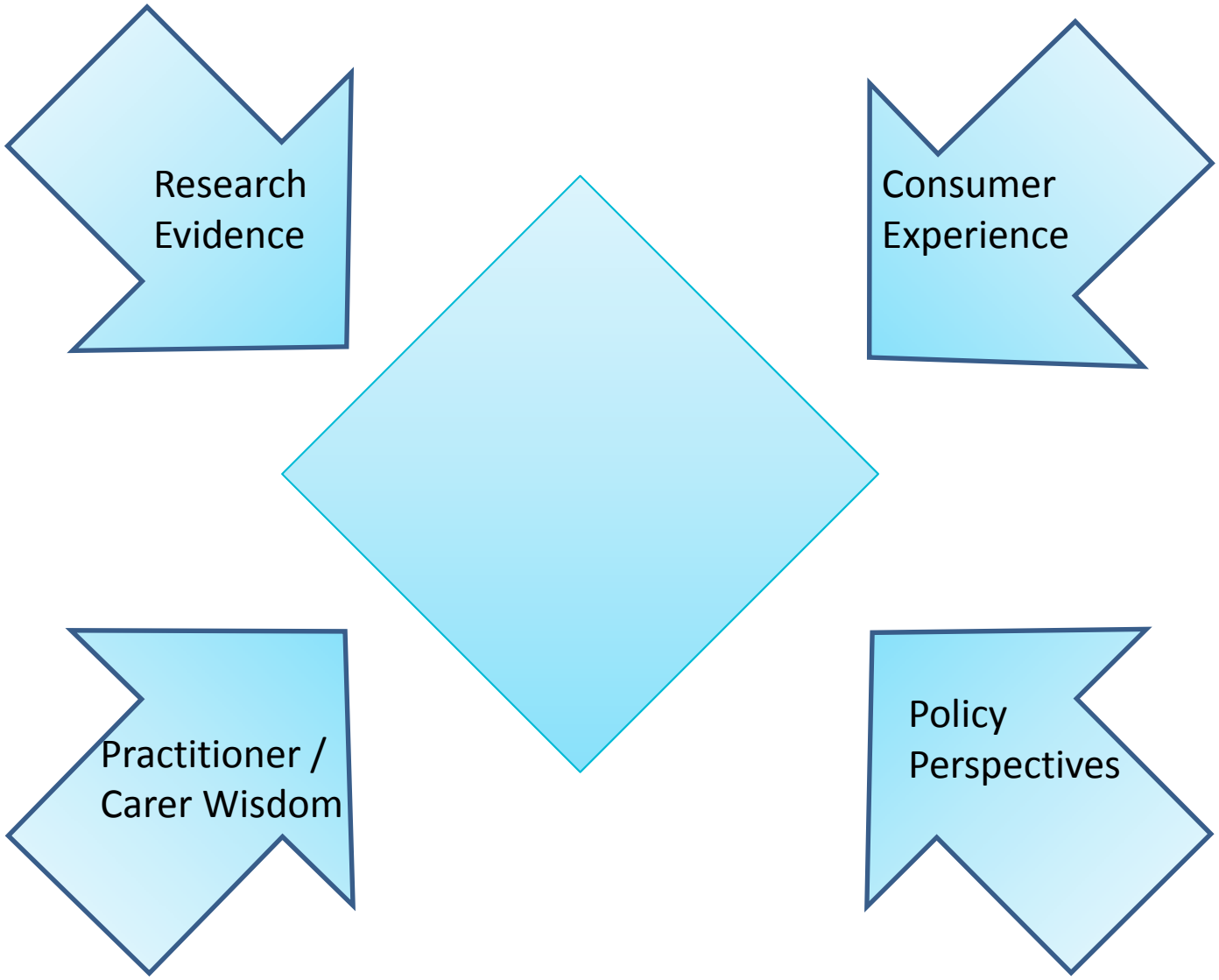
# kContact Research Partners

| VICTORIA | ACT |
| --- | --- |
| • University of Melbourne<br>• Baptcare<br>• Berry Street<br>• CAFS Ballarat<br>• Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare<br>• MacKillop Family Services<br>• Ozchild<br>• Salvation Army Westcare<br>• Wesley Mission Victoria | • Institute of Child Protection Studies (ACU)<br>• Barnardos ACT<br>• Marymead Child and Family Centre<br>• ACT Community Services Directorate |

# kContact: Why we are doing the study

- Lack of research assessing the outcomes and impacts of different models of contact in child protection
- The research evidence is insufficiently strong or developed to allow confident prescriptions about contact (Quinton et al., 1997; Triseliotis, 2010; Taplin & Mattick, 2014)
- Ours is the first study of its kind.
- Contact is an area which is difficult and often causes distress for all parties – this does not help children maintain connections with their families.
- Yet appears to be an add-on to the main work of looking after children in care – this project is an opportunity for the sector to pay attention to how contact visits are conducted.

# Multiple Sources of Knowledge



# A CSO Perspective

- Why does CAFS support this research?
- CAFS' history as a provider of OOHC





# A CSO Perspective





- Why good contact is important
- Impact of poor contact on children
- Issues with contact

# A CSO Perspective

- Importance of comprehensive evidence
- Worker experience and insight
- Importance and challenges of feedback from parents
- How can we make policy & funding change happen

# Margaret’s Slides

# Stage 1: Setting the scene

- Literature & policy review
- Consultations
- Workshop for partners and others
- Expert panel
- Finalise details for stage 2

# Stage 2: Trial of a practice enhancement for contact (2015-2016)

- Programs are randomly selected to be control or intervention sites
- Training and support to implement the practice enhancement
- Interview 60-80 children (> 7 yrs), and their carers, workers and parents at start and 9 month follow-up

# Stage 3: Guidelines for Contact

- Guidelines for contact practice and arrangements that support the child's physical and emotional safety, and build or maintain relationships between children and parents
- Based on findings from stages 1 and 2

# Acknowledgements


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- Baptcare, Berry St, CAFS Ballarat, MacKillop, Ozchild, Wesley, Westcare, and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
- ACT Community Services Directorate, Barnardos Australia and the Marymead Child and Family Centre.

# kContact: sample

| Period | Intervention sites (enhanced model) (n = 60) | | Comparison sites (usual model) (n = 60) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2014 | Development of enhanced model and guidelines | | | |
| | Vic | ACT | Vic | ACT |
| Feb – Oct 2015: Initial interviews | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Nov 2015 – July 2016: Follow-up interviews | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Aug – Dec 2016 | Analysis of results and revision of model and guidelines | | | |

Interviewees: 120 carers, 120 parents, 120 workers & 60 children > 8 yrs