

Parenting and Family Support Centre

NEWSLETTER • DECEMBER 2024

Our work focuses on the development and evaluation of evidence-based parenting and family interventions.

Final seminar and retirement celebration

This month, we celebrated the remarkable career of **Professor Matt Sanders**, who has retired after an impressive 46 years as a clinical academic at UQ.

As the founding Director of the Parenting and Family Support Centre and the visionary behind the world-renowned Triple P – Positive Parenting Program, Professor Sanders has supported families

locally and around the globe. Thank you for your unwavering dedication and commitment to improving the lives of parents and children everywhere.

The School of Psychology held a special final seminar and retirement celebration at the Women's College that highlighted Professor Sanders' lifelong career and personal achievements.

Alina promoted to Professor

We are happy to announce that **Associate Professor Alina Morawska** received a promotion to Professor, which will come into effect on the 1st of January 2025. It is a wonderful and very well-deserved recognition of Alina's research and teaching excellence, and of her leadership both in the Centre and in her national roles. Alina really is a remarkable scholar and person and is an inspiration to colleagues and students



Matt with some of his current and former PhD students. Dr Karyn Healy, Tianyi Ma, A/Prof James Kirby, Dr Cassandra Tellegen, A/Prof Karen Turner, Prof Matthew Sanders, A/Prof Alina Morawska, A/Prof Divina Haslam, Dr Sabine Baker, Dr April Hoang, Dr Grace Kirby, Dr Jenna McWilliam and Dr Michael Herd.



Professor Deborah Terry,
Professor Matthew Sanders and
Associate Professor Alina Morawska



Associate Professor Alina Morawska

Project spotlight

The Thriving Kids and Parents Schools Project

In 2022, the Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment, through the Emerging Priorities Program, funded us to find out whether the Thriving Kids and Parents Seminar Series (The Power of Positive Parenting; Helping Children Learn to Manage Anxiety; Helping Children Deal With Bullying) could address the increase in child social, emotional and behavioural problems that occurred in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Participation of families was exclusively through their child's school, with 380 schools from across Victoria, Queensland and South Australia registered to participate in the TKPSP.

Results show that children's emotional (e.g., anxiety and depression), and behavioural problems and peer-relationship difficulties all decreased significantly in families when at least one parent attended a seminar.

Parents' skills and confidence improved following participation in a seminar, resulting in increases in parents' consistency and encouragement, and improvements in the relationship between parents and their children, and in their own mental health.

Parents reported being more knowledgeable, using more positive strategies and engaging in less yelling and arguing.

You can read more about the TKPSP [here](#).



Perinatal Mental Health Week

During Perinatal Mental Health Week (17-23 November), parenting experts from the PFSC joined voices across Australia to highlight the role of community for giving babies the best start in life and strengthening the mental health and wellbeing of new parents and carers.

Associate Professor Alina Morawska said becoming a parent is a big identity change and new parents can feel a mix of emotions, from joy and excitement to uncertainty and sometimes sadness or worry. Providing a community of support is critical to navigating this new journey.

"Triple P Online for Baby, the free, evidence-based online program for new and expecting parents, is a crucial part of the wrap-around support making a difference to families nationwide."

"Thanks to Australian Government funding, more than 60,000 new families in Australia have accessed the online program, reflecting the high demand for this kind of support," said Dr Morawska. "It helps parents and carers not only normalise seeking help but also offers practical strategies to boost their confidence and enjoyment during the early stages of parenting."

ANZSPDQ Clinic Day 2024

Associate Professor Alina Morawska presented a paper entitled, "The role of parents in promoting their child's oral health habits" at the Australia & New Zealand Society of Paediatric Dentistry (ANZSPD).

Associate Professor Alina Morawska



Australasian Human Development (AHDA) Conference 2024

The AHDA conference, held in Brisbane, was well supported by PFSC researchers and associates with Dr Carys Chainey, Dr Stevie Hepburn, Associate Professor Alina Morawska, Hui Min Lee, Stuart Gates, Ari Pratiwi, Callyn Farrell, Dr Amy Mitchell, Grace Kirby, Blake Pyne, and Olifa Asmara all presenting. Stuart Gates and Callyn Farrell both received student presentation awards.

AACBT Conference 2024

The Australian Association for Cognitive and Behaviour Therapy (AACBT) national conference held in Brisbane was well attended by researchers from the PFSC.

Professor Matt Sanders, chaired a symposium titled, "The role of the family in improving outcomes for victims of school bullying." Dr Karyn Healy presented, "The protective role of supportive relationships in mitigating bullying victimisation and psychological distress in adolescents" and "Pilot randomised controlled trial of a family intervention for adolescents experiencing peer problems and emotional distress." Alex Johnstone presented, "Interventions for Autistic Children Who Experience Bullying Victimisation" and Dr Julie Hodges spoke on, "Can a brief parenting seminar provide parents with skills to support their children's peer relationships and prevent bullying?"

Professor Matt Sanders, chaired the symposium titled, "A public health approach to evidence-based parenting support" with speakers, Dr Julie Hodges, Tianyi Ma and Associate Professor Alina Morawska.

Dr April Hoang chaired the symposium titled, "Parenting and risk and protective factors of child development" supported by speakers Dr Carolina Gonzalez and Dr Carys Chainey.

Associate Professor Karen Turner chaired the symposium titled, "Finding meaning through cultural tailoring of parenting support" with speakers Arvind Ponnappalli, Ari Pratiwi and Dr Amina Khalid.

Short presentations were delivered by Olifa Osmara Ayu Paramewari, and Dr Cassandra Tellegen



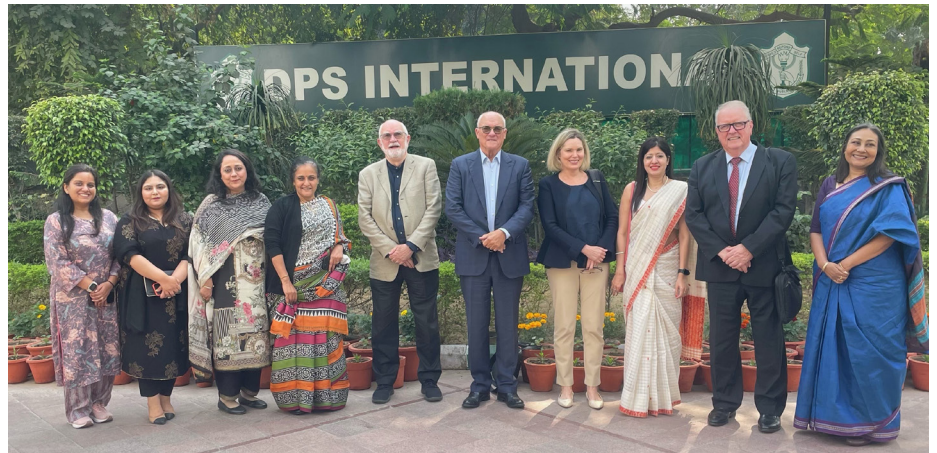
Hui Min Lee, Stuart Gates, Associate Professor Alina Morawska and Dr Stevie Hepburn



Arvind Ponnappalli, Ari Pratiwi, Associate Professor Karen Turner and Dr Amina Khalid

Delhi Public Schools visit

Professor Matt Sanders and Dr Des McWilliam, Director of Triple P International held a series of meetings about Triple P hosted by the Delhi Public Schools Society in India in November. Professor Sanders gave a series of presentations to the leadership groups in four schools focused on the educational benefits to students and teachers of evidence-based parenting support delivered through schools.



Murri School Health Expo

Associate Professor Karen Turner represented UQ, with colleagues from the School of Psychology Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, at the Murri School Health Expo to introduce primary and secondary school students to the study of psychology.

Professor Mark Nielsen, Dr Hayley Williams, Associate Professor Karen Turner and Ying Kang.



Campus Plus fireside chat

Professor Matthew Sanders was interviewed on the Campus Plus Webinar. The webinar focused on commercialisation of social science innovation.

PD + HASS – Fireside chat with Professor Matthew Sanders, founder of the 'Triple P Positive Parenting Program'.

Award news



Congratulations to Associate Professor Karen Turner on a successful ARC Linkage grant: Deadly Home Reading: Enabling Indigenous Children's Literacy & Wellbeing with total funding for 5 years of \$1,005,058. This is to continue important work in supporting Indigenous children and families. Associate Professor Karen Turner is one of six chief investigators led by Professor Rhonda Craven from the Australian Catholic University.

Associate Professor Karen Turner was also the winner of the UQ Research Partnership and Translation Award at the 2024 HaBS Staff Award Ceremony.



Congratulations to Associate Professor Alina Morawska for being recognised by The Australian again as a field leader in the field of family studies.



Congratulation to Dr Carys Chainey (and PFSC colleagues Dr April Hoang and Tianyi Ma) who has been successful in leading a Life Course Centre (LCC) ECR Seed Funding application titled, "Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Adversity and Disadvantage."



Congratulations to Tianyi Ma who received a Commendation at the UQ Psychology Postgraduate Student Research Excellence Award 2024.

Tianyi was also selected as an Early-Career Mentored Editorial Board Member for a two-year term (2025-2026) for the journal *Prevention Science*.

PFSC seminar series

Dr Elizabeth (Liz) Eggins from Metro North Mental Health, Queensland Health presented the October seminar with a talk titled, "Considering parents experiencing serious mental illness in tertiary settings."

PFSC Honours student Jhalak Arora presented in November, "Systematic review and meta-analysis of Teen Triple P-Positive Parenting Program."



Jhalak Arora

International Congress on Evidence-based Parenting Support

(Online: June 4-7, 2025)

New to I-CEPS in 2025 is a Parent Day which is co-designed with parent organisations to facilitate meaningful dialogue and collaboration between parents and professionals. Planned activities include topic-specific parent seminars, skill-building workshops, Q&A sessions with program leaders, and inspirational guest speakers.

Further details can be found [HERE](#).



End of year party

Once again, PFSC staff and students came together to celebrate another successful year of research and creating positive opportunities for parents and families.



Cultural Lunch

Alumni updates

We always take a keen interest in our alumni and would love to share your news in the newsletter. Let us know by emailing pfsc@psy.uq.edu.au and we will post the news.



Recent publications

Dittman, C.K., Sanders, M.R., Rynne, S.B., Mallett, C.J., & Lefebvre, J.S. (2024). Play Well Triple P: Developing and evaluating a program to promote positive parental involvement in junior sport. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-024-01725-y>.

Hoang, N. P. T., Ma, T., Silverwood, A. J., & Sanders, M. R. (2024). Place-based approach to support children's development towards Sustainable Development Goals: A scoping review of current effort and future agenda. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 164, 107873. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107873>.

Kulasinghe, K., Mitchell, A. E., & Morawska, A. (2024). Oral health care habits with young children in Australia: parent experiences and perspectives. *Journal of Children and Young People's Health (Accepted 30/9/24)*.

Mitchell, A.E., Morawska, A., Casey, E., Forbes, E., Filus, A., Fraser, J., Rowell, D., Johnston, A., & Birch, S. (2024). Brief parenting intervention (Triple P) for families of children with eczema: a randomized controlled trial. In *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsae023>.

Morawska, A., Armstrong, R., McBryde, C., Mitchell, A. E., Etel, E., McAuliffe, T., & Johnston, L. (2024). Parent needs and preferences for support during their very prematurely born child's transition to school. *International Journal of Early Years Education* <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2024.2367508>.

Morawska, A., Mitchell, A. E., Etel, E., McAuliffe, T., Ma, T., Armstrong, R., McBryde, C., & Johnston, L. (2024). A systematic review of parents' experiences during their child's transition to school. *Early Childhood Education Journal* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-024-01780-z>.

Turner, K. M. T., & Sanders, M. R. (2024). Finding solutions to scaling parenting programs that work: A systems-contextual approach. *Prevention Science* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s1121-024-01755-x>.