

**Thea Calzoni, Coordinator of Northern Strengthening Parents**

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The Northern Strengthening Parent Support program can help parents find social activities in the community for themselves as well as their children. If you are a parent with information to share, or if you would like to find out what's out there for parents, drop me a line.

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Spring has arrived and sunshine brightens days that are lonely for some and crowded for others. The COVID-19 pandemic has made 2020 a year of living close to home. I hope that you, like me, have been lucky to have avoided getting sick. Many workers and families who caught the virus are now recovering. Among our older relatives, those in nursing homes because of their frailty have come the closest to COVID-19. If your parent or grandparent has passed, I hope you have opportunities to recall their life and what they meant to you. We remember our debt to these good and hardworking people when we hear their stories.

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## Stepping out slowly ahead of the virus



[The Australian Medical Association backs the Victorian road-map out of social restrictions.](#)

Another view comes from Catherine Bennett, chair in epidemiology at Deakin University, who says “We have done an amazing job turning this wave around. We are down to manageable low numbers of new cases and most are known and contained given they are linked to workplace clusters.” She suggests that we might be able to move faster than expected through the 3 weeks ahead.

But the government is heeding health-advice to take it slow. Our movements will continue to be restricted under Melbourne's Stage Four lock-down for two weeks extra past the original end date of September 13.

- **First step**

The First Step will mean modest changes. Playgrounds will be open again from Monday 14 September. People living alone and single parents will be able to nominate one other person to help them through this – a friend or family member that can visit them in their home.

At the First step, permitted exercise will be increased to two hours every day. This could be a two-hour block or split into two one-hour blocks. You can walk or catch up in the park with one other person from your home or from outside your household.

The curfew will move back an hour to 9pm. These small changes will make life a little easier and if all goes well, Victoria will move into the **Second step on 28 September**.

- **Second step**

Workers across construction, manufacturing, and landscape garden and maintenance workers who operate alone can return to work.

At the Second step, childcare will also open without permits, and life for many young parents will be a little lighter.

**From 12 October in Melbourne, VCE and VCAL students and Prep to Grade 2 will return to their schools for onsite learning.**

The Premier says that the plan is to keep us one step ahead of the virus – and make sure we don't have to take another backwards step.

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## Parent Group Activities

- **Zoom sessions**

Playschool for Parents was well attended by parents keen to find ways of stimulating curiosity and communication in their little ones in activities adapted to their fine motor skills and personalities. Children's art educator, Helen Morrison, followed up the session by emailing each parent individualized notes for art activities for their child. We will hold another session on Tuesday 15 at 1.30 pm. Text Thea, on 0417 331 681 or [email](#) if you are interested.

- **Parent support groups**

Autism support groups and Northern and Western online support group are catching up regularly on Zoom. Facebook groups Caring Parents and Loving Mothers of Different Kids are there for you too, if you would like to join.

- **December face-to-face catch ups in the park**

We are planning to hold some real life outdoor coffee catch ups in December, maybe even November if it's safe to meet. Please [make contact](#) if you would love to catch up for a breath of fresh air and a celebratory coffee together.

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Carers Victoria are offering some new sessions to give us ideas and tools for relaxation. Next week, they are offering a [Music and Self-Care Online Workshop](#) to lift your mood, energy levels and physical health.

This workshop will give you tools to choose music that makes you feel good and meets your needs (no solo singing required!).



## Topics will include:

- The place of music in our lives
- How does music help?
- Choosing music that is good for body, mind and spirit.

**When:** Monday, 14 September 2020 from 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

For further information about this and other workshops, call Carers Victoria on 03 9396 9500.

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# VALID

VALID run Keys to Success programs for people with disability to learn about their rights and speak up for themselves. [Take a look!](#)



Association for  
Children with a  
Disability

ACD are welcomes calls and emails from parents seeking information and support.

- Text 0475 577 997 with your preferred day and time for a call back
- Or call 03 9880 7000

Support Line hours are Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

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## Telephone numbers for counseling or crisis support

- **Parentline:** Call 132 289: (8am to midnight, 7 days a week)

- **Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Line:** Call 13 22 29 (24 hours)

- **Family Relationship Support for Carers:** Call 1300 303 346 or visit the [Each website](#).

- **Beyond Blue:** The [Beyond Blue Support Service](#) provides advice and support via telephone 24/7 (just call 1300 22 4636), [daily web chat](#) (between 3pm–12am) and [email](#) (with a response provided within 24 hours)..

- **Mens Line Australia:** Call 1300 789 978 (24 hours) or visit the [Mensline website](#).

- **National Debt Helpline:** Free financial counselling. Call 1800 007 007 (Mon-Fri) or visit the [National Debt Helpline website](#).

- **1800 RESPECT:** National Sexual Assault Family Domestic Violence Counselling Service. Call 1800 737 732 (24 hours) or visit the [1800 RESPECT website](#).

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## Need to talk?

If you are in crisis, anxious or depressed and want to talk with someone, please call:

Lifeline 13 11 14 (for anyone).



Strengthening Parents  
Melbourne City Mission  
230 Normanby Avenue  
Thornbury VIC 3071



You have subscribed to the Strengthening Parents email list