This is the first newsletter for 2016—a year to embed the Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice in all our work.

The month of March marks the 12 month anniversary of the launch of the Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice. It was March 10th 2015 that saw Minister Fentiman launch the framework at the first of the 22 foundational training events in Beenleigh.

At this anniversary mark it is important to take some time to pause, reflect and plan so that we can embed the framework in our work and processes. Through the month of March, leaders from across the organisation, will lead a critical reflection process with staff to review the understanding and application of the Framework for Practice. This will occur in regions and also in central office units. A 12 month review tool has been developed which provides reflection and scaling questions. These questions include:

- Where would children, young people and families you work with say you are at in the implementation journey?
- Where would your partners in NGOs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, and other government departments say you are at?
- What changes have you seen in the “way we do business”?
- What leadership messaging do you see and hear?

Leadership teams in regions and in central office units will collect team feedback to analyse and plan for further embedding of the framework across all areas of work. A number of regions are being very creative with Manager presentations and stakeholder activities. The reflection process will give us as a department a great sense of where we are at with the framework implementation, what’s working well and what we need to pay more attention to. Looking forward to seeing and sharing the high level results.

**News from around the State**

Since the introduction of the Framework for Practice innovations have appeared right across the state. HR has applied all the elements of the framework to their program of works to ensure alignment with the framework’s values, principles, knowledge and skills and other work areas have adapted the framework practice tools to meet their local and cultural needs.

A great example is the Mt Isa-Gulf Child Safety Service Centre adaptation of the Three Houses tool for use with Aboriginal school-aged children. “Boomerangs are a pretty deadly part of Aboriginal traditions”, but Boomerangs were used for much more than just a weapon. **Good Things:** Boomerangs were also used to show off a lot of the good things about the tribe, such as their hunting skills, strength and much more. **Worries:** Boomerangs were also used as a tool to scare away animals and other creatures. **Dreams:** Sometimes if you listen very carefully you will hear whispers of stories from long ago that tell us about the magical Boomerang.

Three Houses – Boomerang
**Spotlight on Practice—our last newsletter focused on Safety Plans, this time it is Structured Decision Making (SDM)**

**SDM Safety Assessments**
- The purpose of the SDM safety assessment is to ensure that departmental officers consider a range of **family and environmental circumstances** that could impact upon the child’s safety, and effectively plan interventions to protect the child.
- The safety assessment tool is applied to the **household of concern** and assesses the immediate safety of the child in relation to the **care they receive in this household**. Immediate harm indicators are family and environmental circumstances that present **serious and imminent threat of harm to a child**.
- Where the child is in hospital, visiting a friend, staying with grandma for a few days etc **the child’s safety is assessed based on the SDM immediate harm indicator definitions being applied to the household of concern and/or the parents** (subject to departmental intervention for both I&A and OI) and **their care of and risk to the child**.
- The SDM definitions are very important for **consistency and accuracy of assessments**.

**Court Reform Work**

There has been a worry expressed that the Court Reform work does not align with the Framework for Practice.

While there are still some important personnel and structural decisions to be operationalised, the basic tenets of the Court Reform work do align with the values of the Framework for Practice.

The court reform work aims to build a rigorous and balanced process that allows for:
- Greater participation in decision making for children and young people
- Active management of proceedings to promote children and young people’s safety, belonging and well-being
- An increased number of specialist Children’s Court Magistrates to ensure fair and timely responses and courts that understand the special needs of children.
- Legal representation for parents at key points in the pre-court and court processes to present strengths and solutions
- Improved information sharing between the parties of proceedings bringing a partnered response
- Important people in a child’s life will be able to participate in Children’s Court proceedings.
- A professional separation between frontline child protection services (that are working directly with families on the harm and worries) and legal advice and services to maintain integrity and fairness of the court process responses.

**Coaching Session Evaluation**

March has seen the commencement of a formal evaluation of the manager and team leader coaching sessions— the framework coaching that has been offered since November 2015. While we are still waiting for all the responses, the early data suggests that face-to-face coaching is meeting the needs of most staff and that webex sessions are not working as well. Once all the data is in we will analyse and decide on next steps. Anyone who is yet to complete the evaluation survey can access it at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/75H2SDP](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/75H2SDP)

**Training Calendar 2016**

- The April IPMS dates are being set aside specifically for senior team leader training which will focus on safety planning
- Four-day David Mandel, Safe & Together training will be delivered to staff and partners in Brisbane from 4-7th April, 2016
- One day David Mandel, Safe & Together, Regional Intake Service (RIS) training will be delivered in Brisbane on 8th April 2016
- Leading Practice II – two day workshops commence in May 2016 and target managers, team leaders, senior practitioners and practice leaders, family group meeting convenors, court coordinators, and PCPPS.
- Family Group Meeting Convenor coaching will commence in late April 2016

**Want more info?** Contact the Practice Leadership Unit at: PLU mailbox@communities.qld.gov.au