

# Children Ahead

## Fact sheet

The Alannah  
and Madeline  
Foundation



Keeping children safe from violence

### Our history

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation is a national charity protecting children from violence and its devastating impact.

The Foundation was set up in memory of Alannah and Madeline Mikac, aged 6 and 3, who were tragically killed with their mother and 32 others at Port Arthur, Tasmania on 28 April 1996.

We care for children who have experienced or witnessed serious violence. We also run programs that prevent violence and advocate for children's safety and wellbeing. Our vision is that every child will live in a safe and supportive environment.

### Contact us

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## An intensive support program helping children recover from violence and build resilience.

Children Ahead (formerly named the Intensive Support Program) has helped provide intensive support for hundreds of children over the past 10 years to recover from traumatic events or violent circumstances. Children Ahead is free of charge and open to Melbourne families with children affected by violence or abuse aged 0-18 years.

Children who have been traumatised can suffer more ill health, feel insecure and have difficulty learning and managing their emotions. Trauma can also distort children's perceptions of themselves and make it difficult to trust others.

Our qualified staff work directly with the children and families to support their emotional, educational and social needs, as well as psychological wellbeing and any overall health concerns.

Children Ahead provides holistic support essential to children's recovery.

We can coordinate opportunities for children to participate in sports, camps and special events. We can also arrange tutoring in keeping with a child's needs. These everyday activities that many of us take for granted can make a significant difference in a child's journey to recovery.

### What children need

Children Ahead helps children recover from trauma and build resilience.

Through research, evidence and experience we know that for children to recover from serious violence they need:

- a safe, predictable and stable environment;
- the ability to express and communicate their feelings;
- positive relationships; and
- connection to family and community resilience.

### Support areas

Children Ahead works with families and children in a holistic way, using a case management approach with focus on:

**Health** – We support the physical and mental health of children through various approaches.

**Connecting children** – We help children get involved in recreational and extra-curricular activities. Positive skills-based connections are recognised as a protective factor for vulnerable children.

**Social skills** – Developing friendships, good communication, dealing with conflict and building assertiveness are just some of the skills that support children to recover from violence.

**Emotional wellbeing** – An essential part of the healing process is the opportunity for children to tell their story, feel understood and express their strong feelings. We can provide links for individual and family counselling.

**Parent support** – We help parents to understand their child's behaviour from a trauma perspective, and help them learn effective ways of responding. This includes referrals for parent education, financial counselling and support groups.

**Educational support** – We work with the school, family and child to overcome educational obstacles caused by trauma.

**Buddy links** – Children have been shown to benefit from a positive relationship with a mentor or role model. Our program encourages children to build self-esteem, trust, friendship and social skills.

*"I don't know what I would do without them. Our case worker is wonderful and I cannot fault her. She is soft and gentle and a calming influence."*

*Patty, grandmother of three children in her care.*

