

How do we engage them? How do we keep them engaged?

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Engaging with the most vulnerable families within our community had always been a struggle. We knew they were out there but ... How do we engage them? How do we keep them engaged?

Working collaboratively with services within the organisation (midwifery, maternal child health, the Early Years program, allied health) we have developed a better way to engage vulnerable families with our services.

It's about warm referrals, soft entry points and progression through services. These encourage the families to see access to our services as easy, with information about services and how to access them. And of course there are helpful staff.

It's basically about building good relationships with vulnerable people. It requires perseverance and time—things that funding bodies don't always acknowledge! We have discovered the positive benefits of technology in the use of social media in communications with families.

It is also important for service providers to meet families where they are most comfortable—to let the service reach out, including by actively visiting places where vulnerable families and children will be. Services are offered in various venues as well as in family homes. Good relationships and trust need to be developed in order to be able to share our knowledge of services and to enable families to have continuity of care through services.

We work to develop an accurate picture of a family's needs and preferences—and this information is used to guide our service provision

We offer support to other organisations and service providers to meet a family's needs through our strong early years network meetings.

By improving people's access to health information and their capacity to use it effectively we empower families to make their own informed life choices

Our efforts have shown an increase in children's school readiness through AEDC data which we hope will transfer into children's educational outcomes, which as research shows, filters through the families

Flexible Funding opportunities have been a major contributor to being able to offer this type of service provision as we have been granted time and flexibility to find what works for our community.