



# Safe from the Start -Project Info-

The 'Safe from the Start' project is an Australian first and an innovative resource initiative based on recommendations from a Tasmanian research study conducted in 2006. The research; States of Mind (Dr Erica Bell, University of Tas – Department of Rural Health) was commissioned by The Salvation Army (Tas) to consider the specific needs of children aged 0-5 affected by family violence.

The 'Safe from the Start' action research project was conducted by Dr Angela Spinney and funded by the Commonwealth Office for Women (FaHCSIA).

The research project focused on children aged 0-5 and:

- Identified key elements of best practice
- Identified and formed a register of intervention activities and therapeutic play which children's workers and parents can use
- Developed a training program to educate children's services workers in working with the resources

The project was a community-based piece of action research and involved input from community sector workers and a steering committee to trial resources within their workplaces. The research describes in detail the impact of violence on young children but also gives hope for healing. A child who lives with violence is forever changed, but not forever 'damaged' and there is a lot that we can do to improve their future prospects (Barker & Cunningham, 2007).

Outcomes of the 'Safe from the Start' Project:

- Resource Kit and Training module
- The impact of violence on children aged up to six identified
- Parents and the community educated about the impact of violence on young children
- Children's activities and information disseminated to services and parents
- Services (particularly domestic violence services) informed about best practice, latest research and the impact of violence on very young children
- A final research report for application nationally

The 'Safe from the Start' training has been attended by 150 service providers in Tasmania and has generated interstate interest with the sale of more than 40 kits (\$550 incl. GST). The feedback from domestic violence services, schools, childcare sector, government and community sector has been overwhelming.

A funding grant from the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation has been received for further training in 22 locations in Tasmania, which will commence in February 2009.

