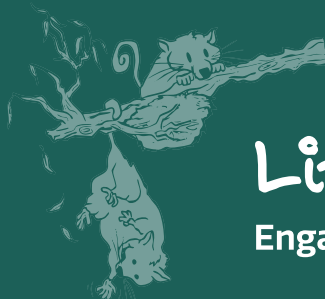




Children and Families Plan

2026 – 2031



Little Voices, Big Say!

Engaging Families • Supporting Children

The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale respectfully acknowledges peoples of the Noongar nation, the traditional owners of the lands upon which the Shire operates. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



Children and Families Plan 2026 – 2031 Document Control:

Version	Date Submitted	Author	Submitted To	Purpose / Notes
V1.0	29 Jan 2026	Jessica Black	Rebecca Taylor – Manager Community Development	Draft objectives and actions submitted to the Shire for review and discussion.
V2.0	09 Feb 2026	Jessica Black	Rebecca Taylor – Manager Community Development	Draft objectives and actions submitted to the Shire for review and discussion.
V3.0	16 Feb 2026	Jessica Black	Rebecca Taylor – Manager Community Development	Draft objectives and actions submitted to the Shire for review and discussion.
V4.0	19 Feb 2026	Jessica Black	Rebecca Taylor – Manager Community Development	Draft plan submitted to the Shire for review and discussion.
V5.0	24 Feb 2026	Jessica Black	Rebecca Taylor – Manager Community Development	Draft plan submitted to the Shire for review and discussion.
V6.0	27 Feb 2026	Jessica Black	Rebecca Taylor – Manager Community Development	Finalised version of the draft plan submitted to the Shire for community and stakeholder feedback.
V7.0	02 April 2026	Jessica Black	Rebecca Taylor – Manager Community Development	Initial draft plan changes submitted to the Shire for review and discussion.
V8.0	15 April 2026	Jessica Black	Rebecca Taylor – Manager Community Development	Draft plan submitted to the Shire for final review.
V9.0	08 May 2026	Jessica Black	Rebecca Taylor – Manager Community Development	Final version submitted to the Shire.

CONTENTS

SHIRE PRESIDENT MESSAGE	4
How to Read This Plan	5
INTRODUCTION	5
SECTION ONE: Background Information	6
Purpose of the Plan	6
How the Plan Relates to Other Shire Strategies and Plans	6
How This Plan Has Been Informed	6
The Shire's Role in Supporting Children and Families	8
Who We'll Seek to Work With	8
SECTION TWO: Strategic Priorities and Actions	10
Healthy	12
Material Basics	14
Valued, Loved & Safe	16
Learning	18
Participation	20
Identity & Culture	22
SECTION THREE: How We Will Implement This Plan	24
Delivery and Measuring Progress	24
Resourcing our Plan	24
Assumptions and Risks	24
REFERENCES	27



SHIRE PRESIDENT MESSAGE



I am pleased to present the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale Children and Families Plan 2026–2031.

This plan has been shaped by the voices of our community. It reflects the views and experiences of parents, grandparents, carers and local service providers

and, most importantly, children aged up to 11. Listening to and valuing these voices demonstrates our commitment to being a caring and inclusive community, where children and families are supported to feel safe, respected and connected.

As one of the fastest growing local governments in Western Australia, Serpentine Jarrahdale has a young and growing population. The Shire recently reached a population of 40,000, with 403 babies born in Byford in the 2024/25 financial year, a reminder of how rapidly our community is expanding. It is essential that our long-term planning responds to this growth and reflects the needs and aspirations of children and families, ensuring children's voices are considered in decisions that shape our Shire's future.

A comprehensive engagement program informed the development of this plan. More than 300 online surveys were completed by community members and service providers, complemented

by conversations with parents, carers and children at a range of pop-up and out-and-about sessions. Over 160 mini-survey conversations were recorded during these sessions, with children participating through creative activities such as art spaces and graffiti tables.

These community insights were strengthened through analysis of local data, helping to identify needs, gaps and priorities. Together, this evidence provides a strong and informed foundation for action.

“The result is the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale's first dedicated plan for families with children aged 0 to 11. It sets a clear and coordinated direction for practical and achievable actions to support children and families over the next five years.”

Delivering this plan will require shared responsibility. The Shire looks forward to continuing to work alongside families, community groups and service providers to implement the plan and create meaningful and lasting outcomes.

By staying connected, listening to one another and putting children first, this plan will play an important role in supporting the Shire to achieve its vision of a welcoming community where everyone feels at home – now and into the future.



INTRODUCTION

Children and families are at the heart of a thriving and connected community. In the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale (Shire), we recognise that supporting children's wellbeing and strengthening families is essential to building a safe, inclusive, and resilient future. As one of the fastest-growing regions in Western Australia, the Shire has a unique opportunity and responsibility to foster conditions in which children can be safe, loved, healthy, and supported to thrive.

The Children and Families Plan 2026 – 2031 draws on community feedback, local and regional data, and the Shire's strategic priorities to guide actions that support children and families. It brings together the voices of children, parents, caregivers, educators, and service providers, and is grounded in both lived experience and strong evidence.

How to Read This Plan

SECTION ONE:

This section explains the foundations of the Children and Families Plan 2026 – 2031. It outlines the purpose of the Plan, describes how it has been informed, and defines the Shire's role in supporting children and families. It clarifies how the Shire delivers, partners, promotes, and advocates across the actions in Section Two.

SECTION TWO:

This section describes our planned actions, the timing for each and the role the Shire will take. It is structured around the Nest Wellbeing Framework, developed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), a nationally recognised model for understanding the holistic conditions children need to thrive: being healthy; having material basics; being valued, loved, and safe; learning; participating; and having a positive sense of culture and identity. This section also includes quotes from children and adults that reflect lived experience, along with key data snapshots.

SECTION THREE:

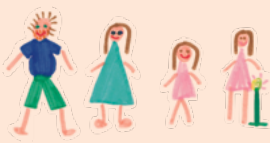
This section explains how the Plan will be implemented and monitored over time. It also describes how the Shire will integrate a stronger Children and Families focus across existing programs, partnerships, and service networks, ensuring the Plan remains practical, accountable, and responsive to community needs.



SECTION ONE: Background Information

Purpose of the Plan

The Shire has developed its first Children and Families Plan 2026 – 2031 to guide how we deliver, partner, promote, and advocate for programs, services, and initiatives that support local children (aged 0 – 11 years) and their families or carers. While the Shire has long been active in this space, this first plan places renewed emphasis on strengthening existing relationships and building new ones with families, community organisations, schools, and service providers.



The plan provides a clear framework to help the Shire coordinate efforts, strengthen connections across the community, and ensure our work is responsive, inclusive, and grounded in the lived experiences of children and families. Moving forward, Shire staff will use this plan to determine, at a high level, what actions will be prioritised and when. For further detail on the implementation approach, refer to Section Three of this Plan.

How the Plan Relates to Other Shire Strategies and Plans

This plan has strategic alignment with other Shire strategies and plans, including:

- Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale 2050
- Council Plan 2023 – 2033
- Access and Inclusion Plan (2023 – 2028)
- Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan (2023 – 2027)
- Economic Development Strategy (2024 – 2034)
- Public Health Plan (2025 – 2030)
- Youth Plan (2025 – 2028)
- Library Plan (2026 – 2031)

This Plan will inform the development of new and refreshed plans and strategies in the future, including community infrastructure and public open space strategies, sport and recreation planning, access and inclusion planning and community infrastructure projects (where appropriate).

How This Plan Has Been Informed

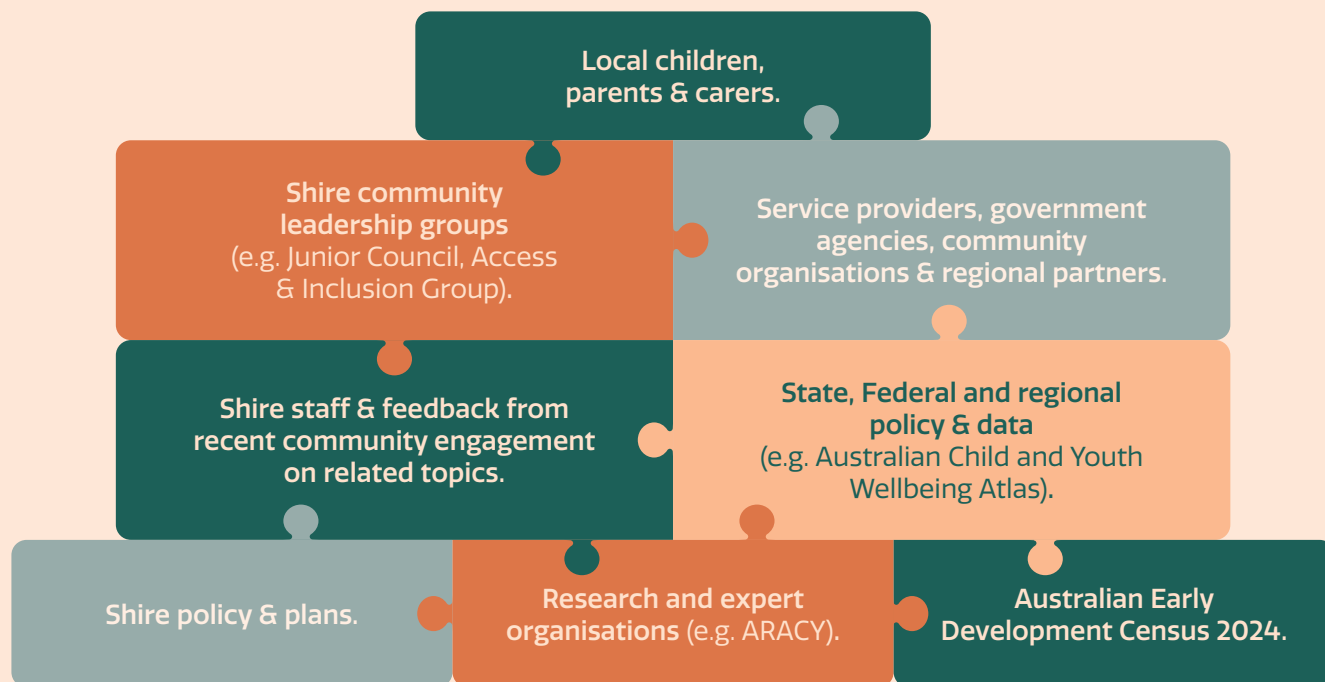
The Children and Families Plan 2026 – 2031 was created through a process that combined community engagement, stakeholder input, and analysis of local and regional data. Between September and October 2025, the Shire gathered close to 600 contributions from children, parents, carers, service providers, and community members through workshops, meetings, event pop-up stalls, and online surveys. A detailed data collection and analysis process drew on national, state, and regional datasets. These findings were synthesised into a draft Children and Families Needs and Gaps Analysis, which was then tested with the community through a public review period in November and December 2025, allowing families and service providers to refine the emerging priorities into a finalised Children and Families Needs and Gaps Analysis in January 2026.

What was identified in the Children and Families Needs and Gaps Analysis was used to draft the Children and Families Plan. In March 2026, the draft Plan was published for community and stakeholder review to inform its finalisation. Feedback was gathered through a mix of structured and informal methods, including a



Junior Council Workshop, a community pop-up at the SJ Farmers Market, an online survey, Facebook engagement, and targeted stakeholder meetings. These activities captured children's ideas, community priorities, and service provider insights to refine the draft Plan. The Children and Families Plan was finalised in April 2026.

Together, this blend of lived experience, expert knowledge, and data created a community-grounded foundation for the Children and Families Plan 2026 – 2031. The implementation of this plan will continue to be guided by the Children and Families Needs and Gaps Analysis to ensure actions remain responsive to community needs.



THANK YOU!

We would like to thank the children, parents, caregivers, services and organisations who shared their knowledge, ideas and experiences to shape this plan.

The Shire's Role in Supporting Children and Families

The Shire plays a central role in supporting children and families through service delivery, partnership building, advocacy, and clear communication. In this plan, we identify the Shire's role for every action in Section Two so responsibilities are transparent and easy to understand.



Role Definitions

Deliver:

The Shire directly provides a program, service, space or activity using its own staff, resources and/or facilities.

Partner:

The Shire works alongside other organisations to co-design and/or co-deliver programs, sharing responsibility, resources and/or expertise.

Promote:

The Shire raises awareness of programs, services or information through its communication channels to improve community access and navigation.

Advocate:

The Shire influences decision-makers and service providers by raising community needs, seeking improved services, funding or policy changes.

Who We'll Seek to Work With

We will seek to work with a wide range of local organisations and community-led groups, including health providers, advisory groups, community resource centres, and volunteer-run initiatives, while remaining open to new partnerships as they emerge.





905 km²
(.idcommunity 2021)

11,250
dwellings
(ABS 2021)



13 suburbs
(.idcommunity 2021)

The Shire recently reached
the population milestone of:

40,000
(Shire 2026)



6,555 people aged
0-11 years living
in the Shire

20% of the Shire's population
is aged 0-11 years
(ABS 2021)

Aged 0-4



8.6%
Shire



6.1%
WA

2,777 people

Aged 5-9



8.6%
Shire



6.5%
WA

2,760 people



Aged 10-14



7.7%
Shire



6.4%
WA

2,481 people

(.idcommunity 2021)

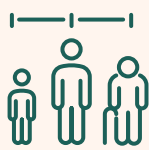
Median age

33

Shire

38

WA



(.idcommunity 2021)

Babies born in Byford

403

in 2024/25 financial year



(Shire 2026)

Couples
with
children

43%
Shire

30%
WA



(.idcommunity 2021)

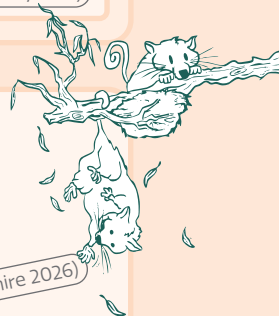
Single
parents
with
children

10.7%
Shire

10%
WA



(.idcommunity 2021)



Little Voices, Big Say!
Engaging Families • Supporting Children

SECTION TWO: Strategic Priorities and Actions





**A place where children and families
feel connected, supported and
included, with opportunities to
learn, grow, play and enjoy the
outdoors close to home.**





Healthy

Physical health, access to health services, and safe environments for active play



Voices of Children

- 'Lots of area to play. Across the road, lots of grass and bike jumps. Like playing with my friend who lives near me.'
- 'Like footy, soccer and Lego.'
- '... Like to go hiking...'
- 'Museum; Animal Park; Bike and scooter - to park, to shops, to museum; Easter Activities; Lollies; Cooking classes - Cookies; More Parks.'
- 'Art and craft; Bike ride - traffic sign park; Concerts for kids - Fairies; Goes to dance classes.'



Voices of Parents, Carers & Service Providers

- 'More maintenance in parks, more resources.'
- 'Considering we have the most school age children in WA. Our parks and playgrounds are extremely lacking. Barely any fenced playgrounds. Minimal shade. And the equipment is not suitable for all ages. We also need more playgrounds with toilets.'
- 'All ability playgrounds, outside of Byford. Issue is transportation, if you are in the less populated areas.'
- '(Existing playgrounds are) NOT disability and sensory friendly.'
- 'All in one water park with toilets and facilities and bbqs like Kwinana'
- 'Local OT services (private) but we need more of them locally as well as mental health services, especially for neurodivergent kids. Currently, no local free community services make our lives better.'
- '(We need)... more access for children's appointments at the doctors. Sometimes children get sick and you cannot get them an appointment locally for weeks.'
- 'The Shire has very limited options with critical services, which means these families and children are forced into the outer suburbs of the Shire to seek help from other organisations which are already beyond capacity...'
- 'Opportunities for case management, including one-to-one support and education (e.g. Sunshine Project).'



Data Snapshot

- In the 2025 Children and Families - Needs and Gaps Analysis community survey, the most common response to the question 'What helps your family feel connected to your local community?', was 'parks, playgrounds, or nature spaces', selected by 237 participants.
- In 2021 in the Shire, 28 children aged 0-4 required assistance with core activities (1.0%; WA 1.2%), 102 children aged 5-9 required assistance with core activities (3.7%; WA 3.6%), and 168 young people aged 10-19 required assistance with core activities (3.8%; WA 3.4%). All age groups have increased since 2016.¹
- In 2020, just over half of Shire residents aged 5-15 years met the weekly physical activity recommendations, compared with about 70% across WA.²
- In 2020, about 23% of Shire residents aged 5-15 years were overweight, compared to the State average of about 15%.³
- In 2020, only about 10% of children aged 2-15 years in the Shire ate the recommended daily serves of vegetables, compared with around 12% across WA.⁴
- In 2024, 11.5% of children in their first year of full-time school were considered developmentally vulnerable in 'Physical Health & Wellbeing' (physical readiness for the school day, physical independence, and gross and fine motor skills), exceeding the WA average (10.5%), and up from 9.6% in 2021.⁵
- In 2020, 19.49% of Serpentine Jarrahdale residents aged 16 years and above were diagnosed with a mental health condition in the last 12 months, higher than the WA average of 15.53%.⁶



Note: Some percentages from the East Metro Health Service Health and Wellbeing Profile for Serpentine Jarrahdale are derived from visual estimates of graphs and should be considered approximate values.

 HEALTHY ACTIONS What we will do	TIMING When we will do it					ROLE The Shire's role
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	
1.1 Undertake early-stage planning for a regional destination play space as essential social infrastructure, offering diverse play and recreation elements that support children of different ages, abilities, play styles, and sensory needs.				✓	✓	Partner 
1.2 Develop a Shire-wide play space renewal plan, informed by the Children and Families Needs and Gaps Analysis, playground reviews, an open space assessment and in consultation with the community. This will identify priority locations, core infrastructure upgrades or maintenance (such as fencing, toilets, shade, seating, car parking and drinking water), and set out funding options to support the delivery of improved play spaces.		✓	✓			Deliver 
1.3 Support community-led physical activity events and programs (e.g. pram walks, Park Run family days, obstacle course activities) in trails, parks, playgrounds, and open spaces through small grants, promotion and capacity building with local clubs and groups.			✓	✓		Partner 
1.4 Work with the Byford Health Hub to engage with service providers to support the community to access child and family health services, and advocate for increased availability of affordable, child and family-focused health, mental health, neuro-diversity and disability support services within the Shire	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Partner 
1.5 Strengthen the existing Interagency Network connecting local health, mental health, disability, neuro-diversity and Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) services, CRC, case managers and community organisations, with a focus on coordinated referrals and collaborative case management, particularly for families with complex needs.		✓	✓	✓	✓	Partner 
1.6 Work with the Shire's Access and Inclusion Advisory Group on projects and programs relating to children and families to ensure they are accessible and inclusive.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Partner & Deliver 

Shire teams involved in implementation:

- Community Development team
- Communications and Customer Engagement team
- Community Projects, Property and Recreation team
- Strategic Planning team
- Infrastructure Service team
- Operations team
- Economic Development team



Material Basics

Adequate housing, infrastructure, and essential services



Voices of Children

- '(We need) safer roads to walk to school.'
- '(We need) Scooter – Footpaths.'
- 'Want a McDonalds'



Voices of Parents, Carers & Service Providers

- 'Both parents have to work to pay bills so we don't have much time available for extra activities.'
- 'We are satisfied the way things are but sometimes costs of living becomes hard to deal.'
- 'Food bank. Free events in the community definitely are a massive help.'
- 'Cost of living pressures are enormous. We are seeing this across a lot of socioeconomic and cultural groups, and suburbs.'
- 'I work for Homelessness we care sjs, the Friday night food services are utilised regularly.'
- 'The little op shop behind the library are always extremely helpful, and the Free Food Market run by the Byford Baptist Church are a god-send.'
- 'Cheaper rates (would make life better for families)'
- '(We need) Shopping centres in closer driving distance.'
- '(We need) Accessible and affordable transport, particularly for outlying areas such as Serpentine and Jarrahdale (e.g. bus connections).'
- 'More footpaths and safer roads. Can't take the kids for a walk or bike ride as there is just nowhere safe.'
- '... Bike paths are also dearly missed as the roads are narrow and cars drive fast in our area.'
- 'Children not having safe access to school. No crossings.'



Data Snapshot

- In the 2025 Children and Families Needs and Gaps Analysis community survey, the most common response to the question 'In the last 4 weeks, what has been the biggest challenge in caring for your child/ren?'; was the 'cost of essentials', selected by 173 participants.
- While the Shire's average IRSD SEIFA score (1028.2) sits above the WA average (1011), pockets of higher socioeconomic disadvantage remain, with some areas such as Mundijong (1009.9) recording scores below the state benchmark in 2021.⁷
- About 75% of children aged 0–9 in the Shire lived in owner-occupied households in 2021, above the national average.⁸
- In 2021 62% of households in the Shire had a mortgage, compared to the WA average of 38%. Notably, in 2021 14.8% of owner-occupier households were paying more than 30% of their income on mortgage repayments (which can be a sign of mortgage stress), slightly above the WA average of 13.0%.⁹
- Between 8–10% of children aged 0–9 years old are living in households earning less than \$1,000 per week in the Shire SA3 (2021).¹⁰
- Children in single-parent households in Serpentine–Jarrahdale LGA are more likely to experience parental unemployment, with 5.46% of children aged 0–14 years living with an unemployed parent in a single-parent household, compared to just 0.24% in couple families (2021).¹¹



 MATERIAL BASICS ACTIONS What we will do	TIMING When we will do it					ROLE The Shire's role
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	
2.1 Support local community organisations to strengthen coordinated food security and early intervention pathways, including access to financial and legal assistance, budgeting workshops, material aid, and other family support services.			✓	✓	✓	Partner 
2.2 Improve community awareness of local financial wellbeing supports, including financial and legal support, budgeting workshops, and food security initiatives, by sharing simple, accessible information through social media spotlights and providing clear resources in community spaces and at relevant events.				✓	✓	Promote 
2.3 Provide training for relevant Shire teams on local service providers and referral pathways for children and families who may be experiencing hardship or disadvantage.		✓	✓			Deliver 
2.4 Develop a funding program to support small-scale, local front-line community service organisations to maintain core operations and services within the Shire.		✓				Deliver 
2.5 Work with homelessness and community organisations and District Leadership Groups, to improve coordinated responses for families experiencing unstable housing or homelessness, and advocate for increased investment in crisis accommodation and transitional housing.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Partner & Advocate 
2.6 Strengthen the Shire's connectivity by prioritising safe, accessible pedestrian and bike routes, pedestrian crossings, and continuing investment in maintaining and upgrading local roads.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver 
2.7 Use planning levers and collaborations with developers and landowners to encourage a mix of retail, hospitality, and essential services in key activity centres and emerging neighbourhoods, ensuring commercial spaces are well located for families.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver & Partner 
2.8 Advocate for expanded bus routes, including new services for underserved suburbs, and for increased frequency and reliability of existing services to improve access to shops, schools and community facilities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Advocate 
2.9 Support and implement community infrastructure planning across the Shire to ensure the needs and children and families are represented and incorporated, including strategies to respond to growth and demand for services at neighbourhood, district and regional levels.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver & Partner 

Shire teams involved in implementation:

- Community Development team
- Communications and Customer Engagement team
- Statutory Planning and Compliance team
- Development Services team
- Infrastructure Services team
- Operations team



Valued, Loved & Safe

Safety, security, and environments that protect children



Voices of Children

- 'Like playing with my friend who lives near me.'
- 'Going to the fun park with my friends.'
- 'I like my neighbours and friends on my street.'
- 'Nature. Going to different places (like the park). Birthday parties of our neighbours.'
- Love my house – my bedroom.
- My family is there. I love playing with my sister.
- 'We went to the lake and painted it; it was a competition – with grandma.'



Voices of Parents, Carers & Service Providers

- 'More support for young families. Early intervention is key.'
- '(Need)...Parenting courses, financial courses...'
- 'We have 4 kids and at this time in our life it's not easy to attend anything as they're all very young...'
- 'Parent education (e.g. safety), provided in flexible formats so families can engage in ways that fit their lifestyle.'
- 'Free/Cheap access to parenting support groups, parents with neurodivergent children or children who are developmentally delayed.'
- 'With regard to fun programs in this age group I believe there are options available. This age group is generally needing parent support... We have limited options.'
- 'We... have launched a lot of new programs such as our 4 week ADHD workshop which was fully booked, along with a Coercive Control and Domestic Violence workshop which was fully booked.'
- 'Families and individuals are after intervention, help, assistance across all levels.'



Data Snapshot

- In the 2025 Children and Families Needs and Gaps Analysis community survey, the second most common response to the question 'In the last 4 weeks, what has been the biggest challenge in caring for your child/ren?', was 'juggling parenting with other responsibilities', selected by 154 participants.
- Service providers added to this, and in response to the survey question 'In the last 6 months, what have been the three biggest needs you've seen for children aged 0-11 years old and the families/carers you support?', the equal most common answer was 'parent or carer wellbeing', selected by 6 participants.
- AEDC Shire results show a decline in children's physical readiness for school, with more children arriving unprepared, late, tired, hungry, or inappropriately dressed. In 2024, 14.7% of children in their first year of full-time school were considered developmentally vulnerable in 'Physical readiness for school day', up from 7.1% in 2018.¹²
- AEDC teacher ratings for children in the Shire starting full-time school show a decline in children reported as 'very true' for active parent engagement with school, falling from 75.3% in 2018 to 69.3% in 2024.¹³
- AEDC teacher ratings for children in the Shire starting full-time school show a decline in children reported as 'very true' for regular home reading (66.9% in 2018 to 59.6% in 2024), alongside a rise in 'not true' responses (2.9% in 2018 to 6.0% in 2024).¹⁴



 VALUED, LOVED & SAFE ACTIONS What we will do	TIMING When we will do it					ROLE The Shire's role
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	
3.1 Facilitate opportunities for families of children with additional needs to connect with one another through inclusive community events, peer-support activities, or information sessions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver 
3.2 Support the delivery of free or low-cost parenting and early intervention programs that build confidence, reduce stress, and help families respond to everyday challenges such as behaviour, connection, emotional regulation, and the pressures of managing work, home, and parenting responsibilities.		✓	✓	✓		Deliver & Partner  
3.3 Work with the Interagency Network, District Leadership Groups, and specialist Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) services to support increasing the frequency and reach of local FDV outreach.			✓	✓	✓	Partner & Advocate  
3.4 Develop the Shire's 'Safeguarding Young People' Policy and an accompanying implementation strategy. This will be informed by the Shire's existing 'Council Policy – Child Safety and Wellbeing 2025', the 'Commonwealth Child Safe Framework' and 'Child Safe Awareness Policy – Template for local government'.	✓					Deliver 

Shire teams involved in implementation:

- Community Development team
- Youth Development team
- Library services team



Little Voices, Big Say!
 Engaging Families • Supporting Children



Learning

Access to learning opportunities, literacy, and skill development



Voices of Children

- '... I love going to day care and playing with my friends.'
- '... I like my friends at school...'
- 'Love your school – learning.'
- '(Love) School friends.'



Voices of Parents, Carers & Service Providers

- 'We really appreciate our local Byford Library – it's a lovely community space for reading and children's activities...'
- 'We enjoy the library and come often, however it would do well to be bigger and be able to offer more programs and events and have the space for this.'
- 'Although we love Byford Library, it can be quite noisy for private study, so we sometimes travel to Armadale Library instead.'
- 'Family daycare helps our family a lot keeping the sickness' at bay and helping us to pick up more work while our child is cared for.'
- 'Lots of access to daycare.'
- 'More schools that cater for kids with special needs.'
- 'More private or church-based schools would give families more choice, as the Catholic school is already at capacity...'
- 'Schooling has been such a challenge living in Cardup. All of the schools in town are so competitive as too many children. OSCH and bus services also have waitlists...'
- 'I wish more before and after school options were available'
- 'Access to after-school care or tutoring services would support working parents.'
- 'We have a growing number of home schooling in our community would be great to have opportunities during the day for them.'
- '(We need) Programs or Workshops that target challenges that have real impact to quality of life rather than fun programs.'



Data Snapshot

- In 2021, 26.6% of Shire residents provided unpaid care for their own children, above the WA average of 20.5%.¹⁵
- Childcare availability in 2024 varied across the Shire. Byford SA2 (Byford and Darling Downs) recorded an average number of children per available place was 2.38. Mundijong SA2 (Oakford, Oldbury, Mardella, Mundijong, Whitby, Cardup and Karrakup) recorded an average of 11.11 children per available place. Serpentine–Jarrahdale SA2 (Hopeland, Serpentine, Keysbrook and Jarrahdale) recorded an average of 5.26 children per available place.¹⁶
- The AEDC data shows a decline in children's emotional maturity between 2021 and 2024. In 2024, 12.5% of children in their first year of full-time school were considered developmentally vulnerable in 'Emotional maturity', exceeding the WA average (10.3%), and up from 9.1% in 2021.¹⁷
- AEDC data shows rising vulnerabilities in foundational skills among children entering school. In 2024, 71.0% of children starting full-time school were rated by teachers as 'on track' in Language and Cognitive Skills (school-based), down from 81.4% in 2018 and below both the WA (80.4%) and national (81.7%) averages. Vulnerability in this domain has nearly doubled, rising from 6.5% in 2018 to 12.7% in 2024.¹⁸
- The AEDC shows a growing proportion of children entering school with additional needs. In 2018, 3% of children were identified with special needs, rising to 4% in 2021 and 6.2% in 2024.¹⁹
- The Shire's Year 3 and Year 5 2024 NAPLAN results showed higher scores than the national average, though still within the range of many other areas in the national distribution.²⁰



 LEARNING ACTIONS What we will do	TIMING When we will do it					ROLE The Shire's role
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	
4.1 Pilot expanded and varied children's programs that reach under-represented localities (including outdoors), times and groups, ensuring inclusive access for children with additional needs (including those living with mental health challenges and neurodiversity) and for families with older children.	✓	✓				Deliver & Partner  
4.2 Co-deliver outreach and interactive learning programs with schools, playgroups, community groups and organisations to extend reach beyond the main library building.			✓	✓		Deliver & Partner  
4.3 Undertake research and assessment to determine need for expanded library building and branches to service population growth and improve accessibility for diverse communities.				✓	✓	Deliver 
4.4 Continue to support local early education providers to join and actively participate in the Armadale Early Years Network, and to expand their capacity in the Shire's growth areas.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver & Partner  
4.5 Work with early childhood educators, playgroup facilitators, and community organisations to co-design programs that support school readiness and respond to local developmental trends.			✓			Deliver & Partner  
4.6 Strengthen relationships with local schools to better understand how the Shire can support schools in advocating for greater educational supports for children with additional needs, and in responding to increasing complexity in student and family needs.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Partner & Advocate  
4.7 Support local schools and out-of-school-hours care (OSHC) providers to identify opportunities for new or expanded OSHC programs, particularly in high-need areas, and support them to advocate for resources to meet demand.				✓	✓	Partner & Advocate  
4.8 Work with local providers to strengthen out of school learning supports and tutoring programs for school-attending and home-schooled children, including children with specific learning needs.				✓	✓	Partner 

Shire teams involved in implementation:

- Community Development team
- Library services team





Participation

Opportunities to engage in community life, recreation, and decision-making



Voices of Children

- 'Love face paints. Like to go hiking and motor bike riding.'
- 'Like tap and jazz dance.'
- '... Singing and music...'
- 'Drawing; Arts and Crafts; Bike ride; Concert for kids.'
- 'Art & Craft; Horse Riding; Dancing; Lollie Machine.'
- 'Ride your bike; Swimming; Art and Craft...'
- 'Dance classes, reptile park.'
- 'I drew a swimming pool. I love to go to the pools for lessons and play.'

- 'More playgroups for parents who work weekdays. A chance for men especially to meet other dads.'
- 'I wish there were more sporting options closer by, i.e soccer and gymnastics in particular for my children.'
- 'Wish we had more programs on offer for children, and families. We go swimming every Saturday, travel to Armadale or Kwinana, would love a pool at the rec centre.'



Data Snapshot

- In the 2025 Children and Families Needs and Gaps Analysis community survey, the second most common response to the question 'What helps your family feel connected to your local community?', was 'Local events or festivals' (186 responses), followed by 'Neighbours and local friends' (156 responses) and 'Sport, dance or other recreation activities' (147 responses).
- In the 2025 Children and Families Needs and Gaps Analysis community survey, people were asked what makes it difficult to use local services, programs, or spaces. 'Times don't work for our family schedule' was the most common response (140 responses), followed by 'The cost is too high' (109 responses), 'Not enough spots available when we need them' (94 responses) and 'Location is too far or too hard to get to' (83 responses).
- In 2024, fewer children in the Shire were starting full-time school 'on track' for social competence, dropping from 78.3% in 2021 to 65.6% in 2024, below both WA (74.6%) and national (74%) averages. Over the same period, vulnerability increased from 9% to 12.9%.²¹



Voices of Parents, Carers & Service Providers

- '(Need) youth group for 8-10.'
- 'Unsure of what is on offer. Times available are often a limiting factor when something is on offer'
- 'Not enough easily accessible information to tell us about these services or spaces existing'
- 'More free community events.'
- 'Play group, rhyme time, messy plays. Literally anything that gets us out of the house each day...'
- 'More playgroups on different days of the week, being a part time working parent makes it hard to attend things as they fall on work days. Have diversity would be great to make some connections'
- 'School holiday programs.... consistently fully booked out. This is for ages up to 12 years old.'
- 'Not much out of school programs.'
- '... A lot of programs and things take place Mon-Fri, and as those are work days for us we are unable to participate, but they are great services to offer for say parents that are able to stay home.'

 PARTICIPATION ACTIONS What we will do	TIMING When we will do it					ROLE The Shire's role
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	
5.1 Provide meaningful opportunities for children to participate in local decision making, with options such as a Junior Council that enables children to share ideas, influence decisions and lead positive change.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver 
5.2 Improve the quality and accessibility of information to help families find local programs, events, services, and supports, including through the Shire's online platforms, community directory and a new local service provider information pamphlet.		✓				Promote 
5.3 Offer regular, low cost or free, family friendly and inclusive events to build social capital and community cohesion. Events will cater to a wide range of ages, interests, abilities and sensory needs, delivered across different days, times, and locations to support diverse family schedules and maximise access for all households.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver & Partner  
5.4 Develop a new program that strengthens neighbourhood connection and local friendships by supporting community-led, small-scale street-level gatherings through micro-funding, and practical advice that helps families meet one another.				✓	✓	Deliver 
5.5 Work with local sporting and recreation clubs to build organisational capacity and support the delivery of accessible, inclusive club-based programs to increase participation for early childhood and primary aged children.				✓	✓	Partner 
5.6 Build stronger relationships with local playgroups to strengthen their capacity to support families and increase opportunities for collaboration.	✓	✓				Partner 
5.7 Explore partnerships with local organisations to deliver conservation projects that provide hands-on opportunities for children to contribute to caring for the Shire's unique natural environment.		✓	✓			Partner 

Shire teams involved in implementation:

- Community Development team
- Community Projects, Property and Recreation team
- Library Services team
- Communications and Customer Engagement team



Little Voices, Big Say!
 Engaging Families • Supporting Children



Identity & Culture

Cultural connection, diversity, and inclusion



Voices of Children

- 'Big property – a lot of nature. Likes to be outside.'
- 'Nature. My next-door neighbours. Saturday markets (SJ Shire ones).'
- 'A big yard – we live on a hill and can see lots of Kangaroos.'
- 'Nature; park; neighbours; SJ Markets; more animals.'
- 'We live on a farm – we're getting animals soon.'
- 'Like to ride my horses – I have 2 horses.'
- 'More Carnaby Cockatoos.'



Voices of Parents, Carers & Service Providers

- 'We love the rural vibe but it would be nice to be able to walk with our kids down to the playground to meet up with neighbouring families.'
- 'Like nature with lots of trees in estates. New to the area.'
- 'We're really lucky to have such an amazing community here, with a tight bunch of school mums and supportive neighbours. Having that network around us makes life so much easier, whether it's sharing school runs, helping with the kids, or just being there for a chat.'
- 'Free events, I feel like there is nothing on in SJ for my children! In other cities there is free yoga, parent support groups, fairs, multicultural festivals, Christmas events.'
- 'Outdoor free activities and cultural classes.'



Data Snapshot

- In the Shire, 10.8% of residents speak a language other than English at home, compared with 18.4% across Western Australia.²²
- A total of 25.2% of Shire residents were born overseas, while the figure for Western Australia is 32.2%.²³
- In the Shire, 2.9% of people identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, compared with 3.3% across Western Australia.²⁴
- In 2021 a total of 920 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people lived in the Shire, with a median age of 18, much younger than WA's median of 24.²⁵ Approximately 43% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Shire residents are aged 0–14 years, compared to 32% across WA, highlighting the need for culturally appropriate places, activities, events and programs for children and families.²⁶





IDENTITY & CULTURE ACTIONS What we will do	TIMING When we will do it					ROLE The Shire's role
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	
6.1 Provide and support activities and programs that celebrate the Shire's identity and culture, including rural life, nature, animals and local heritage, delivered through arts and culture initiatives, nature-based play, outdoor events, and community gatherings.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver & Partner ● ●
6.2 Establish respectful relationships with local Aboriginal Elders, families, and organisations through ongoing listening, engagement, and cultural learning to support future co-design of culturally safe programs and spaces.	✓	✓				Partner ●
6.3 Share stories, events, and programs that celebrate cultural diversity and encourage cross-cultural connection.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Promote ●
6.4 Establish respectful relationships with multicultural organisations, community leaders, and culturally diverse families as the groundwork for future co-design of relevant, accessible, and culturally safe supports.	✓	✓	✓			Deliver ●
6.5 Support multicultural parenting services to increase awareness, referrals, and participation among local families.			✓	✓	✓	Partner ●

Shire teams involved in implementation:

- Community Development team
- Library Services team
- Communications and Customer Engagement team

SECTION THREE:

How We Will Implement This Plan

Delivery and Measuring Progress

An implementation plan will be developed to guide delivery on an annual basis. Progress against actions and outcomes will be reported through the Shire's quarterly and annual corporate performance reporting.

Resourcing our Plan

The following resource requirements in addition to core budgets have been identified to support implementation of the Plan.

Type	Timing
Operating	
Increase in Library budget for Children and Families programming	Year 1
Junior Council program budget continued	Year 1
Staffing	
Librarian position established to support increase in library activity and outreach	Year 1
Continuation of Junior Council Program Officer	Year 1
Coordinator Events established to provide capacity for development of community events program	Year 1
Increase in FTE for Library Technician position	Year 2
Two Children and Families Officers established to support plan delivery	Year 2 Year 4
Capital	
Establish reserve to support delivery of play space renewal plan (action 1.2)	Year 2+

Year 1 of the Plan will include a focus on integration of greater Children and Families focus within existing activities and programming, developing partnerships for collaboration, strengthening service provider networks and progressing core projects across existing Shire teams. Resourcing for Year 1 is directed toward an uplift in key areas to support this activity.

Additional targeted resourcing for Children and Families Officers is identified from Year 2 to support increase in delivery of actions over the remaining years with operating budgets developed in line with annual implementation plans.

Assumptions and Risks

The Plan has been developed on the assumption that the resources identified above are supported by Council annually through the Budget setting process. If the identified resources are not supported, or there are changes to the existing levels of resources, this will impact the Shire's ability to implement the actions identified within the Plan.

SUPERHEROES OF SJ

TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH!





REFERENCES



- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Census of Population and Housing. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).
- 2 East Metro Health Service. (2020). Health and Wellbeing Profile for Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 17.
- 3 East Metro Health Service. (2020). Health and Wellbeing Profile for Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 2.
- 4 East Metro Health Service. (2020). Health and Wellbeing Profile for Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 20.
- 5 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). (2024). Community Profile – Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 14.
- 6 East Metro Health Service. (2020). Health and Wellbeing Profile for Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 41.
- 7 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Census of Population and Housing. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).
- 8 Australian Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas (ACYWA)
- 9 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Census of Population and Housing. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).
- 10 Australian Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas (ACYWA)
- 11 Australian Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas (ACYWA)
- 12 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). (2024). Community Profile – Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 15.
- 13 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). (2024). Community Profile – Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 9.
- 14 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). (2024). Community Profile – Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 9.
- 15 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Census of Population and Housing. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).
- 16 Australian Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas (ACYWA)
- 17 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). (2024). Community Profile – Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 17.
- 18 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). (2024). Community Profile – Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 26.
- 19 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). (2024). Community Profile – Serpentine Jarrahdale, p. 8.
- 20 Australian Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas (ACYWA)
- 21 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). (2024). Community Profile – Serpentine Jarrahdale, p.16
- 22 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Census of Population and Housing. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).
- 23 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Census of Population and Housing. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).
- 24 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Census of Population and Housing. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).
- 25 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Census of Population and Housing. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).
- 26 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Census of Population and Housing. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).





6 Paterson Street, Mundijong
Western Australia 6123

t: (08) 9526 1111 | **e:** info@sjshire.wa.gov.au
w: www.sjshire.wa.gov.au



Little Voices, Big Say!
Engaging Families • Supporting Children