

Making a difference

As both a trainer of child protection staff and a leader for staff working in facilitated family time one of the things that often surfaces in discussion and supervision is a need to “make a difference” in the child and families world. A recent conversation with one of our own amazing facilitated family workers has led me to being reflective about how we make a difference in our work.

As much as we would love to change people’s worlds and make a difference in an extensive concrete way, in our work this often is not the case. Not because we cannot, not because we do not have the resources, not because we do not have the will but because often the circumstances and experiences of trauma that the children and young people have experienced only permit us to make change in incremental ways, but it is still making a difference.

Celebration of the small things are just as significant as the “big” things and you need to allow yourself to celebrate those wins because for the time you are involved with that child, children or family you might only see those changes and it is important for your reflection, development and self-care that you recognise small wins are just as important as big wins. For children, often the small things are the big things!

I spent some time reflecting on ways we make a difference in our work and here are a few that make a difference to children and their families:

- Belief – in the children and young people, parents and carers.
- Being child focussed and putting their needs first
- Developing healthy relationships
- A child who experiences a consistent reliable facilitated contact worker in their life provides stability and security for them
- A parent who is treated with respect and dignity at a facilitated family visit is provided the opportunity of feeling positive
- A child who has someone listen wholeheartedly to their stories and engages with them with compassion, curiosity and empathy provides a child with a sense of worth
- An FCW who encourages a child to try new things and praises them for the efforts shows children how to succeed and try again when things do not go as planned.
- The provision of contact reports that show a balanced view of both strengths and areas for improvement allow parents to see where they can make changes or allows them to look for help and to celebrate what they have done well, as a parent.

Never underestimate the valuable and significant difference you make in your work, the impact you make can have a rippling effect on their tomorrow, even if you do not get to see it.