

## **Half-million dollar ARC grant for ACU's Institute for Child Protection Studies**

The Australian Research Council has awarded Australian Catholic University's Institute for Child Protection Studies a three-year grant of \$560,000 to develop and trial an intervention to enable children in out-of-home care and their birth parents to have improved contact.

The project is a joint initiative of the Institute, the ACT Community Services Directorate and major ACT community services partners – Marymead, Anglicare, Communities at Work and Barnardos – together with the University of Melbourne and a range of Victorian community services.

Associate Director of the ICPS Dr Stephanie Taplin highlighted the importance of the project, noting that, "there is very little evidence of how to best manage contact between the nearly 40,000 children in care nationally and their birth parents".

This project will develop, trial and evaluate a new model of contact that will improve children's relationships with their birth parents, increase the incidence of successful reunifications and reduce distress to children and parents. This ARC success is evidence of the very strong relationship built up over nearly a decade between the ACT Community Services Directorate, ACU and its grass roots community partners. The Institute's research is directed to improving outcomes for children and the effectiveness of practitioners who work with children, young people and their families.

Dr Taplin said, "without our long term partnership with the ACT Government and its Community Services Directorate, this grant would not have been successful. The Institute of Child Protection Studies is a joint initiative of the Community Services Directorate and Australian Catholic University and has been funded by both for almost 10 years. The relationship has been very important for the ACT Government, Community agencies and the University and has now been recognised by the Australian Research Council."

This project demonstrates the value of partnerships between Government and Universities, particularly when they are directed toward practical outcomes for those in need through enhanced skills and capabilities for practitioners. The ICPS is one of the University's key instruments in furthering its research goals in relation to the common good and social justice.

Visit the [ICPS website](#) for more information about the Institute.

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