

# Relationships Australia

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **“INCORPORATING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN”**

Relationships Australia will be presenting key findings on a study called “Child Inclusive Practice” at a Forum as part of a conference being held in Adelaide today. The study highlights the effectiveness of the Child Inclusive Practice program in helping to reduce the likelihood of conflict even in traditionally high risk areas such as Contact Order Programs and where there has been violence within the family.

‘The pain and hurt of separation has been felt by most of us at some point in our lives’ states Mary Mertin-Ryan National Director of Relationships Australia. ‘That pain can disable us and our capacity to see how others around us are coping. Our children in particular can find themselves wondering whether we are more concerned with our own needs than we are for them’.

Mary Mertin-Ryan said that ‘if children are troubled by parents fighting and arguing, it is difficult for them to grow up free of care because they are continually watching their parents to gauge how safe their family is. Children can become distressed by concerns that are beyond their control and this is inherently stressful’.

‘Established organisations such as Relationships Australia, Catholic Welfare Australia and Family Services Australia are very keen to find ways to assist the parents to ensure that the best interests of the children are not forgotten’ states Mary Mertin-Ryan ‘and with the upcoming introduction of Family Relationship Centres to assist Australian families in overcoming disputes, it is particularly important that we get it right’.

Child Inclusive Practice is designed to help families to keep conflict out of their lives after separation and divorce by allowing the children to be heard in a way that isn’t frightening or confronting for them.

‘The effects have been remarkable and both dads and mums have been happy with the results’ states Mary Mertin-Ryan. ‘The parents have often been surprised at the way the children describe their feelings - no parent wants their child to suffer and they quickly look to find ways to stop the fighting’.

The Relationships Australia Forum is from 1.30pm - 4.30pm on Wednesday 28 September and is part of a three day conference being held by Family Services Australia at the Stamford Grand in Glenelg, Adelaide from Wednesday 28 to Friday 30 September.

**For further information contact Mary Mertin-Ryan, National Director, Relationships Australia on (02) 6285 4466 (telephone) or 0410 623 030 (mobile) or [www.relationships.com.au](http://www.relationships.com.au)**