



Department of
Communities



'WHALE OF A TALE'

READER MENTOR PROGRAM

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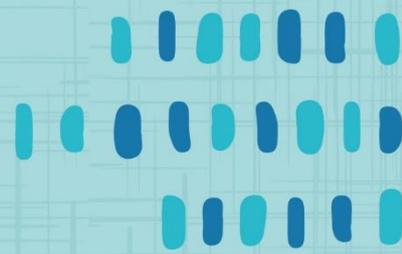
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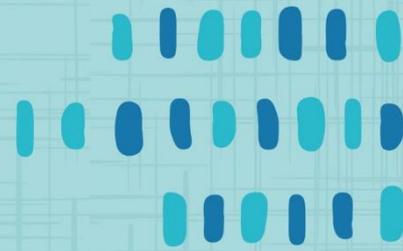
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The **READER MENTOR PROGRAM** is a program for supporting positive reading relationships for children in care.

These children are recognised as a vulnerable group who are at-risk of poor educational achievement and outcomes. Despite this, with the support of foster carers, schools and the community they are able to go on to enjoy a range of successes in both their professional and personal lives.

A partnership has been formed between the Department of Communities (Child Protection and Family Support) and the University of Notre Dame Australia to promote reading with children in care.

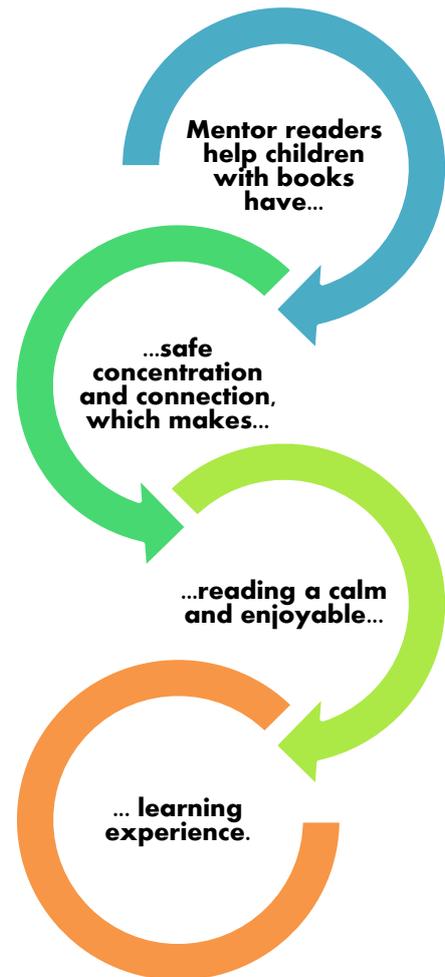
Volunteer university students will provide reader mentor support with a child in care, for up to one hour per week for two school terms. This reading session will be conducted at the child's school at a time agreed with both the student teacher and the school staff.

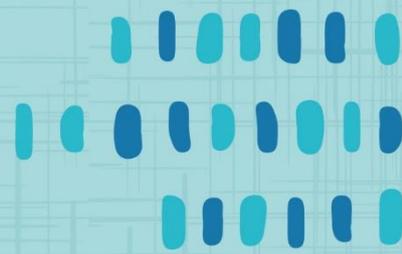
The student volunteer will require a place to read with the child and, if required, access to appropriate reading materials.

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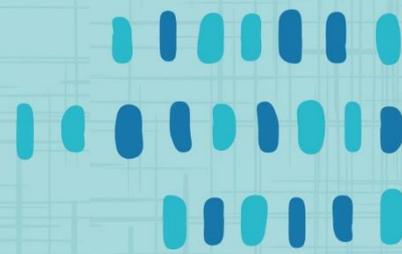
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Program improvements and developments

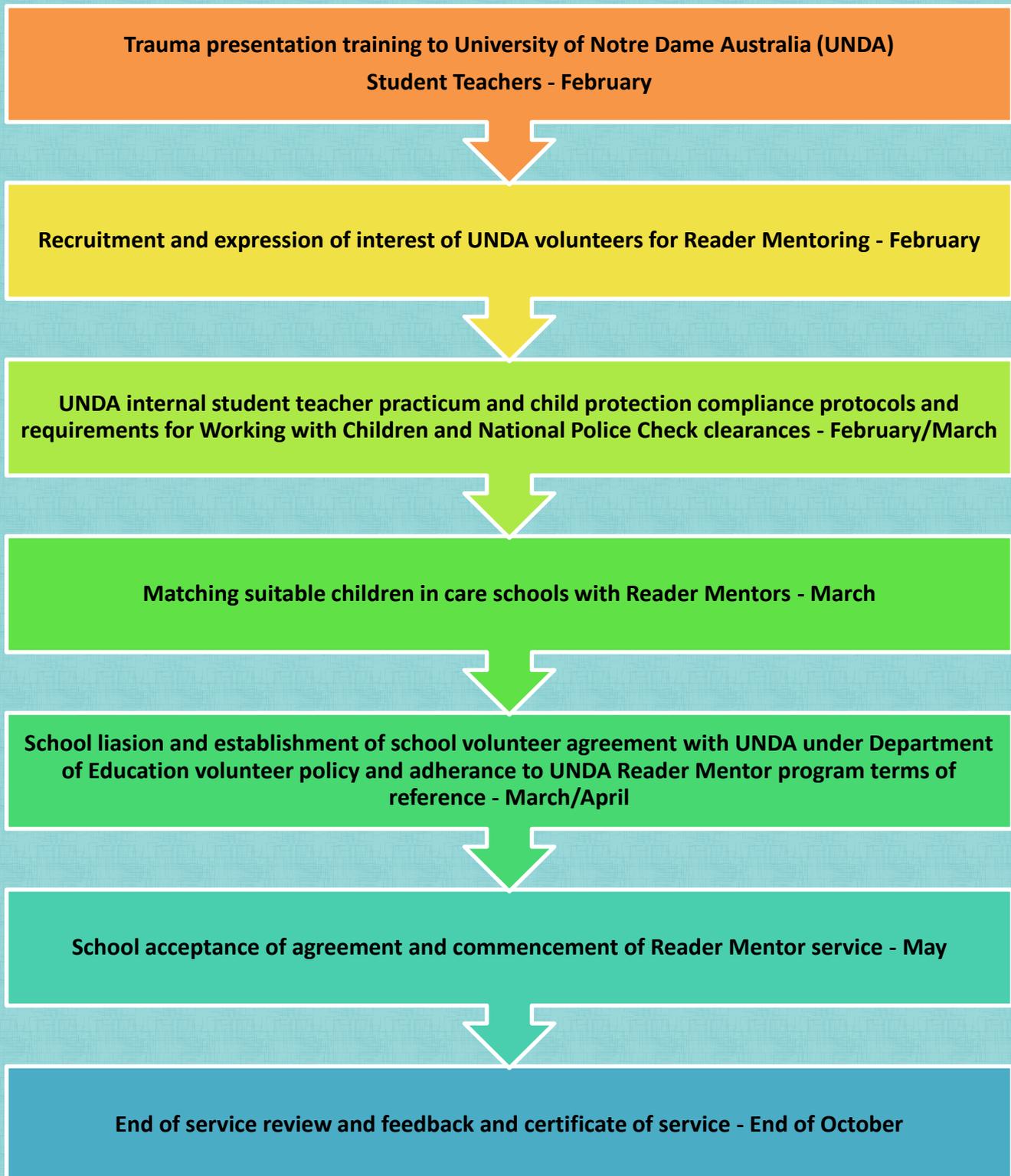
- **Development of Terms of Service policy and procedures, data handling**
 - Detailing key roles and responsibilities
 - Review of key timeframes and program duties/tasks
 - Having mentors come under school volunteer policy and accountability
 - Better use of automated email mail merge notification, certificate publishing and data base compilation and recording
- **Included and improved service documents**
 - Mentor service case summary form (completed by mentor at end of service)
 - Reading and reflection log (provided as related resource)
- **Trauma informed presentation**
 - District Senior Education Officer proving professional development instead of Fostering Services as with previous years.
- **In the media/ news articles about the program**
 - West Australian newspaper – May 2016
 - Australian Teacher Magazine - July 2016
 - The Record Magazine – August 2016
 - InPrincipio UNDA Magazine - December 2016
- **Published documents**
 - Dr Glenda Cain – UNDA Senior Lecturer publishing Service-Learning in Action - A' Whale of a Tale' program for children who have experienced trauma, chapter in Book Series: International Perspectives on Inclusive Education
 - Corporate Communications approved Student and School Information booklet
 - New logo design, appreciation of service and trauma PD certificate template

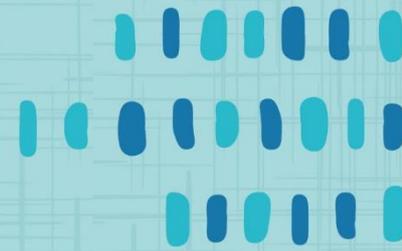


Mentor Service summary statistics 2017

- Number of UNDA student teachers attending “Trauma in the Classroom”
PD presented by Senior Education Officer: **100 students total**
- Number of mentors finalised with school: **22 total**
- Number of schools participating: **14 total** (13 public, 1 Catholic)
- Hours of mentoring service: **440 hours total** (based on 1 hour per week 2 terms worth)

Timeframes, Procedures and Processes





Terms of Service

UNDA Reader Mentor volunteer service will be provided on the following conditions

UNDA and Student Teacher responsibility

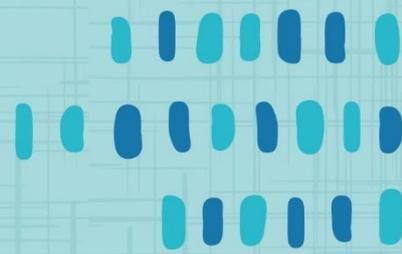
- All UNDA Student Volunteers must be relevant Child Protection check cleared and able to have Working with Children Checks and National Police Checks.
- Reader mentoring will commence during school term two and commence until approximately twenty sessions have been completed or until the end of school term three (usually negotiated with the school to be between 45 minutes to one hour sessions per week for two terms worth).
- Student teacher will complete a reading mentor log and summary review of the service for all parties' reference and proof of service.
- The UNDA Senior Lecturer to liaise and debrief to support UNDA student teacher if required.
- The UNDA Lecturer and Senior Education Officer to liaise and debrief to support UNDA student teacher if required.

Department of Communities (CPFS) responsibility

- Provide trauma informed practice learning development to student volunteers performing reader mentoring.
- To authorise via the respective Child Protection worker from the CPFS District for the UNDA student to provide reader mentoring to the requested child in care.
- To provide reader mentoring program information, and ensure written confirmation of school agreement to program's terms of reference.
- Provide certificate of learning development and service acknowledge on student teacher completion.
- The UNDA Lecturer and Senior Education Officer to liaise and debrief to support UNDA student teacher if required.

School responsibility

- The school will provide formal written acceptance to CPFS and UNDA if accepting the outlined terms of service, and take on responsibility of taking on the UNDA student volunteer as a school volunteer, adhering completely to the Department of Education Policy on volunteers in schools.
- The school classroom teacher to liaise and debrief to support UNDA student teacher if required.



Mentor Service case summary

1. How many sessions did you have with the child?

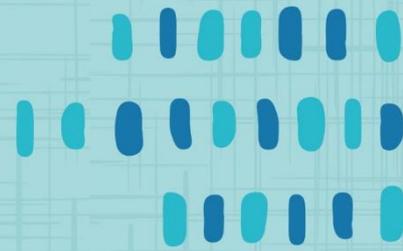
2. What were your perceptions regarding the child's engagement and participation in the sessions with you?

3. How did you find you were able to engage and support the child's participation?

4. Did you receive any feedback from the school about the volunteering program?

5. Are you able to continue with the program?

6. Any other feedback you might like to give us?

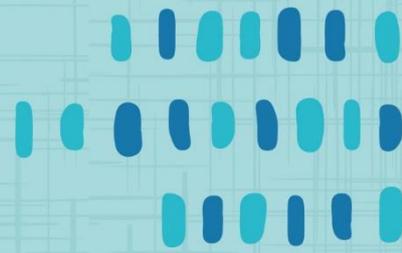


Reader mentoring program tips and advice

- Be professional and punctual.
- Be professional in what you wear.
- Be professional in the way you present yourself.
- Get to know your students interests - that is the key to engaging them.
- If they are a behaviour challenger, face it head on ASAP by implementing behaviour management strategies so they have something to aim for and an incentive to work towards.
- Speak to the teacher and ask them is there is anything you should know. Most teachers will do this without you asking.
- Use hand-on teaching resources with your child e.g. play dough to model their favourite character from a book.
- Offer regular praise for their work and feedback.
- Some children may need to be reassured that you will be seeing them again so tell them at the end of the session "I will see you next week."
- Be flexible with activities and times
- Organize communication with the school so if students are away you know before you go e.g. Call the school in the morning.
- Tell the child a bit about yourself so they can get to know you as well as you getting to know them. It will help them to connect to you and form a relationship with you.
- Use ICT to engage them e.g. iPad interactive book apps
- Be cautious of books chosen as some may be family based and some children under CPFS care may not have a mum or dad in their lives.
- Be prepared to hear the child tell you about their background as some may tell you what has happened in the past.

Most importantly enjoy the experience and journey of getting to know this child. The experience is an amazing one that is very rewarding even though it can be challenging. Just remember the difference you are making to that young person is a positive one.





Resources

Calmer Classrooms teacher tip sheet

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/childsafety/foster-care/calmer-classrooms.pdf>

Recommended Books for children - The Children's Book Council of Australia

<https://cbca.org.au>

Child Development Trauma Guide

<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/ChildAbuseAndNeglect/Documents/ChildDevelopmentAndTraumaGuide.pdf>

S.M.A.R.T. Practice free online trauma practice teacher training

<http://www.childhood.org.au/for-professionals/smart-online-training>

School and Classroom Strategies: Trauma Related Concerns tip sheet

<http://studentsfirstproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Quick-Fact-Sheet-Trauma-Strategies-for-teachers-2.24.14.pdf>

