

# Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds

Teacher's Guide

Supporting intergenerational  
learning programs in schools

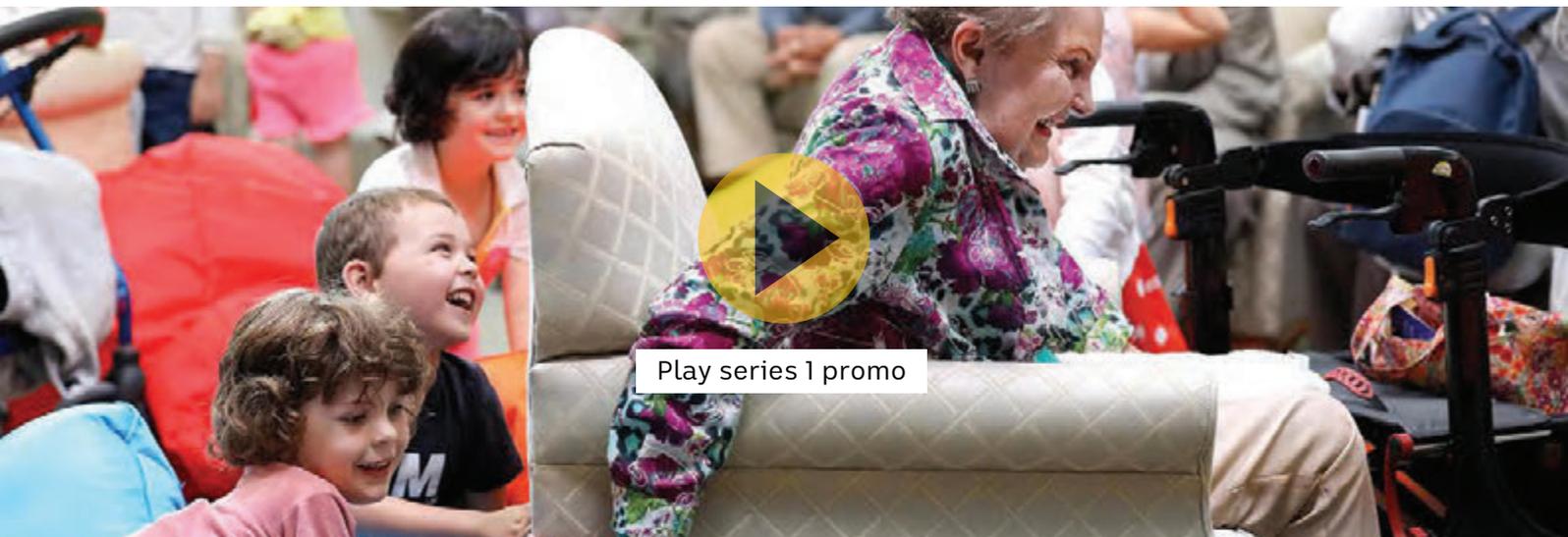


**Education**

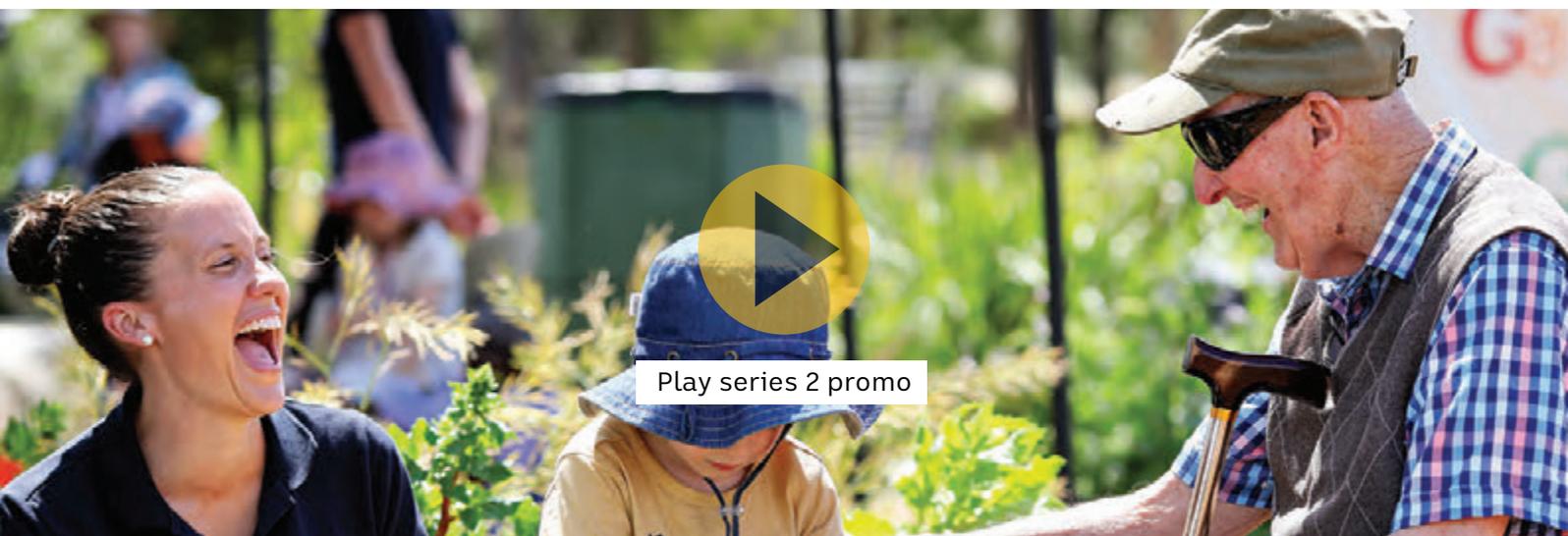
# INTRODUCTION

What can a team of energetic four year olds do to enrich the lives of older people? *Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds series 1 and 2* invite us to observe an expansive research project designed to answer this question, as well as determine whether interaction with senior citizens can contribute to the development of young children.

*Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds* is at times confronting as it explores the sometimes lonely world of old age, but its lasting messages of hope, joy and friendship provide opportunities for teachers to consider ways in which children can make genuine improvements in the lives of others.



Play series 1 promo



Play series 2 promo

Watch [Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds](#) on ABC iview.

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# ABOUT

The television series *Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds* records the events of a research project in which a group of preschool children join senior citizens in a range of activities designed to challenge children and adults alike.

While intergenerational care programs have proven to be beneficial overseas, research is also being undertaken in Australia to determine the merits of such programs. *Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds* is an account of some of the first such investigations.

Both series inspire teachers to consider ways of bringing students and senior citizens together. The children in series 1 visit a retirement home, and in series 2 senior citizens visit an early childhood centre. But for teachers, the most practical approach might be for students to meet senior citizens in schools, community community centres or local parks.

The participants in both series undertake activities that exercise their minds and bodies. The progress of the children and adults is monitored by experts, and the final episode provides an insight into the success of the programs.

*Old People's Homes for 4 Year Olds* explores issues of loneliness, depression and dementia and the ways in which these influence, and are influenced by, physical wellbeing. This provides a valuable context for the study of the *Personal Social and Community Health* strand of *Health and Physical Education* in the primary years. Further, engagement with older Australians can contribute to the history curriculum in Years F–3, as well as Year 6.

**Dr Kay Patterson**  
Age Discrimination Commissioner  
Australian Human Rights Commission



Dr Kay Patterson, Age Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission, talks about the benefits of intergenerational programs in schools.



# CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

*Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds* supports the following learning outcomes in the Australian Curriculum:

<b>Humanities and Social Sciences: Civics and Citizenship</b>	
<b>Years 3 and 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACHASSK072 Why people participate within communities and how students can actively participate and contribute</li> </ul>
<b>Humanities and Social Sciences: History</b>	
<b>Foundation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACHASSK013 How the stories of families and the past can be communicated, for example, through photographs, artefacts, books, oral histories, digital media and museums</li> </ul>
<b>Year 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACHASSK030 Differences and similarities between students' daily lives and life during their parents' and grandparents' childhoods</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACHASSK045 The importance today of a historical site of cultural or spiritual significance in the local area, and why it should be preserved</li> <li>● ACHASSK046 How changing technology affected people's lives (at home and in the ways they worked, travelled, communicated and played in the past)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACHASSK064 Days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia (including Australia Day, Anzac Day, and National Sorry Day) and the importance of symbols and emblems</li> </ul>
<b>Year 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACHASSK136 Stories of groups of people who migrated to Australia since Federation (including from ONE country of the Asia region) and reasons they migrated</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Physical Education</b>	
<b>Foundation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACPPS004 Practise personal and social skills to interact positively with others.</li> </ul>
<b>Years 1 and 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACPPS024 Recognise similarities and differences in individuals and groups, and explore how these are celebrated and respected</li> </ul>
<b>Years 3 and 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACPPS037 Describe how respect, empathy and valuing diversity can positively influence relationships</li> </ul>
<b>Years 5 and 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ACPPS058 Investigate the role of preventive health in promoting and maintaining health, safety and wellbeing for individuals and their communities</li> </ul>

Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds supports the following General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum:

<b>Social awareness</b>	
<b>Levels 1a and 1b</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Show an awareness for the feelings, needs and interests of others</li><li>● Describe ways they can help at home and school</li><li>● Explore relationships through play and group experiences</li></ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Describe how they contribute to their homes, classrooms and local communities, and how others care for and assist them</li><li>● Identify ways to care for others, including ways of making and keeping friends</li></ul>
<b>Level 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Identify the various communities to which they belong and what they can do to make a difference</li><li>● describe factors that contribute to positive relationships, including with people at school and in their community</li></ul>
<b>Level 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● identify a community need or problem and consider ways to take action to address it</li></ul>





## BENEFITS OF AN INTERGENERATIONAL CARE PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS

Engaging with senior citizens offers many benefits to school students. These include:

- providing opportunities for students to care for people in their local community
- deepening students' understanding of their communities and their places in them
- improving students' confidence and sense of self-worth
- meeting people from different cultural backgrounds
- learning stories of immigration
- learning about ways people lived in the past
- developing an appreciation of the achievements of others
- increasing empathy, sensitivity and respect towards others
- developing vocabulary and language skills.





# GETTING STARTED

For teachers who are considering embarking on intergenerational learning programs, there are many ways to get in touch with senior citizens. Perhaps the best place to start is the school community, which might include senior citizens or people who work with them. A message in the school newsletter might draw some useful responses.

Other helpful organisations include:

- [National Seniors Australia](#)
- local councils, which list aged care services on their websites
- elderly citizens' residences, retirement villages, aged care facilities and nursing homes. A useful resource is the [Aged Care Guide](#)
- Local sub-branches of the RSL can be located by selecting the relevant state or territory on the [RSL National website](#). The RSL is not an elderly citizens' organisation, but it includes a significant number of senior members. Further, many sub-branches include officers whose role is to liaise with schools
- [Aged and Community Services Australia](#)
- The Older Persons Advocacy Network's [Stay Supported and Connected in Your Community](#) campaign can provide advice on initiatives to connect with older Australians.

It is important to meet with representatives of selected organisations to discuss the sorts of activities you are planning. They can help determine what is feasible, ensure activities are safe, and provide tips and ideas to improve the effectiveness of your interactions.

In *Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds* series 1, 10 pre-schoolers visit 11 residents of a retirement village. If whole classes of school-aged students visit aged care centres, it is important that the students do not overwhelm their senior counterparts. Activities need to be planned carefully and children should be familiar with the protocols listed below.

Some schools might choose to include visits to senior citizens as part of a special activities program, where the number of students can be capped at a more manageable number.

If visits to residential facilities are not possible, local halls, community centres, libraries and parks might be available. Keep in mind that senior citizens often require ramps, instead of steps, and user-friendly bathroom facilities.

Of course, schools can make ideal places to meet, especially if they include multipurpose rooms or halls. Older Australians can share their experiences of school and how things have changed. Once again, don't forget about ramps and bathrooms.



## ACTIVITIES

For teachers who are considering embarking on an intergenerational learning program, there are many activities that students and senior citizens can undertake together. Whether students interact with senior citizens in retirement villages, schools, parks or community centres, possible activities include:

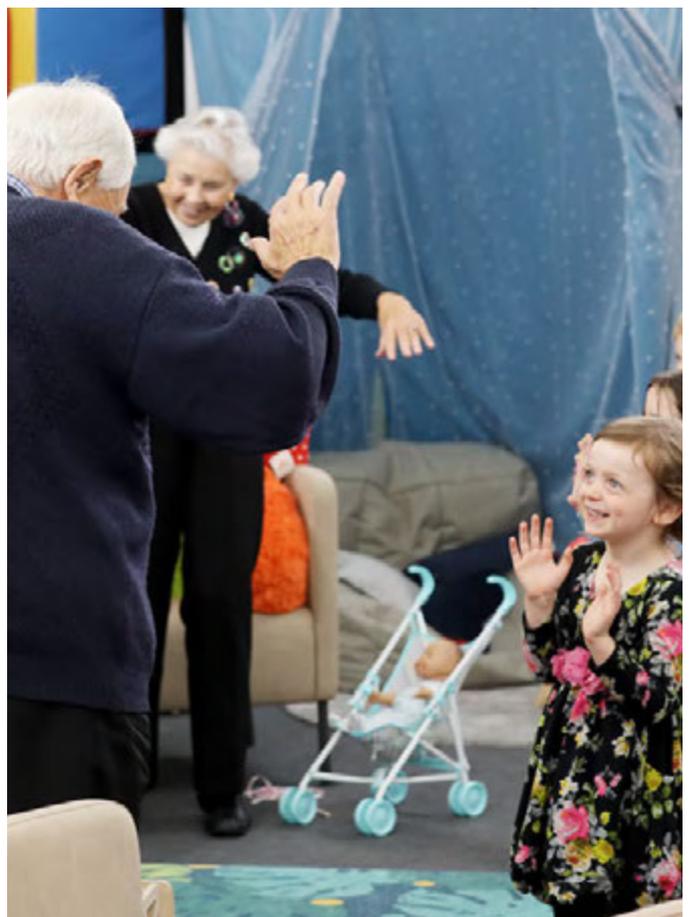
- assisting senior citizens with tasks, e.g. carrying items, serving afternoon tea, helping with shopping and using technology
- playing games, e.g. board games, card games and memory games
- inviting citizens to describe games they played as children
- interviewing citizens in order to learn about their immigration experiences
- asking citizens to show and discuss items from their past that are not in common use today
- prompting citizens to describe their school days
- asking citizens to discuss some of the ways they travelled, shopped, cleaned and communicated when they were children
- listening as Indigenous Australians share experiences from throughout their lives and how these have (and have not) changed
- creating artworks, e.g. paintings, drawings, collages and dioramas
- performing songs and other musical works. Some senior citizens are terrific musicians
- preparing and sharing meals
- sharing observances with citizens, e.g. Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, Harmony Day, NAIDOC Week and birthdays
- reading stories together
- writing captions for photos
- gardening, e.g. planting and harvesting fruit and vegies, mulching and watering.



## PROTOCOLS

It is important that students are reminded of simple protocols when interacting with senior citizens. These might include:

- remembering that some senior citizens do not see or hear very well
- calling people by the names they used when introducing themselves. Some adults might prefer to be addressed with a title, e.g. Mrs Smith
- not running, especially indoors
- looking at people when speaking to them
- remembering to say “please” and “thank you”
- understanding that some senior citizens cannot move as quickly as children
- being patient
- coughing and sneezing into tissues or elbows. Students with coughs and colds should not participate until they are well
- washing hands after using the bathroom.





## GOING FURTHER

There are a number of websites that provide information, research and examples of intergenerational programs. Here are a few examples:

- [The Intergenerational Care Project](#) is a great place to find out more about the subject.
- The [Intergenerational Learning Centre](#) in West Seattle is a pioneer in the field.
- [ConnectAbility Australia](#) describes intergenerational programs being trialled on the Gold Coast and in Kingston, Tasmania.
- [Ask Gran Not Google](#) is a program that encourages school students to present questions to older Australians. It is run by Feros Care, a not-for-profit organisation based on the Gold Coast.
- [Ed Connect](#) is a program that prepares and connects intergenerational volunteers with disadvantaged or at-risk young people for educational success and personal wellbeing.
- [Ageless Friendships](#) is an inspirational short documentary series on ABC iview that looks at community initiatives that support intergenerational connections.



