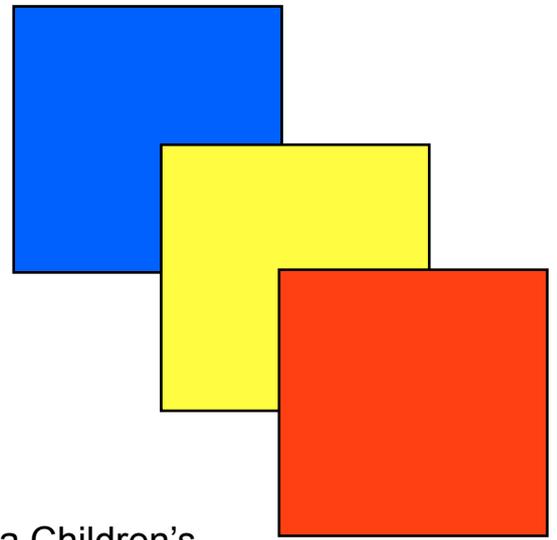


**A PROPOSAL FOR THE ONGOING USE OF  
THE MECHANICS INSTITUTE HALL**

*AN INVESTMENT IN FRANKSTON'S FUTURE*

Written by Sandi Walters and Melinda Shelley April 2013

# OVERVIEW



## Proposal Summary

- Develop the Mechanics Institute hall into a Children's Community Centre
- Entrust management of the centre to the Frankston Toy Library team.
- Watch the centre become a hub of activity for families throughout the city and beyond.
- Encourage diverse community groups to use the site to form mutually beneficial relationships.
- Give the incredible gift of a sensory room to the children of our community.
- Reduce council expense by allowing the centre to be run by the community for the community.



# Mechanics Institute Hall Proposal

## Background

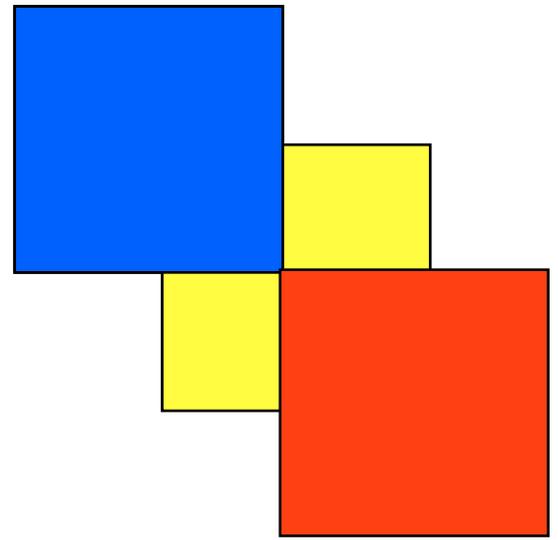
The Mechanics Institute Hall has played a key role in the history of the City of Frankston. Since its establishment in 1880 it has been used by the local community for meetings, war memorials, kindergartens, dances and theatre productions. It was also used as the home of the Frankston Toy Library for several years.

The hall has since been refurbished due to a considerable investment by the Frankston City Council and is waiting for its future to be written.

Ability gaps  
— cognitive and non-cognitive —  
between the advantaged and disadvantaged  
open up early in the lives of children.

Professor James Heckman

# The Proposal.



We propose that the Frankston City Council allow the Mechanics Institute Hall to be used as a **Children's Community Centre**.

**The primary aspect which would make this centre unique, would be the introduction of a sensory room.**

These rooms offer a therapeutic environment that is extremely useful for children with special needs but is also fantastic for the development of all children.

Primary services would include using the space to provide activities aimed at children that encourage physical and social development.

Regular activities would include offering a range of regularly varied activities such as playgroup, storytime, children's yoga, circus training, children's theatre, singing, dancing and much more.

In this role it could offer numerous activities and once again become a central hub of activity for the local community.

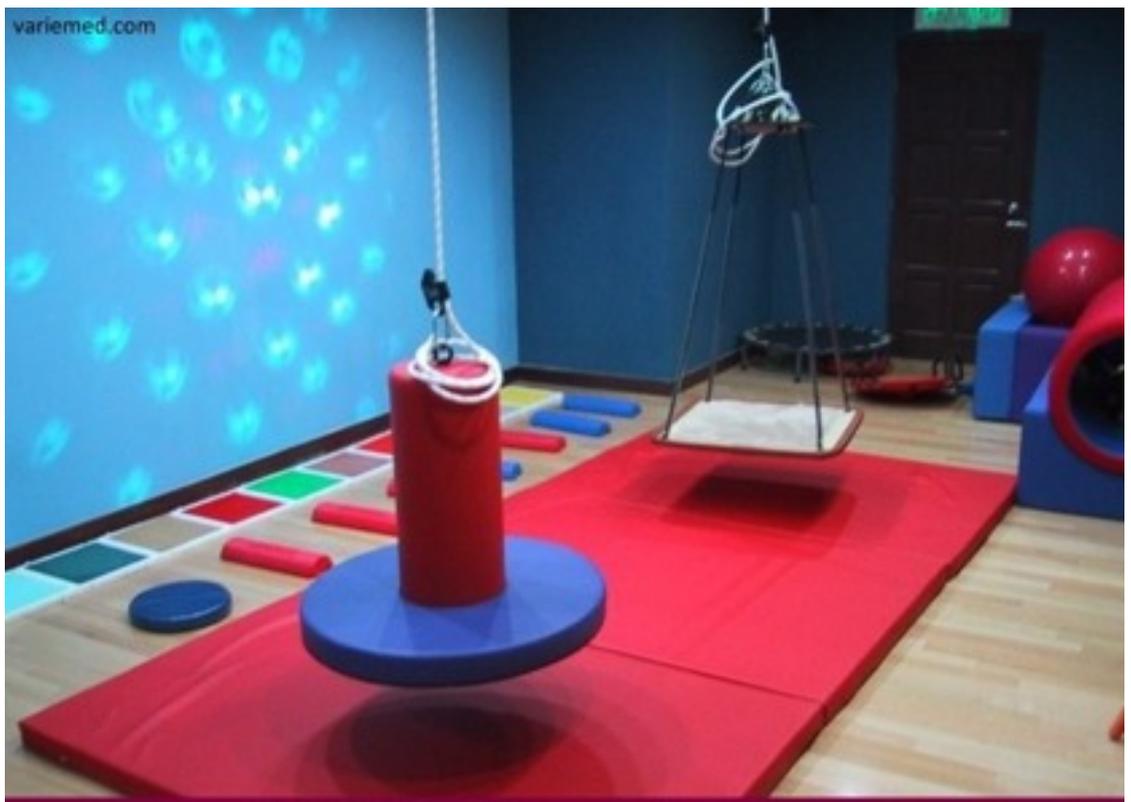
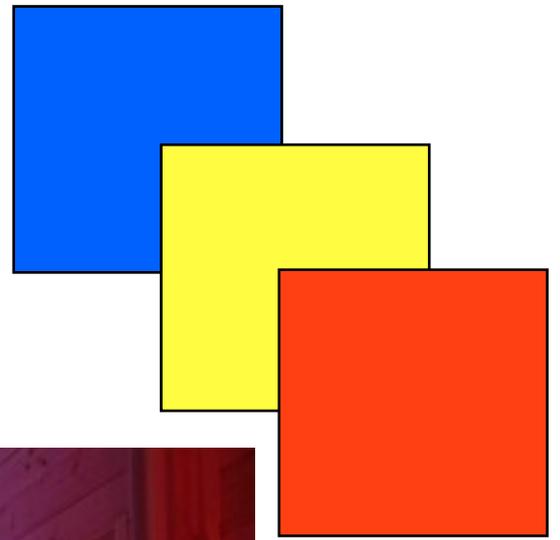
# “A sensory room offers special needs kids new hope”



Sensory rooms include a soft environment with a range of interactive activities in which children can not harm themselves. Parents are unable to provide this for their children due to the significant space and financial commitment required.

**For the Frankston City Council to provide this room would be an incredible investment in the health and wellbeing of local families.**

# Ideas for Sensory Playroom



## Management

The Frankston Toy Library is offering to manage the centre as a part of its service to the local community and commitment to the health and development of children.

With a proven record of management, community liaison, council involvement and service to the Frankston community; management of this centre would merely become an additional arm to an already invaluable service.

This would in turn allow council to provide an innovative, fresh and community minded service without significant expense or time commitment.

The development would be personally overseen by President, Sandi Walters who is committed to improving the services available to children and families within the area, without the exclusion of families with children that have special needs.



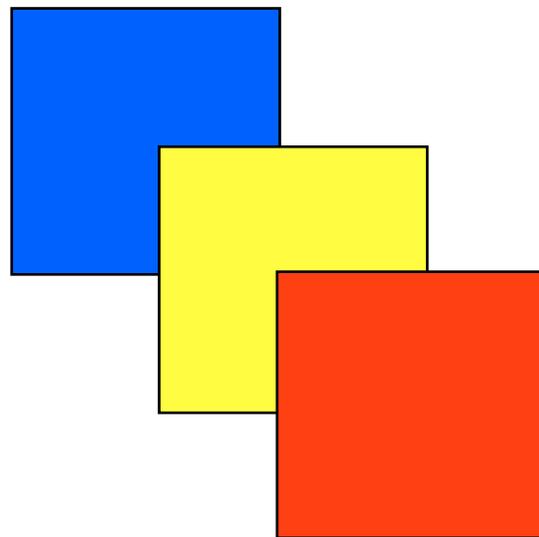
Sandi is also committed to encouraging mutually beneficial relationships between various community groups within the city and would develop opportunities for otherwise diverse community groups to work together to support the development of our children.

The centre would be run by the community for the community and would be dedicated to community wellbeing.



# Opportunity

**Target Market :Children 0-9's  
Frankston and surrounding LGA's**



	<b>0-4's</b>	<b>5-9's</b>
Frankston	8,675	7,646
Mornington Pen	8,451	8,960
Kingston	9,104	8,263
Greater Dandenong	8,916	7,781
Casey	19,964	19,100
<b>Totals</b>	<b>55,110</b>	<b>51,750</b>



## Commitment

The Frankston City Council has made a significant contribution to the community through the refurbishment of the Mechanics Institute Hall. It would be so rewarding to see this commitment effectively used by the community.

To establish the Children's Community Centre is simple; FCC only needs to agree to lease the premises to the Frankston Toy Library with terms to be agreed and based on sharing the revenue generated once the centre is fully operational .

Once given approval, the Frankston Toy Library committee would work quickly with local community groups, business owners and families to establish a program of events and a draw card launch to showcase the commitment made by council.

The Frankston Toy Library Committee with support from Frankston City Council Councillors and staff will approach both State and Federal Governments, local business and community organisations to gain the necessary funds to develop the facility.

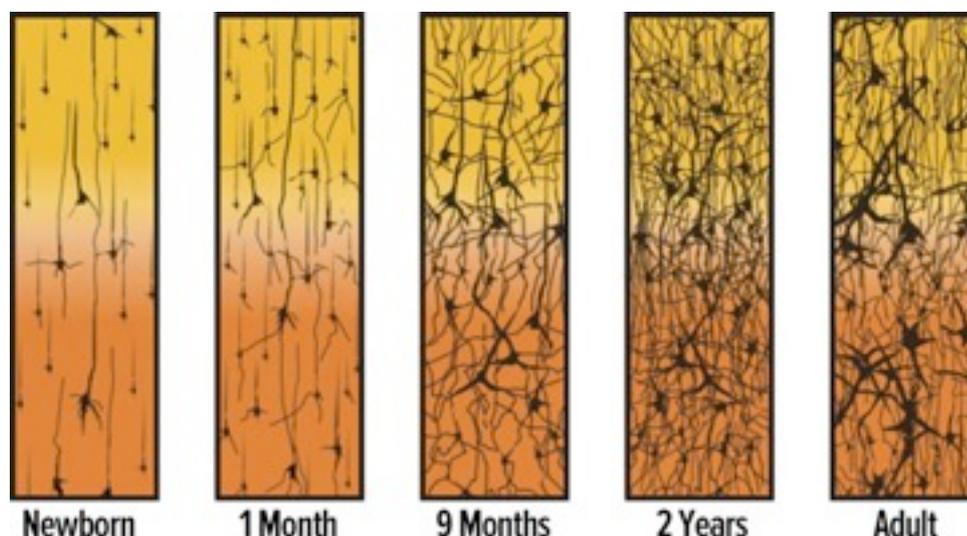
Expenses would include \$20,000pa for a suitably qualified additional casual staff member and \$35,000 for the establishment of the jewel of the centre, the sensory room.

The new position will be an employee of the Frankston Toy Library and managed accordingly. The role will be to oversee the coordination of the centre in conjunction with the President of the Frankston Toy Library.

While most of the running of this centre will be done by volunteers, having an employee responsible for its development will ensure ongoing growth and productivity.

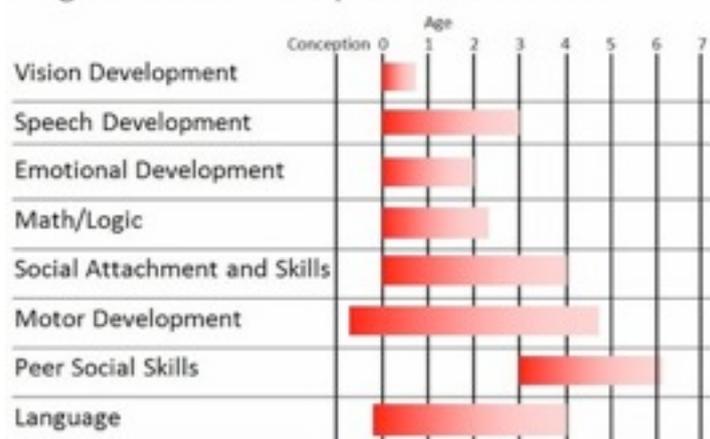


# Baby's Brain Begins Now: Conception to Age 3



[www.urbanchildinstitute.org](http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org)

Stages of Brain Development in an Infant



Social and Emotional Development:  
Something We Can All Support



## **Case Study**

at Clifton Primary School by Edge Hill University and Lancashire County Council.

### **What has been the impact of the project on pupils' learning, achievement or enjoyment**

- The children using the room are much more in control of themselves (be it behaviorally, physically or emotionally, or all three). This has meant a higher chance of being able to work within the classroom for most of the day, plus better motor control skills enabling them to take a fuller part in lessons and activities.
- Children's feedback is very positive and seen as a wonderful place to support their learning and enable them to achieve much more.
- Staff have noted the calming effect the room is having on some children, resulting in better communication and concentration.

[http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/projects/gp\\_award/download/file/clifton%20primary%20010-004.pdf](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/projects/gp_award/download/file/clifton%20primary%20010-004.pdf)

# Other Sensory Rooms

## Sensory Room

Macarthur Disability Services (MDS) went into the future when the **Sensory Room** opened at our Camden site.

The state of the art room uses light and sound to help stimulate disabled people.

Equipment in the room includes a vibrating musical mattress that allows people with a hearing impairment to feel music, and a leaf chair that provides a sense of movement to people confined to wheelchairs.

Air beanbags, variable lighting, projectors and pin spots, fibre optics, bubble tubes and therapeutic music are other features of the sensory room. All items and equipment in the **Sensory Room** assist a range of disadvantages, but also have social benefits.

The **Sensory Room** provides therapy and stimulation based programs to improve participants' quality of life. All ages can benefit from the **Sensory Room** and is available for public use.

The local community and Camden Council through its Mayoral Ball, donated more than \$30,000 to make the **Sensory Room** a reality, and MDS thanks all those that contributed for their support.

This cost is \$5 per person, per half hour. Group discounts available and bookings are essential.



# Barrow Borough Council, UK

## PlayMax Soft Play and Sensory Room at the Park

### Soft play

PlayMAX is the indoor play soft arena at the Park.



It's a safe environment for all children, including those with disabilities and with challenging behaviour.

The soft play area contains various wedges, waves, logs and steps, slide, ball pool, trampoline, illuminated cabin and interactive musical hopscotch, upturned mushroom which rocks from side to side, sensation trail and funky slouch pods.



### **Interactive floor**

There is now an interactive floor in the soft play room at the Park Leisure Centre. This is noisy and has flashing lights.

This is great fun for some young people but not for others. If you think the noise and lights may affect your child, please contact the Park Leisure Centre in advance. Staff will make sure the noise and lights are turned off when you visit.

### **Sensory room**

Children with a disability also have access to the sensory room as part of the sessions.

The sensory room is designed for people with sensory, cognitive and physical impairments and meets the challenge of both the interactive and the passive user through educational and therapeutic activities. The Sensory Room is only available for children with a disability.

# Sensory Room Equipment

## ● Water Bed

Music can be played through the bed to create fine vibrations of rhythm, tone and beat.

## ● Milky Way Carpet

Supports sight and touch.

## ● Fibre Optic Spray & Fibre Optic Curtain

Act as a visual stimulus that creates a sense of relaxation. They encourage hand eye coordination, sight and a sense of cause and effect.

## ● Mirror Ball & Spot Light

Creates magical atmosphere and when combined with the spotlight moves sparkles of light around the room.

## ● Colour Match Panel

Passive and interactive. Ideal for sensory stimulation and colour recognition.

## ● Colour Change Panel

Colourful back-lit push buttons when pressed respond with both sound and light.

## ● CD Player & Relaxation CDs

## ● Colour Fan Panel

Gentle breeze provided by fans whilst three lights run through multiple light sequences and fusion.

## ● Textured Grille

## ● Light Up/Vibrating Totem Poles

## ● Talking Cube

The talking cube when rolled will trigger the cube to say the name of the colour that the cube lands on. This piece of equipment encourages language development and hand eye coordination.

## ● Projector with Effect Wheels

Create simple changing shapes of colour and gentle patterns.

## ● Aromatherapy Diffuser

## ● Acrylic Mirrors

## ● Slouch Pods

Moulds to the shape of the body and has supportive high back.

## ● Vibration Pillow

## ● Massage Tube