



MEDIA RELEASE

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Family Planning Queensland marks International Day of People with Disability

On 3 December, millions of people throughout the world will be celebrating International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD). Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) is commemorating the day through its support of families with children and young people with disability in the Creating Conversations about sexuality and relationships project.

Georgina Livingstone, FPQ's Disability Education Coordinator says, "The day is not only an opportunity to celebrate the ability of people with disability but also a chance to increase awareness of the issues facing families." She explains, "One specific issue of concern is that children and young people with disability often do not receive adequate support or information about sexuality and relationships."

The Creating Conversations project currently delivered throughout Central Queensland aims to build the confidence of parents and carers to discuss topics such as relationships and decision making, bodies and puberty changes as well as personal safety skills. Importantly the project provides opportunities for parents and carers to practice having conversations with their child using multimedia, visual and activity based resources.

"Parents and carers are often in the best position to support and respond to the needs and questions that a child or young person has and it is important that children and young people receive positive messages about their sexuality, sexual development and safety," explains Toni Woodrow, Local Area Co-ordination for Emerald Disability and Community Care Service Centre, Blackwater.

Parents and carers of children and young people with disability can now access free online activity books to help open up conversations at home about bodies, relationships and being safe. The resources include activities, worksheets and picture cards and are available at www.fpq.com.au/education/disability/resources.php

FPQ hopes to expand the Creating Conversations project to cover all of Queensland, as all children and young people with disability have a right to receive information about sexuality and relationships and sadly, for many, this does not happen.

"People with disability are sexual beings and FPQ encourages the community, parents, carers and professionals to work together to promote healthy attitudes and communication about sexuality and relationship issues. Disability does not mean inability. By publicly celebrating International Day of People with Disability we hope to make a positive contribution to the lives of the one in five Australians who live with a disability," Ms Livingstone said.

For more information, please contact Janelle Weissman on 0423 408 830. See FPQ's position statement on sexuality and disability on www.fpq.com.au/media/Ps_SexualDisability.php