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Media Release

***Accept Difference* initiative to change the lives of thousands of Mid North Coast families**

For the first time in Australia, Mid North Coast families with disability will have their voices heard in a groundbreaking home-grown media and education campaign to communicate the important *Accept Difference* message to the community.

[Early Connections](#), an alliance of a group of five Early Intervention Services from Taree to Coffs Harbour, has been funded to roll out an awareness and social change campaign encouraging greater inclusion of families with disability.

The [campaign](#) aims to break down the stigma people with disability regularly experience in public and to foster a greater feeling of acceptance of difference and heightened awareness among the broader community.

“One in five Australians have disability and global research is clear that inclusion fosters social well-being as well as economic advantages. It is the way society is organised that causes disability rather than the person’s impairment or difference,” said Jennie Fenton, parent, carer and founder of social inclusion project Bello Belonging.

“Inclusion and belonging is a basic human right. We have a choice how we react and view families with disability. Small changes to our behaviours can break down barriers for these families and we want all families to be socialised, not marginalised,” Jennie said.



An intense three-month [advertising campaign on commercial television networks](#), in newspaper and outdoor media as well as business and community education and online activity around #Accept Difference are part of the initiative. Real-life case studies will be shared through the website, experiences in both workplace and community settings.

The [television advertisement](#) was produced in Nambucca Heads by Nancy Sposato Projects, with unique animation and musical score to highlight the plight of a mother shopping with her child and facing the surprising inclusion, warmth and acceptance by those she encounters in the shop.

It is anticipated other regional and metropolitan communities will embrace the campaign and activate in their regions, with the NSW Mid North Coast initiative a catalyst for change across the country.

Interviews with key spokespeople as well as families with disability are available:

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* The print campaign features Jacob who lives with Down Syndrome. He is undertaking trainee placements at McDonald's and Woolworths in Nambucca Heads. In both situations he fulfills his role without the help of an aid.