



HELPING OUT: The panel of professionals attending the session included Centrelink clinical nurse Kerri O'Connor, Centrelink manager Gavin Burns, Department of Child Safety team leader Celina Pettit, Centacare Homelessness Service program manager Elena Casilli, Tisara Gunasekera, a legal officer for the Western Queensland Justice Network and Centracare family relationships programs manager.

Working to help fathers

PARENTS play an important role in their children's lives.

That is why Centacare is attempting to strengthen father-child relationships through a new program in the city.

The community organisation is currently running a Fathers Keeping It Together program in the city.

This program, based on early intervention and prevention rather than a cure, would help parents while their children get back into the school year, Centacare family relationship services programme manager Menik Gunasekera said.

"It aims to support fathers with the challenges of parenting, with emphasis on strengthening the important role of the father within the family and assisting with communication between parents," she said.

Ms Gunasekera said the program

would help fathers focus on being a parent, no matter the circumstances.

"Fathers who are already separated from their families can also benefit from this program," she said.

"It works with them to take charge of the impact of separation and isolation on their lives and those of their children."

Fathers can also meet with professionals in the sessions to learn about legal rights with their children.

Centacare will also be launching a Hey Dad program for fathers which would explore the skills, benefits and challenges of parenting.

The program is due to commence on February 15 and registration is essential.

■ For more information on the services at Centacare contact 4749 8000.