

## *Policy: Child Protection Investigation*

### Policy Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that Territory Families Care and Protection staff complete a timely and comprehensive investigation and assessment of safety and risk, when information indicates that a child may be in need of protection, and take other action considered necessary to secure the safety of the child.

### Policy Statement

Territory Families Child Protection staff have a legislative responsibility to undertake an investigation to determine whether a child is in need of protection, that is, that the child has been harmed or is at risk of harm because of an act or omission of a parent. The outcome of an investigation and risk assessment provides the basis for any ongoing intervention.

Territory Families Child Protection staff will use Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools, in conjunction with professional judgement and knowledge of legislation, and care and protection policies and procedures, to facilitate decision-making at critical decision points in the child protection investigation process.

The principles underpinning a child protection investigation are:

- The best interests of the child are paramount, including protecting the child from harm;
- Statutory powers should be exercised in a way that is open, fair and respects the rights of the child and their family;
- The family has the primary responsibility for the care, upbringing and development of a child. A child will only be removed from their family when there is no other reasonable way to ensure their safety;
- A strengths based approach is used; and
- A kinship group, representative organisation and Aboriginal community nominated by an Aboriginal child's family, should be involved in making decisions about an Aboriginal child.

The aims of a child protection investigation are to:

- Ensure the immediate and ongoing safety of the child;
- Gather and assess information about what factors may have contributed to the harm having occurred;
- Determine whether the reports of harm or exploitation made in a Child Protection Report can be substantiated;
- Determine whether there is a likelihood of harm occurring in the future supported by completion of a Family Risk Assessment;
- Determine what strengths/supports are present or available to reduce the likelihood of further harm occurring; and
- Engage with the family to reduce risk to the child where the risk of harm or exploitation is assessed as 'high' or 'very' high risk upon completion of the Family Risk Assessment.

## Legislative Basis

[Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 s35](#)

## Standards

[Standards of Professional Practice](#)

Authorised by:

<b>Executive Director, Service Development and Policy on:</b>	16/03/2015	<b>Active from:</b>	16/03/2015
<b>Version 1.0</b>	To ensure that Territory Families Child Protection staff complete a timely and comprehensive investigation and assessment of safety and risk and take other action considered necessary to secure the safety of the child.		

Current Version V 1.01

<b>Active from:</b>	6/02/2017	<b>Authorised by:</b>	Director, Policy
<b>Update:</b>	Rebranded, internal links reset, Caseworker to Case Manager		
<b>Review due:</b>	March 19	<b>Maintenance:</b>	Policy TF.Policy@nt.gov.au