

Policy: Family and Parent Support Services

Policy Purpose

To inform staff about the elements of Family and Parent Support Services provided and funded by the Territory Families.

Policy Statement

Mandate

Territory Families is mandated to provide Family and Parent Support Services in the *Care and Protection of Children Act*:

- The Northern Territory Government is responsible for promoting and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and supporting families in fulfilling their role in relation to children (s7);
- The Minister (s25) and Chief Executive Officer (s42) have the power to fulfil this responsibility. The Minister may do anything for the adoption of a cooperative approach in relation to the care and protection of children; and
- The Chief Executive Officer can make a number of arrangements to provide services to children and families, including the coordination of assistance and the provision of child-related services (s41 to s46).

The purpose of Family and Parent Support Services is to support families to care for their children.

Family Intervention Framework

Family and Parenting Support services are provided under the Territory Families' Family Intervention Framework.

The Family Intervention Framework identifies and informs the role of four service streams to ensure families receive the type of services they need to secure the wellbeing and safety of their children:

- **Child Safety Intervention** – for families with low to moderate child safety concerns, to prevent future harm;
- **Intensive Family Preservation** – for families with high level child safety concerns, to prevent the removal of the child into the care of the Chief Executive Officer;
- **Reunification Support** – to support families so that children in the care of the Chief Executive Officer can safely return home; and
- **Relative and Kinship Carer Support** – to support families so that a child taken into care can be placed with their extended family.

SERVICE APPROACH

Family and Parent Support Services focus on the strengths of the child's family to enable the family to maintain and build upon their own resources and networks to support them to care for, protect and raise their child.

This service approach includes:

- Engaging with a child and their family and respecting any decision they make to decline or to terminate their involvement;
- Respecting the child's and their family's cultural practices and values; and
- Planning and reviewing collaboratively with the child and their family, other significant people and service agencies.

SERVICE TYPES AND LOCATIONS

Intensive Family Preservation Service

Territory Families has contracted non-government organisations to deliver Intensive Family Preservation Services in the main centres.

The service providers work with families where the risk of their child being removed is high. The purpose of the service is to prevent the removal of the child;

Territory Families Child Protection maintains an open child protection case and is responsible for overall case management while the family receives intensive family preservation services.

For a list of all services see [Family and Parent Support Service Providers and Locations guide](#).

Remote Family Support Services

Services funded by the Australian Government under the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment National Partnership Agreement to operate in six remote communities.

The Remote Family Support Service (RFSS) has the following aims:

- Vulnerable children are able to stay safe in their communities with their families;
- Families under pressure get the support they need when they need it; and
- Services for children and families are integrated.

Services provided include:

- Case management services to support families to keep their children safe, including through a referral for Family Support (child safety intervention) from child protection services when a child protection investigation has been finalised and the risk assessment indicates low to moderate risk of future harm. See [Procedure: Referral for Remote Family Support Service Case Management](#);
- Convening multi-agency child safety co-ordination groups to enable information sharing and coordination of services to families. See [Procedure: Child Safety Coordination Group - Remote Family Support Service](#); and
- Assistance to visiting child protection and out of home care staff.

Community based family support staff working in a further nine remote communities providing general family support and assistance to visiting child protection and out of home care staff, coordinated through urban based Team Leaders. See [Procedure: Request for Remote Family Support Service Assistance](#) and [Request for Remote Family Support Assistance](#) form.

For a list of all services see [Family and Parent Support Service Providers and Locations](#).

When these and other service options are not available, or if the family does not agree to a referral, Child Protection staff may continue to provide support to families. See [Policy: Supporting Families Post Investigation](#) and [Procedure: Supporting Families Post Investigation](#).

Legislative Basis and Related Documents

[Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 - s7, 41-46](#)

Practice Standards

[Standards of Professional Practice - 1, 2, 3, 4.](#)

Authorised by:

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