

Policy: Strengthening Families

Policy Purpose

This policy outlines the Family Support that Territory Families provides to children and families after a child protection investigation has been completed and ongoing case management is required in a Strengthening Families case.

Policy Statement

When a risk assessment conducted after a child protection investigation determines that the child is at high to very high risk of harm, and it is likely that the child can safely remain in the home during the casework service provision, Strengthening Families casework can occur if the parents agree to work cooperatively with Territory Families.

When a risk assessment determines the probability of future harm to a child is low or moderate a Strengthening Families case may also be commenced where the parents consent.

Territory Families will engage with the child and family to provide ongoing casework services to ensure the child's safety and reduce the risk of harm to the child. The Child Protection case is closed and a Family Support, Strengthening Families case will be opened for ongoing case management.

A child protection case can only be closed with no further action when the level of risk to the child is either moderate or low, the safety threats have been resolved and the parents are able to continue to meet the child's protective needs when casework has ceased.

If a parent withdraws agreement to work with the Territory Families and the child remains at risk or in need of protection, child protection staff must consider whether further action is required.

Throughout Strengthening Families casework the risk of harm to the child must be continually assessed and there must be a focus on reducing the risk of future harm. This includes identifying the support required by the family to meet the needs of the child.

If there is an imminent risk of a child's removal, the Case Manager should investigate referral of the family to Intensive Family Preservation Service under the Family Intervention Framework. Intensive Family Preservation Services are provided in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin and Nhulunbuy. See [Policy: Family and Parent Support](#).

The following principles guide case management in an ongoing child protection case:

- The best interests of the child are paramount, including protecting the child from harm;
- The family has the primary responsibility for the care, upbringing and development of a child and the child will only be removed from family when there is no other reasonable way to safeguard their wellbeing;
- A strengths based approach is to be 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.

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Legislative Basis

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

Practice Standards

[Standards of Professional Practice](#)

Authorised by:

Executive Director, Service Development and Policy on:	15/03/2015	Active from:	15/03/2015
Version 1.0	To inform Territory Families' staff on the casework to be provided following completion of a child protection investigation.		

Current Version V2

Active from:	26/06/2017	Authorised by:	Director, Policy
Update:	Implementation of Strengthening Families case for all post CPINV cases, internal links reset.		
Review due:	June 19	Maintenance:	TF.Policy@nt.gov.au