



Family Led Decision Making for Aboriginal families Framework

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department for Child Protection acknowledges and respects Aboriginal people as the state's first people and nations, and recognises Aboriginal people as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and future. We value Aboriginal children and young people for their voice and role they have in the continuity of their culture. We understand the important responsibility of all those that care for them, to nurture their connection to culture, family, community and Country.

Introduction

The Department for Child Protection (DCP) acknowledges the distress and sense of powerlessness experienced by Aboriginal¹ children, young people and families when in contact with the child protection system. The history of racism in the political and social experiences of Aboriginal families, and Stolen Generations, continues to affect and disadvantage the lives and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and families today. The Family Led Decision Making (FLDM) for Aboriginal families Framework sets the objective of achieving culturally safe, collaborative, child-centred and family focused decision making to achieve positive outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people engaged with the child protection system.

FLDM for Aboriginal families is a crucial factor to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system in South Australia and integral to honouring the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle \(ACPP\)](#) in DCP practice. FLDM processes involve a range of strategies aimed to support and empower families to lead decision making in partnership with child protection and is an important mechanism to challenge the power imbalance experienced by Aboriginal families.

FLDM enables opportunities for the participation of Aboriginal children, young people, parents, family members and community representatives in significant decisions across all phases of child protection intervention. The approach is an active effort to uphold the rights of Aboriginal children and young people to grow up safe with their families and communities, on their Country and immersed in their culture. Furthermore, it supports all active efforts towards implementation of the ACPP precursor and five elements of the [DCP ACPP Practice Paper](#), and the [DCP Practice Approach](#).

The purpose of this framework is to outline the DCP strategies to enable FLDM across all levels of child protection interventions and decisions. Furthermore, it aims to build understanding that FLDM is a broad framework for practice, and not limited to the opportunity of family group conferencing (FGC), rather it is a way of participation in other areas of decision making, such as case planning and safety planning. While FGC is only one such pathway for families, FLDM is a broader approach in finding opportunity within everyday practice to support the child or young person and their families to be part of decisions of significance to them.

¹ When the term Aboriginal is used in this document, it should be read as inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people acknowledging that Torres Strait Islander people have a separate and distinct culture, identity and country to that of mainland Aboriginal peoples.



Scope

This framework applies to all DCP staff working with Aboriginal children and young people and families and includes unborn child concerns.

Principles

To guide FLDM for Aboriginal families the DCP embraces the following principles²:

Principles of family led decision making for Aboriginal families

- Privileging the voices of Aboriginal children and young people in decision making
- Aboriginal children and young people are best cared for in their family, kin and cultural networks
- Supporting families and communities to stay together promotes healing and the protection of future generations
- Children and young people have the right to participate in decisions about their care and protection
- Family is a culturally defined concept and therefore who is included in the decision making process should be defined by Aboriginal families, children, young people and communities
- Families should be enabled to make decisions without coercion
- Families should be enabled to have time together to make decisions without professionals present
- Family decided safety plans which meet the safety needs of the child or young person should be given preference over other safety plans and must be resourced properly
- Family engagement is strengths based and solution focused
- Family engagement is focused on the best interests of the child or young person, in keeping them safe and connected to family, culture and community
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) have cultural and community knowledge that strongly assists the facilitation of FLDM for Aboriginal families.

The [DCP Practice Principles](#) of child centred, cultural safety, strengthening families, supporting carers, partnership and collaboration, and learning culture, underpin the application of these principles.

Furthermore, these principles drive the intent of the guiding principles of the [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#), that practice is 'done in collaboration with, and with the cooperation of, children and young people and their families rather than simply being done to or for them'. It supports the requirement that the voices of children and young people are heard and their views considered, and that participation is enabled and partnership encouraged when making decisions about the placement of Aboriginal children and young people in care.³

² These principles are based on those provided by [The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: A Guide to Support Implementation, SNAICC, 2019](#)

³ [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#), Chapter 2, Part 1 Parliamentary Declaration (4), Part 2 Other needs of children and young people (8) Principles of intervention (10) Part 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (12)



1. FLDM for Aboriginal families in practice

FLDM recognises Aboriginal families as having the best knowledge of their family, community and culture, including their strengths and needs, and supports Aboriginal families' participation in significant decisions across all phases of child protection intervention. The involvement of family members demonstrates their important role in raising children and young people, and promotes family strengths in working to resolve concerns, identify supports and options for care and protection. When families have the opportunity to participate, they are more likely to take responsibility for issues and respond to interventions when they have been involved in those decisions⁴.

FLDM is more than sitting down and talking to families. It is about giving them the power and control of the decision making process.⁵ A crucial component of best practice in FLDM for Aboriginal families is the opportunity for a decision making process independent of the DCP, facilitated by an Aboriginal person, employed by an ACCO or non-government organisation. Aboriginal facilitators are key to creating a culturally safe and respectful space, which draws on traditional Aboriginal ways of doing to enable culturally based family-driven decisions and provide a genuine Aboriginal FLDM experience for families.

1.1 Enabling participation in decision making

FLDM should be utilised to enable family participation in decision making processes no matter what part of the child protection system a family are involved. FLDM must occur throughout DCPs involvement with a family, from the initial assessment of child protection concerns through to reunification or case closure, including throughout the period of a long-term order.

[Relationship based practice](#) provides a necessary foundation to enable meaningful participation of families, through building trusting and respectful relationships with families. Developing strong relationships with Aboriginal families allows practitioners to engage more effectively, and collaborate more successfully with families to promote positive outcomes for their children and young people.

During engagement with Aboriginal families, DCP must demonstrate culturally safe practices by meeting the needs, expectations and rights of the family in decisions that affect them and their children and young people. As Aboriginal culture is a protective factor for families, it is important to take a [strengths based approach](#), such as recognising how family problem solve together and how cultural connections can facilitate safety for the child or young person.

Another important factor is creating and utilising spaces that best connect and welcome Aboriginal children, young people and their families to the physical environment. This can be demonstrated by showing flexibility and giving choice to family for culturally appropriate locations for meetings, interviews and conferences.

Processes facilitated by an Aboriginal person, either internal or external to the DCP, or an ACCO, recognises Aboriginal people and communities are best equipped to provide a culturally safe environment and inclusive atmosphere for Aboriginal families. While an Aboriginal facilitated process is considered best practice, it is important to recognise cultural safety for families is not a one-size fits all approach, rather it is based on the individual needs and experiences of the child, young person and family receiving the service response. To

⁴ [The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: A Guide to Support Implementation, SNAICC, 2019](#)

⁵ [Tangentyere Children Safe, Families Together, 2019](#)



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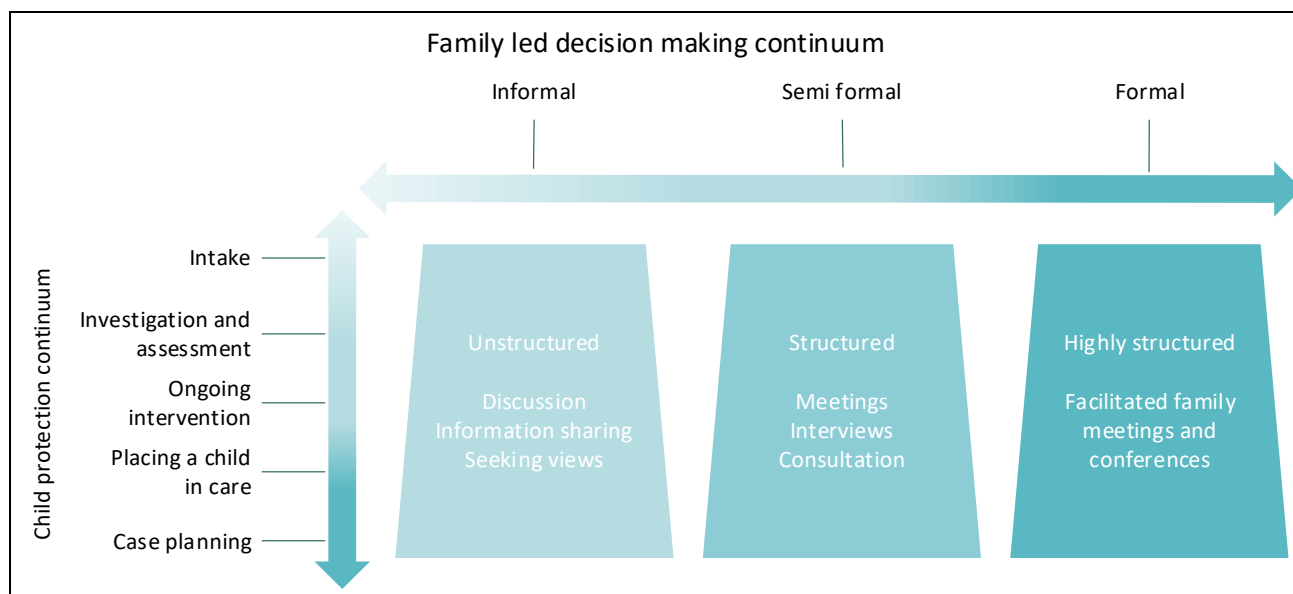
respond to the individual needs of the child, young person and/or family, all available pathways must be offered, as preference for a provider or facilitator cannot be assumed or decided without the child, young person or family being involved in that decision. To support optimal participation it is important for family to have choice of service and facilitator and avoid any conflict.

1.2 Structures for participation

FLDM is best understood as a structured approach across a continuum as seen in Figure 1⁶. The level of structure (eg informal, semi-formal, formal) will be influenced by:

- the nature and gravity of the decision/s being made
- the requests and views of the family and what they feel comfortable with
- the stage of intervention on the child protection continuum in which FLDM is being applied.

Figure 1:



With the different structures for family participation, it is important that the family is given as much information as possible to enable them to choose the best structure that fits with their individual needs and situation. Remember in each of these structures, when working with Aboriginal families, DCP must recognise the family are broader than just the parent or guardians of the child or young person. For Aboriginal families, a genuine family led process includes extended family and kin who are involved and responsible for the raising of children and young people, and/or community members who can provide cultural support and advocacy when meeting with the family.

Regardless of which structure is used, the same FLDM principles must apply as previously outlined. Family members must be engaged respectfully for their views to not only be listened to, but also heard and

⁶ Adapted from figure in [Tangentyere Children Safe, Families Together, 2019](#).

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documented. To support participation, [strengths based practice](#) recognises all families have strengths and resources that can support change, even when they are experiencing difficulties or are in crisis.

DCP structures to support FLDM can range from:

- informal discussions to seek views, between workers, Aboriginal practitioners such as a Principal Aboriginal Consultant (PAC) where practicable and the child/young person, parents/caregivers, extended family and kin, on both paternal and maternal sides, to ensure the inclusion of family with cultural responsibility for decision making
- semi-formal meetings or interviews with the family, Aboriginal practitioners (where practicable) which may include specific tools or frameworks for guidance, and family are encouraged to have a support person for cultural advocacy to the family
- formal decision making meetings facilitated by DCP, with or without an independent facilitator, or by an agreed non-government service provider in an independent space, for invitation to the wider family group to participate in formulating a plan to respond to the safety and care needs of the child or young person.

1.3 FLDM through the phases of child protection continuum

Intake

Understanding the perspective and culture of the family is an important aspect of the [DCP Assessment Framework](#). During the intake stage, it is important to make an active effort to ask questions when talking with notifiers and service providers who work with the family to identify potential strengths and safety concerns. It is also critical to consult with the PAC to provide cultural guidance and support during the initial assessment phase to ensure a cultural lens is applied to any identified strengths and safety concerns.

When pre-birth intervention is undertaken for an Unborn Child Concern (UCC), it presents a critical opportunity for an active effort toward prevention for Aboriginal families. A DCP High Risk Infant worker may engage with the birth parents and family with their consent, to inform them of concerns raised and provide them with options to work together in a voluntary capacity until the baby is born. This practice of early engagement is a critical time, with the potential to influence the type of support offered to the family to prevent statutory intervention when the baby is born.

FLDM provides an important opportunity for families to respond to UCCs and to:

- identify family protective factors (as well as risk factors)
- identify appropriate family and support services to engage and wrap around the mother and baby
- establish a plan to mitigate risk for the pregnant mother and baby (wherever possible)
- ensure Aboriginal families are fully informed about the child protection concerns
- take proactive steps prior to the birth of their baby to reduce the risk of the baby being removed after birth.

It is critical that consultation with the PAC is undertaken when any pre-birth intervention is undertaken to provide cultural guidance and support both to the worker and family.

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Investigation and Assessment

Prevention is a key priority when FLDM is enabled during the Investigation and Assessment phase. Workers must always be striving to build open and trusting communication with the focus on ‘working with and not doing to’⁷ Aboriginal families. Planning how to engage the child and family and increase participation should start from allocation and investigation planning. Partnership with a PAC in planning and investigation is recommended to provide a cultural lens and advice to support engagement and promote family participation.

When gathering information for assessment, it is essential that conversations and engagement extend beyond the mother and father, to include the extended family and kin on both maternal and paternal sides and other important community members who have an existing relationship with the child, young person and parent/caregivers. Including extended family and other important people in the kinship and community network will assist in identifying and understanding the needs and difficulties the family may be facing, inform assessment decisions and assist in the development of a detailed genogram or ecomap. It might be valuable to consult with the PAC or Aboriginal Family Finding and Mapping (AFFM) team to assist with gathering information for assessment as well as providing cultural support.

Once the assessment is complete, or where the assessment decision indicates a plan to establish safety for the child or young person is required, then FLDM approaches are utilised to support family involvement in the significant decision-making. It begins with engagement of the family to provide all information regarding next steps and types of decision making to occur. It is important that the family have choice and control in how they would like to participate. Discuss the options for family participation in decision making with the family, for their preference to work directly with DCP through semi-formal or formal meeting processes, or for a referral to an external service provider to facilitate a decision making process. FLDM utilised from the beginning is an early intervention approach which aims to keep children and young people safe with family and can prevent children and young people from entering care. FLDM can also support the family when they have continued involvement with the child protection system across all phases of child protection decision making processes.

Examples of significant decisions about Aboriginal children and young people during Investigation and Assessment:

- Assessment of family strengths
- How to establish safety during an investigation (safety planning)
- Need for protective intervention
- Alternatives to protective intervention
- Supports provided to families directly or through referral.

Examples to enable participation during Investigation and Assessment:

Informal/unstructured	Semi-formal/structured	Formal/highly structured
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⁷ [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#), Chapter 2, Part 1 (4)



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<p>During visits, conversation and informal meetings with the family, workers sit with the family to explore issues and develops relationships through strengths based and transparent engagement. The views of the family inform assessment, which includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing safety • identifying risks and strengths • family mapping to develop detailed genograms • eco-mapping to identify strengths and important family, kin and community networks • give choice in referral pathways to services. 	<p>Responding to decisions about how to keep a child or young person safe with the family during the investigation. Developing a safety plan with the participation of the parents/caregivers and key family members that draws on the network of family and kin to establish safety for the child or young person.</p> <p>At a place nominated by the family, to support cultural safety, accessibility, attendance and participation.</p> <p>Where key family members are unable to support the family, the family are encouraged to have an independent cultural support person attend.</p>	<p>Family meeting or conference to discuss safety, risks and identify family strengths with the wider family. Responding to decisions about establishing safety for a child or young person with the family by developing a family plan for the child protection concerns and preventing the need for further child protection intervention.</p> <p>As part of preparation with the family, the facilitator collaborates with the family on who will attend, location and preference of facilitator (where possible).</p>
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Ongoing Intervention

Participation of Aboriginal families during ongoing intervention provides opportunities to:

- bring family and community networks for the Aboriginal child or young person together
- contribute to case direction
- exhaust all active efforts towards preservation and reunification
- develop plans to keep the child and young person safe and connected.

As this phase follows on from assessment, and an intervention is required, decisions about intervention can be considered significant for a family as it has potential to affect long-term outcomes for the child or young person. FLDM is enabled first through continuing the ongoing engagement with the family to give them the information about next steps and giving them the options that can support them to be involved in the decision making. Families should be offered both the opportunity to work directly with the DCP in having a mix of internal and external facilitated process or to service pathways available independent of the DCP. Genuine FLDM for Aboriginal families gives families choice and control over how they would like to participate and therefore for any service referrals made.

When utilising semi-formal strategies for family participation such as meetings, interviews or consultation, it must, in addition to the mother and father, include extended family and kin who are involved in raising the child or young person. If this cannot occur, the child, young person or family should be encouraged to have an independent cultural support person attend with them for cultural support and guidance.



Examples of significant decisions about Aboriginal children and young people during ongoing intervention:

- Plans that keep the child or young person safe at home (wherever possible)
- Whether there is a need for placement, and if so, with whom the child or young person should be placed
- Supports and intervention for the family to keep the child or young person safely at home or to reunify the child or young person if they are in care
- Whether a care and protection order application is required and if so what type of order and what duration the order will apply.

Examples to enable participation during ongoing intervention:

Informal / unstructured	Semi-formal / structured	Formal / highly structured
<p>Family engagement focuses on giving voice to, and should not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the child or young person • parties in significant decisions • appropriate type of intervention and choice of available pathways • support needs for family preservation and reunification • review family mapping to identify placement options with family and kin. <p>Discussion takes place in locations where family feel safe to share important family cultural information.</p>	<p>In care team meetings where the care team consists of both parent/caregivers and other important family members with cultural responsibility for decision-making, the meeting driven with the understanding that the family hold valuable information to enable them to determine key decisions, such as the need for placement, who the child or young person is best placed with.</p> <p>The meeting held at a place nominated by the family, to support accessibility, cultural safety, attendance and participation.</p> <p>Where key family members are unable to support the family, the family are encouraged to bring an independent cultural support person with them to the meeting.</p>	<p>Formal meeting or conference for the family to develop their own plans to address risks and safety concerns which address the need for alternatives to protective intervention.</p> <p>Decisions reached on arrangements for the care and protection of the child or young person may include voluntary arrangements.</p> <p>As part of preparation with the family, the facilitator collaborates with the family on who will attend, location and preference of facilitator (where possible).</p>

Placing a child or young person in care

When participation of Aboriginal families, children and young people is actively supported and encouraged through FLDM, it ensures placement options within the hierarchy in section 12 of the CYPS Act are thoroughly explored by DCP.

Family participation supports decisions to review placements when initial placement options are limited to a placement lower in the hierarchy, or a non-Aboriginal placement, where there is the potential for a



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placement higher in the hierarchy and best suited to the child or young person’s individual needs. In practice, participation of families in decision making is an important component in [relationship based practice](#) and demonstrates acknowledgement of Aboriginal families as the experts in their lives.

Family participation also ensures appropriate supports are in place to establish culturally appropriate and safe practice when embedding the precursor and five elements of the ACPP.

Examples of significant decisions when placing an Aboriginal child or young person in care:

- Where and with whom the child or young person will live
- Applying the Winangay Assessment Tool – Full Carer Assessment for Kinship placements
- Training and supports required for the type of carer (eg for kinship placements or non-Aboriginal placement)
- Family and sibling contact arrangements
- Maintain and support the child or young person’s contact with family, community, culture and Country
- Transition planning (to and from care and between placements).

Examples to enable participation when placing an Aboriginal child or young person in care:

Informal/unstructured	Semi-formal/structured	Formal/highly structured
<p>Discussion (yarning) with the family to gather information about members of the family and kinship networks which can identify family members who can provide placement, support and/or cultural connection for the child or young person.</p> <p>Discussions take place in locations where family feel safe to share important family cultural information.</p> <p>Consider referral to the AFFM team to map family and kinship networks.</p>	<p>Consultation on appropriate placements with the care team, where the care team includes the mother, father, extended family and kin.</p> <p>Held at a place nominated by the family, to support accessibility, cultural safety, attendance and participation.</p> <p>Where key family members are unable to support the family, the family are encouraged to have an independent cultural support person attend the meeting with them.</p>	<p>At a formal meeting or conference, the family may determine that it is in the best interest for the child to live with another family member to keep them safe.</p>

Case Planning, Review and Annual Review

FLDM during case planning, review and annual review ensures DCP responds effectively to the unique and changing cultural needs of Aboriginal children and young people as they develop across their lifespan. Aboriginal families, children and young people must be actively supported, encouraged to participate in and lead the development of plans to keep the child or young person connected to family, community, Country and culture. In practice, by bringing in the family, DCP acknowledges self-determination and the diversity of Aboriginal families and demonstrates a desire to understand and acknowledge the family narrative and cultural identity for supporting the child and young person’s sense of identity, belonging and wellbeing.

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For families with children and young people under long-term orders, there is still opportunity for participation through formal processes such as during their annual review. Families are the vital piece in maintaining connections and nurturing the identity for Aboriginal children and young people in care for their safety and wellbeing, and they should be afforded every opportunity to participate in meetings about the care and protection of their child or young person.

Examples of significant decisions about Aboriginal children or young person during case planning, review and annual review:

- Stability and permanency of care
- Case plan goals and timelines
- Cultural care planning
- Case plan review

Examples to enable participation during case planning, review and annual review:

Informal/unstructured	Semi-formal/structured	Formal/highly structured
<p>Engagement and discussion (yarning) to provide input and an opportunity to hear the voice of the child or young person and their family on case plan decisions, including connections with family, culture, siblings, Country, kin and placement.</p> <p>Discussion takes place in locations where family feel safe to share important family cultural information.</p>	<p>Ensuring when the care team consultation on case plan goals and direction, includes parents/caregivers, extended family and kin in the care team.</p> <p>Where the child or young person is in kinship care, working closely with the family to identify their support needs.</p> <p>A case plan review through a review meeting between the DCP case worker, parents/caregivers and significant family.</p> <p>At a place nominated by the family, to support accessibility, attendance, cultural safety and participation.</p> <p>Where key family members are unable to support the family, the family are encouraged to have an independent cultural support person attend the meeting with them.</p>	<p>Ensuring extended family and kin, in addition the mother and father, invited to participate in annual review meetings for children and young people under long-term orders.</p>



2. Active efforts towards the ACPP

DCP acknowledges the active efforts towards implementation of the [ACPP](#) are essential when working with Aboriginal children, young people and families to support action that will lead to long-term change.

FLDM and the precursor and five elements of the ACPP:	
Identification: FLDM for Aboriginal families aims to support Aboriginal children and families who identify as Aboriginal.	FLDM processes are utilised to prioritise the rights of Aboriginal children and young people to their cultural identity by exploring their Aboriginal nations or language groups with family. It supports the development of detailed genograms/ecomaps, to identify important people in their life, including key family to include in significant decision making.
Prevention: Aboriginal families are engaged to discuss safety concerns and seek alternatives to statutory intervention.	FLDM is an important early intervention strategy to support a family to stay together through preservation or reunification to protect the rights of Aboriginal children and young people to have their upbringing within their family and community.
Participation: Families and services participate in planning and decision making for all Aboriginal children, young people.	FLDM enables Aboriginal children, young people and families to have a voice in decisions that affect them.
Partnership: Families and services work in partnership in planning and decision making for all Aboriginal children, young people.	FLDM empowers Aboriginal children, young people, families, communities, Aboriginal community representatives and ACCOs to work together with DCP in child protection decision making. FLDM for Aboriginal families facilitated by an ACCO or Aboriginal facilitator creates an opportunity to make decisions about child protection concerns independent of the DCP.
Placement: Thoroughly explore kinship networks, to identify and map options to enable placements higher on the placement hierarchy.	FLDM enables Aboriginal children, young people and families to be involved in placement decisions. This ensures identifying and exploring higher hierarchy placements (section 12 of the CYPs Act) first, before a lower hierarchy placement is considered.
Connection: Aboriginal children and young people remain connected to their kin, culture, Country, and community and their networks strengthened.	FLDM for Aboriginal families focuses on the development, continuation and maintenance of important connections for Aboriginal children and young people with their family, community, culture, Country, tradition and language. FLDM supports the development and implementation of detailed cultural plans that decrease the chance an Aboriginal child or young person will become disconnected while in care.

3. Glossary

Term	Meaning
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child	A national framework which aims to:



Term	Meaning
Placement Principle (the ATSI CPP or ACPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise and protect the rights of Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities • increase the level of self-determination for Aboriginal peoples in child protection matters • reduce the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system. <p>The history and intent of the ACPP is about keeping Aboriginal children and young people connected to their family, community, culture and country.</p>
Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)	<p>An incorporated Aboriginal organisation, initiated, based and governed by the local Aboriginal community to deliver holistic and culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal community.</p>
Active efforts	<p>The term ‘active efforts’ was developed in the United States (U.S.) as a result of the U.S. Government’s requirements to make all ‘active efforts’ under the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICW Act) to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care.</p> <p>In the South Australian context, active efforts are the efforts taken by workers to apply the ACPP in their practice with Aboriginal children, young people and families, in accordance with their legislative responsibilities, to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care</p>
Cultural safety	<p>A commonly used definition of cultural safety as that of Robyn Williams (1999), who defined cultural safety as <i>“an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together.”</i></p> <p>It is a reflection of Aboriginal families’ experiences of services and processes, as to whether they feel culturally safe or not. Cultural safety for Aboriginal peoples recognises the intricate nature of Aboriginal cultures, as it extends to value the complexity of an Aboriginal person’s lived experience and individual social reality.</p> <p>DCP workers committed to self-reflection on their personal biases and professional judgement support cultural safety, through building understanding that a “one size fits all” approach denies diversity and individual considerations. Approaches towards engagement and tailoring ways of working together in a culturally safe way, considers the unique needs of the individual, empowers and promotes the right to self-determination.</p>
Family	<p>Aboriginal family systems have an extended family structure, as opposed to the nuclear or immediate family structure common in western society. Child rearing responsibilities extend beyond the immediate family group and may include aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents.</p> <p>Family members also have other core functions within the family and community. As with non-Aboriginal cultures, families teach children specific</p>



Term	Meaning
	<p>cultural values and rules, including rules about social norms for interaction with others.</p> <p>Aboriginal cultures thrive through knowledge of family and kin, connection to Country and community. Over time, Aboriginal children and young people find out about their family connections and where they belong in relation to others, including who they are related to, who they can and cannot marry, and socially acceptable ways of interacting with others.</p>
Kinship	<p>Aboriginal kinship relations reflect a complex and dynamic system and define where a person fits into their family and community. The value of the kinship system is that it structures people’s relationships, obligations and behaviours towards each other.</p> <p>It will influence who will look after children if a parent dies, who can marry whom, who is responsible for another person’s debts or misdeeds, and who will care for the sick and old.</p> <p>For example, a man or woman may have an obligation to care for the children of their siblings. The children may refer to their uncle and aunty as their father or mother and their cousins as brothers or sisters. They know who their birth mother and father are, but under these societal (kinship) laws, other family members have equal importance. The common terms of endearment among Aboriginal peoples are brother or sister when talking to people, as derived from the kinship terms and associations.</p>
Self-determination	<p>The right to self-determination is a right of ‘peoples’ rather than individuals. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples this is about the ongoing choice to meet their social, cultural and economic needs and have opportunity to exercise meaningful control over their own affairs through participation in the decisions, policies and programs that impact on them.</p> <p>In DCP practice, self-determination enables Aboriginal children, young people and families to express whom they would like to be involved in and at the forefront of decision making in the care and protection of their children and young people. Self-determination supports Aboriginal peoples’ right to be involved in decisions relating to the safety and wellbeing of their children across all phases of child protection interventions. It means Aboriginal families and communities are enabled to participate with their voice at the decision making table for the care and protection of their children and young people.</p>

4. Related documents

Whole of government documents

[Australian Human Rights Commission, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019](#)



Every effort for every child: South Australia’s strategy for children and young people in care 2020-2023
Family Matters
Safe and Well - Supporting families, protecting children
South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People 2019
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
DCP governing documents
Aboriginal Action Plan 2020-2021
Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2022
DCP Strategic Plan 2019-2022
DCP Practice Approach
Investing in their future - Supporting children and young people in care to access across government services
The DCP Practice Principles
DCP practice documents
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle – Practice paper
Bias in Child Protection Practice – Practice Paper
Consult or decision record – Practice guidance
Consultation with the recognised Aboriginal organisation
Decision making – Practice paper
Permanency Planning Practice Paper
Relationship based practice
Strengths based practice – Practice paper
Supporting the participation of children and young people in decision making – Practice paper

5. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/responsibility for
Chief Executive/Senior Executive Group	Responsible for strategic oversight, implementation and organisational compliance with the framework.
Quality and Safeguarding Operations Subcommittee	Monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of processes in place to ensure operational compliance with the detail of the framework.
Directors, managers and staff with line management responsibilities	Operationalisation of the framework into DCP regions, services and units. Ensure DCP staff are aware and accountable for their responsibilities within this framework.
All DCP staff	Responsible for compliance with this framework which operates to drive and support self-determination of Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities in decision making affecting them within DCP.



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6. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

DCP will ensure that governance structures are in place for regular monitoring, reporting and reviewing of the implementation of this framework. As this framework relates to the Practice Approach in the context of working with Aboriginal families, there is a shared responsibility between Quality and Practice Directorate (Q&PD) and Aboriginal Practice Directorate (APD).

Document control

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Accountable Director: Tracy Rigney			
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