



Quality and Safeguarding Framework

1. Purpose

The Department for Child Protection (DCP) Quality and Safeguarding Framework sets the objective of achieving safe, effective, culturally safe and responsive, child-centred services. The framework supports the integrated leadership, systems, processes and organisational culture essential to achieving safety, wellbeing and the best outcomes for infants, children and young people.

2. Scope

This framework applies to all staff, family-based carers, non-government residential carers, young people employed as part of the Youth Engagement Strategy and volunteers in the Department for Child Protection (DCP).

Please note that in this document, the term Aboriginal, refers to all people who identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This term is used as the First Nations Peoples of South Australia are predominantly Aboriginal peoples and it is their preferred term. We acknowledge and respect that it is preferable to identify Aboriginal peoples, where possible, by their specific Language group or Nation.

3. Authority

3.1 Legislative context

Sections 150, 152, 153, 157, 158, 163, 164 of the [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)
Sections 64A and 65 of the [Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935](#)
[Family and Community Services Regulations 2024](#)

3.2 Whole of Government requirements

- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - The Australian Human Rights Commission 2018](#)
- [National Agreement on Closing the Gap: Target 12](#)
- [South Australia's Implementation Plan for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#)
- [Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 - 2031](#)
- [National standards for out-of-home care 2011 – 2020](#)
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding framework](#)
- [South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People 2019](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle](#)
- [Family Matters](#)
- [Safe and Well - Supporting families, protecting children](#)



- [Investing in their future - Supporting children and young people in care to access across government services](#)
- [Every effort for every child strategy 2020-2023](#)

3.3 DCP requirements

- [DCP Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#)
- [DCP Reconciliation Action Plan 2022 - 2025](#)
- [Aboriginal Employment and Engagement](#)

3.4 Principles

DCP is committed to:

- the provision of high quality, effective, child-centred services
- protecting the rights of infants, children and young people to be safe, connected, supported, culturally strong
- ensuring the safety and wellbeing of infants, children and young people is the paramount consideration.

DCP has a responsibility to identify and implement strategies to safeguard infants, children and young people. For children and young people receiving services from DCP, safeguarding is more than preventing further harm. Safeguarding is the duty of care and responsibility to implement preventative and responsive systems, policies and practices to ensure infants, children and young people are:

- safe from harm
- supported to heal from trauma
- empowered to have a voice and be heard
- connected to family, kin, community, culture and Country
- cared for in a way that ensures their physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing and promotes healthy development so they can reach their full potential.

DCP recognises that what constitutes wellbeing for an infant, child or young person is based on their individual needs and culture.

In 2018, the Australian Human Rights Commission developed a set of principles for child safe organisations in response to the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission). In 2019, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations were endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG):

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing



4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The National Principles represent a significant national reform that provide a consistent approach to embedding child safe cultures within organisations providing services to and caring for children and young people. These principles are underpinned by a children's rights approach and identify that child safe organisations create a culture, implement strategies and take action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to infants, children and young people.

A child safe organisation intentionally and systematically:

- prioritises prevention
- creates an environment where children and young people's safety, wellbeing and cultural identity is the centre of thought, values and actions
- places a strong emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of the voices of infants, children and young people and their families
- embeds the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle elements; prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection, as well as the precursor identification, into all decision making and practice
- addresses the drivers of child protection intervention for Aboriginal infants, children and young people
- develops strategies and systems that both reduce the likelihood of harm and increase the likelihood of identifying harm to infants, children and young people
- responds to concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm to infants, children and young people in a child-centred manner.

The National Principles provide a valuable lens that supports DCP to identify:

- mechanisms already in place that safeguard infants, children and young people
- additional strategies for implementation to ensure services are child safe
- measures of the quality of services and care provided to infants, children and young people
- a systematic approach to support quality outcomes.



It is essential that DCP is taking active steps to ensure that its systems, processes and practices are consistent with the intention of the National Principles. In addition to the National Principles, there are other legislative requirements and safeguarding mechanisms pertinent to DCP. Implementation of the Aboriginal and Child Placement Principle is crucial to safeguarding the rights of Aboriginal infants, children and young people, their families and communities within the statutory child protection system. Information sharing is also a central tenant of an effective child protection system. To reflect the importance of these safeguarding mechanisms, they will be separately and specifically addressed in this framework, in addition to the National Principles.

4. Framework requirements

The Quality and Safeguarding Framework reflects an integrated system of processes and governance structures that ensure the safety and wellbeing of infants, children and young people and support the delivery of high-quality services.



Quality and safeguarding mechanisms in DCP

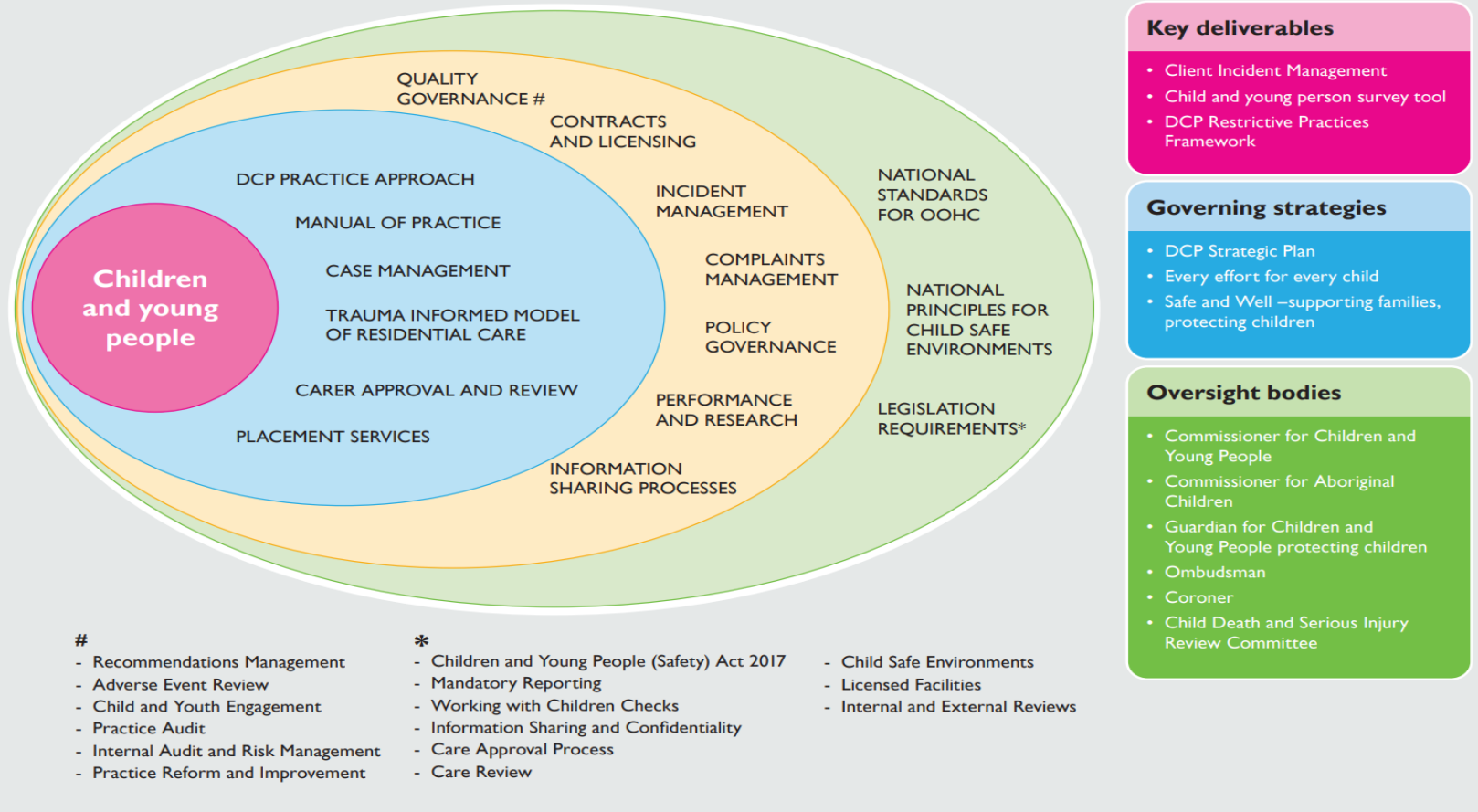


Figure 1: Safeguarding mechanisms in DCP.



4.1 Safeguarding mechanisms in DCP

4.1.1 Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture

DCP has a mandate and commitment to ensure child safety and wellbeing in all service provision. Strong leadership supports a culture of accountability and provides an authorising environment that enables staff to share information, plan and take action to mitigate risks to children and young people. Governance systems are in place to support service design and policy consistent with the vision of DCP that all children and young people grow up safe, healthy, connected and feeling loved, so they reach their full potential.

Systems are in place to ensure:

DCP implements the requirements of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* (CYPS Act) and ensures the safety and wellbeing of infants, children and young people who have been harmed or are at risk of harm through practice supported by:

- a strong emphasis on child safety at the centre of all decision making in the DCP Practice Approach
- accessible and contemporary best practice guidance
- practice tools for working with Aboriginal infants, children, young people and families in a culturally safe manner
- induction and orientation aligned with the vision of DCP
- completion of Child Safe Environments Training for all staff
- ongoing practice development, training and access to clinical and professional supervision
- clearly defined operational and corporate governance structures that ensure quality of service design and alignment of policy, practice and service delivery to best practice in child protection.

Success looks like:

- the Quality and Safeguarding Operations Subcommittee receive regular reports on child safety focused matters (for example, Care concern management, Adverse Events reviews)
- regular Quality and Performance meetings examine the performance of the organisation on key indicators of quality and safety (for example, investigation rates, case planning, hearing the voice of the child and participation of children and young people in case planning, adherence to the placement element of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle and carer participation in case planning).

4.1.2 Children and young people are informed about their rights, supported to exercise them, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

DCP is committed to supporting children and young people to have a voice in decisions that affect them and how DCP provides services to children and young people. Support and professional development is provided to enable staff to effectively engage with infants, children and young people and:

- respect their identity and culture



- understand their individual and developmental needs
- identify strengths
- build strong, positive relationships.

The legal rights of children and young people in care are safeguarded through provision of information and advice about their legal rights and support to make complaints and applications. The right to connection to culture enshrined under the CYPS Act is actively promoted.

Systems are in place to ensure:

Children and young people have the opportunity to exercise their rights, have their views genuinely considered and participate in decision making through:

- the emphasis on educating children and young people on their rights and promoting the participation of children and young people in practice guidance and the DCP Practice Approach.
- DCP practice promoting self-determination of Aboriginal children and young people and recognising their right to:
 - grow, enjoy and retain their culture and cultural identity
 - maintain, learn and use language without prejudice or bias
 - retain their kinship ties
 - retain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship to the land and waters they are connected to under traditional laws and customs
 - participate in decisions that effect them
 - participate in cultural customs, rites of passage, sorry business and cultural traditions
 - retain and develop connections to family, community, and Country.
- being involved in their care team meetings and annual review, contributing to the development of their case plan, wellbeing plan, and having their views sought on decisions about their care.
- having the right to:
 - make a complaint about decisions that affect them under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* ('CYPS Act')
 - seek a review of contact arrangements by the Contact Arrangements Review Panel
 - seek an internal review under section 157 and external review under section 158 of the CYPS Act about certain decisions made by the Chief Executive.
- access to support for claims under the National Redress Scheme and/or Victims of Crime
- support to seek assistance from the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People, Commissioner for Children and Young People and for Aboriginal children and young people, the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young people
- being informed of the right to obtain information about themselves after transition from care in accordance with section 153 of the CYPS Act



- practice papers and workplace learning being available to develop staff skills in relationship-based practice and understanding the voice and cues of young children and infants
- regular opportunities to engage with their case workers and residential care workers
- being offered the opportunity and provided with support to complete a survey tool at least annually which supports them to express their views (for children and young people aged over 5 years)
- the implementation of a Child and Young Person Engagement Strategy which facilitates the participation of children and young people with care experiences in service design and to act as representatives of the views of children and young people in care
- visibility of The Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care in DCP offices and residential care settings.

Success looks like:

- at least 50% of children and young people aged over five years (where it is developmentally appropriate) being offered the opportunity to complete a survey tool that supports them to express their views annually
- at least 80% of children and young people who complete a survey endorse that they feel supported to have a say 'most of the time' or 'all of the time'
- an annual Practice Audit demonstrates the prevalence of children and young people who have been educated about their rights by their case worker
- all children and young people in care (where it is developmentally appropriate) are offered the opportunity to participate in the development of their case plan and Annual Review
- a requirement to display the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in residential care facilities is included in the DCP licencing Framework
- Aboriginal children and young people are supported to contact and seek advice from the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People if they require further support or advocacy.

4.1.3 Information is shared to support families and safeguard children and young people

Information sharing is crucial to ensuring that children and young people are protected from harm and supported to achieve their full potential. Sharing the right information in an effective and timely way assists DCP and other services involved with children, young people and their families and carers to work in genuine collaboration and coordinate an effective response. The *Children and Young People (Safety Act) 2017*, contains legislative provisions for information gathering and sharing. In addition, the South Australian Information Sharing Guideline for Promoting Safety and Wellbeing, promotes the sharing of information in an effective and timely way. Information is also shared with the family courts where the court is concerned that a child may be at risk of harm and with interstate child protection agencies as required.

Effective information sharing is critical in facilitating [Family-Led Decision Making for Aboriginal families](#) engaged with the child protection system. Family led decision making is a crucial approach in respecting the self-determination of Aboriginal people and addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal infants, children and young people in the child protection system in South Australia and integral to honouring the ACPD in DCP practice.



Systems are in place to ensure:

- information sharing is supported by clear practice guidance that supports staff to utilise:
 - Section 150 of the CYPs Act which empowers the Chief Executive to requires a State Authority to prepare or provide report that will assist DCP perform a function
 - Section 152 of the CYPs Act which permits the sharing of information between DCP and prescribed bodies (generally government agencies, local government organisations and non-government organisations) to assist these bodies to perform official functions or to protect children and young people from harm
 - Section 164 that permits DCP to disclose personal information where there is a legitimate reason to do so
- notifiers details are protected from disclosure (with limited exceptions) under section 163 of the CYPs Act
- information sharing templates, designed in collaboration with key partner agencies, ensure an efficient and timely exchange of information
- all staff participate in mandatory training on information sharing
- liaison with interstate Child Protection jurisdictions including through the Connect for Safety (C4S)
- DCP has a co-located child protection official at the Adelaide Registry of the Family Court to support information sharing under the Commonwealth project agreement for Family Law Information Sharing.

Success looks like:

- at least 80% of staff have completed Information Sharing training
- an Internal audit is undertaken to understand DCP's compliance with Information Sharing and Confidentiality requirements.
- all judicial officer requests made under the Commonwealth project agreement are met in a timely manner.

4.1.4 Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

The involvement of families, carers and communities is vital to developing and implementing plans that keep infants, children and young people safe and ensure their needs are met. When it is not possible for them to remain safely in their home, the involvement of family/kin and those connected to the infant, child or young person in planning for their care and wellbeing is essential.

For Aboriginal infants, children and young people, the criticality of connection to family, culture, community and Country drives commitment by DCP to form and maintain strong partnerships with Aboriginal families and the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector.

Systems are in place to ensure:

Families, carers and community are engaged in decision making for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through:



- Family Group Conferences (FGC) being a key pathway for enabling family led decision making
- the [Family Led Decision Making Framework for Aboriginal families](#) enabling opportunities for the participation of Aboriginal parents, family members and community representatives in significant decisions across all phases of child protection intervention
- participation in the infant, child or young person’s care team, annual review, development of the case plan and decision making processes
- family contact reflects the needs and best interests of the child of young person
- consultation with key community stakeholders in service design and policy development.

Success looks like:

- children and young people (where age and developmentally appropriate) are invited to participate in their Family Group Conference or an advocate is present to represent their views
- when carers and significant people in a child or young person’s life are invited to contribute to the Annual Review and development of the case plan
- at least 80% of participants at Family Group Conferences held by funded service providers indicate they are satisfied with the process determined by responses to the post conference survey.

4.1.5 The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is embedded in service and policy design, decision making and practice

The rate of Aboriginal children entering care in South Australia is higher than most other Australian states and Aboriginal children are significantly over-represented across the child protection system. The underlying reasons are complex and should be considered within the context of the legacy of past policies of forced removal, cultural assimilation, intergenerational and complex trauma and poor knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal child-rearing practices. Additionally, Aboriginal people continue to experience poverty and discrimination in attaining equal access to services such as housing and health care as well as opportunities to successfully participate in education and employment.

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (ACPP) was developed to address this over-representation by recognising the importance of keeping Aboriginal children and young people connected to their families, communities, culture and Country. The ACPP was designed to create systemic change in child protection systems by promoting the participation of Aboriginal families, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Aboriginal Communities in decision-making processes about the safety and wellbeing of their children.

The ACCP includes five core elements and the precursor:

- **Identification:** Identifying Aboriginal infants, children and young people who are involved with child protection in South Australia is essential to apply the five elements of the ACPP and fulfil legislative, policy and practice requirements.
- **Prevention:** Protecting infant, children and young people’s rights to grow up in family and culture by redressing the causes of child protection intervention



- **Partnership:** Ensuring the participation of community representatives in service design, delivery and individual case decisions.
- **Placement:** Placing infants, children and young people in care in accordance with the established ACPD enshrined in the CYPS Act as the Placement Hierarchy.
- **Participation:** Ensuring the participation of children, young people, parents and family members in decisions regarding the care and protection of their children.
- **Connection:** Maintaining and supporting connections to family, community, culture and Country for infants, children and young people in care.

Systems are in place to ensure:

- Aboriginal families have access to quality, culturally safe and responsive services
- policy and procedures are designed with specific consideration of the impact on Aboriginal infants, children and young people and families.
- practice guidance embeds consideration of specific practice requirements for Aboriginal infants, children young people and families that reflect the ACPD.
- Family Led Decision Making for Aboriginal families is prioritised
- when placement is required, mapping for family, kin and community is undertaken to support Aboriginal infants, children and young people to grow up connected, Aboriginal strong, healthy and proud of who they are.
- DCP consults with a recognised Aboriginal organisation before the placement of Aboriginal infants, children and young people.
- ecomaps and genograms are developed in partnership with families to ensure that connections of Aboriginal children and young people are identified.
- Aboriginal infants, children and young people have a comprehensive cultural maintenance plan developed, implemented and regularly reviewed as part of their case plan.
- the Nation groups of Aboriginal infants, children and young people are known and recorded.
- practice is strengthened by cultural consultation via Principal Aboriginal Consultants, Aboriginal Family Practitioners and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
- culturally safe and responsive practice for Aboriginal families is promoted through mandatory Cultural Footprint training for all staff.

Success looks like:

- an annual audit demonstrates consultation is occurring with a recognised Aboriginal Organisation prior to placement (unless after hours) for all Aboriginal children and young people.
- increasing the percentage of Aboriginal infants, children and young people placed with Aboriginal carers
- all case plans for Aboriginal infants, children and young people have a completed Aboriginal Cultural Identity Support Tool (ACIST) as part of the case plan.
- an annual practice audit identifies that the ACIST is completed for all Aboriginal children and young people sampled.



- all staff have completed stages 1,2 and 3 of Cultural Footprint Training.
- 100% of the Senior Executive Group have completed stages 1, 2 and 3 of Cultural Footprint Training.

4.1.6 Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Considering the individual needs of each infant, child or young person and their family is pivotal in child-centred practice. Viewing each child and young person and their family in their unique context means services are more likely to be effective in keeping them safe, connected and thriving. Recognising and responding to each child or young person and families strengths and needs supports them to feel empowered and valued.

Systems are in place to ensure:

- the CYPS Act Principles of Intervention that require consideration of culture, language, disability and religion are reflected throughout the DCP Practice Approach, programs and practice guidance
- each infant, child or young person in care has an individual case plan that addresses their needs
- case planning for Aboriginal infants, children and young people in care includes an ACIST
- culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people in care have a case plan that includes cultural maintenance
- culturally safe and responsive practice is embedded in practice guidance and emphasised through professional and clinical supervision
- decision making is supported by cultural case consultation
- children and young people with a disability are appropriately supported through specialist service provision, access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and practice guidance that supports staff to identify and respond to their needs.
- the individual therapeutic and care needs of children and young people are supported through case planning and, where appropriate, expert consultation provided by the Interagency Therapeutic Needs Panel and DCP Complex Case Review Meetings.

Success looks like:

- all Aboriginal infants, children and young people have an ACIST completed as part of their case plan
- all children and young people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background have a cultural maintenance plan in their case plan
- children and young people who are recorded on C3MS as having a disability have a National Disability Insurance Scheme plan, an application has been made for a plan if they are eligible or an assessment undertaken of their eligibility.

4.1.7 People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

Ensuring that those providing services to and caring for children and young people are suitably screened, skilled and culturally competent is an essential objective of any child safe organisation. DCP is committed to ensuring that recruitment practices reflect best practice in human resources management. Once determined



suitable to work with children and young people, DCP endeavours to ensure staff and carers are supported and capable to provide quality, child-centred, culturally safe and responsive services.

Systems are in place to ensure:

- recruitment practices reflect public sector and CYPS Act requirements
- valid Working With Children Checks are in place for all DCP staff, carers, contracted agency staff and those in regular contact with children and young people in placement
- induction and orientation supports staff to demonstrate a shared understanding of the core values, outcomes and vision of DCP
- psychometric testing is undertaken as required under the CYPS Act
- carer assessment, approval, review, training and support for kinship and foster carers
- recruitment and retention strategies are implemented to support the development of cultural capability across DCP
- contracted agencies are aware of the minimum requirements for assessment, qualifications and training for carers
- DCP residential care operational staff are enrolled in or have completed Certificate IV – Child and Youth Intervention
- regular, quality professional supervision is available
- risks are monitored and mitigated via operational and/or Strategic Risk Register and Care Concern Management Model.

Success looks like:

- all staff and carers including those working for contracted agencies have a valid Working with Children Check
- increased representation of Aboriginal employees across DCP, across all levels and occupational groups
- all DCP employees complete stages 1, 2 and 3 of Cultural Footprint Training
- psychometric testing is completed for all staff requiring testing under the CYPS Act
- all approved carers are subject of a carer review every two years and have a current carer agreement in place
- carer and Personnel Matrix demonstrates that appropriate assessment, training and qualifications are in place for carers
- DCP service delivery staff indicate that they feel supported in staff wellbeing surveys.

4.1.8 Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

Child-centred services invite children and young people and those who care about them to express their views on the services they receive. To ensure their voice is genuinely heard, children and young people must be supported to express themselves, have their views respected and receive a timely response to questions or concerns. Given the vulnerability of children and young people in care, a rigorous approach and continuous improvement of the approach to managing care concerns is a key priority. Responses to



complaints concerning the care of Aboriginal children and young people take into consideration all elements of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (ACCP) and be undertaken in partnership with Aboriginal families. When concerns about the care of a child or young person are raised, an assessment of safety is the first priority of DCP.

Systems are in place to ensure:

- staff are provided with procedures that assist them to clearly understand their obligations to report concerns consistent with mandatory reporting requirements
- contracted agencies are required to have processes in place for mandatory reporting and responding to complaints
- the management of care concerns has a strong focus on safety and seeking the views of children and young people
- case workers are aware that they must inform children and young people on processes for raising concerns or complaints, both internally and externally
- children and young people in residential care have the right under the CYPS Act to have complaints responded to by the Chief Executive and can access information on this process on the DCP internet site
- children and young people in residential care are supported to complete a reflection form if they have a concern about their care and/or after an incident involving physical intervention in accordance with the requirements of the [Family and Community Services Regulations 2024](#)
- children and young people are supported to engage with the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People, seek advice, support and advocacy from the Commissioner for Children and Young People and for Aboriginal children and people, from the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People (if required).
- Aboriginal families have the opportunity to have an Aboriginal person to support them in complaints processes and consultation with a Principal Aboriginal Consultant is promoted when responding to complaints regarding the care of Aboriginal children and young people
- internal reviews are focused on whether decision making reflects the needs of child or young person and best practice
- reviews undertaken by the Contact Arrangements Review Panel consider whether contact is appropriate for a child or young person's needs
- adverse events reviews are undertaken to inform service improvement
- trends in complaints are considered by the Quality and Safeguarding Operations Subcommittee.

Success looks like:

- all complaints raised by children and young people to the DCP central complaints management unit are responded to within 30 days
- all children and young people (where it is legally and developmentally appropriate) are spoken to within three months of a serious care concern being raised in relation to their care.



4.1.9 Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

The essential foundation of quality, child-centred practice in child protection is a sound, contemporary understanding of:

- child and adolescent development
- the impacts of trauma
- culturally safe and responsive practice
- strategies to support children and young people who have experienced harm.

Developing strong skills in engaging children and young people is crucial to building the trust required for children and young people to feel safe to confide in those around them if they are at risk or have been harmed. Understanding behaviour as a form of communication is particularly important aspect for staff caring for children and young people who have experienced trauma.

Systems are in place to ensure:

- staff have access to contemporary, best practice guidance related to child safety (for example, assessment of harm and risk of harm, cumulative harm, supporting children and young people with complex needs including problem sexual behaviour, suicide and self-harming and going missing from care)
- skill development is supported by induction and orientation, access to learning and development tailored to job role, external professional development, study support and workplace learning
- staff are supported to develop their cultural competence through access to contemporary resources developed by DCP's Aboriginal Practice directorate and DCP's cultural footprint training
- professional supervision focused on competency, reflection and wellbeing is available to staff working with children and young people
- A trauma informed, therapeutic model of care, The Sanctuary Model, is being embedded in DCP Residential Care.

Success looks like:

- all staff undertake Safe Environments training within three months of commencement of employment and a refresher every three years.
- all staff undertake induction training within two months of commencement of employment.
- all DCP Residential Care staff employed by DCP complete Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention within 12 months of commencement of employment.
- all staff undertake DCP's Cultural Footprint training.



4.1.10 Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

An important aspect of providing quality care to children and young people in care is creating care environments that provide support them to heal from trauma and keep them safe. It is imperative that adults caring for children and young people have access to information about how to keep them safe when they are engaging in online environments. It is acknowledged that online environments can provide important opportunities for children and young people in care to remain connected to family and community. This may be particularly important for Aboriginal children and young people who may not be living within community or on Country. An essential aspect of safeguarding is ensuring processes are in place to predict, assess and enable proactive action to minimise risk of harm.

Systems are in place to ensure:

- staff have training and access to best practice advice that supports holistic assessment of safety and risk of harm for children and young people
- children and young people have a case plan that identifies any risks associated with their behaviour or care and strategies are identified to minimise these risks
- care environments are licensed consistent with the requirements of the CYPS Act
- the physical suitability of residential care properties is checked prior to commencement of use and a work, health and safety review undertaken on a six monthly basis
- home safety checks are undertaken for kinship and foster care placements
- Working With Children Checks are undertaken for carers as well as others in contact with children and young people in foster and kinship placements
- children and young people in residential care have access to technology that enables them to be connected to staff, other young people and their families (as appropriate)
- procedures are in place and regular interagency liaison is undertaken to prevent and respond to children and young people in care who go missing
- contemporary practice guidance on preventing and responding to risks including eSafety, aggressive behaviour, problem sexual behaviour, suicide and self-harming, and intoxication is available in the Manual of Practice
- individualised wellbeing plans are in place for children and young people in residential care.
- residential care staff have access to Safety Intervention training which has a focus on prevention and de-escalation of behaviour
- placement Support is available to children and young people living in residential care
- additional supports are available overnight to carers in residential care when required
- eSafety resources are available to DCP residential care staff, including resources specifically designed for Aboriginal children and young people.

Success looks like:

- all carers, household members and regular guests have valid Working with Children Checks



- all children and young people in residential care have an up to date Wellbeing Plan consistent with the Wellbeing Plan section of the [Support children and young people in residential care key step](#) in the DCP Residential Care chapter of the Manual of Practice.

4.1.11 Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved

A key element of the DCP Practice Approach and Strategic Plan is a commitment to continuous improvement. The inclusion of the National Principles for Safe Organisations in the DCP Quality and Safeguarding Framework enables the regular review of the safeguarding functions that implement the National principles.

Systems are in place to ensure:

- policies and procedures related to child safety are regularly reviewed in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework
- regular practice audits are undertaken
- adverse event reviews and practice audit findings inform service improvement
- service improvement recommendations from oversight bodies and the progress of implementation of recommendations are tracked.

Success looks like:

- the success measures identified in the Quality and Safeguarding Framework are reported on a quarterly basis to the Quality and Safeguarding Operations Subcommittee
- a schedule of practice audits that reflects the mechanisms outlined in the Quality and Safeguarding Framework is developed and implemented on an annual basis
- recommendations rated as high on the DCP Recommendations Register are implemented within 12 months.

4.1.12 Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

The mandate of DCP is to respond to concerns that infants, children and young people have been harmed and are at risk of harm and keep them safe from further physical, sexual, emotional and psychological harm. DCP has an important obligation to ensure that children and young people experience cultural safety in the services and care they receive. DCP's operational policies and procedures are focused on supporting staff to ensure the safety of children and young people, whether they are living with their family or are in care.

Systems are in place to ensure:

- DCP staff are aware of their obligation to report concerns about children and young people consistent with DCP Mandatory Reporting Guidelines, Care Concern procedures and section 64A and section 65 of the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935*
- contracted agencies have policies in place relating to duty of care, mandated notifications, complaints handling and managing allegations made about staff



- practice guidance promotes the need to identify and minimise risks and that the safety of children and young people is the paramount consideration
- the importance of cultural safety and culturally responsive services is promoted through the DCP Practice Approach, policies and procedures
- appropriate governance and review of policy through the Policy Governance Framework.

Success looks like:

- all DCP policies and procedures for service delivery include a statement about the safety of children and young people being the paramount consideration
- the DCP Manual of Practice and Practice Approach resources include practice prompts that promote active efforts to implement the ACCP
- DCP mandatory reporting and Care Concerns procedures are reviewed within the prescribed review periods.

4.2 Continuous improvement in quality and safeguarding

The development of the Quality and Safeguarding Framework has highlighted additional systems and mechanisms that must be developed to ensure a comprehensive approach to safeguarding. As part of DCP's commitment to continuous improvement, an implementation plan has been developed to enable a phased implementation of new strategies and review of existing mechanisms. To ensure a comprehensive and thorough approach, the initial focus will be those mechanisms that safeguard children and young people in care. Progressively, implementation will focus more broadly on services provided to children and young people whilst they are at home and children and young people for whom concerns about risk of harm and harm are notified to the department. Once implemented, the new safeguarding mechanisms will be incorporated in the framework and success measures identified.

4.3 Accountabilities for quality and safeguarding

Effective safeguarding is reliant on the successful implementation of the systems outlined in this framework. A commitment to quality and safeguarding requires everyone, at all levels of the organisation, to be accountable to children, young people, families, carers and the community for providing services that are safe, effective, integrated and continuously improving.

4.3.1 All DCP staff and volunteers are required to

- consider the safety of children and young people as the paramount consideration in service provision
- support children and young people to share their views and be responsive
- partner with children and young people in decision making about their care
- provide access to culturally safe and responsive intervention from the first point of contact with child protection services
- work alongside Aboriginal children, families and communities using a culturally safe and responsive approach that honours the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle and recognises that Aboriginal infants, children and young people are best cared for in their family, kin, and cultural networks



- recognise that embedded systemic and structural racism continues to impact on Aboriginal infants, children, young people and their families
- understand their role and responsibilities, work within their role, expertise and level of experience
- provide high quality services and care that moves beyond compliance with minimum standards
- speak up about issues and risks which may affect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- share information with other agencies to ensure the safety of children and young people
- develop and maintain knowledge and skills crucial to the provision of best practice in child protection
- practice consistently with relevant legislation, standards, policies, practice guidance and procedures
- actively monitor outcomes and identify opportunities to improve the quality of services and care provided to children and young people.

4.3.2 Supervisors, managers, practice leaders, Principal Aboriginal Consultants and Principal Psychologists are required to

- provide a supportive and culturally safe and responsive environment for Aboriginal infants, children, young people, families, carers and staff that promotes safety and inspires quality, transparency, accountability, and collaboration
- support staff to ensure the child or young person's voice is at the centre of decision making
- ensure staff and volunteers have the knowledge and skills to understand and assume accountability for their role and responsibilities, decision making and reporting
- recognise and challenge racial bias and racism
- proactively identify and monitor areas of emerging risk and drive action to ensure the safety of children and young people, facilitate improved practice and outcomes for children, young people and families
- promote a culture of continuous improvement by sharing performance data, information and feedback and enabling opportunities to improve practice and service delivery
- promote an environment where staff and clients feel empowered to speak up about safety and quality concerns, incidents and risk
- model a commitment to continuous learning and professional supervision mechanisms
- lead collaborative engagement with interagency partners to support integrated service responses and build strong local networks.

4.3.3 Executive

The Chief Executive and the Executive group:

- promote a culture of quality and continuous improvement that supports practice and care consistent with the vision, purpose and priorities of DCP
- maintain a focus on listening to and acting on the voice of the child and young person to inform strategic priorities and direction
- monitor and manage key areas of strategic and operational risk



- foster a ‘just’ culture of fairness, transparency, learning and improvement in which staff are empowered and supported to raise quality and safety concerns
- oversee improvement initiatives to ensure staff provide the best service and care experience for every child and young person
- oversee the transformation of legislation, policies, programs and practices to ensure they are culturally safe, responsive and appropriate for Aboriginal infants, children, young people and their families
- ensure committee structures are in place to support quality and safeguarding with suitably skilled and proactive members
- ensure data is collected and reviewed that measures the quality and effectiveness of services and safeguarding mechanisms.

5. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

- Progress and outcomes of the framework implementation will be monitored by the Quality and Safeguarding Operations Executive reported to DCP Senior Executive Group (SEG).
- The framework will be reviewed every three years and amendments made as required.
- The Deputy Chief Executive of DCP or delegate is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the framework.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/responsibility for
Chief Executive/Senior Executive Group	Responsible for strategic oversight, implementation and organisational compliance with the DCP Clinical Governance Framework.
Quality and Safeguarding Operations Executive	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 clinical governance, safety and quality within DCP.

7. Glossary

Term	Meaning
Safeguarding	The duty of care and responsibility to implement preventative and responsive systems, policies and practices to ensure children and young people are:



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe from harm • supported to heal from trauma • empowered • connected to family, community and culture • cared for in a way that ensures their physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing and promotes healthy development so they can reach their full potential.
Wellbeing	For children and young people, wellbeing is physical, psychological, emotional and is present where there the child or young person experiences safety, autonomy, competence and relatedness.

Document control

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10 September 2021	V1.1	Minor amendments made to update language and formatting
1 September 2023	V2.0	Amendments made to update language, ensure accuracy and formatting as per the DCP policy review cycle.
11 July 2024	V2.1	Minor amendments to update the Framework to align with the Family and Community Services Regulations 2024 .
2 August 2024	V2.2	Minor amendment to include a link to the Wellbeing plan section of the DCP Residential Care chapter of the Manual of Practice.