



OFFICIAL

Government of South Australia
Department for Child Protection

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Practice Paper

1. Introduction

Established in 1984, following a community movement initiated in the 1970s, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP) was developed to establish distinct national child welfare policy focused on reducing rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child removal. The ATSICPP has been adopted in policy and practice across all Australian states and territories through [Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031](#)¹ and the accompanying [Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026](#).

The ATSICPP seeks to enhance and preserve connection to identity, family, community and culture by promoting self-determination and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Led Decision Making. The ATSICPP recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities have the knowledge, experience, family relationships and connections to make the best decisions about the safety and wellbeing of their infants, children, and young people.

It is an enduring principle that must be applied across the spectrum of Department for Child Protection business, not only to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children, and young people who are in care.

This practice paper describes the ATSICPP context and relationship to child protection practice and how the Department for Child Protection seeks to fully embed it into child protection practice.

2. Context

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people in care has increased in every state and territory over the last decade.² In comparison, the percentage of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care is decreasing.³

The reasons for this are complex and should be considered within the context of the legacy of past policies of forced removal and cultural assimilation, intergenerational and complex trauma and limited knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices. Additionally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to experience

¹ Department of Social Services, 2021 <<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programs-services/protecting-australias-children>>

² SNAICC, 2023 <<https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Family-Matters-Report-2023.pdf>>

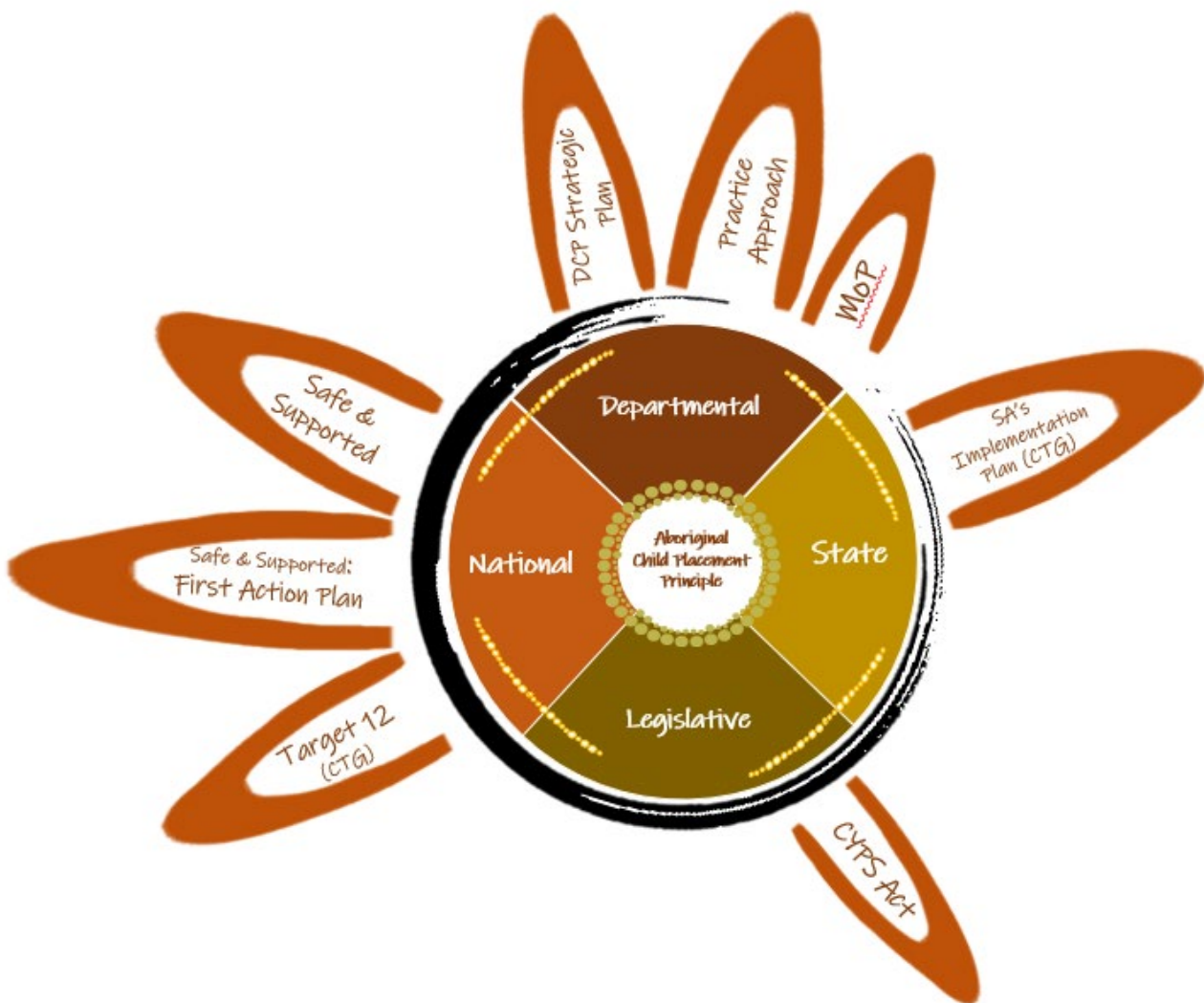
³ Ibid.



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 outcomes.

The ATSI CPP is not fully implemented into the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* (CYPS Act). This practice paper provides practitioners with guidance on best practice for child protection practitioners and departmental policy which may promote active efforts beyond what is required by the CYPS Act.

The below diagram illustrates the departmental, legislative, state, and national contexts for the implementation of the ATSI CPP. These contexts directly and indirectly guide, shape and influence practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children, young people, families and communities.



Since the Bringing Them Home report in 1997, rising rates of removal and disconnection from culture and family stories has continued. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children, young people, and their families are separated at grossly disproportionate rates to their non-

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers.⁴

The 2023 Family Matters report identified that South Australia had the second highest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entry into out of home care rate in Australia.⁵ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people make up 42.8% of the total number of children in out of home care despite being only 5.98% of the population in Australia and less than half of those living in care are living with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.⁶

The same report also highlighted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people are 10.5 times more likely to be living in out of home care and less likely to be reunified with birth parents than their non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers.⁷

Full implementation of the ATSI CPP across the continuum of practice aligns with all four [Closing the Gap](#) Priority Reforms and a commitment by all state and territory governments to systems transformation to fully embed the five elements to the standard of active efforts.

3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

The ATSI CPP embeds the right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children, young people and their families to receive culturally relevant, accountable and responsive child protection services; that respectfully engage families and recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities have the knowledge and experience to make the best decisions about the safety and wellbeing of their infants, children and young people.

Further to this, the ATSI CPP aims to:

- Promote and recognise that culture is integral and as one to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity. Cultural identity and cultural connection are protective factors and should be considered as such. A strong cultural identity maintains connectedness, pride, has meaning and contributes to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant, child or young person's safety, voice, wellbeing, and resilience.
- Recognise, protect and advance the fundamental human rights of self-determination, access to resources, equity, participation and respect for and protection of culture.
- Reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people in child protection and out of home care systems.

The ATSI CPP centres on five elements; prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection, and the precursor identification.

The diagram on the next page illustrates the five elements (and the precursor) of the ATSI CPP.

⁴ SNAICC, 2023 < <https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Family-Matters-Report-2023.pdf>>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.



4. Child safety

The ATSI CPP considers what is in the best interest of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people to keep them safe and reduce their risk of harm. The safety of infants, children and young people is the paramount consideration. The ATSI CPP does **not** prioritise culture over safety as neither are exclusive concepts in practice. The safety of infants, children and young people is the paramount consideration.

The ATSI CPP does not circumvent legislative obligations to ensure all infants, children and young people are protected from harm.⁸

In the context of removal, the ATSI CPP does require consideration of the impact from a loss of identity, family relationships and sense of belonging for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people.

5. Cultural safety

Cultural safety is not wholly determinative of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant, child or young person's safety and wellbeing.

When engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people, their families and communities, the term 'cultural safety' is used to describe the conditions in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity and ways of thinking, knowing and being are recognised, respected and actively supported. A commonly used definition of cultural safety as that of Robyn Williams (1999), who defined cultural safety as:

“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.”

It reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families' experiences of services and processes, as to whether they feel culturally safe or not. Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples recognises the intricate nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, as it extends to value the complexity of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lived experience and individual social reality.

DCP practitioners 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. Refer to the [Bias in Child Protection Practice Paper](#) for more information. 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.

⁸ Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, Section 7

The extent to which an environment is culturally safe is determined by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person with whom the DCP practitioner is engaging. Practitioners should deeply listen to both the expressed views and non-verbal cues of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in articulating what they need to feel culturally safe, and adjust approaches where needed.

Refer to the [Manual of Practice: Identify and respond to the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people](#) for more information.

6. Embedding the ATSICPP into practice

Consistent and enduring application of the ATSICPP elements – including the precursor *Identity* - is critical to ensuring the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people are upheld through improving outcomes and reducing the rate of entry into out of home care. Application of the ATSICPP and its elements and precursor is a core capability for child protection practitioners.⁹

The ATSICPP is neither linear nor static. The elements are inter-related, and practitioners should consider all the elements across the continuum of their practice within the context of the unique circumstances of each infant, child or young person.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culture, language, families and kinship networks are unique, distinct and diverse. As such, there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to embedding the ATSICPP into practice.

7. Active efforts

Application of the ATSICPP must be to the standard of active efforts. Active efforts are purposeful, thorough and timely efforts that are supported by policy and enable the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people.¹⁰

Active efforts are the actions practitioners take to meaningfully support families to overcome barriers and systems inequities to ensure families stay together or are reunified. Or, where necessary to ensure safety; that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people are placed in accordance with the placement hierarchy.

The Manual of Practice contains ATSICPP active effort prompts to support staff in their practice.

7.1 Precursor: Identification

Identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people involved with the DCP is required to fulfil legislative, policy and practice requirements. The CYPS Act must be observed by practitioners in relation to the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people; in particular:

Section 8 (1)(a), In addition to the paramount consideration set out in section 7, and

⁹ AASW (2020), AASW Child Protection Capability Statement pp8

¹⁰ SNAICC, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Implementation Guide: pp4 <

<https://www.snaicc.org.au/resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-child-placement-principle-guide-to-support-implementation/>>

without derogating from that section, the following needs of children and young people are also to be considered in the administration, operation and enforcement of this Act:

(a) the need to be heard and have their views considered;

Section 10 (1)(c) account should be taken of the culture, disability, language and religion of children or young people and, if relevant, those in whose care children and young people are placed

Section 16(1) Aboriginal child or young person means a child or young person who—

(a) is a descendant of the indigenous inhabitants of Australia; and

(b) regards themselves as Aboriginal or, if they are a young child, is regarded as Aboriginal by at least 1 of their parents;

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity is more than listing the cultural status of an infant, child, or young person. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant, child or young person's cultural identity is made up of their Nations, family stories, language, traditions and relationships, and Aboriginal ways, beliefs, and values. Missed opportunities to identify can have long lasting detrimental impacts.

Active efforts to identify include but are not limited to:

- asking parents if they identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or if there are people in their family who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and what their relationship is to the relatives
- asking significant family members if they identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- asking the child or young person whether they identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- consulting with an Aboriginal Family Practitioner or Principal Aboriginal Consultant about how to approach the family in culturally respectful manner to ensure the family remain culturally safe regarding any questions about their identity
- asking the parent, family members or child or young person if they identify with a particular Nation or language group
- if someone declines to answer questions about their identity, informing them that they can provide this information at a later date if they choose to
- developing a detailed genogram and ecomap in partnership with the family - remain curious and ask questions about extended family members and other people who may be significant to the child and family
- reviewing DCP or other agency records regarding the child, young person or family's cultural

identity

- seeking advice and support from specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family finding services for example the Taikurtirna Warri-apinthe Program (DCP), Link-Up (Nunkuwarrin Yunti), State Records of SA, Finding Families (KWY).

Promising practice

The Northern Region has 'Nunga Boys and Nunga Girls' groups for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people case managed within the Northern Region. The groups painted a mural which is proudly displayed in the foyer of the Inner North office. The title of the mural is "we come in all colours" and generated conversations about skin colour and what it means to be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

NB: Proof of Aboriginal Identity

*A person's Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage is personal to them. It is **never** appropriate to ask an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to provide proof or confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage.*

Refer to the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: A guide to support implementation](#) and the [Genogram Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

7.2 Prevention

Prevention recognises the critical importance of providing access to child centered culturally safe and responsive services and assessments that redress the causes of statutory child protection intervention from the first point of contact with DCP.

The Prevention element recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are detrimentally impacted by system. This includes inequities and the social determinants of wellbeing. Active efforts are required to support families to safely care for their infants, children and young people.

Active efforts include but are not limited to:

- building respectful and equal relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- undertaking child centred culturally safe, comprehensive assessments of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant, child, young person and family's needs and circumstances with a focus on preserving families wherever possible
- ensuring that all active efforts have been made (and documented) to preserve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with family

- ❖ ensuring that all alternative and less intrusive interventions have been exhausted prior to removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families
- ❖ recognising the differences in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices, kinship structures and actively working to address cultural bias in practice
- ❖ acknowledging that connection to culture is a significant and positive strength for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- ❖ providing child centered, integrated, culturally safe supports that address the full range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant, children, young person or family's needs
- ❖ utilising appropriate referral pathways to divert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families from further child protection involvement.

Promising Practice

In the context of a youth justice matter for Jade – 15 years, the Youth Court requested DCP to identify placement options for her. Jade had been living with her mother at her auntie's home. Due to Jade's offending behaviour, her aunty had asked them to leave resulting in the mother becoming homeless and Jade being in detention due to there being no suitable accommodation to bail her to.*

Jade's family had identified another aunt that Jade could live with, but the Court had previously rejected this option on the basis that a previous assessment completed by another agency asserted the placement was not suitable as Jade did not want to live there.

The DCP social worker worked with Jade and her family to explore Jade's reluctance to live with her aunt. Jade's reluctance centered around her belief that she would not have her own room and space at her aunt's. Through listening to Jade's voice and working with Jade's family, arrangements were able to be made to ensure Jade had her own space within the home.

Inviting Jade and her family to participate in decisions about where she could live prevented Jade from entering the child protection system. To date Jade is thriving with her aunt and has re-engaged with her education.

Refer to the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: A guide to support implementation](#) for more information.

7.3 Partnership

Partnership is a shared commitment to build equitable, strong, meaningful and enduring relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities and organisations with a strong focus on empowerment and self-determination.

Partnership ensures that family and community representatives actively participate in service design, honest conversation by workers, service delivery and case decisions. The Partnership element recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the knowledge, strength and ability to make decisions regarding the safety and wellbeing of their infants, children, young

people, families and communities.

Active efforts include but are not limited to:

- providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people and their families with active assistance to access Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making processes such as Family Group Conferencing and case planning
- ensuring partnerships between DCP and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children, young people and their families are genuine and encourage self-determination
- consulting with and having regard to the advice provided by Principal Aboriginal Consultants (PACs) on all significant decisions relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people
- consulting with and having regard to the advice provided by the recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation prior to the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people in care
- developing strong, meaningful and enduring inter-agency partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Promising Practice

Monthly stakeholder partnership meetings facilitated by Northern Region DCP offices and their PACs with agencies such as Baptist Care, Incompro, Martinthi, AFSS and Anglicare promote collaboration and partnership with Community to organise cultural events and activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people who are case managed within the Northern Region.

Refer to the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: A guide to support implementation](#) for more information.

7.4 Placement

The Placement element of the ATSICPP aims to facilitate culturally appropriate placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people so that cultural identity is preserved and maintained at the highest level of connection to family, community, culture and Country.

Practitioners must observe the Principle hierarchy set down in section 12(3)(a) of the CYPS Act.

Section 12(3)(a) is not wholly determinative when deciding where to place an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant, child, or young person. If it is not reasonably practicable or is not in the infant, child or young person's best interests to be placed in accordance with section 12(3)(a) then an alternative care arrangement can and should be made.

SNAICC, the national Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation peak body and voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people, advocates that full implementation of the placement element of the ATSI CPP requires that as a priority, wherever possible, the infant, child or young person must be placed with the child's Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander extended family or relatives. If, after all reasonable efforts, this is not possible, the child may be placed with other extended family or relatives.

This does not change the requirement that all decisions must be in the best interests of the child, but it reinforces that connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and culture is central to our children's best interests. Placement decisions must always consider the best interests and unique circumstances of the infant, child or young person, must align with legislation, and be made in accordance with DCP policy. DCP policy in relation to the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people requires active efforts beyond what is required by the CYPS Act.

Placing an Aboriginal infant, child or young person outside of their culture is a significant decision. Significant decisions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people must be made in accordance with legislation and departmental policy including the ATSI CPP and Family Led Decision Making for Aboriginal families Framework and should also include meaningful consultation with a Principal Aboriginal Consultant (PAC).

Practitioners must complete the consultation with recognised organisation form for every placement of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander infant, child or young person. See [Manual of Practice: Consult with a recognised organisation \(for Aboriginal children and young people\) in the Place a child or young person in care chapter](#) for more information.

Active efforts include but are not limited to:

- ☞ actively exhausting all placement options at the higher levels of the Placement hierarchy before considering lower hierarchy placements
- ☞ ensuring placement mapping commences as a matter of urgency when the removal of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant, child or young person becomes a possibility
- ☞ identifying and locating kin as soon as possible and pursuing child centered, timely and culturally safe assessments of identified kinship carers
- ☞ ensuring timely decision-making regarding placements
- ☞ placement decision-making in line with the Placement hierarchy must consider the individual needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people and their requirement for stability and wellbeing
- ☞ placing sibling groups together where it is safe and in their best interests.

Promising practice

Stevie's cultural identity was recorded as unknown. His case worker made a referral to the

Taikurtirna Warri-apintheta Program as Stevie's father's cultural identity was recorded as Aboriginal. There had been barriers to engagement with Stevie's father due to his previous experiences with child protection services. Specialist Aboriginal staff within the Taikurtirna Warri-apintheta Program worked in culturally safe ways with Stevie's father to develop a genogram and eco-map that identified his Nation groups and extensive kin and community members that were not previously identified or recorded in C3MS.

Stevie's family is quite prominent in their hometown and have achieved excellence in cultural preservation, community enhancement and academia. Stevie now has nationally recognised Elders who he can look up to and have relationship with for years to come; counteracting the intergenerational disconnect so many of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people experience.

Refer to the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: A guide to support implementation](#) for more information.

7.5 Participation

Participation ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children, young people, parents and family members participate in decisions that affect them. Participation extends beyond consultation and requires an approach that genuinely includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in decision making about their infants, children and young people across the whole continuum of DCP intervention.

Active efforts include but are not limited to:

- ❖ engaging the child, young person, parents, community advocates and extended family members in decision making and case planning
- ❖ ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are given the opportunity to identify culturally safe spaces for meetings and family contact
- ❖ ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are given the opportunity to provide input on the importance of culture in decisions affecting them and their infants, children and young people
- ❖ ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are given the opportunity to contribute to processes that maintain a connection for themselves and their children to family, community and culture
- ❖ providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with an opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them in line with their capacity, age and maturity while receiving culturally appropriate support to do so.

Promising practice

Following extensive and active efforts to address school non-attendance and exposure to domestic and family violence, 12 year old Leanne was placed in care. The case worker took immediate steps*

to consult with the PAC to seek advice about kinship placement options. Leanne was initially placed with relatives in Port Augusta under a Safety Plan.

This provided enough time to apply Family Led Decision Making principles to listen to Leanne's voice and for the family to participate in the placement decision. Leanne and her family were able to identify an aunt in Western Australia.

Following assessments to ensure the aunt was willing and able to provide safe and appropriate care, Leanne was transitioned into her aunt's care where Leanne now lives in an ongoing private care arrangement.

Refer to the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: A guide to support implementation](#) for more information.

7.6 Connection

The Connection element seeks to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people maintain connections to their family, community, culture, traditions and language.

Keeping connections to family and community is critical in developing and maintaining cultural identity, which starts by the child knowing where they come from, and where they fit within their family and community structures.

Cultural maintenance planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care is a matter of priority and is a requirement under section 28 (2)(b) of the CYPS Act).

The Aboriginal Cultural Identity Support Tool (ACIST) is included in case plans for infants, children and young people identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to record details of actions taken to establish, reconnect and maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant, children and young people's connection with family, community, Country, and culture. For further details about case planning and review, refer to the [Manual of Practice: Case planning, review and annual review](#) chapter.

Descendants from the Stolen Generation may not be connected to family, culture, community, and Country. DCP practitioners should not make assumptions and be mindful that disconnection may be painful and continued questioning, traumatic. When working with disconnected members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community practitioners should be guided by what that person considers to be safe for them.

Active efforts include but are not limited to:

- ❖ developing an Aboriginal Cultural Identity Support Tool (ACIST) within five days of the infant, child or young person entering care
- ❖ reviewing case plans inclusive of the Aboriginal Cultural Identity Support Tools (ACIST), to ensure they continue to meet the infant, child or young person's current needs and

circumstances

- ❖ involving the child, young person, family, PACs and ACCOs in the development and review of the infant, child or young person's case plan, annual reviews and ACIST
- ❖ ensuring actions in the ACIST are appropriately resourced
- ❖ supporting carers to understand their obligations in supporting the infant, child or young person to maintain cultural connections
- ❖ placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sibling groups together where it is safe and in the best interests of all children to do so
- ❖ considering reunification early where it is identified as appropriate.

Promising practice

Aboriginal staff in the Northern Region organised a Kurna / Ngarrindjeri Cultural Connection Day facilitated by Aboriginal Ngarrindjeri Elder Major Moogy Sumner. Activities included teachings of Kurna and Ngarrindjeri culture, language, dance, dreaming and connection; and boomerang throwing by Uncle Moggy. Aboriginal leader and mentor Port Adelaide AFLW player Gemma Houghton, a Yindjibarndi woman, attended to kick the footy with the children and young people.

Promising practice

When 7 year old Tahlia entered care in 2019, she was placed in a number of placements (including residential care) that did not comply with the Child Placement Principle. Tahlia's Country was not in South Australia and there was limited evidence of early mapping beyond a few telephone calls and a police background check.*

Following a case transfer in 2023, Tahlia's social worker partnered with the Principal Aboriginal Consultant (PAC) to explore placement and connection with Tahlia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and community.

The social worker and PAC took Tahlia home to visit her Country where her extended family welcomed her. Tahlia's cultural plan (ACIST) includes plans to return to her Country and family for regular visits so she can maintain her connection to culture.

Promising practice

The Nunga boys' and girls' groups in the Northern Region bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people together to build friendships and have opportunities to interact with Elders to learn about their culture and feel connected.

Refer to the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: A guide to support implementation](#) for more information.

8. Reflective Practice Questions

Practitioners improve their practice when they engage in reflective practice. Practitioners are encouraged to seek feedback about their understanding and application of the ATSICPP to all areas of their work. The following Reflective Practice questions are offered to encourage reflective practice among practitioners.

- ❖ What does 'best interests' mean for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children and young people?
- ❖ The ATSICPP does **not** prioritise culture over safety as neither are exclusive concepts in practice. However, how do you align these concepts into your practice?
- ❖ What do you know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural, customs, history and language? What are your learning gaps?
- ❖ What do you understand about the role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and how would you include them in case management, consultation and decision-making processes?
- ❖ How do you apply the elements of the ATSICPP in decision making?
- ❖ What do you understand 'second Stolen Generation' to mean?
- ❖ How do you ensure families are provided with opportunities to participate in placement decisions through Aboriginal Family Led Decision making processes?
- ❖ How do you demonstrate a commitment to building respectful relationships based on equity and shared decision making?
- ❖ How could you find out more about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander infant, child or young person's cultural needs? Who could you ask to get more information? What kinds of questions could you ask them?
- ❖ What do you think are some dilemmas faced by child protection workers delegated with the responsibilities of child protection in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community?



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