

# Placement Procedure

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide an overarching summary of the Department for Child Protection's (DCP) process for the placement of children and young people into family and non-family based care. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Place a child or young person in care](#) chapter of the Manual of Practice.

The procedure also provides guidance regarding the escalation process when a placement match may or does pose a potential risk to a child or young person in out of home care.

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all DCP staff involved in placement decisions and/or are responsible for placing children and young people in family based and non-family based care.

## 3. Authority

### 3.1 Legislative context

- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#) (CYPS Act), in particular:
  - Sections 7, 10, 11, 12, 78, 80 and 84
- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Regulations 2017](#), in particular:
  - Regulation 20
- [Family and Community Services Act 1972](#)

### 3.2 Whole of Government requirements

- [Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#)

### 3.3 DCP requirements

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle](#)
- [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Child Placement Policy](#)

## 4. Principles

The content of this procedure and the Place a child or young person in care chapter of the Manual of Practice reflects the obligations upon DCP as outlined in the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, to place children and young people in a safe, nurturing, stable and secure environment.

DCP aims to place children and young people in a care environment that encourages a sense of belonging and wellbeing, enabling children and young people to reach their full potential. This aim is underpinned by the following principles:

- the safety of children and young people is the paramount consideration

- timely, holistic assessment is essential to identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people. Preference is given to safe placements with a person with whom the child or young person has an existing relationship
- attention is paid to early, thorough scoping of kinship placements
- the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people is consistent with the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle](#) (section 12 of the CYPS Act)
- the placement of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds is consistent with the [Culturally and linguistically diverse child placement Policy](#)
- decisions are made in an open, transparent and accountable manner and will recognise and respond to the needs and views of children and young people.

#### 4.1 Procedure requirements

Placing a child or young person in care is a coordinated approach between the DCP case worker, Placement Services, the family and/or non-family based carer and service providers. If the DCP case worker assesses that a placement with an approved kinship or specific child only (SCO) carer is not available, or that a temporary placement is not suitable, they should submit a Placement Request (PRQ) to Placement Services for a family based (such as foster care or Guardianship Family Day Care) [Guardianship Family Day Care Procedure](#) or non-family based (residential care) placement.

For further information on placement pathways, refer to [Gather and assess information to identify placement pathways](#) in the Place a child or young person in care chapter of the Manual of Practice.

#### 4.2 Roles and responsibilities

The DCP case worker, together with Placement Services will assess the child or young person's needs to inform decision making about placement for the child or young person. A placement request can be made for emergency, short-term or long-term, general or specialist [family based care](#), general or specialist [respite care](#), or non-family based care.

The final placement decision must be made by a person with the delegated authority to make that decision. The delegated decision-maker must ensure that clear records in C3MS are maintained regarding key information relating to decisions about placements. This includes but is not limited to:

- details of issues identified
- details of all consultations that occurred in the making of the decision, outlining who was consulted and what their views were
- the final decision and rationale
- details of communication with the child and young person, carers, relevant family members and other professionals relating to the decision
- a clear rationale as to why the placement decision was made.

Decisions to place children and young people in particular placements are subject to Internal Review rights and applications to SACAT. All relevant C3MS records are required to be provided during these review processes.

### 4.2.1 DCP case worker

For guidance about the DCP case worker's responsibilities with regard to identifying available placement pathways, preparing a placement request, consulting with a recognised organisation, and preparing for placement, refer to the [Place a child or young person in care](#) chapter of the Manual of Practice.

When communicating with a child, young person, carer, family member and/or other care team members, the DCP case worker is to advise them of the option to raise a complaint through DCP's Complaints and Feedback Management Unit (CFMU) if they wish to.

### 4.2.2 Placement Services

A placement (family based or non-family based) will be sourced by Placement Services based upon the child or young person's assessed needs and the combined information contained in the placement request, the Complexity Assessment Tool (CAT), the child or young person's case plan and any other relevant information.

Placement Services will:

- assess the information from the placement request to ensure it reflects contemporary clinical and placement needs
- for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, confirm the placement is consistent with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
- for children and young people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, confirm the placement is consistent with the [Culturally and linguistically diverse child placement Policy](#)
- confirm consultation has occurred with key stakeholders including Principal Aboriginal Consultants (PACs), Multicultural Services or a Disability Consultant
- assess if the request is suitable to be forwarded to the Additionally Approved Carer Program (AACP), if the child or young person does not have specialist requirements
  - noting the PRQ may also be sent to other family based care placement options. Refer to section 4.2.4 below for more information about this process
- assign the request to a Placement Services' team member to facilitate the request with relevant agency provider
- request a consult with a PAC or Multicultural Services if assessed that the child or young person's cultural needs may not be met and document these issues in C3MS
- where relevant, confirm the carers have approval to provide care for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person and the carer has completed Cultural Awareness training
- confirm the carer's registration and approval details meet the child or young person's placement needs:
  - when placing a child under two years of age, confirm the carer is registered to care for children less than two years old and the carer's Safe Infant Care training is current.
- identify a placement option that best meets the needs of the child or young person, as far as practicable.

The Placement Services team member forwards the placement request to the agency provider, including key information about the child or young person to be placed and record the placement in [C3MS](#).

If there are no family based placement options, Placement Services will explore non-family based placement possibilities.

In circumstances where the child or young person is moving between DCP residential care placements, placement decision making is led by DCP Residential Care in partnership with Placement Services, who are responsible for recording the placement. Any transitions out of DCP Residential Care are facilitated by Placement Services through the active work of Placement Services workers in exploring alternative family/non-family based placements.

### 4.2.3 Exceed numbers

Approval to exceed the pre-approved maximum number of children and young people in a family-based care placement cannot be granted for a period greater than 12 months under any circumstances.

If the exceed placement is expected to continue beyond the initial 12-month approved period, a review of the placement and a request for approval from the Manager, Placement Services is required prior to the completion of the 12-month period. Any further extensions will not be supported without a care plan.

When there is a need to exceed the pre-approved maximum number of children and young people in a placement, the following steps are to occur:

- The service provider is to complete an Application for Approval to Exceed Maximum Number of Children or Young People in Care form and forward the email to the [Placement Services](#) mailbox.
- Placement Services will manage and assess an exceed request on C3MS. This is supported by the Supervisor, Placement Services and approved by the Manager, Placement Services through C3MS. This information is accessible to Carer Payments to ensure subsidy payments are made.
- Placement Services will notify the DCP case worker if exceed numbers in a placement has been approved and return signed paperwork via email to the service provider.

If exceed numbers are expected to be ongoing, it is expected that service providers will approach the Carer Approval and Review Unit (CARU) to request a carer modification, which can be specific for a child or young person.

### 4.2.4 Additionally Approved Carer Program (AACP)

DCP's AACP, identifies registered kinship carers who may be appropriate to also provide care to an unrelated child or young person.

The AACP staff will conduct an initial assessment of the PRQ to determine whether the child or young person meets the eligibility criteria. If the PRQ is assessed as not meeting the eligibility criteria, AACP staff will decline the PRQ and return it to PSU to continue sourcing a placement.

If the PRQ is initially assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria and accepted for further scoping, AACP staff commence the process of scoping for placements to identify a potential carer. It is noted that Placement Services are still required to concurrently pursue alternative placement options for the child or young person. If Placement Services source a placement, Placement Services must advise AACP staff immediately. Information regarding the child or young person will be obtained from the DCP case worker, Placement Services and C3MS. AACP staff will notify the DCP case worker and Placement Services in relation to placement availability and potential matches, for the DCP case worker to consider and assess if it is appropriate for the child or young person as per the requirements in the [Place a child or young person in care](#) chapter of the Manual of Practice.

#### 4.2.5 Family-based care service providers

Family-based care services are delivered by non-government service providers, contracted to recruit, assess, support and train general and specialist foster carers and ensure carers are skilled to care for children and young people requiring an out-of-home placement. These services support DCP to place a child or young person in accordance with the placement principles.

When presented with a placement request, family-based service providers should:

- respond to initial placement requests within 24-hours or within two hours if it is an emergency response request
- accept or decline placement requests within 21 days
- commence placements within 14 days (maximum) of placement request acceptance (except where otherwise agreed as part of the child or young person's Transition Plan).

When placing a child or young person, it is expected that service providers will:

- identify if a placement is available for the child or young person on receipt of a placement request from Placement Services
- confirm approved carers have the necessary information on the child or young person about to enter their care, including information about the child or young person's complex and/or trauma based needs and cultural background
- provide Placement Services with information about the carer and their availability
- seek approval to modify a carer's details by completing the [Carer agreement FBC template](#) and email the form to CARU. If CARU approve carer modifications, they will advise the agency and [Placement Services](#) via email.

#### 4.3 Placement requests for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

When placing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child or young person, DCP must apply the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle](#) and the objects that are set out in section 12 of the CYPs Act.

Consultation with a PAC and a recognised Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation for the purposes of the CYPs Act must occur prior to any placement decisions, or where this is not reasonably practicable, within 24 hours of the placement commencing. Further information can be found on the DCP intranet site, [Placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children](#).

The DCP case worker's responsibilities regarding placement pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people can be found on the [Gather and assess information to identify placement pathways](#) in the Place a child or young person in care chapter of the Manual of Practice.

#### 4.4 Placement requests for children and young people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background

When considering a placement for children and young people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, the placement must be consistent with the [Culturally and linguistically diverse child placement Policy](#) and careful consideration must be given to the cultural identity/ethnicity, religion and language of potential carers. An appropriate cultural placement of a child or young person and carer provides natural

opportunities for the carer to promote the child or young person's cultural connections through their daily activities.

The DCP case worker's responsibilities regarding placement pathways for children and young people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background can be found on the [Gather and assess information to identify placement pathways](#) in the Place a child or young person in care chapter of the Manual of Practice.

#### **4.5 Placement requests for a child or young person displaying complex and/or risk behaviours**

In locating a placement, Placement Services will work with carer support agencies to scope and match the capability of the carers to manage a child or young person's identified behaviours based on the information provided. When placing a child or young person with complex and or/risk behaviours, it is important to take into consideration their care needs and the potential impact this may have on the child or young person as well as others.

For further information about complex and/or risk behaviours, refer to the [Supporting children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviours Practice Paper](#) and [Supporting children and young people in care with high risk and complex behaviour Practice Paper](#).

There may be times when Placement Services proceed with placing children and young people together, predominately in residential care settings, where there is potential risk to the child or young person or children and young people residing in the same placement. Such risk may be related to the child or young person who is being placed entering a new placement and exhibiting ongoing or historical trauma related behaviours (which may impact the children or young people in the placement) or exposure to high-risk behaviour from the other occupants of the household, such as going missing from placement, self-harm, sexualised behaviour and/or substance misuse.

Placement match decisions are made in consideration of the risk and the ongoing safety of the children and young people. In circumstances where there is potential risk, safety plans inclusive of risk mitigation strategies, are implemented (for example, increasing staff ratios to ensure greater supervision, or ensuring there is increased therapeutic support available to the placement).

#### **4.6 Placement requests for a child or young person with disability and complex health needs**

Some children and young people entering care have both disability and high health needs and will be at risk if their specialist care needs are not supported within a placement. These children and young people will require care plans to meet their disability or health related requirements.

For children and young people who require health support in the placement, DCP case workers should contact the Women's and Children's Health Network Disability Services, Registered nurse delegation of care program. A registered nurse from the program will undertake a health and disability assessment and complete a Model of Care which will describe the child or young person's health and disability support needs within the placement.

For further information on the DCP case workers requirements, refer to [identify and respond to the child or young person's disability needs](#) guidance in the Manual of Practice.

#### **4.7 Placement and Support Package (PaSP) placements**

PaSP placements are delivered by non-government agencies specifically contracted to provide PaSP packages through the PaSP Panel. A PaSP is initiated when other placement options have been exhausted by Placement Services and the DCP case worker in C3MS.

It is the role of Placement Services only to directly approach the PaSP Panel or a PaSP Panellist.

For further information on the requirements of a PaSP referral, refer to the [Placement and Support Packages procedure](#) on the DCP PaSP intranet page.

#### 4.8 Supported Independent Living Services (SILS) arrangements

SILS arrangements assist eligible young people aged 16-17 years to transition from care to adulthood and independence. All SILS provision approvals are managed by the SILS Coordinator based in Placement Services.

For further information on referring for a SILS arrangement, refer to the [Supported Independent Living Services \(SILS\) Procedure](#).

#### 4.9 Placement matching

Placement Services in conjunction with the DCP case worker, will take the following factors into consideration when matching a child or young person into an out of home care placement:

- the safety, physical, cultural, social and environmental factors for the child or young person, carers and others in the household
- the child or young person's age, development, gender, cultural background, experiences, trauma and needs
- the carer's capacity and capability to care for a child or young person with complex and/or trauma related needs.

For further information refer to [Attachment 1](#) Placement matching factors table.

When assessing the best available placement, the DCP case worker and Placement Services will consider:

- the number of children and young people already in the placement, the impact the placement may have on existing children and young people in the household, the ages and support needs of the children and young people, and what impact this would have on the needs of the child or young person requiring a placement
- cultural norms in relation to the number of children and young people being cared for in one placement, based on the familial/community ties of collectivist cultures. It is strongly recommended that the DCP case worker consult with DCP Multicultural Services to determine appropriateness
- whether the parents (or family members) of the child or young person being considered for placement have been identified as a safety risk for the child or young person, the applicants and other children or young people in the household (including circumstances where the parent or family member is residing in the carer household)
- whether the placement may pose potential risks to the safety of the carer or any other children and young people in the household
- whether the other children and young people in the placement may pose potential risks to the child or young person being considered for placement.

#### 4.10 Placement match escalation

At times, despite implementing the usual placement processes, it is possible that different parties in the care team may continue to hold strong and differing views about the placement decision and hold concerns for the children and young people impacted by the decision.

In this instance, the delegated decision maker, or another DCP staff member, may seek to escalate the decision to be reviewed by the Executive Director, Out of Home Care and/or the Executive Director, Service Delivery and Practice. Whilst consultation is encouraged, the consensus and/or approval of the delegated decision maker is not required for another DCP staff member to escalate the decision for review.

To initiate a review in these circumstances, the delegated decision maker, or another DCP staff member will advise the Manager, Placement Services and the Manager of the DCP office responsible for the child or young person's case management of the matter in writing via email, including advice regarding:

- the child or young person's C3MS ID
- a brief summary of the placement match concerns and risk factors.

The Manager, Placement Services will notify the Executive Director, Out of Home Care and the Executive Director, Service Delivery and Practice of the request to initiate a placement match escalation process.

The Executive Director, Out of Home Care and/or the Executive Director, Service Delivery and Practice will consider the child or young person's circumstances, placement match assessment and decision-making. The Executive Director, Out of Home Care and/or the Executive Director, Service Delivery and Practice will decide whether the placement match will proceed or seek alternative placement arrangements for the child or young person.

The decision will be communicated to the delegated decision maker, the Manager, Placement Services, and the child or young person's care team. Placement Services will record the decision in C3MS.

The Manager, Placement Services will notify the Guardian for Children and Young People of the initiation and outcome of a placement match escalation process.

## 5. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

This document will be reviewed every three years to ensure currency and applicability, or more frequently if there are any changes to workplace practices and/or relevant legislation.

## 6. Related documents

Related documents, forms and templates
<a href="#">Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Practice Paper</a>
<a href="#">Placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children</a>
<a href="#">Culturally and linguistically diverse child placement Policy</a>
<a href="#">C3MS Guide – Recording a Placement Request</a>
<a href="#">Determine the most suitable placement type</a>
<a href="#">Guardianship Family Day Care Procedure</a>
<a href="#">Placement and Support Packages (PaSP) procedure</a>
<a href="#">Support the child or young person to transition between placements</a>
<a href="#">Supported Independent Living Services (SILS) Procedure</a>
<a href="#">Supporting children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviours Practice Paper</a>
<a href="#">Supporting children and young people in care with high risk and complex behaviours Practice Paper</a>

## 7. Glossary

Term	Meaning
Emergency placements	Placements that are unplanned and require an immediate response. Emergency placements may be provided for up to seven days.
Short-term placement	Refers to the placement for a child or young person for a duration of up to 18 months.
Long-term placement	Refers to the placement for a child or young person until they turn 18 years of age.
Family based care	Placements where an approved and trained person (not being a guardian or relative of a child or young person) provides care for children and young people under custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive, in their own home with the assistance of a regular subsidy and regular placement support from a licensed foster care service provider.
Non-family based care	Placements that provide care for children and young people in a facility operated by DCP Residential Care or a non-government agency licensed to provide residential care.
Placement request	A formal request to place a child or young person in emergency, short term or long-term family based or non-family based care.
Service provider	Non-Government Organisation [NGO]
Specialist care placements	Placements where it is determined that intensive supports and specialised care are required to care for and support children and young people with complex and/or extreme needs.
PAC	Principal Aboriginal Consultant
PaSP	Placement and Support Package
SILS	Supported Independent Living Service

## Document control

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1 July 2022	V1.0	Replaces Matching and Allocation Procedure (v1.0, March 2016).  Information updated to reflect practice and business terms, including updated to new Procedure template. Document aligns with Manual of Practice – Place a child or young person in care chapter.
7 June 2024	V1.1	Minor amendments made to include guidance regarding the Additionally Approved Carer Program (AACP).
26 September 2024	V1.2	Amendments made to include details for a placement match escalation process.

**Attachment: 1 – Placement matching factors table**

Matching Factors	Child/Young Person Factors	Carer Factors
Availability / type of placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>length and type of placement required</li> <li>gender</li> <li>siblings</li> <li>existing relationships with carers due to previous placements</li> <li>views of the child/young person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>type of care offered by carer</li> <li>any limitations on carer</li> <li>level of carer experience</li> <li>age/ gender of other children in the household</li> <li>current commitments and availability for required time frame</li> <li>age of carers, especially when a permanent placement is required</li> </ul>
Location / continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when safe to do so, keep the child within their community for continuity of relationships, school child care</li> <li>when safety issues exist, place the child in a different location to parents</li> <li>are there other casework issues/reasons that impact?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carer's location</li> <li>distance to child's school and community</li> </ul>
Safety issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an assessment that it is not safe for parents, extended family, perpetrator to know where a child is placed, due to safety risks</li> <li>where the child presents a risk to others</li> <li>community expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carer's capacity to comply with a Departmental decision (where applicable) to withhold placement information from parents and child's support networks</li> <li>carer's capacity to supervise and manage child's behaviours</li> <li>risk to other children in placement</li> </ul>
Relationships / contact needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>parents, siblings, extended family, friends and community</li> <li>placement of siblings together, where possible and appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>capacity to support and accommodate contact plan</li> <li>capacity of carer with siblings already in care</li> </ul>
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>existing services for child / required services for child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>capacity to access and maintain child's involvement</li> </ul>
Cultural/ religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal child placement principle</li> <li>cultural identity needs</li> <li>child's religion and level of significance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>culture of carer</li> <li>cultural sensitivity, support</li> <li>carer's religion and level of significance</li> </ul>

Matching Factors	Child/Young Person Factors	Carer Factors
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>child's age and developmental level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>family composition</li> <li>match of other children in the home and to carer's age, if long term placement is required</li> </ul>
Care needs / ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>health</li> <li>education</li> <li>behaviour</li> <li>emotional stability, developmental delays, disability</li> <li>attachment needs/ style</li> <li>complexity of needs</li> <li>strengths / skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carer's registration and approval status</li> <li>carer's strengths</li> <li>carer's support needs</li> <li>carer's experience and skills</li> <li>carer's attachment style</li> <li>suitability of home environment</li> <li>other children's support needs</li> <li>likely impact on other children</li> </ul>
Past experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>abuse history</li> <li>history of placement disruption</li> <li>factors contributing to placement disruption</li> <li>trauma related developmental issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carer's strengths</li> <li>additional supports required</li> </ul>
Transport needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contact, services, schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>time and availability to provide transport</li> </ul>
Case plan goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assessment</li> <li>reunification</li> <li>long-term stable care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>placement type carer can offer</li> <li>flexibility to change when goals change</li> <li>age of carer if long term placement is required</li> </ul>
Socio-economic considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>child's family of origin situation</li> <li>impediments to reunification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carer's socio-economic situation</li> <li>carer's ability to empathise with the child and family</li> <li>carer's ability to support / meet child's needs (i.e. travel costs to get to specialist appointments)</li> </ul>
Lifestyle and personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>child's personality and interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carer's lifestyle and personality</li> </ul>
Views and wishes of the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>views and wishes of the child</li> </ul>	
Views and wishes of the parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>match of parents' views to the child's needs</li> </ul>	