

Child Wellbeing and Safety Partnership Framework

Policy

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Acronyms	Full form
ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
Framework	Child Wellbeing and Safety Partnership Framework
MACCST	Multi-Agency Community and Child Safety Teams
Oversight Group	Children and Family Safety Oversight Group
Partnerships	Child Wellbeing and Safety Partnership

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1. Policy purpose

To strengthen how community leadership and services work together alongside families and embed government and service provider accountability to community aspirations for their children and families so they are safe and thriving.

2. Policy statement

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Partnership Framework (the Framework) is established to support collaborative, place-based connections between government agencies, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), service organisations and Aboriginal communities to plan for the wellbeing and safety of children and families through sharing information and coordination of service delivery.

The purpose of the Framework is to:

- a) Ensure the Northern Territory Government and service organisations (which includes ACCOs and non-Government Organisations) are providing a coordinated response to the risks to the safety and wellbeing of children;
- b) Strengthen and continuously seek to improve how the Northern Territory Government, service organisations and community leaders work together alongside children and families; and
- c) Create processes that make the Northern Territory Government and service organisations accountable for partnering with community leaders to ensure children and families are safe and thriving.

Child Wellbeing and Safety Partnerships (Partnerships) must be implemented in the existing 24 communities that currently operate Multi-Agency Community Child Safety Teams (MACCST) and include families and community leaders in planning and decision making to develop coordinated, strength based, and trauma informed responses for the safety and wellbeing of children and families.

Recognising that every community is different, the Framework requires flexibility to allow for Partnerships to be co-designed locally taking into consideration community needs, resources, and service availability. It is acknowledged that the composition of Partnerships may vary from one location to another. Partnerships will support self-determination and be adaptable to respond to the changing needs of individual communities.

Where concerning themes or protective issues are identified across multiple children and/or families that may relate to community safety, a meeting can be held with community leaders to discuss placed based, culturally appropriate responses and solutions.

Thematic issues that require systemic change and/or allocation of resources must be escalated to the appropriate bodies or authorities who will take action to create change at a programmatic, community, and/or regional level. To ensure transparency and accountability, all themes and issues escalated regionally must be reported to the Children and Family Safety Oversight Group (Oversight Group).

The Oversight Group is established to monitor the operation of the Framework and includes membership of government agencies, Aboriginal peak bodies and ACCOs, and non-government organisations representing varied areas of service delivery related to justice, health, education, and family support.

Aboriginal peak bodies and ACCOs are an essential part of the Oversight Group's membership composition, and membership of the Group must include at minimum of 50 per cent representation of ACCOs. Where possible, ACCOs and government agencies should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff as their representative. The Oversight Group should be co-chaired by a government agency and an Aboriginal

organisation. Aboriginal peak bodies can nominate appropriate ACCOs to represent the six regions across the Northern Territory. The Oversight Group will provide quarterly reporting on the Partnerships to the Children and Families Standing Committee. Partnerships will be implemented in the existing 24 communities that currently operate MACCST across the Northern Territory, including:

Palmerston	Greater Darwin (Northern Suburbs)	Wadeye	Naiyu (Daly River)
Jabiru	Gunbalanya	Wurrumiyanga	Galiwinku
Angurugu	Nhulunbuy	Lajamanu	Kalkarindji
Ngukurr	Borroloola	Tennant Creek	Elliot
Ali Curung	Ntaria (Hermannsburg)	Ti Tree	Papunya
Yuendumu	Atitjere (Harts Range)	Yirrkala	Gunyungarra

Partnerships can be established in additional communities at the request of community leaders and ACCOs.

3. Framework principles

The Framework must operate under the following principles:

- a) The best interests of the child are the paramount concern;
- b) The human rights of children and families must be upheld and respected;
- c) Decisions affecting Aboriginal people must be made in a manner that, as far as practicable, upholds the principles of section 12 of the Care and Protection of Children Amendment Act 2023;
- d) Aboriginal world views must be incorporated into the Framework;
- e) The views of children and families must be considered when decisions are made that affect them;
- f) The diversity of communities is valued so that the operation of the Framework is culturally relevant;
- g) Responsibility and accountability for the safety and wellbeing of children and families is shared between families, communities, service organisations, and the Northern Territory Government;
- h) The Northern Territory Government must exercise its responsibility mentioned in paragraph (g) in a transparent manner;
- i) The Framework should operate in a way that is healing focussed and trauma informed;
- j) The Framework should seek to build on the strengths of individual families and communities; and
- k) Any risk of domestic family or sexual violence affecting children or families must be managed in a way that is consistent with the Framework for family violence risk assessment and family violence risk management approved under section 124Q of the Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007.

4. Legislative basis and related resources

Care and Protection of Children Act 2007

Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007

Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework

Note: The Child Wellbeing and Safety Partnership Framework Operating Guidelines are currently under development and are expected to be published on the intranet by November 2023.