

Policy: Placements

Policy Purpose

To define Territory Families' responsibility for sourcing and approving appropriate Out-of-Home-Care placements for all children and young people in the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Policy Statement

The safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child or young person must be the paramount consideration when a decision about their Out-of-Home-Care placement is being made.

The Out-of-Home-Care system should promote continuity of care and make every effort to minimise placement disruption to children and young people by ensuring their placement is planned and considered.

The child's individual needs, and support for the child's ongoing contact and connection to family and community must be central to the placement decision. The child or young person should be matched with Carers who have the capacity and skills to meet their needs and support their development.

Placement of Aboriginal Children

Territory Families staff must ensure that an Aboriginal child or young person's placement is able to maintain and support their connection to family, community, culture and country.

For Aboriginal children all placement decisions must demonstrate Territory Families' commitment to the five elements of the *Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)* [Aboriginal Child Placement Principle](#).

The five elements, summarised below, are essential components of our planning and decision making when sourcing and supporting successful placements for Aboriginal children. The five elements of the SNAICC Aboriginal Child Placement Principle are:

Prevention	The right of Aboriginal children to be brought up within their own family and community;
Partnership	The right of Aboriginal persons to participate in significant decisions about Aboriginal children;
Connection	The right of Aboriginal children to be supported to develop and maintain connections to family, community and culture;
Participation	The right of children, their parents and family members to participate in decisions regarding the care and protection of their children; and
Placement	Placing Aboriginal children in out-of-home-care in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

Prevention

Protecting the right of Aboriginal children to be brought up by their families requires that active efforts are made to support families and build-up communities to care safely for their children. Providing culturally safe services enhances the opportunity for families to readily engage with services they require.

Partnership

Consultation and collaboration must occur with the child or young person, the family, kinship group, representative organisation or community nominated by the child or young person's family. Engagement with funded Family Finding services, where available, may assist with identification of family and kin carers for individual children. Children and young people's best interests are met when families and communities are central to planning and decision making processes.

Connection

To support ongoing connection with family, community and culture, an Aboriginal child should, as far as practicable be placed in close proximity to the child's family and community.

The child's or young person's *My Care Plan* or *My Leaving Care Plan* must promote active efforts to enhance opportunities for children and young people to be supported to maintain connections to their family, community, culture and country.

During any time that a child or young person is in Out-of-Home-Care, and through all transitions, the family must be provided with relevant, clear, concise, and culturally appropriate information about the child or young person's progress.

Participation

A kinship group, representative organisation, the family's support network or community of Aboriginal people nominated by an Aboriginal child or the child's family should be able to participate in making decisions involving the child. To ensure that children, their parents, family members and nominated representatives can meaningfully participate in decisions regarding the wellbeing of the child, including placement decisions, all participants must be provided with information in a timely way and in a language and manner they understand.

All reasonable steps must be taken to arrange for the provision of services (including an interpreter) to facilitate the participation of all people involved in discussing, approving and supporting the placement. Refer to the *Guideline: Using Interpreters, Translators and Assisted Communications Services* for information about how to determine if a person requires an interpreter and how to arrange one. The Aboriginal Interpreter Services (AIS) also provides a step by step guide to support determination of when to use an Aboriginal Interpreter.

The child or young person's views need to be heard and form part of the placement decision making process wherever possible. Listening, hearing and understanding the child or young person's views is a crucial component of responsive practice that is focussed on meeting the child or young person's needs. The child or young person must also be provided with age appropriate information.

Placement

Placement decisions for an Aboriginal child must comply with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle which is defined in Section 12 of the [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#).

An Aboriginal child should as far as practicable be placed with a person in the following order of priority:

1. A member of the child's family;
2. An Aboriginal person in the child's community in accordance with local community practice;
3. Any other Aboriginal person; or
4. A person who, is not an Aboriginal person, but in the CEO's opinion, is sensitive to the child's needs, is capable of promoting the child's ongoing affiliation with their culture, and if possible, can provide ongoing contact with the child's family.

All possible options at the highest level of the hierarchy should be explored before considering the next option.

SIBLINGS

Siblings should be placed together when:

- It is in their best interests;
- In accord with their wishes; and
- There are no safety concerns.

Where co-location of siblings is not possible, regular contact must be facilitated, unless there is evidence that this would not be in the best interests of the children.

Legislative Basis and Related Documents

[Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#)

[Understanding and Applying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. A Resource for Legislation, Policy and Program Development.](#)

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