

Children's and family's safety, health and wellbeing is at the heart of all our work.

A focus on working alongside families acknowledges that family wellbeing is the essential foundation for child safety and wellbeing.

Families have multiple forms, not necessarily biologically based. These principles are modelled in all aspects of planning, service delivery, management and administration. Organisations and workers recognise that people make meaningful relationships beyond limited biological ties and that many different combinations of people can provide the safe, secure and committed web of relationships children need to grow and develop. Workers allow families to define what family means in their context and avoid placing barriers that could limit the effectiveness of outcomes for family members.



Children and families should be safe.



Children and families receive services that are flexible and responsive to their needs.



Children and families can access services embedded in their community.



Children's and family's growth and development is enhanced by research supported practice.



Children's and family's social, cultural, racial and linguistic identities are affirmed and strengthened.



Children and families work together with services in relationships based on trust and respect.

Principle (1)

Children and families should be safe.

What does this look like?

Safety is a vital prerequisite for positive family functioning and for the healthy development of children. Violence impairs the development of respectful and trusting relationships and undermines the capacity of family members to meet personal needs and to promote positive change.

Children should be provided with safe, quality alternatives if it is deemed they cannot live with their birth family. Being raised within their birth family provides a continuity of relationships, a sense of identity and links with other family members. Any child who cannot be raised within their family experiences a very significant loss. The decision that a child can never live with their birth family has consequences for their lifetime and should only be made after the most careful, albeit timely, consideration. Children who cannot be raised within their birth family are owed special attention to ensure they have access to a safe, nurturing and permanent home.

In practice, this could be seen through:

- Workers taking a consistent position that violence in any form is never acceptable.
- Programs that work to ensure the safety of all family members and staff within the context of the family situation
- Programs that contribute to community action opposing domestic violence and other forms of family violence
- Programs that assist families to work towards the restoration of children in out of home care where there are reasonable prospects for successful restoration
- Workers participating in an honest and respectful way in statutory processes and proceedings
- Workers who are available to and supportive of families where children will not return to their parents' care
- Programs that recognise and respond to the needs of kinship carers i.e. family members who are caring for children who cannot be cared for by their parents

How can you measure this?

- 1.1 #/% of children/young people/families who report feeling safe in their home
- 1.2 #/% of children/young people who are supported to identify other family members/kin in their safety/cultural care plan
- 1.3 #/% of children/young people/families who report their family relationships have improved
- 1.4 #/% of families with increased knowledge about child safety
- 1.5 #/% of parents/carers with increased confidence in parenting and/or problem solving with their children/young people
- 1.6 #/% of families in OOHC engaged in restoration
- 1.7 #/% of children in OOHC placed with the child's extended family, with the child's Indigenous community, or with other Indigenous people

Principle (2)

Children and families receive services that are flexible and responsive to their needs.

What does this look like?

One of the reasons for the effectiveness of child, youth and family services is their capacity to start where families are and to respond to their needs rather than offering an inflexible set of services. They must be open to implement what they learnt through their contact with families into their activities and project design. Services are also in a strategic position to advise the wider community about family needs.

The right service in the right place at the right time.

In practice this could be seen through:

- Program planning and implementation that is flexible and continually responsive to the concerns of families
- Programs that are aware of family and community needs
- Programs that use an evidence base to inform practice and program data for continuous improvement
- Programs that work with families for as long as they need
- Program planning and evaluation that is a collaborative, ongoing process involving staff, families, management and the wider community

How can you measure this?

- 2.1 #/% children/young people/families who were supported to identify their own needs, priorities and goals
- 2.2 #/% of families who report they were listened to and their goals/aspirations for their family were understood
- 2.3 #/% of children/young people who participated in their family plan (case/cultural care plan)
- 2.4 #/% of programs/activities/events using co-design principles
- 2.5 #/% of family/case/cultural care plans developed through Aboriginal family-led decision making processes
- 2.6 #/% of workers applying a child/family centred approach in their work

Principle (3)

Children and families can access services embedded in their community.

What does this look like?

Organisations reflect a broad outlook that sees community building as an important key to supporting family life. They can serve not only as places where family members meet their own needs but as places where families can support each other for the good of the whole community. This means that programs can assist in the creation of the 'social capital' necessary for family wellbeing.

In practice this could be seen through:

- Programs that facilitate a sense of belonging and a connection to the community among program participants
- Programs that use volunteers in ways that reinforce community building
- Programs that respond to community issues and engage families as partners in the process
- Programs that work to develop a co-ordinated response to community needs
- A service sector that uses local data to inform planning and service system design

How can you measure this?

- 3.1 #/% of families/individuals who report they volunteer
- 3.2 #/% of families/individuals who report they participate in other activities with people they have met
- 3.3 #/% of programs/activities/events that are facilitated in partnership with other organisations in the community
- 3.4 #/% of children/young people/families who report they feel connected to people in their local community
- 3.5 #/% children/young people/families who report they have somewhere to go for help when they need it
- 3.6 #/% children/young people/families who report that local community organisations can be trusted
- 3.7 #/% Aboriginal children/young people/families with community controlled mechanisms/ organisations engaged in the services they receive

Principle (4)

Children's and family's growth and development is enhanced by research supported practice.

What does this look like?

Workers help families to identify, enhance and utilise their existing skills, knowledge and resources in the ongoing task of promoting a healthy environment for their family members.

In practice this could be seen through:

- Workers developing, with family members, a full understanding of a family's strengths
- Programs that create opportunities to enhance family relationships and personal development
- Family members expressing a desire to take action to resolve problems or make changes in their lives, workers helping them to develop a realistic plan that is tailored to their strengths, needs, priorities and resources, and supporting them during the process of implementing and evaluating that plan
- Programs that measure the wellbeing of children
- Organisations and workers who use evidence informed data
- Practice that is supported by research
- Supervision and learning activities that are structured to enable staff members to learn from each other and to develop their skills

How can you measure this?

- 4.1 #/% of families who report they are more confident in supporting their children, young people and/or family
- 4.2 #/% of parents/carers who report they have increased knowledge about child development
- 4.3 #/% of children/young people who report they feel valued by their family
- 4.4 #/% of children/young people who are meeting developmental milestones
- 4.5 #/% of children/young people/parents/carers who participate in and contribute their individual needs to the family/case plan
- 4.6 #/% of programs/activities/events that report on participant/client outcomes that measure behaviour/attitude/circumstance/knowledge and/or skill change or increase
- 4.7 #/% of programs/activities/events that use an evidence base to inform practice and program data for continuous improvement
- 4.8 #/% of workers who have access to operational and clinical supervision

Principle (5)

Children's and family's social, cultural, racial, and linguistic identities are affirmed and strengthened.

What does this look like?

Organisations work in many different ways to assist families to prepare their children to grow up in a society that is increasingly diverse. Australian society also carries the legacy from past and present policies and attitudes that discriminate against certain groups, in particular although not only, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Such discrimination has had a destructive effect on family and community wellbeing. Organisations have an important role in countering the effects of discrimination and oppression and so building stronger family and community bonds.

In practice this could be seen through:

- Programs that affirm and strengthen families' social, cultural and racial identities
- Programs that work to combat discriminatory and racist attitudes and to promote the development of positive identities among children
- Programs that work to ensure families have access to culturally safe organisations
- Workers who use an equity lens in all their work

How can you measure this?

- 5.1 #/% of children/young people/families who report increased connection to community/kin and/or extended family
- 5.2 #/% of children/young people who report they are proud of their cultural heritage
- 5.3 #/% of families who report they have control over decisions that affect their children
- 5.4 #/% of families who report they were connected to cultural and language services and resources to support their access and engagement
- 5.5 #/% of children/young people/families who report that the service/activity is culturally safe
- 5.6 #/% workers applying trauma informed practice in their work

Principle (6)

Children and families work together with services in relationships based on trust and respect.

What does this look like?

Relationship building is a dynamic and ongoing process that begins with the family's first encounter with an organisation and with a worker's first day on the job. Building and maintaining relationships based on equality and respect takes time and effort. It is a process of continually seeking to test assumptions and to share meanings and expectations. It requires a mutual recognition of the role each partner plays and a recognition that these roles change over time.

In practice, this could be seen through:

- Programs that create a family friendly environment where stigmatising experiences are avoided
- Workers understanding family members' values and perspectives
- Workers and families developing a collaborative partnership
- Workers demonstrating positive, responsive caring towards families with whom they work

How can you measure this?

- 6.1 #/% of children/young people/families who report being treated with respect
- 6.2 #/% of children/young people/families who report they are satisfied with the service they receive
- 6.3 #/% of families/carers who report they trust the service/program/workers they are engaged with
- 6.4 #/% of families who report they were listened to and their needs and wants were understood
- 6.5 #/% of children/young people who were consulted in the development of their family/case/cultural care plan
- 6.6 #/% of programs/activities/events that use a child/family centred approach
- 6.7 #/% workers who are provided with professional development and collaborative learning opportunities

