

Keeping kids connected

Cultural planning for Aboriginal children and young people



Aboriginal children and young people have a right to be raised in their own culture. They have a right to learn and use the languages and customs of their communities and to take part in a wide range of cultural activities.

If an Aboriginal child or young person enters out-of-home care, then they must have a cultural plan that keeps them connected to their family, community and Country.

A cultural plan is part of the overall Care Plan for an Aboriginal child or young person.

A Care Plan is needed for all children and young people who are placed in out-of-home care. It gives the NSW Children's Court a clear picture of who the child or young person is and what type of court orders are being asked for.

A cultural plan should:

- identify the cultural needs of an Aboriginal child or young person
- outline how the child or young person can experience their culture to maintain their identity and their connection to family, community and Country
- help make sure that important cultural and family information is maintained for any child who is too young to contribute to their own plan.

A cultural plan should have all the information that is known about the child or young person's culture. The child's family and close kin must be involved in creating and implementing it.

An Aboriginal child or young person who is being managed by a non-Aboriginal NGO must have their cultural plan approved by the Aboriginal community.

This can be an Aboriginal community controlled organisation, a recognised Aboriginal organisation, or a respected member of the Aboriginal community. Like with other children and young people in out-of-home care, a Care Plan for an Aboriginal child or young person will use placement principles.

However, placement principles for Aboriginal children are different. The focus is on placing them within their biological family, extended family, local Aboriginal community or broader Aboriginal community.

This approach is provided for under New South Wales child protection laws.