Child Assessment Tool Fact Sheet

- **What is the Child Assessment Tool?**

  The Child Assessment Tool (CAT) is designed to identify the most appropriate level of out-of-home care for a child or young person based on behavioural, health and development factors.

  The CAT, based on a tool successfully implemented in United States, was customised and trialled for use in NSW by Community Services (CS) in partnership with the non government organization (NGO) sector over 2011. Since January 2012, Community Services caseworkers having been applying the CAT to all children and young people referred for placement with an NGO.

- **What does the Child Assessment Tool do?**
  The CAT is based on behavioural issues and heath and development needs applied across three age groups of children and young people (under 5 years, 5 to 8 years and aged 9 and over). The CAT then identifies a recommended level of care for the child or young person, across six levels of care and corresponding placement types.

- **Why use a tool?**

  The CAT supports the decision making process caseworkers undertake when placing children and young people in OOHC. The tool-
  - Determines the most appropriate level of care according to a child or young person's needs
  - provides better information to match of the specific needs of a child or young person with a particular placement type
  - Enhances the transparency and consistency of placement decisions
  - Creates a common approach to placement decision making across the State
  - Is <u>not</u> a diagnostic tool and does not identify the underlying reason or cause for particular behavioural or health concerns.

- **What if the NGO does not agree with the recommended level of care?**

  Agencies may request a CAT Review if new information becomes available about a child or young person that may impact on the recommended care level and must be requested within 30 days of the placement being accepted by the NGO. For more information on requesting a review contact the CS Child & Family Regional Unit (CFRU) that completed the CAT.

- **For more information about the Child Assessment Tool**
  The [CAT User Manual](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docs_menu/for_agencies_that_work_with_us/out_of_home_care_services.html) provides further details on use of the CAT at
  http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docs_menu/for_agencies_that_work_with_us/out_of_home_care_services.html
  Or contact the Child Assessment Tool (CAT) Team at
  ChildAssessmentTool@facs.nsw.gov.au