



Permanency Support (Out of Home Care) Program

Appendix 4: Service Overview - Aboriginal Foster Care

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This appendix should be read in conjunction with the 'Permanency Support (Out of Home Care) Program – Description', Foster Care Service Requirements and all relevant appendices.

Appendix 4: Service Requirements - Aboriginal Foster Care

1 Acknowledgement

FACS acknowledges that we live and work on the traditional land of Aboriginal people of the NSW nations. FACS also acknowledges the intergenerational impacts caused by past policies and law including the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities. These policies and practices continue to have an impact on Aboriginal children, families and communities driving a need for change to the way the NSW government and funded services support Aboriginal people.

FACS recognises that existing Aboriginal community controlled, non-Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal staff sector-wide make every effort to demonstrate good practice when supporting Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities. Aboriginal stakeholders have informed the development of the program vision and achievement of better, culturally appropriate outcomes, recognising that culture should not be seen in isolation to other core outcome areas. In particular, the Aboriginal Foster Care service requirements are strongly influenced by the co-design process involving many key Aboriginal stakeholders during 2014/2015.

The [*Plan on a Page for Aboriginal Children and Young People 2015-2021*](#) sets a clear future direction across the care continuum, including prevention and Out-Of-Home Care (OOHC). Wherever possible, the Aboriginal Foster Care service requirements are informed by the Plan on a Page. Additionally, the Aboriginal Foster Care service requirements will be supported by a NSW Aboriginal Child and Family Industry Development Strategy, ensuring outcomes are driven from an Aboriginal community perspective within a culturally rich environment of Aboriginal community controlled organisations.

FACS will continually strive to ensure that policy and practice aligns to improve the lived experience and outcomes for all Aboriginal people and communities in NSW and breaks the cycle of intergenerational trauma and disadvantage. This can be achieved by recognising the unique insight that Aboriginal people bring in caring for and raising their children within a broader family context, taking a genuine self-determining approach to Aboriginal care in NSW.

FACS aims to keep Aboriginal children and young people safe at home with relatives and kin, providing access to culturally sensitive services and supports for families when needed. It is the intention of the Aboriginal Foster Care service requirements to provide direction to non-Aboriginal organisations in the delivery of support to Aboriginal children, young people and families. This is continuing while the requisite state wide Aboriginal community controlled service system is developed, including identification of their role in supporting the capacity and capability development of the Aboriginal sector.

FACS continues to work with Aboriginal stakeholders, including the Aboriginal child and family peak body, the Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec), Aboriginal community controlled organisations and other community groups, aiming to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families in need.

2 Aboriginal Foster Care

As at 30 June 2016, Aboriginal children and young people made up 5.4% of all children and young people (aged 0-17) in NSW, yet they represented 37% of all children and young people in OOHC¹, with this continuing to trend upwards. To address the systemic problem of the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC, the service model reflects the continuum of support, to maximise achievement of outcomes.

2.1 Overview

This reform will involve stronger support for Aboriginal families and communities to keep children and young people at home with their families. The new service model aims to place Aboriginal children, young people and their families within a strengthened environment to remain in safe, connected and culturally rich environments, supported by their relatives, kin and community.

All Service Providers must work with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relatives and the child's kin to support family preservation in the first instance (see Appendix 2), using evidence-informed services and interventions. From the outset, approaches such as Family Group Conferencing delivered by highly skilled and culturally competent people should be explored to enable the achievement of family preservation, restoration and permanent, safe homes for children and young people.

Where it is not possible to keep children and young people at home with their families, Service Providers will actively work to reduce the amount of time Aboriginal children and young people spend in OOHC. This will be undertaken through early and informed decisions about whether restoration of the child to their Aboriginal family is a realistic and appropriate possibility and must take no longer than:

- Six (6) months for children under two years of age
- Twelve (12) months for all other children and young people.

All options within the child or young person's Aboriginal family will be explored. Where it is suitable to restore a child or young person to their family, intensive support must be provided to ensure their pathway home is successful and meets their needs. Step down support will be provided following their return to their family.

The vision is that Aboriginal organisations are positioned and equipped in the service system to keep Aboriginal children safe and cared for in their families. FACS has a stated commitment to strengthen and assist in capacity strengthening with the Aboriginal sector, in partnership with AbSec, with a focus on supporting Aboriginal Service Providers to provide holistic services to the Aboriginal community. This includes expanding the Aboriginal workforce across the care continuum to enhance preservation and restoration to birth families where possible.

¹ FACS 2016 Annual report.

Estimates and projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026 (Series B). ABS cat. no. 3238.0. Canberra: ABS.

Australian demographic statistics, Jun. 2016. ABS cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.

FACS has a ten year plan to transition Aboriginal children and young people from non-Aboriginal Service Providers to Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers unless families choose to remain with their current Service Provider.

Cultural safety must not be seen as separate from a safe and permanent home and general wellbeing; in fact, it underpins all three elements to create a stable permanent home environment. FACS acknowledges that this will mean a strong and capable Aboriginal community controlled sector to cater for the needs of Aboriginal children and families. Aboriginal staff will support Aboriginal children and families, except where families choose to work with non-Aboriginal staff and Service Providers.

FACS acknowledges the importance of cultural rights for Aboriginal children, young people and communities and is committed to building a community of Aboriginal staff to support Aboriginal children, young people and families at all stages of a child's life.

The priorities below underpin Aboriginal care:

- Aboriginal families, children and young people's needs are met earlier through a holistic, community-driven service system, to prevent the escalation of need
- Aboriginal families are able to access culturally responsive support earlier, and are empowered to live independent meaningful lives
- Risk factors that lead to child abuse, neglect and domestic and family violence are addressed earlier through access to appropriate Aboriginal support models
- Aboriginal children, young people and families have access to effective and culturally safe support and services delivered by Aboriginal staff and wherever possible, community controlled organisations
- Aboriginal children will receive cultural support, facilitated by Aboriginal staff and carers and/or culturally competent non-Aboriginal staff and carers, to maintain and develop their sense of belonging and identity. Staff and carers working with Aboriginal children will be provided the tools, training and support required to implement Cultural Care Plans for Aboriginal children and young people.

All organisations and staff serving Aboriginal communities must implement the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles](#) within the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*. Over time, it is expected that many Aboriginal children and families will be supported by Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers. This means that non-Aboriginal Service Providers delivering to Aboriginal children and families are required to transition that support once capacity is available, if this is what families choose.

FACS will continue to work in partnership with the Aboriginal sector to develop capacity and capability of Aboriginal communities and community controlled organisations to meet the holistic needs of Aboriginal children and families.

2.2 Purpose

This appendix set out the requirements for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Service Providers delivering services to Aboriginal children and young people. The requirements are an acknowledgement that a more in depth approach is required for Aboriginal children and young people that enter care due to complex family and kinship structures, diversity of communities and the enduring impact of government policy and practice.

This also builds on the commitment that Aboriginal children and families are supported by Aboriginal organisations, accessing flexible and tailored supports and services within an Aboriginal designed service system to meet identified needs and achieve the best possible permanency outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people.

These requirements are not intended to be read as a standalone document, but rather reflect the human rights of Aboriginal peoples to determine the services and supports needed to assist Aboriginal children and families, maintaining their distinct cultural identities within a modern child and family support system. Services funded to provide support to Aboriginal children, young people and caregivers must comply with these requirements.

Every Aboriginal child and young person at risk of entering or in OOHC will:

- Receive active efforts towards preservation with their family, or restoration to their family, as a priority, with appropriate Step-Down supports
- Have decisions made about their care and protection in a timely manner and consistent with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles, and the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in decision-making](#) requirement within the *Children and Young Peoples (Care and Protection) Act 1998*
- Receive appropriate support to ensure stability in care, ensuring their needs are met in a culturally rich environment regardless of the permanency outcome
- Receive tailored, child and family-centred, holistic support as needed to achieve improved lifelong wellbeing outcomes (cognitive functioning, physical health and development, mental health, social functioning and cultural and spiritual identity), including meaningful connections to their Aboriginal community
- Be immersed in their culture through connection to family/kin, community and Country and that this be embedded in meaningful Cultural Care Plans
- Be placed with their siblings and on Country, where possible
- Be supported by Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers across the continuum of services
- Have an Aboriginal support worker/caseworker
- Be supported to exit care ideally within two years.

2.3 Scope

These Aboriginal Foster Care service requirements apply to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Service Providers with case management responsibility for Aboriginal children and young people and build on Appendix 3, Foster care - service requirements.

The Requirements relate to Aboriginal children and young people who are:

- At risk of entering OOHC
- Entering OOHC
- Currently in OOHC
- Receiving 'Step-Down' support to exit OOHC.

Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC will:

- Be placed according to the Aboriginal placement principles using culturally appropriate mechanisms that ensure the participation of Aboriginal relatives and kin in decision making approaches if they are required to enter care
- Have their Aboriginal family/kin and community engaged in decision making to determine the permanency pathway and best way to maintain cultural and spiritual identity while in OOHC
- Have the choice to be supported by Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers over time
- Have a Cultural Care Plan that is developed with relatives, kin and community; endorsed by an Aboriginal community controlled Service Provider or a respected and recognised Aboriginal organisation or member of the Aboriginal community; relevant to the child's needs; meaningful in terms of building/maintaining identity and can be implemented effectively through access to supports offered by Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers
- Be supported to achieve a permanency goal ideally within two years.

Aboriginal families and kin must be appropriately supported to ensure ongoing connection is maintained with their children and young people who are at risk of entering care or enter care. They must also be involved in decision making and receive quality, culturally appropriate case support to achieve family preservation or restoration wherever possible.

3 Operational Characteristics of Aboriginal Foster Care

3.1 Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers

Aboriginal care provided by Aboriginal community controlled service providers follows a distinct culturally appropriate approach, with a focus on family and relative/kin preservation and connection to country.

Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers are funded explicitly to recognise that they work differently and more holistically to provide a full set of services prior to and across

the continuum of care to Aboriginal children, young people, their families and communities. Specifically:

- They provide extensive support to the community in the form of community engagement and prevention (for example, education, events, local sponsorship, etc.). This enables them to understand the needs of a child and their family in a particular community and holistically address the broader issues causing harm/concern to children, young people and families (e.g. domestic violence, drugs and alcohol, etc.)
- Early prevention work is a central aspect of the way Aboriginal Service Providers work and to their model of service; working to bring Aboriginal families and communities together to develop solutions
- Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers have a leadership position in the community
- Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers provide advice, support and guidance, especially around cultural care planning
- Staff and carers provide 24/7 support to the child and their family
- Aboriginal Service Providers provide highly individualised services to Aboriginal children, young people and their families across the continuum of care from prevention and Step-Down support, through to restoration. This engagement empowers Aboriginal children, young people and families.

Aboriginal care has been designed to enable Aboriginal community controlled organisations to deliver the following all-encompassing services that extend over and above the standard costs to deliver permanency support services:

- **Community education** that may include, but is not limited to, attendance at domestic violence intervention and education programs, attendance at drug and alcohol education programs and training locals/carers on local Aboriginal matters
- **Community programs** and connections that may include, but are not limited to, community program costs such as running NAIDOC week events, Sorry Day, men's and women's business, healing work and community relationship building programs
- **Preventative family work** such as providing preventative services to children, young people and their families requiring managed support.

3.2 Family

The definition of 'family' within Aboriginal communities and culture is distinctly different from the Anglo-Australian nuclear family model. Aboriginal family structures are characterised by collective parenting models that involve both immediate and extended family members.

The single factor most connected with positive outcomes for children is meaningful, lifelong connections with relatives and kin. A meaningful connection to family and kin helps a child or young person develop a sense of belonging and identity, leading to greater resilience and lifelong wellbeing. This is equally critical for birth parents to know that when their children enter care that the first priority is restoration and that they will receive necessary support to achieve this goal.

4 Obligations of Aboriginal Foster Care Services

4.1 Caring for Aboriginal children and young people

Aboriginal care envisions wrap around services for Aboriginal children and young people, their families and communities and for the organisations that support them; a sector that recognises a child's community and Country is their home.

To achieve this, Aboriginal community controlled services will be enabled to provide case management support to Aboriginal children, young people and their families. All services with case management responsibility for Aboriginal children must ensure that every Aboriginal child or young person is supported to access their Aboriginal family and community, and Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers according to their choice.

For non-Aboriginal Service Providers with case management responsibility for Aboriginal children, accessing support from recognised Aboriginal Service Providers must be in place.

Services must deliver on the following key elements to support this commitment:

✓	Recruit, train and support Aboriginal staff to support families to stay together or to enable children to return home
✓	For non-Aboriginal services, embed plans within the Service Provider reflecting that as the Aboriginal sector capacity grows, more Aboriginal children and their carers will transfer to Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers. Ideally, Aboriginal children should be supported by Aboriginal Service Providers. This transition should be timely (within a two year period). However, Aboriginal children, young people, relatives and kin must be able to choose to work with non-Aboriginal staff and Service Providers
✓	Be responsive to the immediate needs of Aboriginal children and young people in need of care through the recruitment of emergency and short-term Aboriginal carers
✓	Maintain connection to family, school, friends and hobbies by placing children and young people in proximity to their community and Country
✓	Ensure all staff, in the first instance are Aboriginal. Where this is not possible, all staff connected to Aboriginal care will respect and understand cultural rights and the impact of inter-generational trauma affecting Aboriginal communities. They must be actively committed to support better outcomes for the Aboriginal community through genuine self-determination
✓	Provide quality support to family, kin and carers of Aboriginal children and young people to ensure a positive care experience.

Case management for Aboriginal children and young people must include:

✓	Application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles and its intended result areas, including greater self-determination, participation, prevention and cultural planning ²
✓	Authentic and supportive relationships with a child's family, kin and carers that build pathways for resilient and thriving children and families
✓	Strategies and practice that builds value, and supports the network of Aboriginal carers
✓	Tailored step down support when restoration or guardianship goals are achieved.

4.2 Choices for Aboriginal children and young people, their relatives and kin

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring that all Aboriginal children and young people have the opportunity to be supported by Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers where there is capacity, and where this is what the children, young people, their relatives and kin choose.

FACS will continue to work with the Aboriginal sector to strengthen capacity and capability, and increase the scope to build an Aboriginal service system to support Aboriginal children and families to stay safely together. This sector building will take the form of a NSW Aboriginal Child and Family Industry Development Strategy over the long term and aims to build capacity and capability across the continuum of support for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities impacted by child protection and OOHC. This strategy is under development and will commence on 1 October 2017.

Non-Aboriginal Service Providers will be expected to build an Aboriginal workforce to support Aboriginal children and young people. Clear transition plans must be established to provide the opportunity for all Aboriginal children supported by non-Aboriginal Service Providers to transition to an accredited Aboriginal Service Provider, within a two year period, unless determined otherwise.

Non-Aboriginal Service Providers with case management responsibilities for Aboriginal children and young people must:

✓	Recruit, retain and develop Aboriginal staff to support carers in the best interest of the needs of Aboriginal children and young people, with the view that Aboriginal children and young people, and their carers, will transition to an Aboriginal Service Provider in the future
✓	Utilise local Aboriginal decision making mechanisms to ensure community participation in decisions regarding placement and connection to family/culture; carried through to implementation
✓	Ensure all non-Aboriginal staff are culturally informed.

² Arney, F., Iannos, M., Chong, A., McDougall, S., & Parkinson, S. (2015). *Enhancing the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: Policy and practice considerations* (CFCA Paper No. 34). Melbourne: Child Family Community Australia information exchange.

4.3 Step-Down support

At the point of achieving a permanency goal, Service Providers must continue to provide support using a Step-Down approach when restoration or guardianship is achieved.

The Step-Down support will be determined based on the needs of the child or young person and the adults responsible for the ongoing day-to-day care of the child or young person. Step-Down will include ensuring caregivers and young people can identify appropriate supports into the future if needed.

Step-Down support will be provided to families for six (6) months via a Case Coordination Package to ensure stability and safety, acknowledging that setbacks are likely and require thoughtful support rather than judgement. Decisions about Step-Down will be made in collaboration with family and will ensure natural support networks are strengthened to support longer term needs and the opportunity for safe and permanent homes.

4.4 Family participation and decision making

Effective application of the principles of self-determination requires Aboriginal relatives, kin and community to participate in all decision making as it relates to their children.

To support this, Service Providers will:

- Use effective tools for engagement and family finding to ensure that Aboriginal and all other family (immediate and extended) are identified and involved
- Utilise culturally appropriate options to enhance participation and involvement in decision making and ensure that decisions are implemented
- Start with an assumption of family restoration and undertake active efforts to support families to achieve this wherever possible
- Where restoration is unable to be achieved, families will remain authentically involved in ongoing decision making to ensure connections to family and culture are maintained.

4.5 Aboriginal community participation

The role of respected Aboriginal community members, groups and/or organisations will be utilised as a source of cultural empowerment for Aboriginal families.

In learning from past approaches to Aboriginal child welfare, particularly those outlined in the [Bringing them Home Report](#) (1997), the collective right of Aboriginal peoples to self-determination is central to achieving an effective Aboriginal child and family support system.

Aboriginal community participation in and control over decisions that impact on Aboriginal children, young people and families is essential. For this reason, FACS is committed to building and strengthening the capacity and capability of the Aboriginal community-controlled sector, and the development of local Aboriginal community governance bodies consistent with the [Guiding Principles for Strengthening the Participation of Local Aboriginal Community in Child Protection Decision Making](#).

Non-Aboriginal Service Providers must work with Aboriginal families and build relationships with local Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers to support their work with Aboriginal children, young people and families. This work should include improved family and community participation, meaningful cultural and social connection and supportive relationships with individuals and organisations to achieve safe and permanent homes and promote lifelong wellbeing for Aboriginal children and young people. Where there are no existing connections, Service Providers will help to identify and establish linkages with trusted Aboriginal people, groups or organisations to build greater cultural connection.

The role of a trusted Aboriginal community member, group or organisation may include, but is not limited to:

- Increasing family participation
- Supporting the development of Cultural Care Plans
- Supporting families to build cultural connections
- Ensuring non-Aboriginal Service Providers are authentically working with Aboriginal families
- Placement decision-making
- Increasing cultural connection for children and caregivers
- Participating in other decision making when requested by family.

4.6 Culture

A relevant, meaningful and achievable [Cultural Plan](#) is mandatory for every Aboriginal child and young person in OOHC. These plans will provide critical information for ongoing support and must inform the development of child-centred Cultural planning.

Cultural planning must be determined during Case Plan development and reviewed as part of each Case Plan review cycle. Cultural planning is dynamic, reviewed regularly and provides a greater level of detail regarding how an Aboriginal child or young person will maintain or build their cultural connection.

Cultural planning must be developed with the child or young person, their relatives, kin and community. Caseworkers must clearly articulate in the Plan how they (and others) will support the child's cultural identity and reinforce their sense of belonging to family and community.

For non-Aboriginal Service Providers with case management responsibility of Aboriginal children and young people, cultural planning must be developed and implemented collaboratively with the child or young person, their family, kin and community; and the Plan endorsed by an Aboriginal community controlled organisation. This will include support from Aboriginal family/kin and services provided by Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers or Aboriginal Medical Services. This will ensure that even in the absence of accredited Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers, Aboriginal children and young people will receive high quality support maintaining their cultural connections.

4.7 Healing

Service Providers must deliver best practice in trauma-informed casework and care, as outlined in the [NSW Framework for Therapeutic Out-Of-Home-Care](#).

It is important to acknowledge the pain and suffering that separating Aboriginal children and young people from their families and communities has caused, especially those from the Stolen Generations and to their families and descendants.

For Aboriginal people, trauma has had an additional intergenerational impact due to past policies and practices. This has resulted in an accumulative effect, and inter-generational trauma that is affecting potential life opportunities. Healing based support is required to address this trauma, promote cultural identity, connections and community participation. Healing is a central element of the [NSW Government's OCHRE strategy](#) for Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment.

Individual and community level approaches to healing are needed to support safety, permanency and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system, and Aboriginal communities more broadly. Approaches to healing should be culturally embedded, and therefore must be led by Aboriginal people.

A trauma informed and culturally embedded approach must be incorporated into all work with Aboriginal children, young people, family, kin, carers and community. Non-Aboriginal Service Providers providing services to Aboriginal children and young people must recognise the central role of culture and connectedness in healing. A need to appreciate that meaningful cultural planning, can facilitate lifelong wellbeing (across major life areas) for Aboriginal children and young people. Cultural wellbeing and development of plans for children and young people will be undertaken in partnership with recognised Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers.

4.8 Futures planning

In order to achieve the best interests of Aboriginal children and young people Service Providers must focus on their immediate needs as well as their long-term development and wellbeing after they leave care, either by a permanency pathway or at age 18.

5 Matching of Aboriginal Children and Young People to Carers

5.1 Recruiting Aboriginal carers and prospective guardians

Service Providers must target their recruitment activities to find Aboriginal carers who meet the needs of Aboriginal children and young people to ensure access to emergency, respite care, short term care, restoration; and who can support permanency outcomes (for example recruiting carers who are interested in intensive supports to restore children home or recruiting carers interested in becoming guardians).

Effective approaches must be found to increase the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal carers. Culturally informed, progressive recruitment and flexible training will benchmark the experience for potential Aboriginal carers. At the same time, potential and authorised Aboriginal carers must have a positive experience in their interactions with OOHC providers at all stages of their journey to feel supported and valued.

Targeted recruitment activities will be prioritised and matched to demand, to ensure culturally appropriate placement options for all Aboriginal children and young people that require it, with particular focus on areas of NSW where Aboriginal children and young people are often moved out of area due to carer shortages.

FACS strongly encourages Service Providers to work together to build networks of Aboriginal emergency, short-term, restoration and respite carers across the state through shared recruitment, training and multi-agency authorisations.

A network of Aboriginal carers with dual (FACS and a Service Provider) and multi-agency authorisations will provide a more flexible response to keep children and young people on Country, close to family and at school while permanency and case plan goals are established and supported through quality case work.

Through collaboration, FACS and Service Providers can ensure better matching for Aboriginal children and young people, ensuring:

- Aboriginal children and young people can remain close to family and community to maintain connections
- Aboriginal children and young people are supported by Aboriginal carers in community if a relative/kin placement is not available to maintain family and community connections.

A culturally valid, tailored approach to assessment of Aboriginal carers will support Service Providers to recruit appropriate Aboriginal carers, particularly Aboriginal relatives and kin carers for Aboriginal children and young people.

Effective support to Aboriginal carers, and non-Aboriginal carers of Aboriginal children is also under development by AbSec, and will be published in 2017, assisting Service Providers to best support carers, promote achievement of goals and equip carers with the training and support they need to provide culturally embedded Therapeutic Care for Aboriginal children and young people.

Refer to the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care and Australian Institute of Family Studies resource '[Assessing, training and recruiting Indigenous carers](#)' for practices that better support Aboriginal carers.

5.2 Supporting carers to support culture

Service Providers must work closely with carers to ensure they have a strong understanding of the cultural needs of Aboriginal children and young people in care. This will assist children to build a strong sense of belonging and identity.

Non-Aboriginal Service Providers must access relative/kin, community and recognised Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers to provide cultural support for Aboriginal

children in care and for Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers to endorse Cultural Plans. This includes ensuring specific training for staff, and carers of Aboriginal children and young people.

Service Providers must provide training and support to ensure cultural sensitivity of all carers caring for Aboriginal children and young people.

5.3 Ensuring stability through carer support

Service Providers are expected to offer carers the opportunity to explore what type of support will help in terms of self-care, maintaining placement stability and achieving permanency. Conversations about carer support will be incorporated into case planning and case plan review cycles.

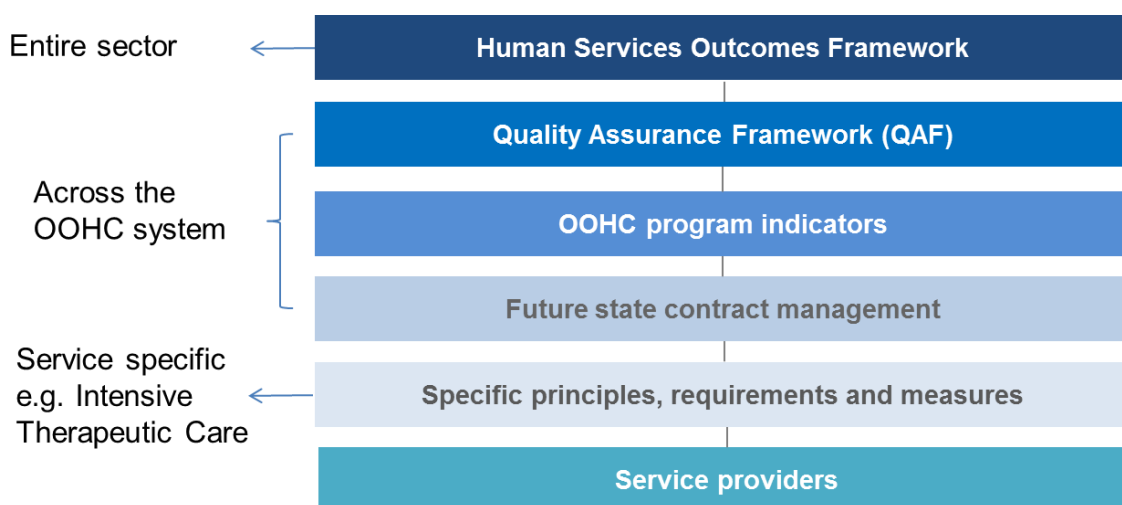
Support will consider the needs of the carers and be in the best interest of the children and young people in their care. Support will vary for each family and may include (but is not limited to) respite, connection to other carers, training, therapeutic support, household assistance, and paying for other siblings to attend activities. Support must assist in the achievement of Permanency Case Plan Direction within two years.

5.4 Respite

Respite can be an opportunity to build additional cultural connection for Aboriginal children and young people either through relatives/kin, an Aboriginal person with a known connection, or by building a new cultural connection through the Aboriginal respite carer network.

6 Outcomes and Indicators

An outcome and monitoring framework provides continuity from the level of broader human services outcomes to service delivery.



From 1 October 2017, outcomes and indicators will be used to inform financial abatements and incentives for contracted Service Providers. The development of measures for Aboriginal Foster Care will be influenced by the Quality Assurance Framework trial.

Indicators will be tracked and enhanced over time for Service Providers and FACS to understand the impact of the OOHC care program on children and young people and are outlined below.

All outcomes and indicators in the Permanency Support (OOHC) Program are located in Schedule 2 (Performance and Outcomes Data Reporting) of the Program Level Agreement (PLA).

Schedule 2 of the PLA sets out FACS' performance and outcomes data reporting requirements for the Program, including the Key Performance Indicators and other outcomes measurement data that Service Providers will be required to report on.

All outcomes and indicators in the Permanency Support (OOHC) Program will apply to the provision of Aboriginal care along with the indicators below.

Outcome	Indicator
<p>Permanency – Aboriginal children and young people have stable and permanent homes with relatives and kin.</p> <p>Where restoration is not possible, Aboriginal children and young people have stable, loving and permanent homes with relatives and kin through guardianship.</p> <p>Long term parental responsibility to the Minister is not an acceptable long term option. This recognises that statutory care is a short term arrangement and Aboriginal children and young people should be transitioned to their case plan permanency goal within two years.</p>	<p>A reduction in the number of Aboriginal children and young people entering OOHC through the provision of Aboriginal designed preservation services aimed at placement prevention.</p> <p>Increase in the number of Aboriginal children and young people restored to their family.</p> <p>Increase the number of children and young people who transition to guardianship.</p> <p>The number of Aboriginal children and young people supported to attain their permanency goal, with particular focus on compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles.</p>

Self determination

Outcome	Indicator
<p>Aboriginal people and communities participate in the care and protection of their children and young people with as much self-determination as possible.</p>	<p>Proportion of placement decisions made through Aboriginal-led decision making mechanisms.</p> <p>Proportion of Aboriginal children case managed by Aboriginal community controlled Service Providers.</p>

Cultural identity

Outcome	Indicator
Aboriginal children and young people in statutory care are connected to their culture and sense of identity	The number and proportion of Aboriginal children and young people supported by relatives or kin. The number and proportion of Aboriginal children and young people who have a Cultural Plan endorsed by an Aboriginal community controlled Service Provider, or a respected and recognised Aboriginal organisation, or a member of the Aboriginal community.