



Let's put the children first

Eight Key Principles

The Community Sector Principles to create a strong, healthy future for young people in out-of-home care.

July 2015





About this Document

The Key Principles and associated messages in this document were developed by the out-of-home care Community Sector.

The document presents the shared view of Alliance for Children at Risk and the Children Youth and Families Agencies Association of WA (CYFAA). Together these two bodies represent the majority of non-government organisations that provide out-of-home care and related services to children, young people and their families in Western Australia, including services that reduce the risk of children entering out-of-home care and support young people leaving care.

Out-of-home care is provided to children who are removed from their families.

Prepared on behalf of the sector by:

Alliance for Children at Risk
Secretariat
c/- Glide
5th Floor 12 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000

08 9218 8888 | 041 791 3302

alliance@glidestrategic.com.au
www.allianceforchildren.org.au

July 2015

Stronger Together

These Key Principles and associated messages were developed by the Community Sector to drive a strong partnership and cooperation between Community Sector organisations and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

The aim? To create a strong and healthy future for young people in out-of-home care.

These principles and messages represent a strong desire to work closely together to bring about the change the Community Sector believes is needed to achieve an out-of-home care sector that creates a stable environment to give children and young people quality care and a sense of belonging, and truly hear their voices in all decisions affecting their lives.

Eight Key Principles — Summary

Principle 1

Belonging: Children and young people in out-of-home care have the right to quality care, stability and a sense of belonging.

Principle 2

Our voices: The voices of children and young people must be sought and their opinions acknowledged and considered in all decisions affecting their lives.

Principle 3

Stronger together: The community sector is a full partner in the planning and delivery of person-centred care to children in out-of-home care.

Principle 4

Prevention is pre-eminent: Prevention and measures to address the antecedent factors that cause children to come into care are essential to making the out-of-home care system work effectively.

Principle 5

How do we know we are making a difference? We are committed to agreed outcomes and measures.

Principle 6

We are all involved in service design: All stakeholders, including consumers, have the right and opportunity to contribute to defining what services and outcomes will be delivered.

Principle 7

Aboriginal families and organisations deliver best outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people.

Principle 8

Leaving care: Young people have a right to continued opportunity for support and resources to embark on adult life with confidence.



Messages

The Community Sector developed messages that convey where and how the principles can be applied and where change is most urgently needed.

1 Principle 1

Belonging: Children and young people in out-of-home care have the right to quality care, stability and a sense of belonging.

Messages:

- Out-of-home care should improve a child's life and never harm them.
- Out-of-home care should be the option of last resort for children and young people at risk of harm.
- The child's needs should drive planning, funding and services.
- Children and young people need a placement where they feel they belong and are valued.
- Resources should be targeted to keep children in their family of origin, wherever possible.
- The 'Typical Australian Child' standard should be adopted as the benchmark for a child or young person in care.
- Funding for services must be aligned to delivery of accepted practice for quality care.

3 Principle 3

Stronger together: The community sector is a full partner in the planning and delivery of person-centred care to children in out-of-home care.

Messages:

- The community sector must be equal partners with government and other stakeholders in designing, developing and enacting implementation of the five year out-of-home care strategic plan.
- The community sector must be equal partners with government and other stakeholders in planning and making decisions about the care of children and young people in their care.
- Care practice must be person-centred, individual, open, transparent and inclusive.
- The knowledge, skills and expert approach that the community sector offers should inform out-of-home care practice and standards.

2 Principle 2

Our voices: The voices of children and young people must be sought and their opinions acknowledged and considered in all decisions affecting their lives.

Messages:

- Children and young people must be involved in developing their case plan, and planning and designing the services they receive.
- Consultation processes for children and young people must be multi-faceted, flexible, well-resourced and timely.

4 Principle 4

Prevention is pre-eminent: Prevention and measures to address the antecedent factors that cause children to come into care are essential to making the out-of-home care system work effectively.

Messages:

- It's time to review how risk assessment and risk aversion impact on the practice of out-of-home care and child protection.
- A collaborative approach between organisations on early intervention makes best use of resources.
- It's important to build relationships and communication with families.

5

Principle 5

How do we know we are making a difference? We are committed to agreed outcomes and measures.

Messages:

- Government and the community sector must work together to develop ways to capture and measure the impact of out-of-home care and identify what works and what does not.
 - The community sector must be involved in developing funding contracts that properly resource agreed, measurable outcomes.
-
-

6

Principle 6

We are all involved in service design: All stakeholders, including consumers, have the right and opportunity to contribute to defining what services and outcomes will be delivered.

Messages:

- As a sector, we must engage with consumers to design services that are based on evidence.
-
-

7

Principle 7

Aboriginal families and organisations deliver best outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people.

Messages:

- There must be a genuine commitment to hearing and acting on the voices of Aboriginal people.
- Service providers should be prepared to be challenged and to change the way they support and respond to Aboriginal children, families and organisations.
- Service providers should review policy, procedural behaviours and language, and the way these matters impact on Aboriginal people.

8

Principle 8

Leaving care: Young people have a right to continued opportunity for support and resources to embark on adult life with confidence.

Messages:

- Much more has to be done to address the needs of young people as they leave care, including those who exit before age 18.
 - Young people leaving out-of-home care need:
 - * Continuity of connections and relationships
 - * Strong personal connections, as well as professional
 - * Peer support and mentors
 - * Interconnected (not siloed), timely services and responses
 - * Focus on relationship, not on system
 - * Skills and knowledge to live successfully and independently
 - * Access to services, information and support from CPFS
-
-



Get In Touch

Alliance for Children at Risk
Secretariat
c/- Glide
5th Floor 12 St Georges Terrace Perth WA 6000
08 9218 8888 | 041 791 3302
alliance@glidestrategic.com.au
www.allianceforchildren.org.au