Child Safety

POLICY

Title: Residential Care
Policy No. 606-3

Policy Statement:

The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (Child Safety) will provide residential care services for children and young people, as part of a continuum of placement and support services that comprise care which is provided in accordance with the legislated standards of care (Child Protection Act 1999, section 122) and the Charter of Rights for a Child in Care (Child Protection Act 1999, section 74 and Schedule 1).

Residential care is provided at premises (not a carer’s own home) that are owned or leased for the specific purpose of accommodating children and young people subject to statutory intervention, and may range in levels and combinations of staffing, including live-in workers (such as houseparents), rostered workers with a combination of sleepover shifts and/or on-call arrangements, or rostered workers on duty 24 hours a day.

When Child Safety is making significant decisions about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, Child Safety will, in consultation with the child and family, arrange for an independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity for the child to facilitate the child’s and family’s participation in decision making. This includes decisions about where or with whom a child will live. This requirement relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a child protection care agreement, assessment order or child protection order granting custody or guardianship to the chief executive under the Child Protection Act 1999, section 83(2).

Residential care services are delivered by non-government organisations, funded by the department and licensed under the Child Protection Act 1999, section 127.

Principles:

• The safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, both throughout childhood and the rest of the child or young person’s life, are paramount and all interactions with a child or young person will be respectful.
• Case planning and placement decision-making undertaken by Child Safety will occur through genuine consultation and participation with the child or young person, parents and other family members (where appropriate), carers and/or direct care staff, and other specialist staff and professionals.
• The long-term effect of a decision on an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child’s identity and connection with the child’s family and community will be taken into account in decision making.
• Child Safety will work in partnership with residential care services to provide quality care in a safe and stable living environment to meet children and young people’s needs, in accordance with the Statement of Standards and the Charter of Rights of the Child Protection Act 1999.
• Child Safety and residential care services will work in partnership to identify, establish and maintain, where appropriate, connections between the child and family (including extended...
family); community; and persons of significance (such as elders or close family friends); and be supportive of individual rights and ethnic, religious and cultural identity and values.

- Children and young people have a right to access support and/or programs that will help them develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours to enhance their life outcomes and prepare them for reunification with family, transition to other forms of care, or transition to independent living.
- Child Safety and residential care services will work in partnership to provide access to training and professional supervision and support to assist direct care staff to provide support to all children and young people in residential care.
- Residential care will be evidence-based and informed particularly by theories of child development, attachment, trauma, and grief and loss.

**Objectives:**

- This policy aims to ensure that placements in residential care:
  o prepare the child or young person for reunification, transition to a family-based placement or other appropriate out-of-home care placement (to meet specific identified needs), or transition to independent living and/or
  o meet the child or young person’s need for safety, wellbeing and belonging in a medium- or long-term stable placement, where after a comprehensive assessment has identified that indicates the child or young person’s has needs may that are best be met by non-family-based care, and regular case reviews indicate that the placement continues to be meeting the best option for meet the child or young person’s needs.
  o promote the safe care and connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with their family, community, culture and country.

Regardless of the purpose of the placement, residential care services will liaise and build linkages with other relevant placement and support services to enhance coordinated service delivery to children and families and to facilitate transitions for children and families between services.

**Scope:**

Residential care placements are for young people aged 12 to 17, who are subject to either a care agreement, assessment order or an order granting custody or guardianship to the chief executive under the Act, including a temporary custody order or a transition order.

A residential care placement may only be considered for children younger than 12 years may only be considered for placement if:

- comprehensive assessment indicates that their safety, wellbeing and belonging may need best be met by placement in residential care and/or
- they are one of a sibling group that would benefit from being placed together and/or
- the service model has been explicitly developed and approved for children younger than 12, for example Indigenous Community Residential Care and Family Intervention Services (“Safe Houses”).

**Therapeutic residential care**

Therapeutic residential care provides enhanced levels of residential care and support for children and young people with extreme to complex support needs, and is subject to Policy 577, Therapeutic Residential Care.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

The procedures to give effect to this policy are in the Child Safety Practice Manual.
Non-government service-providers will be responsible for developing operational policies and procedures for each residential care service provided, in line with care service licensing requirements.

Placements

Placements in residential care will be made under the authority of the Child Protection Act 1999, section 82(1)(d) for licensed services or section 82(1)(f) for services yet to be licensed; with the approval of the delegated officer and in accordance with Child Safety financial delegations.

Placements in residential care will be made in consideration of the child or young person’s own views, strengths and needs, individual abuse and trauma history, culture, disability and developmental needs (including any diagnosed mental health conditions), the views and wishes of the child’s family, continuity of relationships, and the needs of other children and young people already residing with the service; as outlined in the Child Safety Practice Manual. Residential care services will be informed by attachment, trauma and child development theories and research; to respond to the physical, social and emotional needs of each child or young person placed.

Residential care services may provide placements for up to six children and young people, though it may also include individual care. Placement of more than six children may only be made where all children in the placement are of one sibling group, and the premises can reasonably accommodate the children. In such instances, the placement should be considered temporary and a more appropriate placement identified as soon as possible.

Case management and client support

Child Safety is responsible for case management for children and young people placed in residential care, including ongoing assessment to inform reviews of the case plan, which must integrate outcomes from the following:

- the Child Strengths and Needs Assessment
- the Child Health Passport
- the Education Support Plan
- the Cultural Support Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and, where appropriate, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- the transition from care case plan, for young people who are aged 15-17 years old and
- Specialist assessments, such as those conducted by Evolve Interagency Services and, and any behaviour support and/or treatment plans.

Residential care services will aim to meet the individual care and support needs of each child and young person placed, which will be assessed, planned for, and reviewed in partnership with the child, family, Child Safety and residential care services and relevant support services. Other relevant persons (such as school staff, support workers and previous carers) will also be included in these processes.

When Child Safety is making significant decisions about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, Child Safety will, in consultation with the child and family, arrange for an independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity for the child to facilitate the child’s and family’s participation in decision making, including case planning.
The provision of care and support, and planning for transition, will be conducted in consideration of the child or young person’s unique history of attachment and trauma, connections and relationships with family and community, and cultural background.

The long-term effect of a decision on an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child’s identity and connection with the child’s family and community must be taken into account (s5C(1)(b)).

In any decisions or actions taken under the Child Protection Act 1999, the five elements of the Child Placement Principles (s5C(2)) also apply:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have a right to be brought up within their own family and community (prevention principle)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons have the right to participate in significant decisions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (partnership principle)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed in out-of-home care have a right to be placed with a member of their family (placement principle)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their parents and family members have a right to participate, and be enabled to participate, in administrative and judicial decision-making processes (participation principle)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have a right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child’s family, community, culture, traditions and language, particularly where a child is in the care of a non-Indigenous person (connection principle).

Child Safety will provide a range of residential care services to meet the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, including a number of services located in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to safely remain in, or return to, their communities of origin (for example, Indigenous Community Residential Care and Family Intervention Services, commonly known as “Safe Houses”).

**Authority:**

*Child Protection Act 1999*
*Child Protection Regulation 2011*

**Delegations:**

Refer to instruments of delegation for delegations related to residential care.

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**Office:** Operational Support, Child and Family Operations
Help Contact: Operational Support

Links:

Procedures
Child Safety Practice Manual

Related policies
Complaints management policy and procedures (295)
Participation by children and young people in decision-making (369)
Permanency planning (594)
Placement of children in care as part of an integrated child protection response (578)
Responding to concerns about the standards of care (326)
Therapeutic Residential Care (577)
Transitional Placements (including emergent accommodation) and flexible funding (602)
Transitioning from care into adulthood (349)
Decisions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (641)

Related legislation or standard
Child Protection Act 1999
Child Protection Regulation 2011
Statement of Commitment between the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and the foster and kinship carers of Queensland

Rescinded policy
606-2 Residential care

Michael Hogan
Director-General