



**Child & Family
Alliance WA**

February 2021 | www.childfamilyalliance.org.au

Let's Put Children And Families First

Eight Key Principles

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND
FAMILIES ARE SUPPORTED TO STAY
SAFE, STRONG AND CONNECTED.



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, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and the Department of Communities. The Children and Families Alliance of Western Australia (CAFAWA) seeks to work with our members, community and government to advocate for more effective systems to strengthen families.

These principles and messages represent a respectful and collegial relationship to help bring sustained and positive change to the community sector – ensuring children, young people and families are provided services that meet their individual needs.

Eight Key Principles

Summary

Principle 1

Belonging

Children and young people have the right to their individual culture and identity; to be safe and feel they are connected to those important to them, and to belong; quality care and stability are central for children and young people to thrive.

Principle 2

Our voices

The voices of children, young people and their families must be heard and their opinions acknowledged and considered in all decisions affecting their lives.

Principle 3

Stronger together

The community sector is recognised for its expertise and partners with government in the planning and delivery of person-centred care for children, young people and families.

Principle 4

Prevention is pre-eminent:

Early intervention and prevention to address the antecedent factors that cause families to break down are essential to ensuring that systems work to strengthen families.

Principle 5

How do we know we are making a difference?

We work in partnership and advocate for systems that are evidenced based and improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Self-determination is key with a focus on choices for children, young people and families.

Principle 6

We are all involved in service design

All stakeholders, including children, young people and families have the right and opportunity to contribute to designing the services that will best meet their needs and improve their outcomes.

Principle 7

Aboriginal families, communities and organisations deliver best outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people

Aboriginal children should have the opportunity to be cared for by an ACCO on their own country.

Principle 8

Leaving care

Young people have the right to comprehensive planning and continuing support as they enter adult life beyond 18 years.

Messages

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

Principle

1

Belonging: Children and young people have the right to their individual culture and identity; to be safe and feel they are connected to those important to them, and to belong; quality care and stability are central for children and young people to thrive.

Messages:

- ▶ Out-of-home care should be the option of last resort for children and young people at risk of harm.
- ▶ Wherever possible resources should be targeted to keep children in their family of origin, extended family or on country.
- ▶ Funding for services must be aligned to delivery of accepted practice for quality care.
- ▶ The child's needs drive planning, funding, and services.
- ▶ Children and young people need a placement which is culturally appropriate and where they feel they belong and are valued.
- ▶ Children and young people's connection to birth family is encouraged and enabled.
- ▶ The National Out of Home Care Standards* should be adopted as the benchmark for a child or young person in care.

**Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs together with the National Framework Implementation Working Group, An Outline of National Standards for Out of Home Care, 2011.*

Principle

2

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

Messages:

- ▶ Children, young people and their family must be involved in developing their case and care plans and planning and designing the services they receive.
- ▶ Consultation processes for children and young people must be multi-faceted, flexible, well-resourced, and timely.
- ▶ Children, young people and families are provided the opportunity to make independent complaints.
- ▶ Children, young people and families are encouraged and supported to actively participate in seeking solutions that will meet their needs.

Principle

3

Stronger together: The community sector is recognised for its expertise and partners with government in the planning and delivery of person-centred care for children, young people and families.

Messages:

- ▶ The community sector, including ACCO's must be equal partners with government and other stakeholders in designing, developing and enacting implementation of out of home care reform
- ▶ The community sector, government and other stakeholders must be equal partners with children, young people and families in planning and making decisions about their care.
- ▶ Care practice must be person-centred, individual, open, transparent, and inclusive of ACCO's non-government agencies and families.
- ▶ The knowledge, skills and expert approach that the community sector offers is respected and acknowledged and informs out-of-home care practice and standards.

Principle

4

Early intervention and prevention to address the antecedent factors that cause families to break down are essential to ensuring that systems work to strengthen families.

Messages:

- ▶ It's important to build relationships and communication with families and provide intervention and support that prevents family breakdown.
- ▶ A collaborative approach between stakeholders during early intervention ensures the best use of resources available to support families.
- ▶ Family finding using ACCO and government resources should be a priority
- ▶ A whole of government approach is needed to fund and prioritise early intervention and prevention strategies and services for children, young people and families



Principle

5

We work in partnership and advocate for systems that are evidenced based and improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Self-determination is key with a focus on choices for children young people and families.

Messages:

- ▶ Government and the community sector must consult with community and work together to develop reforms which meet the needs of children and families, particularly Aboriginal children and families
- ▶ The community sector must be involved in developing services that have agreed, measurable outcomes that are evidence based.
- ▶ Children, young people and families inform service design to ensure they have choice

Principle

6

All stakeholders, including children, young people and families have the right and opportunity to contribute to designing the services that will best meet their needs and improve their outcomes.

Messages:

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

Principle

7

Aboriginal children should have the opportunity to be cared for by an ACCO on their own country.

Messages:

- ▶ There must be a genuine commitment to hearing and acting on the voices of Aboriginal people in relation to their needs and responding with appropriate funding.
- ▶ Service providers should be prepared to transition Aboriginal children into the care of ACCO organisations when in the best interests of children.
- ▶ Service providers should use a cultural and equity lens to review policy, procedural behaviours and language, and the way these matters impact on Aboriginal people.

Principle

8

Young people have the right to comprehensive planning and continuing support as they enter adult life beyond 18 years.

Messages:

- ▶ Much more must be done to address the needs of young people as they leave care, especially those who exit before age 18.
- ▶ Greater commitment across Government to prioritise services for young people leaving care.
- ▶ Young people should be supported to stay in care up to 21 years if that is their preference and be provided with appropriate supports
- ▶ 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



Get In Touch

Child and Family Alliance WA

 eo@childfamilyalliance.org.au

 childfamilyalliance.org.au



**Child & Family
Alliance WA**