



# Permanency Support Program

What it means for Aboriginal children and families

The Permanency Support Program (PSP) came into effect on 1 October 2017.

For more information go to the FACS website at [www.facs.nsw.gov.au/psp](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/psp) or call your local Community Services Centre.

Finding a permanent, safe home for children and young people is the most important part of the Permanency Support Program. That's because evidence tells us a safe, stable and loving home gives children and young people better lives.

This is especially important for Aboriginal children and young people, who need continued access to their families, communities and Country to help them get the best life outcomes.

## Artwork

The artwork reflects the intricacies of the Permanency Support Program while placing the focus on the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people at the centre.

The centre circle represents the child in a safe, loving and permanent home. The green/blue arches represent the carers, kin and extended family who surround the child with care and support.

The orange circles represent the Permanency Support Program's permanency coordinators and caseworkers (both government and NGO) who plan and achieve the goals of the program. Every orange circle is connected by a pathway linking them together. This orange pathway represents the connections, information sharing, networks and referrals surrounding a child's permanent placement.

The green pathways leading to the centre circle represent the transition of a child into permanency.

**Charmaine Mumbulla, Artist**



## There are four main parts of the Permanency Support Program:

### 1. Permanency and early intervention principles used in casework

This is about addressing issues in a family early on and being able to give children and young people a permanent home as quickly as possible.

### 2. Supporting change by working intensively with birth parents and families

Intensive support is offered to parents and families so that families can be strengthened and children and young people can stay at home or be reunited with their families. Ideally, support and services for Aboriginal families will be community-based and led and delivered by Aboriginal people. There are also 450 new places for Aboriginal children in intensive family preservation and restoration services to help keep children at home safely.

### 3. A new approach to recruiting, developing and supporting carers

Although foster care is not a long term option under the PSP, we're recruiting more Aboriginal foster, relative and kin carers to look after children and young people while parents take some time out. Carers will then support children in their return-to-family journeys.

### 4. Intensive therapeutic care

Residential care for children and young people will be replaced with Intensive Therapeutic Care (ITC). ITC is for a shorter period of time and will be delivered close to home, community and Country for Aboriginal children and young people. ITC will also have a strong emphasis on recovering from trauma and supporting children and young people to have a strong cultural identity.

## Permanency coordinators

There are 52 new permanency coordinators across NSW. Permanency coordinators are not caseworkers. Their job is to link up Aboriginal children and young people with the services that will help them most. Some of these coordinators are Aboriginal and will be there to work with Aboriginal children and young people who are at risk of significant harm.



## Family participation in permanency decisions

Aboriginal families must participate in decisions about their children.

Family-led discussions are an important part of creating safe, permanent homes for Aboriginal children and young people.

If issues arise there are ways to work out solutions together rather than going to court.

## Alternative dispute resolution

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) is now being used in child protection to help family members reach an agreement if they have been in dispute. The most important aim of any dispute resolution is to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people. ADR uses the services of someone objective who acts as the referee between people who are in dispute. There are different types of dispute resolution available, including mediation, reconciliation and family group conferencing.

## Parent responsibility contracts and parent capacity orders

Aboriginal parents can volunteer to be part of a parent responsibility contract or a parent capacity order. These are signed off by a court to help parents commit to keeping their children safe and improve their parenting skills.

They also reduce the need for FACS to intervene if they think a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.