



## What we do

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DoCS helps children, young people, families and communities across the state by providing a wide range of services based on individual needs and circumstances.

### Child protection

Our most important job is keeping children safe.

The DoCS Helpline receives reports about children at risk of abuse, harm or neglect, which are then referred to our field caseworkers for further investigation.

Our priority is always the safety of children and young people.

We work with the child to identify problems and try to find solutions that will keep the family together.

We also provide advice and services to families experiencing difficulties arising from unemployment, domestic violence, alcohol or drug dependence, mental or physical illness.

### Prevention and early intervention

Identifying and dealing with emerging problems before they escalate is by far the best way to protect children.

The Brighter Futures program offers a range of prevention and early intervention services for families showing early signs of difficulties. These services aim to prevent children from entering the child protection system.

The program is based on research that proves a healthy relationship between a child and its parents in the first three years of life lays the foundation for a healthy, happy and resilient life.

Caseworkers work with families facing issues such as:

- domestic violence
- drug or alcohol misuse
- mental health issues
- lack of family or social support
- parental learning difficulties
- child behaviour management problems affecting parent's ability to care for the child

Caseworkers find solutions and build on families' existing strengths. The process is a parent-led, child focussed partnership with DoCS that can last anything from weeks to months.



Support services range from teaching parenting skills, to childcare, drug and alcohol counselling, or therapeutic services for the child and participation is voluntary.

#### Out-of-home care

DoCS cares for and supports children when they are not able to live with their parents through its out-of-home care programs.

Care is provided through DoCS foster carers, our community partners' foster carers or the child's extended family, which is known as kinship care.

These services help children who:

- have been significantly harmed
- are at risk of abuse
- come from families that can't look after them due to illness, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence or poverty

We aim to reunite children and families wherever possible. Out-of-home care provides a safe, secure and comfortable family environment for as short a time as possible.

However, when necessary we find longer term solutions to care for children, as our overall objective is to ensure that children have a stable, reliable and nurturing environment in which to thrive.

#### Funding and regulating children's services such as pre-schools and day care

DoCS funds over 1,600 children's services including preschools, long day care, before and after school care, occasional care and vacation care.

We also license over 3,000 children's services in NSW and set the standards by which they must operate.

#### Supporting communities

DoCS works in partnership with more than 2,000 community organisations to deliver a range of services that support families and communities across NSW.

These services promote family strength, encourage community development and address common issues that can lead to family breakdown.

DoCS also provides support to emerging communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and to disadvantaged and isolated communities.

Programs can range from a DVD on domestic violence targeted at African women to home visitors for struggling parents.



Helping people affected by natural and other disasters

During emergencies such as bushfires, floods, major storms or earthquakes we coordinate services with our community partners such as the Salvation Army, ADRACARE, Red Cross, Anglicare and St Vincent de Paul.

We provide immediate relief and assistance in the form of food, clothing, accommodation and financial assistance when needed.

Offering support services to assist homeless people

Through the joint State/ Commonwealth Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), we run the largest program for homeless people in Australia.

SAAP provides accommodation and support services to help people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to get back on their feet.

