

# CASE DOCUMENTATION



In this tool, you will find:

- » General guidance about the importance and purpose of case documentation
- » A checklist of guiding principles for case documentation

Related tools:

- » Child Protection Obligations – NT or SA
- » Sharing Information in Relation to Child Safety and Wellbeing – NT or SA

- » monitor a child or family's progress towards goals
- » provide families continuity of service during periods of staff leave or in the event of staff turnover.

## Service accountability

Accurate recording of the services you deliver provides accountability to children and families who you work with, your organisation and your funder.

It can support the planning, implementation and evaluation of services at the client level, as well as contributing to an overall understanding of the success of interventions at the program level.

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This document provides general guidance and a checklist of guiding principles for case documentation.

Whilst the guidance provided is of a general nature, it is expected that CaFIS providers will have their own processes, systems and requirements for case documentation and will ensure employees are aware of these requirements, including any legal obligations to record information.

## KEY GUIDANCE

### What is meant by case documentation?

For the purpose of this factsheet, case documentation means any form of documentation, including written and electronic records, relating to the delivery of CaFIS services to a child, young person or family.

### Why is it important to keep records?

The main reasons to keep case records are to facilitate the delivery of services and for service accountability. Some records may also be required for legal reasons.

### Facilitating the delivery of services

Keeping case records helps you to:

- » identify client strengths and unhelpful patterns of behaviour
- » record reasons behind case decisions
- » analyse information when making an assessment
- » recall information when working with families with multiple, complex issues

## Legal requirements

It is important to become familiar with legal requirements to document certain actions undertaken in accordance with legislation, and how these requirements are implemented within your organisation.

Examples include:

- » As you have a legal obligation to report your belief that a child is being or may be harmed (NT)/ or your suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk (SA), you should document the information you report to authorities (see CaFIS tool *Child Protection Obligations – NT or SA*).
- » Sharing information for safety and wellbeing requires requests and actions to be documented. For example, requests received and requests made to share information should be documented, along with all information you share and any refusal of a request or part of a request and your reasons for refusal. You should also document your decision to seek consent or reasons for not seeking consent, and whether consent was provided or not (see CaFIS tool *Sharing Information in Relation to Child Safety and Wellbeing – NT or SA*).

## Disclaimer

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## CHECKLIST OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CASE DOCUMENTATION

CaFIS providers will have their own policy or procedures that relate to how information is recorded and stored, and are likely to have preferred formats, forms or templates. While requirements will differ this checklist provides some guiding principles for case documentation to consider:



### Accurate

Records should be accurate and reflect the services provided. Document dates and times activities took place. Records should distinguish between facts and opinion, and between first-hand information and information obtained from third parties. Record the name and position title of any source of information, and the name of interpreters if you use one.



### Clear and Chronological

When documenting for the case record ensure your meaning is clear. Information is more easily understood when written in plain English, so keep jargon to a minimum. Language should be respectful and reasonably formal as case records can be subpoenaed by the court. Writing in chronological order helps provide clarity for the reader.



### Concise and Relevant

Records should be written in a concise way. That is, you should not include unnecessary material and should try to avoid duplicate information. However, the records should be sufficient, with all significant information and decisions recorded.



### Recording decisions

It is good practice to document all decisions made, including the reason for the decision, who was involved, and what information was considered.



### Contemporary

Allowing yourself time for case documentation will help you keep records up to date. Timely documentation increases the accuracy of records and helps to ensure continuity of services for your clients.



### Client-Centred

Case documentation reflects services provided for the client, with information recorded about the client. It's important that records reflect the views of the child, young person and their family, using their own words where possible.



### Privacy and Confidentiality.

Working closely with families you will access information of a private and personal nature. Respect and protect client privacy wherever possible and appropriate. Only record information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.

Client families should be confident that information held about them will only be disclosed to others with their consent or when there is a legal obligation to do so. Written records should be confidential and kept in a safe place, and electronic records should be password protected.