Children and Family Intensive Support (CaFIS)

1. Developing a Program Logic



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| In this tool, you will find:   * Advice to guide the development or adaptation of your CaFIS program logic * The key components of a program logic * A template for your CaFIS program logic * Links to helpful resources |

Background and Context

CaFIS providers may wish to develop a program logic to show how the CaFIS service being delivered will lead to outcomes for children and families.

The CaFIS program has outcome areas that CaFIS providers will need to report on to the Department of Social Services (the Department) through an Activity Work Plan. CaFIS providers will also be able to engage with the community to choose additional outcome areas to focus on from an agreed list provided by the Department.

Developing a program logic will help CaFIS providers to complete their Activity Work Plan.

This tool includes a template for a program logic and guidance on how to populate the template.

What is a program logic?

A program logic visually represents the links between the service context, program activities, outputs, short, medium and long-term outcomes and goals.

The program logic for your CaFIS service will be informed by:

* your service agreement with DSS
* the CaFIS operating guidelines
* the overarching Pathways to Outcomes program logic for the CaFIS program
* any local outcomes you have identified with the community
* your organisation’s principles and mandate
* your experience in service delivery and knowledge of best practice
* any implementation, research and/or evaluation support you may have for your CaFIS service.

Developing a program logic

Program logic components

The key components of a program logic and a description of each component are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Program logic components

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| Component | Description |
| **Agency/ community context** | What are the community strengths, needs and expectations in relation to the service? What are the features of the agency and the community context that may support or affect service delivery? |
| **Principles of service delivery** | These detail **how** the service will be provided and should reflect the principles for CaFIS and your agency mandate (e.g. child focussed, family based; community led; child safe; trauma informed). |
| **Target group** | Who are the intended clients and beneficiaries of the service? |
| **Inputs** | These are the resources that are provided for the service and can include items such as funding, staffing, cultural knowledge, policies, procedures, IT, transportation, research and evaluation, etc. |
| **Activities** | This includes **what** will be done within the service to produce outcomes for clients. |
| **Outputs** | These are the immediate result of the activities (e.g. number of assessments conducted, case plans developed, home-based activities, inter-agency discussions, staff trained). |
| **Short-term outcomes** | These will depend on the theory of change, and the period over which change is expected to occur. For example, outcomes such as client engagement, involvement in decision making, risks in the home being addressed, immediate needs being met (e.g. medical treatment for children) may be examples of short-term outcomes. |
| **Medium-term outcomes** | Medium term outcomes build upon short term outcomes and begin to reflect changes within the family and their broader context. This may reflect stronger, more positive relationships between family members, calmer times within the family, greater bonding between parents and children. |
| **Longer-term outcomes** | This reflects things that may take longer to change because they build upon other outcomes, are longer-term journeys for clients (eg mental health treatment which is ongoing) or because clients can’t immediately access support and help they need (eg if they are on a waiting list). |
| **Goals of the program** | This is the ultimate why of service delivery and may include goals that CaFIS builds towards (eg child safety, family empowerment) that rely on more than just the work of the CaFIS team in the community. |

Approaching the development of your program logic

You may like to start with the activities and/or the intended goals of the program. The important point is that there is a logical link between each step of the program logic. This logical link is sometimes called a “theory of change” – in other words, why will doing these activities lead to these outcomes?

It is useful to develop program logics together with staff, community members and evaluators/external expert support. This helps test some of the assumptions that underpin the program logic and makes sure the logic is well grounded in the community and service context, and reflects best practice.

It is also useful to share your program logic with other services in the community, as many will be striving to achieve the same outcomes for children and families. Sharing the “why”, “how”, and “what” of your service with other services can help them to understand what you want to achieve for clients and can enhance collaboration and joint work towards shared outcomes.

A template that CaFIS providers can use to develop a program logic is set out on the following page. This template could be helpful in setting out the links between the service context, program activities, outputs, short, medium and long-term outcomes and the goals of your CaFIS service. Once you have gathered this information, you might also find it useful to present your program logic in a visual or diagrammatic way to share this with families, children and the community.

Disclaimer

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| Where to go for more information on this topic  Examples of program logics and their use in evaluation and outcomes measurement: https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/research/Publications/developing-program-logic.pdf  Provides a checklist to support the development of program logics for family support services: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/expert-panel-project/program-planning-evaluation-guide/plan-your-program-or-service/how-develop-program-logic-planning-and-evaluation  Resources to develop theories of change: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/rainbow\_framework/define/develop\_programme\_theory. |

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CaFIS program logic template

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| Community and agency context | Describe the community strengths, needs and expectations and the features of the agency and the community context that may affect service delivery. |
| Principles of service delivery | Describe the CaFIS principles of service delivery. |
| Target group | Describe the intended recipients of CaFIS. |
| Inputs | List the inputs/resources that your CaFIS service will use. |
| Activities | List the activities that your CaFIS service will undertake to achieve its intended outcomes. These will include activities with clients, staff and the community. |
| Outputs | List the immediate results of the activities set out above. |
| Short-term outcomes | List the expected short-term outcomes of your activities and the time frame for these. There should be a clear link between the expected outcome and the activity. |
| Medium-term outcomes | List the expected medium-term outcomes of your activities and the time frame for these. These should build on the short term outcomes. |
| Long-term outcomes | List the expected long-term outcomes of your activities and the time frame for these. These should build on short and medium term outcomes and reflect changes that may take longer to achieve. |
| Goals | Reflect the goals of the CaFIS program, including goals that may rely on more than just the work of the CaFIS team in the community. |