



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Families and Children Guidelines Overview

Families and Communities Program

DSS2933.05.23



Version Control

This table confirms timing of revisions and endorsement of these Operational Guidelines.

Version	Changes	Date
1.0	Department of Finance approved	June 2014
2.0	N/A	November 2014
2.1	Update	September 2017
3.0	Update	January 2023
3.1	Accessibility update	May 2023

Table of Contents

Version Control	2
Activity Overview – Families and Children	4
Sub-Activities	4
Family and Relationship Services (FaRS)	4
MensLine and MensLine Changing for Good Program	4
Specialised Family Violence Services (SFVS)	4
Communities for Children Facilitating Partner (CfC FP)	5
Children and Parenting	5
Children and Parenting Support (CaPS)	5
Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)	5
Children and Family Intensive Support (CaFIS)	6
Stronger Places, Stronger People (SPSP)	6
Adult Specialist Support	6
Find and Connect Support Services	6
Forced Adoption Support Services	7
A Better Life (ABLE)	7
Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS)	7
Reconnect (Youth Homelessness)	7

Activity Overview – Families and Children

The Families and Children Activity provides support to families to improve the wellbeing of children and young people, enhancing family and community functioning, as well as increasing the participation of vulnerable people in community life.

Organisations provide early intervention and prevention activities to improve the wellbeing of families, children and young people, including after separation, enhance family functioning and economic engagement, and strengthen communities.

Sub-Activities

Family and Relationship Services (FaRS)

Family and Relationship Services is a Sub-Activity under the Families and Children Activity and aims to strengthen family relationships, prevent breakdown and ensure the wellbeing and safety of children through the provision of broad based counselling and education to families.

For more information, refer to the FaRS [Operational Guidelines](#).

MensLine and MensLine Changing for Good Program

MensLine Australia Services is a national telephone and online support, information and referral service for men with emotional health and relationship concerns.

Mensline services support online and telephone counselling assistance for a range of health and wellbeing issues, including: physical issues, loneliness, substance abuse, mental health and relationship problems.

MensLine also offer the Changing for Good (CFG) program, a telephone service that aims to reinforce and maintain behavioural and attitudinal change in men who have undertaken a men's behavioural change program, as well as provide information, referral and support services for men who are at risk of, or are, using violence towards women, children and other family members

For more information, please access the [MensLine Australia website](#).

Specialised Family Violence Services (SFVS)

SFVS uses a whole-of-family approach to strengthen family and community functioning and improve personal and family safety by providing support to individuals, couples, children and families who are experiencing, witnessing or at risk of family or domestic violence.

For more information, refer to the SFVS [Operational Guidelines](#).

Communities for Children Facilitating Partner (CfC FP)

Communities for Children Facilitating Partner (CfC FP) is a Sub-Activity under the Families and Children Activity. CfC FP is a place based service delivery model of investment that operates in 52 locations across Australia. CfC FP facilitates a whole-of-community approach to support and enhance early childhood development and wellbeing for children from birth to 12 years, but can include children up to 18 years and their families. CfC FPs sub-contract other organisations (known as Community Partners) to provide services including parenting support, group peer support, case management, home visiting services and other supports to promote child wellbeing.

For more information, refer to the CfC FP [Operational Guidelines](#).

Children and Parenting

The Children and Parenting Sub-Activity provides funding to early intervention and prevention services and resources that are aimed at improving children's development and wellbeing and supporting the capacity of those in a parenting role. Services have a primary focus on children aged 0-12 years, but may include children up to age 18 years.

Children and Parenting Support (CaPS)

CaPS services help improve the wellbeing and development of children from birth to 12 years, but can include children up to 18 years, by building the capacity of parents, carers and children through activities such as community playgroups, supported playgroups, parenting courses, crèches, mobile services, home visiting, peer support groups, school readiness programs and web-based services or resources.

For more information, refer to the CaPS [Operational Guidelines](#).

Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)

The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is a two-year home-based parenting and early learning program targeted to families with children aged 3 and 4 years old.

The program empowers caregivers to be their child's first teacher by guiding them through a structured curriculum of learning activities. Families participating in the program spend 10-15 minutes per day, five days a week undertaking educational activities with their children in their home.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), through HIPPY Australia, holds the exclusive license to run the program in Australia. The program is delivered in 100 sites across Australia, 50 of which have a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

For more information, refer to the HIPPY [Operational Guidelines](#).

Children and Family Intensive Support (CaFIS)

Children and Family Intensive Support (CaFIS) provides early intervention and prevention support to children or young people aged 0-18 years and their families in selected communities in the Northern Territory and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in South Australia. This service aims to support families with multiple and complex needs to enhance children and young people's health, safety and wellbeing.

For more information, refer to the CaFIS [Operational Guidelines](#).

Stronger Places, Stronger People (SPSP)

Stronger Places, Stronger People (SPSP) is a place-based collective impact initiative stewarded by the Australian Government in partnership with state and territory governments and 10 communities across Australia. It seeks to disrupt disadvantage and create better futures for children and their families through locally tailored and evidence-driven solutions to local problems.

For more information, refer to the [SPSP page](#) on the Department of Social Services website.

Adult Specialist Support

The Adult Specialist Support Sub-Activity provides specialist services and support to improve outcomes and enhance wellbeing for people adversely affected by past institutional and child-welfare practices and policies.

Find and Connect Support Services

Find and Connect Support Services help Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants to uncover their history, trace and reclaim their identities, and build relationships with their families. Find and Connect Support Services provide specialist trauma-informed counselling, referral services, peer support, education and social support programs. Services also provide practical assistance to locate and access records and reconnect, where possible, with family members.

For more information refer to the [Find and Connect page](#) on the Department of Social Services website.

Forced Adoption Support Services

Forced Adoption Support Services (FASS) funds seven organisations to provide coordinated specialist support services across Australia for people affected by past forced adoption policies and practices.

For more information, refer to the [Forced Adoption page](#) on the Department of Social Services website.

A Better Life (ABLE)

A Better Life (ABLE) - aims to support improved independence, participation and lifetime wellbeing of people affected by mental illnesses in the East Kimberley.

ABLE provides practical supports to assist participants who have drug and alcohol use and/or gambling disorders to access and engage with relevant services, develop better relationships with family and friends, and manage their everyday tasks.

For more information, refer to the [Mental Health Programs and Services page](#) on the Department of Social Services website.

Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS)

Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS) provide early intervention support services for children and young people up to the age of 18, who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness.

For more information, refer to the FMHSS [Operational Guidelines](#).

Reconnect (Youth Homelessness)

Reconnect is a community based early intervention and prevention program for young people aged 12 to 18 years (or 12 to 21 years in the case of newly arrived youth) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and their families. Reconnect services are available across all states and territories.

For more information, refer to the [Reconnect page](#) on the Department of Social Services website.