# Safe and Supported: Theory of Change

Safe and Supported is underpinned by a Theory of Change explaining how and why we expect change to occur for children, young people and families, including parents and carers, across all priority groups over the next 10 years.

The Safe and Supported Theory of Change outlines:

• our starting point, which recognises the strengths of children, young people and families, and describes the issue Safe and Supported seeks to address.

• the key enablers we need in place to facilitate change.

• what Safe and Supported will do to create change, which is described below in the actions.

• The change (i.e. outcomes) Safe and Supported aims to achieve, which is described in the Outcomes Framework.

It is recognised that First Nations people have a unique starting point and journey under Safe and Supported. This is outlined in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theory of Change, which can be found on page 21 of *Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026*.

A summary of the Safe and Supported Theory of Change can be found below. The full Story of Change that underpins Safe and Supported is at Appendix B of *Safe and Supported: First Action Plan 2023-2026*.

# Summary of the Theory of Change

## Starting Point: What are the issues that need to be addressed?

* When the social determinants of child safety and wellbeing are not fulfilled this can undermine a family’s ability to keep their children safe and well.
* Intergenerational trauma and disadvantage often underpins experiences of child abuse and neglect.
* Many children, young people and families face systemic and service-level barriers (e.g. discrimination) to accessing opportunities and supports.
* Services and systems work in silos – need to shift focus towards more holistic and early supports.
* It is recognised that First Nations people have a unique starting point under Safe and Supported (see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theory of Change).

To address this we: Need to improve services and supports for children and families across the service spectrum, from prevention to out-of-home care and supports for care leavers.

## Underpinning Principles of Safe and Supported

* Access to quality universal and targeted services designed to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.
* Excellence in practice and policy development, based on evidence, data and information sharing.
* Listening and responding to the voices and views of children and young people, and the views of those who care for them.
* Clear responsibilities and strong monitoring, evaluation and achievement of outcomes.
* Trauma-informed, culturally safe and inclusive policies and actions.
* Embedding the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP).

## Key enablers of change

* Recognising the expertise and authority of children and young people on their needs and lives, with respect to their age and maturity.
* Recognising the expertise and authority of parents/ carers and communities on the needs of their children.
* Valuing the living experience of children, young people and families.
* Understanding the needs of children, young people and families in their own words.
* Collaboration between communities, services, governments and other organisations.
* Collaboration across different sectors that impact the social determinants of child safety and wellbeing.
* Strong and capable workforce.
* Sufficient data and research in areas of interest.
* Sustained commitment to improving child safety.

## Please note: We aim to provide documents in an accessible format. The following text describes a table within the *Safe and Supported Theory of Change* which maps Actions from *Safe and Supported: First Action Plan 2023-2026* and the *Safe and Supported Outcomes Framework* across the Safe and Supported Focus Areas. If you are having problems using this document with your accessibility tools please contact us at [NationalFramework@dss.gov.au](mailto:NationalFramework@dss.gov.au).

## Focus Areas under Safe and Supported

Where are we focusing our collective effort?

* A national approach to early intervention and targeted support for children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage.
* Addressing the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems.
* Improved information sharing, data development and analysis.
* Strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability.

## Actions to Drive Change: Safe and Supported First Action Plan

What will stakeholders do/support/develop?

\*See pages 23 to 42 of *Safe and Supported: First Action Plan* for details on the Actions.

Focus Area: A national approach to early intervention and targeted support for children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage:

* **Action 1:** Early supports
* **Action 5:** Out-of-home care
* **Action 7:** Disability

Focus Area: Addressing the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems.

* **Action 8:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP)

See the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan* for other actions that will address Focus Area 2 and outcomes in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outcomes Framework.*

Focus Area: Improved information sharing, data development and analysis.

* **Action 2:** Data and research

Focus Area: Strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability.

* **Action 3:**Workforce
* **Action 6:** Carers

**Action 4:** Listening to Living Experience cuts across all 4 Focus Areas.

## How will these activities help us achieve the 10-year outcomes and sub‑outcomes for all Priority Groups at the system and service level

Focus Area: A national approach to early intervention and targeted support for children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage.

**S1(b)** – Systems and services prioritise resourcing, strengthening and supporting families to stay safe together.

Focus Area: Addressing the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems.

See the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outcomes Framework for outcomes specific to Focus Area 2.

Focus Area: Improved information sharing, data development and analysis.

**S3(b)** – Child and family support policies and services are consistently based on reliable evidence, including living experience.

Focus Area: Strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability.

**S4(b)** – The child and family support system has the capacity to respond effectively and adapt to meet future demand.

## How will these activities help us achieve the 10-year outcomes and sub-outcomes for all Priority Groups at the child and family level

See the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outcomes Framework* for outcomes specific to First Nations children and families.

Focus Area: A national approach to early intervention and targeted support for children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage:

**S1(a)** – Children and young people grow up in safe and nurturing homes, supported by strong families and communities.

Focus Area: Addressing the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems.

**S5(a)** – Children, young people, families and communities have their holistic needs fulfilled. As such, fewer families experience social, emotional and economic risk factors for child abuse and neglect.

Focus Area: Improved information sharing, data development and analysis.

**S3(a)** – Children, young people and families, and their experiences, are accurately represented in the evidence about them.

Focus Area: Strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability.

**S4(a)** – Children, young people and families have their needs met by an effective and skilled workforce.

As outlined above the actions and activities will help us to achieve the 10-year outcomes and sub‑outcomes for all Priority Groups at the system and service level, helping us to achieve our shared Vision and Goal (below).

Safe and Supported Vision: Children and young people in Australia reach their full potential by growing up safe and supported, free from harm and neglect.

Safe and Supported Goal: To make significant and sustained progress in reducing the rates of child abuse and neglect, and its intergenerational impacts.