



HUNTER ABORIGINAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES INC.

Policy and Procedure Manual

Revised 2006

Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal

(1) "Aboriginal" has the same meaning as [Aboriginal person](#) has in the [Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983](#). "Aboriginal child or young person" means a child or young person descended from an [Aboriginal](#) and includes a child or young person who is the subject of a determination under subsection (2).

(2) The Children's Court may determine that a child or young person is an [Aboriginal](#) for the purposes of the Act if the Children's Court is satisfied that the child or young person is of [Aboriginal](#) descent

Act, The

Unless otherwise stated, refers to the [Children and Young Persons \(Care & Protection\) Act 1998](#).

Adoption

The legal process in which all parental rights and responsibilities for a child are transferred from the birth parents to the adoptive parents.

Agency

An organisation providing out-of-home care services to Aboriginal children and families. In this manual it refers to the [Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services](#).

Assessment

The process used to assess the individual needs of a child and the family to work out what type of care is needed. This begins with an 'initial assessment', where the needs of children entering out-of-home care are identified to make sure that the child receives the best possible care. After that, assessment is used to see if the child's case plan is still appropriate, or if any changes need to be made.

Authorised carer

The Principal Officer of the agency and any agency foster carer who has been authorised by the Principal Officer as an authorised carer. Authorised carers can exercise *care responsibility*.

Carer (caregiver)

The primary caregiver in the child's life, who provides a nurturing, safe and protective living environment and who promotes trust and security and the positive development of the child's identity, self-esteem and well-being. Even

though a child might have more than one carer (such as when placed with a family with two foster parents), the singular term 'carer' is most often used.

Care responsibility

An authorised carer, subject to instructions in writing from the Principal Officer, can exercise certain functions under s.157 of the Act in relation to a child. This includes giving consent to some medical and dental treatments, correcting and managing the behaviour of the child (subject to the *Regulations*), giving permission to participate in activities (such as school excursions) and making other decisions that are required in the day-to-day care and control of the child.

Care plan

The plan set out by DoCS as part of proceedings in the Children's Court.

Case plan

The case plan is used to help manage the placement of the child and to best meet the child's needs while they are in out-of-home care. This plan is based on the requirements set out in the *care plan* (where the child is the subject of a Children's Court order) and the issues that were identified in the initial assessment. It should include a schedule of visits with the child, the parents, carers and other agency workers involved in the case. The case plan is maintained by the agency.

Case review

A regular process where a child's situation is reviewed to see what progress has been made and to set goals for their ongoing care. Children are encouraged to participate in the case review in a way that is appropriate to their age and developmental stage.

Case conference

A meeting involving the child, where appropriate, and everyone involved in his or her out-of-home care. Case conferences are an important part of the initial assessment and regular case reviews.

Case Worker

The primary worker assigned by the agency to work with the child in out-of-home care.

Case Work Manager

The supervisor of the Caseworkers.

Case record (care record)

The information that is kept about each individual child in out-of-home care. The term 'case record', rather than 'care record', is used in this manual.

Case record system (care record system)

The system used by the agency to keep and maintain records of its contact with those involved with its work, including the individual case files of children in out-of-

home care and carers who offer out-of-home care. The term 'case record system', rather than 'care record system', is used in this manual.

Child or children

Although the Act refers to 'a child or young person' (a child is under 16 years of age and a young person is 16 to 18 years of age), this manual uses the term 'child' or 'children' to refer to any person under 18 years of age entering, or placed in, out-of-home care.

Critical event

A critical event is a serious incident, such as a death, accident, abuse or assault. It is likely to have a significant impact for any child in out-of-home care. Section 6 discusses critical events in detail.

Developmental needs

A child's developmental needs include their personal, social, physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual and psychological well-being. Developmental theory says that children develop in a specific way and that they should accomplish certain tasks by a particular age. It sets out what should happen at certain ages or stages in the child's life, and that all children will pass through certain stages as they develop, such as walking at one, talking at two and so on.

Family

In the context of this manual family can include mothers, fathers, siblings, aunts, uncles and grandparents. It may also include significant other people.

Initial assessment

Occurs when a request for an out-of-home care placement for a child is considered. It involves gathering information to work out the needs of the child and his or her family and or carers, looking at the family situation that has led to the request for a placement, working out the length of the placement and giving a clear reason for the decision to accept the placement.

Out-of-home care

Under the Act and the *NSW Out-of-Home-Care Standards*, 'out-of-home care' is the term used for a child in alternate family or residential care. (Out-of-home care was referred to in the past as substitute care.) Out-of-home care results from an order of the Children's Court and can include emergency care and protection orders and a range of interim and final orders. A child is defined as being in 'out-of-home care' if care and control is provided under a Children's Court order for more than 14 days or if the child is a 'protected person' for more than 14 days.

Parental responsibility

The Act defines 'parental responsibility' in relation to a child as 'all the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which, by law, parents have in relation to their children'. The Children's Court can reallocate parental responsibility, or aspects of it, from both parents to one parent, at the exclusion of the other; or to

both parents and the Minister (for Community Services) or solely to the Minister or another suitable person, such as the Principal Officer of an agency. Once the Children's Court has decided on parental responsibility, that person can carry out the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority for the child who is the subject of the court order.

Permanency planning

The principle that underpins all out-of-home care arrangements for children. It aims to ensure that children are provided with a stable and emotionally secure home that lasts indefinitely, can enjoy strong and committed relationships and are connected to the family by a clear legal arrangement.

Principal Officer

The person in charge of an agency that provides out-of-home care.

Referral

A process to put individuals and families in touch with agencies providing services which they need. As part of a referral, relevant information may be passed between agencies so that services can continue.

Regulation, The

Unless otherwise stated, refers to the *Children and Young Persons (Care & Protection) Regulation 2000*.

Respite Care

A short term arrangement where a child in care with the agency is placed with an alternate Authorised carer for a planned period until being returned to their regular carer.

Restoration

The process of returning or reuniting a child to his/her family and 'restoring' the original family unit.

Supervisory responsibility

The agency that places a child in out-of-home care has 'supervisory responsibility' for the child while they remain in that placement, which includes the authority to make decisions about the safety, welfare and well-being of the child and to give directions to authorised carers. It also includes the responsibility for ensuring regular reviews of placement arrangements occur.

Temporary Care

A short term care arrangement between DoCS and the agency to provide care for a child in the temporary care of DoCS.

Voluntary Care

A short term care arrangement between the agency and the family of a child.