

# Family Preservation in the Permanency Support Program

Many families face a range of social and emotional issues leading to some children and young people (child) experiencing an increased risk of harm in their homes. They may experience racism, discrimination, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, poor housing, a lack of education and other structural factors which make parenting much more difficult.

Traditionally there has been a lack of family preservation services, including culturally competent services to help children remain safely with their families. This has contributed to more children entering out-of-home care (OOHC).

The Permanency Support Program (PSP) is increasing investment in family preservation through the PSP Family Preservation Packages. Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is funding PSP service providers to deliver intensive, wrap-around services, tailored to the specific needs of a family for up to two years, to help keep families together. There are a range of family preservation programs, varying in intensity and approaches used to help create change for families. PSP Family Preservation is one of these programs.

## Objectives of the PSP Family Preservation Program

The primary goal of family preservation programs is to increase the number of children who can remain safely at home with their families, be healthy, thrive and have improved lives over the long-term.

Family preservation packages allow PSP service providers to develop individual service models based on their expertise and the needs of the families they support. This provides greater depth and innovation across the sector. Greater consideration is given to culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse populations.

PSP family preservation has a special emphasis on working in culturally safe ways to reduce the proportion of Aboriginal children in OOHC.

Additional program goals include:

- ensuring Aboriginal, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), refugee and newly arrived migrant families can access culturally safe and responsive services
- parents making significant progress towards addressing risk factors such as alcohol and other drug (AOD) dependence, mental health and wellbeing, and family violence
- parents demonstrating improved parenting skills
- children receiving the right supports and having their health needs addressed, including those relating to trauma and disability
- children and parents reporting improved wellbeing
- children demonstrating improved educational outcomes
- parents utilising improved support networks
- children and parents reporting a feeling of greater empowerment to cope with challenges and ongoing change in their lives
- achieving the permanency goal of family preservation.

For more information see [Foundations of Family Preservation.](#)

## Core Components of Family Preservation Services

Not all family preservation services are the same and PSP Service Providers have the discretion to tailor their service delivery models, however, all family preservation models must include:

- home-based visiting to deliver family and parenting support
- access to caseworkers outside normal business hours

- regular reviews to understand support needs, which are adapted throughout the course of the program
- implementation by staff with appropriate qualifications
- ensuring casework staff have an appropriate caseload proportionate to the intensity of service delivery
- evidence based approaches such as trauma-informed, strength-based, cultural safety, and ecological theory
- due consideration of the literacy and numeracy levels of family members
- effective use of two-year funding timeframes to maximise chances of success for children and families.

The table below shows the essential activities different Family Preservation services must include.

Core Components	Essential Content & Activities
Family and parenting support	<p>Essential content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parenting skills</li> <li>• parent/child interaction</li> <li>• child development, health and safety.</li> </ul> <p>Essential activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build networks for families, including Family Finding and Family Group Conferencing (FGC)</li> <li>• family relationship counselling</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and support change to meet housing, income support and advocacy needs</li> <li>• in-home practical support and brokerage.</li> </ul>
Child or young person focussed support	<p>Essential activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of a child's emotional and psychological needs</li> <li>• psychological services (counselling at a minimum)</li> <li>• educational and learning assistance</li> <li>• identification of and referral to services to address any health needs including those related to dental, allied health, or disability.</li> </ul>
Safety monitoring	<p>Essential activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• service support and assistance to decrease potential risk through case review</li> <li>• regular contact and monitoring visits.</li> </ul>
Risk mitigation	<p>Essential activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of any major risk factors for parenting such as alcohol and other drugs (AOD), mental health, or domestic family violence (DFV)</li> <li>• warm referrals to services to address these risk factors</li> <li>• provision of any support to engage successfully with services, such as assistance with transport or attendance at appointment</li> </ul>

- support to maintain engagement with services.

## Preservation Services Available in NSW

DCJ Community Service Centres (CSC) can now refer families to PSP family preservation providers, in addition to other funded family preservation programs.

Before referring, practitioners must also consider the availability and appropriateness of other DCJ funded family preservation programs, which are listed below.

Service Model	Age Cohort	Goal	Length
Brighter Futures	Birth – 9 years and unborn children	Early intervention and family preservation	18 months (up to 24 months in exceptional circumstances)
Youth Hope	9-15 years	Early intervention and family preservation  Delivered in the following districts: South Western Sydney, Western Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Hunter, Dubbo and Tamworth.	18 months (up to 24 months in exceptional circumstances)

Intensive Family Preservation (IFP)	Birth – 18 years	Family preservation, restoration support or OOHC placement stability.	6 months (up to a maximum 9 months in exceptional circumstances)
Intensive Family Based Service (IFBS)	Birth – 18 years for Aboriginal families only	Family preservation, restoration support or OOHC placement stability.  (Delivered in the following Districts – Hunter & Central Coast (Tuggerah, Broadmeadow), Mid North Coast, Northern NSW & New England (Casino, Grafton, Kempsey and Moree) and Murrumbidgee, Far West & Western NSW (Wagga Wagga))	6 months (up to a maximum 9 months in exceptional circumstances)
Nabu	Birth – 18 years Aboriginal Families only	First nations intensive family preservation and support (Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas)	Up to 18 months (however, flexibility is a core component of the service length so engagement may be reviewed if required)

Resilient Families	Under 6 years including unborn	Family preservation (Delivered in the following districts: South Western Sydney and Sydney, South Eastern and Northern Sydney Districts excluding Nth Sydney/Chatswood)	Up to 12 months
Multi-Systemic Therapy- Child Abuse & Neglect (MST-CAN)	6-17 years	Family preservation and restoration  (Delivered in; Campbelltown, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Edgeworth, Tamworth, and Wyong)	6-9 months
Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare (FFT-CW)	Birth – 17 years	Family preservation and restoration  (Blacktown, Campbelltown, Central Sydney, Edgeworth, Fairfield, Goulburn/Queanbeyan, Nowra, Penrith, Shellharbour, St Marys, and Wagga Wagga)	Average of 9 months (low track stream) or 6 months (high track stream)

## For more information

For more information on the requirements of PSP family preservation see [Framework for Family Preservation](#) and [Roles and Responsibilities in Family Preservation](#).