

Genograms

Families are diverse, complex, intertwined social systems that interact with each other along with other people, groups, kin and communities. A child and young person (child) family is critical to a child and their identity. Genograms are visual diagrams of family trees. They provide a pictorial display of a child or young person's links and connections to relatives over generations.

A genogram includes information about a child's wider family and not just the nuclear family. A genogram provides family members' names and their connections with one another (i.e. aunt, sibling, cousin). Other vital information can also be documented in a genogram including relationships and behaviours, cultural heritage and medical history. Geneograms are important for all children, especially children who do not live with their parents. Genograms are also extremely significant for children from collective cultures because extended family and kin often play an active, frequent and important role in caregiving.

The Importance of Genograms For Children Involved in Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care

Genograms are important for children who are in out-of-home care (OOHC) whether their care arrangements are with family, kin or non-relative carers.

They are also important for children who you are working with to return home or to keep safely with their family.







Genograms assist children to understand their social world and how they fit within that world. They can help them understand their own and their family's history, context, culture and present situation. They can also help visualise the support people who can play an important role in helping to keep a child safe and connected to family and culture.

Genograms can also support children to see and understand:

- the connections and relationships between family members including marriage, separations, bonds and conflicts
- family talents, strengths and cultural information
- medical history and risks
- intergenerational patterns of behaviour and child protection concerns

- death and suicide.

Genograms can help carers, caseworkers and other professionals within the child's care team understand the family history to better deliver services, undertake Family Finding, support relationship building and strengthen connections. A genogram is a living document. It needs to reflect change over time as families grow and change. It is essential genograms are updated regularly, annually at a minimum, or when a change occurs.

	Female
	Male
?	Unknown gender
	Pregnancy
	Biological relationship
⋮	Foster child
⋮	Adopted child
	Deceased male
	Deceased female
	Hostile relationship
	Abuse

A genogram is an important and useful tool in gathering information, understanding relationship dynamics and behavioural patterns, exploring identity and cultural connections, promoting understanding of a child's story, conducting assessments and guiding the caseworker or practitioner to helpful interventions.

Examples of Some Genogram Symbols

There are generic genogram symbols that represent:

- A person's name, date of birth, date of death, gender and ethnicity as well as whether the relation to the child is a biological, fostered or adoptive.
- pregnancy, miscarriage
- medical, genetic disease or addiction information
- relationship of marriage, defacto, separation, divorce
- Emotional relationship of general/healthy, distant, fractured, harmonious, conflict, different levels of hostility and different types of abuse

There are many online genogram programs available to support Permanency Support Program (PSP) Service Provider casework staff to develop and update genograms for children. It is a caseworker's

responsibility to ensure a genogram is developed and regularly updated for all children they are working with.

Some genogram programs include:

<https://www.mediafreeware.com/free-genogram-maker.html>

<https://www.genopro.com/>

<https://www.edrawsoft.com/genogram-software.html>

<https://online.visual-paradigm.com/diagrams/features/genogram-software/>

Genogram examples:

