

## What is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle?

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (ACPP) is documented in the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007*, which legally requires NT Families and Children (NTFC) to place Aboriginal children in the care of Aboriginal people wherever possible. Equally as important, it upholds the rights of the child's family and community to have some control and influence in decisions being made about their children.

The ACPP prioritises the placement options that should be explored when an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child is placed in care. They are in order of priority as follows:

- with a member of the child or young person's family
- with a member of the child or young person's community or language group
- with an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person that does not have a familial or kinship relationship to the child.

If a child cannot be placed with any of the above people, alternate placement choices can be made. Other options then include placing the child with:

- a carer who is not Aboriginal but is considered by the CEO to be capable of promoting the child's ongoing affiliation with the culture of the child's community (and, if possible, ongoing contact with the child's family).

Wherever possible, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children should be placed with carers who live in close proximity to the child's family and / or community.

The ACPP also requires NTFC to consult with representatives from the child's family, kinship group or appropriate Aboriginal organisations in order to make the most informed placement decisions that are in the best interests of the child. This values and supports the importance of Aboriginal people being involved in and making decisions directly related to the care and protection of Aboriginal children.

## Why was the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle developed?

The devastating impact of the past assimilation policies on Aboriginal children and their families and communities has been well documented. In later years, measures to prevent further harm to Aboriginal children and communities have been put into place through a number of forums including changes to child protection legislation and practice. One of the most significant changes for Aboriginal people has been the implementation of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (ACPP).



The ACPP protects the rights of Aboriginal children to live with their families and in their communities. It upholds their right to identify as Aboriginal and to maintain their connections with their culture. It also affirms the rights of family and community to have some control and influence in decisions being made by child protection authorities over Aboriginal children.

### **The Purpose of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle**

The Purpose of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is to enhance and preserve Aboriginal children's sense of identity as Aboriginal, by ensuring that Aboriginal children and young people are maintained within their own biological family, extended family, local Aboriginal community, wider Aboriginal community and their Aboriginal culture.

The objectives of the Principle are to ensure that, recognition is given to an Aboriginal child's right to be raised in their own culture and to the importance and value of family, extended family, kinship networks, culture and community in raising,— '*growing up*'—Aboriginal children<sup>1</sup>.

### **Caring For Aboriginal Children**

Further information about caring for Aboriginal children in care can be found on the Fact Sheet 'Caring For Aboriginal Children'.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Aboriginal Child Placement Principle Guide  
Community Care Division, Victorian Government Department of Human Services  
Melbourne Victoria, August 2002