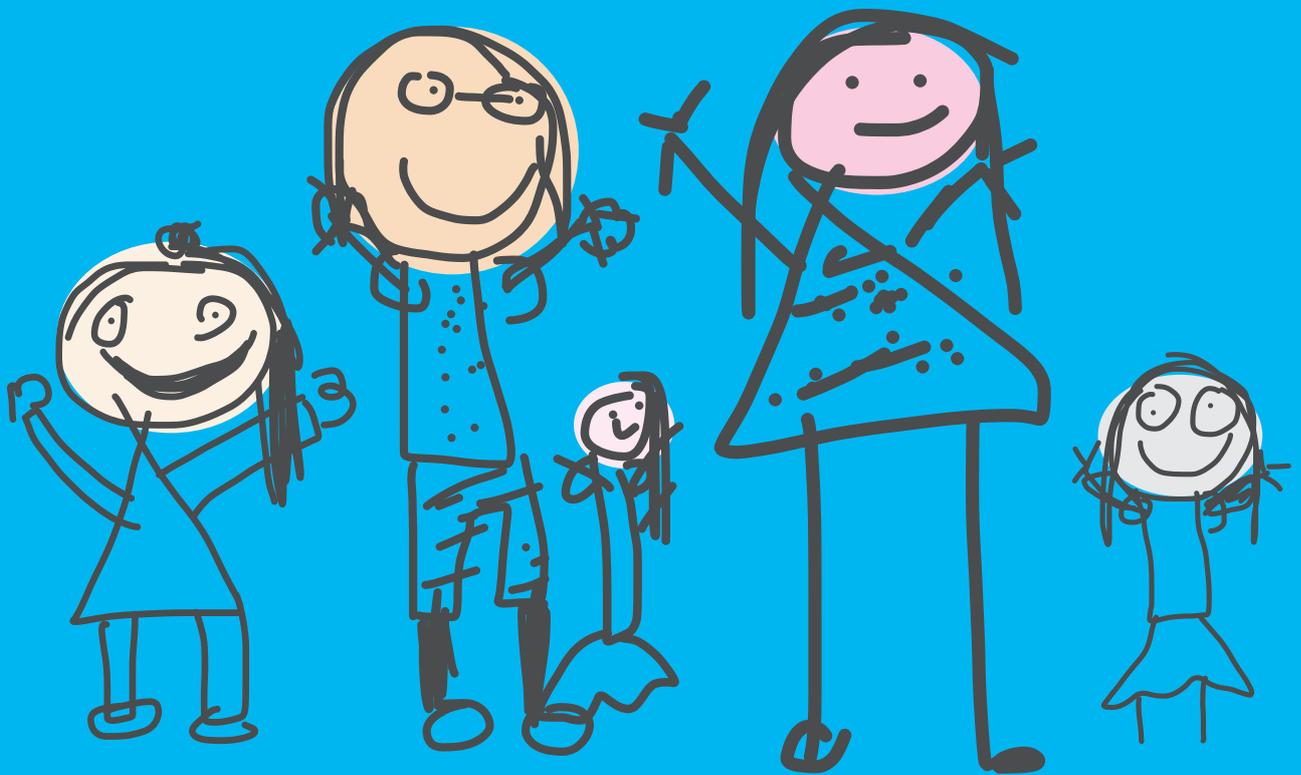


2013-14 Annual Report

# Protecting Children is Everyone's Business

National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020



ISBN: 978-1-925007-82-4

ISSN: 2205-9032

### Copyright notice

Creative Commons BY graphic



This document 2013-14 Annual Report of The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence

**Licence URL:** <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

**Please attribute:** © Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services) 2015

### Notice:

1. If you create a derivative of this document, the Department of Social Services requests the following notice be placed on your derivative:  
Based on Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services) data.
2. Inquiries regarding this licence or any other use of this document are welcome. Please contact: Branch Manager, Communication and Media Branch, Department of Social Services. Phone: 1300 653 227. Email: [communications@dss.gov.au](mailto:communications@dss.gov.au)

# Foreword

This is the fifth annual report for the **National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020** (the National Framework). The report outlines the continued progress towards the National Framework's high-level outcome that Australia's children and young people are safe and well.

The report highlights the strong and ongoing commitment of the Australian, state and territory governments and the non-government sector – through the **Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children** (the NGO Coalition) – to work together to protect children and families at risk. This unique tripartite collaboration reflects the National Framework's key message that '**Protecting children is everyone's business**' and has been a critical element of the success achieved under the National Framework.

At the final meeting of the **Standing Council on Community and Disability Services Advisory Council** on 27 June 2014, it was agreed to develop a streamlined and more cost effective approach to annual reporting for the National Framework, as well as an interactive online tool that would allow data to be published during the year as they become available. This annual report reflects the streamlined approach for the first time.

The report also describes some of the achievements and contributions made by all jurisdictions, to meet the objectives of the National Priorities set out in the National Framework's *Second Three-Year Action Plan 2012–2015*.

Contributions to this report have been provided by the Australian and state and territory governments, the NGO Coalition and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.



# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>'Protecting children is everyone's business'</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Governance</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What is the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020?</b>	<b>6</b>
The high-level outcome	6
The six supporting outcomes	6
A system for protecting children and young people	8
Three-Year Action Plans	8
Measuring achievements	9
National Framework's suite of web products	9
<b>Part 1. Tracking our progress against the National Framework</b>	<b>11</b>
High-level Outcome: Are Australian children and young people safe and well?	13
<b>Part 2. National performance in 2013–14</b>	<b>17</b>
Supporting Outcome 1. Do our children live in safe and supportive families and communities?	21
Supporting Outcome 2. Do children and families access adequate support, promoting safety and early intervention?	27
Supporting Outcome 3. Are the risk factors for child abuse and neglect being addressed?	32
Supporting Outcome 4. Are children who have been abused or neglected receiving the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing?	39
Supporting Outcome 5. Are our Indigenous children supported and safe in their families and communities?	45
Supporting Outcome 6. Is child sexual abuse and exploitation being prevented and are survivors receiving adequate support?	48
<b>Appendix A. National Framework For Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 data tables</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Appendix B. National Standards for out-of-home care data tables</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Appendix C. References</b>	<b>81</b>

# List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1. An overview of reporting progress under the National Framework	7
Figure 2. A system for protecting children and young people	8
Table 1. Supporting outcomes, performance indicator domains and national priorities	20

# 'Protecting children is everyone's business'

In 2009, the **Council of Australian Governments** (COAG) endorsed the National Framework. From this time, all Australian governments and the non-government sector – through the **Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children** (the NGO Coalition) – began working together to ensure that Australia's children and young people are safe and well.

The NGO Coalition is a consortium of around 156 major non-government community service organisations and prominent researchers from across Australia. For more information go to [www.familiesaustralia.org.au](http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au)

This unprecedented level of collaboration between all Australian governments and the NGO Coalition is the only way we will see 'a substantial and sustained reduction in child abuse and neglect in Australia over time'.<sup>1</sup>

## Governance

Under the 2009 COAG arrangement, the **Standing Council on Community and Disability Services** (the Standing Council) was required to report annually on progress under the National Framework. In December 2013, COAG's system was streamlined and the Standing Council and its advisory committee were abolished.

In its place, the **Children and Families Secretaries Group** (CAFS) was established. CAFS provides broad oversight of identified national priorities under the National Framework, and provides jurisdictions with a platform to collaborate on innovative policy approaches to child and family issues.

The **National Forum for Protecting Australia's Children** (the National Forum) is the tripartite committee involving senior Australian, state and territory government officials, together with executive members of the NGO Coalition and the National Children's Commissioner. The National Forum focuses on the practical aspects relating to the implementation and delivery of the National Framework.

<sup>1</sup> It is acknowledged that measuring a reduction in child abuse and neglect is difficult, as Australia currently does not have robust data on incidence/prevalence. Even if such data existed, it may not be sensitive to change over a short period.

# What is the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020?

## The high-level outcome

The National Framework is a long-term, ambitious approach to promote and enhance the safety and wellbeing of Australia's children and young people. Achievements are tracked against the high-level outcome, that **Australia's children and young people are safe and well**, and against the six supporting outcomes.

## The six supporting outcomes

1. Children live in safe and supportive families and communities.
2. Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early.
3. Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed.
4. Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing.
5. Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities.
6. Child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support.

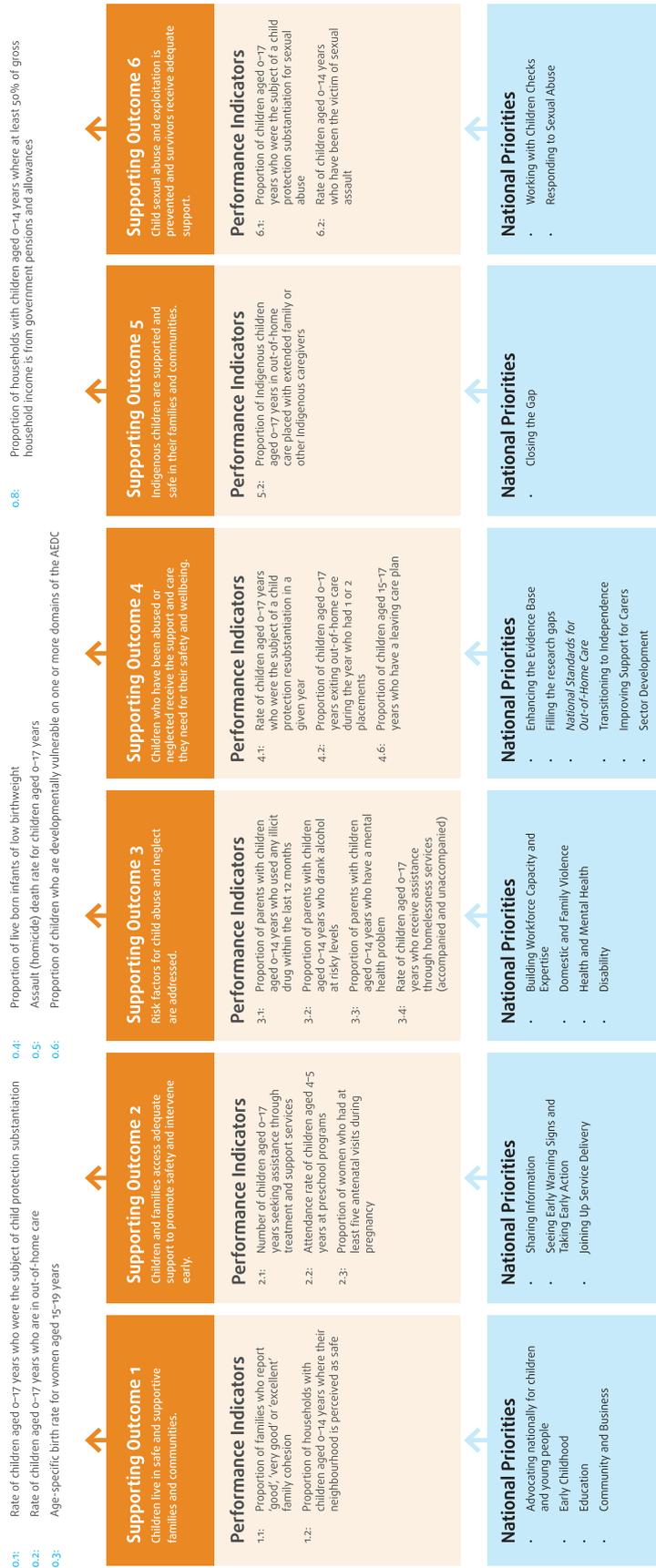
The supporting outcomes, and associated national priorities, help focus effort and actions under the National Framework in order to reach the high-level outcome.

Figure 1: An overview of reporting progress under the National Framework

## National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020

### High-Level Outcome: Australia's children and young people are safe and well

#### High-Level Outcome: Performance Indicators



Note: Based on the reportable performance indicators in 2013–14.<sup>2</sup>

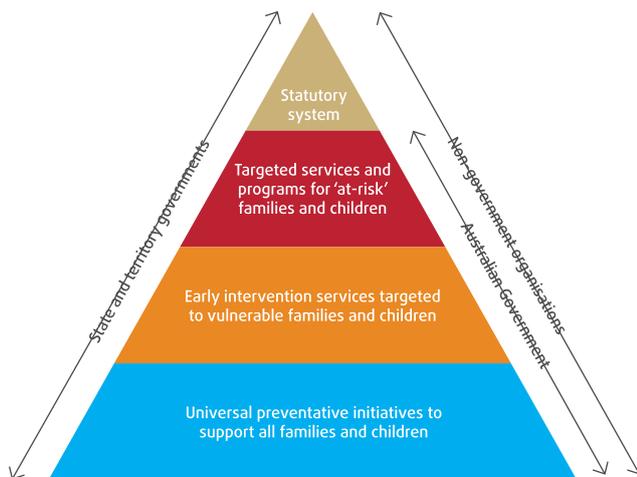
<sup>2</sup> The following performance indicators were not reportable in 2013–14:

- 0.7 Proportion of children aged 8–17 years scoring 'of concern' on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.
- 3.5: Proportion of adults who experienced current partner violence and their children saw or heard the violence in the previous 12 months.
- 4.3: Proportion of out-of-home carer households that were retained in a given year.
- 4.4: Proportion of children aged 15–17 years leaving care and scoring 'of concern' on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.
- 4.5: Proportion of children on guardianship and custody orders achieving at or above the national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy.
- 4.7: Proportion of child protection clients aged 0–17 years who enter juvenile corrective services or seek assistance from homelessness services.
- 5.1: Indicator to be developed (Indigenous Child Placement Principle compliance indicator).
- 5.3: Proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–17 years placed through Indigenous-specific out-of-home care agencies.
- 5.4: Proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–17 years in care who have a cultural support plan.

## A system for protecting children and young people

The National Framework acknowledges that keeping children safe and well is not simple. In order to not only ensure children are protected from abuse and neglect but also ensure that their safety and wellbeing are promoted, the National Framework applies a public health model to guide the development of joined-up services that work most effectively to support children, young people and families.

Figure 2: **A system for protecting children and young people**



Under this model, priority is placed on having universal supports such as health and education available for all families. More intensive secondary prevention interventions are provided to those families that need additional assistance with a focus on early intervention. Tertiary child protection services are a last resort, and the least desirable option for families and governments.

## Three-Year Action Plans

The National Framework is planned and coordinated through a series of three-year action plans.

The *First Three-Year Action Plan 2009–2012* (the First Action Plan) focused on jurisdictional inconsistencies in the statutory child protection system, as well as programmes and services targeting 'at risk' families and children.

The *Second Three-Year Action Plan 2012–2015* (the Second Action Plan) builds on the foundation of the First Action Plan, and embeds the success of our ongoing commitment to ensure Australia's children are safe and well.

The *Third Three-Year Action Plan 2015–2018* (the Third Action Plan) will be launched by the end of 2015 to guide activities over the next three years.

## Measuring achievements

Progress on the National Framework is measured through the use of performance indicators, some reportable and some still being developed.

**Part One** of this document reports progress against the National Framework's high-level outcome – there are eight performance indicators identified against the high-level outcome – seven of those were reportable in 2013–14.

**Part Two** of this document reports progress against the National Framework's six supporting outcomes— there are 23 performance indicators identified against the six supporting outcomes – 15 of those were reportable in 2013–14. Part Two also provides an overview of the key activities undertaken in 2013–14 across all jurisdictions to drive change towards the National Framework's outcomes.

**Appendix A** provides a list of the data tables that support the interpreted data provided throughout Part One and Part Two of this report.

**Appendix B** provides a list of the available data tables for the 13 agreed *National Standards for out-of-home care* (the National Standards). For more information on the National Standards, refer to Part Two of this report under **supporting outcome 4**.

**Appendix C** provides a list of references used throughout the document.

The data reflected in this report comes from different sources and is collected at different intervals over different time frames. Given the complexity of collecting rigorous and wide-ranging data on Australia's children, there are often time delays in consolidating the information and providing overviews of recent trends. The information presented in this report reflects the most current data available at the time the report was developed, in April 2015. Any data updated since the publication of this report are reflected in the National Framework's suite of web products.

## National Framework's suite of web products

As highlighted in the Foreword, on 27 June 2014 the former **Standing Council on Community and Disability Services Advisory Council**, now the **Children and Families Secretaries Group**, agreed to the proposed streamlined approach for future annual reporting under the National Framework. As part of this agreement, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has developed a suite of interactive web products that will allow detailed indicator reporting and data to be published in a more timely manner. The National Framework's web products can be accessed at [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au).



## Part 1

# Tracking our progress against the National Framework



## High-level Outcome: Are Australian children and young people safe and well?

This section reports progress against the National Framework's high-level outcome – there are eight performance indicators identified against the high-level outcome – seven of those were reportable in 2013–14.<sup>3</sup> Please refer to **Figure 1**: for an overview of reporting progress under the National Framework, including a full list of the performance indicators that were reportable in 2013–14.

### Child protection substantiation

Child abuse and neglect can negatively affect a child's development, including physical, psychological, cognitive, behavioural and social aspects. The negative effects of child abuse and neglect can be long lasting: young people and adults who were abused or neglected during childhood commonly experience mental health problems, and there is a strong association between sexual abuse and substance abuse (Lamont 2010).

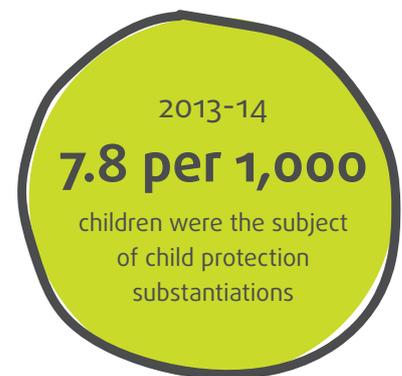
#### Indicator 0.1

##### Rate of children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of child protection substantiation

The rate of children who were the subject of substantiations remained steady in 2009–10 and 2010–11 (6.2 per 1,000 children). The rate then steadily increased: to 7.4 per 1,000 children in 2011–12; and 7.8 per 1,000 children in 2012–13 and 2013–14.

In 2013–14, children aged under 12 months were most likely to be the subject of a substantiation (14.7 per 1,000 children), and children aged 15–17 years were least likely (3.5 per 1,000 children). This reflects a similar pattern from recent years (AIHW 2015).

Indigenous children accounted for just over one-quarter (28 per cent) of children subject to substantiations in 2013–14 and are almost seven times as likely to be the subject of substantiations than non-Indigenous children (38.8 per 1,000 children, compared to 5.7 per 1,000 children). The rate for Indigenous children has been consistently higher than the rate for non-Indigenous children since 2010.



Although a real change in the incidence of abuse and neglect may contribute to the observed increase, enhanced public awareness and changes to policy, practice and legislation in jurisdictions are also thought to be contributing factors.

3. Performance indicator 0.7 Proportion of children aged 8–17 years scoring 'of concern' on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was **not reportable** in 2013–14.

## Out-of-home care

Out-of-home care is provided across Australia for children and young people who are unable to live with their families, generally because of child abuse or neglect or because their family is unable to care for them (Bromfield and Osborn 2007; Bromfield, Higgins, Higgins and Richardson 2007).



There are different kinds of out-of-home care, including foster care, residential care and relative/kinship care.

### Indicator 0.2

#### Rate of children aged 0–17 years who are in out-of-home care

At 30 June 2014, there were 43,009 children in out-of-home care – a rate of 8.1 per 1,000 children. Between 2010 and 2014, the rate of children in out-of-home care has increased from 7.1 to 8.1 per 1,000 children.

At 30 June 2014, Indigenous children were 9 times as likely as non-Indigenous children to be in out-of-home care (a rate of 51.4 compared to 5.6 per 1,000 children respectively). The rate for Indigenous children has been consistently higher than the rate for non-Indigenous children since 2010.

## Teenage births

Teenage motherhood can be associated with poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for both the mother and her children (AIHW 2012a).



Teenage mothers are more likely to be socioeconomically disadvantaged and to have lower levels of education, and are less likely to attend antenatal classes, than older mothers (AIHW 2012a).

### Indicator 0.3

#### Age-specific birth rate for women aged 15–19 years

In 2011, there were around 10,900 infants born to teenage mothers in Australia – a rate of 15.4 live births per 1,000 females aged 15–19 years. Teenage mothers represented 4 per cent of all women who gave birth in Australia (Li, Zeki, Hilder & Sullivan 2013).

## Low birth weight

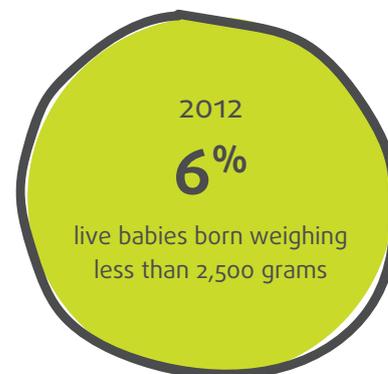
Infants born with a low birth weight have an increased risk of health, learning and behavioural problems.

### Indicator 0.4

#### Proportion of live born infants of low birth weight

In 2012, 6 per cent of live born babies had a low birth weight (<2,500 grams), including 1 per cent with very low birth weight (<1,500 grams). The proportion of low birth weight babies has remained steady over 2009–2012.

In 2012, the proportion of low birth weight babies among Indigenous mothers was 12 per cent, twice that of babies of non-Indigenous mothers (6 per cent) and all mothers (6 per cent) (Hilder, Zhichao, Parker, Jahan, Chambers 2014).



Factors that may contribute to low birth weight include:

- maternal experiences of illness, trauma or injury during pregnancy
- inadequate prenatal care
- maternal alcohol and drug use (including tobacco)
- poor maternal nutrition, physical and mental health.

## Child homicide

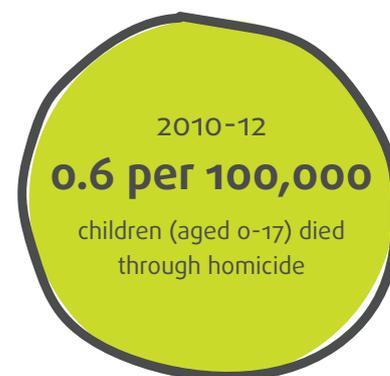
Although deaths from assault are relatively rare among children, fatal outcomes from intentionally inflicted injuries or homicide provide an indication of the nature and extent of extreme interpersonal violence towards this age group (AIHW 2008).

### Indicator 0.5

#### Assault (homicide) death rate for children aged 0–17 years

Over the two-year period from 2010–11 to 2011–12, there were 62 deaths due to homicide among children aged 0–17 years, a rate of 0.6 per 100,000 children. Homicides among this age group represented 12 per cent of all homicides in that period. The full report can be accessed at [www.aic.gov.au](http://www.aic.gov.au).

Rates of homicide were similar among boys and girls (0.7 and 0.5 per 100,000 children, or 37 and 25 deaths respectively). Among 0–17 year olds, the rate of homicide was highest among infants under 1 year (2.2 per 100,000 infants or 13 deaths).

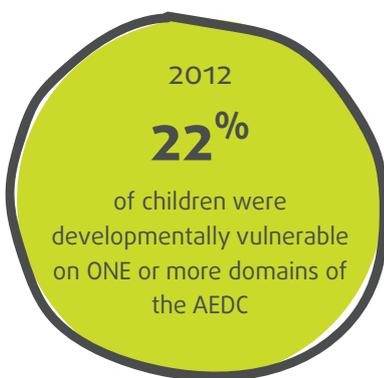


## Early childhood development

There is clear evidence that a child's early development has a profound impact on future health, development, learning and wellbeing (DEEWR 2013). For this reason, the proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable is a useful indicator of the number of children in need of intervention to meet developmental milestones.

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a population measure of children's development, based on the scores from a teacher-completed checklist in their first year of formal schooling (the preparatory year prior to Year 1). [www.aedc.gov.au](http://www.aedc.gov.au)

On 1 July 2014, the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) programme became known as the AEDC.



### Indicator o.6

#### Proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDC

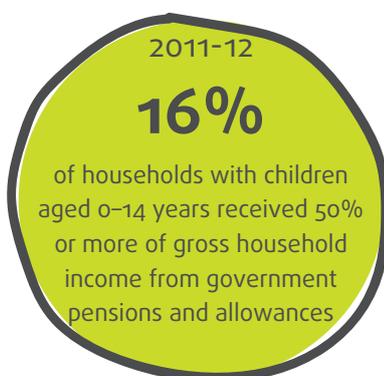
The majority of Australian children are doing well, with around three-quarters of children on track across all domains of the AEDC in 2012.

However, 22 per cent of children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains, and 11 per cent were vulnerable on two or more domains, accounting for around 59,900 and 29,500 children, respectively. Similar results were found in 2009 (24 and 12 per cent respectively). These children are considered to be at particularly high risk developmentally.

In 2012, Indigenous children were more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous children to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (43 per cent compared with 21 per cent), and two or more domains (26 per cent compared with 10 per cent).

## Family economic situation

Reliance on income support is often associated with long-term poverty and social exclusion (Tseng & Wilkins 2002).



### Indicator o.8

#### Proportion of households with children aged 0-14 years where at least 50 per cent of gross household income is from government pensions and allowances

In 2011-12, 16 per cent of households with dependent children aged 0-14 years (an estimated 302,000 households) received at least 50 per cent of their gross household income from government pensions and allowances.

Reliance on income support was more common among one-parent families, with government pensions and allowances contributing at least half the household income for 49 per cent of one-parent families, compared to 8 per cent of couple families. Similar patterns were found in 2009-10.

## Part 2

# National performance in 2013–14



## Tracking our progress against the National Framework's supporting outcomes

This section reports progress against the National Framework's six supporting outcomes and provides an overview of the key activities undertaken in 2013–14 to drive change towards the National Framework's outcomes.

There are 23 performance indicators identified against the six supporting outcomes – 15 of those were reportable in 2013–14.<sup>4</sup> Please refer to [Figure 1](#) for an overview reporting of progress under the National Framework, including a full list of the performance indicators that were reportable in 2013–14.

The National Framework's Second Action Plan identified national priorities to help progress towards the National Framework's outcomes. In 2013–14, a number of key activities have been implemented across all jurisdictions to help focus efforts against the National Framework's identified national priorities. This part of the report provides some examples of these key activities.

4 The following performance indicators were **not reportable** in 2013–14:

- 3.5: Proportion of adults who experienced current partner violence and their children saw or heard the violence in the previous 12 months.
- 4.3: Proportion of out-of-home carer households that were retained in a given year.
- 4.4: Proportion of children aged 15–17 years leaving care and scoring 'of concern' on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.
- 4.5: Proportion of children on guardianship and custody orders achieving at or above the national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy.
- 4.7: Proportion of child protection clients aged 0–17 years who enter juvenile corrective services or seek assistance from homelessness services.
- 5.1: Indicator to be developed (Indigenous Child Placement Principle compliance indicator).
- 5.3: Proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–17 years placed through Indigenous-specific out-of-home care agencies.
- 5.4: Proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–17 years in care who have a cultural support plan.

**Table 1** shows the identified national priorities mapped against the National Framework’s supporting outcomes and the performance indicator domains.

Table 1: **Supporting outcome Performance indicator domains National priorities**

<b>Supporting outcome</b>	<b>Performance indicator domains</b>	<b>National priorities</b>
1. Children live in safe and supportive families and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family functioning</li> <li>• Perceived safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocating nationally for children and young people</li> <li>• Early childhood</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Community and business</li> </ul>
2. Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family support service use</li> <li>• Early childhood education</li> <li>• Antenatal care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing information</li> <li>• Seeing early warning signs and taking early action</li> <li>• Joining up service delivery</li> </ul>
3. Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental substance use</li> <li>• Parental mental health</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Domestic violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building workforce capacity and expertise</li> <li>• Domestic and family violence</li> <li>• Health and mental health</li> <li>• Disability</li> </ul>
4. Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child protection resubstantiations</li> <li>• Placement stability</li> <li>• Carer retention</li> <li>• Rebuilding resilience of abuse survivors</li> <li>• Literacy and numeracy</li> <li>• Leaving care plans</li> <li>• Cross-sector clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the evidence base</li> <li>• Filling the research gaps</li> <li>• National Standards for out-of-home care</li> <li>• Transitioning to independence</li> <li>• Improving support for carers</li> <li>• Sector development</li> </ul>
5. Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement of Indigenous children</li> <li>• Cultural support plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing the Gap</li> </ul>
6. Child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual abuse substantiations</li> <li>• Child sexual assault</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with children checks</li> <li>• Responding to sexual abuse</li> </ul>

## Supporting Outcome 1

# Do our children live in safe and supportive families and communities?

The domains that demonstrate performance against Supporting Outcome 1 are family functioning and perceived safety.

## Family functioning

Family functioning (family cohesion) relates to a family's ability to interact, communicate, make decisions, solve problems and maintain relationships with each other (Geggie, DeFrain and Hitchcock 2000; Shek 2002).

There are currently no national data available on a single overarching measure of family functioning. However, national data are available on a specific component of family functioning – family cohesion – which captures the ability of the family to get along with one another.

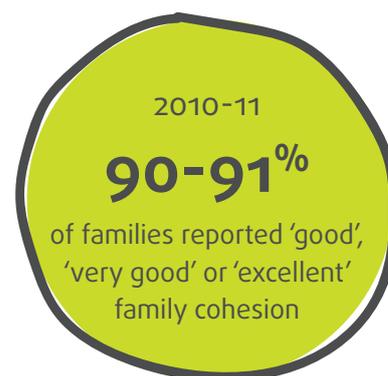
### Indicator 1.1

#### Proportion of families who report 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent' family cohesion

*Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children* (AIFS 2015) measured family cohesion among families of two cohorts of children, one aged 6–7 years (birth cohort) and the other aged 10–11 (kinder cohort), in 2010–11 (Wave 4).

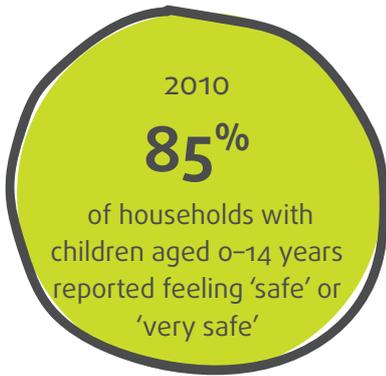
In 2010–11, family cohesion was reported to be 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent' in the vast majority of families of both cohorts of children – 91 per cent for the birth cohort and 90 per cent for the kinder cohort families.

The remainder of families reported 'fair' or 'poor' family cohesion. A higher proportion of couple families reported high levels of family cohesion. Among couple families, 93 per cent of the birth cohort and 91 per cent of the kinder cohort families reported 'good' to 'excellent' family cohesion, compared with 83 and 81 per cent of one parent families respectively.



## Perceived safety

Parental perception of community safety affects children’s activities and can have a significant impact on children’s health, development and wellbeing (AIHW 2012a; Zubrick, Wood, Villanueva, Wood, Giles-Cort, and Christian 2010).



### Indicator 1.2

#### Proportion of households with children aged 0–14 years where their neighbourhood is perceived as safe

In 2010, among adult survey respondents of the 2010 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) General Social Survey, (aged 18 and over) who lived in households with children aged 0–14 years, the majority (85 per cent) reported feeling 'safe' or 'very safe' at home alone during both the day and at night. Respondents were more likely to feel safe or very safe at home during the day (94 per cent) than at night (86 per cent). About three-fifths of respondents (60 per cent) reported feeling safe or very safe walking alone in their local area at night.

## National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 1

### What is being done to ensure our children live in safe and supportive families and communities?

The National Framework recognises that Australian children and young people have the right to live in safe and supportive families and communities. To help achieve this outcome, the National Framework has identified strategies to improve family functioning and increase the number of children who feel safe and supported in their communities. These strategies focus on strengthening the capacity of families to support children; educating and engaging community about child abuse and neglect; and implementing effective mechanisms to involve children and young people in decisions affecting their lives.

To help progress against the performance indicators and towards our high level outcome, the Second Action Plan outlined four National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 1:

- **Advocating nationally for children and young people** – focusing on initiatives to improve awareness of children’s rights amongst the broader community
- **Early childhood** – exploring opportunities to provide quality early childhood experiences for vulnerable and at-risk children
- **Education** – focusing on improving educational outcomes for children and young people in care
- **Community and business** – encouraging greater community and business engagement in the protection and wellbeing of children.

### Key activities under National Priorities in 2013–14

A number of projects and initiatives have been implemented against the National Priorities across all jurisdictions in 2013–14. Some examples of different activities are outlined below.

#### Advocating nationally for children and young people

**National Children’s Commissioner’s *Children’s Rights Report 2013:***

On 11 December 2013, this report was tabled in the Australian Parliament for the first time. It provides an account of children’s rights in Australia, including the key findings of the National Children’s Commissioner’s national listening tour, the Big Banter. A key issue raised throughout the Big Banter is the importance of having access to family support and preventative services to break the cycle of disadvantage and divert children away from costly tertiary services. [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)



**Ms Megan Mitchell**  
National Children’s Commissioner

**Western Australia’s online Viewpoint questionnaire:** This gives children in care another opportunity to provide feedback on their views, wishes and experiences. Children are encouraged to use Viewpoint as the first step in participating in their care planning. In 2013–14, Viewpoint was reviewed to align with the *National Standards for out-of-home care*, with a focus on being more inclusive and engaging of Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse children in care.

**Northern Territory’s major amendments to legislation affecting children:** These aim to improve the legal representation of children in court; enhance the role of the Children’s Commissioner; strengthen the powers of Department of Children and Families, and NT Police officers, to respond to concerns in relation to children in care; and introduce a Charter of Rights for children in care.

## Early childhood

**South Australia’s expanded Family by Family Program:** Facilitated by the Australian Centre for Social Innovation, this peer-to-peer programme draws on the experience and strengths within communities. It provides training to ‘sharing families’ who are then matched and provide support to ‘seeking families’, that is, families who seek to make changes in their lives. The programme has been expanded into the northern and outer southern suburbs of Adelaide. [www.familybyfamily.org.au](http://www.familybyfamily.org.au)

**Australian Capital Territory’s Parents as Teachers Program:** This is a key initiative in prevention and early intervention responses for vulnerable children and their families. It is a sustained home visiting and group programme that gives parents the knowledge and skills to handle complex parenting situations and allows for targeted interventions based on areas of concern. In the 2013–14 Budget, the ACT Government provided funding for an additional three Child and Family Workers to expand the programme. [www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)

**Tasmania’s Launching into Learning Program:** Tasmania progressed the Launching into Learning Program, which is designed to enable early childhood educators to form partnerships with families before children begin Kindergarten. Launching into Learning was delivered in all government primary schools across Tasmania, and has resulted in a range of improved early childhood outcomes. The *Launching into Learning Longitudinal Study* has shown that regular participation in the programme significantly improves children’s educational outcomes for reading and numeracy. [www.education.tas.gov.au](http://www.education.tas.gov.au)

**Queensland’s Kindergarten Program:** Between 2010 and 2014, this programme increased participation by Indigenous children from 35 per cent to 77.9 per cent and other disadvantaged children from 38 per cent to 85.5 per cent. In 2013, 77.9 per cent of Indigenous children and 85.5 per cent of disadvantaged children were enrolled in early childhood education (Kindergarten) programs. Overall participation rates rose from 29 per cent in 2008 to 97.4 per cent in 2013, as sourced from [www.deta.qld.gov.au](http://www.deta.qld.gov.au)

**Victoria’s Early Childhood Agreement for Children in out-of-home Care:** This was signed in March 2014 by Early Learning Association Victoria, Municipal Association Victoria, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The agreement assigns responsibilities to local government, early childhood education services and case managers to ensure children in out-of-home care are referred to, engaged and participate in early childhood services. [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

## Education

**Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (the national data collection):** This is a joint initiative of the Australian and state and territory governments and non-government education authorities. National data is collected annually to identify the number of school students with disability and the level of reasonable educational adjustment provided for them to enable targeted and consistent support. The national data collection will be progressively implemented over the period 2013–2015. From 2015, all government and non-government schools will participate annually in the national data collection. [www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au)

**Northern Territory's *A Share in the Future – Review of Indigenous Education*:** The review was completed, highlighting 51 recommendations that cover all stages of education from early childhood to secondary education, emphasising student attendance, quality numeracy and literacy approaches and clear pathways to higher education, training and employment. The recommendations have informed the development of a 10-year strategy, to drive policy and programmes that are proven to make a difference for Indigenous students.

**Australian Capital Territory's *Everyone, Everyday* teaching resource:** This focuses on the inclusion of children who have a disability and was implemented in nine mainstream primary schools during 2013–14. It promotes the important role each individual has in taking action to create inclusive, safe and supportive communities. It consists of 35 lessons and additional resources and has been commended by the peak body, Children with Disability Australia. *Everyone, Everyday* will be rolled out in additional schools, including four high schools and colleges, later in 2014. [www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)

**New South Wales' Learning and Support Framework Project under *The National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities*:** Progress included the reform initiative, Every Student, Every School, aimed at improving learning, support and educational experiences for more than 90,000 students with disability in more than 2,200 New South Wales Government schools. [www.dec.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au)

## Community and business

**Child Aware Approaches:** This national grassroots initiative engages the community to develop local approaches, actions and initiatives to keep children safe and well, recognising that protecting children is a shared responsibility. In 2013–14 the Australian Centre for Child Protection and Families Australia jointly led a launch of two new operational Child Aware Local Initiative sites: the YWCA NSW Child Aware Local Initiative site in Lismore, New South Wales; and the Smith Family Child Aware Local Initiative site in Townsville, Queensland. Families Australia hosted the Child Aware Approaches Conference from 31 March to 1 April 2014, bringing together practitioners, providers, researchers and policy advisers to share innovation and evidence to promote and enhance the wellbeing and safety of children in Australia. In addition to this, the Australian Institute of Family Studies produced *The Good Practice Guide to Child Aware Approaches: Keeping children safe and well*. [www.aifs.gov.au](http://www.aifs.gov.au)

**The Child Aware Local Initiative:** This is a capacity building initiative that supports communities to undertake early intervention and prevention activities and contribute to keeping children safe and well. Communities will be supported to bring together existing resources and networks within the local area, which may include organisations and business. The joint lead organisations, the Australian Centre for Child Protection and Families Australia, will work with a local lead agency to develop and implement sustainable local plans that aim to enhance community awareness of ways to foster safe and nurturing communities for children and their families in up to eight sites across Australia. Outcomes will be reported in March 2016. [www.unisa.edu.au](http://www.unisa.edu.au)

**Queensland Government reforms:** Red tape reduction initiatives minimise duplication for non-government organisations and businesses so that resources can be focussed on supporting children and families. This initiative has reduced the time spent by Queensland’s funded organisations when applying for licences and preparing for assessments, resulting in up to 21 regional licenses being replaced with a single organisation-level licence for organisations providing home care services. [www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

**South Australia’s Implementation model for Child Friendly Cities in Australia from 2013–2015:** This model aims to improve child health, education, safety and wellbeing, play and leisure outcomes. The South Australian pilot for a child friendly monitoring and accreditation process has been developed in partnership with Campbelltown, Gawler and Onkaparinga local councils and community groups. The model is based on UNICEF’s commitment to children’s rights and places significant emphasis on children’s participation in influencing decision-making.

## Supporting Outcome 2

# Do children and families access adequate support, promoting safety and early intervention?

The domains that demonstrate performance against Supporting Outcome 2 are family support service use, early childhood education and antenatal care.

## Family support service use

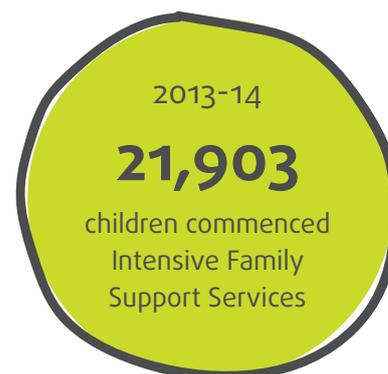
Family support services are increasingly recognised as playing a critical role in assisting families and minimising or complementing statutory child protection intervention. Currently there are limited national data available on family support service use. However, national data are available on a small subset of service use – the number of children who commence Intensive Family Support (IFS) – and this provides a measure of the support families are receiving to allow children to live safely at home.

### Indicator 2.1

#### Number of children aged 0–17 years seeking assistance through treatment and support services

In 2013–14, 21,903 children commenced IFS – that is, they met with the IFS service provider for the first time. For jurisdictions with available data (excludes South Australia and the Northern Territory), almost half (47 per cent) of the children commencing services were aged less than 5 years. Children aged 15–17 years were least likely to be commencing services (6 per cent).

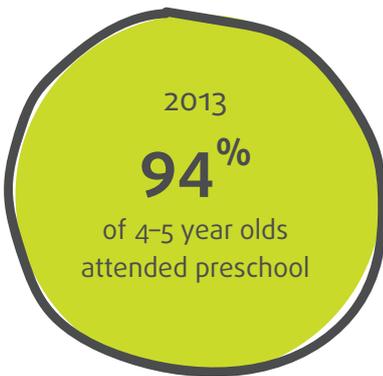
In 2013–14, among the 19,098 children commencing IFS services for whom Indigenous status was known, 25 per cent were Indigenous.



IFS services are funded by state and territory departments responsible for child protection and offer early intervention when child protection concerns are identified. These services work intensively with families to help create a safe home environment for their children and avoid the need for out-of-home care. IFS services also help reunite families after a child has been removed. (AIHW 2015)

## Early childhood education

Children who attend early education programmes or interventions show better performance and progress in their early school years in almost all intellectual, cognitive and school domains and in many socialisation domains (AIHW 2011a).



Participation in high-quality early childhood education programmes may be particularly beneficial for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

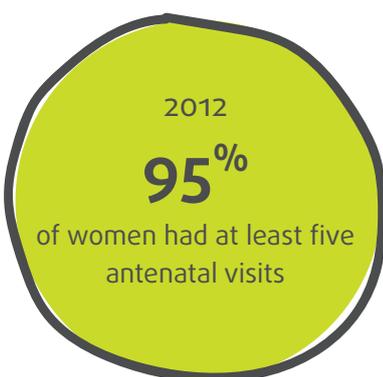
### Indicator 2.2

#### Attendance rate of children aged 4–5 years at preschool programmes

In 2013, 94 per cent of children aged 4–5 years attended a preschool programme for at least one hour in the reference week in the year before full-time schooling (around 280,000 children). Attendance rates were higher among non-Indigenous children than Indigenous children (95 per cent and 73 per cent respectively).

## Antenatal care

Antenatal care is important for the safety and wellbeing of infants. Women who do not receive antenatal care are more likely to have adverse pregnancy outcomes, including pre-term birth, post-partum haemorrhage, babies with low birth weight and perinatal death.



### Indicator 2.3

#### Proportion of women who had at least five antenatal visits during pregnancy

The *National Indigenous Reform Agreement* sets a benchmark of at least five antenatal visits during pregnancy. In 2011 and 2012, data on the number of antenatal visits during pregnancy were available for six jurisdictions: New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

During 2012, among women who gave birth at 32 weeks or more gestation (thus excluding very pre-term births), 95 per cent had five or more antenatal visits during pregnancy.

Indigenous mothers had fewer antenatal visits than non-Indigenous mothers. Among mothers who gave birth at 32 weeks or more, 86 per cent of Indigenous mothers had five or more visits, compared with 96 per cent of non-Indigenous mothers.

## National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 2

### What is being done to ensure children and families access adequate support, promoting safety and early intervention?

The National Framework recognises the importance of children and families having access to adequate support to help promote safety and early intervention. To help achieve this outcome, the National Framework identified strategies that aim to improve antenatal care, early childhood education and increase the number of families accessing family support services.

To help progress against the performance indicators and towards our high level outcome, the Second Action Plan outlined the following National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 2:

- **Sharing information** – exploring and improving information-sharing protocols across all levels of government
- **Seeing early warning signs and taking early action** – drawing upon substantial research that suggests that supporting individuals at key life-transition points can help to maximise their long-term social and economic outcomes
- **Joining up service delivery** – emphasising locally-based responses by bringing together the efforts of government and community sector organisations to meet the needs of families who experience multiple or complex needs.

## Key activities under National Priorities in 2013–14

A number of projects and initiatives have been implemented against the National Priorities across all jurisdictions in 2013–14. Some examples of the different activities that are working towards ensuring children and families access adequate support, promoting safety and early intervention are listed below.

### Sharing information

**Information Sharing Protocol:** This outlines the procedures on how the Australian Government, including the Department of Human Services – Centrelink, Medicare and the Child Support Agency – and state and territory child protection agencies can share information in order to provide more responsive care and protection services to children. In 2013–14 the Attorney-General’s Department continued progressing a number of projects to improve collaboration between the state and territory child protection systems and the federal family law system to streamline processes and practices. [www.ag.gov.au](http://www.ag.gov.au)

**South Australia’s Family Safety Framework state-wide implementation:** Completed in 2013, the Family Safety Framework seeks to ensure structured and systemically-integrated service responses for families most at risk of violence. Agencies share information about high-risk families and take responsibility for supporting families to navigate the service system. The Framework provides a consistent approach to domestic and family violence that has a focus on women’s and children’s safety and the accountability of perpetrators.

[www.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au](http://www.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au)

## Seeing early warning signs and taking early action

**Western Australia's Child and Parent Centres:** Sixteen of these were established in disadvantaged communities in Western Australian public schools to improve access to a range of programmes and services that support families to provide a better start in life for young children. Services may include maternal and child health services; early learning programmes; child support activities; parenting and family support; and referrals to other agencies.

[www.det.wa.edu.au](http://www.det.wa.edu.au)

**Victoria's Stronger Families and Aboriginal Stronger Families programmes:** These are designed to provide a coordinated response for children and families involved with child protection. The target group is children at imminent risk of being placed in out-of-home care for the first time, or children new to out-of-home care who could safely return home if appropriate supports were available. [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

**Queensland's Family Intervention Services Program:** This service provides frontline Intensive Family Support for children and young people who require ongoing intervention and case management. The programme is delivered by a large range of non-government organisations to assist the Queensland Government in keeping families together in their home, and avoiding placement in out-of-home care. In 2013–14, the programme allocated funding of \$20.681 million to 52 Family Intervention Services to intensively support 1,565 families.

[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

**New South Wales' Youth Hope Program:** This is a new Family and Community Services initiative being trialled across six districts. It supports vulnerable children and young people aged 9–15 years, most of whom have been assessed as being at risk of significant harm. The programme, which commenced in April 2014, will support 400 young people each year. [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

**Northern Territory's amendments to the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007*:** Starting on 1 January 2014, these amendments incorporate additional powers to investigate allegations or concerns that a child in care has, is, or is likely to suffer harm or exploitation. These powers enable the Department of Children and Families to inspect a place; conduct investigations; make inquiries; and access information while providing protection of those who provide that information. [www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au](http://www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au)

## Joining up service delivery

**Australian Capital Territory's One Human Services Gateway:** A new, enhanced model of service delivery is in development and involves collaboration with community services providers. The Gateway will provide a range of universal and targeted services at one location, including the provision of information and referral services, and where possible linking people and families to services. [www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)

**Tasmania's Housing Connect Service:** This coordinated approach for housing and homelessness provides people with a single point of contact for assessment, access to housing services and ongoing support needs. It opened its doors in October 2013. Five community organisations collaboratively deliver the new system for the Tasmanian Government. [www.dhhs.tas.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au)

**New South Wales Community Based Referrals project:** This innovative project is being piloted between Family and Community Services, New South Wales Kids and Families, and non-government services. It aims to build the capacity of non-government services to work with families at an early stage and help reduce the number of children and young people entering out-of-home care. The pilot commenced on 1 July 2013 in five of the 12 Family Referral Services across New South Wales.

**Victoria’s Children and Youth Area Partnerships:** Eight partnerships were launched in May 2014, to provide more effective joined-up social services to support better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families. Area partnerships bring together an area’s senior representatives from Australian, state and local governments, the community sector and the broader community. [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

**Western Australia’s Family Support Networks:** Three Family Support Networks were established, in metropolitan Armadale and Mirrabooka, and the regional Midwest. These operate in partnership with community sector service organisations and the Western Australian Government, providing a common entry point to a range of services to deliver earlier, better-targeted support to families. [www.wafsn.org.au](http://www.wafsn.org.au)

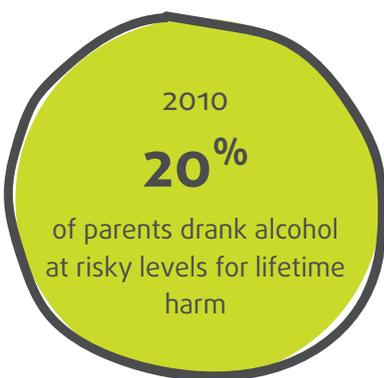
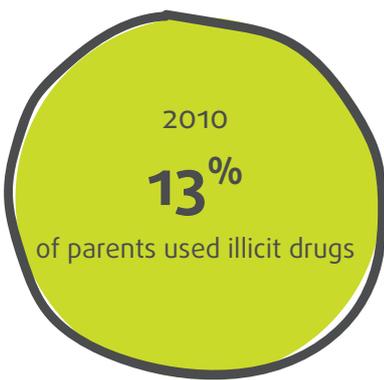
## Supporting Outcome 3

# Are the risk factors for child abuse and neglect being addressed?

The reportable domains that demonstrate performance against Supporting Outcome 3 are parental substance abuse, parental mental health and homelessness. In the December 2015 release of the online indicator reporting, it is likely that there will also be data available to report on the domestic violence domain.

## Parental substance abuse

Parental substance misuse is a key risk factor for child abuse and neglect. Misuse of drugs and alcohol can compromise parents' ability to provide a safe environment for children, maintain household tasks and routines and respond to their children's emotional needs (Bromfield, Lamont, Parker, and Horsfall 2010; Dawe, Harnett and Frye 2008).



### Indicator 3.1

#### Proportion of parents, with children aged 0–14 years, who used any illicit drug within the last 12 months

The 2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey found that 13 per cent of parents with children aged 0–14 years had used illicit drugs in the previous 12 months. Similar results were found among adults without children; the proportion that had used illicit drugs in the previous 12 months was 16 per cent in 2010.

### Indicator 3.2

#### Proportion of parents, with children aged 0–14 years, who drank alcohol at risky levels

The 2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey found that an estimated one-fifth (20 per cent) of parents with dependent children aged 0–14 years drank at levels risky for lifetime harm. An estimated 15 per cent drank at levels risky for single-occasion harm at least weekly, and almost one-third (30 per cent) did so at least monthly (AIHW 2012a).

## Parental mental health

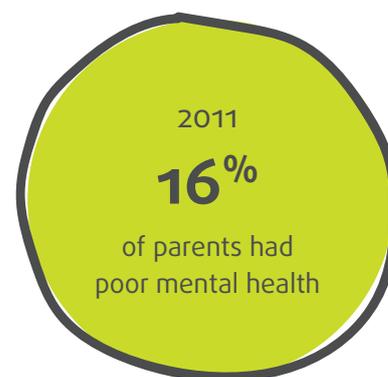
Children living with a parent with a mental health problem may be at increased risk of social, psychological, behavioural and physical health problems, as well as cognitive development problems. They are also more likely to experience a psychological disorder during adolescence or adulthood (AIHW 2012a).

### Indicator 3.3

#### Proportion of parents with children aged 0–14 years who have a mental health problem

The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey measures mental health using a 36-item survey that measures eight domains of subjective health. An analysis of population averages suggests that a Mental Health Component Summary score of less than 41 is indicative of a poor level of mental health.

In 2011, among parents with children aged 0–14 years, it was estimated that one-sixth (16 per cent) of parents had Mental Health Component Summary scores of less than 41, indicating poor mental health. Lone parents were more than twice as likely as parents in couple families to have a score of less than 41 in 2011 (34 and 14 per cent respectively).



## Homelessness

Homelessness has a detrimental effect on children's health and wellbeing, which can persist beyond the period of homelessness. The causes of homelessness are complex and may include economic factors such as poverty, unemployment and increased housing costs (AIHW 2012a).

### Indicator 3.4

#### Rate of children aged 0–17 years who receive assistance through homelessness services (accompanied and unaccompanied)

In 2011–12, almost one-third (29 per cent) of all clients assisted by Specialist Homelessness Services were children aged 0–17 years – over 67,000 children, representing a rate of 13 per 1,000 children. Most of these children (58 per cent) were aged under 10 years.

Indigenous children were over-represented in homelessness services; the rate for Indigenous children was nine times the rate for non-Indigenous children (73 and 8 per 1,000 children respectively).

Around one-sixth (16 per cent) of children presented alone to homelessness services, while the majority presented in a group as part of a 'person with children' (69 per cent) or a 'couple with children' (12 per cent). Over one-third (39 per cent) of children assisted by homelessness services had experienced domestic or family violence (AIHW 2012b).



The national Specialist Homelessness Services data collection was implemented on 1 July 2011 (replacing the previous Supported Accommodation Assistance Program national data collection). For this reason, trend data are not yet available.

## National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 3

### What is being done to ensure the risk factors for child abuse and neglect are being addressed?

The National Framework recognises that in order for our children and young people to be truly safe and well we must ensure the risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed. To help achieve this outcome, the National Framework has identified strategies that focus on reducing parental substance abuse, improving parental mental health, and reducing homelessness and domestic and family violence.

These strategies include:

- enhanced alcohol and substance abuse reduction initiatives
- enhanced programmes that reduce family violence
- increased services and support for people with a mental illness or disability
- expanded housing and homelessness services for families and children at risk
- increased capacity and capability for the 'system' to identify children at risk.

To help progress against the performance indicators and towards the high level outcome, the Second Action Plan outlined the following National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 3:

- **Building workforce capacity and expertise** – exploring options to broaden child and family-sensitive practice through increased access to training
- **Domestic and family violence** – aiming to strengthen families so children and young people grow up in a safe household free from domestic and family violence
- **Health and mental health** – looking for opportunities to better meet the health and mental health needs of vulnerable and at-risk women, children and young people
- **Disability** – identifying opportunities to link with the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the National Disability Strategy.

## Key activities under National Priorities in 2013–14

Many projects and initiatives have been implemented against the National Priorities across all jurisdictions in 2013–14. Some examples of different activities that are working towards ensuring risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed are outlined below.

### Building workforce capacity and expertise

**The Australian Centre for Child Protection’s *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity Building Bridges*:** This initiative enhances the knowledge and skills of practitioners to better support parents in meeting the needs of children in their care. Joint participation in workshops strengthened relationships and teamwork between different service sectors. Over 2,000 practitioners from more than 250 organisations across Australia participated in the workshops.

**Queensland’s Sector Readiness and Workforce Capacity Initiative:** This \$1.9 million programme delivered education and training to help non-government organisations and staff develop new skills. In 2013–14, 14,274 sector workers undertook skill development training and 132 undertook full qualifications through the initiative. In addition, 57 workshops were convened to provide non-accredited training to people with disabilities, their families and carers. [www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

### Domestic and family violence

**The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022 (the National Plan)*:** Exposure to domestic and family violence in childhood is increasingly recognised as being a form of child abuse. That is why the National Framework and the National Plan are designed to work in tandem to bring about positive change for women and children experiencing violence. The National Plan was agreed by the COAG and released in February 2011 and sets a long-term agenda for making a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. Key initiatives established under the National Plan include The Line, a primary prevention social marketing and behaviour change campaign targeting young people, and Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS), established to drive expansion of research and build a shared understanding of research priorities on violence against women and their children. [plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au](http://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au)

**New South Wales Government’s *It Stops Here*:** Standing together to end domestic and family violence: This framework for reform was launched in February 2014 and is a five-year, whole-of-government, strategic approach to reducing domestic and family violence. It is based on a belief that both preventing and responding to domestic and family violence involves strong collaboration – across government agencies, between government and non-government agencies, and most importantly, with victims of domestic and family violence themselves. [www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au](http://www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au)

**Queensland Government’s prevention and early intervention initiatives and programmes:** These raise community awareness about domestic violence. DVConnect provides free assistance to those affected by domestic and family violence across Queensland. In 2013–14, DVConnect received 52,658 calls for assistance. Queensland Police referred 3,755 individuals to DVConnect for support via SupportLink, an online e-referral tool. Work is underway to reduce domestic and family violence in Queensland with the ‘not now, not ever’ campaign affiliated with DVConnect. [www.dvconnect.org](http://www.dvconnect.org)

**Western Australia’s *Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022*:** This was launched in 2012 to provide a long-term, cross-government framework for responding to family violence. Initiatives implemented during 2013–14 include development of new practice guidelines for responding to family and domestic violence,

and establishment of a Tripartite Schedule, between the Department for Child Protection and Family Support, Western Australian Police and the Department of Corrective Services, outlining the processes for managing serious domestic violence offenders. This allows the state government to register victims on the Victim Notification Register. [www.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au)

**Victoria's Working With Families Where an Adult is Violent:** This specialist practice resource for practitioners was published in June 2014. It includes research on how children are impacted by family violence and provides information, strategies and tips to engage children, non-offending parents and perpetrators. [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

## Health and mental health

**The Australian Government's Family Mental Health Support Services:** These provide a range of flexible, non-clinical support services to meet the needs of children and young people who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness. In 2013–14, 74 Family Mental Health Support Services assisted over 98,600 participants through a combination of individual and community-based support. [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)

**South Australia's Strong Start Program:** This engages first-time mothers in the antenatal period and supports families with complex health, education and social needs. The aim is to improve attendance at antenatal health assessments; support parents; and address issues of vulnerability, including homelessness and substance abuse. Attention is also given to providing developmental opportunities for children, including access to child care; building nurturing relationships between parents and children; and ensuring greater access to support services. [www.decd.sa.gov.au](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au)

**Tasmania's work in embedding the National Perinatal Depression Initiative:** This facilitates the early identification of antenatal and postnatal depression and improves collaborative care and treatment for expectant and new mothers across the state. In support of the initiative, the University of Tasmania Faculty of Health Bachelor of Nursing Program designed and delivers the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Unit. [www.dhhs.tas.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au)

**Australian Capital Territory's Parent Child Interaction Therapy Program:** The Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre, in partnership with Care and Protection Services, Marymead Child and Family Centre, and the Education and Training Directorate, continued the pilot of the programme. It is an evidence-based treatment for children aged 3–7 years who demonstrate serious behavioural problems. It has an emphasis on improving the quality of the parent-child relationship and changing parent-child interactions.

**The Northern Territory's Suicide Prevention Coordination Committee:** This brings together senior representatives from a range of government agencies, to develop cross-government strategic direction and identify key actions to reduce the rate of suicide. The Department of Children and Families' role is to: reduce the heightened risk of suicide and other self-harming behaviours for children and young people who have experienced abuse and neglect; and improve the capacity of families, carers and child protection staff to identify and better respond to children and young people at risk. [www.health.nt.gov.au](http://www.health.nt.gov.au)

**Western Australia's Koornlin Moort, Walking with Families Program:** Based at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, this programme aims to improve the connection of at-risk Aboriginal children and families with paediatric services. Improved care coordination contributes to improved health outcomes for children, particularly those in remote locations or with complex needs.

## Disability

**National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)'s Interface with Child Protection and Family Support:** The Council of Australian Governments agreed to a set of Principles to Determine the Responsibilities of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Other Service Systems and associated Applied Principles and Tables of Support to provide guidance about the respective responsibilities of the NDIS and mainstream service systems, including the child protection and family support systems. [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

**The Northern Territory's Office of Disability:** This agency accepts and prioritises referrals for infants, children and young people where there is an indication of risk of child abuse and neglect together with a developmental delay or diagnosed disability. The Office of Disability works closely with the Department of Children and Families and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to ensure integrated inter-agency service planning and transition planning. [www.health.nt.gov.au](http://www.health.nt.gov.au)

**Western Australia's People at Risk Team:** The Disability Service Commission's People at Risk Team provides a dedicated resource to enable appropriate and timely responses to concerns and incidents of abuse, neglect and exploitation affecting children, young people and adults. In 2013–14, the team specially focussed on integrating the service within the Disability Services Commission, as well as increasing its engagement with disability sector organisations and providing ongoing training about safeguarding practices. [www.disability.wa.gov.au](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au)

## Supporting Outcome 4

# Are children who have been abused or neglected receiving the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing?

The reportable domains that demonstrate performance against Supporting Outcome 4 are child protection resubstantiation, placement stability and leaving care plans. AIHW is currently undertaking work to develop reportable data for the carer retention, literacy and numeracy, and cross-sector clients indicators. It is anticipated that these indicators will be reportable in future National Framework Annual Reports.

## Child protection resubstantiations

Resubstantiation rates are a broad indicator of the recurrence of abuse, neglect or harm to children. Resubstantiations capture cases that have been reported to the state and territory departments responsible for child protection.

### Indicator 4.1

#### Rate of children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a child protection resubstantiation in a given year

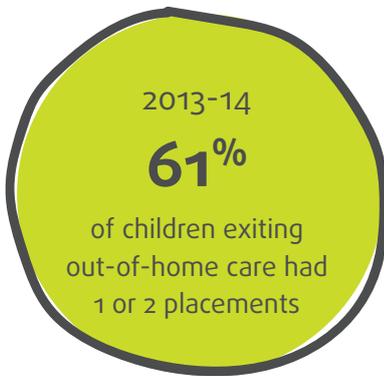
Of all children who were the subject of a substantiation in 2012–13, 7 per cent had a subsequent substantiation within three months, and 19 per cent had a subsequent substantiation within 12 months.

Cases of resubstantiation do not necessarily imply that child protection agencies have failed to protect children from repeated abuse. The resubstantiation rate is affected by the finalisation of investigations and also by factors beyond the control of the child protection system, such as changes in family situations, which may place children in danger of being re-abused or neglected.



## Placement stability

Children in planned, stable out-of-home care placements tend to have better learning and psychosocial outcomes than children experiencing instability (NSW Department of Community Services 2007).



### Indicator 4.2

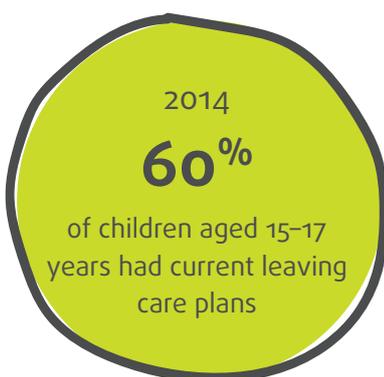
#### Proportion of children aged 0–17 years exiting out-of-home care during the year who had one or two placements

In 2013–14, about three-fifths (61 per cent) of children exiting out-of-home care had one or two placements during the time they were in care, and most (82 per cent) had four or fewer placements. The out-of-home care experience was less stable for the 18 per cent of children exiting care who had five or more placements; of this group, most were in care for two years or more.

Comparisons between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children exiting out-of-home care showed that the proportion of Indigenous children with one or two placements was slightly lower (56 per cent) than non-Indigenous children (63 per cent). The proportion of Indigenous children with five or more placements was higher than for non-Indigenous children (22 per cent compared to 16 per cent).

## Leaving care plans

Historically, young people leaving statutory care and making the transition to independent living have been considered one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged social groups (Osborn & Bromfield 2007).



### Indicator 4.6

#### Proportion of children aged 15–17 years who have a leaving care plan

A leaving care plan (also called a 'transition from care plan') is developed in preparation for a young person's exit from care into independent living. Leaving care plans are developed in agreement with the young person and usually include information on goals, planned actions, needs assessments, income support and post-care support (such as counselling, mentoring and ongoing case management).

At 30 June 2014, an estimated 60 per cent of young people aged 15 years and over had a current and approved leaving care plan (based on data from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia only).

## National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 4

### What is being done to ensure children who have been abused or neglected are receiving the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing?

Although the National Framework is ambitiously leading the way towards achieving a substantial and sustained reduction in child abuse, the evidence indicates that too many of our children and young people are facing abuse and neglect. In response to this, the National Framework acknowledges the importance of providing support and adequate care for these vulnerable children and young people.

To help achieve this outcome, the National Framework has identified strategies that aim to:

- reduce child protection substantiations
- increase the resilience of abuse survivors
- improve the educational outcomes of children in out-of-home care
- ensure children leaving care have adequate leaving care plans
- examine the link between children who are subject to child protection substantiations and have also had services support from across the sectors.

These strategies focus on:

- enhancing access to support services for recovery where abuse or neglect has occurred
- supporting grandparent, foster and kinship carers to provide safe and stable care
- improving support for young people leaving care
- supporting enhanced national consistency and continuous improvement in child protection services.

To help progress against the performance indicators and towards our high level outcome, the Second Action Plan outlined the following National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 4:

- **Enhancing the evidence base** – improving data collections relating to children’s health, development and wellbeing
- **Filling the research gaps** – supporting research focused on issues relevant to protecting children from abuse and neglect
- **National Standards for out-of-home care** – identifying opportunities to improve outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care
- **Transitioning to independence** – providing support in areas such as health, housing, education and employment to vulnerable young people transitioning to independence from out-of-home care
- **Improving support for carers** – addressing issues facing carers of children and young people unable to live at home with their own families, by exploring opportunities for professional care, removing barriers to caring for working families and developing a national survey to better understand what carers need
- **Sector development** – strengthening support for the education, professional development and retention of the child protection workforce, including enabling the Indigenous workforce to be more actively involved in the tertiary child protection system.

## Key activities under National Priorities in 2013–14

A number of projects and initiatives have been implemented against the National Priorities across all jurisdictions in 2013–14. Some examples of different activities that are working towards ensuring our children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing are outlined below.

### Enhancing the evidence base

**The Australian Capital Territory's five-year Out-of-home care Strategy:** This strategy will guide the delivery of out-of-home care services from July 2015 to June 2020. Extensive consultations to support development of the strategy were held in 2014. Other research was also undertaken, including a literature review, a survey of kinship carers and foster carers, a co-design project which engaged service users to identify areas for improvement in service delivery, a child profiling report, demographic modelling to forecast future demand and economic modelling to understand the financial requirements for out-of-home care service delivery.

[www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)

**Tasmania's review panel for Child Protection notification closures for children aged 3 years and under:**

Established in 2013, the panel provides an independent review to ensure that risk and safety factors have been appropriately considered for this vulnerable age group. The panel includes senior staff from a range of child protection services. In addition to providing specialist expertise, the panel membership has led to greater linkages between programme areas, resulting in improved agency response to vulnerable, at risk children.

### Filling the research gaps

**National Research Agenda for Protecting Australia's Children 2011–14:** Cost-shared funding was provided for the following three research projects, each focussing on families and their children living in three separate environments: refugee communities, high risk communities and Indigenous communities. [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)

**Australian Catholic University Institute of Child Protection Studies' Refugee Communities Intercultural Dialogue:**

Building relationships, building communities study: This research aims to provide in-depth and contextualised data about how services may: better support refugee parents to care for their children; and better understand the social resources and connections required by refugee parents and their children to support positive parenting skills and family relationships. Quantitative and qualitative data collections are now complete. Analysis of this data is underway, with a report due in 2015.

**University of New South Wales Social Policy Research Centre's Thriving in Adversity study:** This uses a positive deviance conceptual framework built on research into risk and protective factors for child maltreatment, using a strengths-based and practice-driven approach. It recognises that in every disadvantaged community there are individuals and families who are doing unexpectedly well as they have practices and strategies that are positive and deviate from standard approaches. A report will be published on the Department of Social Services website in 2015. [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)

**The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)'s Moving to Prevention research project:**

This was a two-year project aimed at developing knowledge about the quality and effectiveness of community-controlled intensive or targeted family support services for Indigenous families and their children. There were two parts to the project: the first phase was a research study; and the second phase was the development of a practice guide and training package. The research report, highlighting the research's results, was published in 2014 and the practice guide is due for publication at the end of 2015. [www.snaicc.org.au](http://www.snaicc.org.au)

## National Standards for out-of-home care

**National Standards for out-of-home care (the National Standards):** The Australian Government, state and territory governments and non-government sector developed the National Standards to drive improvements in the quality of out-of-home care and ensure that children and young people in care are given consistent, best practice care, so they have the same opportunities as other children and young people no matter where they live in Australia. A set of 22 measures were developed to report on the impact of the National Standards in driving these improvements. In 2013–14, seven of the 22 measures were reportable. [Appendix B](#) of this report provides the reportable data tables. For a full list of the National Standards go [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)

**New South Wales' Safe Home for Life reforms to policy:** This will see an investment of \$500 million over four years to improve the effectiveness of the child protection system. The reforms place at the heart of decision-making the need for children and young people to be safe and have a permanent and nurturing safe home for life. They aim to place children at risk of significant harm on a path to a positive future. [www.facs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au)

**Western Australia's proposed reforms to out-of-home care:** In 2014 there were a number of proposed reforms that place additional focus on supporting children and young people to heal from trauma and have increased life opportunities. These are detailed in the discussion paper *Out-of-Home Care Strategic Directions in Western Australia 2015–2020*, which was released for community comment in late 2014. [www.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au)

**South Australia's revised Health Standards for Children and Young People in Care:** The revised health standards outline agreed roles, responsibilities and standards to guide health practitioners and child protection services. The standards address the National Standards for out-of-home care and incorporate key elements of the National Clinical Assessment Framework. [www.families.sa.gov.au](http://www.families.sa.gov.au)

## Transitioning to independence

**CREATE Foundation's Go Your Own Way Information Kit:** This is a contribution to implementing Standard 13 of the National Standards for out-of-home care. It is a nationally consistent transition-from-care planning resource, to support young people who have been in the care system to achieve their full potential and overcome barriers. [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

## Improving support for carers

**Victoria's Kinship Carers Handbook:** Developed by Kinship Carers Victoria and funded by the Department of Human Services, the handbook provides practical support, information and advice to carers on a range of issues including roles and responsibilities, legal matters and financial support. State-wide information, training and support sessions are also available to support and assist kinship carers in caring for children affected by trauma. [www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org](http://www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org)

**Northern Territory's improvements to out-of-home care service system:** In 2013–14, the Department of Children and Families increased the number of its foster and kinship care households; published the *Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care in the Northern Territory* and launched the new Carer Community website that brings together important information about the responsibilities and resources for existing and prospective carers. [www.carercommunity.nt.gov.au](http://www.carercommunity.nt.gov.au)

## Sector development

**Professional Foster Care – Barriers, Opportunities and Options:** This report by ACIL Allen presents options and recommendations for developing a professional foster care model in Australia with the aim of providing stability and appropriate care in a home environment for high-needs children. The report was delivered in October 2013, for consideration by all jurisdictions and the Australian Government and published in September 2014.

[www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)

**New South Wales' out-of-home care reforms:** Since 2012, the Department of Family and Community Services has committed to major reforms, transferring out-of-home care to the non-government sector. The transfer is the biggest reform to the New South Wales out-of-home care service in many decades and is a critical component of reforms to child protection.

**Tasmania's out-of-home care reforms:** Children and Youth Services Tasmania is undertaking major systemic reforms that target the needs of children in out-of-home care and take into consideration the projected demand for specific services into the future. Foster care reforms will be in place and operational from July 2016.

[www.dhhs.tas.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au)

## Supporting Outcome 5

# Are our Indigenous children supported and safe in their families and communities?

The reportable domain that demonstrates performance against Supporting Outcome 5 is the placement of Indigenous children in kinship care or with other Indigenous caregivers. AIHW is currently undertaking work to develop reportable data for the cultural support plans indicator. It is anticipated that this indicator will be reportable in future National Framework Annual Reports.

## Placement of Indigenous children

Indigenous children and young people benefit when they are able to maintain fundamental links to family, community, land and culture.

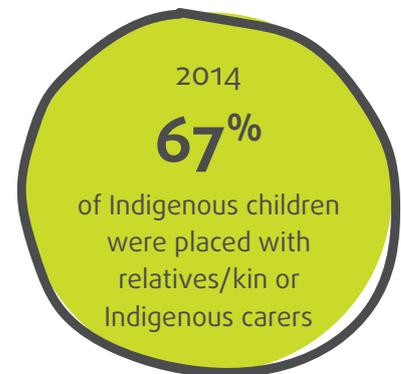
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle states that the preferred order of placement for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child who has been removed from his or her birth family is with, the child's extended family; the child's Indigenous community; and other Indigenous people.

Only if an appropriate placement cannot be found from the three groups can an Indigenous child be placed with another carer. This principle has been endorsed by all states and territories in Australia.

### Indicator 5.2

#### Proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care placed with extended family or other Indigenous caregivers

At 30 June 2014, just over two-thirds (67 per cent) of Indigenous children were placed with relatives/kin or Indigenous carers. Placement with Indigenous relatives/kin was most common (37 per cent).



Relative or kinship care is where the caregiver is a relative (other than parents), considered to be family or a close friend, or is a member of the child or young person's community (in accordance with their culture). For Indigenous children, a kinship carer may be another Indigenous person who is a member of their community, a compatible community or from the same language group.

## National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 5

### What is being done to ensure our Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities?

The National Framework recognises that in order to ensure our Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities, strategies to help achieve this outcome need to be developed in partnership with Indigenous families and community, Indigenous agencies, mainstream service providers and all Australian governments.

The identified strategies under Supporting Outcome 5 focus on:

- expanding access to Indigenous and mainstream services for families and children
- promoting the development of safe and strong Indigenous communities
- ensuring that Indigenous children receive culturally appropriate protection services and care.

To help progress against the performance indicators and towards our high level outcome, the Second Action Plan outlined the following National Priority against Supporting Outcome 5:

- **Closing the Gap** – aiming to ensure that Indigenous families and communities are in a position to provide their children with the safe and supportive environments they need to reach their full potential.

## Key activities under National Priorities in 2013–14

Many projects and initiatives have been implemented against the National Priorities across all jurisdictions in 2013–14. Some examples of different activities that are working towards ensuring our indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities are outlined below.

### Closing the Gap

**Western Australia’s collaboration with remote public schools:** The Department of Education’s Child Protection Support Team provided training, support and guidance to school staff in child protection and mandatory reporting in compliance with the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (WA) and the Department’s Child Protection policy. In 2013–14, this included an update for the school principals in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and a support visit to Burringurrah District High School. The training provided crucial information for identifying and responding to child protection matters.

**Australian Capital Territory’s new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service model:** Work commenced on developing a service model to engage suitable Indigenous community members to provide independent advice for children and young people in out-of-home care. The advice will relate to placement, cultural planning and transition-from-care planning. This work will continue in 2014–15. [www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)

**The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)’s Developing Capacity Through Partnerships tool:** Work to build the capacity of Indigenous organisations through partnerships with mainstream agencies was most evident in New South Wales, where the Department of Family and Community Services and mainstream providers continued the commitment to work with communities to establish Indigenous community-controlled out-of-home care agencies state-wide. SNAICC published a resource with Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat NSW profiling the approach. [www.snaicc.org.au](http://www.snaicc.org.au)

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle discussion papers:** Following discussions at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Workshop in May 2013, SNAICC developed action-focussed discussion papers aimed at enhancing the application and nationally consistent reporting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. [www.snaicc.org.au](http://www.snaicc.org.au)

**Stronger Communities for Children Program in the Northern Territory:** Place-based initiatives in the programme were advanced through community engagement and planning in the early establishment phase in five communities. Continuing implementation of intensive and targeted family support services, including for a small number of Indigenous agencies, provided critically important support to families with complex needs.

**South Australian Aboriginal Family Birthing Program:** This continues to be delivered in seven locations, including five country locations. It aims to improve maternal and infant perinatal health outcomes through a specific Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Care workforce and a culturally respectful partnership model of care. The programme enables Aboriginal women and their families to receive antenatal care close to or in their local community and reduces the number of high-risk birthing transfers to facilities outside the region.

**Tasmania's antenatal services for young Aboriginal women:** The Department of Health and Human Services continues to improve access to and participation in these services. This has included the continued delivery of community-based pregnancy support at participating Aboriginal organisations and targeted Child and Family Centres through the Aboriginal Midwifery Outreach Project. For the period January to June 2014, 92 per cent of Aboriginal women aged less than 20 years giving birth in Tasmania, had attended eight or more antenatal visits during their pregnancy, with 77 per cent having an antenatal visit in the first trimester.

**Queensland's Safe Houses:** These provide care and support for up to six young people aged 0–17 years in statutory care in remote Indigenous communities. This enables the child to be placed within their community – facilitating community connection and stability, and family contact – while their child protection needs are being assessed. [www.missionaustralia.com.au](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au)

**New South Wales' *Keep them Safe* reform:** Intensive Family Based Services provide placement prevention, restoration and placement support services for Aboriginal families. The NSW Department of Family and Community Services permanently funds and manages six Intensive Family Support based services. Under the reform, an additional four services in Aboriginal non-government organisations are being piloted until 30 June 2016. An evaluation of the four additional pilot services is currently underway and will be finalised in 2015. [www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au)

**Victoria's *Taskforce 1000*:** This is a group of senior officers across the Victorian Government and the Aboriginal community, whose task is to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children in out-of-home care and to assist in identifying the causes of over-representation in the out-of-home care system. [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

## Supporting Outcome 6:

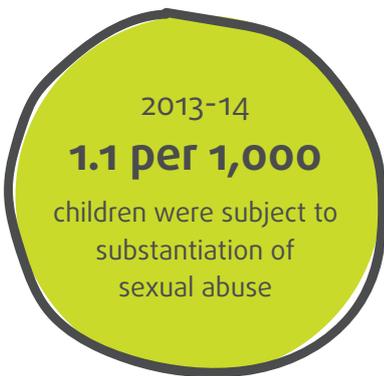
# Is child sexual abuse and exploitation being prevented and are survivors receiving adequate support?

The performance indicator domains that demonstrate performance against Supporting Outcome 6 are sexual abuse substantiations and child sexual assault.

Other types of abuse and neglect are generally viewed as a symptom of family dysfunction and parenting problems. Sexual abuse is different, with multiple types of potential perpetrators (Price-Robertson, Bromfield & Vassallo 2010).

## Sexual abuse substantiations

The data provided for this indicator only represent cases of sexual abuse reported to departments responsible for child protection. Instances of sexual abuse by family members other than parents/guardians and by non-family members are generally only included where there has been a finding of a failure to protect by the parent/guardian.



When interpreting these data, it should be noted that, if a child was the subject of more than one type of abuse or neglect as part of the same notification, the abuse and/or neglect reported is the one considered by the child protection workers to cause the most harm to the child.

### Indicator 6.1

#### Rate of children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of child protection substantiation of sexual abuse

In 2013–14, 5,581 children were the subject of substantiated sexual abuse, a rate of 1.1 per 1,000 children. The rate of substantiated sexual abuse was four times higher for Indigenous children than non-Indigenous children (3.4 and 0.9 per 1,000 respectively).

## Child sexual assault

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Recorded crime - victims, Australia collection captures data on children who were recorded by the police as victims of sexual assault (ABS 2014). These offences may have been reported by a victim, witness or other person, or they may have been detected by police.

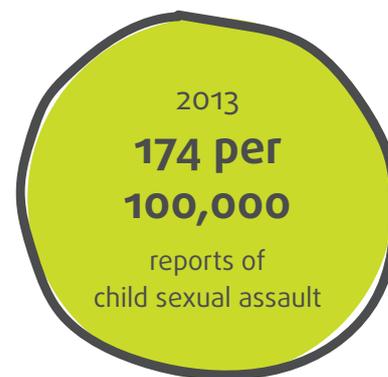
### Indicator 6.2

#### Rate of children aged 0–14 years who have been the victim of sexual assault

In 2013, over 7,500 children aged 0–14 years were recorded by the police as victims of sexual assault, a victimisation rate of 174 per 100,000 children.

The rate of reported sexual assault among girls was three times higher than the rate among boys – 272 compared to 80 per 100,000 in 2013. Similarly, the rate among 10–14 year olds was three times higher than the rate among 0–9 year olds – 331 compared to 100 per 100,000 in 2013. Consistent patterns occurred across 2010–2012.

Data on the Indigenous status of sexual assault victims were available for four jurisdictions: New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory. In 2013, the rate of reported sexual assault for Indigenous children in these jurisdictions was more than twice the rate for non-Indigenous children (401 and 173 per 100,000 children respectively).



The statistics from this collection do not provide a total picture of victims, as not all crimes are reported to police; nor do all incidents which are reported to police get recorded as a crime. In particular, children may feel intimidated and reluctant to report personal crimes if the perpetrator is known to them or in a position of power.

## National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 6

### What is being done to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation and to ensure survivors receive adequate support?

The National Framework recognises that child sexual abuse and exploitation should be prevented and survivors of abuse and exploitation must receive adequate support. To help achieve this outcome, the National Framework has identified the following strategies:

- raising awareness of child sexual exploitation and abuse
- enhancing prevention strategies for child sexual abuse
- strengthening law enforcement and judicial processes in response to child sexual abuse and exploitation
- ensuring survivors of sexual abuse have access to effective treatment and appropriate support.

To help progress against the performance indicators and towards our high level outcome, the Second Action Plan outlined the following National Priorities against Supporting Outcome 6:

- **Working with children checks** – aiming to continue improving these checks across jurisdictions
- **Responding to sexual abuse** – exploring options to prevent childhood sexual abuse and provide trauma-informed support to assist children, young people and adults who are survivors of child abuse and neglect.

## Key activities under National Priorities in 2013–14

A number of projects and initiatives have been implemented against the National Priorities across all jurisdictions in 2013–14. Some examples of different activities that are working towards ensuring child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support are outlined below.

### Responding to sexual abuse

**Australian Capital Territory’s training programme about working with families affected by sexual abuse:** During 2014, the Community Services Directorate developed a seven-day programme based on a model developed by the Victorian Department of Human Services. It is designed for frontline practitioners in investigating and understanding the complexities of child sexual abuse. The initial round was offered to experienced team leaders and case workers, allowing them to support the learning of less experienced practitioners.

**Northern Territory’s Mobile Outreach Service Plus:** This provides counselling to Aboriginal children and young people in targeted remote communities, in response to trauma from child abuse and neglect, including sexual assault. The service also provides professional development for community-based staff.

[www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au](http://www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au)

### Working with children checks

**Tasmanian legislation *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013*:** This came into effect on 1 July 2014. It provides a more consistent, rigorous and reliable background checking system. A centralised screening unit within the Department of Justice will undertake detailed risk assessment and seek information from other jurisdictions. The new Act will replace the Good Character Check Screening Programme. The Tasmanian child care sector is the first area to adopt the new regulations. [www.thelaw.tas.gov.au](http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au)

**South Australian Government amendments to the *Children’s Protection Act 1993*:** The *Statutes Amendment (Assessment of Relevant History Act) 2013* amended the *Children’s Protection Act 1993* to extend the child-safe environment provisions to organisations providing cultural, entertainment or party services wholly or partly for children. [www.legislation.sa.gov.au](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au)

**Queensland’s blue card system:** This is a key prevention and monitoring system of people working with children. It contributes to creating safe and supportive environments for children in child care, education, sport and cultural activities. Organisations and self-employed people who fall within the scope of Queensland’s blue card system are legislatively required to use child and youth focused risk management strategies. Blue Card Services monitor the strategies. [www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

**New South Wales’ Working With Children Check amendment:** This was introduced from June 2013. It is more robust, provides better protection for children and is more efficient for both employers and workers. It provides clearer results, in the form of either a clearance to work with children for five years or a bar against working with children. From 31 March 2014, the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW) requires all authorised carers and adult household members aged 18 years and over and people engaged in child-related work to obtain a Working With Children Check clearance. For the first time, a person’s full criminal record is able to be considered. [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)

**Victoria’s Working With Children Check:** The Department of Human Services continues to work with the Department of Justice and Regulation in conducting background checks on applicants. The check involves a review of the applicant’s criminal record. Sexual, serious violence and serious drug offences are relevant under the *Working with Children Act 2005* and the presence of such offences in an applicant’s criminal history can result in the refusal to grant a Working with Children Check clearance. [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)



## Appendix A

# National Framework For Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 data tables



## Part 1: High-level outcome-Australia's children and young people are safe and well

### Child protection substantiations

Indicator 0.1: Rate of children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of child protection substantiation

**Table 1: Children aged 0–17 years subject to substantiation of a notification, by Indigenous status, 2009–10 to 2013–14**

Indigenous status <sup>(a)</sup>	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14
	Number				
Indigenous	8334	8231	10 058	10 991	11 270
Non-Indigenous	22 335	22 144	26 183	28 106	28 149
All children	31 295	31 527	37 781	40 571	40 844
	Rate				
Indigenous	29.5	28.9	35.1	38.1	38.8
Non-Indigenous	4.7	4.6	5.4	5.7	5.7
All children	6.2	6.2	7.4	7.8	7.8
Rate ratio <sup>(b)</sup>	6.3	6.2	6.5	6.6	6.8

(a) 'All children' includes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

(b) Rate ratios are calculated by dividing the unrounded rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were the subject of substantiations by the unrounded rate of non-Indigenous children who were the subject of substantiations. The resulting number is a measure of how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were the subject of substantiation for every one non-Indigenous child who was the subject of substantiation.

(c) Rates were calculated using revised population estimates based on the 2011 Census and should not be compared with rates calculated using populations or projections based on previous Censuses, including those published in previous editions of this report.

**Note:** This table reports the number of children subject to substantiation of a notification, not the number of substantiations.

**Sources:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections; AIHW 2015

## Out-of-home care

Indicator 0.2: Rate of children aged 0–17 years who are in out-of-home care

**Table 2: Children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care at 30 June, 2010 to 2014**

Indigenous status <sup>(a)</sup>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	Number				
Indigenous	11 468	12 358	13 299	13 952	14 991
Non-Indigenous	24 279	24 929	26 127	26 422	27 827
All children	35 895	37 648	39 621	40 549	43 009
	Rate				
Indigenous	40.4	43.2	46.2	48.2	51.4
Non-Indigenous	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.3	5.6
All children	7.1	7.4	7.7	7.7	8.1
Rate ratio <sup>(b)</sup>	7.9	8.3	8.6	9.0	9.2

(a) 'All children' includes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

(b) Rate ratios are calculated by dividing the unrounded rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were in out-of-home care by the unrounded rate of non-Indigenous children who were in out-of-home care. The resulting number is a measure of how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were in out-of-home care for every one non-Indigenous child who was in out-of-home care.

(c) Rates were calculated using revised population estimates based on the 2011 Census and should not be compared with rates calculated using populations or projections based on previous Censuses, including those published in previous editions of this report.

Sources: AIHW Child Protection Data Collections; AIHW 2015.

## Teenage births

Indicator 0.3: Age-specific birth rate for women aged 15–19 years

**Table 3: Live births to teenage mothers aged 15–19 years, 2009 to 2011**

Rate per 1000 females	2009	2010	2011
Indigenous mothers	66.0	65.9	61.9
Non-Indigenous mothers	13.9	13.3	13.0
Total birth rate	16.4	15.9	15.4
Total number of births	11 692	11 293	10 903

**Note:** AIHW 2014 included a number of revisions to historical data for teenage births—specifically, the teenage birth rates (total rate, and rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous mothers) for 2010 and earlier were revised, and should therefore not be compared to the rates included in previous editions (see AIHW 2014 for further details). No revisions were made to the 'total number of births'. The revised rates are included in the above table.

Source: AIHW National Perinatal Data Collection, data sourced from AIHW 2014.

## Low birth weight

### Indicator 0.4: Proportion of live born infants of low birth weight

**Table 4a: Live birth babies, by birth weight and Indigenous status, 2012**

Birth weight (g)	Indigenous mothers Number	Indigenous mothers Per cent	All mothers Number	All mothers Per cent
Less than 2500	1 450	11.8	19 243	6.2
Less than 1500	257	2.1	3 071	1.0
1500–2499	1 193	9.7	16 172	5.2
2500 and over	10 864	88.2	290 618	93.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 314</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>309 861</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Notes:**

1. '2500 and over' includes birth weight not stated (which accounted for less than 0.1% of all live births).
2. Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Source:** AIHW National Perinatal Data Collection, data sourced from Hilder et al. 2014.

**Table 4b: Live birth babies, by birth weight and Indigenous status, 2011**

Birth weight (g)	Indigenous mothers Number	Indigenous mothers Per cent	All mothers Number	All mothers Per cent
Less than 2500	1 482	12.6	18 829	6.3
Less than 1500	237	2.0	3 080	1.0
1500–2499	1 245	10.6	15 749	5.2
2500 and over	10 255	87.4	280 759	93.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 737</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>299 588</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Notes:**

1. '2500 and over' includes birth weight not stated (which accounted for less than 0.1% of all live births).
2. Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Source:** AIHW National Perinatal Data Collection, data sourced from Li et al. 2013.

**Table 4c: Live birth babies, by birth weight and Indigenous status, 2010**

<b>Birth weight (g)</b>	<b>Indigenous mothers Number</b>	<b>Indigenous mothers Per cent</b>	<b>All mothers Number</b>	<b>All mothers Per cent</b>
Less than 2500	1 385	12.0	18 522	6.2
Less than 1500	265	2.3	3 120	1.0
1500–2499	1 120	9.7	15 402	5.2
2500 and over	10 126	88.0	278 835	93.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 511</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>297 357</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Notes:**

1. '2500 and over' includes birth weight not stated (which accounted for less than 0.1% of all live births).
2. Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Source:** AIHW National Perinatal Data Collection, data sourced from Li et al. 2012.

**Table 4d: Live birth babies, by birth weight and Indigenous status, 2009**

<b>Birth weight (g)</b>	<b>Indigenous mothers Number</b>	<b>Indigenous mothers Per cent</b>	<b>All mothers Number</b>	<b>All mothers Per cent</b>
Less than 2500	1 352	12.0	18 347	6.2
Less than 1500	235	2.1	3 017	1.0
1500–2499	1 117	9.9	15 330	5.2
2500 and over	9 915	88.0	278 835	93.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 267</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>296 791</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Notes:**

1. '2500 and over' includes birth weight not stated (which accounted for less than 0.1% of all live births).
2. Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Source:** AIHW National Perinatal Data Collection, data sourced from Li et al. 2011.

## Child homicide

### Indicator 0.5: Assault (homicide) death rate for children aged 0–17 years

**Table 5a: Assault (homicide deaths) among children aged 0–17 years, 2010–11 to 2011–12**

Age (years)	Boys Number	Girls Number	All children Number	Boys Rate per 100,000 children	Girls Rate per 100,000 children	All children Rate per 100,000 children
Under 1	7	6	13	2.3	2.1	2.2
1–9	13	11	24	0.5	0.4	0.5
10–14	4	5	9	0.3	0.4	0.3
15–17	13	3	16	1.5	0.4	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.6</b>

**Notes:**

1. Data are aggregated for a two-year period due to the small number of homicide deaths.
2. To protect privacy, disaggregation by Indigenous status is not available for total homicide victims aged 0 to 17 due to small cell sizes.

**Source:** AIHW analysis of Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) National Homicide Monitoring Program data from Bryant and Cussen 2015.

**Table 5b: Assault (homicide deaths) among children aged 0–17 years, 2008–09 to 2009–10**

Age (years)	Boys Number	Girls Number	All children Number	Boys Rate per 100,000 children	Girls Rate per 100,000 children	All children Rate per 100,000 children
Under 1	7	5	12	2.3	1.7	2.0
1–9	11	8	19	0.4	0.3	0.4
10–14	5	3	8	0.4	0.2	0.3
15–17	7	3	10	0.8	0.4	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>

**Notes:**

1. Data are aggregated for a two-year period due to the small number of homicide deaths.
2. Rates were calculated by AIHW using revised population estimates based on the 2011 Census, and should not be compared with rates calculated using populations or projections based on previous Censuses, including those published in previous editions of the Annual Report.
3. To protect privacy, disaggregation by Indigenous status is not available for total homicide victims aged 0 to 17 due to small cell sizes.

**Source:** AIHW analysis of Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) National Homicide Monitoring Program data from Chan and Payne 2013.

## Early childhood development

Indicator 0.6: Proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

**Table 6: Children developmentally vulnerable on one or more AEDC domains, 2009 and 2012**

	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains Per cent 2009	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains Per cent 2012	Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains Per cent 2009	Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains Per cent 2012
Indigenous children	47.4	43.2	29.6	26.0
Non-Indigenous children	22.4	20.9	11.0	10.0
All children	23.6	22.0	11.8	10.8

Sources: Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (TICHR) 2009; DEEWR 2013.

## Family economic situation

Indicator 0.8: Proportion of households with children aged 0–14<sup>(a)</sup> years where at least 50% of gross household income is from government pensions and allowances

**Table 7: Contribution of government pensions and allowances to gross household income among families with dependent children aged 0–14 years(a), 2009–10 and 2011–12**

	2009–10 Per cent of one parent family households	2011–12 Per cent of one parent family households	2009–10 Per cent of couple family households	2011–12 Per cent of couple family households	2009–10 Per cent of all households	2011–12 Per cent of all households
Nil or less than 1%	4.3	6.2	35.4	41.6	28.3	33.9
1% to less than 20%	15.3	23.2	44.1	37.2	38.8	34.9
20% to less than 50%	20.5	21.3	12.5	13.1	14.8	15.2
50% to less than 90%	25.4	23.9	3.4	3.5	7.9	7.5
90% and over	34.3	24.9	4.1	4.4	9.7	8.2
<i>At least 50%</i>	<i>59.7</i>	<i>48.8</i>	<i>7.5</i>	<i>7.9</i>	<i>17.6</i>	<i>15.7</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Estimated number of households in population</b>	<b>2009–10</b>	<b>2011–12</b>	<b>2009–10</b>	<b>2011–12</b>	<b>2009–10</b>	<b>2011–12</b>
	344 000	344 000	1 439 000	1 495 000	1 856 000	1 925 000

(a) Includes all children aged 0 to 14 years. Dependent full-time students aged 15 to 24 years are excluded.

(b) Includes multiple family households.

**Notes:**

1. Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.
2. Data on Indigenous status are not available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2009–10 or 2011–12 Surveys of Income and Housing.

**Sources:** AIHW analysis of ABS 2011 (unpublished data) and ABS 2013a (unpublished data).

## Part 2: 2013-14 Supporting outcome reporting

### Outcome 1-Children live in safe and supportive families and communities

#### Family functioning

Indicator 1.1: Proportion of families who report 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent' family cohesion

**Table 8: Families with children reporting good, very good or excellent family cohesion, 2010–11**

Child cohort	One parent families Per cent	One parent families 95% CI	Couple families Per cent	Couple families 95% CI	All families Per cent	All families 95% CI
Birth (6–7 years)	82.8	78.8–86.2	92.5	91.4–93.5	91.0	89.9–91.9
Kinder (10–11 years)	81.4	77.6–84.7	91.4	90.3–92.4	89.6	88.4–90.7

**Note:** Due to the cohort-based study design and small sample sizes for Indigenous people in the LSAC, estimates for Indigenous families were not considered sufficiently reliable for reporting.

**Source:** LSAC Wave 4 (2010–11) data sourced from AIHW 2013c.

#### Perceived safety

Indicator 1.2: Proportion of households with children aged 0–14 years where their neighbourhood is perceived as safe

**Table 9: Households with children aged 0–14 where neighbourhood is perceived as safe or very safe, 2010**

Feels safe or very safe	Per cent
At home alone	
During day and at night	85.4
During day	94.4
At night	85.5
Walking alone in local area at night	59.5

**Note:** Data on Indigenous status are not available from the ABS 2010 General Social Survey.

**Source:** ABS 2010 General Social Survey data sourced from AIHW 2012a.

## Outcome 2-Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early

### Family support service use

Indicator 2.1: Number of children aged 0–17 years seeking assistance through treatment and support services

**Table 10: Children commencing Intensive Family Support services, 2013–14**

Age group (years)	Number	Per cent <sup>(b)</sup>
0–4	9 856	47.0
5–9	5 979	28.5
10–14	3 879	18.5
15–17	1 253	6.0
<b>Total children</b>	<b>21 903<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Total includes 936 children whose age was unknown. This includes all children commencing services in South Australia and the Northern Territory, as data could not be disaggregated by age.

(b) Percentages exclude children of unknown age. Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Source:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections.

### Early childhood education

Indicator 2.2: Attendance rate of children aged 4–5 years at preschool programs

**Table 11: Children attending a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling, 2013 (per cent)**

	2012	2013
Indigenous children	76.0	72.9
Non-Indigenous children	86.0	94.9
<b>All children</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>93.6</b>
Number of children	258 881	280 908

**Notes:**

1. A small number of children aged 5 attend a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling. In calculating the percentages, the numerator therefore includes children aged 4 and 5 and the denominator includes children aged 4 only.
2. Indigenous status data for 2013 were calculated using ABS Indigenous population estimates based on the 2011 Census, and can not be compared with the Indigenous status data for 2012 which were calculated using ABS Indigenous population estimates based on the 2006 Census.

**Source:** ABS National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection data sourced from AIHW 2014.

## Antenatal care

Indicator 2.3: Proportion of women who had at least five antenatal visits during pregnancy

**Table 12: Women who gave birth at 32 weeks or more gestation, and had at least five antenatal visits during pregnancy, 2011 and 2012 (per cent)**

	2011	2012
Indigenous mothers	84.6	85.9
Non-Indigenous mothers	95.6	95.9
All mothers	95.0	95.3

**Notes:**

1. In 2011 and 2012, data on the number of antenatal visits during pregnancy were only available for Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.
2. Table includes women who gave birth at 32 weeks or more gestation, thus excluding very preterm births.
3. Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.
4. Published percentages for 2011 and 2012 exclude mothers with 'not stated' number of antenatal visits from the denominator, and are therefore not directly comparable with published percentages for 2010 and earlier (which include 'not stated' in the denominator; for example, see Li et al. 2012).

**Source:** AIHW National Perinatal Data Collection, data sourced from Li et al. 2013 and Hilder et al. 2014.

## Outcome 3-Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed

### Parental substance use

Indicator 3.1: Proportion of parents with children aged 0–14 years who used any illicit drug within the last 12 months

**Table 13:** Illicit drug use in the past 12 months among parents with children aged 0–14 years, 2007 and 2010

	Adults with children <sup>(a)</sup> 2007	Adults with children <sup>(a)</sup> 2010	Adults without children <sup>(a)</sup> 2007	Adults without children <sup>(a)</sup> 2010
Used a licit substance for non-medical purposes	2.9	3.1	4.2	4.7
Used any illicit substance	10.2	11.1	11.8	13.1
Used any illicit substance or licit substance for non-medical purposes	12.4	13.1	14.5	16.0

(a) Adults are persons aged 18 years or more. 'Children' are dependent children aged 0 to 14 years.

Source: AIHW analysis of NDSHS, previously published by FaHCSIA (now DSS) 2013.

### Parental mental health

Indicator 3.3: Proportion of parents with children aged 0–14 years who have a mental health problem

**Table 14:** Parents with co-resident children aged 0–14 with a Mental Health Component Summary score of less than 41, by family type, 2006 and 2011

Year	One parent families Per cent	One parent families 95% CI	Couple families Per cent	Couple families 95% CI	All families Per cent	All families 95% CI
2006	31.0	24.0–38.1	16.8	14.9–18.7	18.3	16.6–20.0
2011	33.6	25.6–41.7	14.1	12.1–16.1	16.1	14.2–18.1

Note: For the reported years, estimated percentages for Indigenous parents had relative standard errors above 25% and so are not considered sufficiently reliable.

Source: AIHW analysis of HILDA Survey, Waves 6 (2006) and 11 (2011), unpublished data.

## Homelessness

Indicator 3.4: Rate of children aged 0–17 years who receive assistance through homelessness services (accompanied and unaccompanied)

**Table 15: Children aged 0–17 years assisted by specialist homelessness services, 2011–12**

Age group (years)	Indigenous children Number	Non-Indigenous children Number	All children Number
0–4	6 668	13 168	22 580
5–9	4 502	9 714	16 276
10–14	3 394	8 247	13 475
15–17	2 928	9 925	14 945
Total 0–17	17 492	41 053	67 277
	Indigenous children Rate per 1000 children	Non-Indigenous children Rate per 1000 children	All children Rate per 1000 children
0–4	92.8	9.4	15.4
5–9	69.8	7.3	11.7
10–14	52.1	6.3	9.8
15–17	75.4	12.0	17.3
Total 0–17	72.8	8.4	13.2

**Notes:**

1. 'All children' includes 8732 children whose Indigenous status was unknown (13.0% of all children).
2. Data are weighted to adjust for non-sampling error (details provided in AIHW 2012b). Categories may not add to Total due to rounding.

**Source:** AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services data collection, previously published in FaHCSIA 2013.

## Outcome 4-Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing

### Child protection resubstantiations

Indicator 4.1: Rate of children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a child protection resubstantiation in a given year

**Table 16: Children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, 2008–09 to 2012–13**

	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
<b>Subject of a resubstantiation within 3 months</b>					
Number of children	2 657	2 197	2 214	2 297	2 945
Proportion of children	7.2	6.4	6.7	6.0	7.0
<b>Subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months</b>					
Number of children	6 403	5 326	5 691	6 804	7 902
Proportion of children	17.3	15.6	17.1	17.9	18.9

**Notes:**

1. Children who were the subject of a resubstantiation are those who were the subject of a substantiation during the reference period (regardless of the date of notification), who were also the subject of at least one subsequent notification within the following 3 or 12 months, that was subsequently substantiated. The year reported relates to the year of the original substantiation. The proportion is of all children who were the subject of a substantiation in the year reported.
2. Disaggregation by Indigenous status was not available.

**Source:** SCRGSP 2015.

## Placement stability

Indicator 4.2: Proportion of children aged 0–17 years exiting out-of-home care during the year who had 1 or 2 placements

**Table 17: Children exiting out-of-home care in 2013–14<sup>(a)</sup>, by number of different placements and Indigenous status**

### All Children

Number of different placements	1	2	1-2 subtotal	3	4	5+	Total
Length of time in out-of-home care							
1 month to < 6 months	14.2	5.9	20.1	2.4	0.6	0.5	23.6
6 months to < 1 year	6.6	3.7	10.3	1.3	0.5	0.5	12.6
1 year to < 2 years	5.8	4.8	10.6	3.0	1.6	1.7	16.8
2 years to < 5 years	4.2	4.4	8.6	3.6	2.7	4.9	19.8
5 years or more	6.0	5.0	11.0	3.5	2.6	10.0	27.1
<b>Total children</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Indigenous Children

Number of different placements	1	2	1-2 subtotal	3	4	5+	Total
Length of time in out-of-home care							
1 month to < 6 months	15.8	4.5	20.3	2.7	0.6	0.3	23.9
6 months to < 1 year	5.2	3.6	8.7	1.3	0.5	0.3	10.9
1 year to < 2 years	5.0	4.2	9.1	3.5	2.1	2.0	16.7
2 years to < 5 years	3.7	4.3	8.0	3.0	2.5	6.5	20.1
5 years or more	5.6	4.0	9.6	3.8	2.6	12.5	28.5
<b>Total children</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>55.7</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Non-Indigenous Children(c)

Number of different placements	1	2	1-2 subtotal	3	4	5+	Total
Length of time in out-of-home care							
1 month to < 6 months	14.4	6.7	21.1	2.4	0.6	0.5	24.7
6 months to < 1 year	7.2	3.6	10.8	1.3	0.5	0.5	13.1
1 year to < 2 years	6.0	4.9	10.9	2.7	1.4	1.6	16.6
2 years to < 5 years	4.3	4.4	8.7	3.7	2.7	4.3	19.4
5 years or more	6.1	5.2	11.4	3.3	2.6	8.9	26.2
<b>Total children</b>	<b>38.0</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Excludes WA and NT.

(b) 'All children' includes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

(c) 'Non-Indigenous children' excludes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

**Note:** Percentages in tables may not add to subtotals or totals due to rounding.

**Source:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections

## Leaving care plans

Indicator 4.6: Proportion of children aged 15–17 years who have a leaving care plan

**Table 18: Young people aged 15 years and over who have a current and approved leaving care plan, at 30 June 2014**

Indigenous status	Per cent
Indigenous	56.8
Non-Indigenous	60.5
All young people(a)	59.5

(a) 'All young people' includes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

**Note:** Reported numbers are based on data from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia only. These data were provided for national reporting for the first time in 2012. Data only include children who are required by jurisdictional policy/legislation to have a current and approved leaving care plan.

**Source:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections.

## Outcome 5-Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities

### Placement of Indigenous children

Indicator 5.2: Proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care placed with extended family or other Indigenous caregivers

**Table 19: Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and relationship of carer, 2010 to 2014**

Carer type	2010 No.	2010 %	2011 No.	2011 %	2012 No.	2012 %	2013 No.	2013 %	2014 No.	2014 %
Indigenous relative/kin	4 633	40.6	4 803	39.0	5 047	38.2	5 216	37.5	5 548	37.1
Other Indigenous caregiver	2 001	17.5	2 055	16.7	2 169	16.4	2 225	16.0	2 314	15.5
Other relative/kin	1 412	12.4	1 657	13.5	1 866	14.1	2 002	14.4	2 221	14.8
Total placed with extended family or other Indigenous caregiver	8 046	70.5	8 515	69.2	9 082	68.8	9 443	67.9	10 083	67.4
Other caregiver	3 370	29.5	3 788	30.8	4 122	31.2	4 243	30.5	4 879	32.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 416</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12 303</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13 204</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13 911</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14 962</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Notes:**

1. This table does not include Indigenous children who were living independently or whose living arrangements were unknown.
2. Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.
3. Family group homes and residential care are reported under 'other caregiver'.

**Sources:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections; AIHW 2015.

## Outcome 6-Child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support

### Sexual abuse substantiations

Indicator 6.1: Rate of children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a child protection substantiation for sexual abuse

**Table 20: Children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a substantiation, by type of abuse or neglect and Indigenous status, 2013–14**

	Indigenous children Number	Indigenous children Rate	Non-Indigenous children Number	Non-Indigenous children Rate	All children Number	All children Rate
Physical	1 903	6.5	5 780	1.2	7 906	1.5
Sexual	998	3.4	4 292	0.9	5 581	1.1
Emotional	3 790	13.0	11 803	2.4	16 093	3.1
Neglect	4 567	15.7	6 220	1.3	11 194	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 270</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>28 149</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>40 844</b>	<b>7.8</b>

(a) 'All children' includes children whose Indigenous status is unknown.

**Notes:**

1. Finalised investigations, and thus substantiations, refer only to cases which were notified during the reporting year and finalised by 31 August. This excludes finalised investigations that were notified in a previous reporting period.
2. If a child was the subject of more than one type of abuse or neglect as part of the same notification, then the abuse and/or neglect reported is the one considered by the child protection workers to cause the most harm to the child. Where a child is the subject of more than one substantiation during the year, then the type of abuse reported in this table is the type of abuse and/or neglect associated with the substantiation decision relating to the earliest notification during the year.
3. Totals include substantiations for which the abuse type was recorded as 'not stated/inadequately described'. As such, total may not equal the sum of categories.
4. Rates were calculated using revised population estimates based on the 2011 Census and should not be compared with rates calculated using populations or projections based on previous Censuses, including those published in previous editions of the Annual Report.

**Sources:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections; AIHW 2015.

## Child sexual assault

Indicator 6.2: Rate of children aged 0–14 years who have been the victim of sexual assault

**Table 21: Children who were recorded victims of sexual assault, 2010 to 2013**

	2010 Number	2010 Rate per 100,000	2011 Number	2011 Rate per 100,000	2012 Number	2012 Rate per 100,000	2013 Number	2013 Rate per 100,000
<b>Boys</b>								
0–9 years	823	57.0	825	56.5	944	63.2	990	64.8
10–14 years	804	113.2	696	97.8	669	93.8	814	113.6
Total 0–14 years	1 627	75.5	1 521	70.0	1 613	73.1	1 804	80.4
<b>Girls</b>								
0–9 years	1 831	133.7	1 769	127.7	1 610	113.8	1 966	136.0
10–14 years	3 707	549.6	3 460	511.6	3 586	528.7	3 810	558.6
Total 0–14 years	5 538	270.9	5 229	253.7	5 196	248.2	5 776	271.5
<b>All children (a)</b>								
0–9 years	2 660	94.5	2 599	91.3	2 557	87.9	2 956	99.5
10–14 years	4 514	326.0	4 159	299.7	4 259	306.1	4 627	330.8
Total 0–14 years	7 174	170.9	6 758	159.6	6 816	158.5	7 583	173.5

(a) 'All children' includes victims whose sex was not specified. As such, the sum of 'Boys' and 'Girls' may not equal 'All children'.

**Notes:**

1. Rates were calculated by AIHW using revised population estimates based on the 2011 Census, and should not be compared with rates calculated using populations or projections based on previous Censuses, including those published in previous editions of the Annual Report.
2. These data capture sexual assault offences that have been recorded by police. These offences may have been reported by a victim, witness or other person, or they may have been detected by police. The statistics do not provide a total picture of victims, as not all crimes are reported to police, nor do all incidents which are reported to police get recorded as a crime. Victims may be double-counted where multiple offences have occurred.
3. The age information collected about a victim relates to the age of the victim at the time he or she becomes known to police rather than the age that the person became a victim. For example, if a victim was sexually assaulted at age 14 years but did not report the offence until she or he was 18 years old, the victim's age would be recorded as 18 years. Therefore, it is not possible to derive an accurate count of victims at the age when they were victimised.
4. ABS advises caution in interpreting police statistics, as fluctuations in recorded crime may be a reflection of changes in community attitudes in reporting crime, changes in police procedures or changes in crime reporting systems, rather than a change in the incidence of criminal behaviour.

**Source:** AIHW analysis of ABS 2014.

## Appendix B

# 2013-14 National Standards for out-of-home care data tables



In 2013–14, of the 22 measures identified against the National Standards for out-of-home care, seven were able to be reported: 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 4.1, 9.1, 12.1 and 13.1.

## Standard 1: Children and young people will be provided with stability and security during their time in care

Measure 1.1: The proportion of children and young people exiting out-of-home care during the year who had 1 or 2 placements, by length of time in continuous care preceding exit

**Table 22: Children exiting out-of-home care in 2013–14<sup>(a)</sup>, by number of different placements and Indigenous status**

### All children<sup>(b)</sup>

Number of different placements	1	2	1-2 subtotal	3	4	5+	Total
Length of time in out-of-home care							
1 month to < 6 months	14.2	5.9	20.1	2.4	0.6	0.5	23.6
6 months to < 1 year	6.6	3.7	10.3	1.3	0.5	0.5	12.6
1 year to < 2 years	5.8	4.8	10.6	3.0	1.6	1.7	16.8
2 years to < 5 years	4.2	4.4	8.6	3.6	2.7	4.9	19.8
5 years or more	6.0	5.0	11.0	3.5	2.6	10.0	27.1
<b>Total children</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Indigenous children

Number of different placements	1	2	1-2 subtotal	3	4	5+	Total
Length of time in out-of-home care							
1 month to < 6 months	15.8	4.5	20.3	2.7	0.6	0.3	23.9
6 months to < 1 year	5.2	3.6	8.7	1.3	0.5	0.3	10.9
1 year to < 2 years	5.0	4.2	9.1	3.5	2.1	2.0	16.7
2 years to < 5 years	3.7	4.3	8.0	3.0	2.5	6.5	20.1
5 years or more	5.6	4.0	9.6	3.8	2.6	12.5	28.5
<b>Total children</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>55.7</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Non-Indigenous children<sup>(c)</sup>

Number of different placements	1	2	1-2 subtotal	3	4	5+	Total
Length of time in out-of-home care							
1 month to < 6 months	14.4	6.7	21.1	2.4	0.6	0.5	24.7
6 months to < 1 year	7.2	3.6	10.8	1.3	0.5	0.5	13.1
1 year to < 2 years	6.0	4.9	10.9	2.7	1.4	1.6	16.6
2 years to < 5 years	4.3	4.4	8.7	3.7	2.7	4.3	19.4
5 years or more	6.1	5.2	11.4	3.3	2.6	8.9	26.2
<b>Total children</b>	<b>38.0</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Excludes WA and NT.

(b) 'All children' includes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

(c) 'Non-Indigenous children' excludes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

**Note:** Percentages in tables may not add to subtotals or totals due to rounding.

**Source:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections.

Measure 1.2: The number and proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care

**Table 23: Children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was living in the household, 2013–14**

	2013–14
Number of children who were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was living in the household	365
Number of children in at least one out-of-home care placement during 2013–14	48 622
Per cent <sup>(a)</sup>	0.8

(a) 'Per cent' is children in care who were the subject of a substantiation as a proportion of all children in care.

**Notes:**

1. Excludes the Northern Territory, as they are unable to provide data for this measure.
2. Indigenous status data were not available for reporting.

**Source:** SCRGSP 2015.

Standard 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities participate in decisions concerning the care and placement of their children and young people

Measure 3.1: The proportion of Indigenous children and young people in out-of-home care placed with the child's extended family, with the child's Indigenous community, or with other Indigenous people, by carer type.

**Table 24: Indigenous children in out-of-home care, by carer type, 2013–14**

Carer type	Per cent
Indigenous relative/kin	37.1
Other Indigenous caregiver <sup>(a)</sup>	15.5
Other relative/kin	14.8
Total placed with extended family, Indigenous community, or other Indigenous people	67.4
Other caregiver	32.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Includes Indigenous residential care.

**Note:** Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Sources:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections; AIHW 2015

Standard 4: Each child and young person has an individualised plan that details their health, education and other needs.

Measure 4.1: The proportion of children and young people who have a current documented case plan

**Table 25: Children aged 0–17 years who have a current documented and approved case plan, at 30 June 2014**

Indigenous status	Per cent
Indigenous children	80.5
Non-Indigenous children	83.1
All children <sup>(a)</sup>	82.1

(a) 'All children' includes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

**Note:** Excludes South Australia and the Northern Territory. Data only include children who are required by jurisdictional policy/legislation to have a current documented and approved case plan.

**Source:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections.

Standard 9: Children and young people are supported to safely and appropriately maintain connection with family, be they birth parents, siblings or other family members

Measure 9.1: The proportion of children and young people in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives and kin

**Table 26: Children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, at 30 June 2014**

Indigenous status	Per cent
Indigenous children	50.8
Non-Indigenous children	47.3
All children <sup>(a)</sup>	48.5

(a) 'All children' includes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

**Source:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections.

## Standard 12: Carers are assessed and receive relevant ongoing training, development and support, in order to provide quality care.

### Measure 12.1 (part a): The number of foster carer households with a placement at 30 June, by number of foster children placed

At 30 June 2014, there were 9932 households with one or more foster care placements. Approximately half (51 per cent) of these households had one foster child placed with them, 46 per cent had between two and four foster children, and 4 per cent had five or more children.

**Table 27: Foster carer households with a placement at 30 June 2014, by number of foster children placed**

Number of children per household	Number of households	Per cent
1	5 023	50.6
2	2 778	28.0
3–4	1 751	17.6
5 or more	380	3.8
<b>Total<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>9 932</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) 'Total' includes households where the number of children placed at 30 June was unknown.

**Notes:**

- Percentages in tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.
- Data on Indigenous status of foster carer household are not available for 2014.

**Source:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections; AIHW 2015.

### Measure 12.1 (part b): The number of foster carer households with a placement during the year

**Table 28: Foster carer households with a placement during 2013–14**

	Number of households
Households with a placement during 2013–14	12 860

Note Data on Indigenous status of foster carer households are not available for 2013–14.

Source: AIHW Child Protection Data Collections; AIHW 2015.

## Standard 13: Children and young people have a transition from care plan commencing at 15 years old which details support to be provided after leaving care

Measure 13.1: The proportion of young people aged 15 years and over who have a current leaving care plan

**Table 29: Young people aged 15 years and over who have a current and approved leaving care plan, at 30 June 2014**

Indigenous status	Per cent
Indigenous	56.8
Non-Indigenous	60.5
All young people <sup>(a)</sup>	59.5

(a) 'All young people' includes children whose Indigenous status was unknown.

**Note:** Reported numbers are based on data from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia only. These data were provided for national reporting for the first time in 2012. Data only include children who are required by jurisdictional policy/legislation to have a current and approved leaving care plan.

**Source:** AIHW Child Protection Data Collections.



# Appendix C

## References

ABS: See Australian Bureau of Statistics

AIHW: See Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

CCCH & TICH: See Centre for Community Child Health and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research

DEEWR: See Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

FaHCSIA: See Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (now Department of Social Services)

SCRGSP: See Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2010, *Australian Social Trends, Who's afraid? Feelings of personal safety*, cat. no. 4102.0, ABS, Canberra.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011, *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia, 2009–10*, cat. no. 6523.0, ABS, Canberra.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2013a, *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2014, Recorded crime - victims, Australia*, cat. no. 4510.0, ABS, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) 2015. *The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children Annual Statistical Report 2014*. Melbourne: AIFS.

Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 2013, *A snapshot of early childhood development in Australia 2012*, DEEWR, Canberra.

Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) 2013, *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business, National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020: Annual Report to the Council of Australian Governments 2011–12*, FaHCSIA, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2008, *Technical paper on operational definitions and data issues for key national indicators of children's health, development and wellbeing*, cat. no. WP 59, AIHW, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2011a, *Headline Indicators for children's health, development and wellbeing 2011*, cat. no. PHE 144, AIHW, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey report*, Drug statistics series no. 25, cat. no. PHE 145, AIHW, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2012a, *A Picture of Australia's children 2012*, cat. no. PHE 167, AIHW, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2012b, *Specialist Homelessness Services 2011–12*, cat. no. HOU 267, AIHW, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2013c, *Australia's Welfare 2013, Australia's welfare series no. 11*, cat. no. AUS 174, AIHW, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2014, *Children's Headline Indicators*, AIHW, Canberra, viewed 10 December 2014, Go to [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2015, *Child Protection Australia 2013–14*, Child welfare series no. 61. Cat. no. CWS 52, AIHW, Canberra. Go to [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)
- Bromfield, L, Higgins, JR, Higgins, DJ and Richardson, N 2007, *Why is there a shortage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers?* Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- Bromfield L, Lamont, A, Parker, R and Horsfall, B 2010, *Issues for the safety and wellbeing of children in families with multiple and complex problems: The co-occurrence of domestic violence, parental substance misuse and mental health problems*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- Bromfield, L and Osborn, A 2007, *Getting the big picture: A synopsis and critique of Australian out-of-home care research*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- Bryant, W and Cussen, T 2015, *Homicide in Australia: 2010–11 to 2011–12*, National Homicide Monitoring Program report, AIC Monitoring Report 23, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- Centre for Community Child Health and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research 2009, *A snapshot of early childhood development in Australia: AEDI national report 2009*, re-issue March 2011, DEEWR, Canberra.
- Chan, A and Payne, J 2013, *Homicide in Australia: 2008–09 to 2009–10*, National Homicide Monitoring Program annual report, AIC Monitoring Report 21, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- Dawe, S, Harnett, PH and Frye, S 2008, *Improving outcomes for children living in families with parental substance misuse: What we know and what should we do*, Child Abuse Prevention Issues No. 29, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- Geggie, J, DeFrain, J and Hitchcock, S 2000, *Family strengths research project*, University of Newcastle Family Action Centre, Newcastle.
- Li, Z, McNally, L, Hilder, L and Sullivan, EA 2011, *Australia's mothers and babies 2009*, Perinatal statistics series no. 25, cat. no. PER 52, AIHW National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit, Sydney.
- Li, Z, Zeki, R, Hilder, L and Sullivan, EA 2012, *Australia's mothers and babies 2010*, Perinatal statistics series no. 27, cat. no. PER 57, AIHW National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit, Sydney.
- Li Z, Zeki R, Hilder L & Sullivan EA 2013. *Australia's mothers and babies 2011*. Perinatal statistics series no. 28. Cat. no. PER 59. Canberra: AIHW National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit.
- Hilder L, Zhichao Z, Parker M, Jahan S, Chambers GM 2014, *Australia's mothers and babies 2012*, Perinatal statistics series no. 30, Cat. no. PER 69, Canberra, AIHW.
- Lamont, A 2010, *Effects of child abuse and neglect for children and adolescents*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- NSW Department of Community Services 2007, *Permanency planning and placement stability*, Research to Practice Notes, NSW Department of Community Services, Sydney.
- Osborn, A and Bromfield, L 2007, *Outcomes for children and young people in care*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- Price-Robertson, R, Bromfield, L and Vassallo, S 2010, *The prevalence of child abuse and neglect*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- Shek, D 2002, 'Family functioning and psychological well-being, school adjustment, and problem behaviour in Chinese adolescents with and without economic disadvantage', *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 163, pp. 497–502.
- Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2013, *Report on Government Services 2013*, Productivity Commission, Canberra. Go to [www.pc.gov.au](http://www.pc.gov.au)

Tseng, Y and Wilkins, R 2002, *Reliance on income support in Australia: Prevalence and persistence*, Melbourne Institute Working Paper No. 6/02, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

Zubrick, S, Wood, L, Villanueva, K, Wood, G, Giles-Cort, B and Christian, H 2010, *Nothing but fear itself: parental fear as a determinant impacting on child physical activity and independent mobility*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), Carlton.

