



Families and Children (FaC) Activity Newsletter

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Happy Spring to all FaC Activity service providers and staff! Welcome to our latest newsletter update. This issue includes information about:

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Please feel free to circulate this newsletter to other staff in your organisation. If staff would like to receive the newsletter directly, they can send a request from their email address to families@dss.gov.au.

We are open to feedback on the frequency, format and content of the newsletter. If you have suggestions, please email us at families@dss.gov.au.



Updates on grant funding

Children and Parenting Support (CaPS)

Earlier this year, the government extended funding for 166 grant activities that were due to finish on 30 June 2023.

The government extended the grants from 1 July 2023 for up to 3 years. This brings the majority of these grants in line with other FaC Activity grants funded until 30 June 2026.

This included 30 grants under the former Budget Based Funded (BBF) program, which were transitioned into the CaPS program from 1 July 2023.

Further information is on the [DSS website](#).



Review Point

The department has commenced the mid-term Review Point for service providers who received 5-year extensions from 1 July 2021:

- Communities for Children Facilitating Partner (CfC FP)
- Family and Relationship Services (FaRS)
- Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS)
- Five national Children and Parenting Support (CaPS) activities.

The Review Point is an opportunity for the department and service providers to:

- check if grant activities are on track
- identify areas for improvement
- work together to achieve improved outcomes.

Providers do not need to do anything differently. The department has started the review work internally and will be in touch with providers to discuss outcomes by 29 February 2024.

A fact sheet about the Review Point is available on the [DSS website](#). If you have any questions, please contact your Funding Arrangement Manager.

ⓘ Please note this information does not apply to the CaPS activities that were recently extended from 1 July 2023. The [Review Point](#) for those activities will begin in September 2024.



Activity Work Plans

A big THANKS to all providers who submitted their Activity Work Plan (AWP) by the due date of 15 August 2023. The department would like to acknowledge the significant time and effort that providers put into AWP and AWP reports.

These AWP provide valuable qualitative information which complements your DEX data. This really helps the department understand more about the valuable services and supports you are providing to your communities.

A friendly reminder for any providers who have not yet submitted their AWP to please do so as soon as possible. If you have any issues or concerns, please talk to your Funding Arrangement Manager. Current AWP templates are available on each program page on the [DSS website](#).



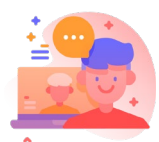
Program Logics

We are very happy to share that 99% of program logics are now complete. A massive thank you to everyone for your efforts!

It was great to see the engagement on this process, including coming along to webinars and sourcing any support you needed. This new requirement was added in 2021 to focus on outcomes for families and children in Australia.

Reading the program logics has been really informative for the department. We hope the process has also proved useful for your organisations.

We appreciate everyone getting them in on time – the quality of the submissions is very high too! Thanks again and well done to all.



Getting to know you!

We are keen to learn more about how things are going ‘on the ground’ with our providers! The department is hoping to do some informal site visits and online meetings over the coming months to hear more from you directly about how programs are currently working.

If you would like to take part, and are keen to have a department official visit your location or have an online catch up, please email families@dss.gov.au.

We would love to get to know more of our providers and learn more about your valuable work. Where we have capacity, we hope to meet with as many of you as possible around Australia.



Survey for child, youth and parenting services

DSS and the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) will soon be sending around a survey to providers delivering the following child, youth and parenting services:

- Children and Parenting Support (CaPS)
- Communities for Children Facilitating Partner (CfC FP)
- Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS).

The survey will include questions about key service delivery activities and workforce characteristics. This will help us to understand more about the services that you deliver, the way you do your work, and who makes up the team doing it. We hope to send this out in October 2023.

We encourage everyone to respond to the survey. We are looking forward to understanding more about the valuable services you're providing for children and families around Australia.



New DEX report available

We understand the challenges organisations face trying to identify issues with the reported DEX data. To support you, you can now access the '**Submitted data details**' DEX report. This will allow you to correct any reported data errors before the close of a reporting period. This report has been available to organisations reporting into DEX since 8 June 2023.

The report allows organisations to view their own data submissions at a more granular level. It provides information on outlets, cases, sessions and clients to help organisations check their data entry and fix any incorrectly entered data to improve data quality.

A copy of the [Submitted data details report fact sheet](#) is also available under the Training Resources tab on the [DEX website](#).

We have fact sheets available for the other DEX reports available to organisations reporting into the Data Exchange:

- [Submitted data details](#)
- [Service footprint](#)
- [Resource planning](#)
- [Community profiles – 2nd edition](#)
- [Client outcomes](#)
- [Organisation data quality](#)
- [Organisation overview](#)



DEX Guidance

The August edition of the DEX Program Specific Guidance is now available on the [DEX website](#).

You will notice there is a change to the format of the Program Specific Guidance. Previously all Australian Government agencies guidance was in the one document. Now, it is split by department and program outcome. It has the following format for DSS:

- [Outcome 2.1 – Families and Communities](#)
- [Outcome 3.1 – Disability and Carers](#)
- [Outcome 3.2 – National Disability Insurance Scheme](#)
- [Outcome 4.1 – Housing and Homelessness](#)

Programs that were on-boarded or had updates before August 2023 are included where applicable.

A reminder that if you have any technical DEX questions, please contact the Data Exchange helpdesk by emailing dataexchange.helpdesk@dss.gov.au or phoning 1800 020 283, 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. They are there to help!

Guidance for Communities for Children Facilitating Partners (CfC FPs)

In July 2022, the department sent CfC FPs an email on behalf of the Family Policy team. This email notified them of the phasing out of 2 FP-specific service types in DEX.

These are **Governance** and **Service system capability/capacity**.

This is a reminder that you can report these services in your Activity Work Plan. DEX reporting on these service types is not required. The DEX Program Specific Guidance has been updated to remove these service types.

If you have any questions about DEX or the Program Specific Guidance, please email dataexchange@dss.gov.au.



Website updates

In July, the department updated multiple FaC Activity webpages on the [DSS Website](#). You can now find relevant information for each program on its own page, including Operational Guidelines and templates. Pop over and take a look!

The department also updated the [CaPS Operational Guidelines](#) from 1 July 2023 to reflect the transition of BBF services into the CaPS program.



Evidence and Evaluation Support (EES)

A reminder that AIFS offers free support to FaC Activity providers.

Online resources are available on the [EES website](#).

EES offers one-on-one support to FaC Activity providers for tasks such as:

- guidance to undertake literature reviews
- developing or updating program logics
- writing evaluation questions
- choosing outcomes to measure and measurement tools
- identifying data needs and data collection methods
- help with writing evaluation plans.

The EES team also provides support for Communities for Children Facilitating Partners to meet the 50% evidence-based program requirement.

Email the team at fac-evidence-evaluation@aifs.gov.au for more information or to book a consultation.



Child Family Community Australia (CFCA)

AIFS also runs CFCA, an information exchange for the families and children sector.

You can access publications and webinars on the [CFCA website](#).

Recent CFCA publications you may want to check out:

- [Key organisations for working with culturally and linguistically diverse families](#)
Resource sheet, May 2023
- [Peer support for parents of children with complex needs](#)
Short article, June 2023
- [Technology-facilitated coercive control](#)
Practice guide, June 2023
- [What is community development?](#)
Resource sheet, July 2023
- [Reporting child abuse and neglect](#)
Resource sheet, August 2023

You can also [subscribe to the AIFS newsletter](#) to keep up to date with resources available from AIFS. You can subscribe to the topics:

- Program planning and evaluation (EES content)
- Working with families, children and young people (CFCA content).



Working with Children Compliance

A reminder to all FaC Activity providers about Child Safety obligations under your grant agreement. There are 4 core requirements:

- 1. Risk assessment and management**
Undertake risk assessments annually to identify the level of responsibility for and contact with children, evaluate risks to child safety, and put in place appropriate strategies to manage identified risks.
- 2. Training and compliance**
Establish and maintain a system of training and compliance, to make staff aware of and compliant with the Framework and relevant legislation. This includes Working with Children Checks / Working with Vulnerable People Checks and mandatory reporting requirements.
- 3. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**
Adopt and implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- 4. Annual Child Safety Statement**
Complete an annual statement of compliance form (sent to you by the department). This milestone is due by 31 March each year.

Helpful resources

There is a range of resources available to help you understand and meet your child safe obligations.

- [Child Safety Obligations resource sheet](#)
This provides useful information about your child safety obligations and how to implement them. The department developed this for the CaFIS program, but you can also use it for other FaC Activity programs.
- [Pre-employment screening: Working With Children Checks and Police Checks](#)
This resource sheet developed by AIFS outlines state and territory requirements.
- [Child Safe Organisations website](#) includes a number of resources developed by the office of the National Children's Commissioner, including:
 - Introductory Self-Assessment Tool for Organisations
 - Example Code of Conduct
 - Charter of Commitment
 - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy template
 - Checklist for Online Safety
 - [11 free professional learning units](#) on the National Principles, including separate modules on each of the 10 Principles.

Further information about child safety for DSS grants is on the [DSS website](#).



Stronger ACCOs, Stronger Families Part 2

The department is delivering Stronger ACCOs, Stronger Families Part 2. It is a collaborative project aimed at building and strengthening genuine partnerships between Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and non-First Nations organisations who deliver child and family services in Australia.

This project is exploring the role that ACCOs can play in the delivery of the Communities for Children Facilitating Partner (CfC FP) and Home Interaction for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) programs.

The project is being managed by an Aboriginal organisation, [Wunan Foundation](#), based in the East Kimberley, Western Australia.

Wunan Foundation will work alongside selected communities across the country to:

- strengthen partnerships
- identify service delivery barriers faced by ACCOs
- highlight best practices for partnership development.

You can find more information on the [DSS website](#).

Tranche 1 Outcomes information session

Tranche 1 activities started in March 2023, and work with those involved is continuing. In total, there are 3 CfC FP providers and 2 HIPPY providers participating in Tranche 1.

Wunan will be running an information session on **12 October 2023 from 3:30pm to 5pm (AEST)** for CfC FPs and interested Community Partners. This session will include:

- a presentation on the outcomes from Tranche 1
- early learnings from the leading regions that will inform the activities for Tranche 2.

DSS sent out an email to CfC FP providers on 26 September 2023, with an event registration link for this information session.

How to participate or learn more

Email either strongeraccos@wunan.org.au or families@dss.gov.au if you are a CfC Facilitating Partner or Community Provider, HIPPY or ACCO provider who wants to participate in the next stage of the project, or if you would like to receive more information.



Opportunities to participate in consultations

National Autism Strategy

Public consultation is now open on the development of a National Autism Strategy. The strategy is Australia's inaugural national strategy dedicated to help Autistic people across Australia live the lives they want and deserve.

To create a National Autism Strategy for all Autistic Australians, we need to hear from Autistic people, their families and carers, and the Autism sector.

A Stakeholder Toolkit is available on the [DSS website](#). This can help you reach out to your networks to encourage people to get involved and help shape the change. We encourage you to use this toolkit any time until 30 October 2023.

How you can help

- **Share, share, share!** Tell your stakeholders, members and communities you work with about the consultation process.
- **Spread the word** and encourage people to [register to attend](#) a community engagement, or [register to attend](#) an online workshop.
- Feature the consultation process in your next **newsletter** or on your **website**.
- **Share** posts and animations on your **social media**.
- Provide a **submission** or answer the [online guided questions](#).
- **Share your experiences** through the [online ideas wall](#).

We encourage you to share this information within your networks to create a National Autism Strategy for all Autistic Australians. Thank you for your support!

Community sector grant reforms

The government is committed to developing a stronger, more diverse and independent community sector.

Public consultation is now open on an issues paper on the [DSS Engage website](#). The issues paper will inform a package of recommendations the department is developing on innovative approaches to grant funding for the community sector.

Your feedback on the issues paper will help us understand how:

- to improve grant funding policy, processes and practice
- the government can better partner with community service organisations to help them to deliver services in their communities.

We encourage individuals and organisations to submit their feedback, and invite you to share the paper with your network.

Submissions close on 7 November 2023.