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| **Family Connect and Support (FCS) Program Logic** | | | | |
| Current Situation | **ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES** | EVIDENCE | Outputs | Theory of Change | | client Outcomes |
| The number of child protection helpline reports continues to rise and less than one-third of children reported at Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) receive a face-to-face assessment (Donnelly Inquiry, 2017; Tune Review 2016).  Reviews of the NSW child  protection system between 2008 and 2019 consistently highlight that there is inadequate investment in early intervention services to support families to address their complex needs and vulnerabilities to prevent contact with statutory child protection and entries into OOHC[[1]](#footnote-2)).  The following cohorts[[2]](#footnote-3)   * Aboriginal children, young people & their families * Children aged 0-5 years * Children and young people affected by mental illness * Children and young people at risk of disengagement from school, family and community. * Young parents with known vulnerabilities or who are experiencing a number of hardships.   Commonwealth and NSW Governments have committed to reduce overrepresentation and increase access to early intervention for Aboriginal families.[[3]](#footnote-4) In addition, families with vulnerable young children 0-5 and young people affected by mental illness have been identified as priority populations.[[4]](#footnote-5) .  Families have needs that cross government silos (e.g. economic, health, housing, education, safety) and attempts to coordinate services across agencies have failed to improve their outcomes.[[5]](#footnote-6) The current service system is complex and difficult to navigate, with inconsistencies in service provision and entry points across geographic locations. This makes it difficult for families to access the supports available to them.[[6]](#footnote-7) | Proactive outreach   * Outreach into universal settings, home visits and cold calling to better reach families. * Anyone who presents to FCS will be provided with support if they are not already engaged with the statutory child protection system.   Holistic assessment   * Timely needs and strengths-based assessment. * Whole-of-family lens, trauma-informed and culturally safe. * Tiered support model tailored to client needs.   Timely and warm referrals   * Intake and referral gateway into local services and supports, with support to navigate the system. * Culturally appropriate information and referrals. * Advocating for client access to services, arranging services and introducing clients to the referral agency. * Active outbound contact with families and/or outbound agencies to learn if family’s needs have been met/whether further support is required.   Active holding & flexible brokerage   * Check ins and support to families, including practical supports and use of brokerage, home visits, follow up with services – until a suitable service can be accessed. * Brokerage funding where presenting issues can be quickly addressed through practical assistance.   Family-led decision making   * Meetings with families are strengths-based and encourage family decision-making and responsibility about the services with which they engage * Informal supports within the family as well as formal supports are identified and engaged in partnership with the family * Referral to a formal Family Group Conference or convening a case conference where appropriate.   Whole-of-family case coordination and planning   * Dedicated case coordination and a single point of contact for the family. * Individualised, single case plan that can move with the family. * Case conferencing meetings with the family’s service providers to facilitate coordination of service provision. | Available evidence on effective and targeted early intervention can significantly impact the developmental outcomes, and in turn, life trajectories of children, families and communities.  Research shows that enablers of success and specific service features of interventions include: soft entry points; flexible approaches that respond to individual needs; strengths-based approaches; and community- driven and culturally appropriate design.[[7]](#footnote-8)  Consultations with the child and family sector, in the FCS redesign process, highlighted the effectiveness of identifying, engaging and referring families to services before their situation escalates.  The FCS model builds upon the strengths of the longstanding NSW Family Referral Services, implemented as part of the Keep Them Safe Reforms. These strengths include:  \* Information & advice to help families navigate the service system  \* Warm referrals  \* Brokerage funds  \* Assertive outreach  The core component ‘Engagement’ is critical to preventing child abuse and neglect.[[8]](#footnote-9) Engagement activities include building trust and being flexible in delivery to meet the needs of clients.  How services engage with families is crucial to ensuring parents/carers participate and remain in a program. In the case of FCS, families’ support needs are meet and they are effectively engaged and connected with the appropriate services through warm referrals.  Evidence shows ‘Engagement’ is most effective when practitioners also:  \* Build a positive relationship with families by fostering a trusting and caring partnership built on empathy respect and open communication, and  \*Actively work with families to overcome barriers to their participation[[9]](#footnote-10).  Engagement is important in ensuring families receive referral to other support services that provide: case management; parental education, coaching and modelling; parental self-care and personal development; and building supportive relationships and social networks[[10]](#footnote-11). | As per contracted service deliverables | Through early access to service and support, families can build their own capabilities to meet their goals and safely care for their children. This is achieved by increasing a family's  knowledge of services and supports that may help their ability to engage in appropriate services, leading to increased empowerment and family functioning. | | Families engage with Family Connect and Support.  Families identify their needs, through assessment considering the 8 NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework domains (economic, family relationships, education and skills, safety, home, health and empowerment).  Families are provided with culturally appropriate service information and referrals.  Families have increased knowledge of the services and supports available to them.  Families have improved resourcefulness to meet their needs.  Families are empowered to engage with services which support their needs.  Families feel heard, understood and respected when engaging with the FCS.  Children are safe within their families with reduced risk of entry into the child protection system.  Families, children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing are improved. |

1. The Hon James Wood AO QC (2008) Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW; David Tune AO PSM (2016) Independent Review of Out of Home Care in New South Wales; The Hon Greg Donnelly MLC (2017) Inquiry into Child Protection in NSW; Professor Megan Davis (2019) Family is Culture: Independent Review into Aboriginal Out-of-home Care in NSW. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Stronger Communities Investment Unit (2018) Forecasting Future Outcomes, available at: https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/Forecasting%20Future%20Outcomes%20Report%202018.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. National Indigenous Australians Agency (2020) Closing the Gap Report; Department of Family and Community Services (2018) Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2017-2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Stronger Communities Investment Unit (2018) Forecasting Future Outcomes, available at: https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/Forecasting%20Future%20Outcomes%20Report%202018.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. David Tune AO PSM (2016) Independent Review of Out of Home Care in New South Wales. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Their Futures Matter (2018), *Access Systems Redesign: Evidence Review,* Sydney: State of NSW. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Their Futures Matter (2018), *Access Systems Redesign: Evidence Review,* Sydney: State of NSW. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Department of Communities and Justice (2022) Preventing Child Maltreatment: Evidence Review, Available at: https://evidenceportal.dcj.nsw.gov.au/evidence-portal-home/our-evidence-reviews/preventing-child-maltreatment.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)