

Factsheet 2

Working together

1. Why a National Framework?

Australia needs a shared agenda for change, for national leadership and a common goal.

The National Framework provides an opportunity for governments and the broader community to improve the way we tackle the problem of child abuse and neglect. The investment by governments and the non-government sector on family support services and child protection is significant, yet our combined effects still fail many children and young people.

The National Framework is a new approach, recognising the protection of children is not simply a matter for the statutory child protection systems. States and Territories are engaged in significant reforms all focused on enhanced intervention. But for these reforms to be truly effective, they need to be coordinated with Australian Government programs, policies and payments- a large part of the early intervention response.

A National Framework provides an opportunity to drive improvements across all systems and all jurisdictions. National leadership will provide the momentum for key national projects – such as national standards for out of home care, information sharing and data and research.

Ultimately, a national approach recognises that protecting children is a shared responsibility – within families, and across communities, professions and services, and governments.

2. Does this change the roles of the States and Territories in child protection?

No. The National Framework will deliver a more integrated response but does not change the responsibilities of governments.

State and Territories retain responsibility for statutory child protection.

State and Territory governments currently spend in excess of \$2 billion annually on child protection alone, with average annual increases of more than 12%.

Significant reforms to state and territory child protection systems, already underway will continue and are critical to the success of the National Framework.

States and Territories have committed to key national reforms in their areas of responsibility, including the development and implementation of national standards for out of home care.

3. What is the role of the Australian Government?

Under the National Framework, the Australian Government will continue to provide universal supports and services to help families raise their children along with a range of targeted early intervention services to vulnerable families and children.

The Australian Government provides a range of services available to all families such as Medicare, employment services, child and parenting services, family relationship services and the family law system. In addition, the Australian Government provides support for key services through the States and Territories such as hospitals, schools, housing and disability services.

Some of these supports and services are being expanded or refocused under the National Framework including family support services, access to child care for children at risk, support for young people leaving care.

The Australian Government will also drive key national leadership projects throughout the life of the project to drive continuous improvement and build the evidence base. These include national standards for out of home care, information sharing, data and research and workforce development.

4. Who endorsed the National Framework?

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children at its meeting on 30 April 2009.

5. What can I do to make a difference?

We all have a responsibility. Some families need more help than others. If you know a family in need offer them a helping hand and support them to navigate local family and children's services.

The National Framework also outlines a range of activities and approaches being adopted across Australia.

More information about services and programs available in localities across Australia is available on your local State or Territory website – details are outlined in Factsheet 5.