



May 2020

COVID-19 pandemic recovery

Assessing the impact on children and young people

All Western Australian children and young people will be impacted by the decisions made in the coming months to drive the State's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these impacts will be the result of strategies directly targeted at children and young people. However, many more impacts will be indirect and the consequence of decisions made that affect the lives of adult family members, the wellbeing of communities and the operations of service providers. Identifying and understanding these impacts will be crucial to effective decision making.

With 598,000 people under the age of 18 in Western Australia, one quarter of the State's population, decisions made by organisations today will have far-reaching social and economic impacts on children and young people, now and as future adults, across our community in the short and long term.

The child impact assessment process outlined below will support the rights and wellbeing of children and young people by assisting agencies to consider how their decision making may:

- directly and indirectly impact children and young people
- have long-term social impacts on children and young people, their families, carers, service providers and communities
- have long-term financial impacts on children and young people, their families, service providers and the community
- need to include strategies to mitigate against negative impacts and unintended consequences
- take into account the best interests of children and young people.

Questions to consider when undertaking a child impact assessment

The direct or indirect impacts on children and young people

Consider the following:

- the **direct impacts** on children and young people, or indirect impacts due to flow-on effects (e.g. as a result of impacts on parents or services)
- the **positive or negative impacts** on the [rights of children and young people](#) including impacts on their safety, learning, health, wellbeing or economic position
- groups of **children and young people who may be disproportionately impacted**, including based on their age, ability, gender, economic position, cultural background, geographical location, or any specific vulnerabilities.

The significance of these impacts on children and young people

Consider the following:

- the **scale of impact on** children and young people including the number of children and young people who will be affected or the length of time the impacts will be felt
- **whether proceeding is in the best interests of children and young people**, including how the impact on children and young people balances with any competing priorities and interests
- **strategies to mitigate any negative impacts** for children and young people.

There will be instances where it may be appropriate to proceed even though it is not in the best interests of all children and young people. This may include where there are equally important considerations which outweigh the best interests of children and young people.

Child Safe considerations

Throughout all phases of the COVID recovery efforts, it is critical for organisations to be guided by the National Principles for [Child Safe Organisations](#) as they adapt their service delivery methods (e.g. through online platforms), and as children and young people re-engage with regular learning and other activities outside their homes. Experience from other international crises has shown that children and young people can be more vulnerable to abuse from organisations and others outside their home during times of upheaval such as these.