



POLICY STATEMENT: CHILD PROTECTION

Principles

The *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006 (WA)* establishes that the Commissioner's paramount concern must be the best interests of children and young people in WA. The Commissioner undertakes research with children and young people to ensure their voices inform the activities and priorities of the Commissioner.

Critically, children and young people must be informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and be taken seriously. Significant international evidence demonstrates the value of lived experience in the development of policy, programs and services.

The Commissioner advocates to uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for the children and young people affected by the child protection system.

Position

The Commissioner monitors developments in child protection legislation, policies and practices, and advocates to improve well-being outcomes for children and young people. A holistic view of the child and young person must be at the core of all policy, programs and services. The interconnectedness of matters such as health, education, housing, safety and the challenges of exclusion and vulnerability demand a connected service system.

Children and young people in contact with the child protection system deserve holistic support to improve their emotional, social, cultural and physical wellbeing.

In line with national and international evidence the Commissioner advocates for the following child protection approaches, that:

- they are trauma-informed, and informed by peer and lived experiences
- they are accessible and supportive for families at risk
- they are culturally safe, secure and responsive – particularly for Aboriginal children and young people and those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage
- there is independent oversight and advocacy in the child protection space
- there are equitable outcomes for children and young people in care.

Addressing the underlying causes of child protection interventions, including poverty, disadvantage and systemic racism should be a whole of government priority.

The Commissioner's advocacy priorities are informed by consultation with children and young people across WA, as well as research and stakeholder engagement. The Commissioner will prioritise additional issues of concern to provide evidence-informed recommendations to Government as needs arise.

