





Authorised by:

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ACT Government



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THE ACT CHILDREN'S PLAN

Making Canberra a great place for children

PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS 2004-09



ACT CHILDREN

CHILDREN—NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Outcomes

- Increased life expectancy at birth.
- Improvement in child physical development.
- Improvement in child social and emotional development.
- Increased literacy and numeracy for ACT students.

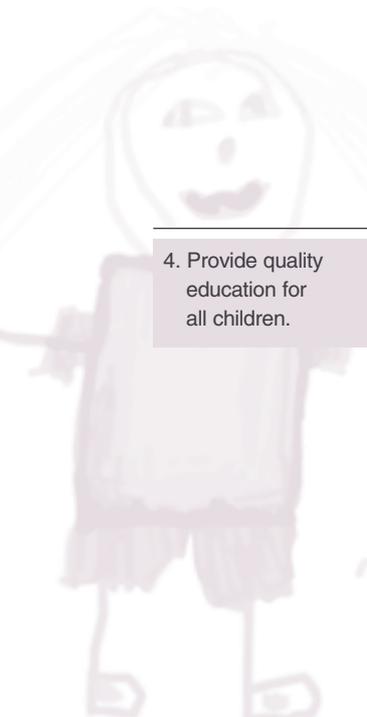


Priorities

Strategies

Actions

<p>1. Improve the health and wellbeing of our children.</p>	<p>Provide accessible Maternal and Child Health Services and screening programs.</p> <p>Work with targeted communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, to promote and deliver early childhood programs.</p> <p>Create partnerships between government and non-government providers responsible for services for children.</p>	<p>Promote the value of play and social development for learning with professional development programs for teachers and others who work with children as well as information and programs for parents.</p> <p>Enhance access for all children to public services and facilities through playground and open space enhancements. Provide access to fun and challenging holiday programs.</p> <p>Introduce screening services for all mothers before and after birth for peri- and post-natal depression.</p> <p>Introduce hearing screening for all babies.</p>
<p>2. Promote healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p>Enhance the abilities of families to make healthy choices for children.</p> <p>Promote nutrition programs in schools and other settings.</p> <p>Ensure participation in sport and recreation programs by all children.</p>	<p>Improve agencies' capacity to identify children of parents with a mental illness and provide appropriate, timely and flexible services.</p> <p>Increase funding to ensure equitable access to mental health services to children, young people and families in the Gungahlin area.</p> <p>Improve services for children with complex health needs through early intervention support and coordinated case management.</p>
<p>3. Nurture children's development as the foundation for life-long learning.</p>	<p>Provide access to early childhood development programs from birth, particularly for targeted communities and children with delays and disabilities.</p> <p>Engage all students in learning through broad range of inclusive, contemporary, challenging and relevant programs.</p> <p>Foster effective transitions between home, children's education and care services and schools.</p> <p>Support and enhance children's social skills and emotional development.</p>	<p>Work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to expand the range of early intervention and support services. This will include midwifery, new born hearing screening, dental and preschool programs.</p> <p>Expand the Health Promoting Schools program into ACT preschools and schools in partnership with community.</p> <p>Support schools in addressing bullying and violence to provide safe school environments. This will include expanding the Protective Behaviours Programs in primary schools to improve children's self esteem and sense of safety.</p> <p>Improve drop-in services for children with concerns about speech, language and gross motor development through extending hours and offering the services from additional locations.</p> <p>Provide joint training to support service providers in the delivery of early intervention and collaborative services.</p>
<p>4. Provide quality education for all children.</p>	<p>Improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes for ACT children.</p> <p>Provide a quality, contemporary curriculum.</p> <p>Ensure all students have access to diverse and challenging programs to meet specific needs.</p> <p>Support learning based on individual needs of children including those at-risk or with disabilities.</p>	<p>Provide training and information to parents and professionals that recognises key transition points as critical times in a child's life.</p> <p>Reorient service and operational policies and guidelines to support early intervention and coordinated service delivery to support children with behavioural concerns and children with complex health and social needs.</p> <p>Provide additional staff to extend autism and post-diagnostic support services for children with developmental delays and disabilities.</p> <p>Provide early intervention social skills programs that develop positive relationships.</p> <p>Expand counselling services for preschools and schools.</p>



EN'S PLAN PRIORITIES AND

CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Outcomes

- Increased parental health and wellbeing.
- Reduced risk of harm for vulnerable children.
- Reduction in the proportion of ACT families on low incomes who experience housing stress.



Priorities

Strategies

Actions

5. Enhance parents' confidence and skills in their parenting role.

Improve access and information sources that increase the capacity of parents to nurture and care for their children.

Enhance the capacity of services to identify risk factors and support families.

Work with families for the future needs of their child with additional needs.

Establish two Child and Family Centres, flagships of the *Canberra Social Plan*, to provide local services which are integrated and early intervention focused.

Expand the range and scope of programs to provide skills and knowledge to parents and families when it is needed.

Respond to the recent *Family Support Review* with a focus on creating opportunities for early intervention and prevention and collaboration, linkages and integration.

6. Coordinate approaches to planning and service delivery.

Provide integrated services in identified locations and communities to support families and children.

Utilise targeted approaches to identified communities and locations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Provide joint professional training programs to enhance skills, collaboration and child-centred approaches.

Work with parents in the long-term educational placement planning process for students with a disability and at risk.

Implement the agreed recommendations of *The Territory as Parent—Review of the Safety of Children in Care in the ACT Child Protection Management* to ensure protection of children and responsiveness to children at risk.

Work with a range of professionals and community organisations to develop child protection policies and strategies, as well as child safety programs.

7. Improve child protection and care.

Provide child protection systems with timely responses.

Provide culturally appropriate and relevant care and protection services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to create effective out-of-home care service including kinship and foster care.

Provide additional support to families in housing stress so as to secure and maintain their tenancy, including debt management support and rent assistance.

8. Improve housing options for children and families.

Implement measures in response to the *Report of the Affordable Housing Taskforce*

Implement *The Homelessness Strategy* in partnership with community organisations.

CANBERRA:

- a community that encourages and supports children to reach their potential—now and in the future
- a place where children are active citizens
- a great and safe place for children

PRINCIPLES OF THE ACT CHILDREN'S PLAN:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Child-centred, family and community focused
- Collaborative and well coordinated
- Strengths-based and inclusive
- Evidence-based and accountable

0 ACTIONS 2004–09

CHILDREN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

Outcomes

- Maintenance of the proportion of Canberrans attending and participating in community, sporting and cultural events.
- Increased number of child oriented facilities and activities.
- Increased accessibility of transport.
- Increased community safety.
- Increased number of programs and initiatives that assist employees in achieving work/life balance.



Priorities	Strategies	Actions
9. Strengthen the community to support and respond to children and families.	<p>Ensure Canberra's environment is safe, attractive and accessible to children and their families.</p> <p>Create partnerships for innovative programs and services.</p> <p>Provide accessible public transport.</p> <p>Support a multicultural ACT community.</p>	<p>Establish a Commissioner for Children and Young People with responsibility to support children in the ACT.</p> <p>Skill communities in how to participate with children in program development and decision making by developing good practice guidelines and providing advisory services.</p> <p>Increase the recognition and support of carers who are children and young carers by implementing the <i>Caring for Carers</i> policy. The policy seeks to recognise, value and promote the role and contribution of carers, including young carers, by providing timely, accessible and effective support to assist them in their caring role.</p>
10. Support people working for and with children.	<p>Strengthen professional development and joint training for those who work with children.</p> <p>Support and gather evidence from national research projects.</p> <p>Acknowledge the expertise and role of those who work with children.</p>	<p>Provide professional development for those who work with children in health, education and childcare settings on risk and protective factors for child wellbeing, child development stages and cultural diversity. This will include inter-disciplinary approaches.</p>
11. Support the choices of families in their parental and working roles.	<p>Develop flexible work options that value the contributions of all employees.</p> <p>Share commitment and responsibility for children with employees and families.</p> <p>Support parents through work-based parenting programs.</p>	<p>Expand early childhood development curricula, for use by practitioners, parents and schools and provide professional development.</p> <p>Promote friendly, e support f</p> <p>Enhance private fa activities,</p>
12. Help the community view children as unique and valuable citizens with equal rights.	<p>Promote and increase children's participation in the Canberra community.</p> <p>Improve and enhance programs and services in response to feedback from children.</p>	<p>Improve c implemen <i>Plan for A</i> the provis stops and</p>

