# 15 Child protection services

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| Attachment tables |
| Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘15A’ prefix (for example, table 15A.1). A full list of attachment tables is provided at the end of this chapter, and the attachment tables are available from the website at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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This chapter reports on the performance of governments in delivering services to promote family wellbeing and to protect children. Specifically, this chapter reports on:

* family support services
* intensive family support services
* child protection services
* out-of-home care services (see section 15.5 for definitions).

Improvements to the reporting of child protection services in this edition include:

* data now reported on the number of children *receiving* intensive family support services throughout the year, in addition to *commencing* intensive family support services throughout the year, improving the accuracy of unit cost calculations
* expenditure data for family support services reported for all jurisdictions.

## 15.1 Profile of child protection services

### Service overview

Child protection services are provided to protect children and young people aged   
0–17 years who are at risk of abuse and neglect within their families, or whose families do not have the capacity to protect them. These services include:

* providing family support services (directly or through referral) to strengthen the capacity of families to care safely for children
* receiving and responding to reports of concern about children and young people, including investigation and assessment where appropriate
* ensuring the ongoing safety of children and young people by working with families to resolve protective concerns
* initiating intervention where necessary, including applying for a care and protection order through a court and, in some situations, placing children or young people in out‑of‑home care to secure their safety
* working with families to reunite children, who were removed for safety reasons
* securing permanent out-of-home care when it is determined that a child is unable to be returned to the care of his or her parents, and working with young people to identify alternative supported living arrangements where family reunification is not possible.

Research suggests that children and families who come into contact with the child protection system often share common social and demographic characteristics. Families with a history of domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse, psychiatric disability, and families with low incomes and families who are reliant on pensions and benefits are over‑represented in the families that come into contact with the child protection system (AIHW 2015a; CFCA 2013; The Allen Consulting Group 2008).

Studies have highlighted the higher rates of hospitalisations due to injury, injury mortality and incidence of child abuse and neglect and family violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, compared with non-Indigenous children (AIHW 2014). The Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the NT  *Growing them strong, together* (Bamblett 2010) observed the presence of multiple risk factors in Aboriginal communities, including lack of adequate housing, financial security and education.

### Roles and responsibilities

State and Territory governments fund family support (including intensive family support), child protection, out-of-home care, and other relevant services. Box 15.1 identifies State and Territory government departments responsible for these services during 2014-15.

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| Box 15.1 Government agencies responsible for child protection services, 2014-15 | |
| NSW | Department of Family and Community Services |
| Vic | Department of Health and Human Services |
| Qld | Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services |
| WA | Department for Child Protection and Family Support |
| SA | Department for Education and Child Development |
| Tas | Department of Health and Human Services |
| ACT | Community Services Directorate |
| NT | Department of Children and Families |
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Other areas of government also have roles in child protection and provide services for children who have come into contact with relevant departments for protective reasons. These roles include:

* mandatory reporting responsibilities in some jurisdictions
* education and child care services, which in some jurisdictions includes education on protective behaviours
* health services and mental health services, which support the assessment of child protection matters and deliver general medical and dental services as well as therapeutic, counselling and other services
* police services, which investigate serious allegations of child abuse and neglect, particularly criminal matters, and may also work on child protection assessments with State and Territory departments responsible for child protection
* courts, which decide whether a child will be placed on an order.

A range of appointments, schemes and charters have been introduced by jurisdictions in recent years, to provide additional protection for clients of child protection systems. Examples of these are outlined in attachment table 15A.36.

### Size and scope

#### Child protection service system

Child protection legislation, policies and practices vary across jurisdictions, which has some implications for the comparability of child protection data. However, the broad processes in child protection systems are similar (figure 15.1) (AIHW 2015a; CFCA 2014).

State and Territory government departments with responsibility for child protection are advised of concerns about the wellbeing of children through reports to these agencies. Reports may be made by people mandated to report or by other members of the community. Individuals and organisations mandated to report vary across states and territories, and may include medical practitioners, police officers, school teachers and principals. These reports are assessed and classified as child protection notifications, child concern reports, or matters requiring some other response. Nationally, between 2009-10 and 2013-14, police were the most common source of notifications, although proportions varied across jurisdictions (AIHW 2015a and earlier editions).

Figure 15.1 is a simplified representation of the statutory child protection system. It depicts the common pathways through the statutory system and referrals to support services, which can take place at any point along the statutory service system. Children might or might not move sequentially along these pathways and, in some instances, children might move through these pathways quite rapidly (for example, on the same day). There are a range of other services and programs which work to meet the needs of children and families that are not depicted in this diagram, including health, education and early childhood services.

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| Figure 15.1 The child protection service system**a, b, c, d** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 15.1 The child protection service system  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Dashed lines indicate that clients may or may not receive these services, depending on need, service availability, and client willingness to participate in voluntary services. b Support services include family preservation and reunification services provided by government and other agencies. Children and families move in and out of these services and the child protection system, and might also be in the child protection system while receiving support services. c Shading indicates data availability. d AG = Activity Group. See box 15.20 and section 15.5 for detailed definitions. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished). |
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#### Overview of child protection activity in 2014-15

*Notifications* — nationally, 208 111 children aged 0–17 years were the subject of child protection notifications in 2014-15. This was equivalent to 39.2 notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years, compared with 143.1 per 1000 children aged 0–17 years in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (table 15A.8). The total number of notifications for each jurisdiction for 2014-15 (including cases where a child was the subject of more than one child protection notification), by Indigenous status, is reported in table 15A.5.

*Investigations* — nationally, 100 994 children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a notification in 2014-15 were subsequently the subject of a finalised investigation in 2014‑15. This was equivalent to 19.0 finalised investigations per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years, compared with 88.7 finalised investigations per 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-17 years in the population (table 15A.8). The total number of notifications investigated for each jurisdiction in 2014‑15, by Indigenous status, is reported in table 15A.5.

*Substantiations* — nationally, 42 457 children aged 0–17 years were the subject of a substantiation in 2014‑15. This was equivalent to 8.0 substantiations per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years, compared with 39.8 per 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-17 years in the population. These rates have increased over the past five years, as have the rates of notifications and investigations (table 15A.8).

*Care and protection orders* — nationally, 48 730 children aged 0–17 years were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2015. This was equivalent to 9.2 children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0-17 years, compared with 57.5 per 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the population aged 0‑17 years. The rate of children on a care and protection order has increased over the past five years (table 15A.8). Table 15A.6 identifies the number of children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status over the past ten years, while table 15A.7 identifies the number of children on care and protection orders by type of order and Indigenous status for the past ten years.

*Out-of-home care* — nationally, 43 399 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2015. This was equivalent to 8.2 children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years, compared with 52.5 per 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the population aged 0–17 years (table 15A.18). Tables 15A.19–22 provide further information on out-of-home care for a ten year time series, including the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status, placement types, whether children were on a care and protection order, length of time in continuous out-of-home care, and the number of children who exited care and length of time spent in care.

Definitions for the key terms above are available in section 15.5.

### Funding

Total recurrent expenditure on child protection, out-of-home care, family support services and intensive family support services was $4.3 billion nationally in 2014-15 (a real increase of $239.2 million (5.8 per cent) from 2013-14) of which out-of-home care services accounted for the majority (56.2 per cent, or $2.4 billion). Nationally, annual real expenditure on these services has increased by $472.5 million since 2011-12 (the period when expenditure on family support services was first reported), an average increase of 3.9 per cent per year for the past four years (table 15A.1).

In 2014-15, real recurrent expenditure on child protection, out-of-home care, family support services and intensive family support services per child aged 0–17 years in the population was $815 nationally. This figure has increased from 2011-12 ($752 nationally) (figure 15.2).

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| Figure 15.2 Total real recurrent expenditure on all child protection services, per child (2014-15 dollars)**a** |
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| a Refer to table 15A.1 for detailed footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.1. |
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Ideally, the full range of costs to government would be determined on a comparable basis across jurisdictions. Where full costs cannot be calculated, costs should be estimated on a consistent basis across jurisdictions. However, in the area of child protection, there are differences across jurisdictions in the calculation of expenditure. Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency across jurisdictions for a number of expenditure items.

## 15.2 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators for child protection services is based on shared government objectives (box 15.2).

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| Box 15.2 Objectives for child protection services |
| The aims of child protection services are to:   * assist families to protect children and young people * protect children and young people who are at risk of abuse and neglect within their families or whose families do not have the capacity to provide care and protection * provide quality care for children and young people aged 0–17 years who cannot live with their parents for reasons of safety or family crisis.   Child protection services should be provided in an efficient and effective manner. |
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The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of child protection services (figure 15.3). The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2016 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability and data completeness from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

In addition to section 15.1, the Report’s statistical context chapter contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics (chapter 2).

Prior to the 2014 Report, child protection data were sourced from the AIHW’s national child protection aggregate data collection (with data having been supplied to the AIHW by State and Territory governments). In 2013, the AIHW began implementing a child-based unit record collection for child protection services. Data for this Report were derived from the AIHW’s new child-based unit record collection for all jurisdictions except NSW. Data for NSW were sourced directly from the NSW Government. The move from the aggregate data collection to the unit record data collection has not affected the comparability of child protection data over time.

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| Figure 15.3 Child protection services performance indicator framework |
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## 15.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and clients can affect the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of child protection services.

Data quality information (DQI) is included where available for performance indicators in this Report. The purpose of DQI is to provide structured and consistent information about quality aspects of data used to report on performance indicators, in addition to material in the chapter or sector overview and attachment tables. All DQI for the 2016 Report can be found at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016.

Performance indicator results may differ from similar data included in some jurisdictions’ annual reports due to different counting rules applied for these jurisdictional reports.

### Outputs

Outputs are the services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1, section 1.5). Output information is also critical for equitable, efficient and effective management of government services.

### Equity

Equity indicators for child protection services is a key area for development in future reports. These will be indicators of governments’ objective to ensure that all clients have fair and equitable access to services on the basis of relative need and available resources.

#### **Effectiveness**

#### Child protection services — continuity of case worker

‘Continuity of case worker’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure child protection services are delivered in an effective manner (box 15.2).

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| Box 15.2 Continuity of case worker |
| ‘Continuity of case worker’ is yet to be defined.  The turnover of workers is a frequent criticism of the quality of child protection services. Effective intervention requires a productive working relationship between the case worker and the child and family.  This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. |
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#### Child protection services — client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients (box 15.3).

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| Box 15.3 Client satisfaction |
| ‘Client satisfaction’ is yet to be defined. It is intended that this indicator will measure client satisfaction with the statutory child protection system.  This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. |
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Table 15A.37 provides examples of steps taken nationally to monitor, assess and promote client satisfaction with child protection services.

#### Child protection services — response times

‘Response times’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to minimise the risk of abuse and neglect to children by responding to notifications of possible child protection incidents and completing investigations in a timely manner (box 15.4).

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| Box 15.4 Response times |
| ‘Response times’ is defined by two measures:   * response time to commence investigations, defined as the length of time (measured in days) between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is subsequently commenced * response time to complete investigations, defined as the length of time (measured in days) between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is completed (that is, the date an investigation outcome is determined by a department).   A short or decreasing length of time between recording a notification and commencing an investigation, and between recording a notification and completing an investigation, is desirable.  The length of time between recording a notification and commencing an investigation indicates a department’s promptness in responding to child protection concerns. The length of time between recording a notification and completing an investigation indicates a department’s effectiveness in conducting investigations in a timely manner.  (continued next page) |
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| Box 15.4 (continued) |
| Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time, but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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For most jurisdictions, and nationally, the majority of investigations were commenced within seven days of notification in 2014-15 (figure 15.5(a)). Response times to complete investigations varied across jurisdictions in 2014-15. Nationally, 38.2 per cent of investigations were completed in 28 days or less, 25.8 per cent were completed in 29 to 62 days, 13.5 per cent were completed in 63 to 90 days, and 22.5 per cent were completed in more than 90 days (figure 15.5(b)). These patterns are consistent with available time series data (tables 15A.15-16).

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| Figure 15.4 Proportion of investigations commenced and completed, by time taken, 2014-15**a** |
| |  | | --- | | **(a) Response time to commence investigations** | |  | | **(b) Response time to complete investigations** | |  | |
| a See box 15.4 and tables 15A.15 and 15A.16 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.15 and 15A.16. |
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#### Child protection services — substantiation rate

‘Substantiation rate’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to target investigations to those notifications where a substantive child abuse/neglect incident has occurred or is at risk of occurring (box 15.5).

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| Box 15.5 Substantiation rate |
| ‘Substantiation rate’ is defined as the proportion of finalised investigations where abuse or neglect or risk of abuse or neglect was confirmed.  The substantiation rate provides an indication of the extent to which government avoided the human and financial costs of an investigation where no abuse or neglect had occurred or was at risk of occurring. Neither a very high nor very low substantiation rate is desirable. A very low substantiation rate might indicate that notifications and investigations are not accurately targeted to appropriate cases, with the undesirable consequence of distress to families and undermining the likelihood that families will voluntarily seek support. It might also reflect a greater propensity to substantiate abuse incidents rather than situations of risk. A very high substantiation rate might indicate that the criteria for substantiation are unnecessarily bringing ‘lower risk’ families into the statutory system.  The rate of finalised investigations that were substantiated is influenced by a range of factors and might fluctuate because of policy, funding and practice changes, such as better targeting of investigative resources, the impact of mandatory reporting or factors such as increased community awareness and willingness to notify suspected instances of child abuse, neglect or harm.  Comparability issues affecting substantiations data, including varying thresholds for recording a substantiation across jurisdictions, should also be considered when interpreting data for this indicator (see section 15.5).  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time, but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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The proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.6).

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| Figure 15.5 Proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated**a** | |
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| a See box 15.5 and table 15A.9 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. | |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.9. | |
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#### Out-of-home care — safety in out-of-home care

‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide children who are under the care of the state with a safe home environment (box 15.6).

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| Box 15.6 Safety in out-of-home care |
| ‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is defined by two measures:   * the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect * the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care.   The scope of these measures differs. For the first measure, the person responsible can be anyone who comes into contact with the child while the child is in out-of-home care and is for notifications received within the period. For the second measure, the person responsible is limited to someone in the household providing out-of-home care and is irrespective of the date of notification.  A low or decreasing proportion of substantiations for both measures is desirable.  The proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect, assesses the overall safety of children in care. This may include events that occur outside of the child’s placement arrangements. The proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care assesses the extent to which authorised carers provide safe care to children in care.  Care should be taken when interpreting this indicator as the threshold for substantiating abuse or neglect or risk involving children in care is generally lower than that for substantiating abuse or neglect or risk involving a child in the care of his or her own parents. This is because governments assume a duty of care for children removed from the care of their parents for protective reasons.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions)   incomplete for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data were not available for NSW or Victoria, which did not provide data for the number of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect; and the NT, which did not provide data for the number of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care.Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Data for the measure ‘proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect’ are experimental. These data will be improved over time, but available data suggest the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect varied across jurisdictions (table 15.1).

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| Table 15.1 Proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect, 2014-15**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Unit | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | | Children in care who were the subject of a notification, which was substantiated | no. | na | na | 144 | 87 | 80 | 8 | 11 | 108 | | Children aged 0-17 in at least one care placement during the year | no | 21 426 | 11 017 | 8 400 | 4 725 | 3 273 | 1 245 | 831 | 1 233 | | Proportion | % | na | na | 1.7 | 1.8 | 2.4 | 0.6 | 1.3 | 8.8 | |
| a See box 15.6 and table 15A.28 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. **na** Not available. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.28. |
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The proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household also varied across jurisdictions (table 15.2).

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| Table 15.2 Proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation and the person responsible was living in the household, 2014-15**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Unit | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | | Children in care who were the subject of a substantiation and the person responsible was in the household | no. | 147 | 69 | 144 | 7 | na | 8 | 10 | na | | Children aged 0–17 in at least one care placement during the year | no. | 21 426 | 11 017 | 8 400 | 4 725 | 3 273 | 1 245 | 831 | 1 233 | | Proportion | % | 0.7 | 0.6 | 1.7 | 0.1 | na | 0.6 | 1.2 | na | |
| a See box 15.6 and table 15A.27 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. **na** Not available. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.27. |
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#### Out-of-home care — stability of placement

‘Stability of placement’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients on the basis of individual need and available resources (box 15.7).

Stability of placement is an important indicator of service quality for children placed away from their family for protective reasons, particularly for those who require long term placements. Data are collected on the number of different placements for children on a care and protection order who exited out-of-home care. Data are grouped according to the length of time in care (less than 12 months, and 12 months or more).

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| Box 15.7 Stability of placement |
| ‘Stability of placement’ is defined as the proportion of children who had one or two placements during a period of continuous out-of-home care.  A low number of child placements (one or two) per period of care is desirable, but must be balanced against other placement quality indicators, such as placements in compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, local placements and placements with siblings.  Children can have multiple short-term placements for appropriate reasons (for example, an initial placement followed by a longer term placement) or it may be desirable to change placements to achieve better compatibility between a child and family. It is not desirable for a child to stay in an unsatisfactory or unsupportive placement. Also, older children are more likely to have multiple placements as they move towards independence and voluntarily seek alternate placements.  Data are collected only for children who are on orders and who exit care during the reporting period. There are limitations to counting placement stability using a cohort of children on exit from care rather than longitudinally tracking a cohort of children on their entry into care: an exit cohort is biased to children who stayed a relatively short time in care and thus were more likely to have experienced fewer placements.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally, 87.8 per cent of children on a care and protection order who exited care after less than 12 months in 2014-15 experienced one or two placements (figure 15.7(a)). Across jurisdictions, children who had been in out-of-home care longer tended to have had more placements. The proportion of children exiting care in 2014-15 after 12 months or more who had experienced one or two placements was 60.3 per cent nationally (figure 15.86(b)). Proportions varied across jurisdictions.

These patterns are broadly consistent with available time series data. However, there was an increase in the proportion of children exiting care in 2014-15 after 12 months or more who had experienced one or two placements, as distinct from three or more placements (table 15A.26).

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| Figure 15.6 Proportion of children on an order exiting care who had one or two placements**a, b**  **(a) Exiting care after less than 12 months** |
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| **(b) Exiting care after 12 months or more**  a See box 15.7 and table 15A.26 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b Data were not available for WA between 2010-11 and 2013-14. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.26. |
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#### Out-of-home care — children aged under 12 years in home-based care

‘Children aged under 12 years in home-based care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services which meet the needs of recipients (box 15.8).

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| Box 15.8 Children aged under 12 years in home-based care |
| ‘Children aged under 12 years in home-based care’ is defined as the number of children aged under 12 years placed in home-based care divided by the total number of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care.  A high or increasing rate of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care that are placed in home-based care is desirable.  Placing children in home-based care is generally considered to be in their best interests, particularly for younger children. Children will generally make better developmental progress (and have more ready access to normal childhood experiences) in family settings rather than in residential or institutional care environments.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally, the proportion of all children aged under 12 years in care who were placed in home-based care at 30 June 2015 was 97.4 per cent. Proportions were similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children, and have been consistent across available time series data (figure 15.7; table 15A.25).

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| Figure 15.7 Proportion of children aged under 12 years in out‑of‑home care who were in a home-based placement, by Indigenous status, at 30 June 2015**a** |
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| a See box 15.8 and table 15A.25 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.25. |
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#### Out-of-home care — placement with extended family

‘Placement with extended family’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that meet the needs of recipients (box 15.9).

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| Box 15.9 Placement with extended family |
| ‘Placement with extended family’ is defined as the proportion of all children in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives or kin who receive government financial assistance to care for that child.  A high or increasing rate for this indicator is desirable. Placing children with their relatives or kin is generally the preferred out-of-home care placement option. This option is generally associated with better long-term outcomes due to increased continuity, familiarity and stability for the child. Relatives are more likely to have or to form long-term emotional bonds with the child. Placement with familiar people can help to overcome the loss of attachment and belonging that can occur when children are placed in out-of-home care.  Placement with extended family should be considered with other factors in the placement decision, as placements with extended family may not always be the best option. Long standing family dynamics can undermine the pursuit of case goals such as reunification, and the possibility of intergenerational abuse needs to be considered. In addition, depending on the individual circumstances of the child, it may be more important to have a local placement that enables continuity at school, for example, rather than a distant placement with relatives.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required data for 2014-15 are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally in 2014-15, the proportion of children placed with relatives or kin at 30 June 2015 was 47.3 per cent. The proportion was slightly higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (48.8 per cent) than for non‑Indigenous children (46.5 per cent) (figure 15.8). The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin has increased since 30 June 2006 (40.5 per cent).

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle gives considerable emphasis to the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with extended family. This principle is discussed in box 15.10.

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| Figure 15.8 Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, at 30 June 2015**a** |
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| a See box 15.9 and table 15A.23 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.23. |
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#### Out-of-home care — placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

‘Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to protect the safety and welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children while maintaining their cultural ties and identity (box 15.10).

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| Box 15.10 Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle |
| ‘Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle’ is defined as the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed with the child’s extended family, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, divided by the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in  out-of-home care. Data are reported separately for children placed (i) with relative/kin, (ii) with a  non-relative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer or in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care, and (iii) not placed with relative/kin, a non-relative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer or in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care.  A high or increasing proportion of children placed in accordance with the principle is desirable. This indicator should be interpreted with care as it is a proxy for compliance with the principle. This indicator reports the placement outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children rather than compliance with the principle. The indicator does not reflect whether the principle’s hierarchy of placement options was followed in the consideration of the best placement for the child, nor whether appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals or organisations were consulted.  Data excludes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living independently and those whose living arrangements were unknown.  Placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in circumstances consistent with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is considered to be in their best interests. However, it is one factor among many considerations for the child’s safety and wellbeing that must be carefully considered in the placement decision. In the application of this principle, departments consult with and involve appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and/or organisations. If the preferred options are not available, the child may be placed (after appropriate consultation) with a non-Indigenous family or in a residential setting. The principle does not preclude the possibility that in some instances, placement in a non-Indigenous setting, where arrangements are in place for the child’s cultural identity to be preserved, might be the most appropriate placement for the child.  Identification of Indigenous status may lead to data quality issues for this indicator, in particular undercounting or under-identification of Indigenous status (for example, when clients are not asked about their Indigenous status or where Indigenous status is not recorded accurately). Therefore, data for this indicator should be interpreted with care.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data were available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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According to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (Chisholm 1998) the following hierarchy of placement options should be pursued in protecting the safety and welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children:

* placement with the child’s extended family (which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous relatives/kin)
* placement within the child’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
* placement with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

All jurisdictions have adopted this principle in both legislation and policy.

Nationally, at 30 June 2015, 50.8 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care were placed with relatives/kin (35.9 per cent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relatives/kin and 14.9 per cent with non‑Indigenous relatives/kin). A further 16.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care were placed with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers or in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care. Proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.9). Nationally, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care who were placed with relatives/kin, other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, or in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care has decreased over the past 10 years (from 75.7 per cent at 30 June 2006 to 67.1 per cent at 30 June 2015) (table 15A.24).

Work is underway to develop a more robust measure of compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle as part of the *National framework for protecting Australia’s children: Second three year action plan, 2012-15* (FaHCSIA 2012).

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| Figure 15.9 Placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, at 30 June 2015**a** |
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| Relative/Kin = Placed with relative/kin. Other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander = Placed with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care.  Other = Not placed with relative/kin, other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care. a See box 15.10 and table 15A.24 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.24. |
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#### Out-of-home care — local placement

‘Local placement’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients (box 15.11).

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| Box 15.11 Local placement |
| ‘Local placement’ is defined as the proportion of children in out-of-home care attending the same school that they were attending before entering out-of-home care.  A high or increasing rate of local placement is desirable.  A placement close to where a child lived prior to entering out-of-home care is considered to enhance the stability, familiarity and security of the child. It enables some elements of the child’s life to remain unchanged (for example, they can continue attending the same school and retain their friendship network). It may also facilitate family contact if the child’s parents continue to live nearby.  Local placement should be considered with other factors in the placement decision. For example, placement with a sibling or relative might preclude a local placement. Also, a child might move from a primary school to a secondary school or to a different local school at the same level.  Data collection for this indicator is under development and will be provided for 3 and 12 months after entering care. Data were not available for the 2016 Report. |
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#### Out-of-home care — placement with sibling

‘Placement with sibling’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients (box 15.12).

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| Box 15.12 Placement with sibling |
| ‘Placement with sibling’ is defined as the proportion of children who are on orders and in out-of-home care at 30 June who have siblings also on orders and in out-of-home care, who are placed with at least one of their siblings.  A high or increasing rate of placement with siblings is desirable. Placement of siblings together promotes stability and continuity. It is a long standing placement principle that siblings should be placed together, where possible, in the interests of their emotional wellbeing. Children are likely to be more secure and have a sense of belonging within their family when placed with siblings.  This is one factor among many that must be considered in the placement decision. In circumstances of sibling abuse, or when a particular child in a family has been singled out as the target for abuse or neglect, keeping siblings together may not be appropriate.  Data collection for this indicator is under development. Data were not available for the 2016 Report. |
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#### Out-of-home care — children with documented case plans

‘Children with documented case plans’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that meet the needs of the recipients (box 15.13).

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| Box 15.13 Children with current documented case plans |
| ‘Children with current documented case plans’ is defined as the number of children who have a current documented and approved case plan as a proportion of all children who are required to have a current documented and approved case plan.  A case plan is an individualised, dynamic written plan (or support agreement) that includes information on a child in need of protection, including his or her needs, risks, health, education, living and family arrangements, goals for ongoing intervention and actions required to achieve identified goals. A case plan is usually developed between a family and an agency on the basis of an assessment process. Case planning is essential to structured and purposeful work to support children’s optimal development.  A current case plan is one that has been approved and/or reviewed within the previous 12 months. Individual jurisdictions’ timeframes for ongoing review may vary and reviews may be more frequent when young children or infants are involved, the child has just entered care, and certain orders are in place (for example, assessment orders). Reviews may also be required when circumstances have changed (for example, the death of a parent or carer, or placement changes) and significant new decisions are needed.  The scope of this indicator extends to children and young people (aged 0–17 years) whose care arrangements were ordered through the Children’s Court and for whom parental responsibility has been transferred to the Minister/Chief Executive and who are required by jurisdictional policy/legislation to have a current documented and approved case plan.  This indicator is under development and it is anticipated that these data will improve over time.  A high or increasing rate of children with current documented case plans is desirable.  The quality of case plans, and the extent to which identified needs and actions are put into place, should also be taken into account when considering this indicator. The existence of a case plan does not guarantee that appropriate case work to meet a child’s needs is occurring.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time, but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * incomplete for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data were not available for SA and the NT.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally, 86.6 per cent of children required to have a case plan, had a case plan at 30 June 2015. Proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.10). This proportion has increased since 30 June 2013 (75.1 per cent), the earliest year of available data (table 15A.17).

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| Figure 15.10 Proportion of children with current documented case plans, at 30 June 2015**a, b** |
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| a See box 15.13 and table 15A.17 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b Data were not available for SA and the NT. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.17. |
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#### Out-of-home care — client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients (box 15.14).

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| Box 15.14 Client satisfaction |
| ‘Client satisfaction’ is yet to be defined. It is intended that this indicator will measure client satisfaction with the out-of-home care system.  This indicator has been identified for development and future reporting. |
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Information on initiatives across jurisdictions to measure client satisfaction is included in attachment table 15A.37.

### Efficiency

#### Child protection — Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation

‘Total expenditure on all child protection activities, per notification, investigation, and substantiation’ are reported as proxy indicators of governments’ objective to maximise the benefit to the community through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.15).

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| Box 15.15 Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation |
| ‘Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation’ is defined by three measures:   * total expenditure on all child protection activities divided by the number of notifications * total expenditure on all child protection activities divided by the number of investigations * total expenditure on all child protection activities divided by the number of substantiations.   Low or decreasing expenditure per notification/investigation/substantiation can suggest more efficient services but may indicate lower quality or different service delivery models.  These indicators are proxy indicators and need to be interpreted with care. Because each of these proxy indicators is based on total expenditure on child protection activities, they do not represent, and cannot be interpreted as, unit costs for notifications, investigations or substantiations. These proxy indicators cannot be added together to determine overall cost of child protection services.  More comprehensive and accurate efficiency indicators would relate expenditure on particular child protection activities to a measure of output of those activities. Work is underway to develop a national activity-based costing method, the Pathways project, which will allow this type of reporting from existing information systems (box 15.18). Experimental data using the Pathways method are included in tables 15.3 and 15.4. The proxy data reported for this indicator will be replaced by Pathways unit cost data when the Pathways method is refined and implemented nationally.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data were available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation from 2010-11 to 2014-15 varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.11).

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| Figure 15.11 Child protection efficiency indicators (2014-15 dollars)**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | **(a) Annual real recurrent expenditure on all child protection activities per notification**  **(b) Annual real recurrent expenditure on all child protection activities per investigation**  **(c) Annual real recurrent expenditure on all child protection activities per substantiation** | |
| a See box 15.15 and table 15A.2 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.2. |
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#### Out-of-home care — Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night

‘Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.16).

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| Box 15.16 Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night |
| ‘Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night’ is defined as total real recurrent expenditure on out-of-home care services divided by the total number of placement nights in out-of-home care.  Low or decreasing expenditure per placement night can suggest more efficient services but may indicate lower service quality or different service delivery models. Further, in some cases, efficiencies may not be able to be realised due to remote geographic locations that limit opportunities to reduce overheads through economies of scale.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data were available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally in 2014-15, out-of-home care expenditure per placement night was $157. Expenditure varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.12).

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| Figure 15.12 Real out-of-home care expenditure per placement night (2014‑15 dollars)**a** |
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| a See box 15.16 and table 15A.29 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.29. |
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#### Out-of-home care — Total expenditure on residential and non‑residential out-of-home care per child in residential and non-residential out-of-home care

‘Total expenditure on all out-of-home care services per child in out-of-home care, by residential and non-residential care’ are reported as proxy indicators of governments’ objective to maximise the benefit to the community through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.17).

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| Box 15.17 Total expenditure on residential and non‑residential  out-of-home care per child in residential and non-residential out-of-home care |
| Total expenditure on children in residential and non-residential out-of-home care per child in residential and non-residential out-of-home care is defined by three measures:   * total expenditure on residential out-of-home care divided by the number of children in residential out-of-home care at 30 June * total expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care divided by the number of children in non-residential out-of-home care at 30 June * total expenditure on all out-of-home care divided by the number of children in all out-of-home care at 30 June.   Low or decreasing expenditure per child in care can suggest more efficient services but may indicate lower quality or different service delivery models.  These indicators are proxy indicators and need to be interpreted with care as they do not represent a measure of unit costs. Expenditure per child in care at 30 June overstates the cost per child because significantly more children are in care during a year than at a point in time. In addition, the indicator does not reflect the length of time that a child spends in care.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * incomplete for the current reporting period. All required 2014-15 data were not available for NSW, Queensland and the NT for the measures of total expenditure on residential  out-of-home care and non-residential out-of-home care.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Total expenditure on residential care and non-residential care for the period 2010-11 to 2014-15, per child in residential care and non-residential care at 30 June, varied across jurisdictions (figures 15.13(a) and 15.13(b)). Total expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in care at 30 June for 2010-11 to 2014-15 also varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.13(c)).

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| Figure 15.13 Out-of-home care efficiency indicators, at 30 June (2014‑15 dollars)**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | **(a) Annual real recurrent expenditure on residential out-of-home care per child in residential care** | | **(b) Annual real expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care per child in non-residential care** | |  | | **(c) Annual real expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in out-of-home care at 30 June** | |  | |
| a See box 15.17 and table 15A.3 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b NSW, Queensland and the NT could not disaggregate expenditure on out-of-home care. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.3. |
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##### Developments in efficiency reporting for child protection services

Data reported for the existing efficiency indicators for child protection services have several shortcomings which impact on the comparability and completeness of these indicators, including different approaches to service delivery across jurisdictions and limitations in current information systems. Consequently, cost allocations do not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the costs involved in the provision of various child protection services. To improve efficiency data for child protection services, the Steering Committee initiated a project (the ‘Pathways’ project), which uses a combination of direct costs (those costs which can be clearly allocated by a jurisdiction to a particular child protection activity) and indirect costs (which form part of the overall expenditure base, but which cannot be clearly allocated to a specific activity) to measure system efficiencies (box 15.18).

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| Box 15.18 The ‘Pathways’ model of efficiency reporting | |
| The Pathways model of efficiency reporting will allow jurisdictions to calculate more meaningful, comparable and robust efficiency measures than current proxy measures. The model is based on a top-down application of the activity-based costing method. Eight national pathways have been developed as a high level representation of the services that a child protection client could receive in any jurisdiction. Each pathway consists of common activity groups which act as the ‘building blocks’ for each of the pathways. The aggregate cost of each activity group within the pathway will allow the unit cost of an individual pathway to be derived.  These activity groups (or ‘pathways’) will provide additional utility for jurisdictions in managing the business of child protection services, with implementation of the model having the potential to improve the quality of national reporting of efficiency measures. Activity-based data can also result, over time, in measures of the cost savings associated with early intervention strategies.  The activity groups are: | |
| Activity group 1 | Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue |
| Activity group 2 | Provision of generic family support services |
| Activity group 3 | Provision of intensive family support services |
| Activity group 4 | Secondary information gathering and assessment |
| Activity group 5 | Provision of short term protective intervention and coordination services for children not on an order |
| Activity group 6 | Seeking an order |
| Activity group 7 | Provision of protective intervention, support and coordination services for children on an order |
| Activity group 8 | Provision of out-of-home care services |
| Detailed definitions of activity groups are included in section 15.5. Development of national reporting against these activity groups is ongoing. | |
| *Source*: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP) (2003). | |
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Pathways data are presented in table 15.3 (proportion of total expenditure directed to different child protection activities) and table 15.4 (derived unit costs for child protection activities). These data are preliminary and subject to further refinement in future reports. However, for all jurisdictions, the proportion of expenditure allocated to the provision of out-of-home care services (activity group 8) was the most significant and varied from 51.8 per cent to 71.3 per cent across jurisdictions. A more complete collection of unit cost data will be provided once development of activity counts across all jurisdictions in complete.

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| Table 15.3 Proportion of total expenditure by activity group — experimental data, 2014-15**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Unit | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | | AG1 | % | 4.1 | 3.1 | 3.3 | 5.2 | 4.8 | 5.3 | 7.2 | 4.9 | | AG2 | % | 7.0 | 14.5 | 3.6 | 8.5 | 3.2 | 6.7 | 5.0 | 23.5 | | AG3 | % | 10.7 | 9.9 | 8.0 | 2.2 | 6.0 | 10.2 | 1.8 | na | | AG4 | % | 4.6 | 4.3 | 5.7 | 6.6 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 4.9 | 3.4 | | AG5 | % | 5.4 | 4.0 | 4.2 | 6.9 | 0.2 | 2.1 | 0.4 | 0.2 | | AG6 | % | 5.9 | 5.4 | 4.7 | 3.1 | 1.8 | 5.9 | 2.5 | 1.9 | | AG7 | % | 4.8 | 6.6 | 18.7 | 12.5 | 9.3 | 7.4 | 11.8 | 9.6 | | AG8 | % | 57.5 | 52.1 | 51.8 | 54.9 | 71.3 | 58.8 | 66.4 | 56.6 | | **Total** | **%** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | |
| AG = Activity Group (box 15.18). a Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding. **na** Not available. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished). |
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| Table 15.4 Activity group unit costs — experimental data, 2014-15**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Unit | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | | AG1 Cost per report to child protection | $ | 235 | na | 266 | 239 | na | na | 351 | na | | AG1 Cost per notification | $ | 499 | 292 | 1 279 | 1 385 | 702 | 313 | 351 | 514 | | AG2 Cost per child commencing family support services | $ | na | na | na | 13 433 | na | na | na | na | | AG3 Cost per child commencing intensive family support services | $ | 17 309 | na | 16 564 | 11 560 | 31 848 | 4 988 | 3 983 | na | | AG4 Cost per notification investigated | $ | 946 | 1 455 | 2 179 | 2 200 | 1 903 | 1 756 | 1 568 | 839 | | AG5 Cost per child commencing protective intervention and coordination services who is not on an order | $ | 4 441 | Na | na | 6 500 | na | 5 594 | 860 | na | | AG6 Cost per order issued | $ | 15 976 | 2 317 | 7 639 | 6 986 | 1 616 | 4 946 | 2 705 | 1 369 | | AG7 Cost per child commencing protective intervention and coordination services who is on an order | $ | 22 080 | Na | 17 398 | 10 109 | na | 4 266 | 7 523 | na | | AG8 Cost per placement night | $ | 143 | 151 | 146 | 176 | 231 | 123 | 151 | 287 | |
| AG = Activity Group (box 15.18). a Data are rounded to the nearest whole number. **na** Not available. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished). |
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### Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (while outputs are the services delivered) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

#### Improved safety — substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate

‘Improved safety’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to children by appropriately assessing notifications of possible child protection incidents (box 15.19).

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| Box 15.19 Improved safety |
| ‘Improved safety’ is defined by two measures:   * substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate, defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year that led to a decision not to substantiate, and who were later the subject of a substantiation within 3 or 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate. The year reported relates to the year of the initial decision not to substantiate * substantiation rate after a prior substantiation, defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year, who were subsequently the subject of a further substantiation within the following 3 or 12 months. The year reported relates to the year of the original substantiation.   A low or decreasing rate for these measures is desirable. However, reported results can be affected by the finalisation of investigations, factors beyond the control of child protection services, or a change in circumstances after the initial decision not to substantiate was made. A demonstrable risk of abuse or neglect might not have existed in the first instance. In addition, this indicator does not distinguish between subsequent substantiations which are related to the initial notification (that is, the same source of risk of abuse or neglect) and those which are unrelated to the initial notification (that is, a different source of risk of abuse or neglect). This indicator partly reveals the extent to which an investigation has not succeeded in identifying the risk of abuse or neglect to a child who is subsequently the subject of a substantiation. It also provides a measure of the adequacy of interventions offered to children to protect them from further abuse or neglect. This indicator should be considered with other outcome indicators.  Comparability issues affecting substantiations data, including varying thresholds for recording a substantiation across jurisdictions, should also be considered when interpreting data for this indicator (see section 15.5).  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2013-14 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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The proportion of substantiations that occurred within 3 and 12 months of a decision not to substantiate are provided in figure 15.14. Rates for the current year were under 20 per cent in all jurisdictions.

The proportion of substantiations that occurred within 3 and 12 months of a prior substantiation are provided in figure 15.15. Rates for the current year were under 25 per cent in all jurisdictions.

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| Figure 15.14 Improved safety — substantiation rate within 3 and/or 12 months after a decision not to substantiate**a** |
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| a See box 15.19 and table 15A.10 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.10. |
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| Figure 15.15 Improved safety — resubstantiation rate within 3 or 12 months of a prior substantiation**a** |
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| a See box 15.19 and table 15A.11 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.11. |
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#### Improved education

‘Improved education’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise children’s life chances by ensuring children in care have their educational needs met (box 15.20).

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| Box 15.20 Improved education |
| ‘Improved education’ is defined as the proportion of children on guardianship and custody orders achieving at or above national minimum standards in reading and numeracy, compared with all children. Only children on orders in government schools are reported.  A high or increasing rate of children on guardianship and custody orders achieving at or above national minimum standards in reading and numeracy is desirable.  Factors outside the control of child protection services have an influence on the educational outcomes of children on guardianship and custody orders, and care should be exercised when interpreting results. Specifically, children in the child protection system often have high needs and have often experienced significant disadvantage (for example, family stress, trauma and violence, mental illness and disability).  When interpreting NAPLAN data, it is important to take into account student participation rates. Children exempted from NAPLAN testing are recorded as not having met the national minimum standards in reading and numeracy. Experimental data indicate that children on guardianship and custody orders are exempted from NAPLAN testing at significantly higher rates than the general student population, which might contribute to poorer reported NAPLAN results for children on orders, compared with the general student population. Data on the NAPLAN participation rates of children on orders are provided.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * incomplete for the current reporting period. All required data were not available for NSW, Victoria, WA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Experimental data for 2010 to 2012 for Queensland and SA have been published in previous reports. In this Report, experimental data for 2013 were also available for Queensland and SA. These data indicate that the proportion of year 5 children on orders achieving at or above the national minimum standards in the NAPLAN domains ‘reading’ and ‘numeracy’ are significantly lower than the results for all students in year 5. For year 5 students on orders in 2013:

* 78.0 per cent in Queensland and 78.9 per cent in SA achieved at or above the national minimum standard for reading, compared with 96.1 per cent of all year 5 students (and 96.2 per cent and 95.7 per cent for Queensland and SA respectively)
* 64.5 per cent in Queensland and 62.9 per cent in SA achieved at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy, compared with 93.4 per cent of all year 5 students (and 93.6 per cent and 92.0 per cent for Queensland and SA respectively) (ACARA 2012; Queensland and SA governments unpublished).

It is important to take student participation rates into account when analysing NAPLAN data. Participation rates are calculated as all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students in the year level, including students who were absent or withdrawn. For year 5 students on orders in 2013:

* the participation rate for reading was 85.4 per cent in Queensland and 85.7 per cent in SA, compared with 95.8 per cent of all year 5 students (and 94.9 per cent and 94.0 per cent for Queensland and SA respectively)
* the participation rate for numeracy was 86.5 per cent in Queensland and 87.2 per cent in SA, compared with 95.4 per cent of all year 5 students (and 94.5 per cent and 93.8 per cent for Queensland and SA respectively) (ACARA 2013; Queensland and SA governments unpublished).

In 2015, the AIHW released a report that presents a snapshot of the academic performance of Australian children in the care of child protection services in 2013. Six jurisdictions provided data for the study (NSW, Victoria, WA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT), although data were not published by states and territories. The findings in the report are based on data from the Child Protection National Minimum Data Set and NAPLAN. Where possible, the study included NAPLAN data for government and non‑government school students. However, available data varied across jurisdictions. The proportion of children in care across Australia who achieved or exceeded the national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy varied (ranging from 44 per cent to 83 per cent across assessment domains and year levels) (AIHW 2015b). More detailed information on NAPLAN testing can be found in chapter 4 ‘School education’of this Report.

In addition to the above experimental data, historical pilot study data on the proportion of children in years 3, 5 and 7 on guardianship or custody orders achieving national reading and numeracy benchmarks for 2003 to 2006 relative to all children are reported in tables 15A.12–15A.14.

#### Improved health and wellbeing of the child

‘Improved health and wellbeing of the child’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise children’s life chances by ensuring children in care have their health and wellbeing needs met (box 15.21).

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| Box 15.21 Improved health and wellbeing of the child |
| ‘Improved health and wellbeing of the child’ is yet to be defined.  Good health and wellbeing are considered vital ingredients for optimising children’s life chances. Therefore, ensuring the health and wellbeing of children in the child protection system is considered a high priority.  This indicator has been identified for development and future reporting. |
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#### Safe return home

‘Safe return home’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to remove the risk of abuse or neglect to the child while maintaining family cohesion (box 15.22).

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| Box 15.22 Safe return home |
| ‘Safe return home’ is yet to be defined.  For children who cannot be protected within their family and are removed from home, often the best outcome is when effective intervention to improve their parents’ skills or capacity to care for them enables them to return home.  This indicator has been identified for development and future reporting. |
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#### Permanent care

‘Permanent care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide appropriate care for children who cannot be safely reunified with their families (box 15.23).

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| Box 15.23 Permanent care |
| ‘Permanent care’ is yet to be defined.  Appropriate services are those that minimise the length of time before stable, permanent placement is achieved.  This indicator has been identified for development and future reporting. |
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## 15.4 Future directions in performance reporting

The Steering Committee will continue to improve the appropriateness and completeness of the performance indicator framework. Future work on indicators will focus on:

* developing equity indicators for child protection services
* developing client satisfaction indicators for child protection services
* developing data collection strategies for identified child protection indicators, including, local placement, placement with sibling, continuity of case worker, improved education, improved health and wellbeing of the child, safe return home, and permanent care
* further development of the ‘Pathways’ activity-based cost reporting.

## 15.5 Definitions of key terms

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| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person** | Person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she lives. |
| **Activity Group 1 (pathways)**  Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection or support issue | Activities that are typically associated with receipt and assessment of initial information including receipt and recording of information, review of department databases, initial assessment of information and decisions about the appropriate response. This activity can also include consultation, with possible provision of advice. Activities by non-government organisations (NGO) may be included if appropriate. |
| **Activity Group 2 (pathways)**  Provision of generic family support services | Activities that are typically associated with provision of lower level family support services at various stages including identification of family needs, provision of support services and diversionary services, some counselling and active linking of the family to support networks. Services are funded by government but can be delivered by either the relevant agency or a NGO. This bundle of services does not involve planned follow-up by the relevant agency after initial service delivery. The services will be delivered under voluntary arrangements between the relevant agency and family. Clients may receive these services more than once. |
| **Activity Group 3 (pathways)**  Provision of intensive family support services | Activities that are typically associated with provision of complex or intensive family support services including provision of therapeutic and in-home supports such as counselling and mediation, modelling of positive parenting strategies, referrals to intensive support services that may be provided by NGOs, advocacy on behalf of clients and intensive support for a family in a residential setting. This includes protection and treatment support services. These services may be provided if diversionary services are inappropriate to the case and may lead to statutory services being provided to the client. |
| **Activity Group 4 (pathways)**  Secondary information gathering and assessment | Activities that are typically associated with secondary information gathering and assessment are currently counted as ‘investigations’ in the Report on Government Services. As part of this activity group a decision may be made to substantiate or not substantiate. Information gathering activities include:   * sighting the child * contacting people with relevant information about the child or family (for example, teachers, police, support services) * interviewing the child, sibling(s) and parents * observing family interactions * obtaining assessments of the child and/or family * conducting family group conferences * liaising with agencies providing services to the child and family * recording a substantiation or non-substantiation decision * case conferences with partners and contributors in the investigation and assessment process. |
| **Activity Group 5 (pathways)**  Provision of short-term protective intervention and coordination services for children not on an order | Activities that are typically associated with provision of short-term protective intervention and coordination services including:   * working with the family to address protective issues * developing networks of support for the child * monitoring and reviewing the safety of the child * monitoring and reviewing family progress against case planning goals * case conferences with agencies providing services to the child and/or family, internal discussions and reviews * specialist child-focused therapeutic support. |
| **Activity Group 6 (pathways)**  Seeking an order | Activities that are typically associated with seeking orders (court orders or voluntary/administrative orders) including:   * preparing applications for the order * preparing reports for the court * obtaining assessment reports to submit to the court * informing parties to the court proceedings, including parents, the child, and lawyers * informing and briefing legal counsel or internal court groups * going through internal pre-court review processes * attending court * conducting family group conferences. |
| **Activity Group 7 (pathways)**  Provision of protective intervention, support and coordination services for children on an order | Activities that are typically associated with provision of longer-term protective intervention and coordination services including:   * monitoring the child or young person’s progress and development (for example, social development and education progress) and undertaking activities that facilitate progress and development * meeting any specific requirements of any court order * reviewing appropriateness of the order for the circumstances of the child or young person. This usually occurs at intervals established by the court or in legislation * reporting back to court * long term cases involving out-of-home care. |
| **Activity Group 8 (pathways)**  Provision of out‑of‑home care services | Activities that are typically associated with provision of out-of-home care services including:   * finding suitable placement(s) for the child * assisting the child or young person to maintain contact with his/her family * in some cases, staff payments for recruiting and training carers * assessing suitability of potential kinship carers * assisting the child or young person to maintain contact with their family * working to return the child home * assisting the child or young person as they prepare to leave care as the end of the order approaches. |
| **Care and protection orders** | Care and protection orders are legal orders or arrangements which give child protection departments some responsibility for a child’s welfare. The scope of departmental involvement mandated by a care and protection order is dependent on the type of order, and can include:   * responsibility for overseeing the actions of the person or authority caring for the child * reporting or giving consideration to the child’s welfare (for example, regarding the child’s education, health, religion, accommodation and financial matters).   Types of care and protection orders:   * Finalised guardianship or custody orders – involve the transfer of legal guardianship to the relevant state or territory department or non-government agency. These orders involve considerable intervention in a child’s life and that of his or her family, and are sought only as a last resort. Guardianship orders convey responsibility for the welfare of a child to a guardian (for example, regarding a child’s education, health, religion, accommodation and financial matters). Guardianship orders do not necessarily grant the right to the daily care and control of a child, or the right to make decisions about the daily care and control of a child, which are granted under custody orders. Custody orders generally refer to orders that place children in the custody of the state or territory, or department responsible for child protection or non-government agency. These orders usually involve the child protection department being responsible for the daily care and requirements of a child, while his or her parent retains legal guardianship. Custody alone does not bestow any responsibility regarding the long-term welfare of the child. * Finalised third party parental responsibility orders – transfer all duties, powers, responsibilities and authority parents are entitled to by law, to a nominated person(s) considered appropriate by the court. The nominated person may be an individual such as a relative or an officer of a state or territory department. Third party parental responsibility may be ordered when a parent is unable to care for a child, and as such parental responsibility is transferred to a relative. ‘Permanent care orders’ are an example of a third party parental responsibility order and involve the transfer of guardianship to a third party carer. It can also be applied to the achievement of a stable arrangement under a long-term guardianship order to 18 years without guardianship being transferred to a third party. These orders are only applicable in some jurisdictions. * Finalised supervisory orders – give the department responsible for child protection some responsibility for a child’s welfare. Under these orders, the department supervises and/or directs the level and type of care that is to be provided to the child. Children under supervisory orders are generally under the responsibility of their parents and the guardianship or custody of the child is unaffected. Finalised supervisory orders are therefore less interventionist than finalised guardianship orders but require the child’s parent or guardian to meet specified conditions, such as medical care of the child. * Interim and temporary orders – generally cover the provision of a limited period of supervision and/or placement of a child. Parental responsibility under these orders may reside with the parents or with the department responsible for child protection. Orders that are not finalised (such as an application to a court for a care and protection order) are also included in this category, unless another finalised order is in place. * Administrative arrangements – agreements with child protection departments that have the same effect as a court order in transferring custody or guardianship. These arrangements can also allow a child to be placed in out-of-home care without going through court.   Children are counted only once, even if they are on more than one care and protection order. |
| **Child** | A person aged 0–17 years (including, at times, unborn children). |
| **Child at risk** | A child for whom no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but where there are grounds to suspect the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect, and for whom continued departmental involvement is warranted. |
| **Child concern reports** | Reports to departments responsible for child protection regarding concerns about a child, where there is no indication that a child may have been, or is at risk of being, harmed through abuse or neglect. This may include concerns about a child’s welfare related to the quality of his or her home environment or the standard of care that he or she is receiving. |
| **Children in out‑of‑home care during the year** | The total number of children who were in at least one out-of-home care placement at any time during the year. A child who is in more than one placement is counted only once. |
| **Child protection services** | Functions of government that receive and assess allegations of child abuse and neglect, and/or harm to children and young people, provide and refer clients to family support and other relevant services, and intervene to protect children. |
| **Comparability** | Data are considered comparable if, (subject to caveats) they can be used to inform an assessment of comparative performance. Typically, data are considered comparable when collected in the same way and in accordance with the same definitions. For comparable indicators, significant differences in reported results allow an assessment of differences in performance, rather than being the result of data anomalies. |
| **Completeness** | Data are considered complete if all required data are available for all jurisdictions that provide the service. |
| **Dealt with by other means** | A notification that is responded to by means other than an investigation, such as the provision of advice or referral to services. This category can also include notifications where the decision to investigate has not been reached (that is, notifications ‘in process’). |
| **Exited out‑of‑home care** | Where a child leaves a government-funded placement for more than 60 days. (Note this does not necessarily mean that a child has returned to the care of his or her family.) |
| **Family based care** | Home-based care (see ‘Out-of-home care’). |
| **Family group homes** | Family group homes are care settings that provide care to children in a departmentally or community sector agency provided home. These homes have live-in, non-salaried carers who are reimbursed and/or subsidised for the provision of care. |
| **Family support services** | Activities associated with the provision of lower level (that is, non‑intensive) services to families in need, including identification and assessment of family needs, provision of support and diversionary services, some counselling and active linking and referrals to support networks. These types of services are funded by government but can be delivered by a child protection agency or a non‑government organisation.  These services are typically delivered via voluntary arrangements (as distinct from court orders) between the relevant agency and family. This suite of services does not typically involve planned follow-up by the applicable child protection agency after initial service referral or delivery. |
| **Foster care** | Care of a child who is living apart from his or her natural or adoptive parents in a private household, by one or more adults who act as ‘foster parents’ and are paid a regular allowance by a government authority or non-government organisation for the child’s support. The authorised department or non-government organisation provides continuing supervision or support while the child remains in the care of foster parents. Foster parents are chosen from a list of people registered, licensed or approved as foster parents by an authorised department or non-government organisation. |
| **Foster parent** | Any person (or such a person’s spouse) who is being paid a foster allowance by a government or non-government organisation for the care of a child (excluding children in family group homes). |
| **Guardian** | Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child. |
| **Intensive family support services** | Specialist services that aim to prevent the imminent separation of children from their primary caregivers as a result of child protection concerns and to reunify families where separation has already occurred. These services:   * are funded or established explicitly to prevent the separation of or to reunify families * provide a range of services as part of an integrated strategy focusing on improving family functioning and skills, rather than providing a single type of service * are intensive in nature, averaging at least four hours of service provision per week for a specified short term period (usually less than six months * generally respond to referrals from a child protection service.   Intensive family support services may use some or all of the following strategies: assessment and case planning; parent education and skill development; individual and family counselling; drug and alcohol counselling and domestic and family violence support; anger management; respite and emergency care; practical and financial support; mediation, brokerage and referral services; and training in problem solving. |
| **Investigation** | An investigation is the process whereby the relevant department obtains more detailed information about a child who is the subject of a notification and makes an assessment about the risk of abuse or neglect to the child, and his or her protective needs. Not all notifications are investigated in all jurisdictions. For example, if a determination is made that a child and family are better served by family support services rather than a child protection response, children and families might be referred to diversionary and support services. Once it has been decided that an investigation is required, the investigation process is similar across jurisdictions.  The department responsible for child protection may obtain further information about the child and his or her family by checking information systems for any previous history, undertaking discussions with agencies and individuals, interviewing/sighting the child and/or interviewing the caregivers/parents. At a minimum, the child is sighted whenever practicable, and the child’s circumstances and needs are assessed. Where possible, an investigation determines whether a notification is substantiated or not substantiated. |
| **Investigation finalised** | Where an investigation is completed and an outcome of ‘substantiated’ or ‘not substantiated’ is recorded by 31 August. |
| **Investigation in process** | Where an investigation is commenced but an outcome is not recorded by 31 August. |
| **Investigation closed – no outcome possible** | Where an investigation is commenced but is not able to be finalised in order to reach the outcome of ‘substantiated’ or ‘not substantiated’. These files would be closed for administrative purposes. This may happen in instances where the family has relocated. |
| **Length of time in continuous out‑of‑home care** | The length of time a child is in out-of-home care on a continuous basis. Any break of 60 days or more is considered to break the continuity of the placement. Where a child returns home for less than 60 days and then returns to the former placement or to a different placement, this does not affect the length of time in care. Holidays or authorised absences (less than 60 days) in a placement do not break the continuity of placement. (Note that a break in a placement does not necessarily mean a child has returned to the care of his or her family.) |
| **Non-respite care** | Out-of-home care for children for child protection reasons. (See definition of respite care, below.) |
| **Notification** | Notifications are reports lodged by members of the community with the appropriate statutory child protection department to signify that they have reason to believe that a child is in need of protection. Depending on the circumstances, not all reports received by child protection departments will be recorded as notifications. Most jurisdictions assess incoming reports to determine whether they meet the threshold for recording a notification. Where, for example, a determination is made that the alleged behaviour does not meet the definition of a child in need of protection, a child concern report or equivalent might be recorded instead. If the alleged behaviour does not meet the threshold for recording a notification or a child concern report, the person reporting the matter might be provided with general advice and/or a referral.  Jurisdictions count notifications at different points in the response to a report, ranging from the point of initial contact with the source of the report to the end of a screening and decision making process. This means the number of notifications is not strictly comparable across jurisdictions. Notifications are subsequently investigated based on the policies and practices in each jurisdiction.  Notification and investigation data are collected early in the child protection process and often before an agency has full knowledge of a child’s circumstances. This lack of information and the inherent difficulties in identifying Indigenous status mean that data on the number of notifications and investigations by Indigenous status should be interpreted with care. |
| **Other relative** | A grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin, whether the relationship is half, full, step or through adoption, and can be traced through or to a person whose parents were not married to each other at the time of the child’s birth. This category includes members of Aboriginal communities who are accepted by that community as being related to the child. |
| **Out-of-home care** | Overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment. Includes care of children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements solely funded by disability services, psychiatric services, youth justice facilities and overnight child care services.  There are five main out-of-home care placement types:   * Residential care – where placement is in a residential building with paid staff. * Family group homes – provide care to children in a departmentally or community sector agency provided home. These homes have live-in, non-salaried carers who are reimbursed and/or subsidised for the provision of care. * Home-based care – where placement is in the home of a carer who is reimbursed (or who has been offered but declined reimbursement) for expenses for the care of the child. This is broken down into three subcategories: (1) *relative/kinship care* – where the caregiver is a relative (other than parents), considered to be family or a close friend, or is a member of the child or young person’s community (in accordance with their culture) who is reimbursed (or who has been offered but declined reimbursement) by the State/Territory for the care of the child. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a kinship carer may be another Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is a member of their community, a compatible community or from the same language group; (2) *foster care* – where the care is authorised and carers are reimbursed (or were offered but declined reimbursement) by the state/territory and supported by an approved agency. There are varying degrees of reimbursement made to foster carers; (3) *other* – home-based care which does not fall into either of the above categories. * Independent living – including private board and lead tenant households. * Other – includes placements that do not fit into the above categories and unknown living arrangements. This includes boarding schools, hospitals, hotels/motels and defence force. |
| **Relatives/kin** | People who are family or close friends, or are members of a child or young person’s community (in accordance with their culture) who are reimbursed (or who have been offered but declined reimbursement) by the State/Territory for the care of a child. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a kinship carer may be another Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is a member of their community, a compatible community or from the same language group. |
| **Respite care** | Respite care is a form of out-of-home care used to provide short-term accommodation for children where the intention is for the child to return to their prior place of residence. Respite placements include: *respite from birth family*, where a child is placed in out-of-home care on a temporary basis for reasons other than child protection (for example, the child’s parents are ill or unable to care for them on a temporary basis; or as a family support mechanism to prevent entry into full time care, as part of the reunification process, as a shared care arrangement); *respite from placement*, where a child spends regular, short and agreed periods of time with another carer other than their primary carer. |
| **Stability of placement** | Number of placements for children who exited out-of-home care and did not return within 60 days. Placements exclude respite or temporary placements lasting less than 7 days. Placements are counted separately where there is:   * a change in the placement type — for example, from a home‑based to a facility-based placement * within placement type, a change in venue or a change from one home-based placement to a different home-based placement.   Each placement should only be counted once. A return to a previous placement is not included as a different placement. A return home is not counted as a placement, although if a child returns home for 60 days or more they are considered to have exited care. |
| **Substantiation** | A substantiation is the outcome of an investigated notification which has resulted in the conclusion that there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been, is being or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. It does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management is, or is to be, provided. However, if an investigation results in a substantiation, intervention by child protection services might be needed to protect the child. This intervention can take a number of forms, including one or more of: referral to other services; supervision and support; an application to court; and a placement in out-of-home care.  The legal definitions of abuse and neglect are similar across jurisdictions. However, while the legal definitions for substantiating notifications are similar across jurisdictions, there remain some differences in practice, including different thresholds for recording a substantiation (that is, some jurisdictions substantiate harm or risk of harm to a child, and others substantiate actions by parents or incidents that cause harm). These differences impact on the comparability of these data. |

## 15.6 List of attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘15A’ prefix (for example, table 15A.1). Attachment tables are available on the website (www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016).

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| **Table** **15A.1** | State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on child protection and  out-of-home care services (2014-15 dollars) |
| **Table** **15A.2** | State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on child protection services, per notification, per investigation and per substantiation (2014-15 dollars) |
| **Table** **15A.3** | State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on out-of-home care services (2014-15 dollars) |
| **Table** **15A.4** | Comparability of government recurrent expenditure — items included, 2014-15 |
| **Table** **15A.5** | Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status |
| **Table** **15A.6** | Number of children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status |
| **Table** **15A.7** | Number of children on care and protection orders by type of order and Indigenous status, at 30 June |
| **Table** **15A.8** | Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and on care and protection orders, per 1000 children in the target population, and by Indigenous status |
| **Table** **15A.9** | Proportion of investigations substantiated |
| **Table** **15A.10** | Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months |
| **Table** **15A.11** | Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months |
| **Table** **15A.12** | Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 3 level (per cent) |
| **Table 15A.13** | Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 5 level (per cent) |
| **Table** **15A.14** | Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 7 level (per cent) |
| **Table** **15A.15** | Response time to commence investigation |
| **Table** **15A.16** | Response time to complete investigation |
| **Table** **15A.17** | Children with documented case plans, by Indigenous status, at 30 June |
| **Table** **15A.18** | Children in out-of-home care: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years by Indigenous status |
| **Table** **15A.19** | Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and placement type, 30 June (number) |
| **Table** **15A.20** | Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, 30 June (number) |
| **Table** **15A.21** | Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, 30 June (number) |
| **Table** **15A.22** | Children who exited out-of-home care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in out-of-home care (number) |
| **Table** **15A.23** | Children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin by Indigenous status, 30 June |
| **Table** **15A.24** | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by relationship of caregiver, 30 June |
| **Table** **15A.25** | Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home-based placement, by Indigenous status, 30 June |
| **Table** **15A.26** | Children on a care and protection order and exiting out-of-home care during the year by number of placements, by the length of time in out-of-home care (number) |
| **Table** **15A.27** | Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care |
| **Table** **15A.28** | Children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect |
| **Table** **15A.29** | Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night |
| **Table** **15A.30** | Intensive family support services: total real recurrent expenditure, number of children aged 0-17 years commencing intensive family support services and real recurrent expenditure per child (2014-15 dollars) |
| **Table 15A.31** | Intensive family support services: number of children aged 0–17 years commencing intensive family support services by Indigenous status and gender |
| **Table 15A.32** | Intensive family support services: number of children aged 0–17 years commencing intensive family support services by age |
| **Table 15A.****33** | Intensive family support services: number of children aged 0–17 years in intensive family support services by living situation at commencement of the program |
| **Table 15A.34** | Target population data used for annual data, December ('000) |
| **Table 15A.35** | Target population data used for end of financial year data, March ('000) |
| **Table 15A.36** | Initiatives to provide additional protection for child protection clients |
| **Table 15A.37** | Developments in client satisfaction |
| **Table 15A.38** | General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator (index) |

## 15.7 References

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